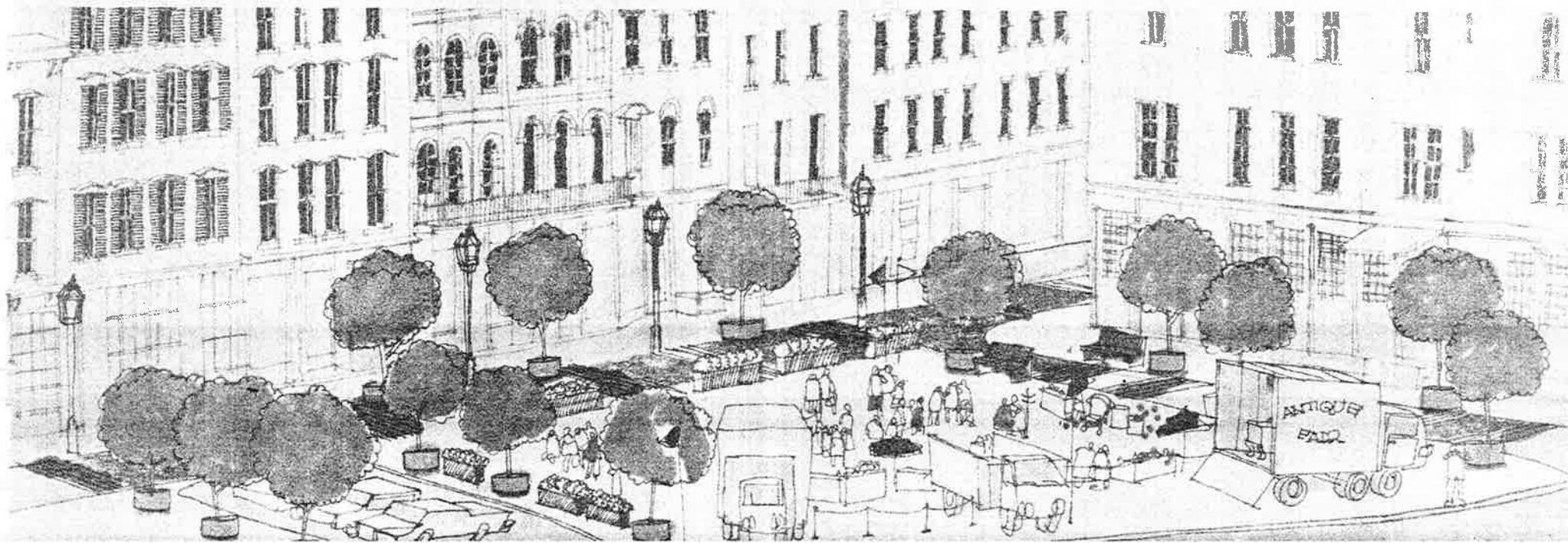


Broadway West

Kingston, New York

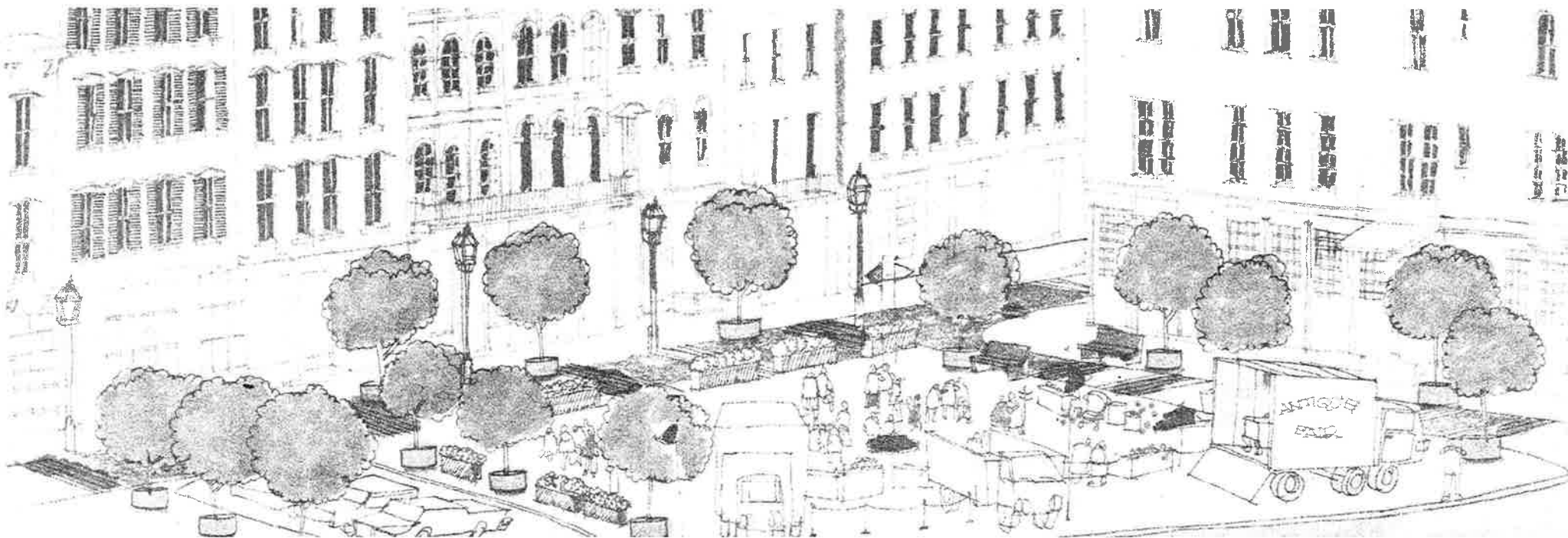


An Improvement Program for
Broadway West
Kingston, New York

Prepared for the Office of Community Development
by Raymond, Parish & Pine, Inc., Planning Consultants
May, 1976

Broadway West

Kingston, New York



CITY OF KINGSTON, NEW YORK

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Ralph A. Marallo, *Executive Director, Office of Community Development (assumed position June 1, 1975)*

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Background and Approach

As early as 1961, revitalization of the Rondout neighborhood, once Kingston's commercial waterfront center, was proposed in the city's Comprehensive Development Plan. The City Council, at that time, approved the Rondout General Neighborhood Renewal Plan. Due to Federal funding shortages, only the first stage of the Plan, the Broadway East Renewal Project was actually undertaken.

As part of its first year Community Development Program, the city allocated funds to prepare and implement a plan to rehabilitate Broadway West, a part of the Rondout Neighborhood.

Although Broadway West is beset by many problems, it also includes some important ingredients for successful revitalization. Many of the city's fine 19th century brick buildings are located here, including the West Strand Historic District. The area's unique character and unusually fine natural setting along the Hudson have generated renewed interest by both residents of Kingston and outside investors.

This report summarizes the proposed improvement effort — a program that can be realistically undertaken within the financial constraints of the city's Community Development Program, a plan that will provide a guide for both public and private actions towards restoring Broadway West as a viable neighborhood.

Although originally aimed only at Broadway West — the area bounded by Broadway, Spring Street, Wurts Street, and the Rondout Creek — the study was expanded to include the entire Rondout area.

Initial studies focused on existing conditions. These included a survey of current land uses and building conditions with particular emphasis on buildings of historical significance. Within the Broadway West area, detailed inspections of all buildings were undertaken and rehabilitation costs estimated.

Based on these studies and discussions with neighborhood residents and the Community Development Advisory Committee, various alternative programs for Broadway West rehabilitation were suggested and reviewed. Finally, a detailed plan and strategy was prepared for Broadway West, in conjunction with an over-all program for the entire Rondout neighborhood, based on the available first and second year community development budget.

Summary of Findings

1. Unique natural features — topography, commanding views, and a waterfront location — are assets which directly influence the Rondout area.
2. The development potential of the Broadway East Urban Renewal Project, when finally realized, will contribute to the revitalization of Broadway West, as will completion of the new north-south arterial.
3. Residents believe that improved public facilities are as important as assistance in rehabilitating their own properties.
4. The total cost of necessary sewer and water system improvements are too great to be funded under Community Development alone.
5. The City of Kingston owns a number of vacant buildings and vacant land in key locations within the Broadway West area.
6. Significant recent interest in the neighborhood by private enterprise has been evidenced by a substantial number of buildings sold or under contract during the past nine months. Rehabilitation of some of these properties has already started.
7. The Broadway West area is considerably more diverse than the rest of Rondout; one-third of the buildings were designed for mixed residential and commercial uses, almost half are exclusively residential, and the remainder commercial or institutional.
8. More than one-third of the buildings in Broadway West are either fully or partially vacant.
9. Fully 95% of all the buildings in Broadway West require some level of rehabilitation. The total estimated cost to achieve all necessary rehabilitation is over \$1,500,000, an average of \$30,000 per building.
10. Rehabilitation appears economically feasible, if undertaken in conjunction with other neighborhood improvements, since 90% of the buildings require less than \$15,000 per dwelling unit.
11. Emergency repairs are needed immediately to halt further serious deterioration of the West Strand Historic District buildings.


THE RONDOUT NEIGHBORHOOD

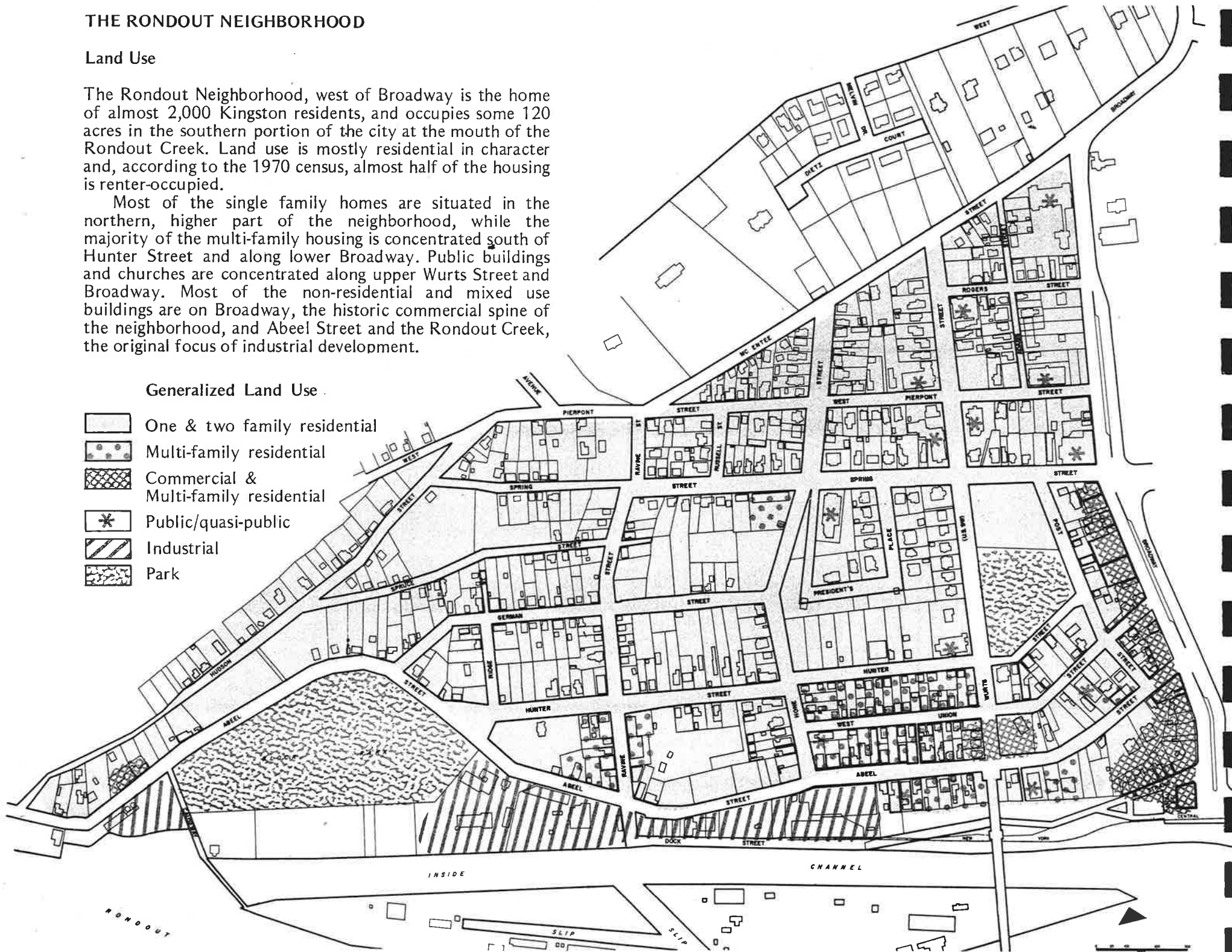
Land Use

The Rondout Neighborhood, west of Broadway is the home of almost 2,000 Kingston residents, and occupies some 120 acres in the southern portion of the city at the mouth of the Rondout Creek. Land use is mostly residential in character and, according to the 1970 census, almost half of the housing is renter-occupied.

Most of the single family homes are situated in the northern, higher part of the neighborhood, while the majority of the multi-family housing is concentrated south of Hunter Street and along lower Broadway. Public buildings and churches are concentrated along upper Wurts Street and Broadway. Most of the non-residential and mixed use buildings are on Broadway, the historic commercial spine of the neighborhood, and Abeel Street and the Rondout Creek, the original focus of industrial development.

Generalized Land Use

-  One & two family residential
-  Multi-family residential
-  Commercial & Multi-family residential
-  Public/quasi-public
-  Industrial
-  Park

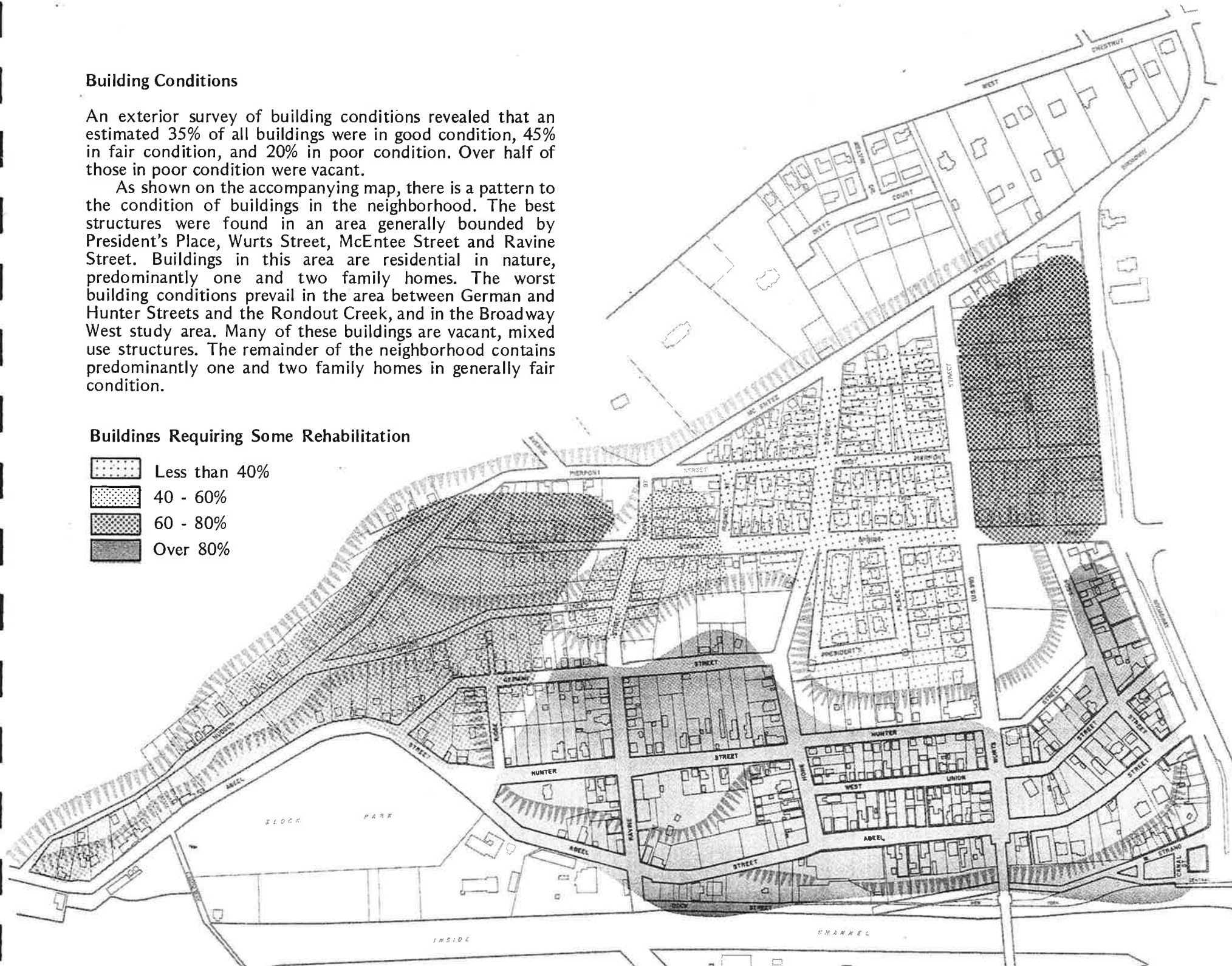
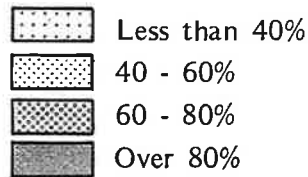


Building Conditions




An exterior survey of building conditions revealed that an estimated 35% of all buildings were in good condition, 45% in fair condition, and 20% in poor condition. Over half of those in poor condition were vacant.

As shown on the accompanying map, there is a pattern to the condition of buildings in the neighborhood. The best structures were found in an area generally bounded by President's Place, Wurts Street, McEntee Street and Ravine Street. Buildings in this area are residential in nature, predominantly one and two family homes. The worst building conditions prevail in the area between German and Hunter Streets and the Rondout Creek, and in the Broadway West study area. Many of these buildings are vacant, mixed use structures. The remainder of the neighborhood contains predominantly one and two family homes in generally fair condition.

Buildings Requiring Some Rehabilitation



Planning Factors

-  Vegetation along slopes
-  Location of public & quasi-public facilities
-  Good views

STEEP SLOPES DIVIDE STUDY AREA

INCREASED TRAFFIC FROM NEW ARTERIAL

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS REQUIRING REHABILITATION

STIMULATE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

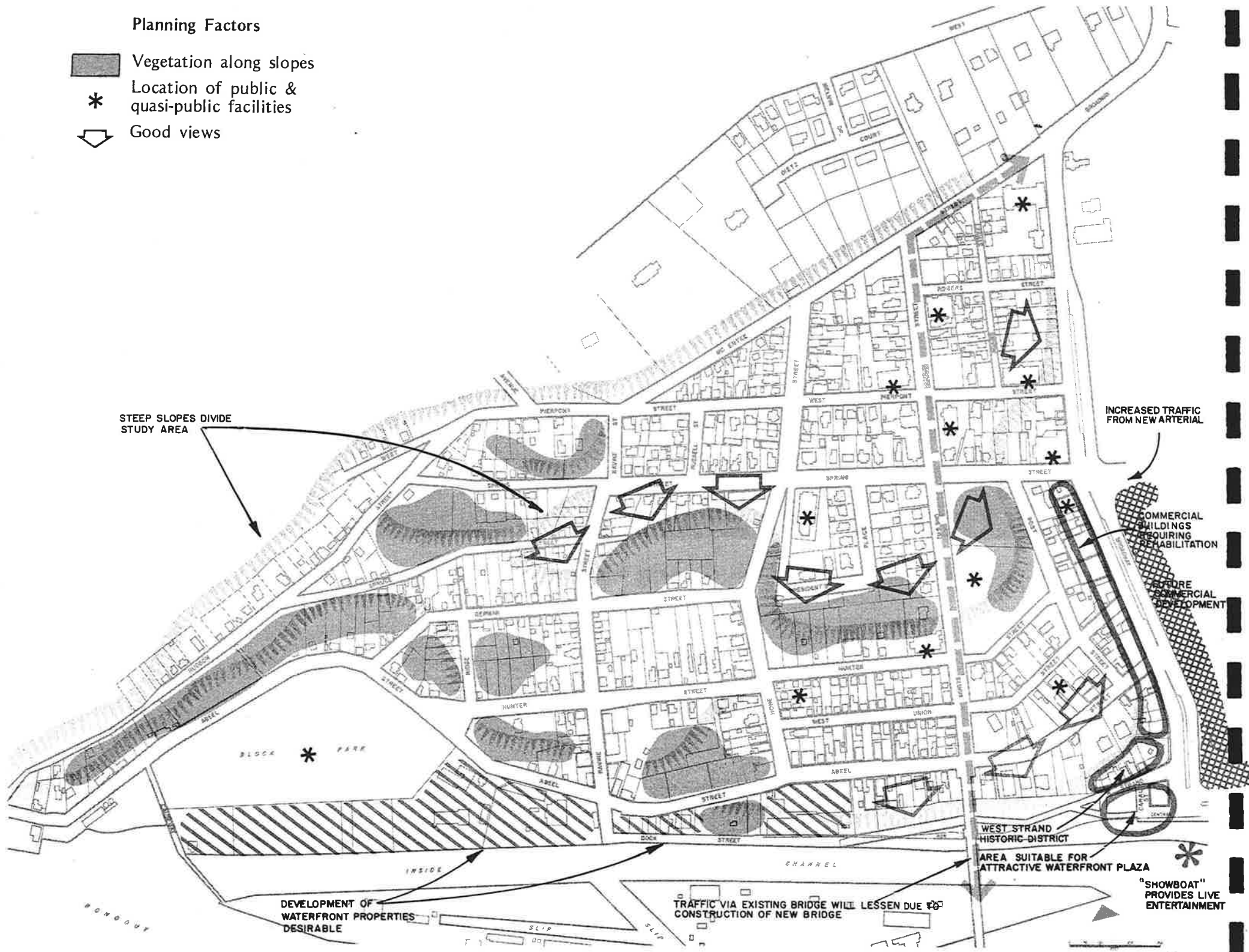
WEST STRAND HISTORIC DISTRICT

AREA SUITABLE FOR ATTRACTIVE WATERFRONT PLAZA

"SHOWBOAT" PROVIDES LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

TRAFFIC VIA EXISTING BRIDGE WILL LESSEN DUE TO CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BRIDGE

DEVELOPMENT OF WATERFRONT PROPERTIES DESIRABLE



Planning Factors

Both natural and manmade characteristics have influenced development in the Rondout Neighborhood. Topography has divided the neighborhood into three natural sub-areas; each contains different land uses, and density of development. Also, building conditions vary from area to area.

Besides topographic factors, other significant natural features include the magnificent views of the Hudson River Valley from the eastern portion of the neighborhood, and the extensive natural vegetation in certain areas which contrast with the urban setting.

Three hundred years of settlement are also reflected in the development patterns in Rondout. Several churches and a parochial school are strong elements which provide ties for people outside the neighborhood as well as residents. The West Strand Historic District, fronting on the Rondout Creek, contains a unique cluster of 19th century commercial buildings in a potentially fine setting. The scale and architectural characteristics of structures throughout the neighborhood are a major resource worthy of preservation.

Cornell Park in the Broadway West Area is an attractive open space which has long been a positive influence on the neighborhood, as evidenced by the condition of many of the buildings which surround it, due to its setting and commanding views. Block Park contains recreational facilities

for outdoor sports which attract people from the entire city during the warm months.

A new feature, the "Showboat" docked at the foot of Broadway, provides live professional entertainment and draws people from throughout the region to Rondout.

The decision to locate the new City Hall in the Broadway East Renewal Project has given a new identity to the Rondout area which had been gradually eroding for many years. The large parcel slated for commercial development south of the new City Hall, when developed, will generate additional pedestrian traffic and create a physical edge on the east side of Broadway. Such development should also help generate new demand for the vacant stores on Broadway and the West Strand.

Completion of the new north-south arterial and bridge will improve access to the neighborhood while removing through traffic from Wurts Street, thus improving the prospects for commercial growth while eliminating a blighting influence on the residential neighborhood.

The area between Abeel Street and the Rondout Creek contains obsolete commercial/industrial uses. It is, however, an area which has potential for new waterfront related development due to its unique setting and proximity to the Rondout Creek.

The challenge in Rondout is to capitalize on its natural and man-made assets in a manner that will reverse its steady deterioration.

Land Use

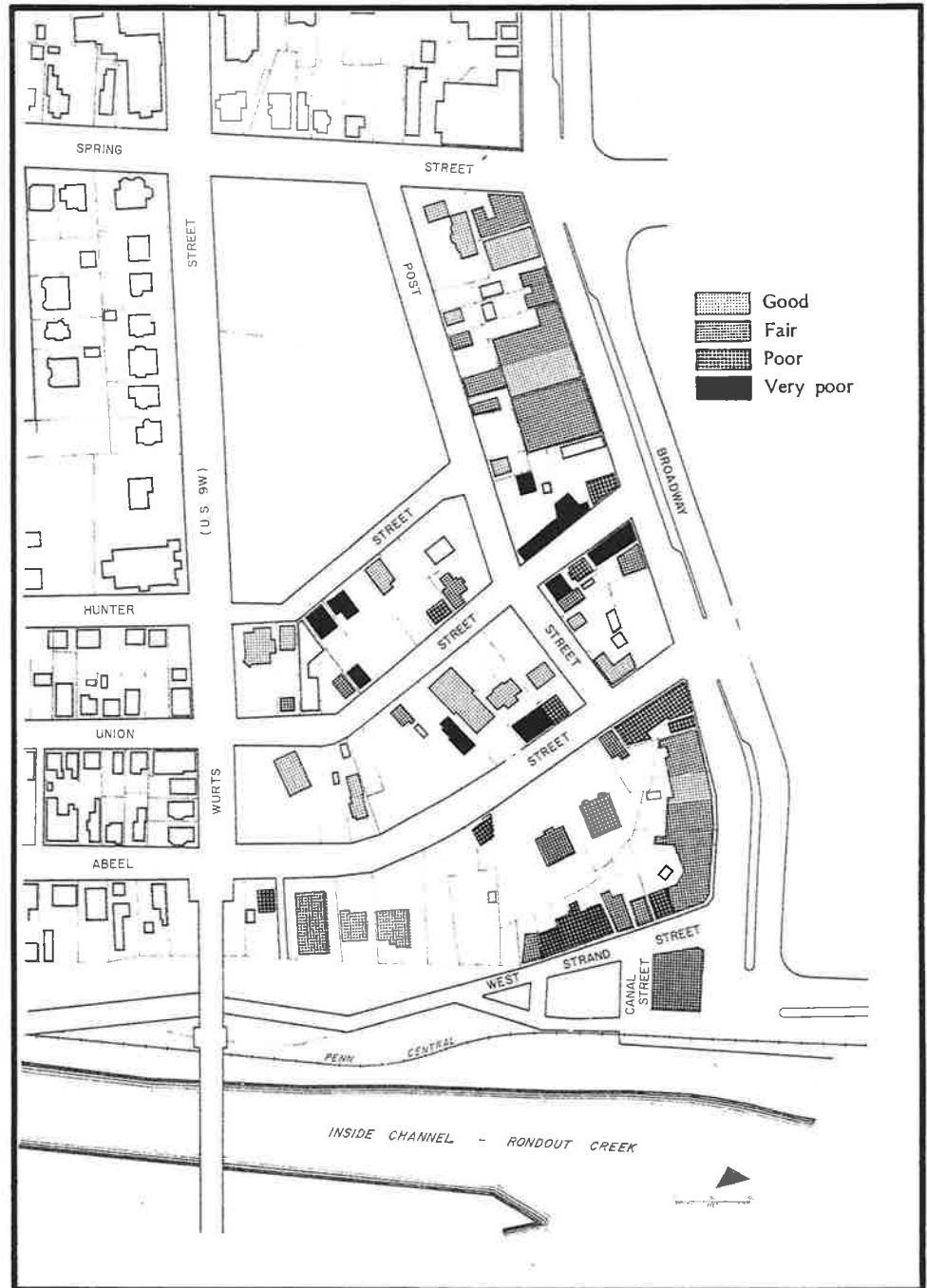
A total of 37% of all the buildings are fully or partially vacant, mostly mixed use structures along Broadway and West Strand. The only substantial vacant land is on Spring Street adjacent to Cornell Park. Several smaller vacant parcels, also residential in character, are located on Abeel Street.

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Building Conditions

A detailed inspection was conducted of the exterior and interior of every building within Broadway West. Based on the inspections, each building was rated either good, fair, poor or very poor. Forty-three percent of the buildings were found in either poor or very poor condition, 28% in fair condition and 26% in generally good condition.

The majority of the buildings in poor condition are found below Hunter Street. Many of these buildings are vacant and one-third are owned by the City of Kingston, due to lack of tax payments by the former owners. However, it appears that most of the poor or very poor buildings are, nevertheless, worthy of rehabilitation due to their brick construction, substantial size and architectural and historic importance.



Rehabilitation Analysis

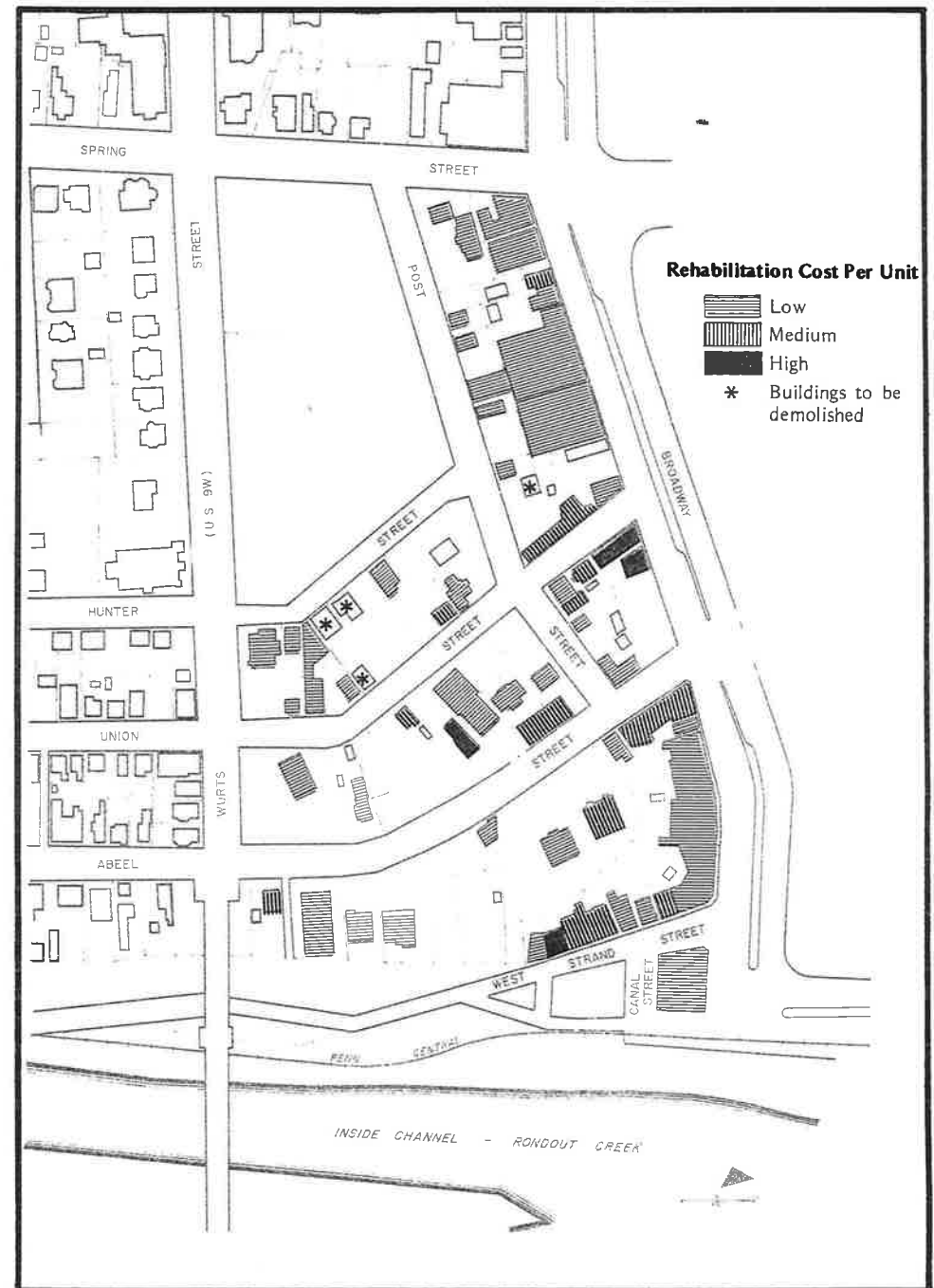
In order to better evaluate the potential for rehabilitation in Broadway West, rehabilitation costs for each building were estimated based on the detailed building inspections.

Building rehabilitation costs were estimated at intervals ranging from less than \$5,000 to more than \$40,000 per building. Virtually all of the buildings in this six block area require some level of rehabilitation. However, almost half, or 46%, of the buildings require less than \$10,000. Of the remainder, 18% require \$10,000-\$20,000, 15% require \$20,000-\$40,000, and 22% of the buildings require over \$40,000. It is estimated that an investment of over \$1,600,000 would be required to completely rehabilitate all of the buildings, including both commercial and residential uses.

Since building size and uses vary, total cost is not necessarily the most pertinent when rehabilitation feasibility is being considered. Therefore, the estimated rehabilitation costs per dwelling and/or commercial unit in each building were calculated.

This analysis, illustrated on the accompanying map, indicates that some 43% of the buildings in Broadway West can be rehabilitated at an average cost of less than \$5,000 per unit and 90% at less than \$15,000 per unit. Only 10% of the buildings would require a rehabilitation cost of over \$15,000 per unit.

The rehabilitation analysis suggests that most buildings in Broadway West are potentially rehabilitable based on the investment required for physical improvements. Obviously, however, the total neighborhood environment must be such that a property owner has reason to believe that his investment will be protected in terms of increased property value and, where appropriate, income. A program to create such an environment in the Rondout neighborhood is described in the next section of this report. A separate report has been prepared which sets forth the guidelines and procedures for a rehabilitation loan program, using funds from the Community Development Program and private lending institutions, which should be put to use in Rondout as well as several other areas in the city.



Recommendations

OVERALL STRATEGY

Successful revitalization of the entire Rondout Neighborhood depends upon coordinated action by both the private and public sector. Rehabilitation loans should be made available throughout the neighborhood. At first, most direct public action should be concentrated in Broadway West, the area of greatest need, to serve as the prototype for a neighborhood-wide program.



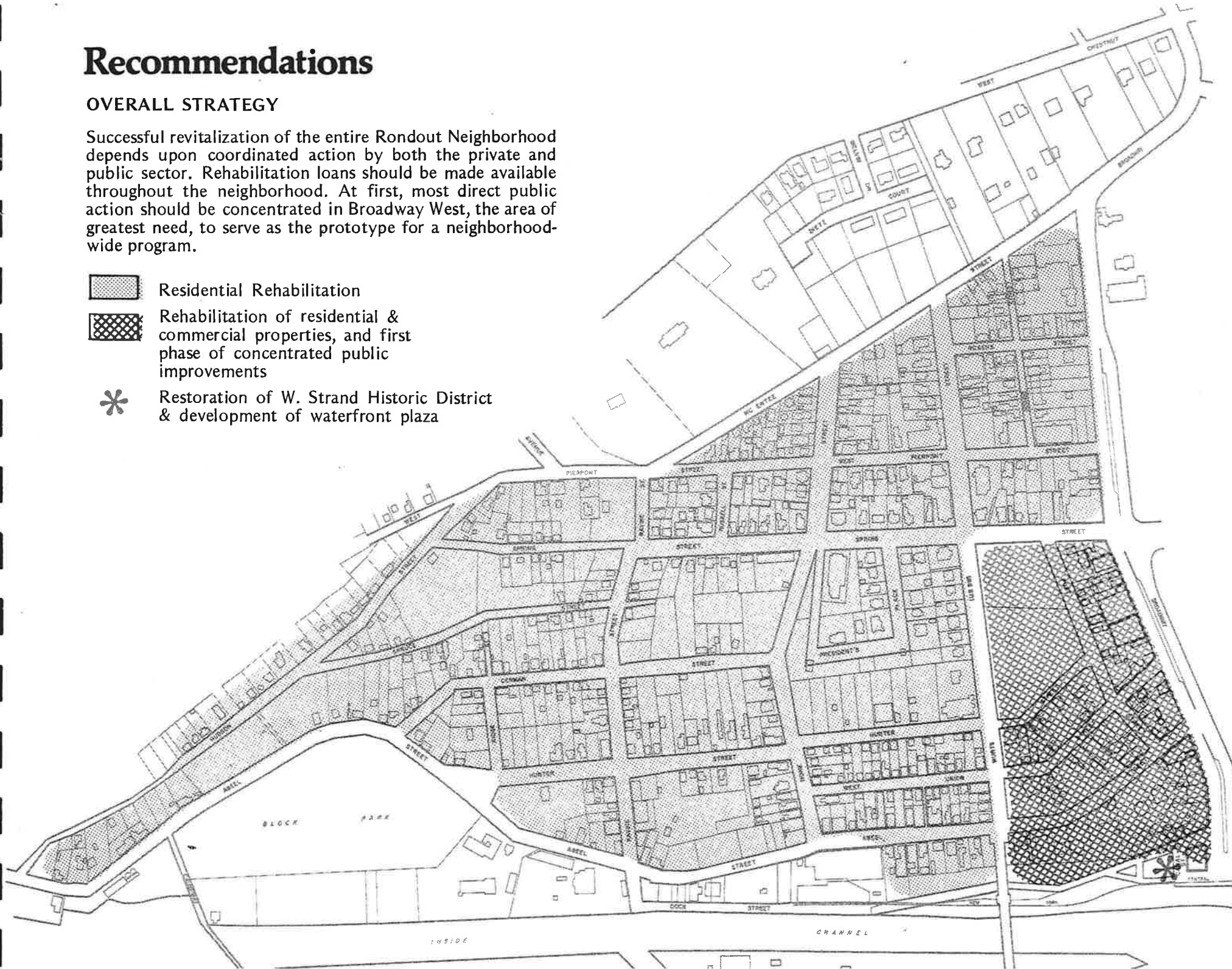
Residential Rehabilitation



Rehabilitation of residential & commercial properties, and first phase of concentrated public improvements



Restoration of W. Strand Historic District & development of waterfront plaza



PUBLIC ACTIONS

During the last year, private investors have shown increased interest in Rondout, due mostly to the availability, at low cost, of fine old structures which have great potential for rehabilitation. The major thrust of public action, therefore, should be to provide evidence to present property owners and potential investors alike, that the city is committed to the preservation and improvement of the neighborhood. Such evidence, in the form of public improvements, rehabilitation assistance and administrative cooperation is vital to create the appropriate climate for revitalization.

The following public actions are recommended:

1. **Emergency Repair Program.** An immediate program of emergency repairs should be instituted to halt further deterioration of structures which are now vacant but suitable for rehabilitation. Such repairs, to include sealing of all windows and doors and roof repairs, will effectively place such structures in a "deep freeze" until permanent rehabilitation can take place. This can be performed using the existing powers of the City Building Inspector under Section 20 of the city ordinance.
2. **Demolition of Substandard Buildings.** The few structures which are in dilapidated condition and not worthy of rehabilitation should be removed to eliminate this blighting influence on the surrounding neighborhood. This can be accomplished under existing city powers.
3. **Rehabilitation Loan Program.** A rehabilitation loan program using Community Development funds to reduce the interest rate on conventional home improvement loans should be implemented at once to insure the availability of rehabilitation funds for this neighborhood. Details of such a program are included in a separate report.

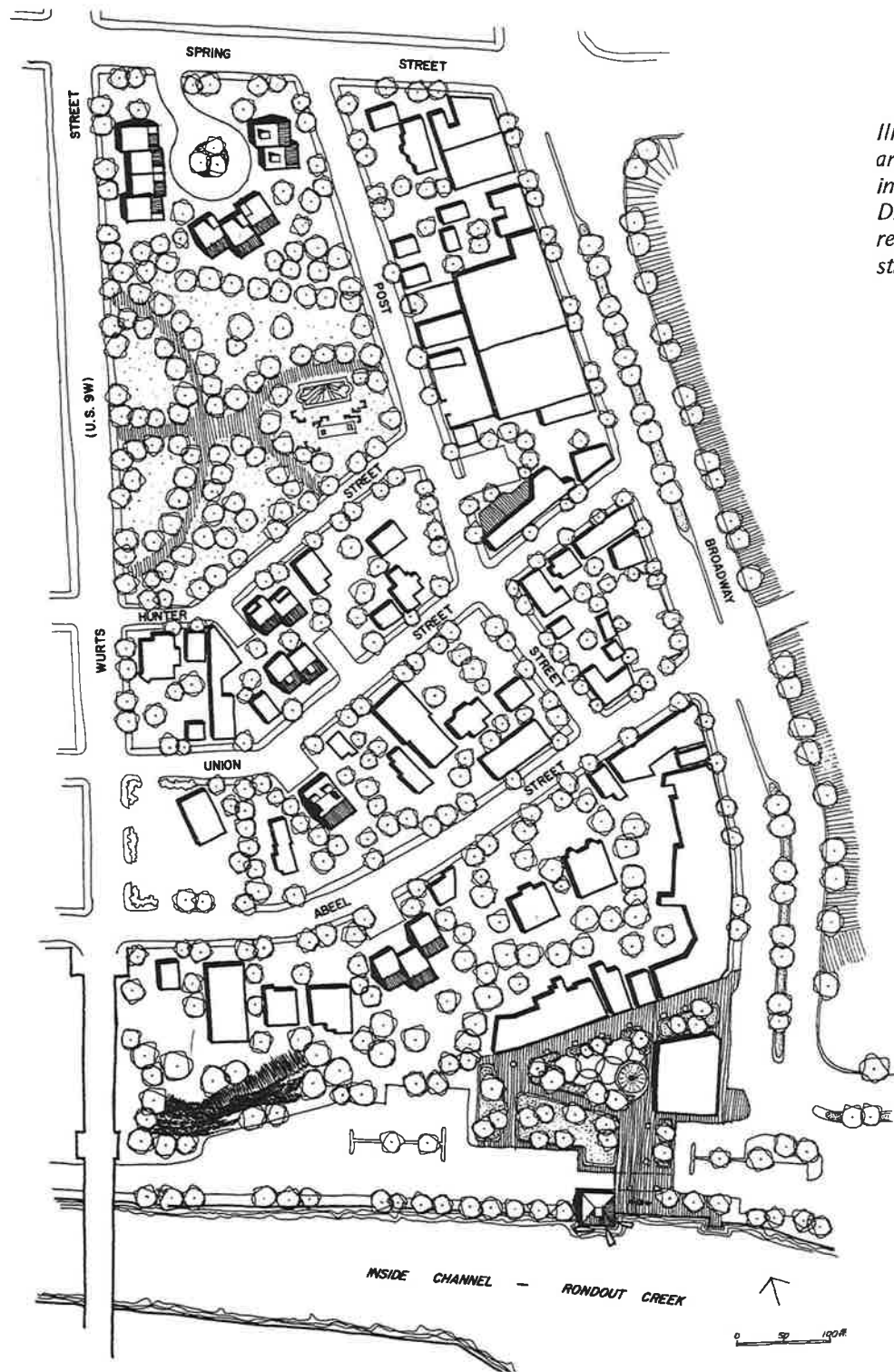
Since many of the buildings which need rehabilitation assistance have the potential for both commercial and residential use, the loan program must be available to a variety of client groups.
4. **Preservation of Architectural Integrity.** A major resource in Broadway West and throughout the Rondout

neighborhood are the many fine examples of 19th century architecture highlighted by the West Strand Historic District.

In order to initiate the sorely needed rehabilitation of many of these structures, as well as to enhance the historical character of the neighborhood, several actions are suggested.

First, design policies for neighborhood conservation should be instituted in three areas.

- a. **Existing Buildings:** The emphasis in treating existing buildings with historical significance should be on restoring correct period exterior details such as sash, doors, cornices, and siding. Exterior paint colors on non-masonry structures should be coordinated among owners. The sides and rears of buildings should receive careful attention with yards cleaned-up and attractive walls and landscaping installed where necessary.
- b. **New Development:** New buildings in the area should be of materials, scale and colors to blend and harmonize with those of existing buildings. The new commercial complex proposed in the Broadway East Renewal Project should be designed to complement rather than compete with the restoration along lower Broadway. The buildings should be located with retail functions fronting on Broadway and developed as a unit in order to maintain unity of design and materials.
- c. **Street Design and Landscaping:** A street design policy should be instituted within Broadway West that uses materials which are compatible with the historic buildings and easily maintained and serviceable by today's standards. Street trees should be planted with varied spacing to complement buildings rather than follow a rigid module, and the street lighting, street signs and store signs should be of a size and type in keeping with the character of the area. Special attention should be devoted to the design of improvements along the West Strand Historic District to complement the architecture.



Illustrative site plan highlights concentrated public and private improvements in Broadway West. Projects include the revitalization of the West Strand Historic District, development of a waterfront plaza, new and rehabilitated housing, renovation of Cornell Park, and street and sidewalk improvements.

The second action recommended is the provision of architectural advice by the city to property owners who undertake rehabilitation to insure a sensitive restoration design and to coordinate work on adjacent buildings.

Third, "facade easements" should be acquired on buildings in the West Strand Historic District. This would permit Community Development funds to be used for restoration of building exteriors via an agreement with the owners. At the same time, owners should be responsible for interior repairs. Without such a dual commitment of public and private funds, it is doubtful that the extensive rehabilitation effort required on the West Strand can be accomplished.

In conjunction with the "West Strand Plaza", discussed below, a unique restoration project can be created along the Rondout Creek.

5. "West Strand Plaza". Although it requires a significant investment, the West Strand Historic District has great potential as an anchor for the commercial revitalization of the neighborhood. As part of this effort, it is recommended that a plaza be developed between the West Strand and the Rondout Creek to provide a pedestrian shopping and gathering place for Kingston residents. An attractive public space can be created with landscaping, a fountain, seating areas, and improved docking facilities for boats that use the Rondout Creek and Hudson River. Vehicular traffic along West Strand would be rerouted and restricted to local and emergency vehicles. New off-street parking would also be provided for the traffic generated by the rehabilitation of commercial properties.

Until necessary sewer construction on the West Strand is completed, it is suggested that an "interim plaza" be created by closing off West Strand to traffic, providing portable landscaping and street furnishings, and by securing lease arrangements with owners on those portions of the plaza on private property. After evaluating the effect of the plaza and upon the completion of the proposed sewer improvements, a permanent plaza could be constructed.

The plaza would achieve immediate visual impact and serve as a focal point for the overall preservation effort.

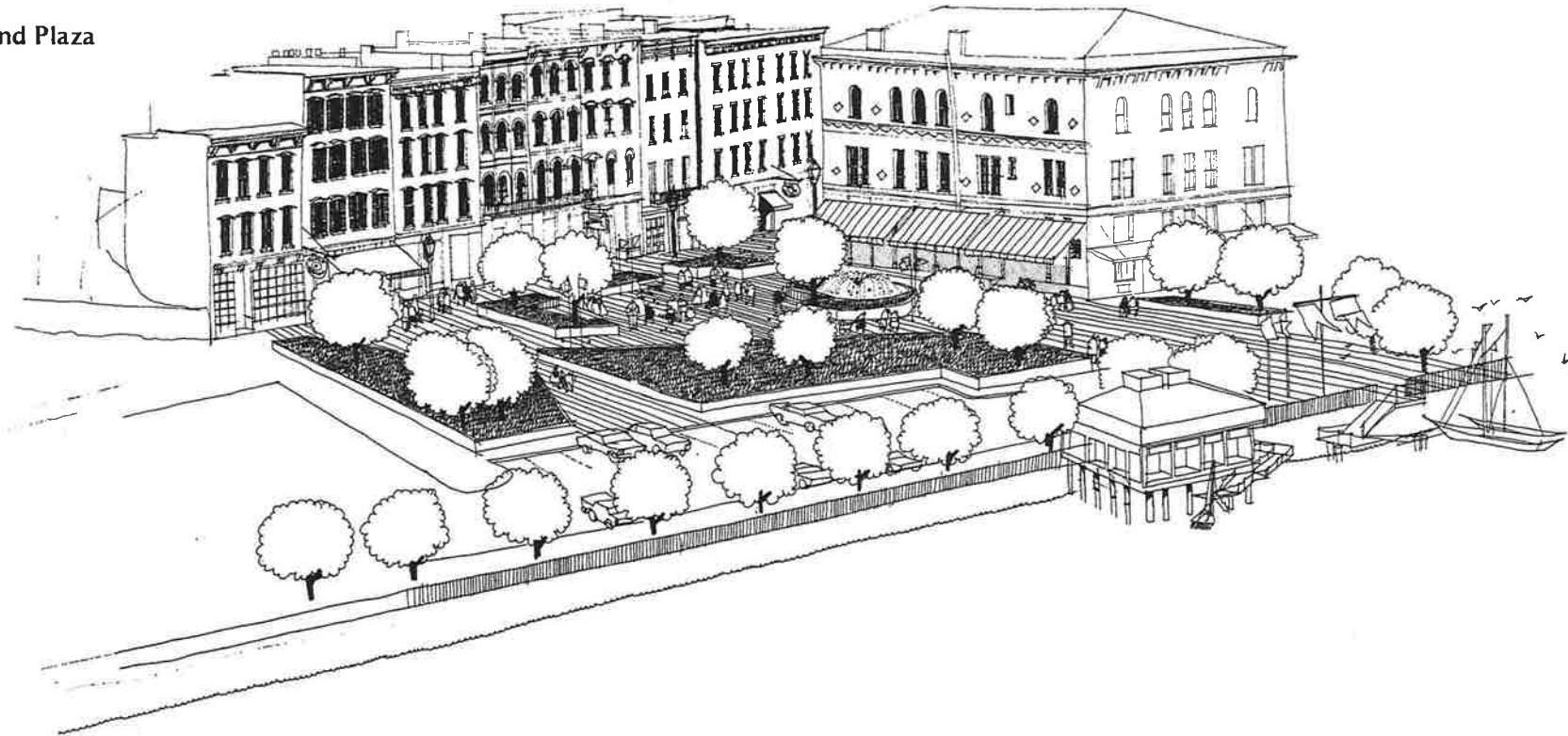
6. **Sale of City Property.** The City of Kingston presently owns 11 vacant buildings and 20 parcels of land in Rondout. It is recommended that the city make these properties available for sale subject to stipulations concerning their use and establishing standards and a timetable for rehabilitation or development. In return, low interest rehabilitation loans to undertake the work should be made available to eligible purchasers.
7. **Zoning Revision.** Presently the majority of Rondout is zoned for single family homes. Vacant land which is suitable for new development should be rezoned to allow clustered residential development which is more economical and consistent with existing neighborhood scale.
8. **Public Improvements.** Since Community Development funds are limited, a two phase public improvement program is recommended that includes an initial emphasis on the Broadway West area plus improvements on a selected basis in the remaining portions of Rondout.

Initially funds should be spent to refurbish Cornell Park, to reconstruct sidewalks and plant street trees, and to improve street lighting in Broadway West. This action would have a high impact and assist in creating the necessary environment to encourage rehabilitation efforts.

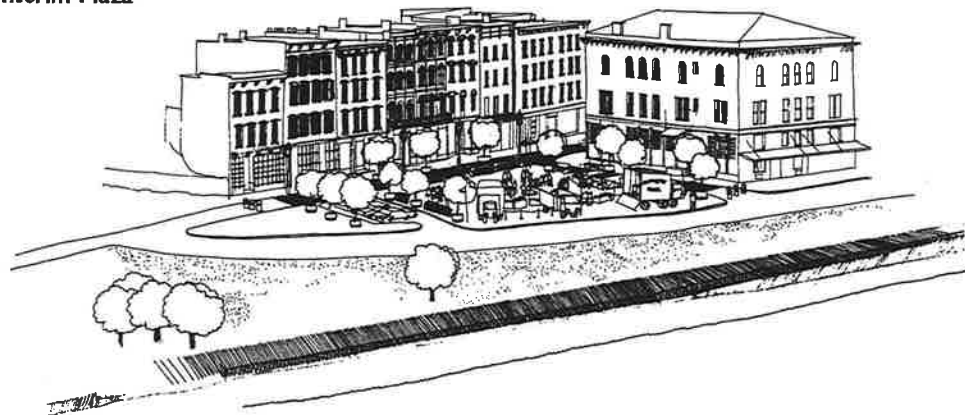
Public improvements in the remainder of Rondout would be coordinated with private rehabilitation efforts or where immediate repairs are required.

Extensive improvements to the existing water supply and sewage disposal systems throughout Rondout are also required. However, such work would require an expenditure of funds that is beyond the available Community Development budget.

West Strand Plaza



Interim Plaza



PRIVATE ACTION

It is absolutely essential that the private sector become a partner with the city in the revitalization of the Rondout Neighborhood. Certain specific actions will be necessary in the process.

1. **Cooperation of Local Private Lending Institutions.** An adequate supply of mortgage and home improvement funds are necessary for any meaningful neighborhood improvement activity. The private lending institutions must be prepared to make loans either separately or in conjunction with Community Development assistance. It will be necessary for the financial institutions and the city to coordinate their activities and to establish a method of evaluating rehabilitation proposals to determine which can be financed exclusively by the banks, which jointly and which require direct city aid.
2. **Citizen Participation.** Rondout residents must be actively involved in the improvement of the neighborhood as a place to live and shop, to show confidence in its future and to reverse the long pattern of neglect. A neighborhood organization should be established — merchants, residents, and other property owners — and organized to play a continuing role in the rehabilitation effort.
3. **Maintenance of Moderate Residential and Commercial Rents.** It is important that rehabilitation activity does not create hardships for present residents by increasing their rents beyond what they can afford. To avoid this possibility, the use of "Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments" should be coordinated with rehabilitation activity and owners who receive low interest loans should be required to submit any proposed rent increases for review.

The Cost of Neighborhood Improvement

THE FIRST PHASE PROGRAM

Total rehabilitation of the Rondout Neighborhood will require major expenditures of public and private funds for housing rehabilitation, construction and rehabilitation of water and sewer lines, repaving of streets, park renovation and other site improvements. It has been estimated that over \$1,500,000 would be required for the sewer and water improvements and housing rehabilitation alone.

Therefore, a first phase program is proposed that can be accomplished with the \$470,000 allocated from first and second year community development funding but that will also contribute significantly towards the creation of a favorable climate for residential and commercial rehabilitation.

The following activities and budget are recommended to begin the concentrated effort in the Broadway West area and to initiate action throughout the remaining portions of Rondout.

Broadway West

The following activities are included in the first phase:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Emergency repair program to preserve structures worthy of rehabilitation. | \$20,000 |
| 2. Public Improvements — including the renovation of Cornell Park, new sidewalks, street trees, and lighting. | \$110,000 |
| 3. Facade renovation of West Strand historical properties through facade easement agreement. | \$75,000 |
| 4. Architectural services for facade restorations along West Strand and Broadway. | \$21,000 |

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 5. Acquisition/demolition/relocation expenses for three substandard properties. | \$25,000 |
| 6. Development of "Interim West Strand Plaza." | \$60,000 |

Entire Rondout Neighborhood

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 7. Rehabilitation loan pool, in conjunction with private bank financing, for entire Rondout neighborhood. | \$40,000 |
| 8. Miscellaneous public improvements outside of concentrated planning areas are needed. | \$60,000 |

The total cost of this initial program is \$470,000, including a 15% contingency.

It is recommended that the first year community development allocation of \$210,000 be used to begin the emergency repair program, demolition of substandard properties, facade renovations via facade easement, rehabilitation loan program and development of the "Interim West Strand Plaza".

The second year allocation of \$260,000 would continue these and the remaining activities described above.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Community Development funds will also be available to Kingston in the third action year, at present funding levels, and at decreased levels in the following two years, according to present regulations. Additional expenditures are required if revitalization of Rondout is to succeed. The initial program should be carefully evaluated, modified as appropriate, and additional funds allocated to continue improvements in other portions of Rondout and to sustain the rehabilitation loan program.

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