

CASE STUDY - "THE HAMILTON STREET MALL"
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT - ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

A Thesis
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by
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ABSTRACT

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This report is a case study of the Hamilton Street Mall. Hamilton Street is the main street running east-west through the central business district of Allentown, Pennsylvania. Prior to 1972 the center city was typical of most eastern cities founded 200 years ago. However, during 1972 the central business area took on a new presence. The Allentown Redevelopment Authority, Chamber of Commerce and some private supporters began to renovate the area along Hamilton Street and created a shopping mall. Traffic patterns were changed, canopies covered the walkways and sidewalks were widened. These changes and others presented a new concept for the downtown area.

After five years in operation, it was determined to examine what effect the Hamilton Street Mall has had on various specific items such as retail sales, parking facilities, vandalism and maintenance. Other areas of attention were directed toward recent controversies: prohibition of auto traffic on the Mall, "Park and Shop" provisions, extension of existing limits, and police

protection. The effects were determined by developing a questionnaire that was answered by the owners within the Mall limits.

The conclusions and recommendations drawn by this thesis are based on the results of the questionnaire analyses and comments received during the interview with each business. The results are the interpretation of the answers to the questions used solely to develop a critical consensus of opinion.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Perspective

The central business district (CBD) is the largest single concentration of commercial activity within urban areas. Although the boundaries that would constitute and define the limits of its area are vaguely apparent, the CBD functions as a dominating focal point for various issues affecting the development of its own urban geography.

The shopping centers in cities are dependent on the effectiveness of the central business district to attract people. The CBD contains many different kinds of commercial functions including concentrations of offices and administrative buildings, warehouses, entertainments; but particularly important is the major concentration of retailing. It is this element of the central business district that constitutes the highest level in the hierarchy of shopping centers within urban areas.¹

There are at least four levels of centers; in order of decreasing size these are (1) regional centers, (2) community centers, (3) neighborhood centers, and (4) isolated store-clusters. The number of levels in the hierarchy depends on the size of the urban area; in smaller cities the central

¹Yeates, Maurice H. and Garner, Barry J., "The North American City," Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., New York, N. Y., 1971, p. 319.

business district itself may be only functionally equivalent to the higher level regional centers typical of larger cities.² Such is the case of the city of Allentown, Pennsylvania, hereafter referred to as Allentown.

Urban renewal within the core of the central business district has taken many forms varying from "cosmetic" exterior renovations of store fronts to total reconstruction of street systems converted to pedestrian-type malls. Allentown's Hamilton Street Mall could be categorized as having the characteristics of a planned "cosmetic" exterior design with minimum reconstruction of the street system and minor pedestrian improvements.

Although not all urban areas can be considered as candidates for malls or plazas, the need for additional attraction and revitalization of the CBD warrants some renewal techniques. Justification for encouragement of improvements can be demonstrated by the success of certain existing facilities. These show evidence of considerable planning and implimentation of the tendency toward mall type complexes. Venice (Italy), Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia), and Fire Island (New York) have demonstrated the plaza-pedestrian governed shopping districts can be successful. The busiest shopping centers are Japan's "ginzas," which are no more than old alleys too narrow for automobiles and

²Ibid., p. 319.

therefore safe for shopping and walking. The areas most attractive to Singapore's shoppers are the closed pedestrian arcades. The San Francisco downtown renewal project eliminates a transit-oriented Market Street and substitutes a 20-block-long pedestrian mall with plazas. Providence, Rhode Island, while providing for a freeway to downtown, will also have a pedestrian mall, and Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, may be given over to walkers, too.³

Objective

The objective of this case study is to examine the effect the Hamilton Street Mall has had on various specific items pertinent to its own downtown central business district. The following is the list of items that were considered: retail sales, pedestrian traffic (sidewalks), shopper traffic (on stores), number of available parking spaces on Hamilton Street, number of available parking spaces in lots, number of bus stops along the Mall, general street and sidewalk maintenance, vandalism and graffiti, shoppers who live in the city, and also shoppers who live in the surrounding area suburbs who frequent the central business district.

Other specific areas of attention were directed toward some recent controversies: the increase of off-street parking, additional curb-side parking, total prohibition

³Abrams, Charles, "The City is the Frontier," Harper Colophon Books, Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., New York, N. Y., 1967, p. 334.

of auto traffic on Hamilton Street, additional improvements to the present site, extension of existing limits, increase bus service, "Park and Shop" provisions, 15-minute metered parking spaces, adequate police protection, and the need for additament Mall advertisement.

Examination of the Hamilton Street Mall is based on subjective answers to various questions that incorporate the above items. The objective of this thesis therefore is to present the impressions of the local businessmen through a critical concensus of opinions. The conclusions that were achieved were based on the author's interpretation of the answers, remarks and/or comments derived from the particular questionnaire.

Overview

Decision-makers often consider citizen participation an important element in advocating new programs for an urban area. They rely on concise opinionated surveys from the public. To adequately develop a practicable study of the Hamilton Street Mall, a brief questionnaire was created. The questions were answered by a sample of the business owners (store managers) that had store frontage along the Hamilton Street Mall. The questions were designed such that the questionnaire would aid in simplifying and recording responses. The form was filled in by an interviewer, which helped eliminate a haphazard, random or casual recording of answers.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts: (1) a section devoted to ranking (rating) selected items according to their relative increase or decrease since the completion of the Mall, (2) "Yes/No" type questions on selected issues; thereby requiring a decision to be made by the interviewee, (3) space reserved for remarks and general comments with regard to the area within the existing Mall limits. The latter section aided in making additional recommendations for improvements and organizing a consensus of opinions.

Answers to the questionnaire were compiled, the results tabulated and applicable graphs and charts were constructed. The reduced data are regarded as the primary justification for the conclusions and recommendations presented in this case study. Summary of the findings is based on all the collected information for various sources: questionnaire, personal interviews and published materials.

CHAPTER II

HAMILTON STREET MALL

Background

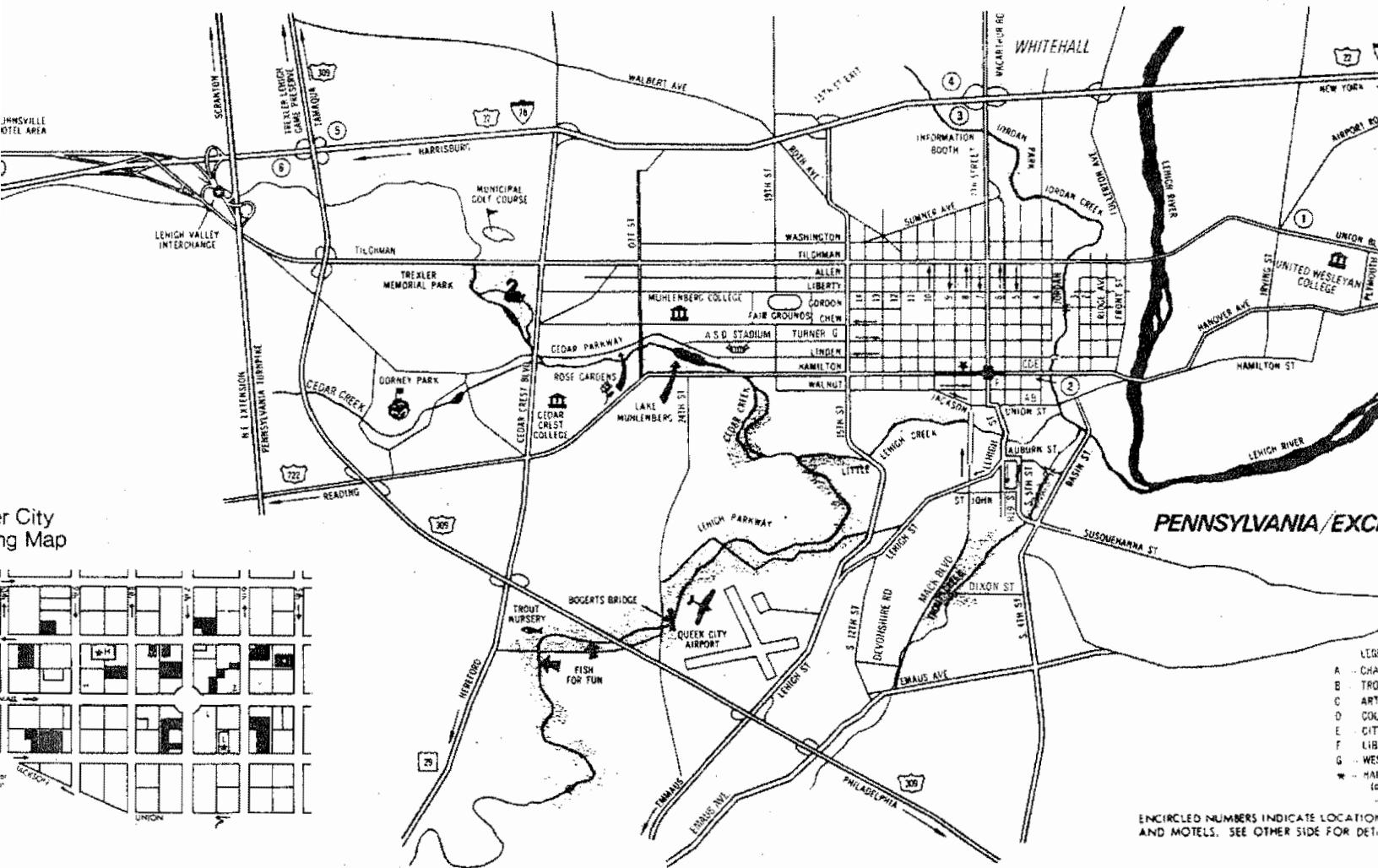
Allentown is a medium-size city (pop. 108,331)⁴ in eastern Pennsylvania, County of Lehigh, located approximately 50 miles north of Philadelphia and 90 miles west of New York City. The city is bounded in the north by Interstate 78, the south by Route 309, the east by the Lehigh River, and the west by the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike as illustrated in Figure 1.⁵ Two airports service the immediate region (A. B. E. and Queen City) and passenger rail service is available from the adjacent city of Bethlehem to center city Philadelphia. Public transportation for the surrounding area (approximately 15 miles) is maintained by a bus service, LANTA (Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority) and small taxi service operations.

Predominate employment is with truck assembly plants (Mack Trucks), utility companies (Pennsylvania Power and Light, Bell Telephone), electronic components (Western Electric) and surrounding suburban shopping centers (Lehigh Valley Mall, Whitehall Mall, Cedar Crest Plaza.

⁴Pennsylvania Industrial Census Series, M-5-73, Pennsylvania Department of Commerce, Published Material, Allentown-Lehigh County Chamber of Commerce, 1976, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

⁵Published Material, Allentown-Lehigh County Chamber of Commerce, 1976, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA



LOCATION MAP

FIGURE 1

Available housing consists of apartments, condominiums, townhouses, duplexes and single family units, all existing for a considerable range of diverse incomes. For additional profile information and economic facts, see Table 1.⁶

Development

In the mid-1960's the Allentown Redevelopment Authority, Chamber of Commerce and some private group supporters undertook a study to chart the downtown's future. Although the downtown area had annual sales in excess of \$80 million at that time, its growth rate was threatening to decrease with the advent of new suburban shopping and employment centers.⁷ Most alarming was the steady drop in property assessments, due to the declining rental fees of Hamilton Street storerooms, offices, and buildings. Diminishing center city tax base, traffic congestion, parking deficiencies and under-utilized and/or poorly maintained buildings were sure symptoms of future decline. "Park and Shop" was born in Allentown, and the city had always offered outstanding shopper parking facilities. But the main street, Hamilton, was clogged with through and other non-shopping who posed a growing traffic problem.

⁶Op. cit., Allentown Chamber of Commerce, 1976.

⁷Cope, Linder & Walmsley, Architects and Engineers, "Hamilton Mall" 1927 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

TABLE 1

ECONOMIC FACTS

Allentown and Lehigh County, Penna.

<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>		
Allentown	109,871	108,331		
Lehigh County	255,304	266,352		
<u>CONSUMER BUYING POWER*</u>	<u>1970</u> <u>Family</u>	<u>1972</u> <u>Family</u>	<u>1973</u> <u>Family</u>	<u>1974</u> <u>Family</u>
Allentown	\$10,322	\$11,400	\$11,905	\$ 9,682
Lehigh County	10,528	11,647	12,652	10,520
A-B-E District	9,945	11,210	11,082	13,799
<u>RETAIL SALES*</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1974</u>	
Allentown	\$291,727,000	\$334,111,000	\$366,595,000	
Lehigh County	489,185,000	569,500,000	634,490,000	
A-B-E District	924,075,000	1,013,717,000	1,304,772,000	
<u>VALUE OF MANU-FACTURED PRODUCTS</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>	
Allentown	\$777,914,000	\$847,200,000	\$866,769,000	
Lehigh County	1,075,912,000	1,157,806,000	1,802,706,000	
*Sales Management Survey (Allentown-Lehigh Chamber of Commerce)				
<u>AVERAGE YEARLY EARNINGS**</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>		
Allentown	\$7,253	\$9,102		
<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS**</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>		
Allentown	26,755	27,000		
<u>PROPERTY VALUATION</u> (Taxables Only)	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>	
Allentown	\$426,001,000	480,000,000	565,000,000	
Lehigh County	1,061,221,400	1,224,734,000	1,666,649,300	
<u>CAR REGISTRATIONS</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1974</u>
Lehigh County	96,384 pass. 14,326 comm.	106,739 pass. 14,737 comm.	116,507 pass. 18,011 comm.	121,998 pass. 22,131 comm.

N. B., All information present on this table is public information furnished upon request from Allentown-Lehigh County Chamber of Commerce

**Source: Pennsylvania Industrial Census Series, M-5-73
Pennsylvania Department of Commerce

The Allentown Redevelopment Authority and Progressive Center City Allentown, an independent committee of the Chamber of Commerce, initiated a study of conditions and trends. With state, local and private financial help, the Philadelphia firm of Walker Associates was commissioned to make a comprehensive study and report on center city traffic, parking, building and land use and other related factors.⁸ The final report included the proposal of creating a "shopping mall" on Hamilton Street.

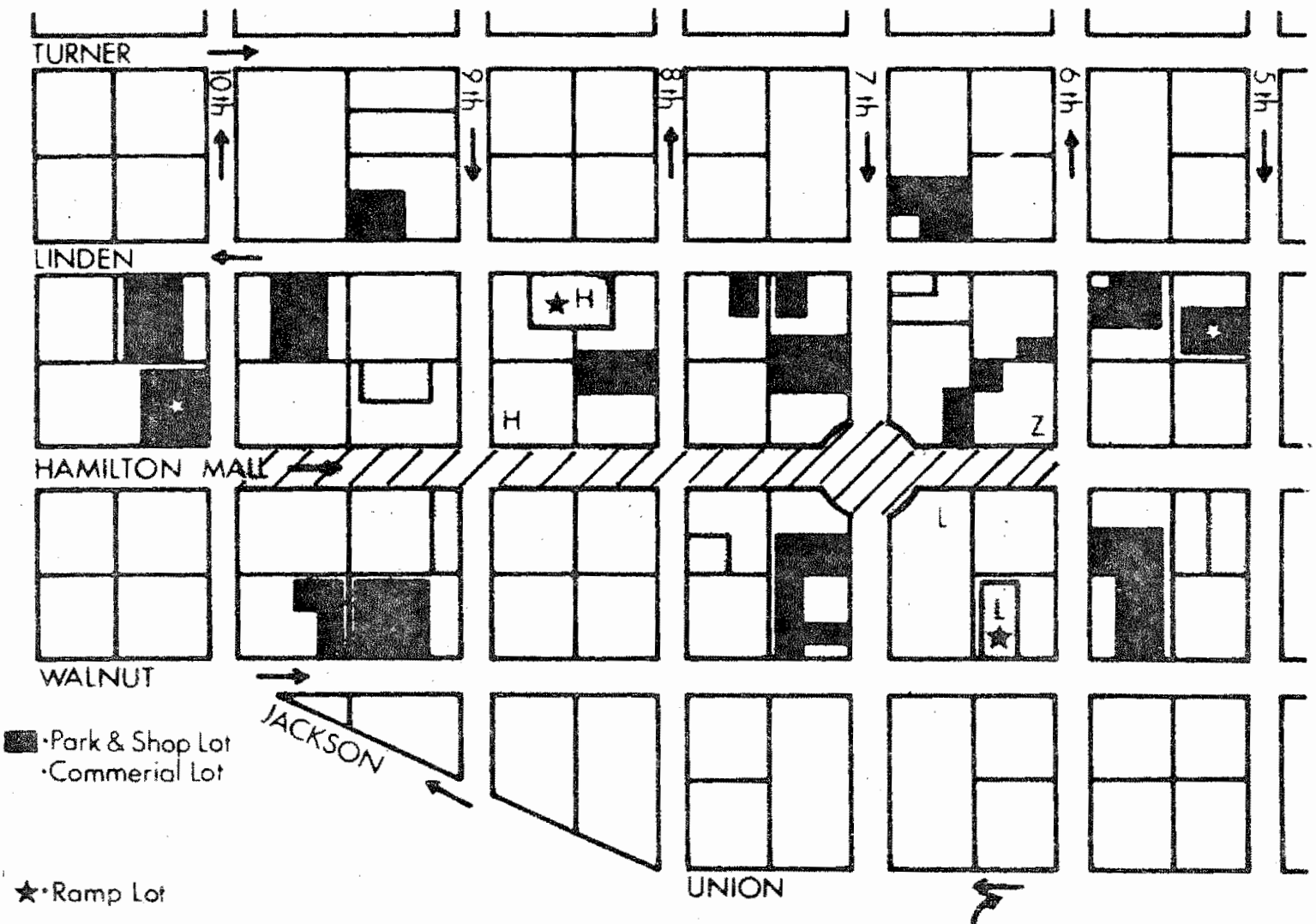
The plan called for conversion of the five lane street to a two lane one way facility, canopied sidewalks, fountains, trees, flowers, benches, plazas, kiosks, and other typical pedestrian mall features. The cost was estimated at approximately \$5 million. The Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs provided half of that sum in the form of a matching grant. The city government agreed to float a bond issue for its matching share.⁹ Accordingly, the urban renewal plan for the Central Business District was prepared in 1968, and advocated, as part of its comprehensive redevelopment strategy, the creation of a four block "semi-mall" on Allentown's principal shopping street, as illustrated in Figure 2.¹⁰

⁸Allentown-Lehigh Chamber of Commerce, "Hamilton Mall," 1976, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Op. Cit., Cope, Linder & Walmsley.

Center City



HAMILTON STREET MALL LIMITS

FIGURE 2

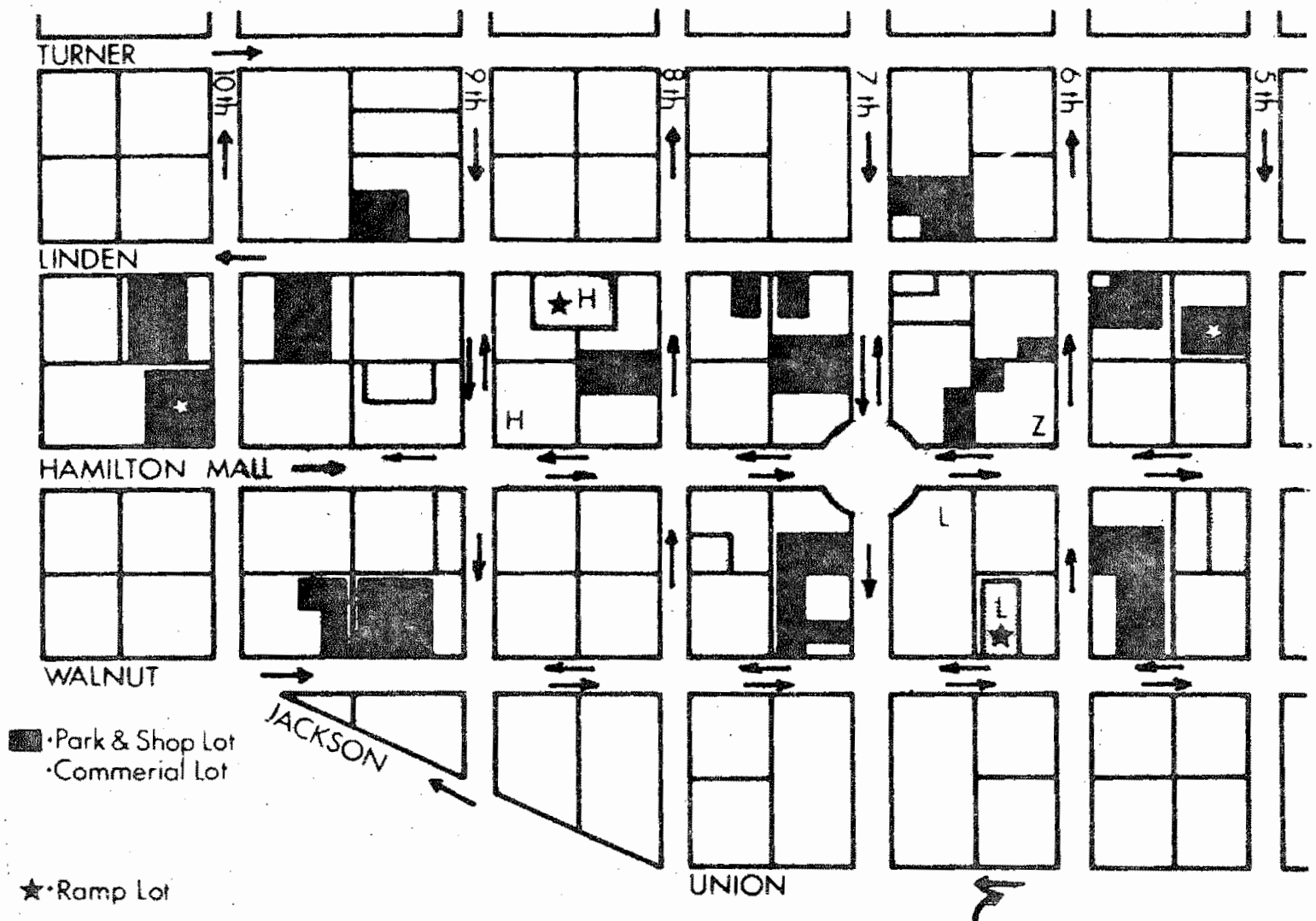
Description - Redevelopment Plan

In designing the mall, one consideration was to provide a unifying element for the approximately 100 shops in the area while preserving the urban quality of the city. Special attention was to be placed on the need for a lighted facility that would not "obliterate the handsome facades and historic landmarks" along Hamilton Street. An evident need was the desire to create a new traffic pattern that would complement the Hamilton Street Mall environment.

Figure 3.

With these goals in mind, the planning was initiated with a new traffic pattern. This new pattern was implemented and the motorists now drive a loop around the shopping district. Almost all of the parking lots and ramps are on the loop. (Figure 4) The north-south streets (numbered streets) partition the length of the mall but each block is long enough to create its own identity. The one-way numbered streets alternate in direction, such to move traffic systematically into or away from the central business district. During the period of construction along Hamilton Street (February 1972 to November 1973), implementation of a number of TOPICS projects were either being worked on or had been completed. Coordination between the pattern within the Mall area and the major intersections surrounding the CBD was apparent. The consideration and incorporation

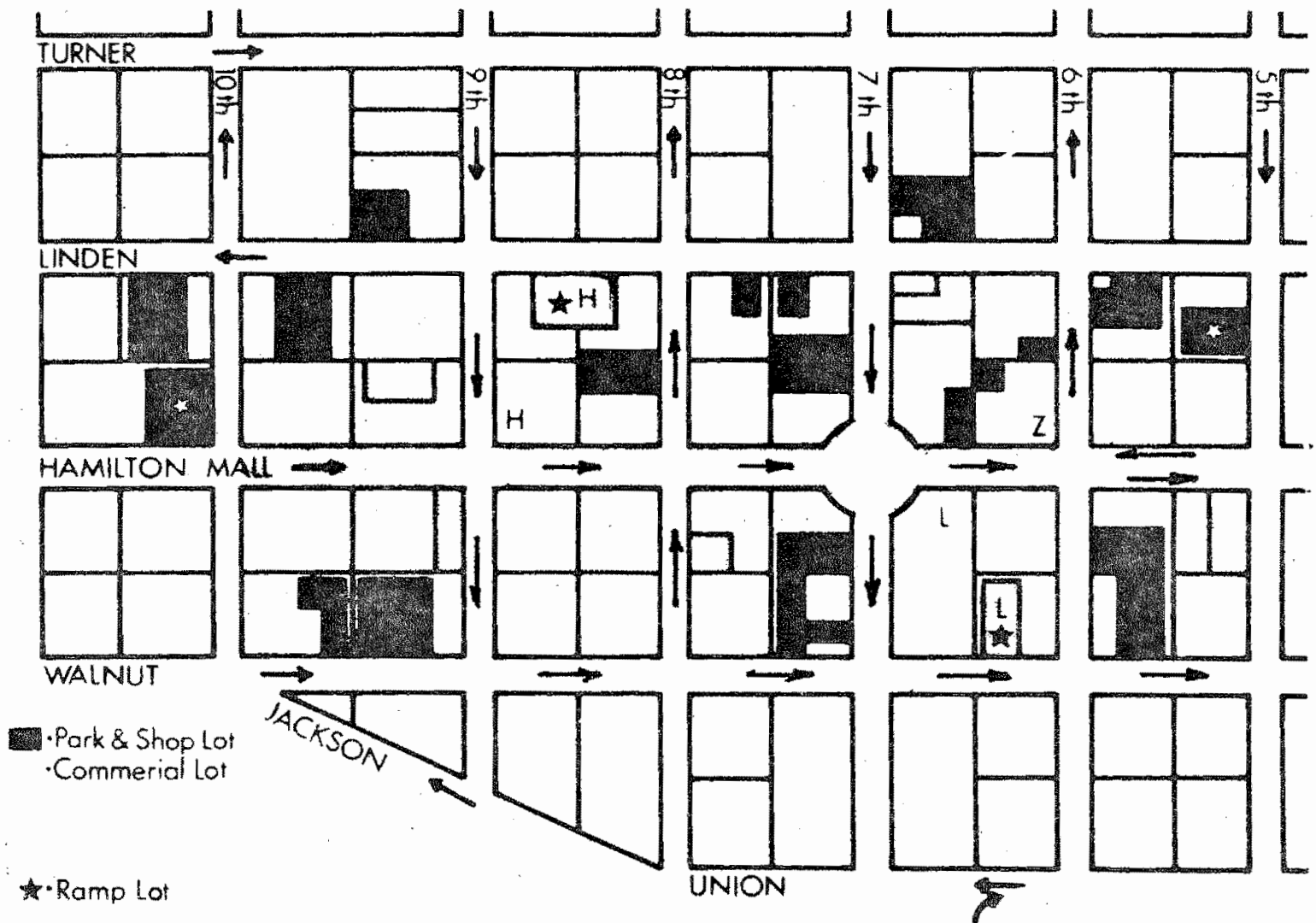
Center City



TRAFFIC PATTERN PRIOR TO MALL

FIGURE 3

Center City



of situations was specified in the design agreement. The architectural firm of Cope, Linder, & Walmsley was selected to design the new four-block mall on Hamilton Street from 6th to 10th Streets. This area is the limit of discussion within this thesis.

Description - Physical Construction

When the Allentown Redevelopment Authority (ARA) and Cope, Linder & Walmsley, the architects of the Hamilton Street Mall, established the criteria for this project, it was agreed that its design should be "bold, new and striking; the Mall would be built to last, yet the plan demanded both natural and man-made elements that would assure convenience, ease of movement and park-like beauty."¹¹ Attempting to satisfy these objectives, the project was started and construction began in February, 1972.

The project presented an opportunity to renew all of the underground utilities on Hamilton Street, and this phase of the program called for new water, storm, and sanitary sewer, gas, electric and telephone lines. The "cartway" was narrowed from five to two lanes (22 feet total width) and the sidewalks were widened to 29 feet. The sidewalks are covered with tile bricks and caulking; each crossing corner has at least one bituminous ramp provision

¹¹Op. Cit., Allentown-Lehigh Chamber of Commerce.

for handicapped utilization. The most obvious feature of the Hamilton Street Mall is the series of 14-foot high transparent pedestrian canopies spanning the walkways on each side of Hamilton Street and extending across the street at the center of each block. A structural steel framework supports the plexiglass canopy through which natural light may be transmitted. Lexan globes provide for overhead lighting and bollards illuminate the Mall at sidewalk level. Eight kiosks house public telephones and benches for waiting pedestrians. Glass enclosed listings of all businesses on each block make the kiosks important information centers. The kiosk on Centre Square lists the important center city public buildings and points of interest and also accommodates the posting of coming events.

Each block along the Mall creates its own identity; focused on its mid-block canopy where the major public facilities are concentrated, the mini-bus stops are located and half streets entering from each side act as pedestrian approaches from the various parking structures and lots serving the downtown. Two small parks were included as part of the original plan; only one remains at 7th Street and in modified form, dominated by a Civil War obelisk, where major fountains, and information/display kiosks for the whole mall, an outdoor dining area and a covered structure for a possible farmer's market are provided.¹²

¹²Op. Cit., Cope, Linder, & Walmsley.

The reduced "cartway" was designed and is utilized by buses, emergency vehicles, and local traffic allowing for pick up and discharge of shoppers. The extended sidewalk areas have necessitated a whole new coordinated system of street furniture: kiosks with mail boxes, drinking fountains, telephones and radiantly heated sitting places, planters, street trees with cast iron gratings, benches, trash containers, fountains, light fixtures of various types, traffic control devices and signs.

The canopy system affords weather protection along each side of the street and acts as a strong unifying element, bringing the two sides together to develop the facades of a common structure. The transparent canopies provide the unifying element; the canopy glazing consists of 1/4-inch bronze Plexiglas brand acrylic plastic. Each section measures 3'2" x 12'10" and is held in place with ribs of aluminum.¹³ Plexiglas was chosen because of its light weight, excellent impact resistance and rugged strength. "Glass was never seriously considered," states Robert Hammond of Cope, Linder, & Walmsley, "because of the possibility that it might shatter and cause pedestrian injury. Glass also would have required a heavier, more elaborate framing--objectionable from an economic as well as aesthetic standpoint."

¹³Rohm and Haas, "Plexiglas in Architecture," Rohm and Haas, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1974.

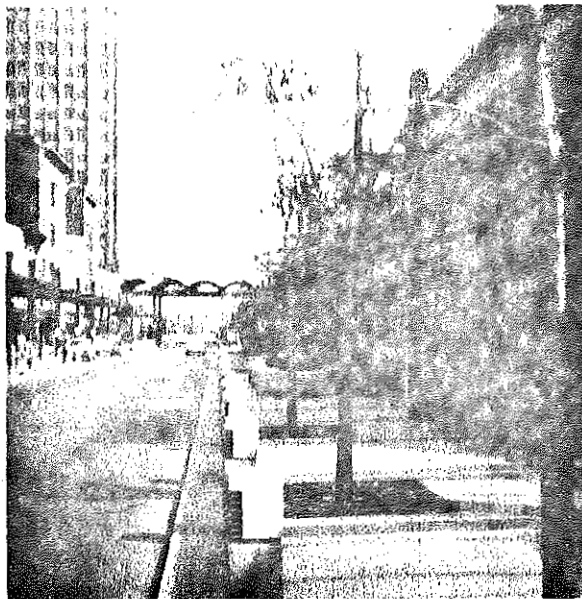
Plexiglas did pose one problem; it's a combustible material and this property was taken into account such that at no point does it constitute a part of the buildings served by the sheltered walkways. Installation consisted of bolting the millworked prefabricated units to the aluminum cross ribs. Being bolted connections, these sheets can be taken out quickly, giving shop owners easy access to the fascia for renovations or repairs.¹⁴

The Hamilton Street Mall was created without the demolition of a single building--the intent was to rejuvenate rather than tear down. The redevelopment authority decided to concentrate on the central business district hoping the tradition and sense of permanence would make the Mall a success. The effort to revitalize the downtown of a middle-sized town was financed by a conjunction of local and state funds. For an expenditure of approximately \$5 million on the public environment, it is anticipated that private investment will follow in the amount of more than \$40 million.¹⁵ The local leadership with a spectrum of community support has proceeded with reconstruction with additional parking lots and continuous maintenance for the existing site. Allentown's renewal was hoped to be a model for the state

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Gruen, Victor, "The Hearts of Our Cities," Simon and Schuster, New York, New York, 1964, p. 171.

of Pennsylvania and for many intermediate-sized towns facing similar problems of urban deterioration and their changing socio-economic role in the contemporary world. The following photographs illustrate the Mall from various vantage points:



Hamilton St. 10th to 9th



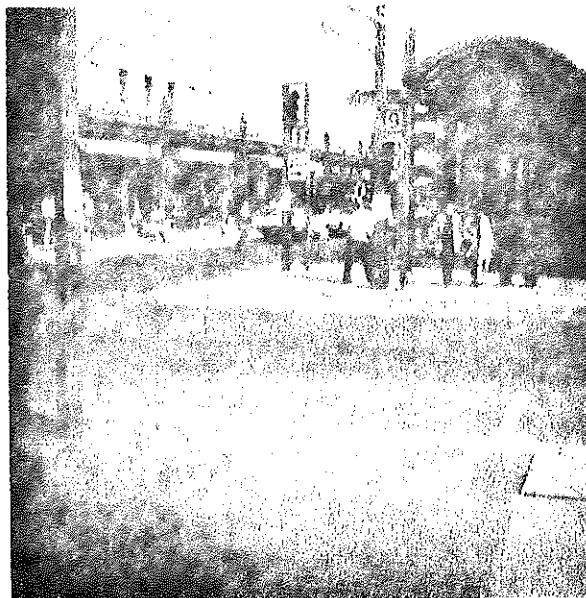
Midblock Store Frontage



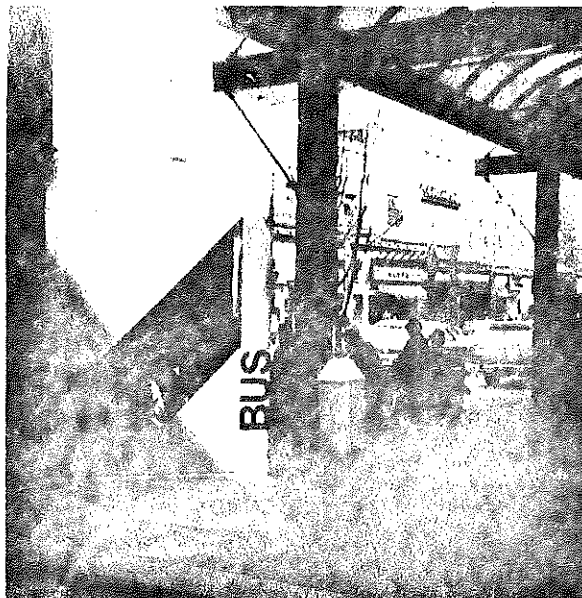
Center Square 7th and Hamilton St.



Hamilton St. 9th to 8th



Crosswalk at 9th and Hamilton St.



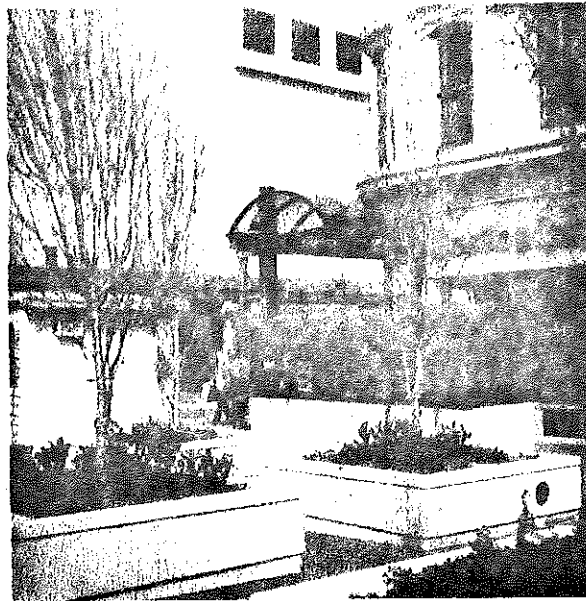
Bus Stop at Corner of 8th and Hamilton St.



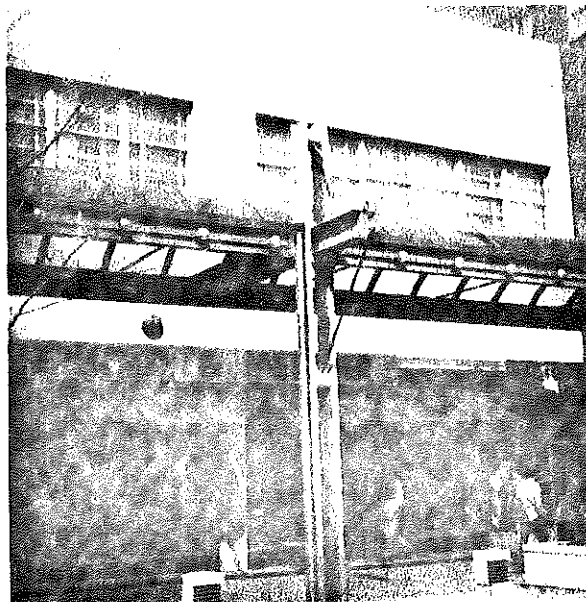
Midblock Canopy between 9th and 8th St.



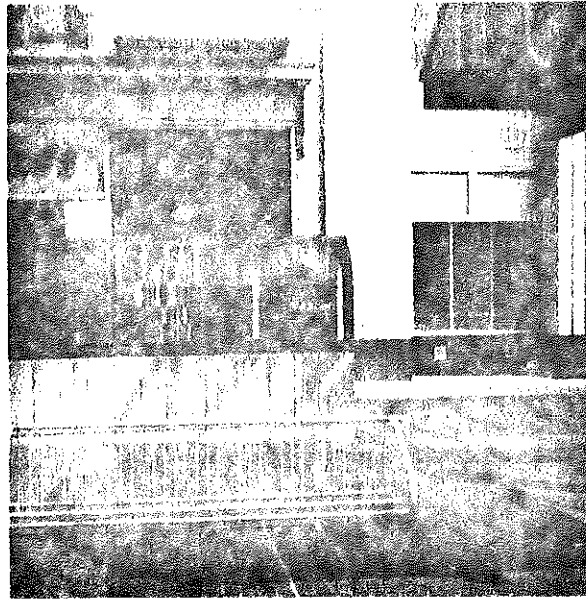
Intersection Lighting 10th and Hamilton St.



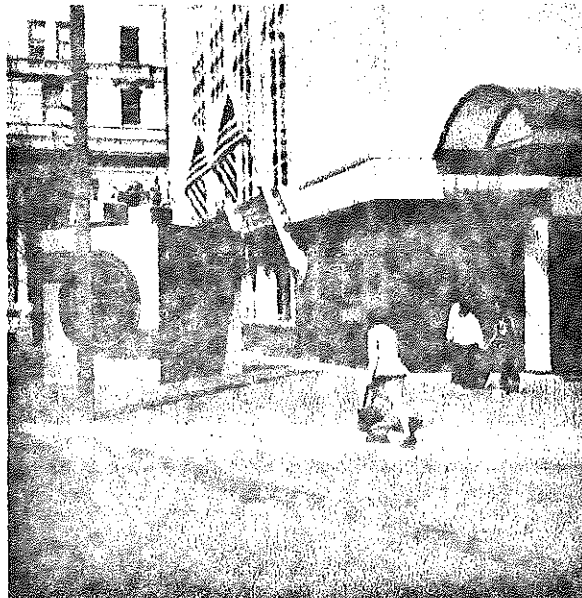
Rest Facilities and Sidewalk Garden
7th and Hamilton St.



Sidewalk Canopy with Globe Fixtures



Rest Facilities and Bicycle Racks
7th and Hamilton St.



Information Center 7th and Hamilton St.

CHAPTER III

INVESTIGATION

Questionnaire Framework

As mentioned earlier, most issues that generate an environment for examination, evolved from controversy, debate, or general discussion relating to some common element. In this study the common variable is the Hamilton Street Mall, confined by a north/south cordon between 6th and 10th Streets and building fronts facing Hamilton Street. To satisfy the objective of this case study, justifying pertinent results based on reliable data, a questionnaire was designed. The essential information necessary for adequate investigation was recorded on previously prepared identical individual questionnaires. (see Appendix A)

The basic portion of the questionnaire contains three parts; with space reserved for recording specific answers to particular questions within each individual section. In addition to the questionnaire, a list of items pertinent to the case study was developed. (see Appendix B) The items contained in this section were used to aid in categorizing the answers to the questionnaire.

Part I of the questionnaire utilizes a rating scheme ranking integer values from 1 to 5. An integer is placed in the space provided; its value depends on the response to

the question. The rank or value of each integer corresponds to the following answers:

<u>RANK</u>	<u>ANSWER TO QUESTION</u>
1	Significant Increase
2	Slight Increase
3	Remain the Same
4	Slight Decrease
5	Significant Decrease

The main question asked in Part I is "How would you rate these items since the completion of the Hamilton Street Mall?" The items are listed on the questionnaire (Appendix A); the interviewer states the question then proceeds with each item recording an appropriate integer for each response. The items included within this part are relative to facilities such as pedestrian malls, shopping centers, or street malls. Obviously objective is "retail sales;" this item is certainly available to the store manager who is aware of his business changes. The remaining items incorporated in this section are subjective but appropriate for an opinionated survey of this type. Pedestrian and shopper volumes cannot be accurately determined but relative variations are noticeable. Parking spaces and bus stops are subject to city governments implementation and enforcement; alterations are always possible. Maintenance of the existing facility is mandatory for beneficial retail sales; however, differing opinions exist on its adequacy. Vandalism and graffitti are indicators that

determine safety, protection and successfulness of public facilities worth consideration in this discussion. The answers are presented in the chapters that follow.

Part II of the questionnaire necessitates a definite decision of agreement or disagreement to specific questions. The answer is recorded as "YES" or "NO" in the space provided; no other result is allowed. The selected questions deal with issues established as objectives for the Hamilton Street Mall creation. Answers to the questions relating to parking facilities may aid in suggesting the need for additional space. The desire to extend the Mall's physical limits can only be justified if sales and public satisfaction are evident responses to the questions. The "Park and Shop" advantages can only be realized by the business that can afford to contribute its portion to compensate the parking lot for lost revenue. Police protection and routine maintenance are pre-requisites for continuous patronage to the center city business. With these concepts in mind the accumulated data were assembled, the results tabulated, and presented as part of the basis for conclusions and recommendations for the Hamilton Street Mall.

Part III of the questionnaire contains spaces for comments or general remarks focusing on specific items: of Mall concept, bus/auto traffic, vandalism, maintenance

of facilities, and parking conditions. This portion is utilized in making additional recommendation for improvements or as a simple consensus of opinions. Occasional quotes are employed to justify certain comments within the discussion that warrant special attention.

Appendix B contains a sample of the information on items pertinent to the case study. The answers to these questions were used in categorizing the results of the questionnaire. Items 1 to 5 in this section are questions asked of the store manager or owner by the interviewer and the appropriate answer recorded in the allocated spaces. Length of store operation or manager's length of service are important variables in deciding on the value of their response to other questions. Peak shopping periods are indicators of consensus between store owners along the Mall. Question 6 through 9 are estimated by the interviewer and are not answered by the interviewee. The area or the store being considered is one of the categories specifically tabulated within the presentation of results.

Sample Selection

Of 85 stores listing addresses fronting on the Hamilton Street Mall, 36 stores were chosen by arbitrary decision. Starting at the western most section of the Mall, a circuit was made to the point of beginning only within the Mall

limits. A variation of business type was desired, with limited concentration on any one type of establishment. Basic consideration was directed toward the following categories: Men's Shop, Women's Store, Boutiques and Crafts, Furniture, Appliance and Radio, Restaurant, Shoe Store, Pharmacy, Jewelry, Bank and Brokerage, and General Department Stores. Three established department stores exist along the Hamilton Street Mall; only one was randomly chosen. This store frankly refused to cooperate in answering the questionnaire. A total of 28 of the remaining establishments, all considerably smaller in size and retail sales, gave cautious cooperation as each saw fitting.

CHAPTER IV
COLLECTED DATA

Tabulation of Results

Table 2 contains the results of Part I of the questionnaire. The total response to each individual question is indicated and can be compared to the sample size of 28. The number of responses corresponding to the various ranks are tabulated and the respective equivalent percentages are computed. Total response varies between 21 and 27, since each business was allowed to answer only those questions they determined were pertinent or that appeared to directly influence their establishments. The average responses to this section is 23.2, with a standard deviation of 2.15.

Results from Part II of the questionnaire are listed in Table 3. The basic question is abbreviated but exists in the same sequence as the original questionnaire. The number of answers for either "YES" or "NO" is included, along with the corresponding percentages based on the total response for that particular question. In Part II, the mean number of responses is 25.9; with a standard deviation of 1.29. This section was answered promptly without hesitation probably due to the type of question and the specific directiveness of each item.

TABLE 2

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE - PART I

Item	RANK					Total Response
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
	<u>Significant Increase</u>	<u>Slight Increase</u>	<u>Remain the Same</u>	<u>Slight Decrease</u>	<u>Significant Decrease</u>	
Retail Sales	3 11%	11 41%	11 41%	1 4%	1 4%	27
Pedestrian Traffic (Sidewalks)	3 12%	6 24%	13 52%	2 8%	1 4%	25
Shopper Traffic (In Store)	3 12%	9 35%	11 42%	2 8%	1 4%	26
Number of Available Parking Spaces on Hamilton St.	- -	8 33%	6 25%	6 25%	4 17%	24
Number of Available Parking Spaces in Lots	3 14%	7 32%	12 55%	- -	- -	22
Number of Bus Stops Along Hamilton Mall	1 5%	5 23%	14 64%	2 9%	- -	22
Street, Sidewalk, and Light fixture Maintenance	2 9%	4 18%	11 50%	3 14%	2 9%	22
Vandalism and Graffiti	1 5%	6 27%	11 50%	4 18%	- -	22
Shoppers who live in city	- -	2 10%	19 90%	- -	- -	21
Shoppers who live in surrounding areas	- -	6 25%	14 67%	1 5%	- -	21

TABLE 3

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE - PART II

<u>Basic Question</u>	<u>Answer</u>		<u>Total Response</u>
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
1. Increase off-street parking	19 76%	6 24%	25
2. Increase curb-side parking	12 44%	15 56%	27
3. Prohibit auto traffic on Mall	8 32%	19 68%	27
4. Additional improvement to present site	13 46%	14 54%	27
5. Extend existing limits of Mall	7 28%	18 72%	25
6. Would additional bus service help your retail sales	11 46%	13 54%	24
7. Does "Park and Shop" help your retail sales	20 77%	6 23%	26
8. Is the 15-minute parking space a good idea	14 52%	13 48%	27
9. Adequate police protection	14 58%	10 42%	24
10. Advertise "Hamilton Street Mall"	24 89%	3 11%	27

The mean results for Part I of the questionnaire are shown in Table 4. Range of the mean varies between 2.4 and 3.3; the average mean of all ten items is 2.8. This value establishes a rank of corresponding to a "slight increase" and "remain the same" as the mean answer to the items of Part I.

To help interpret and clarify the results of the study, some specific information was obtained. This pertinent data were acquired by pacing distances inside the stores and outside on the pedestrian walkways. Figure 5 illustrates the variation in the lengths of store fronts along the Mall. The average store frontage was found to be 34 feet with a range from approximately 10 feet to 50 feet. The approximate square footage of the 28 stores interviewed is between 400 and 18,000 square feet. Although the mean 3500 sq. ft., the concentration of frequency occurs around 1500 sq. ft. as shown by Figure 6.

Distances to parking meters along Hamilton Street range from 10 to 300 feet. The mean distance is 47 feet with the majority of stores being within approximately 20 to 30 feet. This distribution is demonstrated by Figure 7. The nearest parking lot to each store questioned is presented in Figure 8. The mean distance is approximately 409 feet (one-half city block); the range is between 20

TABLE 4

"MEAN" RESULTS - QUESTIONNAIRE - PART I

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mean Value</u>
1. Retail Sales	2.5
2. Pedestrian Traffic (sidewalks)	2.7
3. Shopper Traffic (In Store)	2.6
4. Number of Available Parking spaces on Hamilton Street	3.3
5. Number of Available Parking spaces in Lots	2.4
6. Number of Bus Stops Along Hamilton Mall	2.8
7. Street, Sidewalk, and Light Fixture Maintenance	3.0
8. Vandalism and Graffiti	2.8
9. Shoppers who Live in City	2.9
10. Shoppers who Live in the Surrounding Areas	2.8

(Average Mean Value = 2.8)

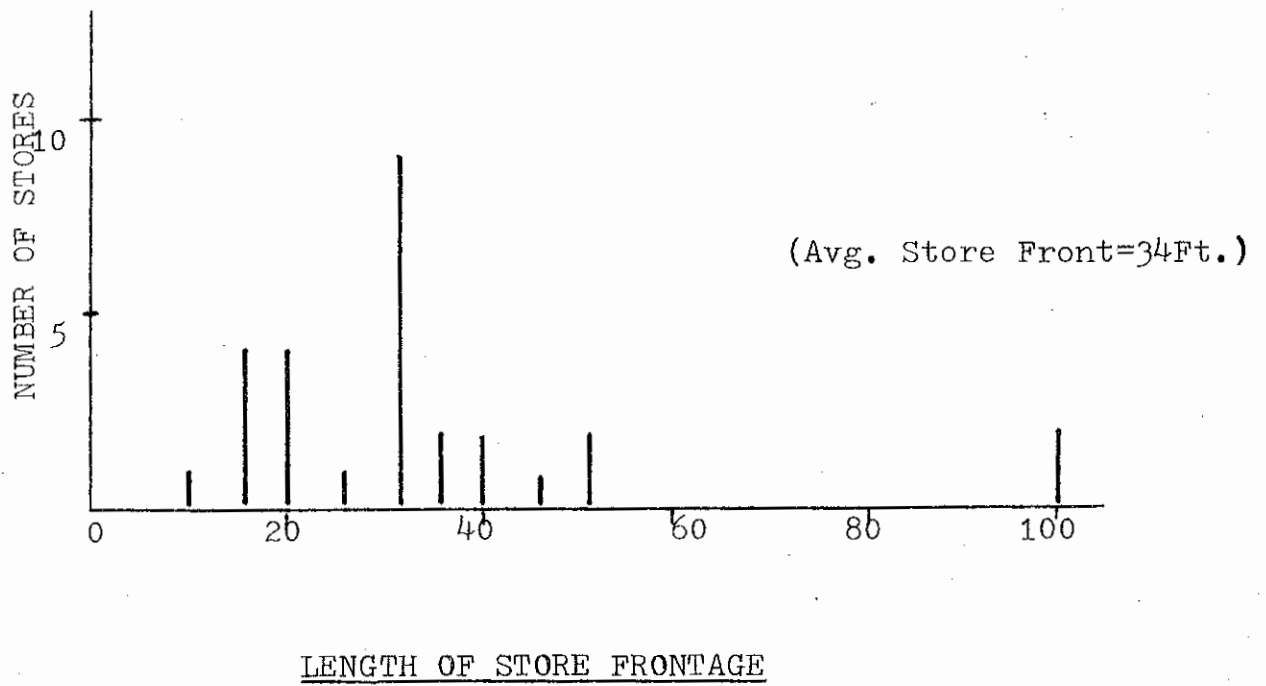


FIGURE 5

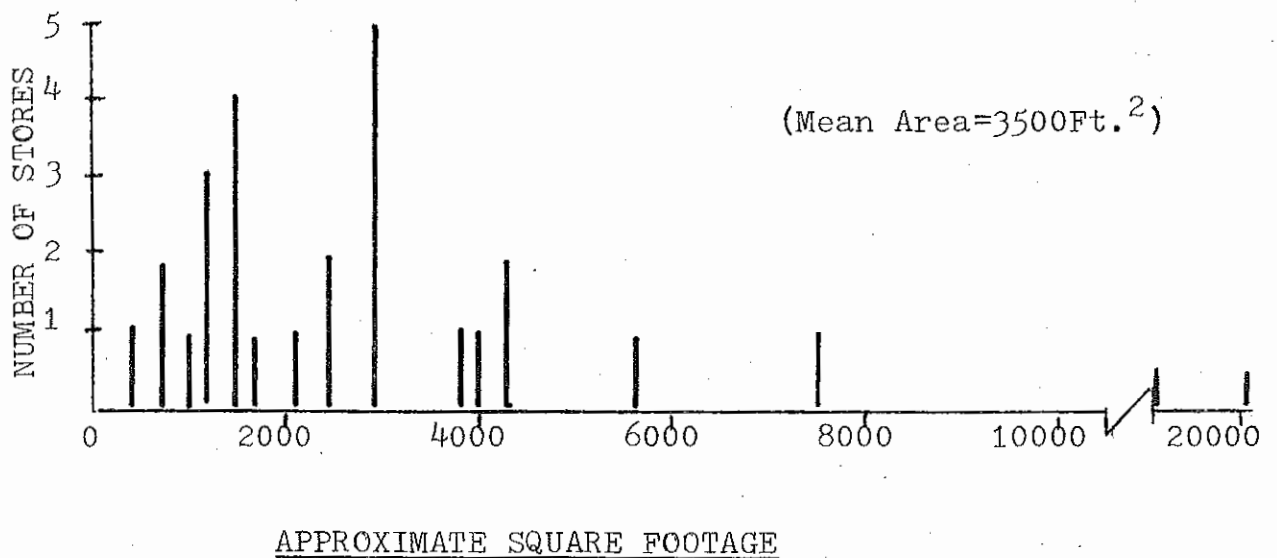


FIGURE 6

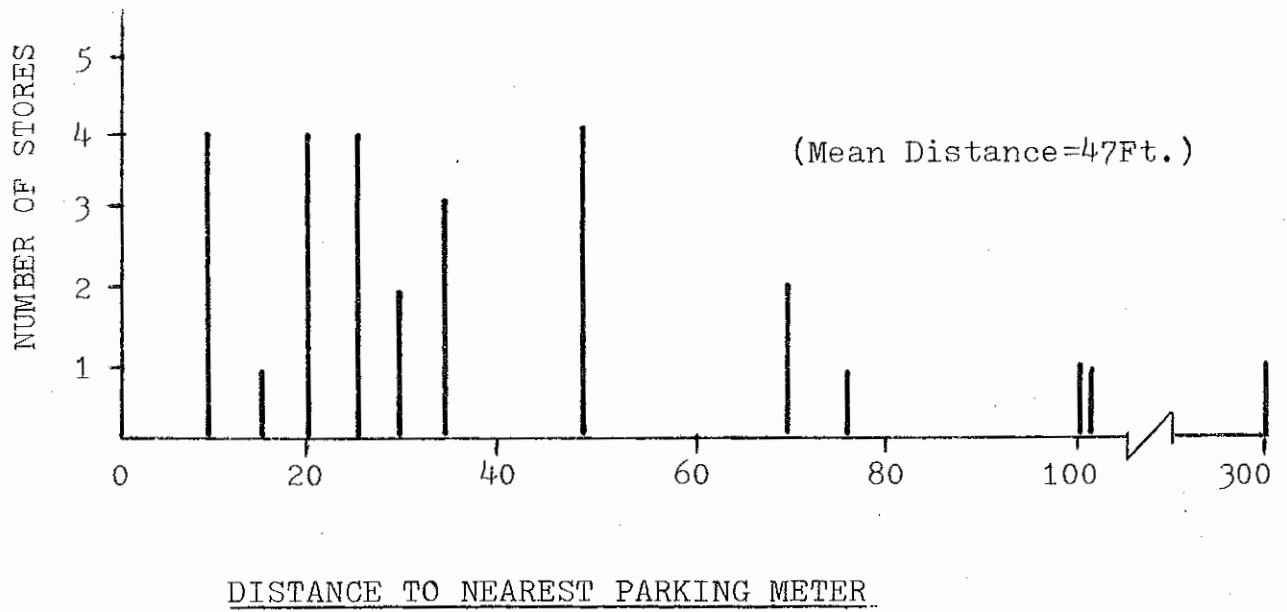


FIGURE 7

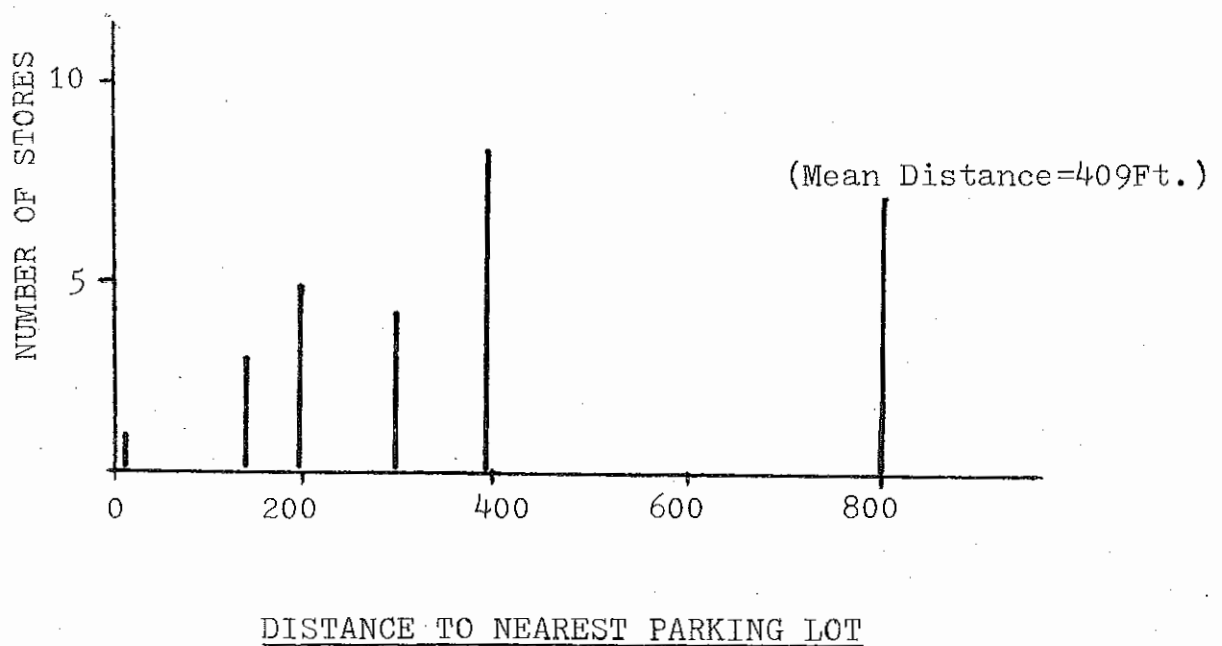


FIGURE 8

and 800 feet. Approximately 50 percent of the stores are within 300 to 400 feet from the nearest parking lot.

Table 5 categorizes the businesses used in this study. The categories were labeled as such to aid in analyzing the results of the questionnaire. The number of stores responding to the questionnaire is compared to the total sample size, which is also tabulated according to category. A 78 per cent response was realized; however, the thoroughness of each individual response did vary.

The first item listed in Part I of the questionnaire deals with retail sales. This item is foremost in establishing the overall rank and rating of the Hamilton Street Mall. This one particular variable is frequently utilized as the pronounced gauging factor of successful renovation of the central business district. To assist in evaluating the responses, Figure 9 was developed. This bar-type chart illustrates the categoric responses to the retail sales question. Each business included in a specific category has its response recorded in comparison to the other establishments of the sample. The variation of rank is depicted and evidence of concentration about rank 3 (Remain the Same) is obvious. The mean result line of 2.4 is shown on this graph. Table 2 should be consulted for exact values.

TABLE 5
CATEGORY OF MALL BUSINESS

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number Responding to Questionnaire</u>	<u>Number of Each Type on Mall*</u>
Boutique & Craft	6	7
Men's Store	4	4
Women's Store	4	4
Shoe Store	4	4
Appliance & Radio Store	4	4
Jewelry Store	2	3
Bank	2	3
Furniture	1	2
Restaurant	1	2
Department	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
TOTAL	28	36

*Includes only those arbitrarily chosen for study

CATEGORY RESPONSE FOR RETAIL SALES

FIGURE 9

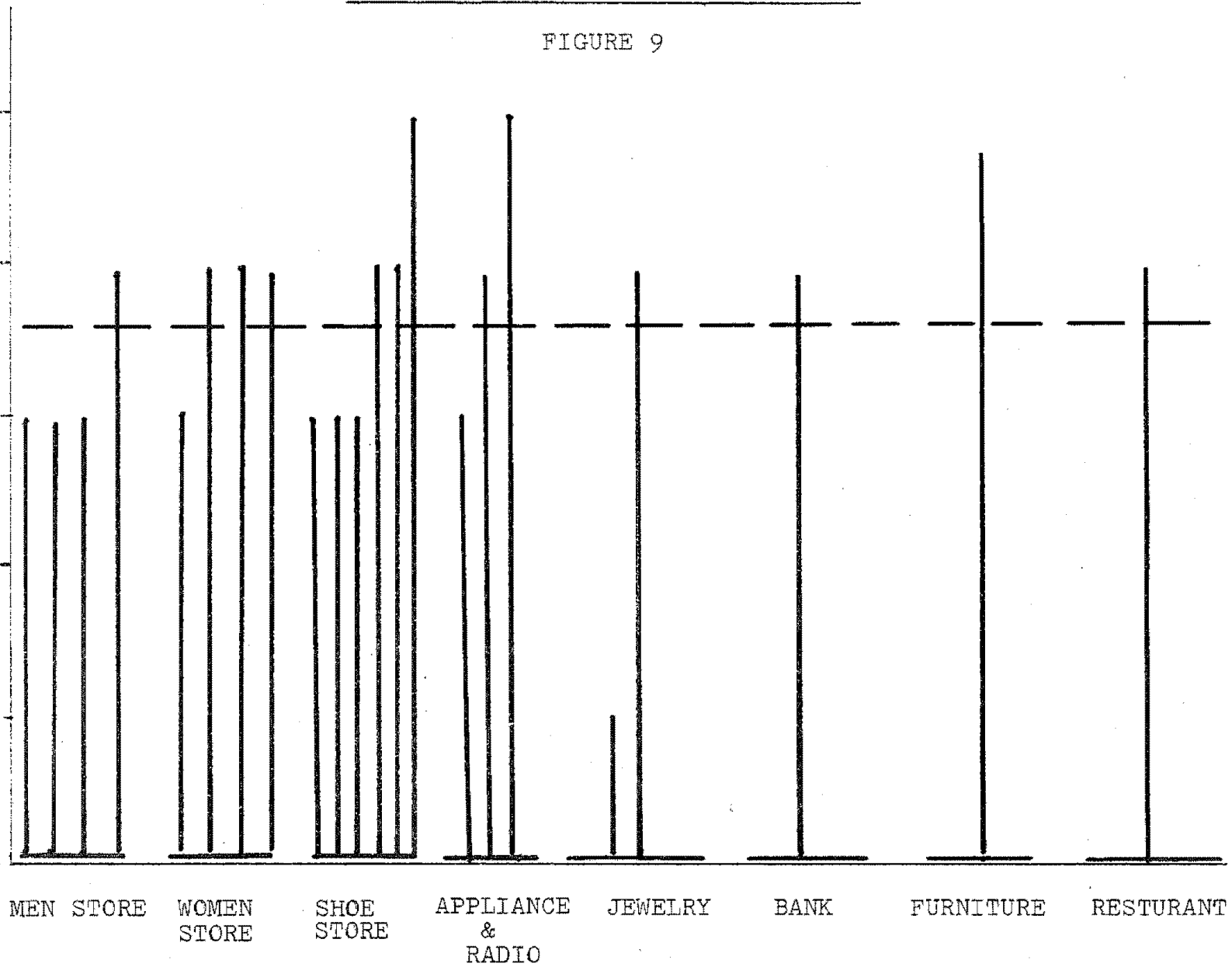


Table 6 is the category results from Part II of the questionnaire. No overall mean value can be established for these responses due to minimum comparative correlation of the basic questions. The category breakdown showing each item's "YES" or "NO" response was used to establish some of the conclusions. Table 3 should be referred to for percentage results of each individual basic question as compared to the total responses.

TABLE 6

CATEGORY RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE - PART II

Increase Off-Street Parking	Increase Curb Side Parking	Auto Traffic Prohibited	Present Site Improved	Extend Limit of Mall	Increase Bus Service	Does "Park & Shop" Increase Sales	Is 15-Minute Parking Helpful	Adequate Police Protection	
YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO
5 1	2 4	2 4	1 5	- 6	3 1	5 1	4 2	3 3	
3 1	2 2	2 2	3 1	1 3	- 4	2 2	2 2	2 1	
2 1	3 1	- 4	1 3	- 2	2 1	4 -	1 3	1 2	
3 -	1 2	2 1	2 1	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	
2 2	1 3	- 4	2 2	2 2	2 2	3 -	4 -	2 1	
2 -	2 -	- 2	1 1	1 1	- 2	2 -	- 2	1 1	
1 1	- 2	1 1	1 1	1 1	2 -	1 1	1 1	2 -	
1 -	- 1	1 -	1 -	- 1	- 1	1 -	1 -	1 -	
1 -	1 -	- 1	1 -	1 -	1 -	1 -	- 1	1 -	
19 6	12 15	8 19	13 14	7 18	11 13	20 6	14 13	14 10	2

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions stated below are the interpretations of the author. Utilizing the results of the questionnaire, certain summarized judgments are presented. The objective of this case study was to examine the effect the Hamilton Street Mall has had on various specified items, and to present the impressions of the local businessmen through a consensus of opinions. The following discussion is based solely on the responses to the questionnaire. The rank of the items as shown in Part I of the questionnaire form the basis for the conclusion.

"Retail sales" are the one item business can use as an indicator of change in financial status. Since the completion of the Hamilton Street Mall, 52 per cent of the establishments noted an increase in sales; 41 per cent of those noted only a slight increase. Another 41 per cent saw no change in sales; only 8 per cent recorded a decrease in retail sales. It appears that although the Mall's presence has not developed a significant increase in retail sales, it has probably justified its existence merely by maintaining stability. Each category of business had at least one response citing a slight increase in retail sales; over 50 per cent of the Women's Stores and Shoe Stores indicated an increase in

sales. Men's Stores concentrated their responses around rank number 3 - Remain the Same. Limited responses of the other categories does not justify any special attention to be even vaguely conclusive.

The "pedestrian traffic" along the Mall has increased slightly according to business response. Approximately 36 per cent indicate an increase; 52 per cent feel pedestrians number the same as before construction. "Shopper traffic" (In-Store) received answers similar to retail sales and pedestrian traffic, with 47 per cent recording an increase and 42 per cent citing stability. Since response to sales, shoppers, and pedestrians are respectively similar, the logical dependence of each item on the other is apparent. For retail sales to increase significantly, more pedestrians and shoppers should be attracted to the central business district. To be attracted to the Mall, shoppers must instinctively feel there is some agreeable feature that strongly expresses unity in the character and placement of the Mall concept. ¹⁶

Most recent information on available "parking spaces" in the central business district is 6,000 spaces on lots and 1,200 spaces on the garage decks of Hess's Department

¹⁶Gruen, Victor, "The Hearts of Our Cities," Simon and Schuster, New York, New York, 1964, p. 171.

Store and Leh's Department Store.¹⁷ Approximately 30 spaces are legally available along Hamilton Street between 6th and 10th Streets. Figure 2 should be consulted for lot locations and Mall limits. There has been no increase in parking spaces along Hamilton Street; due to widened sidewalks and kiosks, the number of spaces has been radically reduced. This decrease is noted in the response of the questionnaire with 42 per cent indicating a reduction and 25 per cent stating it remained the same. The justification of these results depend largely on where the exact parking space is presently located with respect to its location prior to reconstruction. Independent of that result, the total available parking along Hamilton Street has been significantly reduced. However, it should be noted that only Women's Stores and Jewelry Shops indicated a need to increase curbside parking along Hamilton Street. Increased patronage can be anticipated if parking is ample. The Allentown Center City Association is well noted for its contribution of "Park and Shop" parking, which grants two-hour free parking for individuals who make a purchase while in Allentown. "Introducing one pedestrian mall into a city core area without taking the necessary steps to improve circulation and provide automobile storage space only serves

¹⁷Allentown-Center City Association, Lehigh County Tourist and Convention Bureau, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1976.

to multiply the troubles instead of eliminating them."¹⁸ The city and the business establishments have taken appropriate measures to assure adequate parking; the results of Part II of the questionnaire also justify the parking availability. Figures 1 and 8 indicated satisfactory walking distances to nearest parking meters and parking lots.

The number of "bus stops" along the Mall have increased slightly; but according to the survey, 64 per cent feel it has remained the same. Worth noting is that only 9 per cent indicated a slight decrease and none responded to a significant decrease. Once again, stability is conclusive with a tendency toward increase of stops. The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), a recently established authority, is publicizing revised routes and implementing new transit trends. Additional buses (new and renovated), stops, and shelters are presently in existence with more modification to follow.

Throughout the country, cities and Chambers of Commerce are realizing not only that our cities could be more attractive but that in fact bad esthetics means bad business.¹⁹ The Hamilton Street Mall requires some attempts at increasing its "maintenance" schedules. If the streets, sidewalks, and light fixtures receive the same attention as before reconstruction,

¹⁸Op. Cit., Gruen, p. 223.

¹⁹Tunnard, Christopher and Pushkarev, Boris, "Man-Made America," Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1966, p. 405.

the effort to make the central business district a more pleasing place will be defeated. With more sidewalk and lights present today than before, the same maintenance schedule is not satisfactory. The results of the questionnaire indicated a response of 50 per cent stating the maintenance is the same and 23 per cent showing a decrease in service. In this situation, stability is not noteworthy; only increased maintenance can satisfactorily ensure continuous patronage to the central business district.

"Vandalism and graffitti" are other reasons for continued maintenance and adequate police protection. Since a mall is essentially a concept for pooling people together, it will always be a haven for loiterers and other undesirables. The response to this item indicates both conditions still exist with an unfortunate tendency toward increase; 50 per cent maintain it is the same as before and over 30 per cent agree the situation will increase. As will note later, there is almost an equal split between the businessmen when the question of adequate police protection was mentioned. This is evidence of uncertainty which could only be positively overcome by additional police patrol.

Stability of the Hamilton Street Mall is shown with respect to the number of "shoppers who live in the city." 90 per cent of the shoppers would utilize the downtown businesses and still do so today; 10 per cent agree to a

slight increase of city patronage. This high concentration of results may be accounted for by the need of the captive people in the city. It is certainly to their advantage therefore to utilize the Mall facilities and accordingly, based on this survey, their business is noticeable. The "shoppers who live in the surrounding area" have made their presence known with approximately 30 per cent of the establishments responding to a slight increase in out of city patronage.

Any increase and stability patronage by suburban shoppers certainly qualifies the Hamilton Street Mall as an attractor. Part I of the questionnaire yields a mean value of 2.8 corresponding to a slight increase of each item listed. The outstanding conclusion therefore is that stability has been realized by the businessmen; this stability being a result of the construction of the Hamilton Street Mall.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that follow are based on the results received from Part II of the questionnaire. In addition to the basic questions listed in Part II, other specific areas of concern are noted. The effect of the Hamilton Street Mall has established a state of stability for the business district. With the advent of nearby shopping centers (Whitehall Mall and Lehigh Valley Mall) additional requirements may need to be met if continued stability is to exist. In some cities, the trend has been to accept suburban growth as inevitable and the rebuilt areas at the center are concentrating on commercial activities other than retail--on specialized services, like banking and "communications" industry, or on supporting office uses, services, such as wholesale distribution, regional markets and utility firms.²⁰ To a certain extent this has been true for Allentown: banks from the Philadelphia area have established branches on 7th and Hamilton, brokerage firms, law offices and the extension of the Pennsylvania Power and Light Company all are supporting evidence of this movement. However, certain business corporations refuse to falter quite yet. Hess's Department Store, the largest in the area, has recently (March, 1977, Allentown newspaper) acquired adjacent buildings and will

²⁰Ibid., p. 13.

begin renovation for expansion. New management has taken over in a number of other prominent department stores and the consolidation of smaller firms have joined forces to withstand the suburban shopping center development. This movement is not unique, especially the center of older cities which cluster many important buildings and institutions of historic or regional importance. Thereby producing a balance between new demands and the continuing use of existing facilities at the center acting as a cultural nucleus.²¹

The Hamilton Street Mall, as it now exists, shows candidacy to be considered as an integrated design concept. This concept requires and meets the standards of a local shopping facility.²²

Local Shopping Facilities: sites adequate for shops, accessory off-street parking and loading, and landscaping; convenient to specific local tributary trade areas and accessible for receiving goods: (a) neighborhood-serving store group within convenient walking distance of families served (within convenient driving range, in low-density areas), with due consideration for pedestrian access and amenity of surrounding areas; and (b) community-serving shopping center on major radial thoroughfare, usually at the intersection of a major cross-town street, situated toward in-town edge of tributary trade area, and located with due consideration for integrated design of center and amenity of adjoining areas.

²¹Ibid., p. 17.

²²Chapin, F. Stuart Jr., "Urban Land Use Planning," University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, 1965, p. 375.

The recommendations that follow are suggested with the assumption that this integrated design concept will continue along Hamilton Street.

An increase in off-street parking facilities was suggested by 76 per cent of the businesses interviewed. Walking distance to meters and lots was not a problem; basic additional parking space is required. This need stems from customer complaints and was made evident in Part III of the questionnaire. To accommodate additional lots, some of the vacant lots in the immediate area are already being prepared for use. The city has, as part of its redevelopment plan, rerouted traffic and has created a flow line compatible with the parking lot locations. This foresight has proven worthwhile as did the loop routing and multideck facilities in cities as Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Urbana, Illinois.²³

Curbside parking remains an issue of specific circumstance. The request for additional curbside spaces is generated by the smaller shops, particularly Women's Stores and Jewelry Shops. This could be a convenience for some elderly and a necessity for business that requires only a stop for pick-up or merchandise or payment of invoices and the like. Since there is no outstanding support of increased curbside parking, no recommendation for additional spaces is made.

²³Op. Cit., Gruen, p. 331.

Initial development of the Hamilton Street Mall was to provide adequate space for pedestrian movement. This has been accomplished by widened sidewalks and a reduced roadway. The response to the questionnaire regarding traffic on the Mall suggests allowing vehicle travel on Hamilton Street. Traffic is now controlled at every intersection by signals and pavement markings. Signs also give pedestrians the right of way. The approximate travel speed would be less than 15 miles per hour. Roadway lighting and visibility are adequate. Commuters familiar with the area avoid Hamilton Street as a thoroughfare and use the new routing pattern to round the central business district. In essence, Hamilton Street appears to be used only by vehicles tending to short business along the Mall. Based on these circumstances and results of the survey, automobile traffic need not be prohibited within the Mall area.

Additional improvement to the present site is questionable. The survey indicates almost an equal split decision and no specific category reflects any special interest. The present site is relatively new. The site is a "cosmetic" improvement with pleasing exterior appearance.²⁴ With proper consideration given to routing traffic, providing available parking and continuous bus service; the Hamilton Street Mall has taken on substantial improvement. Additional improvement

could only be warranted after a complete analysis is made on the Mall in the future.

The Mall now serves 85 per cent of the business along Hamilton Street; extension of limits of the Mall is not necessary according to the survey. The establishments now being served by the Mall canopy and facilities have realized stability with some slight growth in sales. Their intent not to extend the Mall services may be of fear to lose this stability to new business that could develop at either end of Hamilton Street. The suggestion would be to continue the canopy to mid-block between 10th and 11th Streets along Hamilton Street. At this location are a number of establishments in operation, some as long as other stores already within the Mall limits. Construction costs in this section would be proportionate to the overall cost of the Mall if appropriate consideration is given to recent inflationary building costs. This extension should be given consideration based on more input from these owners.

The issues of adequate bus service, 15-minute parking spaces, and police protection all are questionable items based on the questionnaire response. Additional police patrol may help curb vandalism and graffiti, but obviously no extreme need is evident. The 15-minute parking spaces exist along Hamilton Street; the stores indication acceptance of this situation are Women's Stores.

and Jewelry Shops. These were also noted as part of the conclusions. LANTA is revising schedules and stop locations along the Mall and in the surrounding suburbs. It has been noted that stability exists with respect to bus transportation and no immediate need is required for additional service.

The "Park and Shop" arrangement received positive comments by 77 per cent of the businesses along the Mall. It recommended this procedure be continued with some reference given to those establishments that are not members of the "Park and Shop" arrangement. According to some business managers, the park and shop assessment is fitted only to those establishments that can afford the dues. The assessment structure at present is not exclusively prorated upon annual receipts; thereby excluding the very small businessman. The park and shop idea has helped the central business district; hopefully a new assessment method can be devised to include the small businessman and develop an equitable chance of survival for everyone.

An outstanding number of businessmen acknowledge the need for the Hamilton Street Mall to be advertised. Almost 90 per cent of the owners agreed the total Mall concept should be mentioned and not depend solely on small advertisement by each individual establishment. Here again the fact that only the large firms could afford to advertise

excludes the small businessman. Of the 90 per cent, 22 per cent of the firms responding were in the category of Boutique and Craft Shop. Unless the Mall is to be incorporated by a few large conglomerates, special attention is recommended to provide adequate advertisement for all participants.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

The investigations of this thesis indicate that the Hamilton Street Mall has provided a state of economic stability for the stores that front the Mall. Although no specific item appeared to have increased significantly, the mean of all results showed some promise for a slight increase. The presence of the Mall concept is therefore suggested as being the variable responsible for the stable growth. The inferences made in this thesis were based on the results of the questionnaire. The conclusions and recommendations are interpretations of those results and were used solely to develop a critical consensus of opinion.

One question that should be asked is--What if the Hamilton Street Mall was not developed? Would such stability exist? Another realm of investigation would be to pursue to survey again in the future and compare the results. This would be justifiable considering the advent of prestigious suburban shopping such as the Lehigh Valley and Whitehall Malls, only three miles north of center city Allentown.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Name _____ Date _____

These questions are to be used to interview business owners (managers). The questions on the questionnaire form will aid in simplifying recorded responses. The form will be filled in by the interviewer, a way to help eliminate a haphazard answer sheet.

PART I

The questions listed here are a rating scheme where a blank follows the question. A numerical value is placed there depending on what value the interviewee decides.

Rank

1. Significant Increase
2. Slight Increase
3. Remain the same
4. Slight Decrease
5. Significant Decrease

QUESTIONS

How would you rate these items since the completion of the Hamilton Street Mall?

1. Retail Sales _____
2. Pedestrian Traffic (sidewalks) _____
3. Shopper Traffic (In store) _____
4. Number of Available Parking Spaces on Hamilton Street _____
5. Number of Available Parking Spaces in Lots _____
6. Number of Bus Stops Along the Hamilton Mall _____
7. Street, Sidewalk and Light Fixture Maintenance _____
8. Vandalism and graffitti _____
9. Shoppers who live in the city _____
10. Shoppers who live in the surrounding areas _____

PART II

The questions listed here are yes/no type to be handled in the same manner as PART I.

1. Would you suggest an increase in off-street parking facilities? _____
2. Would you suggest an increase in curb-side parking along Hamilton Street? _____
3. Would you like to see auto traffic prohibited on Hamilton Street? _____
4. Should additional improvement be made to the present site? _____
5. Should the existing limit of the Mall be extended? _____
6. Do you think additional bus service would help your retail sales? _____
7. Do you feel that the Park and Shop lots help your business? _____
8. Are the present 15-minute parking spaces a good idea? _____
9. Is police protection adequate within the Mall limits? _____
10. Do you feel more advertising should be done to attract people to the Hamilton Street Mall, i. e., by mentioning the total Mall and not individual store advertisement?

PART III

Remarks and/or general comments with regard to the Hamilton Street Mall. Focusing on issues of the following:

- (a) Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with mall concept.
- (b) Auto traffic/bus traffic.
- (c) Vandalism, loitering, graffitti.
- (d) Maintenance of facilities within Mall limits.
- (e) Parking spaces (curbside/lots).

This part is to help in making additional recommendations for improvements or a simple consensus of opinions.

APPENDIX B

Name _____ Date _____

PERTINENT QUESTIONS TO CASE STUDY

1. How long has store been in operation?
2. How long has manager supervised this location?
3. How does owner travel to work?
4. Peak shopping day/days of week?
5. Peak shopping month/months of year?

-
6. Estimated length of store front?
 7. Square foot measurement of store?
 8. Walking distance to nearest parking meter?
 9. Walking distance to nearest parking lot?

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