Proposal for Revitalization of Uptown Mt. Lebanon

Urban Generation

Spring Semester 1991
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Acknowledgments

Work for this book was submitted by the following:

Dan Cohen
Annalisa Ekbladh
T. W. I. Gallemore
Mohammed Harun
Todd Hause
Staci Kegelman
Donald MacDonald
Becky Mingo
Deborah Przekop
Donald Schieferecke
Carissa Swiss

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Annalisa Ekbladh
Dutch MacDonald
Editors
Editors:  Annalisa Ekbladh
        Dutch MacDonald

Photography:  Don Schieferecke
             David Lewis

Book Design and Graphic Layout:  Annalisa Ekbladh
                                Dutch MacDonald

Cover Design:  Becky Mingo

Production Crew:  Don Schieferecke
This publication is a product of a Carnegie Mellon University fifth year architecture studio on Urban Design, Spring 1991. We have attempted to simulate an urban design study as it might occur in professional life, but in a collapsed time frame of only 10 weeks. We have organized ourselves into a mock firm known as Urban Generation. For the purposes of this study we have selected the municipality of Mt. Lebanon as our urban laboratory. To allow a more accurate simulation of a real life situation we have invited Uptown Mt. Lebanon, a non-profit development corporation to act as clients and to submit to us a mock Request for Proposal which became the basis for this experiment.

This endeavor is an educational process and by no means should be considered a substitute for professional services. This publication, as well as being a product of an educational experience creates a vision for Mt. Lebanon. We wish to offer it as a gift to Mt. Lebanon in hopes that it may expose some ideas or proposals that will prove useful to the citizens and businesses of Mt. Lebanon and inspire an awareness of new alternatives and directions.
Introducing Urban Generation

Urban Generation is a group of fifth year architectural students. We have adopted the mode of a young, professional urban design group. As such, we are concerned with the changing image and usage of Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Our location at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh has allowed us to become acquainted with the city's neighborhoods and familiar with their inhabitants. Urban Generation believes that this interaction with the community is the most important aspect of our design process and wishes to thank Uptown Mt. Lebanon and the many citizen's who participated in meetings with us.
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INTRODUCTION

Reason for RFP

The Municipality of Mt. Lebanon and Uptown Mt. Lebanon, a nonprofit development corporation, have requested Urban Generation to submit a proposal for the preparation of an urban revitalization plan to guide the development of the Washington Road Business District (WRBD).

Urban Generation views this proposal as an opportunity to create a strong commercial main street to serve a variety of residential communities. We also see a great opportunity to attract shoppers from a wider market area, including those who pass through the district daily while commuting to work. We recognize a need to review issues that relate directly to the revitalization of the WRBD. These include examining the residential areas surrounding Washington Road, considering the future of the vacant school building and the adaptation of City Hall, and study the relationship between the light rail transit and the business district.

The problem is an interesting mix of metropolitan and local issues. Urban Generation has approached the problem as outlined in this proposal.

RFP Excerpts

PURPOSE: Uptown Mt. Lebanon, a nonprofit development corporation and the Municipality of Mt. Lebanon requests the preparation of an urban revitalization plan to guide the development of Mt. Lebanon’s established central business district known as “Washington Road.”

OBJECTIVE OF PROPOSAL:

1. To ensure a compatible and healthy mix between professional, office space, retail, and residential development.
2. To enhance the visual character of the area.
3. To encourage pedestrian activity.
4. To provide reusable open space.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA: The Washington Road Business District (WRBD) is a for block district with over eighty first floor businesses. The majority of structures in the District are over forty years in age.

Mt. Lebanon, which surrounds the WRBD, is a bedroom community with high expendable income. Within one mile of the WRBD, the average family income is $44957 (CACI Reports, 1990). A large proportion of Mt. Lebanon’s aged population resides within a short walking distance of WRBD.

The following changes must be considered to ensure a beneficial transition of the WRBD:

- The Pittsburgh Transit Authority’s (PAT) light rail transit system is located one block from the heart of the business district.
- By 1992, a 350 space garage with 15,000 square feet of retail space and access to the above light rail system will be built adjacent to Washington Road.
- By 1992, an appliance/hardware store will be built on a 125 space parking lot adjacent to Washington Road.
- The adaptive reuse of two abandoned buildings. The first building, Mellon School, contains 112,000 square feet and was utilized as a high school. The second building, Walker Pontiac, contains 35,000 square feet. The first floor is connected to the second floor by means of an automobile ramp.
- Beyond the above, residential density through projects such as the Mainline X on Shady Drive must be developed to support business development throughout the central core of Mt. Lebanon.

SCOPE OF WORK: To verify a consultant’s understanding of the request for proposal, all consultants must outline a recommended scope of work during the interview stage.

TIME FRAME: Mid-Feb to Mid-April 1991
Growth of Mt. Lebanon

Pittsburgh seventy years ago was a metropolis centered on the triangle between the two rivers. Rolling farmland surrounded the urban area. Pittsburgh grew, as most cities do, along its transportation systems. In the first part of the nineteenth century industries and towns appeared along the rivers. A trolley system from the middle of century onwards relayed people outward east and west, before the wide scale use of the automobile. Along this line, urban growth occurred. Located at the end of one such line, Oakland in 1870 - 1890 was a prestigious first generation suburb featuring the Carnegie Library, University of Pittsburgh and Schenley Farms. At this time most of the city’s growth was east-west, for the hillsides across the river made travel difficult southward. Hence the development of the inclines, which serviced communities built on the crest of the hills.

The Model-T, produced by Henry Ford, made the automobile affordable for the middle class family. In 1922 the Liberty Tubes were constructed. The Liberty Bridge spanned the Monongahela River and the Liberty Tubes cut through Mount Washington and provided an arterial route for automobiles into the country beyond. Immediately after the construction of the Liberty Tubes, Mt. Lebanon burgeoned, a second generation suburb, with a main commercial area located on Washington Road.

After the World War II, the super highways and turnpikes were built. Third generation suburbs grew farther away from the city along these highways. Large shopping centers and malls that provided easy parking were built in these new areas and shoppers were attracted away from Washington Road. Some of the people who lived in Mount Lebanon were attracted to these new suburbs farther away from the city and Washington Road became a thoroughfare for commuters beyond Mount Lebanon.

Recently a new kind of development is occurring, inner city malls, like the Galleria and the Bourse are attempting to attract shoppers who would otherwise go to the regional malls. Perhaps this is because some people feel that the suburban malls have lost some of their glamour. Now the Washington Road Business District is challenged by these inner city malls in addition to the regional malls. It is necessary to find a new answer for Mount Lebanon.

Challenges

The history of Mt. Lebanon reveals to us that Washington Road was once a flourishing main street. Today, this main street, like many others in “second generation” suburbs, is suffering despite the fact that there is a high expendable income in the area surrounding the business district. Much of the decline in patronage is due to the growth of “third generation” suburbs with shopping malls and new commercial centers created by strategically placed inner city malls. The following are a number of the challenges that need to be addressed:

- citizens are opting for the convenience and selection in the large malls,
- with many of the buildings vacant, Uptown lacks a strong presence in the community,
- no single management exists for the commercial district,
- cars and their occupants pass straight through creating a traffic corridor,
- with few pedestrians on the sidewalks, the vitality of the street and the community is lost
- a large part of the population surrounding the business district is elderly.

The revitalization of the business district must go hand in hand with that of the residential neighborhoods and institutional facilities. Fortunately, Mt. Lebanon has a wealth of opportunities and resources with which these challenges can be met.
Resources

The town of Mt. Lebanon offers Urban Generation a number of unique resources. The charming residential communities surrounding the main street give character to the neighborhood and an understanding of the long history of Mt Lebanon to the residents and visitors. Washington Road is a raw commercial gem that binds the network of residential streets. The prevalent art deco influence in many of the buildings and the already firm economic foundation make Washington Road a potentially wonderful shopping district. The vacant school hold many options for civic or community uses. There are spaces and places in both the residential areas and along the main street that are perfect for pedestrians and proprietors. And of course, the Rapid Transit System makes all of this accessible to many people.

Opportunities

Washington Road presently holds an opportunity for revitalization in direct response to the needs of an active multi use main street. One option would be the recreation of an absolutely unique historic Art Deco shopping center. There exists a possibility to take back commercial activity back from the nearby malls and department stores by responding to the needs of Mt. Lebanon shoppers who have relatively high median incomes. There also exists an opportunity to establish a culture and arts center in response to the high level of educated residents in Mt. Lebanon. The vacant school may be adaptable to this use.

To attract local residents back to the Washington Road shopping area we need to supply greater convenience for all activities. This action would first be directed toward the parking problem for merchants and customers. The breadth of the street will allow for better street parking, but for the merchants to see more activity, these parking areas must have a greater change over during the course of the day. If greater density is required to re-activate the commercial district then an effort should be made to utilize the upper floors of the existing buildings and additionally to buy and make use of the available air rights on both sides of the street.

At this turning point identifying the multi-layered community of Mt. Lebanon and its characteristics would be critical in order to successfully answer the needs of revitalizing the street. Washington Road holds the opportunity to provide activities for both the elderly and young people in addition to the families who already seem to want to use the street for commercial and leisure activities.

About Urban Generation

Description

Our world is made of many beautiful and varied landscapes. Towns and cities are our contribution to this variety. They redefine the landscape to express our lives and ideals. Urban Generation was formed by a team of individuals, all committed to the search for a more human, urban landscape.

Urban Generations stands behind the principle that architecture is for the people, and as architects we serve the public trust. Our location in the Pittsburgh area has allowed us to become acquainted with the needs and desires of the neighborhood citizens and more capable to respond to those needs.

Services

The firm offers the client a range of services which include historic surveys, residential and institutional works, landscaping, feasibility studies, master planning, programming, preservation, and urban design. These services, although diversified, are essential in accommodating all the contributing factors in urban design. In addition, we also value citizen participation. Our firm is able to take citizen recommendations and
incorporate them in our urban design. We strongly believe that a successful project is always the one that has gone through these extra contributing factors.

The members of our design team:

Dan Cohen
Annalisa Ekbladh
T. W. I. Gallemore
Mohammed Harum
Todd Hause
Staci Kegelman
Donald MacDonald
Becky Mingo
Deborah Przekop
Donald Schieferecke
Carissa Swiss

Scope of Services

Analysis:

We at Urban Generation begin each of our projects with an analysis of the existing conditions of the area under study. This is how we will begin our project for Uptown Mt. Lebanon, PA. In our analysis of Mt. Lebanon we will study three distinct areas, the commercial, the institutional, and the residential. This analysis will begin with a survey of previous comprehensive development plans, the traffic and parking, the current demographics, the conditions of existing buildings, and the history of the area to determine how the community is composed.

In investigating the commercial sector, we will study the economic performance of the business district, and the factors that influence the economy. Factors such as local income level, local employment numbers, the numbers of customers that visit the shops, and the amount of sales revenue generated in the business district. All of these factors, and the effect they have on the local economy will come under study.

For the study of the institutional sector, the schools, cultural facilities and local government services will be the main areas of investigation. As regards the schools, an analysis will be done to determine if there is adequate space for projected future growth and what the future needs will be. For the local government, the analysis will concentrate on the level of services provided and the space needs of the government.

In the residential sector, the analysis will look at the population of Mt. Lebanon, the density and types of housing and if the supply is keeping up with the demand. Also in this part of the study, the age of the population, number of families, the number of children and the future growth of the population will be determines. The analysis will also determine if there are enough services in the community for the different sectors of the population.

We at Urban Generation believe that working closely with members of the community is one of the best ways of gathering information on what the desires and needs are of the residents, business owners, customers and guests. To this end we will conduct a series of interviews and public meetings with the community to gather data and receive their input concerning this project.

The product of this analysis will first be a series of goals for the community and a series of restrictions associated with these goals of revitalization. These goals and restrictions will then be transformed into a program for urban design. This program will set up the basic framework for developing a series of
comprehensive urban plans for Mt. Lebanon. At the end of the analysis phase of this project a comprehensive urban design and the policies that will accompany the design will be developed and presented to the client.

Examination of Alternatives

With the knowledge gained from the survey of the existing conditions of Mt. Lebanon, Urban Generation will propose alternative solutions for its redevelopment into a thriving commercial and professional district.

As reflected in the attached flow chart, the firm will divide into three teams: commercial, residential, and institutional. These teams will generate creative approaches to dealing with issues such as open space, pedestrian access, parking and traffic, the LRT station, revitalization of existing buildings and development of new ones, among others.

The product of this phase will be a revision of the urban design and finally, with the aid of the citizens of Mt. Lebanon, a selection of preferred alternatives.

Architecture of Preferred Alternatives

Once the preferred alternatives for the project have been selected, they will
become the proposed comprehensive urban design for Mt. Lebanon, and will be developed into the appropriate architectural and urban design recommendations for the town. These recommendations will be represented graphically, as plans, sections, elevations, perspectives, and other drawings as necessary.

The final product of Urban Generation's work will be an illustrated report containing our firm's recommendations to Mt. Lebanon, several copies of which will be presented to the town. Accompanying the report will be a presentation to the community by Urban Generation.

Schedule

Our schedule for the work outlined in the scope of services is shown at right in the flow chart.
PHASE 1

2-8-91 Request For Proposal

Review Databank Site Investigation

2-13-91 Client Meeting

SYNTHESIS goals issues constraints

2-20-91 Community Forum

PROGRAM

3-1-91 Comprehensive Sketch

Residential
Commercial
Institutional
PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

4-24-91
Public Presentation

COMPILATION
Final Design
Written Conclusion

4-3-91
Client
Review

DESIGNS OF
PREFERRED
ALTERNATIVES

3-6-91
Client
Meeting

3-13-91
Community
Review

3-20-91
Comprehensive
Urban Design

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

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History of Mt. Lebanon

A Glorious Past

While the settlement and growth of Mount Lebanon reflects the technological development of transportation in a young, industrializing country, the values and dedication of the people who settled there illustrates a commitment to a quality lifestyle and a promising future. From the “Tribunal” that James Brady described in 1787 of the area as a “part of the great wilderness beyond the Allegheny Mountains” to the “Township of First Class” to “A great place to call home” Mount Lebanon has evolved into one of the premier residential developments in the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Region.

When Andrew McFarland bought 900 acres south of Monogehela River from the Penns around 1773 Washington Road had seen little traffic other than Indians and brave travelers daring the journey from Washington to Pittsburgh. Slowly, other settlers discovered the fertile land south of Mount Washington away from the fogs and floodlands along the rivers just to the north. In 1787 James Brady acquired his “Tribunal” that encompassed 249 acres including the present Township of Mount Lebanon. Most of the early pioneers settled along Washington Road where they could catch the stage coaches for the still treacherous ride into Pittsburgh. In the early 1800’s The Alderson Tavern became the first commercial establishment in the area that served as a rest stop for travelers along Washington Road. In 1855 a small academy was built to serve the scattered community marking the first institutional development geared toward a residential lifestyle. In the 1850’s a post office was built at the corner of Washington and Bower Hill Road and adapted the name Mount Lebanon inspired by two Lebanon Cedar trees that Rev. Joseph Clokey had brought from the Holy Land and planted down the street in front of his house on Bower Hill Road.

The first wave of development came shortly after the the Pittsburgh & Southern Railroad crossed Washington Road in 1878 providing the residents of Mt. Lebanon to have fairly rapid transit to Pittsburgh. The line extended from Arlington on the east side of the Township to a point near present day Alfred Street to a Pittsburgh terminal south of Carson Street known as ‘Temperanceville’ for its tolerance of liquor sales. From Temperanceville commuters continued their journey into Pittsburgh by way of Omnibus, the horse drawn carriages that crossed the Smithfield to the foot of Fifth Avenue. When the Pittsburgh & Southern failed in 1884, the residents of Mt. Lebanon had to walk down Castle Shanon Road to Arlington to catch the narrow gauge train that connected to the inclines that carried passengers over Mount Washington a journey that took about two
hours and usually involved four transfers. To make street traveling a little easier, Washington Road became the first macadam road in the area in 1897. With the paving of Washington Road commercial development slowly ensued with the Milholland Store at the corner Washington and Bower Hill Roads along with the McCormick's Cabinet Making and Carpenter Shop at Central Square. With the possibility of rapid transit came the possibility of a second generation of suburban growth; a pattern similar to that experienced in Pittsburgh's first generation suburbs such as Oakland and East Liberty.

The turn of the century brought new technology to transportation as well as new conveniences of the industrial lifestyle. In 1901, the construction of the Mount Washington Transit Tunnel became the first attempt to cut under Mount Washington and in 1902 the first streetcar emerged on the south side of the mountain opening a new age of real estate development and a new direction of growth for Pittsburgh. Around this same time Mt. Lebanon witnessed its first of many real estate development plans indicating the future of a residential community. Lots were generally laid out in a grid pattern as was the practice at the time for convenience and to serve primarily the pedestrian and carriage direct access to the trolley lines by running the streets, regardless of the terrain, perpendicular to the Washington Road trolley lines. Trolleys
brought residents down Washington Road and dropped them off in the middle of the street where they could do their afternoon shopping before walking home. The trolley's then turned around at the Alfred Street at what became known as the “Loop”. Shortly after the boom in real estate speculation, the movement began to form an independent Township separate from the still rural Scott Township that could provide better services and better infrastructure for a predominately residential community.

Governmentally, the area of Mt. Lebanon had been in St Clair Township until 1806 when it was divided and became a part of Upper St. Clair. In 1861 Scott Township was carved out of Upper St. Clair and on February 6, 1912 Mt. Lebanon came into legal existence. At that time Mt. Lebanon had 1705 residents, one fire hydrant, and 75 gas street lights, a country club and a school of 200 pupils.

The big boom in Mt. Lebanon's development did not hit until the completion of the Liberty Tunnel in 1924, making access simple and for residential commuters and shoppers. An early real estate speculator, Justus Mulert, developed Washington Road from Cedar to Cochran with large homes and played an influential role along with many entrepreneurs in the South Hills in the building of the Liberty Tunnel. Other real estate development such as Mission Hills by Stevens, Williams Company and Central Square and Sunset Hills by W.A. Bode began...
to subdivide the area into lots and construct roads that were more sensitive to the contours and geared to providing a high quality residential lifestyle. By the end of the 1930's Mt. Lebanon had grown in population to 17,000 residents mostly clustered around the Washington Road trolley corridor, meanwhile, real estate valuation had jumped from $3,250 in 1912 to $35,000,000. Its schools, its services and its high quality life grew as sources of community pride as Mt. Lebanon was becoming a “Township of First Class.”

After the war years, Mt. Lebanon experienced another wave of growth that doubled its population by 1960 and caused real estate value to skyrocket to $112,676,000. Mt. Lebanon could boast 90 miles of improved streets, a very highly rated school system, a top quality Police and Fire Department various cultural programs and a plans for a new library.

As the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Region grew from an industrial economy based on mass production and mass consumption, to a commercial and information economy based on education and financing, Mt. Lebanon is faced with maintaining a lifestyle and services that are maturing with its surrounds. In their commitment for higher quality of life, the people and officials of Mt. Lebanon have pledged to protect the residential nature and maintain the infrastructure through focused organizations.
and planning. A 1950’s Master Plan called for a number of self-contained communities with small shopping and elementary schools based on the walking neighborhood concept. In the late 50’s and early 60’s Mt. Lebanon officials oversaw the routing of the L.R.T. and creation of the first public parking garages in suburban Pittsburgh (N. Garage 1958 and S. Garage 1966). The Public Works Department formed in 1970’s oversaw the removal of the trolley lines and traffic islands from Washington Road as well as the redevelopment of the old “Rec” into a modern recreational complex. Strong code enforcement has ensured that old structures are maintained and new construction complements the residential nature. Winding, tree-lined streets, well maintained diverse housing, excellent schools, good public transportation, outstanding recreational facilities and convenient shopping have all contributed to rising real estate development and the quality lifestyle found in Mt. Lebanon. As first wave of families that came to Mt. Lebanon via the automobile has grown up, fewer residents have been living in many more housing units, reflecting a transformation in the household types and a diminishing family size. Mt. Lebanon offers a wide range of living arrangements from apartments to town houses to detached houses. With this transformation, Mt. Lebanon has attracted a growing diversity of religious, political, and economic households.

### Mt. Lebanon Today

Today, Mt. Lebanon residents still reminisce about the old “Rec”, the log cabin school house, backyard pick up and 10¢ parking meters. They are still talking about the controversies of the construction of the Virginia Manor Shops in the 1960’s, the property maintenance code of the 70’s and the Bird Park Athletic Field of the 80’s. The people and planners of Mt. Lebanon value the past but are looking to the future with new concerns. While planning strategy continues to reinforce the residential priorities, Mt. Lebanon is now facing a declining commercial economy which has played an important role in supporting the residential lifestyle and municipal economy.

Recent controversies have focused upon development along Washington Road to revitalize the commercial base that is losing to the commuter shoppers. The intentions of this study are to understand and assess the changes that have occurred and are still occurring in Mt. Lebanon, and to offer a solution to the growing concerns of the Washington Road Business District while maintaining the residential nature of Mt. Lebanon.

**Image:** School children crossing at Bower Hill and Washington Roads with street car tracks still in tact
The Rise and Fall of the Washington Road Business District

The business core around Washington Road has become the central focus for retail and professional development in Mt. Lebanon. Located along a major artery U.S. Route 19 it has proven a valuable location for commercial development. Because the pattern of commercial development in the suburbanization of the United States has been a function of transportation development. Those main street commercial districts that were born in the Trolley Town era are now struggling to compete with the segregated and dispersed shopping districts and malls of the automobile suburb. As street production increased so did the accessibility of cheap land and commercial development scattered into disperse specialized nodes.

Today the Mt. Lebanon central business district along Washington Road is the victim of Trolley Town development patterns. Although past planning has evolved around preserving the residential nature of Mt. Lebanon, Mt. Lebanon planning has recognized the importance of commercial development to support the residential base. While the Master Plan of 1950 outlined the development of pockets of self contained neighborhoods, the Mt. Lebanon Core Area Study of 1972 recognized the survival of the Mt. Lebanon's central commercial district hinged upon playing a greater role in regional economics. The automobile age brought the age of the mall and the commuting shopper which enticed local shoppers to spend outside of Mt. Lebanon. In February of 1984 the Mt. Lebanon Commission resolved to form the Washington Road Revitalization Task Force to “determine the programs and projects necessary to improve the economic base of the Washington Road Business District”. Uptown Mt. Lebanon was chartered in 1985 as a non profit development corporation to carry out revitalization programs on Washington Road. In 1987, an updated version of the Mt. Lebanon Master Plan of 1950 that identified one area to be addressed was “support for the revitalization of the central core by fostering retention of existing businesses, promoting mixed-use, high density development and implementing a regular inspection program.” Later the same year Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs awarded Mt. Lebanon $50,000 award to be applied to facade renovations along Washington Road. When the Mt. Lebanon Development Group announced the proposal of the mixed use commercial and residential development of "Town Centre" at the North Garage site, the Washington Road Business District appeared to be well on its way to regeneration. However, in 1990 the group withdrew consideration of the project and Uptown Mt. Lebanon issued a Request for Proposal for professional assistance to aid in the revival of the Washington Road Business District.
Physical Features of Area

Topography

The topography of Mt. Lebanon is a series of valleys and peaks with a ridge running through the middle. Along that ridge is the most important dense commercial area, the Washington Road business district.

On each side of Washington Road lie valleys, with steep roads and sidewalks descending into them and up the other side. The LRT occupies one of these valleys: Florida Avenue another.

This exposes Washington Road to winter winds. It is also a negative for pedestrian shoppers in adjacent residential neighborhoods who don't like to walk up steep hills to go shopping. It also gives a difficult cross-section for commercial buildings on Washington Road, whose service alleys and rear parking is 10-15 feet below floor level.
Advantages and Disadvantages

The location of Washington Road had advantages as well as advantages. Being at the highest point, it requires customers and surrounding residents to walk up steep inclines to get to the businesses. Unfortunately, it is inherent in people to prefer to walk down to things rather than up, although this is not logical especially in shopping areas when the shopper must then carry his purchases back up the incline. Also with the large elderly population in the area, this is quite a disadvantage, deterring their potential business.

The advantage to being along the highest point is visibility. The aspect can be played up to draw more people and make the shopping area more desirable.
Housing

In the valleys surrounding Washington Road lie the residential developments. The areas to the west of Washington Road have steeper access to the main commercial area and the LRT lies in the east valley.
Grids vs. Topography

Roads lead from the residential developments up to the ridge. The organization of these roads is struggling to be a grid. In actuality, it is a bunch of smaller grids shifting, in some cases, to respond to the topography, in others completely ignoring it.
Existing Conditions

Buildings and Uses

In the investigation of the existing buildings and uses on Washington Road in Uptown, three areas were documented. The land use, Washington Road facades and the empty spaces on Washington Road were recorded.

Land Use

The land use map of Uptown shows a concentration of the commercial district along Washington Road with a concentration of high density apartment buildings in the areas adjacent to Washington Road. The low density residential areas which typify Mt. Lebanon are removed by a few blocks from the Uptown commercial district. The land use for all of the municipality of Mt. Lebanon is as follows: 55.2% residential, 4.7% commercial, 15.5% roadway, 6.3% institutional, 5.3% recreational facilities, 9.0% open space parks, 4.0% vacant.
Facades

The facade drawings show a considerable amount of unique buildings along Washington Road that are a documentation of the history of Uptown Mt. Lebanon. These buildings chronicle the beginning of Mt. Lebanon, the heavy influence of Art Deco in the 1920's, and the modernism of more recent history. These drawings also show the distinct and impressive institutional architecture on Washington Road in the Municipal Building, the Mt. Lebanon Protestant Church, and the A.W. Mellon School. The drawings also show the gaps that are in the Washington Road fabric and the lack of distinct entries into Uptown.
Proposal for the Revitalization of Mt. Lebanon
Empty Spaces

The empty spaces map identifies properties that are currently vacant of buildings, and buildings that are currently empty of tenants. This map identifies the availability of commercial space in Uptown ready for occupancy.
Pedestrians and the Streetscape

Various streetscape items including, trees, benches, trash cans, and street lamps are found on the sidewalks of the Washington Road Business District. All of these provide essential services to the pedestrians, yet they are of quite varied design and are placed in a manner seemingly indifferent to the needs of the pedestrians. This is especially true of the benches, as evidenced by the lack of use. On the whole, the streetscape presents a cluttered, confused image. The job of maintaining the sidewalks is given to the borough, a condition which suggests that the sidewalks and street furniture be durable enough to withstand the effects of a small budget.
The worst problem pedestrians face is trying to cross Washington Road. There are crosswalks at each intersection, and one at the Washington School, but the stoplights are timed for the traffic on Washington Road, not the pedestrians. The pedestrian link to the Light Rail Transit station is also poor. It is too long to allow for casual passing, and is not suitable for the handicapped.
Traffic Patterns

Although Washington Road was not meant to carry the heavy load that it does, it is burdened with the job of a major arterial route for the south hills. A large percentage of the traffic on Washington Road is pass-through. That is, it does not stop and will move as fast as it can. For those people who do want to stop, there are approximately 68 parking spaces on the road and an additional 750 spaces in lots and garages. A number of these 750 spaces are absorbed by day-long parkers, and therefore are not available to shorter-term parkers. However, approximately 215 spaces will disappear when the Rollier’s project is built; and when the cemetery reclams its land. Critical intersections in terms of safety are Washington Road’s intersections with Cedar Boulevard, Alfred Street, and Central Square.
Rapid and Mass Transit

The Washington Road Business District is served by both the south hills Light Rail Transit system and P.A.T. buses. At present, the buses use Shady Drive East and Parse Way to service the L.R.T. station, which is located in the valley to the east of Washington Road. There is also a car park adjacent to the station, capable of serving 24 commuters.
Air Rights

The Mt. Lebanon Parking Authority has acquired the air rights for the area bounded by Parse Way, Shady Drive East, and Alfred Street, outlined by a dashed line on the map. This is all inclusive with the exception of the area directly over the L.R.T. tracks, outlined by a dotted line on the map, which must be kept clear to a height of 1215 feet above sea level.
Mount Lebanon experiences the prevailing South Western wind during the summer and North Western wind during the winter. The commercial building blocks, which span along North-South direction, becomes the barrier for lower altitude winds for all seasons. However, the splits among buildings do allow the prevailing wind to pass through. In addition, the major road openings at the North and South, plus minor ones along the East and West become major holes for the winds into Washington Road. Consequently, a wind tunnel is created in the middle of the commercial district where the winds comparatively blow in the opposite direction during summer and winter. The sun shines from the South and always in a deeper angle during the summer. Southern openings on buildings to increase sunlight exposure during winter is recommendable. In addition, open spaces designed in this commercial district should consider the effect of the wind tunnel during both seasons (open to summer wind - closed to winter wind) and maximize the southern exposure to the sun.
climate

- sun path
- summer wind
- winter wind
Accessibility

The vehicular accessibility is mainly through Washington Road either from the South or the North. Most of the bus stop locations are on Washington Road. Washington Road also connects the district to downtown Pittsburgh and the South Hills. The commercial service paths are located behind the commercial blocks along Parse Way and Florida Avenue. The LRT which spans along the Eastern part of the district also brings in people to the commercial district. Most of them are either the residents of Mount Lebanon, the commuters to downtown Pittsburgh or simply those who are stopping by. The pedestrian connection from the LRT station to the commercial district is through Alfred Street. In addition, the pedestrian entries for the local residents are located along Washington Road junction with other smaller roads which cross perpendicularly such as Shady Drive, Academy Avenue, Cedar Blvd. and Central Square.
accessibility

- main street
- service street
- pedestrian path
- LRT route
Vista

The main looking-in vistas for the Washington Road commercial district are from the vehicular entries on both south and north of Washington Road. In addition, looking-in vistas are also located along the pedestrian entries looking into Washington Road. These vistas are significant to expose the existence of the commercial district to the areas surrounding it and to enhance the sense of "arrival and leaving". Since the commercial district is located on top of a ridge, there are a lot of looking-out vistas possibilities to be incorporated in the urban design. Both east and west sides provide a commending view out beyond and down the ridge. On the east side, there is an unobstructed vista across from Washington road to the Allegheny Cemetery. In addition, the Mellon School is also provided with vista across the playing field. On the west side, the vista of the western part of Pittsburgh is visible through the splits between the building blocks and the streets.
vista

- looking-in vista
- looking-out vista
Citizen's Meetings

What We Have Heard

In the following, a list of the concerns of the citizens of Mt. Lebanon as delineated in our client and citizen meetings, is given in bold type, and in italics are quotes from input at the meetings.

• Maintain a healthy community. Commercial district is first priority.
  The Lebanon Shops, Village Square and the Galleria are competition.
  A short term view and overall master plan are necessary.
  We need to attract new shoppers.

• Make the community attractive.
  The backs of the building shows where people put their garbage.

• Produce a comprehensive image.
  Creating a overall streetscape may spark more (community) interest.
  We (the Planning Board) in Mt. Lebanon are questioning where we want to be in the future. We must set the framework now.
  Washington Road as a symbol of Mt. Lebanon is worth pursuing.

• Attract new businesses to the area.
  Uptown lacks a critical mass of shops.
  We need to cater better to the elderly and to families.
  Specialty shops do well.
  Destinations people will walk to (The Saloon, Cafe Papa J's).
  Rolliers will be a destination place; a service to a far larger market than the immediate community.

• Integrate the LRT with the business district.
  If you had better access from the T, those people would shop.
  When you stop at the Mt. Lebanon stop, you are looking at a concrete wall or platform.
  The trolley used to end its line in Mt. Lebanon and people would stop and get off here.

• Utilize the upper floor(s) of the commercial structures.

• Address these four projects: Mellon School, North Garage, Walker Pontiac, Swan Lot.
  I tried to find a drugstore to buy a bottle of aspirin, but I couldn't find a parking space.

• Create outdoor spaces.
  Elderly widows have money to spend, but nowhere to meet. (We) catch a trolley and go downtown.
  The wind tunnel keeps some of the geriatric crowd away from the shops.
  We should include places to sit, sheltered from sun, wind and snow.

• Give “ambiance” to the commercial district.
  We need to make a comprehensive plan for the shopping experience.
  We wanted to get back to where we could walk in to the community.
  We don’t understand why more people don’t walk.

• Increase cash flow and real estate values of businesses as a means of increasing the tax base.
• Consolidate municipal services in Municipal Building by moving the public safety departments out.

• Sensitize the commercial district to new opportunities.
  Identification and marketing of area must be well thought out.

  We don't have good use of our perpendicular streets.

• Washington Road is both difficult to get to and difficult to cross.
  For the elderly, Walking up Alfred Street becomes an all day activity.

  Our main road sits on top of a (cardiac) hill.

  It's frightening to cross that road. There is too much commuter traffic.

  We don't walk on Washington Road. We walk on Shady because it is more of a pleasant walk away from noise and traffic.

  People will walk without any great philosophical problem if they are looking for services. Where as, if you have to carry more than two bags, nobody is going to do that; clearly not the elderly.

• Washington Road already has several doctors' offices.
  We need to expand and concentrate the number of medical suites so that Washington Road can become known as a family medical center.

• The "humaneness" of Washington Road is an issue.
  It would be nice if the merchants knew their customers by name.

  We need street awnings, trees, and crosswalks.

  There are no food shops on the street; it would be great to have a markethouse, a deli, a flower shop, more bakeries, and service shops, not only for the elderly population, but for families too.

  Don't forget more restaurants, and an ice cream shop for the kids, large kids as well as tots.
The role of Mt. Lebanon has transformed from a first generation suburb with a single family residential community and a dominant main street to a residential community that has a mixture of single family dwellings and apartments with a relatively undefined commercial street. From many client meetings, we have seen and heard that the ethos of the community of Mt. Lebanon is in the process of changing. It has been decided that a new direction is needed in order to maintain a healthy community.

The foremost aspiration for the Mt. Lebanon community is the maintenance of the quality of life. There is a desire to make the community more attractive and to create wonderful outdoor spaces with places to sit in the sun and in the rain, with places to play and run, with places to watch Mt. Lebanon, and with places to pass time with neighbors. The residents want to be attracted to the little nooks of Mt. Lebanon. There is also a desire to give an ambiance to the commercial district. A comprehensive image must be attained to give a presence to Mt. Lebanon.

The issues involved in the commercial revitalization of Washington Road stem from the fragmented and non-responsive agenda of the district. The lack of direction and of continuity of the commercial area is also an issue that must be addressed. This commercial district is not responsive nor representational of the residential community of Mt. Lebanon. A community must be targeted and addressed in order to gain a clientele for the commerce. There are three communities that could be addressed with a revitalization of Washington Road; the community that can walk to Washington Road, the people that drive by Washington Road and the people that are attracted to Washington Road as a destination point. In the consideration of how to propose change to the commercial area we must consider the existing businesses. The existing businesses are resistant to change. Washington road also struggles with the competition from malls and the new inner city malls. This issue must be addressed along with how new businesses can be attracted to Washington Road. One last issue is the maintenance of the commercial district, which may perhaps in part be provided by the Borough of Mt. Lebanon.

The residential neighborhoods of Mt. Lebanon are also undergoing change. The family structure is changing, single parent families, childless couples and unrelated roommates all demand a different dwelling typology. There has also been a rise in the median age of the property owners in Mt. Lebanon. There is a large population of well off elderly that are demanded smaller, easily maintained, luxury apartments.

The topography of Mt. Lebanon is an issue. Washington Road is located on the ridge of a hill that splits Mt. Lebanon in to two distinct pieces. The terrain and the traffic of Washington Rd make it difficult for one half of the neighbors to communicate to the other half. This ridge also separates the LRT station, located in the valley of the east side, from the commercial district. It is difficult for travelers on the LRT to access and recognize Washington Road as a commercial street. This ridge also makes it difficult for the neighbors to climb up the hill to shop.

There is also the issue of what can be done with a number of vacant sites in Mt. Lebanon: Mellon School, North Garage and Walker Pontiac. The Fire and Public Safety Department are presently in the Borough Building with inadequate facilities. Perhaps these services can be transferred to another location and the civil services can be consolidated in the Borough Building.

In general the issues to focus on are the maintenance of the present quality of life and the creation of an overall "becomingness" for Mt. Lebanon that encompasses residential, institutional and commercial aspects. This summary of issues shall be addressed in the attitudes and designs proposed by the individual students.
URBAN DESIGN
48  The Framework
50  Commercial Armature
52  Residential Armature
54  Institutional Armature
Framework

Structure

Urban design is the means whereby we can see in three-dimensions the impact on a place or a community of recommended policies. Through urban design, we can clearly see the impacts of public and private investment in either buildings or the public infrastructure; we can see how traffic and pedestrians are affected by proposals; we can understand the legal ramifications of taking action, and whether local regulatory processes such as zoning will require amendment; we can discern the quality of public places; and we can decide on whether new controls, such as heights, materials, and so forth might be necessary. These are some of the things which urban design documents reveal.

Regarding our study of Uptown Mt. Lebanon we developed an urban design "armature" as a result of our analysis of the area, and the input of the citizens. The armature serves the urban designer as a framework, or starting point, from which the organism of his/her design springs forth.

Upon the completion of an urban design, the armature can be used as a testing device to check the logic of the design. Alternatively, a design may reveal an oversight, or an entirely differing viewpoint then that found in the policy of the armature. As a result of this relationship, an urban design study must support the simultaneous development of both an armature, and a design proposal.

For the purpose of clarity, three armatures; Commercial, Residential, and Institutional were developed for the Washington Road study.

Proposal for the Revitalization of Mt. Lebanon
Commercial Armature

- Strengthen points of entry at Mellon Elementary School and West Shady Drive.
- Concentrate commercial area between these points.
- No commercial activities off of Washington Road.
- Ground floors devoted to commercial use, minimal service, no housing.
- Make Washington Road visible from the LRT station.
- Washington Road must remain four lane two way traffic.
- Three options: existing street, widen sidewalk, and/or add a median.
- Increase commercial activity; good possibilities that do not exist: deli, new bakery, family grocery, coffee shop, tavern/bar, cafes, bookstore, new liquor and wine store, video rental, ice cream, more restaurants, 5 & 10, amusement arcade, toy store, butcher, convenience store, dry cleaners, and clothing store.
- Replace old benches, create cluster parks along Washington Road. Integrate bus stops at cluster locations.

- Must have pedestrian connection to LRT and Washington Road on North Garage.
- Make Shady Drive East have a pedestrian connection to LRT.
- Close Alfred Street, remain open from Parse Way to Washington Road.
- Facilitate Pedestrian crossing, possible tunnel
- At Walker Road create cluster park, access from LRT to Florida Avenue.
- Create points of entry for pedestrians on Cedar Road, Central square, Academy Avenue, and Alfred Road.
- Lighting along Washington Road that is aesthetically pleasing.
- Address problem of sidewalks, make it handicap accessible.
- Infill site possibilities:
  - North Garage (commercial, parking, and park)
  - Walker Pontiac (commercial, park)
  - Parcel A (commercial park)
  - Alfred Triangle (parking, large park with LRT Access, etc.)
LRT
- PORTALS
- PEDESTRIAN GATEWAY
- POTENTIAL PARKING
- TERRACE - CAFE
- PARK BENCH CLUSTER
- COMMERCIAL (FIRST FLOOR)
- POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL
- CONNECTION TO LRT

Urban Design
Residential Armature

In the residential armature, four distinct areas were identified: the potential high density residential, elderly concentration, upper level residential in the business district, and the residential portals into Uptown. The issues are as follows.

• Increase residential density along Washington Road to increase the walk-in market.

• Emphasis on multi-family mid to high density (30+units/acre). Avoid single family detached construction.

• Concentrate elderly housing in areas where topography does not impede pedestrian access.

• In higher density developments the provision of outdoor spaces is necessary.

• Development of housing along Washington Road must provide ground floor commercial space.

• Housing development must provide one parking space per unit.

• Housing developments should provide a mix of income levels and household types
The institutional armature points out the possibility for consolidation of institutional and municipal facilities making a unique entry to Washington Road from the north. The empty Mellon School, the Library and the small institutionally used houses across from Mellon School already create an entry to the street. The municipal building can be reused for different municipal functions. The issues to be evaluated are as follows:

• Consolidate municipal functions

• Create an institutional park

• Create spaces for employees to recreate

• Reuse Mellon School

• Create a new function that involves the entire community base
INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS
At present, Washington Road is at conflict. On the one hand, it is a major highway, transporting commuters to and from the city. On the other hand it is a commercial district, attempting to support pedestrian traffic. In order to allow both the vehicle and pedestrian to continue to use this street without one becoming dominant over the other, the infrastructure of the street must be changed. By adding a median and enlarging the sidewalk, the street can become much friendlier to the pedestrian, while still allowing the vehicle traffic to flow.

In order to make this change it is necessary to completely rebuild the area. By making this proposal, it is possible to look at the road without the confines of the existing conditions. If this road could become anything, what should it be? The people of Mt. Lebanon expressed a desire to retain it as a commercial district, but because of the topography of the area, I feel that it could not thrive under the existing residential conditions of the area.

Another issue that I chose to deal with was the changing patterns of the household unit and needs of these households. My vision for the future of housing is high density living with shared facilities, near by shopping and convenient mass transportation.
Because of the location of the LRT station and Mt. Lebanon's location just outside the city limits, the area seemed ideal for this new vision of living.

My design is a master plan; it basically consists of commercial facilities along the road with housing above and parking in the rear, with shared facilities for the residents above. The commercial would be primarily supported by the residents of this complex, but it would also serve the surrounding community.

My image for the streetscape, consists of arcades for the commercial level and overlooking balconies for the residential above. At street level the arcades would be used for outdoor cafes, sidewalk sales, and shade for the elderly in the summer. To buffer the pedestrian from the vehicle, I have added planting boxes to the edge of the sidewalk, and have retained the on street parking.

As I have stated above this proposal is only meant to be a general infrastructure for the street. This project could be accomplished in stages. The building masses and facades are not intended to all follow the exact same design, they would be designed to vary in accordance with this common infrastructure.
Proposal for the Revitalization of Mt. Lebanon
Florida Avenue Proposal

The traffic along Washington Road cuts the commercial district into two which consequently weaken the commercial district "wholeness" character. As an alternative, the traffic can be diverted by building a new main road that avoid the commercial district. The possible alternative is to build the new road that cuts Washington Road at Oak Way and connects with Florida Avenue. A second alternative will be diverting the traffic to Shady Drive East.
To revive the wholeness character of the commercial district, a wholistic program of urban design needs to intervene into the existing pattern of the commercial district. For my proposal, a “connection” scheme is introduced which conceptually involves provision of connected experiences along the commercial district. The connected experiences include:

- connection of vistas through planned structure along both sides of Washington Road. These vistas will allow the viewers to see the interrelation of the two sides of the commercial district thus enhance the wholistic character.

- connection of pedestrian path along and across Washington Road. The existing path in front of the stores will be enriched with the introduction of open “green paved” areas for sitting and eating. In addition, the cross Washington Road pedestrian path will be planned and made stronger by the adjacent built structure and paved zebra crossing. More trees will be planted along the pedestrian paths to provide shades during the summer and to bring down the scale.
Portals

My individual projects deal with the placement of “portals” at the points of the vehicular entries. These projects include:

• The memorial park at the southern entry to the commercial district.
  The south portion in front of the Washington Square up to the municipal building is cleared out for the development of a memorial park with parking spaces, sitting spaces and a memorial sculpture for the veterans of Mount Lebanon. This open space will enhance the presence of the municipal building which is not apparent right now. The combination of these two “places” - the memorial park and municipal building - will proclaim itself as the entry portal from the south part of the commercial district.

• The Rollier center at the northern entry to the commercial district.
  The current plan to build a hardware center on the Swan Lot site should be exploited since it is a strategic site for an entry portal from the north. The whole project for the site is also in consideration for the futuristic vision it can contribute to the commercial district as a whole. The projects that I propose for the site are the current planned hardware center with a portal, a cafe at the southern part, open “green and paved” area along Washington Road and a parking garage at the back along Shady Drive.
The Rollier Site

• The Rollier Center is built with a tower at the strategic junction of Shady Drive and Washington Road. The manner which the tower is designed is to “proclaim” itself as the portal entry of the Mount Lebanon Commercial District from the north. The ground plan of the tower also becomes the entry point for the Rollier center and the pedestrians connection from Shady Drive to Washington Road through escalators. In addition, the tower is a clock tower which can be viewed from far away by the residence of the area. In plan, the Rollier Center is two stories with the commercial shop at the front and the services rooms at the back. Next, the parking garage at the back is designed in four terraces to conform with the topography. The elevation is purposely designed to be humane and low in profile to minimize the obstruction it may cause to the residential surrounding.

• The Cafe at the southern end of the site is included with an open space in front. This open space can be used for outdoor eating or sitting area. The open space is secured from the winter wind and opened to the southern exposure. In addition, the open space also becomes the pedestrian entry from Academy Avenue. A Mac machine is purposely placed along Academy Avenue next to the cafe to increase the human activity in the area. A bus station is also proposed to be built in front of the open space along Washington Road for the same goal.
Proposal for the Revitalization of Mt. Lebanon
Pedestrian Retrofit

Project Background

People of Mt. Lebanon used to shop and browse, drink and dine, meet and chat while on their way to and from work or while they waited for the Trolley when the streetcars that ran down the center of Washington Road transporting hundreds of Western Pennsylvanians throughout the South Hills. Today, they speed down the center of Washington Road commuting to and from downtown workplaces and surrounding malls merely glancing at the unique stock of goods and services advertised in the broad window displays lining the Washington Road Business District. To those who prefer to walk up the street be it for health or for happiness, to pick up a hoagie or fill a prescription, a stroll down Washington Road may be treacherous, uncomfortable, and an exhausting climb.

To maintain a healthy residential and commercial community we must make the Central Business District more friendly to the pedestrian who must compete with the unrelenting topography and the passing automobiles of Washington Road. The future vitality of the residential and commercial community surrounding Washington Road depends foremost on pedestrian activities, like those during the Trolley days. To revive the life that was once dominated by window shoppers, afternoon
strollers, and people watchers Washington Road must become a memorable, inviting, and healthy place that encourages social, economic, and recreational activity. In retrofitting Washington Road for the Pedestrian four goals guided my design:

- create safer more pleasant pedestrian atmosphere that encourages walking in both the residential and commercial communities around Washington Road
- reduce the dominance of the automobile along Washington Road
- create a memorable experience for both the pedestrian and the automobile
- to link proposals for a mixed housing type development along Rose Way with Central City Development and the Mellon Market Place as well as the redevelopment proposals for Washington Road and to integrate the LRT public transit with the proposals.

Two levels of pedestrian activity are created: Washington Road geared toward the commercial life and market economy of the Washington Road Business District and Rose Way Development geared toward a residential lifestyle that encourages neighborly interaction.
Retrofit for Washington Road

• Just as the center of activity for the streetcar commuters the removal of on street parking and insertion of a median along Washington Road will reduce the dominant presence of the automobile and as well as create a more favorable atmosphere for the pedestrian

• The Median increases the safety of the pedestrian by providing a break between opposite directions of traffic where one can mediate the lanes of traffic with greater ease.

• Development of a median enriched with plush vegetation and colorful banners hung from elegant streetlights will create a more memorable and inviting experience for both the pedestrian and the driver.

• A sense of thereness is created by the median identifying the Washington Road Business District as a unique place to be along Washington Road.

• For one arriving to Washington Road from one of the perpendicular avenues or streets, streetlamps located at the breaks along the Washington Road median will serve as portals marking arrival to Washington Road Business District.

• Parking for Washington Road Businesses will be relocated off Washington Road in surface and multi-story garage developments at rear of shops that will encourage business to clean up the backs of their buildings that have been neglecting the aesthetic consideration for the residential community.
• Just East of the intersection of Washington Road and Shady Drive East, Rose Way begins a pedestrian link that runs parallel to the Central Business District at approximately an equal elevation with Washington Road. Beginning at the Northern most segment of Shady Drive East, Rose Way will be built over an extension of the Mt. Lebanon Transit Tunnel and will serve as a link to the L. R. T. for both the residential and commercial community of the Core area. Lined on the West by new rowhouses overlooking the Mt. Lebanon Cemetery and the residential landscape to the East of Washington Road, Rose Way capitalizes on the topography providing a pleasant, safe and quiet place for the residents of Mt. Lebanon to take a stroll that is protected from the automobiles and the wind of Washington Road.

• To minimize gradation along Rose Way the pedestrian link incorporates an elevated sidewalk connecting Mellon Market Place Proposal with Roselawn Street and Central Square to the proposed housing development by a pedestrian bridge that passes directly over the proposed L.R.T. station at Central City Development.

• The housing along Rose Way provides a mix of house types reflecting the demands of the increasing elderly population and decreasing household sizes and changing lifestyles.
A typical housing add for the proposed housing development for Rose Way may read as follows:

FOR SALE OR RENT
ONE STORY SOLAR EFFICIENT
APPARTMENTS AND TOWNHOUSES
PERSONAL GARAGE ALONG PARSE WAY
DIRECTLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC TRANSIT STOPS
WONDERFUL VIEW
LIBRARY, CHURCH, SHOPPING AND MARKET:
ALL WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE

Personal automobile parking garages and/or storage for residents will be located under new development along the East side of Washington Road and accessed by the service corridor Parse Way.

The residents of Shady Drive who were once faced with garbage and refuse deposited behind the facades along Washington Road will now be fronting a "wild park" that will provide a protected playground thick in vegetation and overlooked by Rose Way for children to play under adjacent adult supervision.
EASTERN ELEVATION

T.W. I. Gallimore [Pedestrian Retrofit]
After studying the commercial area of Washington Road, it is my belief that it has a lot of potential with its variety of buildings. In my view, this aspect needs to be played up and revitalized to make an exciting shopping street with a strong identity. Consequently, drawing people of all generations from all areas of Pittsburgh.

To realize this potential, Washington Road becomes a ‘Street of Banners’. With their movement, color, and play of light and shadow, an exciting atmosphere is created. They unify and define the commercial area, but allow for great variety and flexibility. Banners are hung from buildings and streetlamps, and used as awnings and signage. Although all of the signage is banners, great variety of design occurs between businesses. The only constraint on the business owners is that the signage must be a banner or banners, and they must be maintained. Otherwise, there is complete freedom in their design. This is an inexpensive means of revitalization and therefore can be implemented quickly and changed accordingly. Because the banners eventually deteriorate, the street will be perpetually revitalized and the appearance will constantly change, adding to its excitement and drawing people to return. The rapid changing of images of commercial streets is an American tradition and can already be seen in the number of different building styles which currently exist on Washington Road.

The streetlamp is designed specifically to carry banners. They are placed along the sidewalks to enliven the day and night activities, through the use of neon filaments. They are also placed down the center of the street in a median to further strengthen the boundaries of the commercial area, and to make it safer for pedestrian use. The main intent of the streetlamps is to give the people of Mt. Lebanon something personal with which they can identify. The children from local schools design these banners, giving the community a strong sense of pride for their commercial street.

Kiosks are located along the street. The Market House itself becomes a huge kiosk, its outer walls being giant bulletin boards. Local groups and schools can post activities and events at these locations, further enhancing the sense of community by bringing the residents together.

The measurements which are taken in this portion of Washington Road from Alfred Street to the North Garage site can be easily implemented along the entire commercial area. The banners, new activity, and height density strengthen the image of the shopping street. The banners, in particular, give an image special to Mt. Lebanon which the local community can relate to since the designs are done by local students and artists. This special quality will also induce people from all over Pittsburgh to come and experience this unique shopping atmosphere.
WASHINGTON ROAD
PERSPECTIVE
Elevations

New businesses which bring more activity to the area are inserted along Washington Road and existing facades are renovated. A year-round Market House with a large tower marking the bend and center of the road occupies the current Walker Pontiac site. A colonnade is created over the sidewalk for protection and to allow a covered place for the market to open onto in the summer months. As mentioned previously, the outer walls are giant boards for posting bulletins.

The building along side of this which contains Caruso’s Pizza is made taller by placing residences above. This strengthens the ‘wall’ of facades along the Northwest side of Washington Road.
Elevations

The banner image was influenced in part by the Denis Theater. Its false facade is replaced by a steel framework from which large banners are hung.

A terrace cafe is put on top of the current bakery, florist, and antiques shops which have renovated facades. The cafe has outdoor seating looking onto Washington Road and a proposed park on the site that is currently Alfred Street. The interior is completely enclosed in glass, so that views to the surrounding areas can be maintained in the winter.

The site of Kawai Piano and Organ Center is converted into a large building into which the medical offices are consolidated. This helps to strengthen the Southeast side of Washington Road. Commercial shops are maintained at the street level.
This project represents an attempt to revitalize the commercial viability of uptown Mt. Lebanon by adding a large shopping complex, roughly 130,000 square feet of retail space, to the center of the business district on Washington Road. The center has the intention of attracting the users of the nearby malls, which have supposedly been sapping Washington Road of its former level of activity, by providing greater variety, and vitality.

Consumers will be able to shop in one of the four centers: Medical, Interior design, International Foods, and Clothing, without being exposed to the multitude of other specialty shops that malls generally support. The four centers, incorporated within one structure, are intended to function in tandem with the existing stores of Washington Road in a non-competitive manner. This may be accomplished by firstly, relocating stores under one of the four types into the complex, and secondly, by not repeating any of the existing store types on the street.
The Medical and Interior Design Centers were chosen because they already exist and provide a nucleus for expansion on Washington Road. Organizing them under one roof may help them to function more authoritatively within their fields of service. The Food Center was chosen due to the residential nature of the surrounding area and also because the food court functions as a festive center and the main activity within the complex. It should also function as an introduction for the three other centers. Finally, the Clothing Center was selected because of its inherent characteristics of high volume activity/profitability. Each Center will strive to function as a true “buyers market” by allowing easy comparison shopping and all of the necessary amenities which will best serve the shoppers.

There is an attempt within each Center, and particularly within the Food Center, to integrate the pedestrian experience with the vehicular experience by allowing for shoppers to see vehicles entering and exiting the complex as they drive through the skylights. This experience attempts to replace the positive street shop pedestrian/vehicle interaction that is often lost in large complexes.

Each Center will be overseen by one manager with the intent of insuring a mix of shops that are complementary and not overly competitive with each other and Washington Road, within each Center.
The Site

The site chosen for this complex is between the existing Municipal Building and the Ideal Sports store. It encompasses close to four hundred feet of western street frontage at the center of the district, yet the body of the complex occurs one and two levels below street level. Lowering the project below the level of the street is done for the purpose of opening the center to some of the more desirable views in Mt. Lebanon, and additionally to provide a release with green areas and parking at the center of the city at street level. The second but equally important reason for lowering the project is for the purpose of providing additional real estate development along the entire 400 ft of street frontage from ground level up, should the demand arise. If development does take place above the complex on Washington Road it should strive to preserve the feeling of openness that is attempted at the center.
Objective

A major objective of this project, being a destination type development, is to heighten the experience of those approaching the complex by way of a personal vehicle. This is attempted by alleviating street traffic and opening views out to the west from Washington Road, and from the roof of the complex. A user entering the site in a vehicle will be able to see into his/her Center at roof level, and upon entering the underground garage be able to park directly under, with direct access to the Center they have chosen to use. The complex strives to encourage the pedestrian experience by way of providing easy access to and across Washington Road through cross walks and underground passageways. And secondly by providing intimately sized two storey skylit corridors with views of the hills beyond within each Center.
Phases

This project encompases five phases of which only the third was discussed at length. The five phases follow as such:

1.) Create Centers of entertainment with restaurants and movie theaters at the most visible location of Washington Road.
2.) Strengthen the East wall of Washington Road by filling in the gaps with good businesses. The gaps currently communicate a feeling of insecurity.
3.) The Mega-structure described at length on the West side of Washington Road opposite the entertainment Centers.
4.) The potential development of buildings above the Mega-structure on the West side of the road.
5.) The impact analysis and action to help the affected edges of the site where the project has been graphed to Florida avenue.
Proposal for the Revitalization of Mt. Lebanon
The current connection between Washington Road and the LRT Station is exceptionally poor and certainly not accessible to the handicapped. Not only do the businesses on Washington Road miss the chance to capture the market of the LRT riders, but the image that the riders get of Mt. Lebanon is that of a large blank concrete wall. This project moves the station to what is now Alfred Street, closing it to vehicular traffic. This forges a strong visual and physical link between Washington Road and the station.

The problem then, is to attract people from one to the other, along the now named Alfred Walk. To do so, a series of new shops are placed along the northern edge of Alfred Walk, with a covered arcade which at the lower end, joins to the station and the bus stop, and at the upper end, opens to Washington Road which now has a wide crosswalk. The arcade, a glassed-in walkway, will allow light to reach the new shops while providing a pleasant micro-climate in which to move between the station and Washington Road. It will act as a passive solar collector, allowing for outdoor activities such as sidewalk cafes to occur here year-round. In the summer, the arcade will open to allow for cooling breezes and a direct relationship to the adjacent plaza, arranged on two levels. This plaza will serve as Washington Road's
central open space, becoming the location for a variety of uses, such as speeches, exhibits, and most importantly, the site of the farmer’s market, which will be displaced by the building of the new Rollier’s store. This lends itself to the idea that Mt. Lebanon could host a different type of market here for each week of summer. The quality of this space by day is obvious enough, but by night, the plaza, with the internally lit arcade, will become a unique centerpiece for Mt. Lebanon.

The plaza has a connection to the Central Square residential area through Central Way and a connection to the new North Garage along Parse Way. The new garage has its entrance directly across from Cedar Blvd to allow it to take advantage of the existing stop light. Adjacent to the garage is the relocated theater, which will benefit from this adjacency.

This project is intended as a “first step”. Once it is implemented and creating revenue, the air rights over the LRT lines, owned by the Mt. Lebanon Parking Authority will be the place for a second wave of commercial development.
In examining Washington Road, we were attracted to the bend that marks the center point of the commercial area. It seemed to us that there is a lack of connections to the surrounding residential areas. Presently, Alfred Street is the pedestrian path from Washington Road to access the LRT. Alfred Street is very steep and as one approaches the LRT tracks the sidewalk is almost perilous. To reach the LRT station proper, one must cross the tracks and look left to find a station that has no relation to Washington Rd. On the other side of Washington Rd., the residential neighborhood on Florida Avenue is cut off from the commercial street by the steep climb and the unfriendly nature of the backs of the buildings on Washington Rd.. We found, within one hour on a Sunday afternoon, several residents climb a deteriorating set of stairs between the Walker Pontiac building and it’s neighboring office building. These stairs let onto a parking lot that connects with Florida Avenue. This experientially void and potentially hazardous route was an often used residential path to Washington Road. So, at this bend, this center point on Washington Road, we decided to create a development perpendicular to the street that connects the LRT station across Washington Rd. to Florida Avenue.

Goals & Intentions

• To link the LRT with Washington Rd., both visually and physically

• To create an elderly pedestrian pathway form the LRT to Washington Rd. and from Washington Rd. to Florida Avenue

• To provide a tunnel under Washington Rd. so that an easy crossing is made.

• To create an urban park on the present site of Alfred Street.

• To create terraces and inner courts for cafes on Washington Rd.

• To mark the center point and the bend in Washington Rd., in order to establish a feeling of “thereness”

• To provide sufficient parking for any new additions that we add to the area.

Proposed Scheme

The LRT station is moved to a more visible location at the bottom of Alfred Street. We closed access to Washington Road on Alfred Street, but left a one way bus and parking path from Shady Drive East to Parse Way. As shown in the site plan, the new path of Alfred Street is next to the LRT Station with Bus stops adjacent. The new LRT Station is two levels, one at the level of the LRT tracks and the other at the height of the proposed urban park linking the present residential neighborhood and the elderly housing proposal. From the station one can ascend by elevator, escalator or stair to the upper level which is ten feet below Washington Rd..

In order to provide a well maintained covered walkway from the Station to Washington Rd., a series of escalators and elevators ascend the levels under the guise of a Market House. The Market House can be a daily event that takes the place of the weekly event once on the site of the Rolliers building. In the winter, the building will be heated and remain closed, but in the summer the upper and lower windows can open to allow the southwestern wind to blow through. Parking for the merchants is located under the Market House.

The proposal is to move the LRT Station and create a pedestrian path perpendicular to Washington Rd. from the LRT Station to Florida Avenue. We have done this by creating a Market House and an urban park that links the LRT Station to Washington Rd. and a mixed use commercial and office building with housing on Florida Avenue that links Washington Rd. to Florida Avenue.
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Section and the Tower
The tower, as seen in the section, visually connects the Market House and the LRT to Washington Road at the site of the City Center Building. The tower marks the position of an under-pass which comes from the Market House under Washington Road at the center point. The tower contains an elevator and staircase that takes pedestrians from the underpass level up to Washington Rd. or to the upper levels on the City Center Building.

On the site of Walker Pontiac we placed a building with retail on the first floor to establish a relationship with Washington Road. From the court on Washington Road a lower court is created to place a cafe with outdoor tables and allow access to the LRT and to the housing on Florida Avenue. On the upper levels of the City Center Building are offices.

On the rear portion of the Walker Pontiac site, a housing development has been placed with approximately teny five condominium-type units. There is a small court with a garden and play area. There is a ramp up to the lower court of the commercial area or a ramp down to Florida Avenue.
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This project is a design for a part of Washington Road. It is sited at the middle of Uptown, the point where Washington Road bends and Alfred Street rises from the east valley. The idea for this project grew out of the residential armature of the urban design for Uptown. The intent is to increase the residential density along Washington Road to provide an increase in the shopper base for the Uptown Commercial district.

Along with providing an increase in the residential density, other needs that had been identified were also incorporated. A sense of ‘center’ for Uptown had been expressed as a desire. The ‘center of Uptown’ is marked by the placement of a free standing tower at the bend of Washington Road and by the placement of a building mass which is dominant over its neighbors. The idea of a public park space along Washington Road is developed in the plaza that occurs at the Washington Road commercial level, and continues in the connection to Florida Avenue. The plaza is designed as a place for people to relax and enjoy a summer day under the shade of trees, while also serving as an extension of the street to the commercial shops that are in the plaza.

The residences enjoy southern exposure, private terraces and balconies with commanding views of Mt. Lebanon, and a private parking garage.
Consolidation of Uses

The existing Mellon Jr. High School building offers the potential to house a variety of uses. Located just outside the WRBD and surrounded by a church, elementary school and library, its use may best be served by civic functions. Considering the need for a new public safety building and library addition, as expressed by the community, Mellon School has both the space and location to accommodate these functions. By relocating the fire and police departments to the Mellon School building, their functions can be consolidated on two floors. The municipal functions that currently exist in a number of residential buildings on Washington Road will then be consolidated into the vacated space in the Municipal building. These vacant houses can then be reclaimed for residences or incorporated into the institutional district as indicated by the urban design armature.

Entrances

The public entrance to the building will remain on Castle Shannon Boulevard. It will serve both the Mellon PSB and the Annex. The Annex will also connect to the existing library by means of a bridge over Castle Shannon Boulevard. Police officers and firemen will have access to the building on the east side at the ground floor.
Parking and Paving

The existing parking would be doubled to accommodate both public users and employees of the facility, as well as all police vehicles. It is also possible for library patrons to park in the existing library parking lot and cross Castle Shannon Boulevard at grade level or via the proposed bridge connection above. Creation of a large paved apron behind the building will allow for easier maneuvering of the fire trucks and eliminate the problems of stopping traffic on Washington Road whenever trucks were dispatched or returned. A fence/gate would be used to separate the paved area behind the elementary school from that used by the fire department. This device would be incorporated into the playground furniture and prevent the children from interfering with emergency procedures, as well as provide them with a viewing stand to watch the firemen in action from a safe distance. The gate would be locked and opened only for delivery. Similar furniture will be provided at the edge of the park to allow others (elderly, families, interested observers) adequate view of the excitement created when members of the Mellon PSB are called to duty.
Civic Center Park

The existing park space is highly used, and ideally located with exposure to southern sun and protection from the winter winds by the building density to the west. The area would be re-landscaped to create an enjoyable experience by young and old alike with a terraced lawn, shade trees, shrubs, benches, a new playing field, picnic tables and a garden path to stroll along or to be used by bicyclists. The upgraded civic center park would serve as an attraction to both the elementary school children and the residents of the Rose Court area. Two pavilions provide shaded seating and eating areas and protection from inclement weather. Lights can be considered for extending the park use into the early evening.
Space Plans

The greatest concern of the police and fire departments was the difficulty of being located on multiple floors in the existing municipal building. In the new Mellon Public Safety Building, the police will be consolidated to two floors and the fire department to one. The ground floor will house the entire fire department and a portion of the police department in order to:

1) accommodate the two departments’ need to be in close proximity to their vehicles and
2) separate the police functions that require greater security from the general public entrance floor of the building. On the first floor will be the public entrance and a central lobby. Both the police department and the additional library space require direct public accessibility and are best suited to this floor. The police department will occupy one third of the floor off of the main lobby with offices and the front service desk. The Library Annex will occupy the remaining two thirds of the floor with a separate entrance off the main lobby. The circulation desk and general book stacks will be accommodated in this area. The second and third floors will house other Annex functions, including an expanded children’s section, the Mt. Lebanon archives and quiet study areas with reference materials, in addition to meeting rooms and classrooms for supplemental educational programs and senior citizen workshops.
Perspective Views of the Library Annex

Given the brick detailing of the existing auditorium space, openings can be made for natural lighting. The entry to the auditorium will be removed and replaced with additional windows to create a pleasant reading space overlooking Washington Road. The stack area will be a double height space with north facing skylights over the circulation and reading areas.
Perspective View of the Annex Bridge

The connection of the library to its annex across Castle Shannon Boulevard can occur at street level or at the second level of each building. The enclosed bridge provides a covered walkway for both patrons and pedestrians. This bridge becomes a landmark device marking not only the library connection, but also the entrance to the Mellon Public Safety Building.
The Mellon School has a prominent place in Mt. Lebanon’s past and an enviable position on Washington Road. It was a resource for the community’s education and a source of pride in the Pittsburgh region for academic excellence. The Mellon School now lies abandoned. It is an empty hole in the center of a community. Mellon School lies at the point of entry to Washington Road. It demands an architecture that gives it the kind of emphasis that was a part of the role it used to play in the community and not forgetting the strength in education.

The Mellon Marketplace attempts to incorporate the needs and wants of the Mt. Lebanon community. The community has expressed excitement for a Farmer’s Market and for increased elderly housing. These needs are coupled with an activity that is new to the community and attractive to the young and old alike. Mellon Marketplace will primarily reuse the Mellon School as a Botanical Center. In this way, the Farmer’s Market has a home in a building dedicated to the study plants; there are two floors of garden apartments; and Mellon School retains its original function as a place of education.
On The Inside

A long central greenhouse/atrium connects the center of the existing building with Washington Road, a much needed connection to attract visitors to the community and the community at large. The facades are bright and fun. Old facades are covered with lively banners and a stripe of pink neon light connects the existing with the new.

The ground floor provides public functions. The Washington Road entry spine is a conservatory space for permanent and travelling displays. The Castle Shannon entry is open to the farmer's market on the floor below and there are seed shops and garden book shops on the left. This creates, not only a lively architecture but the sounds and smells of activity. There is an auditorium and cafe for public lectures and performances. A cafe, adjacent to the auditorium, looks out over the rear garden. The ground floor is dedicated to the farmer's market and to botanical education. The botanical wing includes a public greenhouse, toolshed, and classrooms for lectures and various classes. Outside the botanical wing are the rentable garden plots and intimate places for the public and for the garden apartment residents to enjoy watching the gardens and gardeners. The second and third floors are one two and three bedroom apartments. These are ideal for the elderly. Provisions have been made for handicap accessibility and there is a bridge link from the building to Rose Way.
Mellon Marketplace

This scheme attempts to bring life to the community by being sensitive to the residents of Mt. Lebanon and by creating a resource that has never before existed. This will attract people from other communities and provide education and recreation for the people of Mt. Lebanon.
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the end