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A. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important opportunities to improve the visible appearance of the Solomons area lies in improvement of the storefronts, implementation of an appearance Code, and in the creation of a pleasant pedestrian environment.

For these improvements to work to their maximum effectiveness, they must be carefully designed and closely coordinated. The exterior of building facades is an extremely important component. Because some of the buildings have been altered in a variety of ways, particularly over the past 30 years, removal of incompatible elements and enhancement of the original ones underneath can be an inexpensive and dramatic way of improving the visible appearance of Solomons.

A second critical component is the public improvements. Over the years, the quality of the public improvements, that is, the sidewalks (where they exist), curbs and gutters, trash cans and paving has suffered serious deterioration. Lack of maintenance, particularly on the bulkhead, and inadequate pedestrian amenities and trees have created a sterile and barren appearance in the historic area.

Any public improvements plan must take into consideration the present routes which vehicles and people use as they move around the area; the relationship between present and proposed architectural structures; and the colors and textures of the small-scale features such as proposed landscaping, paving, sidewalk materials, street furniture, and graphics which - during the day or at night - create the total visual experience of the area.

B. PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

1. Streetscape

A streetscape includes all the area between the building fronts on one side of the street to the building fronts, on the other side or in the case of Solomons Island, the bulkheading on the Patuxent River. This includes the sidewalk, the curbing, the parking meters, benches, pavement, trees and grass, trash receptacles, rest rooms, traffic signs, street lights and public signs.

The basic design of public improvements should serve to highlight the main entrances and intersections of the commercial area, to create distinctive vistas along the main streets, and to provide amenities such as rest areas and green spaces that reduce the harshness of building materials and concrete paving. The effect of such improvements should be to create a sense of place which encourages consumers and tourists to shop, to stroll, and to enjoy the area.

A look at the existing streetscape immediately visible at the "entry" to Solomons Island gives a good indication of some of the major problems with the area.



FIGURE 30 - "TIDEBOX" BRIDGE AT THE SOLOMONS ENTRYWAY (1984)

The first vehicular bridge to Solomons Island was completed in 1907. The current "tide box" bridge resulted from the progressive widenings of the road in 1918, 1948-49, and again in 1957.

Because of the gradual dominance of the automobile as the principal means of entry to the historic area of Solomons Island, there has been little done to ensure a separation of modes of travel, such as walking, bike riding, and cars. It is a principal concept of these proposed public improvements, that there be a clear and attractive separation of these modes.

In order to improve the streetscape and functioning at the entry point to the historic area, this Master Plan proposes the following type of transportation separation on the Patuxent River side of Solomons Island Road.

As illustrated in Figure 32, (looking north) a continuous landscaping strip separates the street and the bike lane from the parking lot. The shrubs in this buffer strip will be in the range of two to four feet high. At this height, the strip will begin to block many of the parked cars from view.

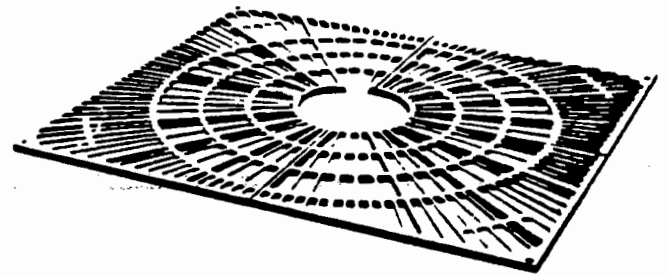
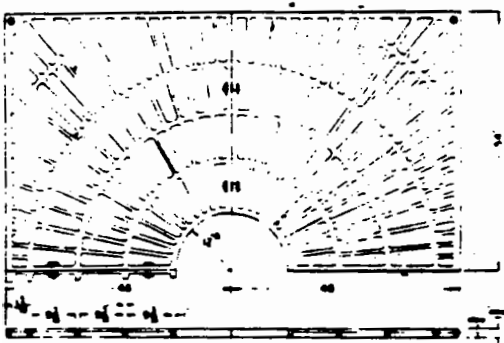
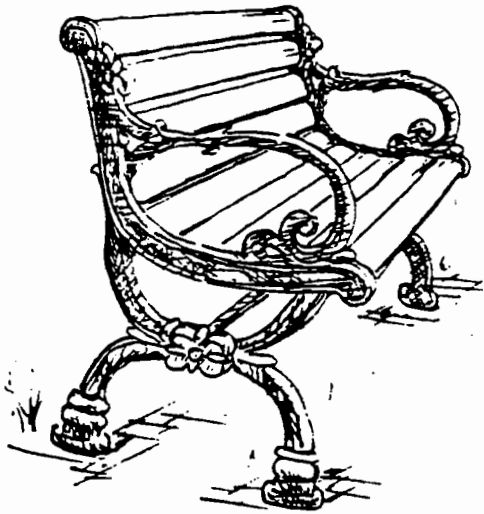


FIGURE 31 - STREET FURNITURE

Shade trees above will provide both a change of scale and protection at the street level, and some visual interest along the entire commercial strip.

The additional lane on the river side of Solomons Island Road, now used as a temporary parking area or a turning lane for entry to the parking lot is proposed as a bike lane. This lane is proposed to continue throughout the Town Center area (see Figure 39).

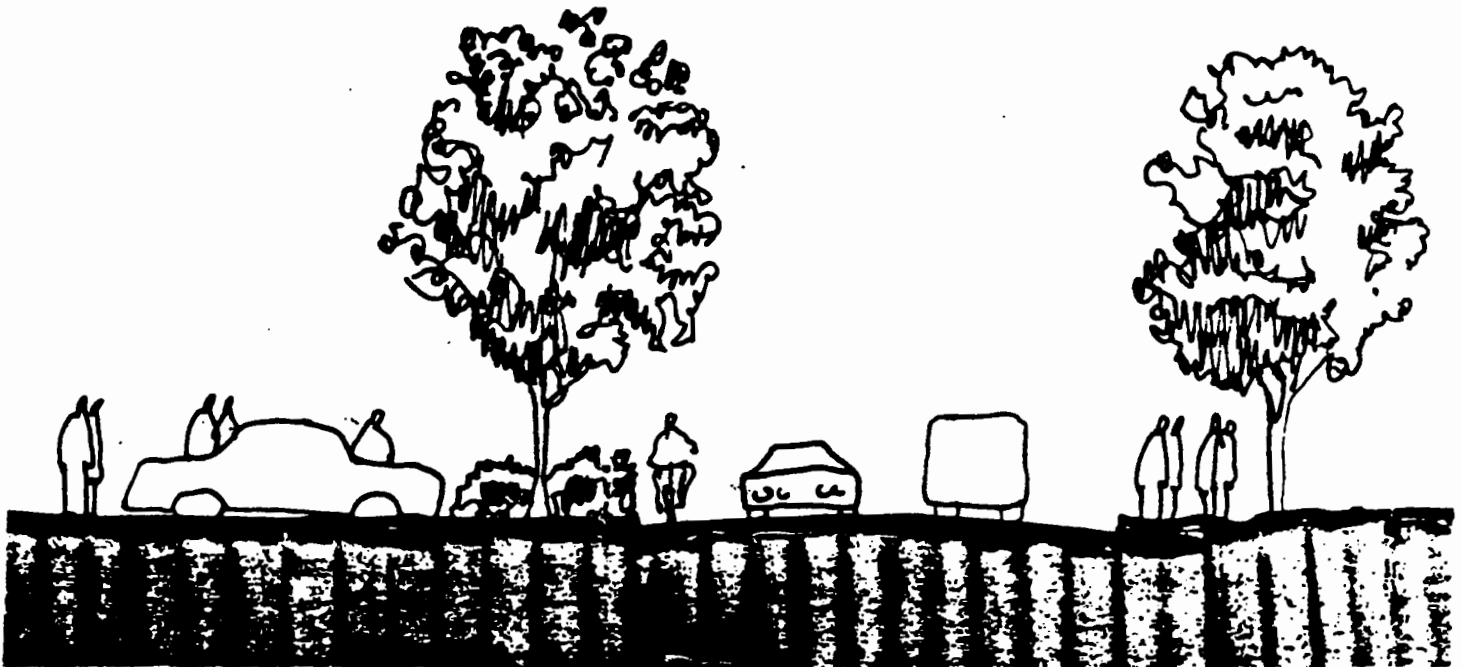


FIGURE 32 - STREET IMPROVEMENTS



FIGURE 33 - CURRENT STREETScape

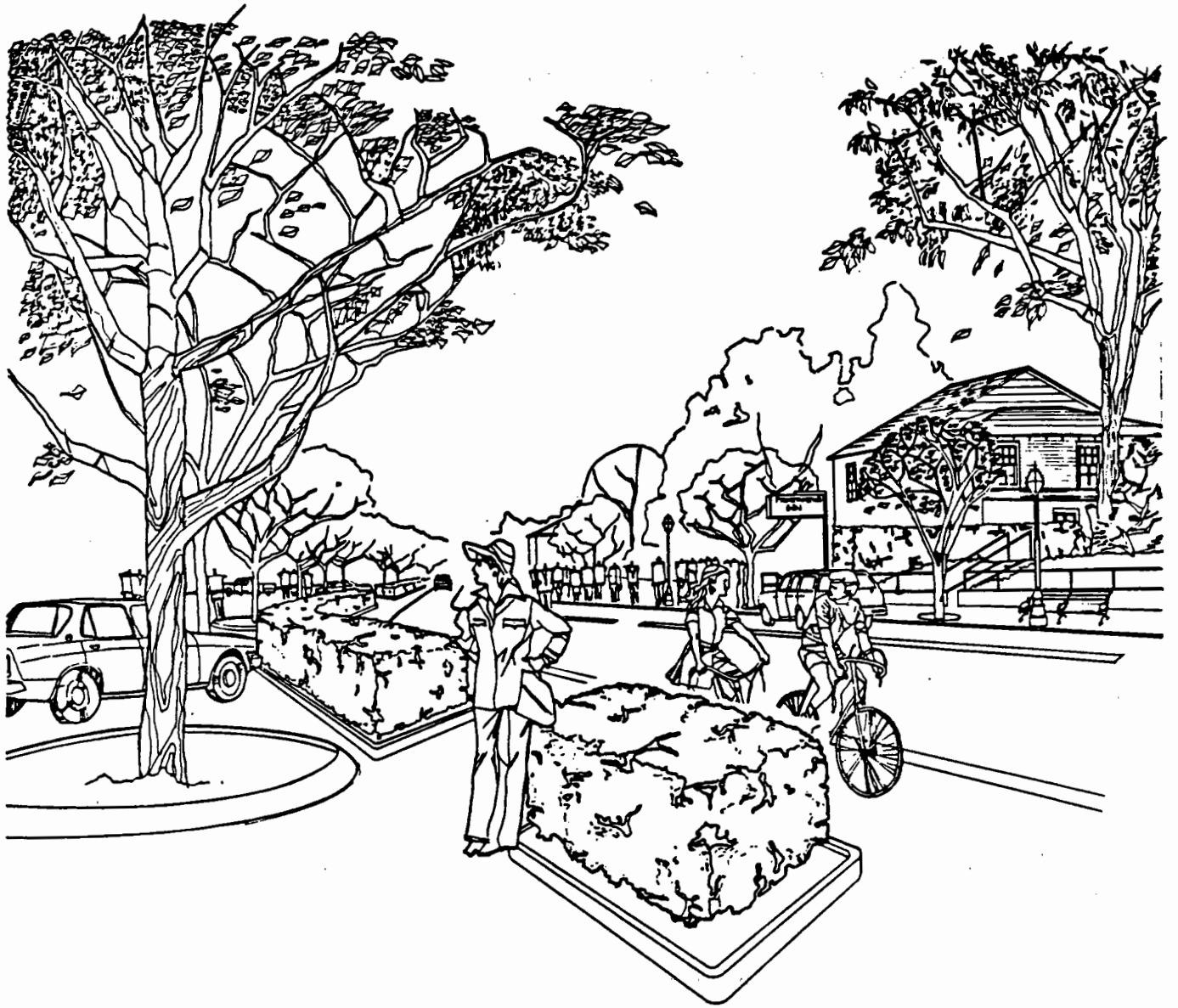


FIGURE 34 - PROPOSED STREETScape

2. Entrance to Solomons

Few first time visitors to Solomons Island know when they have entered the "island" area. The historic separation of island from peninsula is no longer obvious to the casual observer.

Solomons Tidebox

In order to begin to recreate a "sense of place" in historic Solomons and to provide an attractive, functional and historic entry-way, this Master Plan proposes modifications to make a more prominent and attractive bridge at the "tide box".

The following illustration attempts to recapture some of the steel/cast-iron feeling of bridge construction popular at the end of the 19th century. Reconstruction of the original wooden type of structure would be both impractical and undesirable.



FIGURE 35 - ENTRY BRIDGE

3. Bulkhead Along the Patuxent

The bulkhead along the Patuxent River has, in recent years, acted as an "attractive nuisance" at the heart of the historic area. While providing parking for many of the customers who visit the restaurants and shops along Solomons Island road, the bulkhead also has attracted overnight campers, boat trailers, and fishermen - adding to the problems of maintenance and policing. In addition, the only public restroom facilities are temporary rental structures located on the bulkhead at the entryway to Solomons Island.

Bulkhead Expansion

The bulkheading from the entrance of Solomons Island to Solomons Pier Restaurant will be expanded. An additional bulkhead south of the restaurant will be constructed.

Through careful design, this expanded bulkheading would provide additional parking, and a pleasant tree-lined walkway for pedestrians along the River.

Parking will be restricted to automobiles unless otherwise designated.

Fishing from the bulkhead, camping, car washing/polishing, and overnight parking will be prohibited.

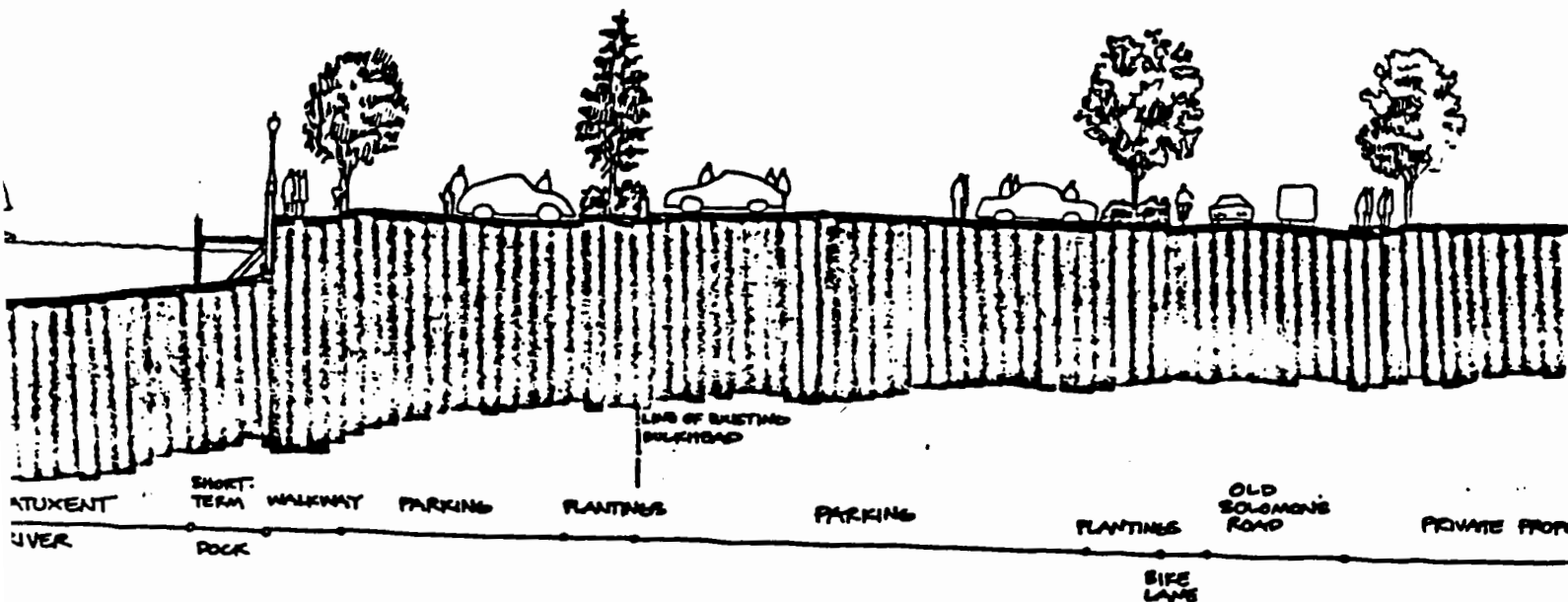
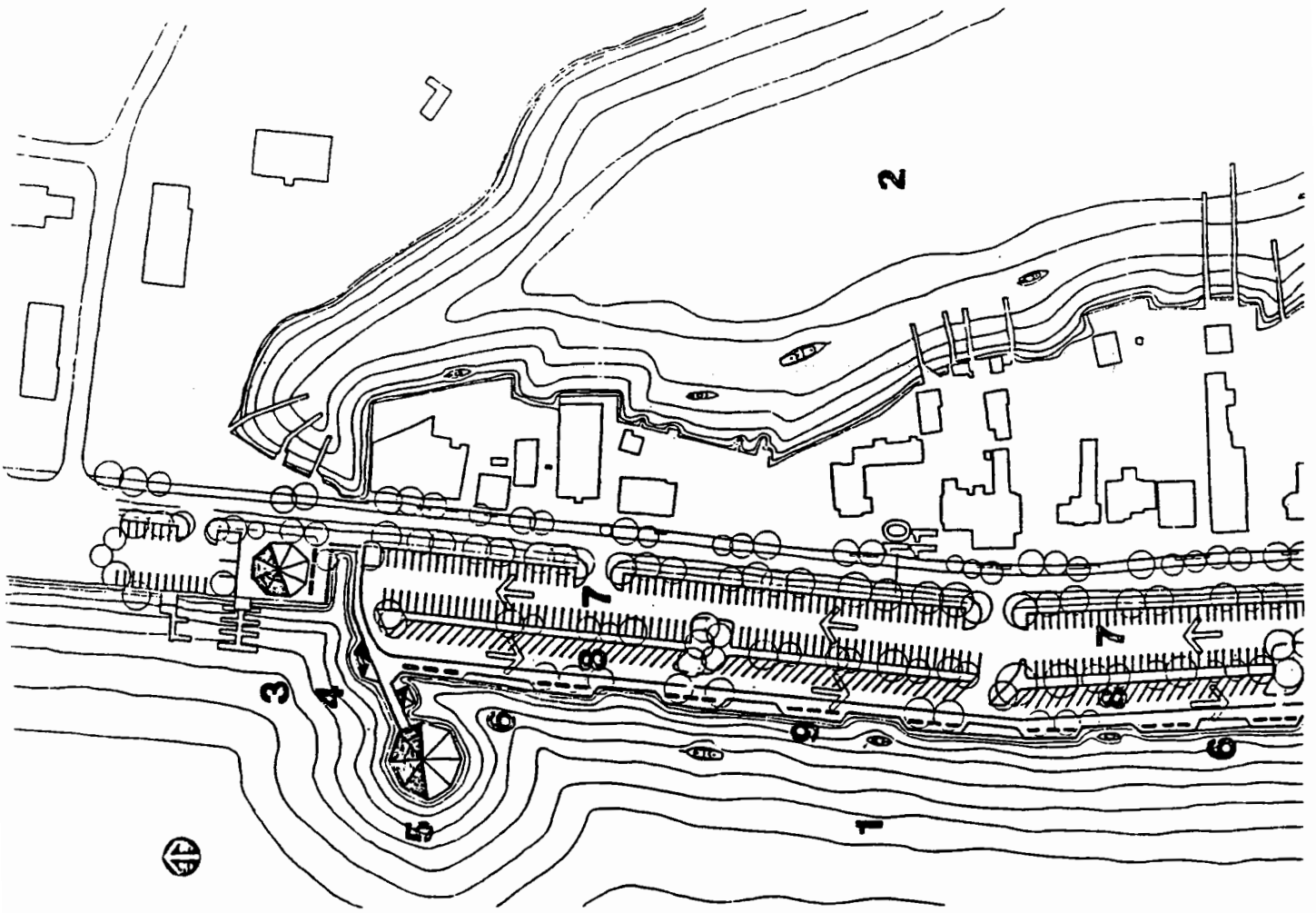


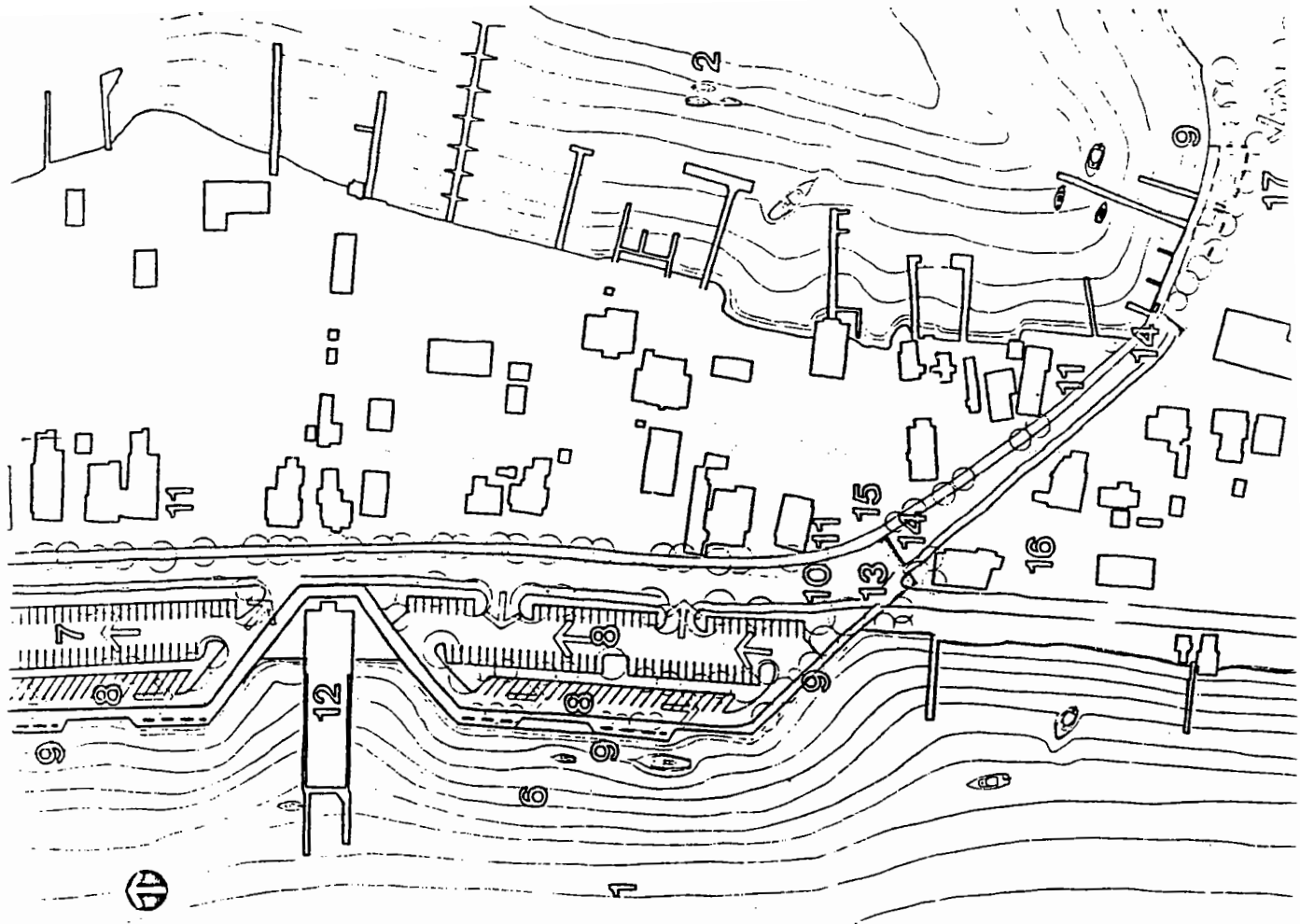
FIGURE 36 - EXPANDED BULKHEAD



KEY TO MAPS

- 1. Patuxent River
- 2. Back Creek
- 3. Concession/Bike Rental
- 4. New Bridge
- 5. Shopping Pier
- 6. Transient Mooring
- 7. Existing Parking Area
- 8. New Parking Area

FIGURE 37 - SITE PLAN OF EXPANDED BULKHEAD



9. "Riverwalk" Pedestrian Boardwalk
10. Bicycle Lane
11. New Sidewalk (Exposed Aggregate)
12. Existing Restaurant
13. Private Entry to Sandy Point Community
14. Crosswalk
15. Realignment of Street Curve
16. Sandy Point Residential Community
17. Landscaped Seating Area
18. Shops

FIGURE 37 - (CONTINUED)

4. Commercial Pier(s) Along Bulkhead

The historic commercial strip of Solomons Island is both land-locked and very narrow. There is today both interest and pressure from those holding riparian rights on the Patuxent River to construct privately owned and operated piers along the bulkhead. It is environmentally and aesthetically undesirable to permit the proliferation and duplication of private commercial piers along the public bulkhead.

Commercial Pier Moratorium

There are three very different opinions on what action should be taken to sustain and strengthen the commercial activity on Solomons Island.

- First, it is considered by some that it is both desirable and economically feasible to encourage the concentration of small scale retail facilities along the River's edge and that those holding riparian rights along the bulkhead should be allowed to construct their own private commercial pier once the public bulkhead is expanded.
- Second, there are those who agree with the basic desirability and economic feasibility of concentrating small scale retail activities along the River's edge, but they would have such a concentration limited to a single commercial pier, composed of a variety of shops, constructed near the Solomons tide box. Under this option, holders of riparian rights would be financially compensated and offered first rights to retail space on the Solomons commercial pier.
- Third, there is an opinion that small scale retail commercial activities should be held to the historic commercial strip of Solomons Island and areas along Solomons Island Road north of Lore Street. Under this option, holders of riparian rights would be compensated and there would be no further commercialization of the River's edge once the public bulkhead is expanded.

With the initial approval of this Master Plan and until more detailed planning of the expanded bulkhead is undertaken, a moratorium is established on the granting of building permits for new renovated commercial piers along the Patuxent River from the Solomons tide box south.

5. Comfort Station

Solomon Island needs a facility which will provide public restrooms near the heart of the historic core.

Solomons Town Center Comfort Station

Construct an attractive kiosk/pavilion near the site of the pumping station. The small area in front of the proposed facility would provide short-term (30 minute) parking.

6. Information Center & Bike Rental Facility

Calvert County needs a public facility which would provide information to residents and visitors. Moreover, it would be extremely useful to have a bike rental facility near the parking, so that visitors would be encouraged to leave their automobiles.

Solomons Town Center Information Center & Bike Rental Facility

At a suitable location within the Town Center limits, construct an attractive kiosk/pavilion to serve as an information and tourist facility. A bike rental facility at the same location would enable visitors to leave their cars or to walk from their boats and tour Solomons by bicycle.

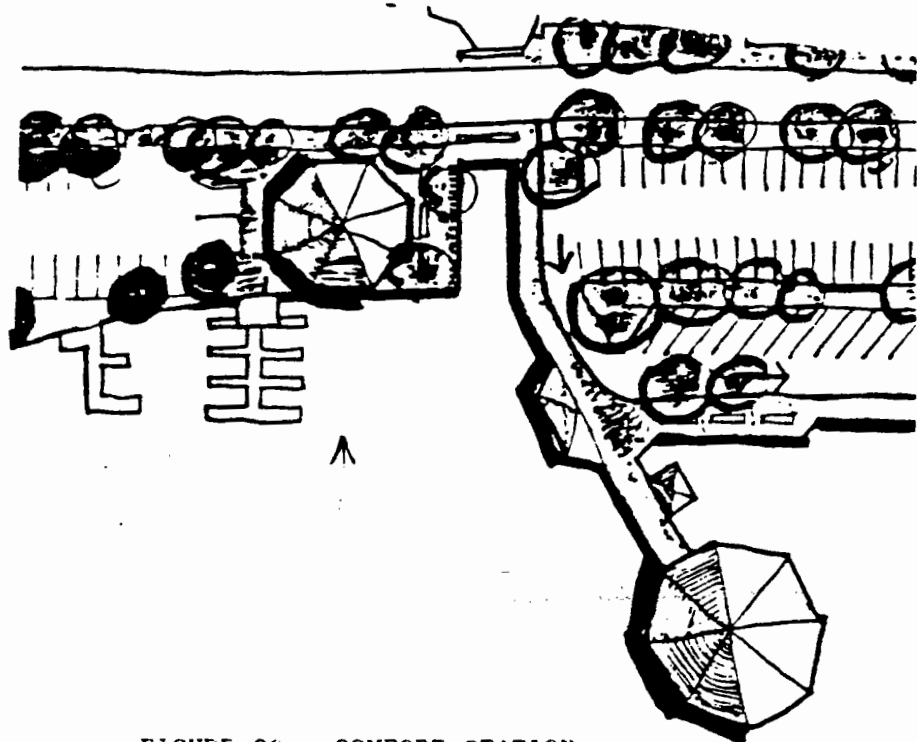


FIGURE 38 - COMFORT STATION

6. Sidewalks

The sidewalks in the Solomons area are in bad repair and, in many cases, do not exist. Not only does this condition constitute a hazard to pedestrians, but leads to a poor image of the area, particularly in those sections illustrated on the accompanying map, where many people receive their most lasting impression of Solomons.

In addition, a pleasant walking environment is needed to encourage museum and marina patrons to come on foot to the Island area.

Initial Town Center Sidewalks

A sidewalk will tie in the Solomons Annex Patuxent River Air Station with the proposed public boat ramp area under the Governor Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge and the Calvert Marine Museum with the scenic walkway on Solomons Island. It will progress down the eastern side of Solomons Island Road from Lore Street to the northeastern end of Farren Avenue.

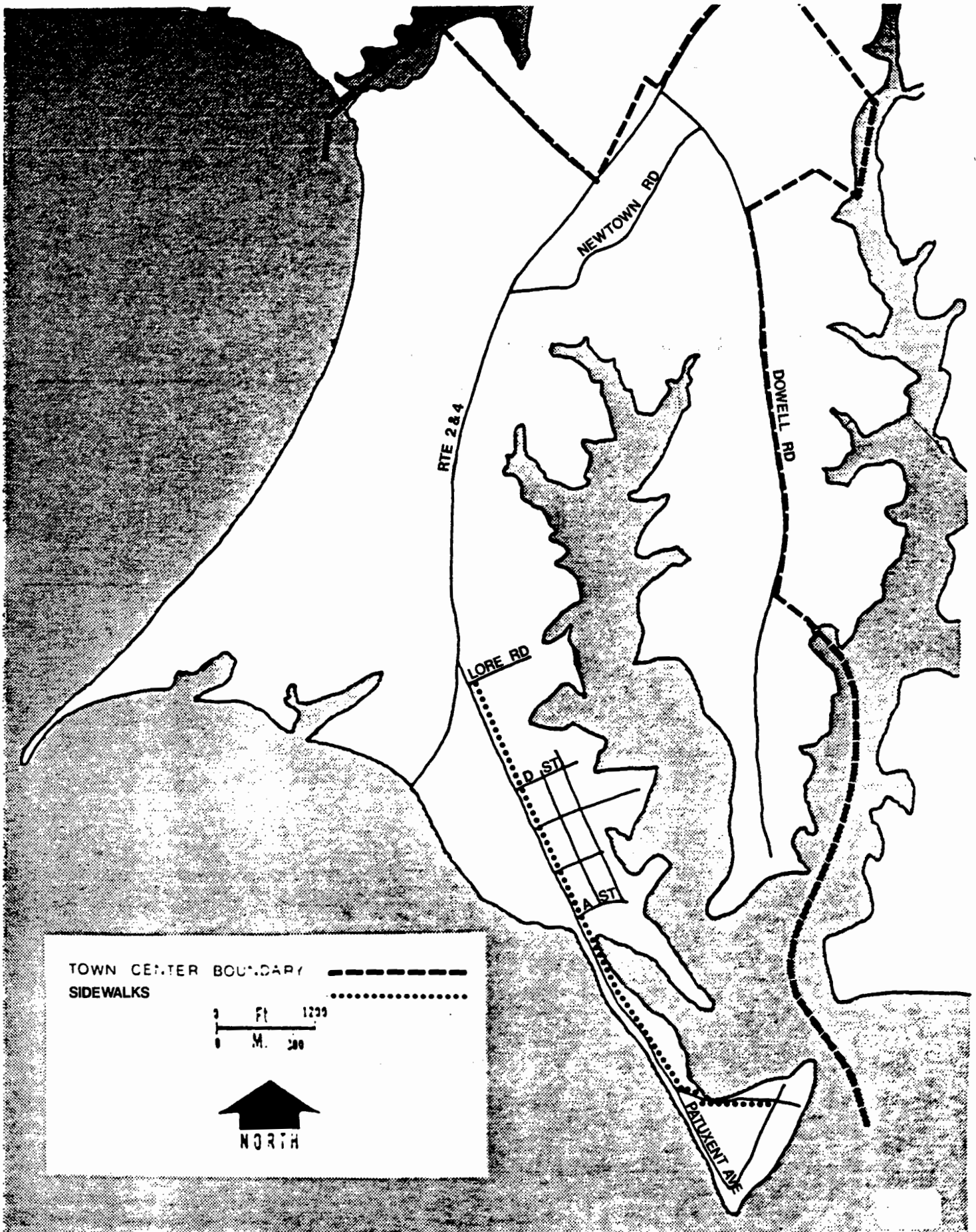


FIGURE 39 - MAP OF SIDEWALK
V-89

7. Bicycle Path

A major goal of this Master Plan is to alleviate automobile congestion in Solomons and to enhance the pleasant small town environment which currently exists.

Because of its basically level terrain, and relatively small area, the Solomons Town Center is naturally suited to recreational travel by bicycle.

There are several operations which could be united by such a bicycle path:

- a. the Solomons Annex Patuxent River Air Station,
- b. the Calvert Marine Museum,
- c. Zahniser's and Spring Cove Marinas, and
- d. the Chesapeake Biological Lab in the Sandy Point area.

Residents of any new development on the Dowell Peninsula could also benefit from such a network.

Initial Town Center Bicycle Path

A bicycle path for the entire Town Center area provides an alternative means of transportation. Such a path will connect the residential, recreational and parking areas with the historical core of solomons.

8. Underground Utilities

The presence of overhead utilities dramatically changes the skyline and clashes with the preservation and enhancement of the historic character of Solomons.

The scheduling of construction of sidewalks provides an opportunity to coordinate the undergrounding of the utilities with this construction, and achieve some cost savings.

Recommendation:

Underground the utilities in the historic Solomons commercial area and along the Solomons Island Road. While it is preferable that this be carried out as a single project, it may have to be accomplished in two stages because of cost. In that case, the first stage of undergrounding should concentrate on the area of Lore Street South.

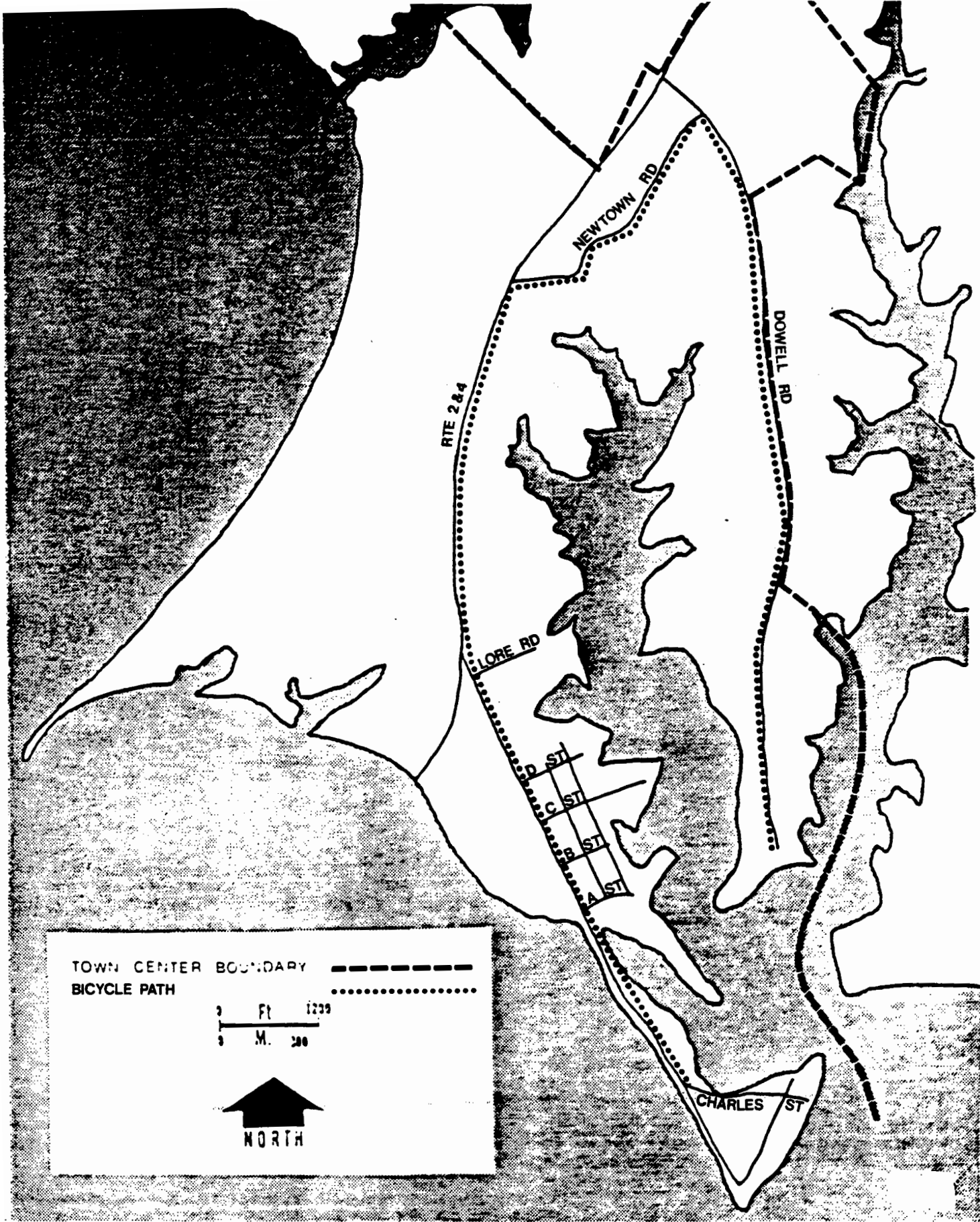


FIGURE 40 - BICYCLE PATH

9. Calvert Marine Museum Parking

Because of the increasing attendance and future expansion plans of the Calvert Marine Museum, additional parking for the facility will be required.

The museum currently leases land across Solomons Island Road for this purpose.

Expanded Museum Parking

Sufficient land should be purchased west of the Museum to provide both additional parking space and a bus turnaround. A clearly defined pedestrian crosswalk and traffic lights will be added for pedestrian safety.

10. Shuttle Bus Service

Mitigation of automobile congestion on the Island is a critical aspect of this plan. With the provision of public parking spaces at the new State Park under the bridge, it would be feasible to encourage some temporary parking at this site, if shuttle bus service to the historic core were available.

County Action:

The County should investigate the possibility of providing shuttle bus service to Solomons during the summer season. It should be clearly understood that this service will have to be subsidized to be effective. In order to encourage the greatest possible usage, this service should be either free, or at only nominal cost.

The principal stops on this shuttle circuit should include the Solomons Annex, Patuxent River Naval Air Station; the Calvert Marine Museum; the marinas on Back Creek; the "Riverwalk"; and the University of Maryland Biological Laboratory.

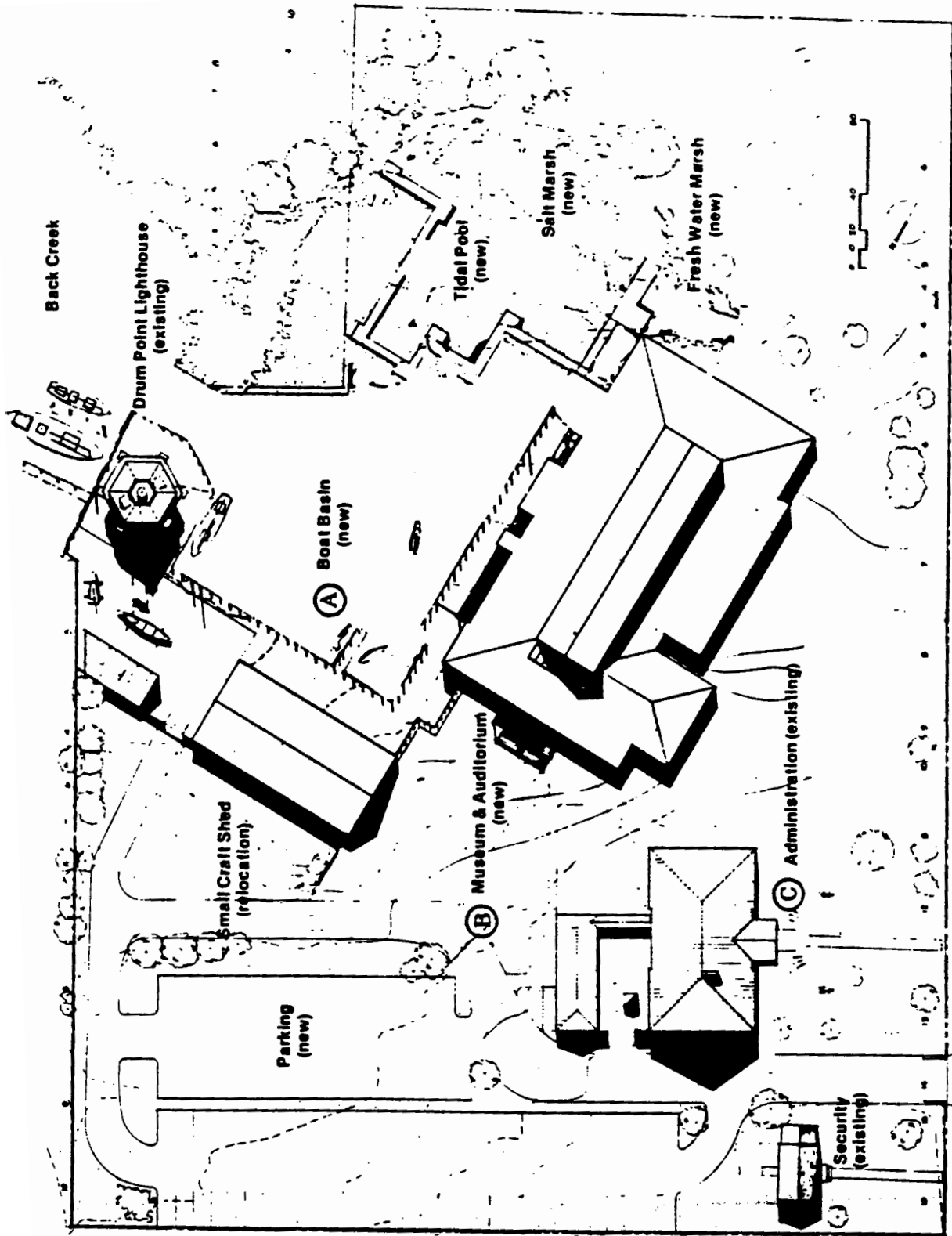


FIGURE 41 - CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM MASTER PLAN

11. Farren Avenue Turnabout

A significant portion of Island traffic follows Charles Street to Farren Avenue, with the result that many cars penetrate the residential area looking for an exit. In addition, many residents of Solomons enjoy the scenic view from Charles and Farren and need a facility for turning around.

The problem lies in the tight configuration of land and shore at the intersection of Farren and Charles.

Action: Initial Traffic Turnabout

It is proposed that the public street space, located at the northeastern tip of the Island in front of the University of Maryland Chesapeake Biological Laboratory docks and the commercial marina be immediately designated and stripped as a turnaround. While the turning radius is narrow, it is possible without any additional construction, for the largest size station wagon to make this turn without backing. This area is also the widest available space in public ownership in the vicinity. The turning radius would be improved, if a park is constructed here upon the removal of Moleys Island.

Appropriate signage (i.e., "No Fishing", "No Camping", "Do Not Enter - Local Traffic Only", etc.) would encourage all traffic to make the circle and not to turn right onto Farren Avenue. No parking would be allowed along Farren Avenue, north of Charles.



FIGURE 42 - PROPOSED FARREN AVENUE TURNABOUT

12. Harbor Protection Improvements

Solomons harbor is vulnerable to high wind and waves coming from the southeast. Considerable damage has been sustained at the Solomons Island Yacht Club and Inner Harbor Basin. Letters requesting harbor protection were registered with the planning office.

County action:

The Calvert County Commissioners should pursue a harbor protection design and construction financing via the department of natural resources boating waterway improvement fund.

C. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

1. Bridge Access Intersection Improvements

Movement by car onto Solomons Island Road from Route 2/4 can become very congested during peak summer periods. If the recommendations for public improvements provided in this plan are implemented, including the establishment of a park under the Governor Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge ramp and public parking across from the Museum, additional congestion can be expected to occur in the same vicinity unless improvements are made to allow better car access to Solomons Island itself. The right turn for traffic coming off the bridge wanting to turn south on Solomons Island Road is satisfactory most of the time but for traffic coming from the north on Route 2/4, the left turn and stop is confusing and difficult.

Action: Under Bridge Access to Route 2 South

Since plans are underway to realign Route 2/4 and convert it into a four lane divided highway, we recommend that the intersection be studied carefully by the Maryland Department of Transportation to determine the best way to provide access to Solomons Island Road and the park. For traffic coming from the north on Route 2/4, one possible solution is to provide a ramp turning to the right off the south bound lanes and crossing under the Johnson Bridge ramp to Solomons Island Road. Another possibility would be the construction of an overpass.

2. Street Signage

It is important to have clear street signs that identify all streets and give appropriate directional information. With the exception of signage along Route 2/4, current street signs in Solomons are not clear and are sometimes absent, making it difficult and sometimes impossible for visitors to know where they are going.

Action:

A sign showing street names will be placed at each intersection in Solomons. In some cases this may mean that decisions will need to be made about what name to use for each street. The main road from Dowell Road south shall be called Solomons Island Road. Other appropriate public signage will be installed including: speed limit signs in the residential and commercial areas; public parking and park directional signs; and activity or vehicle prohibitions (e.g., No Parking, No Camping, No Fishing).

3. Dowell Road

Substantial development in the southern portion of the peninsula might generate increased traffic on Dowell Road.

Action:

A traffic analysis of Dowell road should be done to assess future road improvement needs. Large scale development will generate substantial traffic along Dowell Road. Major improvements to the road will be required.

A bicycle/pedestrian path/walkway is to be recommended along Dowell Road to encourage bicycle use, promote pedestrian safety, and reduce car traffic.

4. Traffic in Planning Areas B & C

The traffic along Solomons Island Road, Charles Street and Farren Avenue has been of major concern, especially during the summertime. The area is a focus of recreation and business activity and as a result is the focus of traffic problems.

Action:

There are a number of recommendations that are included in this Plan that are designed to reduce traffic concerns:

- a. The designation of a parking area across from the Calvert Marine Museum for long-term parking. The availability of a shuttle bus and bicycle rentals for movement through the Solomons Island area.
- b. A location for parking of boat trailers and recreational vehicles near the Johnson Bridge.
- c. The designation of the park under the Governor Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge for fishing and the prohibition of fishing, camping, car washing/polishing and overnight parking along the bulkhead.
- d. The building of a sidewalk along the entire length of Solomons Island Road that continues along Charles Street and ends at the northeast end of Farren Avenue.
- e. The availability of a bicycle path which runs along Solomons Island Road.
- f. The suggestions for reducing traffic in the Sandy Point area through curb improvements, and signage.
- g. ~~The provision of a car turn-around on Farren Avenue to~~ reduce traffic through residential areas.

D. PARKING

1. Public Parking near the Governor Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge

There is a need for public parking in areas that are convenient to major arterials and are away from the busy recreational areas.

Action:

Identify the parking area across from the Calvert Marine Museum as a public parking location. The land could either be leased or purchased from the owner. The parking lot would serve the needs of the Calvert Marine Museum, act as a shuttle bus turn-around, and be a supplementary lot for the bulkhead parking on Solomons Island. A bicycle rental facility could also be located here.

2. Public Parking for Trailers

Currently the only public space for trailer parking is in the bulkhead parking area. With the implementation of public improvements along the bulkhead, it is recommended that trailer parking in that area be phased out over a period of years.

Action:

There will be a public boat launch in the park that is being proposed under the Governor Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge. Parking for trailers will be provided adjacent to the boat launch facility.

3. Bulkhead Parking

The bulkhead along the Patuxent River has provided parking for customers who visit the restaurants and stores along Solomons Island road, provided parking for fishermen who fish off the bulkhead and provided parking for boat trailers.

Action:

The bulkheading from the entrance of Solomons Island to Solomons Pier Restaurant needs to be expanded to adequately handle existing parking demands. An additional bulkhead south of the Restaurant should be constructed. This expansion and new construction would add between 30% and 40% more parking spaces.

Parking would be restricted to automobiles only, with the following single exception. Five transient boat trailer parking spaces each should be provided for the two existing businesses: H. M. Woodburn's and Dockside. Their use of these spaces would be allowed until the business or property changes hands or changes management or until five years after construction of the new bulkhead, at which period this exception should be re-evaluated.

No overnight parking would be permitted.

Public parking spaces on the bulkhead could be used to satisfy a portion of the parking requirements for commercial development or substantial commercial rehabilitation in Planning Subarea C1 only. A yearly fee would be established for the assignment of such parking spaces on the bulkhead.

E. RECREATION AND PARKS

1. Solomons Center Park

The State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources is developing land underneath the Johnson Bridge for a boat launching and trailer parking facility. The County has proposed using adjacent land for a park, and a boating and fishing pier. The park would contain picnic tables and comfort stations. The park would be an ideal spot for boating and fishing enthusiasts as well as visitors seeking a relaxing spot for a picnic. It would be away from the commercial and recreational activity of Solomons Island and yet would be convenient from Route 2/4.

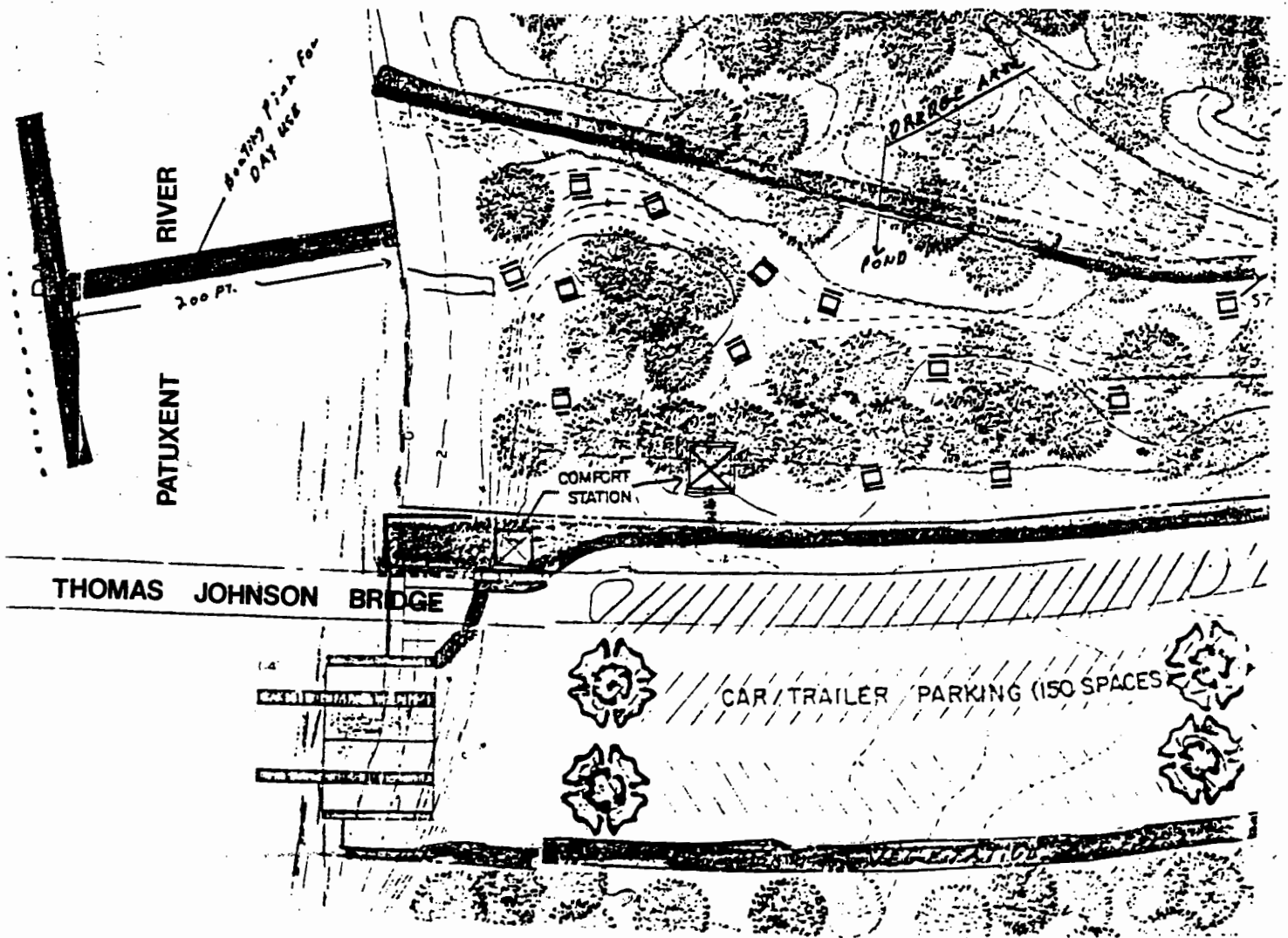


FIGURE 43 - SOLOMONS CENTER PARK

2. Solomons Community Park and Moleys Island

The history of the small island known as Moleys Island is filled with conflicting opinions - even to the appropriate spelling of the name. While these differences may date back beyond 1972, the earliest documentation available on the site was from the series of public meetings in 1972 which eventually determined the construction of the current island.

A growing number of citizens have advocated the removal of the island for the following reasons:

- a. Moleys Island adds to the congestion of a busy harbor.
- b. It creates navigational problems such as impaired visibility, confusion as to the proper course to take upon entering the harbor, and awkward harbor crossing patterns.
- c. The loss of navigation space around the harbor is considerably larger than the island itself, because of the under water berm used to support the island.
- d. Its removal would create needed navigational space in the harbor.
- e. After recent storms, property owners reported that Moleys Island is not an effective breakwater. Further, there is no documentation to show that it was intended for that purpose.
- f. In some cases, owners found that the island appeared to increase wave action.
- g. The island collapsed once during construction and was wired together with cables. Experts say that the cables have a limited lifetime and the island will have to be rebuilt within ten to fifteen years.

At the same time, a community park is needed in Solomons and there are few suitable locations. A park at the end of Charles Street would improve the vehicular turnaround and provide a place for Solomons residents to stroll.

County actions:

Request that agencies such as the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Marine Fisheries, and the Fish and Wildlife Service investigate the removal and relocation of Moleys Island to the northeast point of the island to create a landscaped park. Prior to moving the island, a harbor protection device would have to be constructed (see V-102).

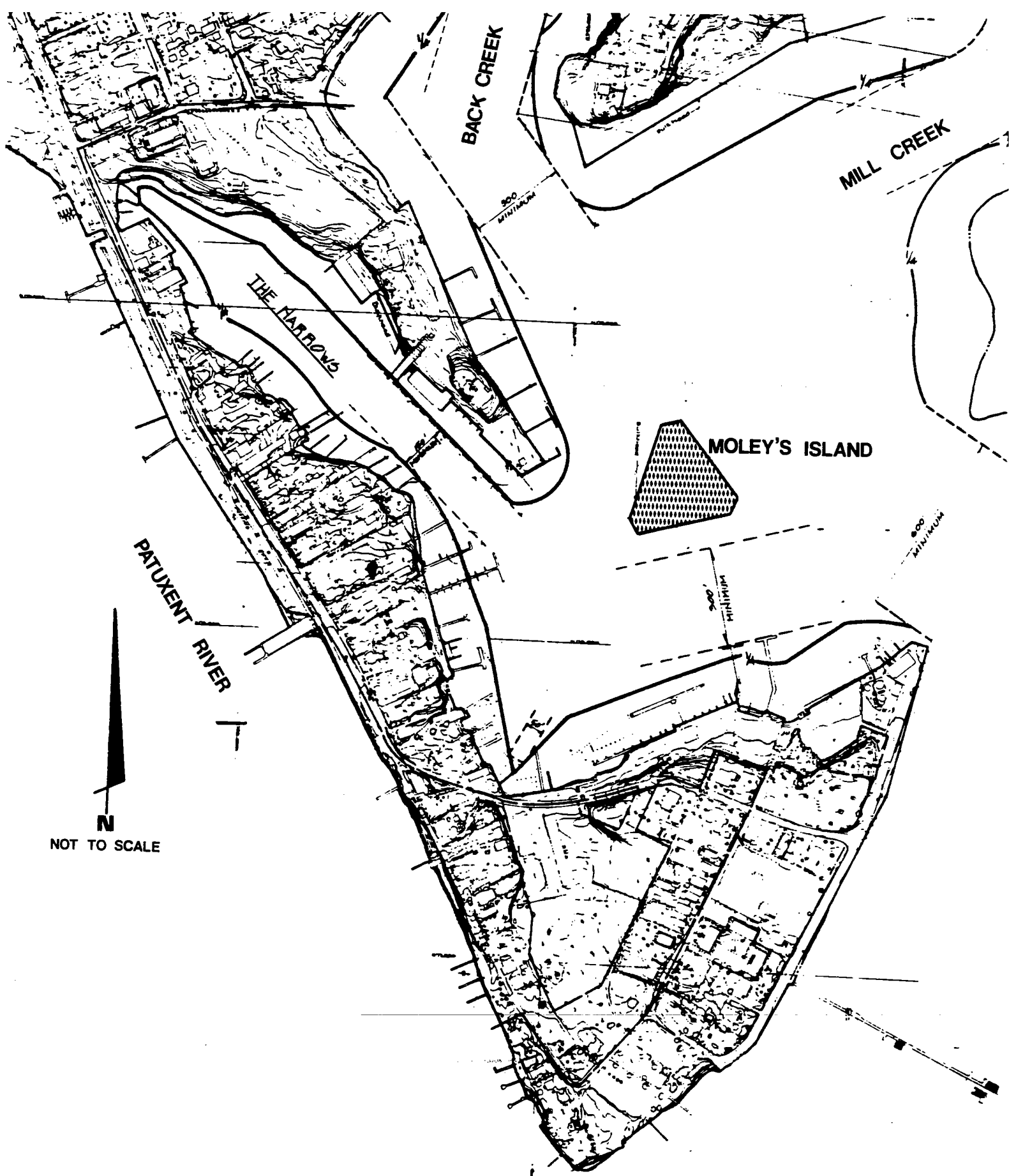


FIGURE 44 - MOLEY'S ISLAND

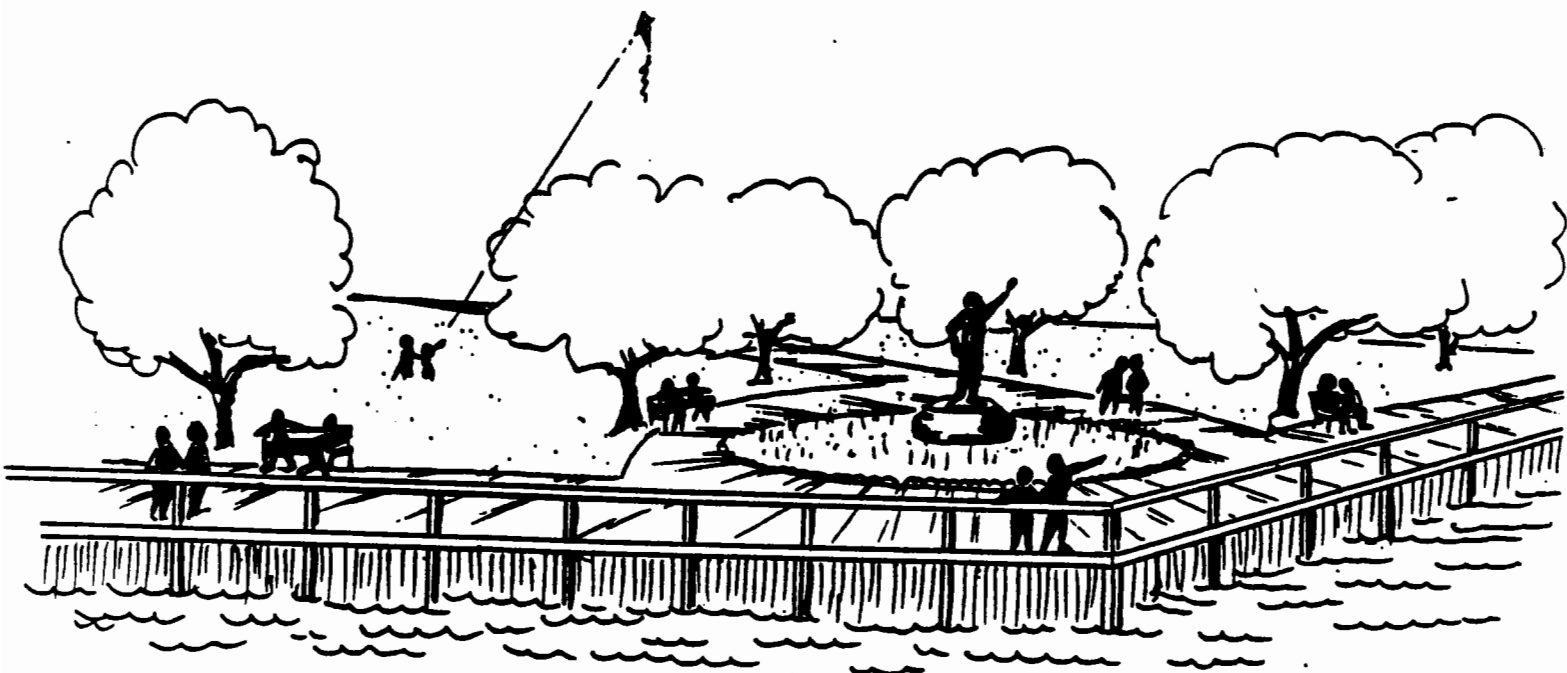
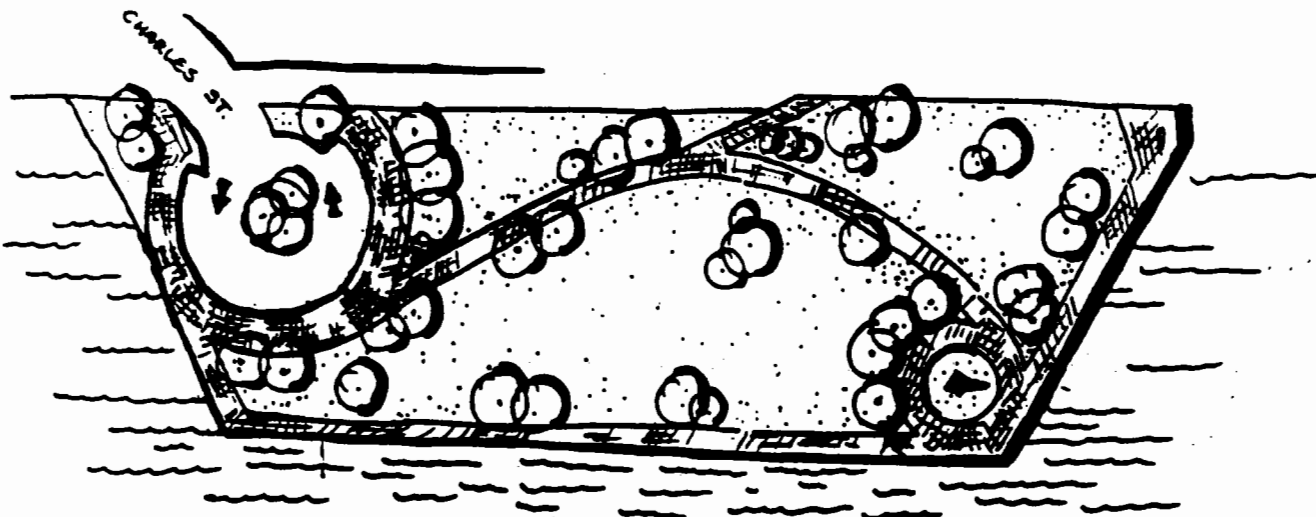


FIGURE 45 - SOLOMONS ISLAND PARK

TABLE B POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL DENSITY IMPACT - 6 unit per acre

POTENTIAL NUMBER OF TOWNHOUSE AND/OR MULTI-FAMILY UNITS	WASTE WATER GENERATION (225 gal. per unit per day)	SCHOOL NEEDS	TOWNHOUSE AND MULTI-FAMILY POPULATION (2.87 pph ¹)
At 6 Units Per Acre Density 3100 - 3600 ¹ D.U.	697,500 - 810,000 gal. per day ²	2 Elem. Schools 1 Middle School ¹ / ₂ High School	8900 - 10,300 people
EXISTING NUMBER OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS 341 D.U.	76,700 g.p.d.		1000 people

¹Assuming 60% to 70% of the total land area in Solomons Town Center is developed at this density

²Current total waste water capacity 500,000 gal. per day

These figures are for Townhouse & Multi-family units only. They do not include Commercial or Single Family Residential development