

The International City Design Competition

There are too few forums directed towards generating credible visions—that is almost an oxymoron—for the city of the future, especially those that encourage dialogue among the various groups responsible for planning, designing and building cities.

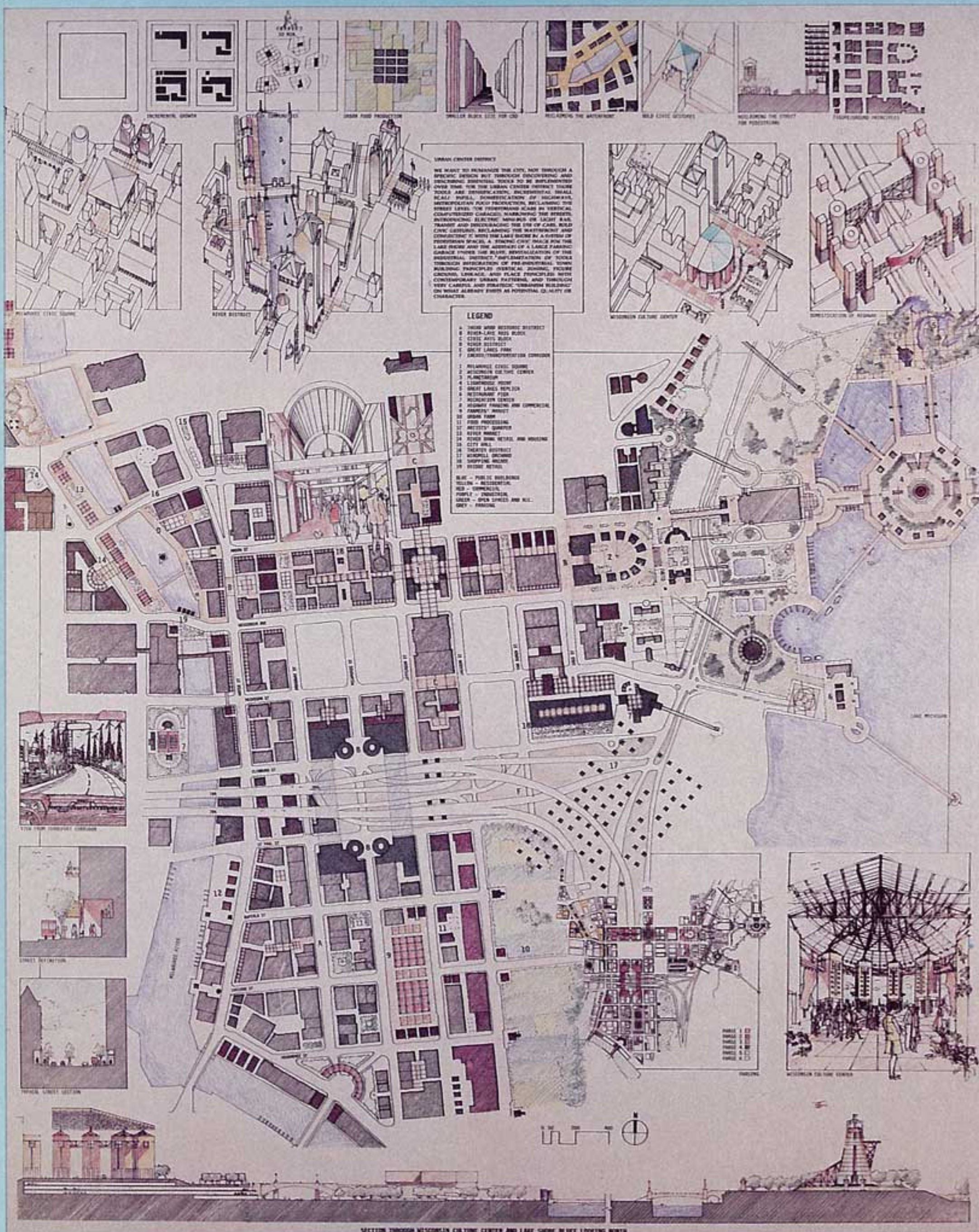
Politicians and public agency planners spend, with justification, most of their time, energy and money “fire fighting”—their tasks and efforts are defined by political situations, public opinion and economic forces. Rarely do they have the time and opportunity to develop long-term visions, plans and design alternatives based on realistic projections, or the luxury of reflecting on what ought to happen, given the opportunity.

As academics, my colleagues and I often ask ourselves if we do any better. As we teach professional skills, values and practices, are we introducing students to the political and economic realities that establish the constraints of the real world? When we define the planning and design problems for their studio work, are we insuring the projects will promulgate our personal values? That we have no answers to these questions is a source of great dissatisfaction to us.

By staging the International City Design Competition, we hoped to accomplish two things. First, we wanted interdisciplinary teams—including politicians, educators, planners, architects, social scientists and private developers—to address the problems and potentials of cities of the twenty-first century. Second, we wanted to move this discussion from the realm of fantasy and utopias and focus on a real place as it exists today and how it might exist in the next century. We thought Milwaukee, a nineteenth-century industrial city that is experiencing economic and social change, could be a prototype because it is familiar to us and is indicative of many places in the industrialized West. The ideas and concepts developed in the competition would be applicable to cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, Stuttgart and Liverpool.

The International City Design Competition was sponsored by the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, School of Architecture and Urban Planning. It was organized by Carl V. Patten, dean of SARUP, Associate Dean Lawrence P. Witzling and Jeffrey E. Ollswang. Places invited Ollswang and the jurors to comment on the lessons ICDC taught about city design.

All photos and graphics courtesy of ICDC, except Milwaukee map.



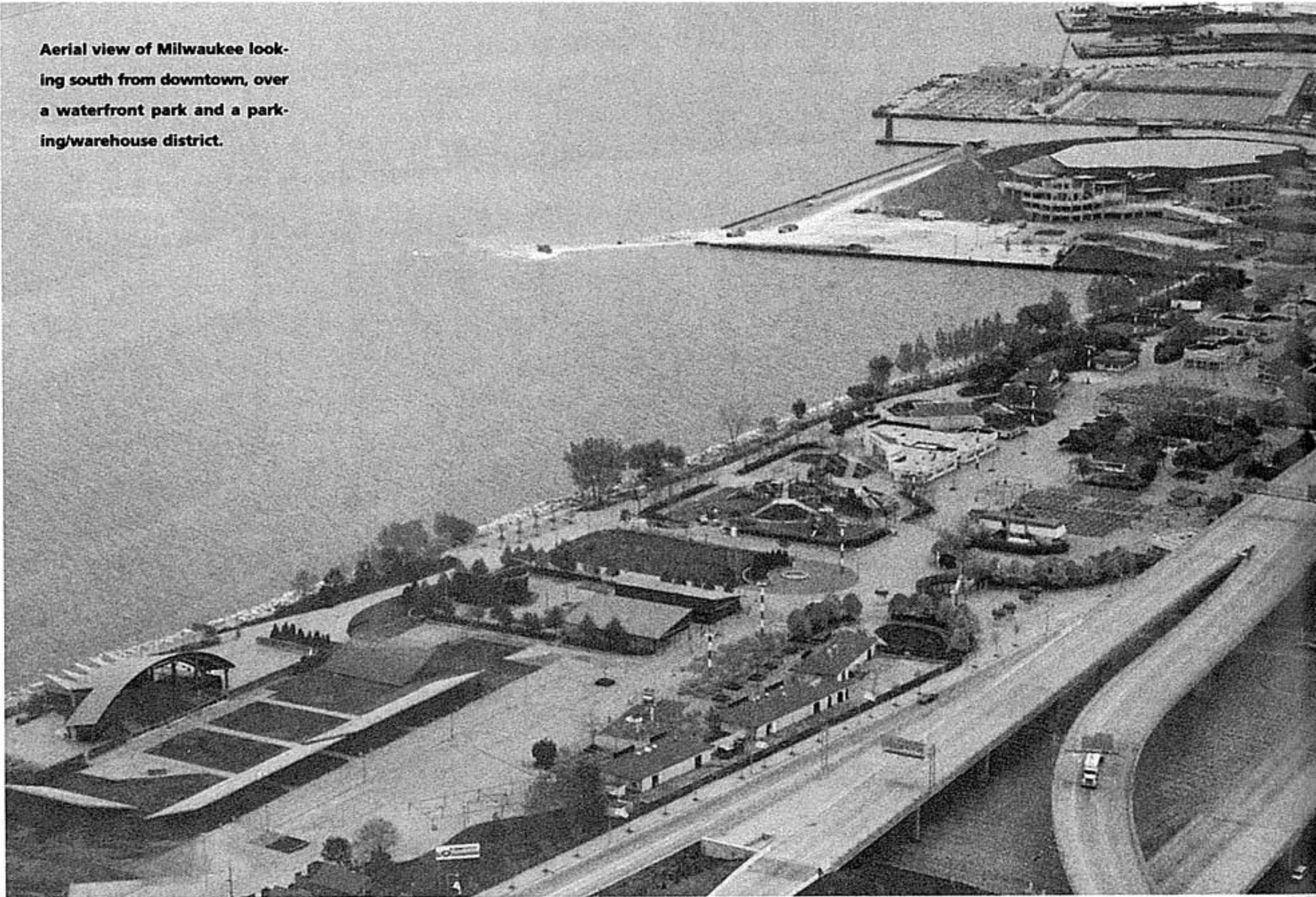
We want to humanize the city by discovering and describing essential tools to be implemented over time. For the Urban Center District, those are:

- Incremental small-scale infill.
- Domestication of highways
- Urban food production.
- Reclaiming street level for pedestrians.
- Narrowing the streets.
- Introducing electric mini-bus or light rail.
- Bold civic gestures.
- Reclaiming the waterfront and connecting it with the lake shore.
- Revitalizing the industrial district.

These would be implemented by using pre-industrial town building principles (vertical zoning, figure ground, linkage and place) and strategically building on what already exists as a source of quality of character.

Project team: Milosav Cekic, James L. Cormier, Anthony DeGrazia, Neal Hubbel, Niko Letunic, Roy B. Mann (Gold Medalist).

Aerial view of Milwaukee looking south from downtown, over a waterfront park and a parking/warehouse district.



People said Milwaukee is a conservative community and we would never be able to raise enough money to stage the competition, but we raised nearly half a million dollars, all from local, county and state sources: utilities, insurance companies, television stations, foundations and the Wisconsin Society of Architects. People who have participated in the building of the city and have a vested interest in it are a lot less cynical about the future, and it is a lot easier to make them think they can have a positive role in what is going to happen. It is not hard to convince people that they should be a part of the process.

How do you define the city of the future? Most people—including architects, planners and urban designers—envision places like those contrived for movies such as *Blade Runner*, places at which they can gawk and say “wow.” It was essential, though, that competitors did not spend their time predicting the future. Their effort was to be directed toward the creation of planning and design concepts based on a prepared set of predictive assumptions that were developed and presented as part of the program.

We approached the problem by thinking of what Milwaukee was like 15 years ago, how it has changed and what is likely to happen in another 15 years. We thought, if one of us were a developer or mayor, what would we like to see happen? What is likely to happen?

We generated various assumptions about economics, demographics, government policies and private investment from which the competitors could choose. We also established constraints. For example, it is unlikely that we could bring a Cyclopean developer into Milwaukee and say, “Here’s an eraser. You can start anew.” We figured enough land could be assembled, potentially, for four or five large projects downtown during the next 30 years. So it would be up to the competitors to determine if those would occur, where they should occur and what they would be.

The toughest thing was establishing the design problems, and I mean that in the broadest context. We know in a city like Milwaukee, if you take a map and put a pin where downtown is, then cut a wedge from that point out, you will include part of downtown, a mature residential neighborhood and the fringe or developing edge. So we decided those were the three prototype areas that should be addressed. The downtown site includes the lake front, harbor, part of the traditional commercial downtown and part of a close-in residential neighborhood. The mature neighborhood site includes parts of three neighborhoods, a railroad/industrial corridor, a creek and a parkway. The suburban edge is in the town of Oak Creek, nine miles south of central Milwaukee, and includes both a town center and undeveloped forest and agricultural land.



The assumptions and constraints made the task incredibly difficult for competitors. Although they predetermined the way in which we hoped competitors would think, they were meant to guide competitors towards a realistic set of criteria, not to constrain designs.

Interestingly, where we set the fewest constraints and guidelines, in the fringe or developing edge, competitors had the most problems. When you have enormous areas of farmland between Chicago and Milwaukee with a major highway and you tell them it is going to develop, many people do not know what to do.

Some of them did have good ideas. They recognized that Chicago and Milwaukee are growing together, so they proposed not a satellite city but a “village cross,” with a High Street, that could be noticed from the highway. Others said this is beautiful, rural land and it should remain undeveloped. It takes a lot of courage to say develop right along the highway and leave the rest for farmers. To be credible you need an economist and someone with the conviction that even though there may no longer be room for a quaint Wisconsin family farm, there is viable farmland left.

The competitors were best at working with the downtown and mature residential areas, probably because they are used to that. One area had a railroad running through it and a good park system with a little stream. You cannot realistically

remove the railroad. So they thought about how to bridge the right-of-way and make it more attractive, to make the little creek a real amenity and to weave together the railroad, commercial and light industrial uses with the residential. They did that sort of thing quite well.

Sometimes it is said we have no compelling paradigms that tell us how cities should be built. Did this competition turn up some new and astounding fundamental concepts of city design? If we had wanted that, we would have written to Walt Disney, because they are much better at it, or to people who are true visionaries in the best sense, or to a futurist.

Yet this competition reassured me it is possible to think about cities in a visionary way. And I am convinced this is the way to do it. We should have a competition like this every three years and each time pick a different type of city. The next one might be a city out of control, such as Mexico City, Cairo or Djakarta. Or it may be a city that has a thousand-year-old historic district that, because of some developmental pressures, is being destroyed. Not Athens or Rome, but some place like Dubrovnik or York. This can be the start of an ongoing dialogue, and get people talking.

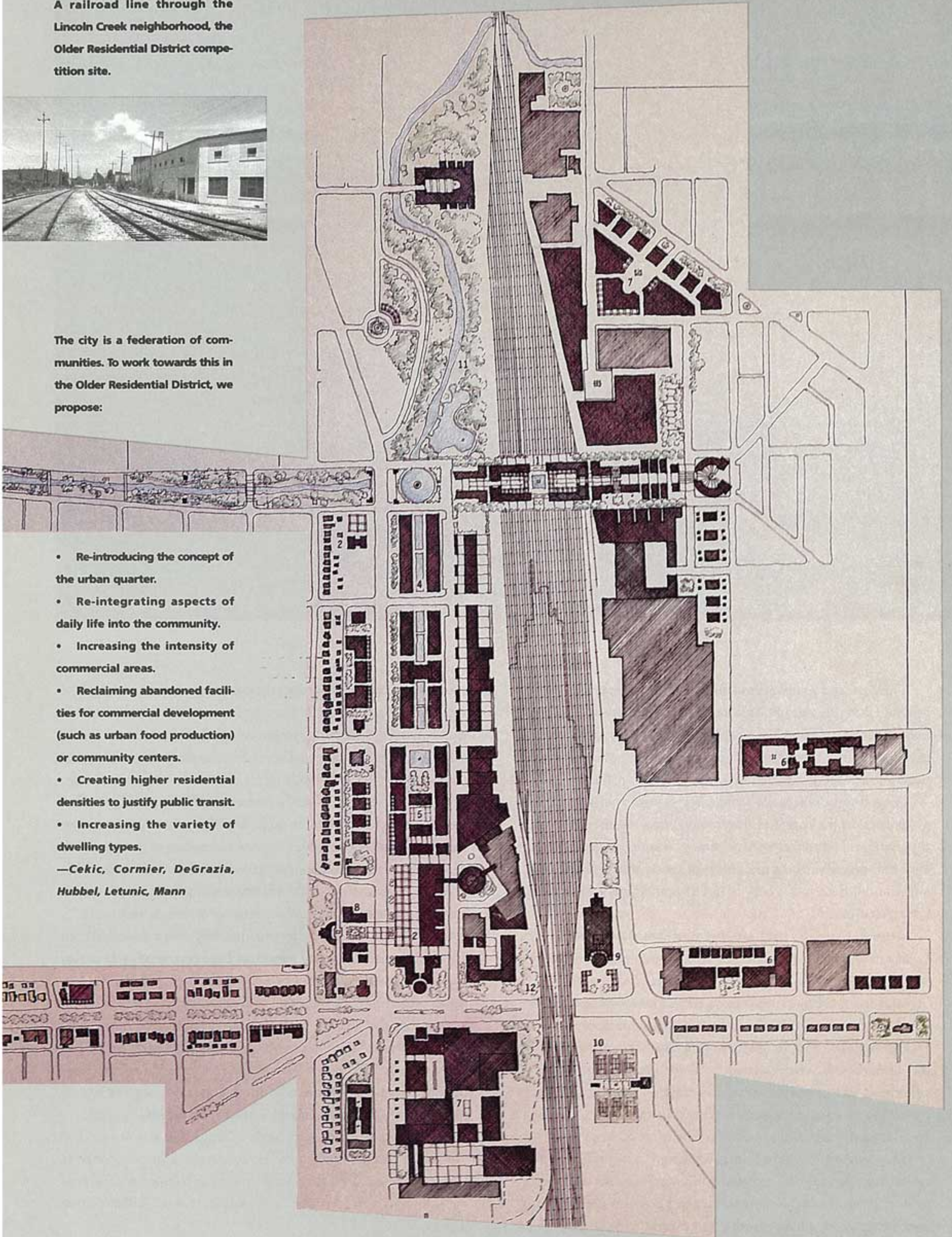
A railroad line through the Lincoln Creek neighborhood, the Older Residential District competition site.



The city is a federation of communities. To work towards this in the Older Residential District, we propose:

- Re-introducing the concept of the urban quarter.
- Re-integrating aspects of daily life into the community.
- Increasing the intensity of commercial areas.
- Reclaiming abandoned facilities for commercial development (such as urban food production) or community centers.
- Creating higher residential densities to justify public transit.
- Increasing the variety of dwelling types.

—Cekic, Cormier, DeGrazia, Hubbel, Letunic, Mann



Incremental Utopias

Allan B. Jacobs

The ICDC was a difficult and complex competition. It did not encourage or seem to ask for clear, imageable physical designs. Its substance was real, messy, complex urban areas and those who wrote the program were looking for complex solutions.

Competitors were required to focus on not one but three areas, each different from the other, each with its own very separate problems and challenges, each distant enough from the others that their physical, social inter-relatedness was not always clear. Only one area, at the urban fringe, offered a reasonably clean slate for designers to really exercise their hands and for that one it was not at all clear that any development and therefore any design was appropriate.

Entrants, to a point, were asked to choose their own programs (albeit from a pre-prepared palette). The organizers invested considerable effort in presenting presumably rational program options for competitors to consider: slow growth versus fast growth, more or less money available, greater or lesser public investment, and so forth.

Yet, the connection between choice and physical consequence was not always clear. This requirement might well have proven frustrating. Diagrams might have provided a solution, the kind of verbal pictorial cartoon that makes clear intended relationships between the city, region and socio-economic conditions, the kind of clear diagram that Ebenezer Howard used to present his garden city ideas.

Entrants also were asked to form interdisciplinary teams. Bringing together an interdisciplinary team might not be so easy, except at a physical place where diverse disciplines exist at one location. Think about how designers actually prepare competition entries—in one central office or place with drafting boards and the tools of the designer, often after regular working hours and with a team of people who are known to each other and can and do come together regularly (perhaps one senior designer and a group of juniors).

Remember also that the products, on three boards, were to be physical, imageable drawings, something to attract the eye and then, via those physical images, to make mental connections to socio-economic ways of living, both past and present. With that kind of product, the person who holds the drawing pencil is king. Even if an interdisciplinary team is put together, the leadership is likely to be with the designer.

One might have expected the competition would be inviting to groups from universities, particularly of students working with one or two professors. The competition seemed made for an interdisciplinary design study done as a semester's

work in a required course. My bet is that's who entered in large numbers. If that's right, it would explain the large number of naive and unsophisticated entries.

There wasn't any problem coming up with three winners, but the fact that we couldn't really fill the slots allotted for medalists is instructive: few outstanding ideas at even one of the scales, and fewer still that were able to integrate a vision and some kind of coherent point of view or philosophy with actual designs, at all three scales.

It would do us well to reread something like Kevin Lynch's "place utopia" in his book *Good City Form* and then say "What would such changes mean in terms of initial changes to the urban physical environment?" I recall only one entry that really did that. It embraced an urban vision that looked to ecological and environmental responsibility, logically proposing truck gardens (maybe even small farms) in or adjacent to the most central location and looking at alternative energy sources, in this case, wind. It used the windmills as the visual focal point entering the center: better, I think, than the seemingly inevitable high rises.

Perhaps competitors understand that the enthrallment with large projects, ones that are sponsored by big government or big business and result in large land holdings controlled centrally by few very wealthy people, has been misplaced, is simply not appropriate and rarely results in good urban design. But, incrementalism and modesty of scale rarely make for eye-catching graphics. Competitors had difficulty communicating ideas that were not physically large, even though they might foretell a more appropriate urban lifestyle and image.

One might have expected a lot more focus on streets: alternative designs, rearrangements, landscape solutions, transitions between buildings and public ways. Streets still take up from 25 percent to 35 percent of all developed land. But transportation technocrats continue to engineer fewer and larger streets and block with even fewer intersections.

What was positive about the designs at the urban edge was that we didn't see the bevy of high-rise point towers or long, long slabs that so characterize the outskirts of many European cities. Thanks for that. At same time, competitors had the most difficulty at this scale and location. Maybe that means designers have given up any real hope of designing real places at the urban fringe, places instead of sprawl. If that's so, then it is a terrible commentary on the ineffectiveness of urban planning and of our political will. Out of just such a malaise might come some renewed dedication to the notions of urban limits and to dealing with the edge and the interrelationships between urban and non-urban life. If the competition could serve that end, and that's a lot to ask, it will have served a useful purpose.



Solutions in Search of a Problem

Amos Rapoport

Two things influence the comments that follow. First, I was a member of the committee that developed the program as well as a member of the jury. Second, on both I represented a different view of design, predicated on research-based knowledge derived from environment-behavior studies (EBS) and a variety of related disciplines. These comments, therefore, address some general and very important issues that I raised during the program committee meetings but could not address during the jury process. In fact, they are based on notes I made while on the jury knowing that I would not be able to use them there and then.

The program asked competitors to select a future involving assumptions about a variety of economic, occupational, educational, demographic and similar variables. Proposals were to be derived from these assumptions. To me that meant an acknowledgement that design, particularly of cities, cannot be arbitrary and subjective, but is a serious problem-solving activity. I therefore, expected an explicit chain of reasoning and inferences leading from the setting of explicit objectives based on the assumptions, and the use of research-based knowledge, to proposals satisfying these objectives. After all, one can hardly judge whether a thing is done well unless one knows what it is supposed to do—and why.

From that perspective the entries were generally disappointing. Lacking were clear objectives— notions of what things should be like and why—and any link between assumptions and proposals.

Competitors checked the assumptions but seemingly ignored them, proceeding in the usual non-explicit, arbitrary way to manipulate shapes and spaces, buildings and vegetation. The few who did engage in serious analysis also ignored the assumptions and either neglected proposals or made proposals that neither derived from nor emerged from the analysis. As a result there was no clear rationale for decisions, no clear or explicit goals, nor any possibility of justification of any goals—even if one could infer them. The lack of chains of reasoning, of explicit linkages among assumptions, data, relevant research and proposals made it difficult, if not impossible, to analyze, discuss and, hence, evaluate the proposals rationally.

Even the problems were never identified—and unknown problems cannot be solved. Yet problems could be derived from the assumptions. For example, the assumptions selected by each competition team would lead to a certain distribution of population groups. These population groups could be expected to have certain lifestyles leading to the need for cer-

Project team:

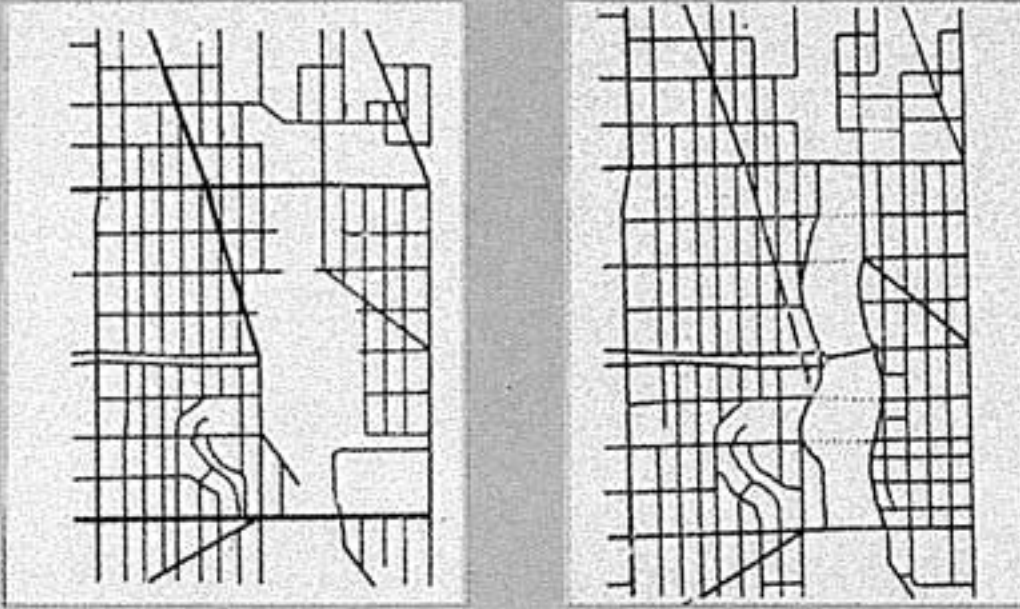
Santiago Abasolo, Simon Atkinson, Wayne Attoe, Robert Mugerauer (Gold Medalist).

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Two distinct areas are proposed for the park:

- The "lake," a very open area with long vistas and a bridge for the railroad.
- The "forest," a heavily wooded area with more intimate spaces and a network of paths that link different areas of use.

Informal or more picturesque open spaces would be defined by tree masses that link these two areas and specific sites for sports fields. The edge of the park would be defined by some of the existing residential areas as well as by new housing units, which are defined as "urban villas" and provide a visible edge to the park while preserving a "permeable" quality for the residential area.



An integral component of planning for the Older Neighborhood District is re-evaluating the street system:

- The existing street grid would be extended to the edge of the new park.
- New residential blocks would be half the size of existing blocks to allow better public access to the park from the residential areas.
- Two curvilinear streets would mark the edge of the park.
- An existing street would be continued through the park and under the railroad.
- A network of pedestrian paths would be provided in order to link the lake area with places for sports activities, small squares at the end of streets and the proposed transit station.



Lincoln Creek passing through the Older Neighborhood District competition site.

tain facilities for instrumental supportiveness and certain meanings, imagery, etc., for supportiveness of latent functions. The degree of variability of environments follows from the projected diversity of such groups, their sub-cultures and resulting lifestyles. From this, desirable environmental quality profiles can be inferred with certain attributes expressible through a set of facilities, forms, shapes, spaces, colors, vegetation, linkages and so on.

One way in which this can be done is through scenarios. These enable thinking in scenes and hence settings which can be illustrated in three dimensions. This was why the program asked for such illustrations. Scenarios enable social, demographic and cultural assumptions to be related to proposals, avoiding the problem of "planners' people."¹ Not doing so leads to abstract and vacuous proposals because competitors do not consider the likely inhabitants, visitors and users of settings. It follows, as is so often the case, that such illustrations were used mainly as decoration or window-dressing—like the assumptions made.

As I have long argued, competitors seemed to launch immediately into manipulating shapes and spaces, buildings and vegetation; they seemed to be concerned with how to do things, neglecting the far more important questions: what are the problems and hence what should be done and why? Although the program tried very hard to make them address these questions it did not succeed.

It was also clear from the program, as it should be generally, that adequate design, especially of cities, cannot be done by designers alone, even those with some knowledge of EBS. Hence, entrants were encouraged to form interdisciplinary teams involving planners, social scientists and EBS specialists as well as designers. While I still have no data, I doubt that such teams were in fact formed. If they were, the approaches and knowledge of other disciplines did not visibly (and certainly not explicitly) influence the proposals. That seems to support my position that mainstream designers are unwilling and probably unable to use knowledge and others' expertise. In fact, it has been shown that even when research is done by designers themselves it is not used in design.²

All these shortcomings not only weakened the proposals for Milwaukee but made transferability much less likely—or even impossible. I doubt that it was even considered. Certain local, specific and idiosyncratic features dominated (while others, such as climate, were generally ignored) but no apparent consideration was given to Milwaukee as an exemplar of a class of declining, nineteenth-century industrial cities—as had been intended. Needed were generic approaches (and even proposals) modified by local specifics. To give just one example, the emphasis on the lake front and the river should have

Cities of Culture, Cities of Places

Carlos Tejeda

The problem that inspired the competition—the lack of dialogue about the city of the future—seems as evident in the case of Milwaukee as it is in the case of a metropolis many times more problematic, like Mexico City. The complexity and fragmentation of urban government precludes the possibility of sustaining a continued dialogue capable of producing general and plausible concepts for the not-so-distant future.

The ICDC has been a unique and very valuable endeavor, supported in good measure by the excellent program prepared by the organizers. It has been a success in terms of response to the competition because there were around 240 entries from a wide variety of countries. But concerning the nature and quality of the projects, the results are not easy to assess.

In spite of the program's emphasis on the idea of credible visions and the practical nature of time frames of 20 to 30 years into the future, many entries, perhaps more than half, were complete flights of fancy, often belonging in the realm of "eco-fantasy." Some of these were undoubtedly interesting scenarios of far distant futures, or just strong images of the unreal contrived to expand the limits of the imaginable. But too many were only shallow abstractions of the nature of the city and life in general, where a vague notion of ecology seemed to matter much more than urban structure and design.

This is very meaningful because it indicates a rejection, or ignorance, of the idea of the city as a fundamentally cultural entity, as human and material concentration in contrast with nature. It means also that many competitors evaded the question of dealing with the city's specific problems in design terms. Maybe part of this vacuum was indirectly caused by one of the few questionable assumptions of the program, that the proposals for Milwaukee could be applicable to other similar cities. As it turned out, the best projects made very particular proposals for specific sites in Milwaukee. Their applicability to sites other cities is valid only at the level of general principles and concepts.

Suburban sprawl was a basic concern that was countered with the need for effective containment; therefore, the process of urbanization of the urban edge was transformed in proposals for new types of suburban housing integrated with new industry and agriculture and by the use of the fringe for parks, recreation and environmental management.

The problem of regenerating old neighborhoods produced many interesting ideas and was the theme most successfully

developed by the majority. Most competitors seized the opportunity to reuse Lincoln Creek, the railway lines and the old industrial land. The proposals included the creation of a large park, the use of the river to create a lake and ponds and the treatment of the waterfront as a very valuable element in itself. The social and economic fabric of the neighborhood was strengthened by the creation of new industrial uses and jobs in vacant industrial sites; the introduction of local shops, market and schools; and generally, the creation of new neighborhood places.

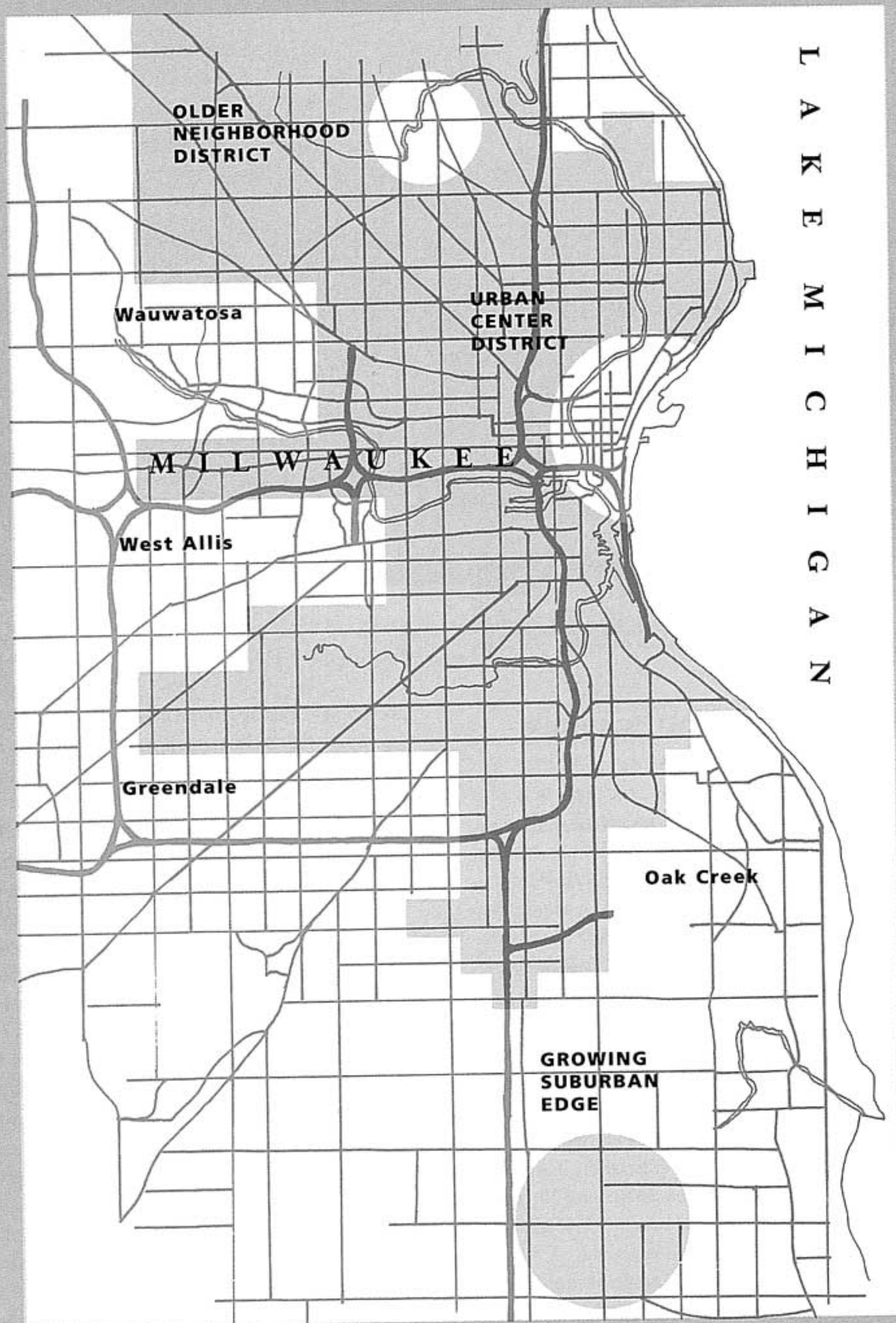
The revitalization of the city center was dealt with rather loosely. The stronger ideas were for the use and design of the river front, the rediscovery of downtown housing and the need to strengthen the axis along Wisconsin Avenue between the river and the lake. But there were only two or three projects that understood clearly the need to link the heart of downtown with the edge of the lake.

In general, there seems to be a lack of understanding for the need for civic or ceremonial spaces, for monuments, for well-defined places. Maybe it's not in the culture anymore.

It is difficult to judge if interdisciplinary approaches contribute to the substance of submissions, since the identity of the competitors remained unknown to the jurors. But in the end substance is a product of strong minds, interdisciplinary or not.

The insights that arise through design, particularly through competitions such as this, must enter public discussion and policy. To do this we need to make these issues part of public education; we must invite and commit the politicians and officials (they were absent from this competition); and we must convince them and the community to get some of these proposals actually built, as examples.

If we judge the state of the art in city design based on this competition, it is fair to say that the state is delicate. There is a lot of fanciful escape from the problem. On the other hand, the works of quality are not opening new frontiers into the next century. They are returning to classic principles of design, to the basic forms of urban life that seem to work well time after time.



L A K E M I C H I G A N

OLDER
NEIGHBORHOOD
DISTRICT

Wauwatosa

URBAN
CENTER
DISTRICT

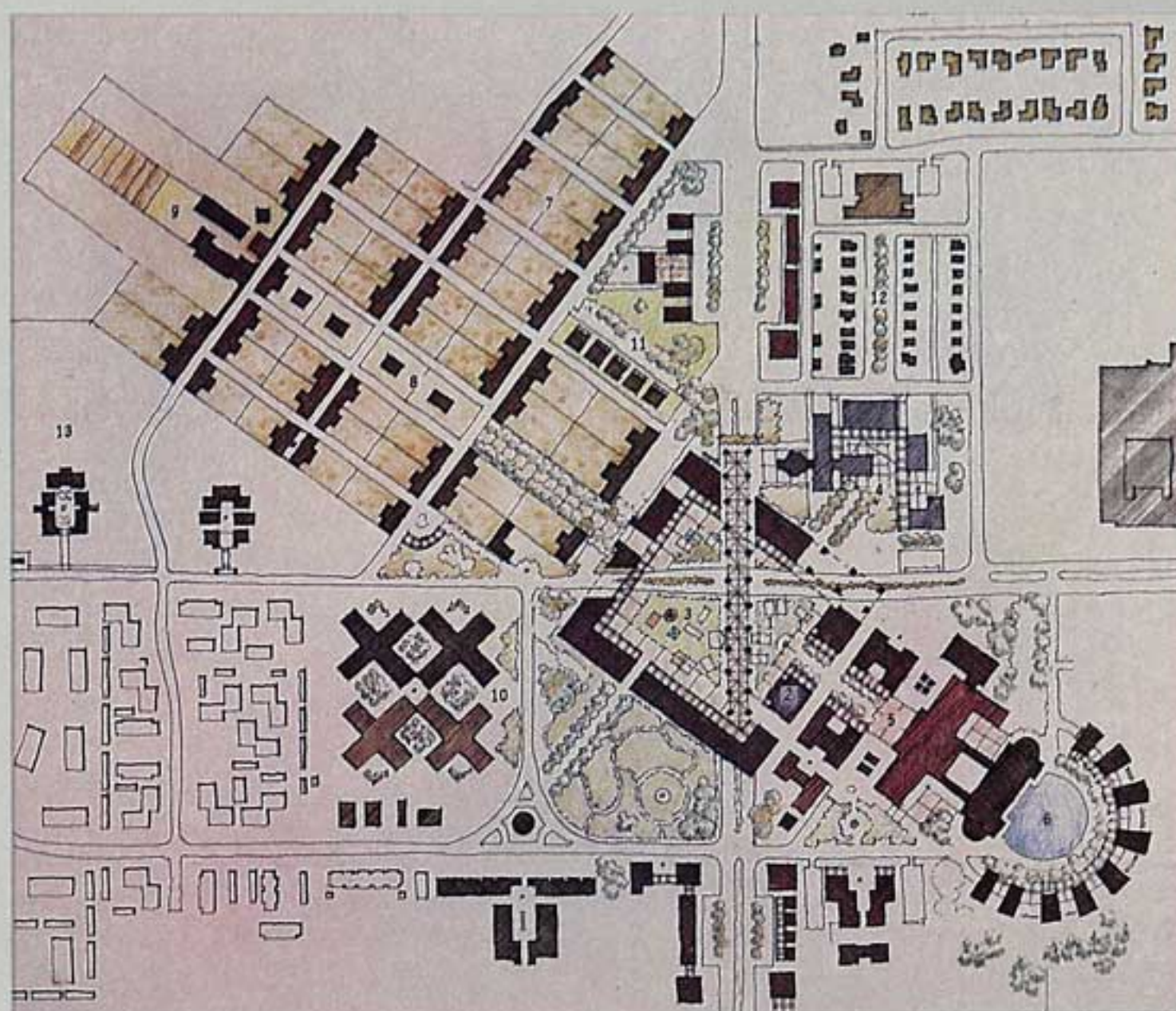
MILWAUKEE

West Allis

Greendale

Oak Creek

GROWING
SUBURBAN
EDGE



The Growing Suburban Edge should be developed to introduce the idea of the contemporary "trading post." A hard enclosure at the crossing of two roads would create a market place and meeting place.

Surrounding areas would provide necessary ingredients for a healthy rural economy. Encourage office headquarters and light manufacturing to locate in this area. Limit growth and define development boundaries. Preserve land for agriculture and large-scale urban recycling enterprises. Promote well-measured variety of building types; including:

- Farmettes, ten acres of land owned and worked by five to ten families living in a compound located on the land.
- Orchard housing, an alternative or addition to ill-defined suburban space patterns and monotonous housing types.

—Cekic, Cormier, DeGrazia, Hubbel, Letunic, Mann

Let Milwaukee Be Milwaukee

Cynthia Weese

The competition recognized that there are definite characteristics uniting certain urban areas. The exploration in this case was of the problems and possibilities inherent in late nineteenth-century, mid-sized industrial cities such as Milwaukee, Cleveland, Rochester, St. Louis and Minneapolis.

These cities do not have the lively urban qualities of New York, Chicago, or San Francisco, nor are they as amorphous and spread out as southern and western metropolitan areas; they have a certain rather pleasant density, particularly in their older residential areas. They exist because of a natural feature, generally water, which made their industrial growth possible, and a human-made feature, railroads, which carried their products to markets. The strong work ethic of the immigrant populations still exists and is celebrated. In the past 30 years the industrial base has diminished and in some cases has been replaced with a service and information economy.

The most creative thoughts came in proposals for the older residential area, a district where the single family house on the 50-foot lot prevails and there are few apartment buildings or town houses. The competitors looked at the problems with fresh eyes, possibly because the elements of the existing neigh-

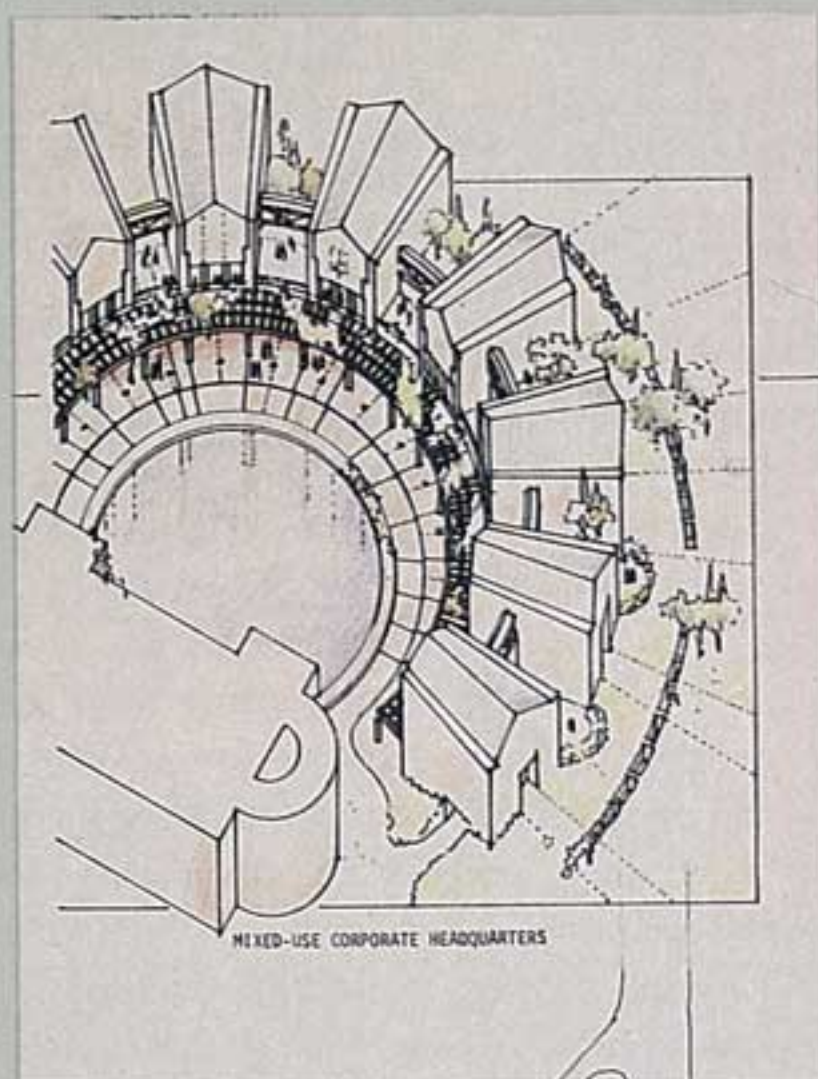
borhood—housing, commercial, industrial and a park with a stream—were an interesting and unusual mix, and possibly because these issues have seldom been worked with on an area-wide basis.

The solutions were successful in two ways. First, competitors understood and respected the scale of the neighborhood. They added shopping areas and cultural centers that had an appropriate scale and texture. Second, they worked with the existing natural features—the park and the stream—to make them integral to their solutions. Sometimes the park became larger, sometimes smaller, but the successful schemes always used it positively.

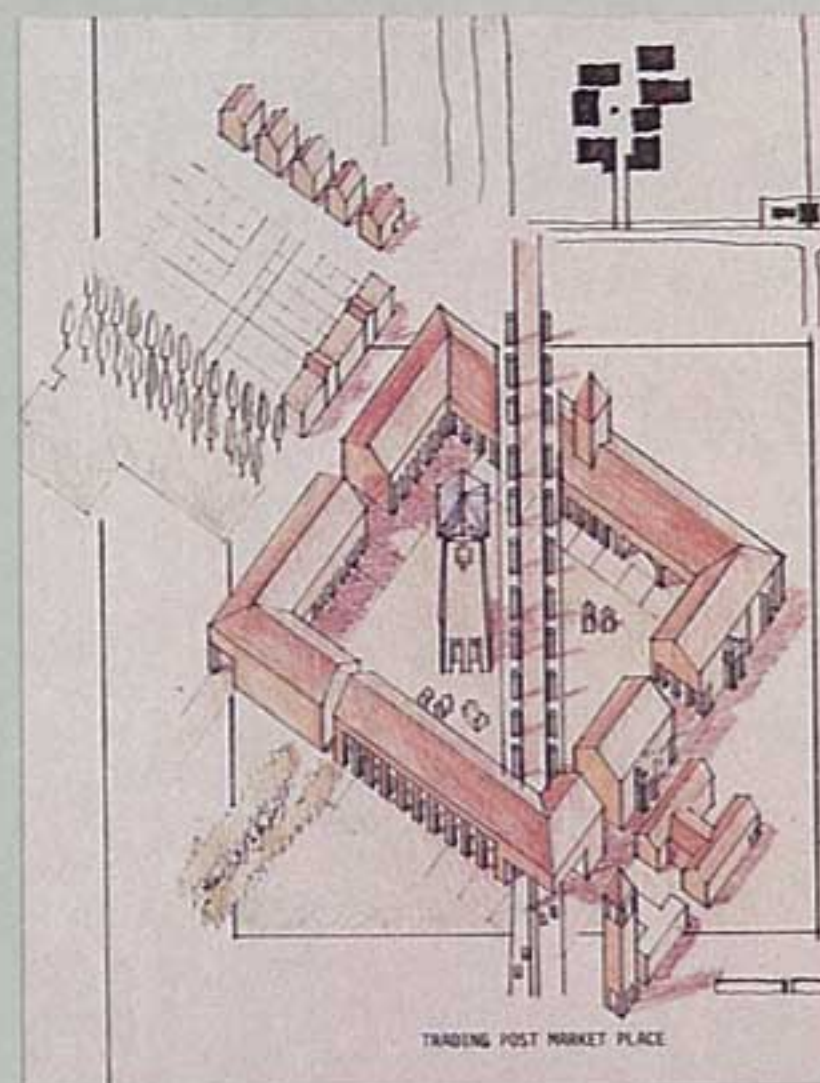
Solutions put forth for the downtown area, while strong in many cases, were less fresh than those in the older residential area. The existing visual tension between older low buildings lining the street and the new high-rise structures standing apart is difficult to deal with, and relatively few solutions addressed it.

Some of the downtown solutions were simply too grand. They provided public spaces far beyond what is realistic for a city of this density. There was an underlying assumption in many solutions that all downtown areas must throb with life as New York or Paris—virtually impossible here since no one lives downtown and very few people live within walking distance. Perhaps more importantly, few people want to live

Detail of mixed-use corporate headquarters.



Detail of trading post market place.



A street in Oak Creek, the Growing Suburban Edge competition site.

downtown. In cities like Milwaukee, those people who “pioneer” move to the older residential areas, which have great character and are very pleasant. Somehow we must recognize the fact that these downtown areas are quiet after 5 p.m. and that this is not necessarily a problem. For urban dwellers, quiet has become synonymous with danger; this is not always the case.

An opportunity overlooked in many downtown schemes was the city’s most dominant physical feature—Lake Michigan. One of the urban strengths of Milwaukee’s neighbor, Chicago, is that the lake front has a strong public presence. It is unbuilt on for most of the city’s 65 miles of shore line and is entirely in the public domain. This is not the case in Milwaukee. The enormous potential of the lake was recognized and celebrated in the best schemes, but it was ignored in many others.

Jurors generally agreed that the area with which entrants dealt least successfully (many abominably) was the outlying suburban/farm section. Schemes varied tremendously—from no-growth proposals (perhaps to the jury’s eyes the best) to wildly futuristic chaos. A medieval village caught our eye almost in relief. It occurs to me that the addition to the teams of a visionary landscape architect would have been a tremendous help here. The existing, gently rolling farmland with woods, an existing road grid, and some random develop-

ment—these could have been best joined with new development within a strong conceptual landscape framework.

One of the goals of the competition was to encourage realistic urban planning that could be implemented. With the exception of some of the suburban schemes, most of the competitors worked toward that end. The winning schemes intrigued the jury for many reasons—one being their in-depth, micro-analysis of urban situations. These analyses dealt realistically and contextually with Milwaukee, and they provided solutions that could be adapted easily by planners.

This is the first in a series of competitions, each with a different city “type” as its focus. It is important that these competitions continue.

Along the central riverfront, the intersection of Wells Street, 2nd Street and Plankinton Avenue (where they form "Plankinton Square," the pedestrian precinct) demonstrate how the automobile can be integrated into the urban landscape without destroying the quality of outdoor spaces for the pedestrian.



Project team:
Timothy A. Gawronski (Silver Medalist).



Skywalk systems can be used to help define outdoor spaces...

...rather than destroy urban space and pattern.



been generalized to water edges; their treatment and linkages derived from assumptions and related to the lifestyles of the likely users in the downtown, older neighborhood and growing edge contexts. Only in that way could proposals influence policy relevant to this particular class of cities.

Finally, in these very brief comments, I find it significant that there was general agreement that the proposals for the growing edge were the weakest; in my view these were followed by the older neighborhood with the downtown proposals being the strongest. I think this is because the latter is most constrained by local and specific conditions, whereas the first is the least constrained and hence the most generic. Yet constraints are essential—the essence of design is a *choice among alternatives* using research-based criteria gradually to reduce the decision-space. The results show the inadequacy of arbitrary, subjective, idiosyncratic criteria mainstream designers typically used to make decisions. It also bears on the unwillingness (or possibly the inability) of designers to derive constraints from the program, from the research literature and from the knowledge of other disciplines.

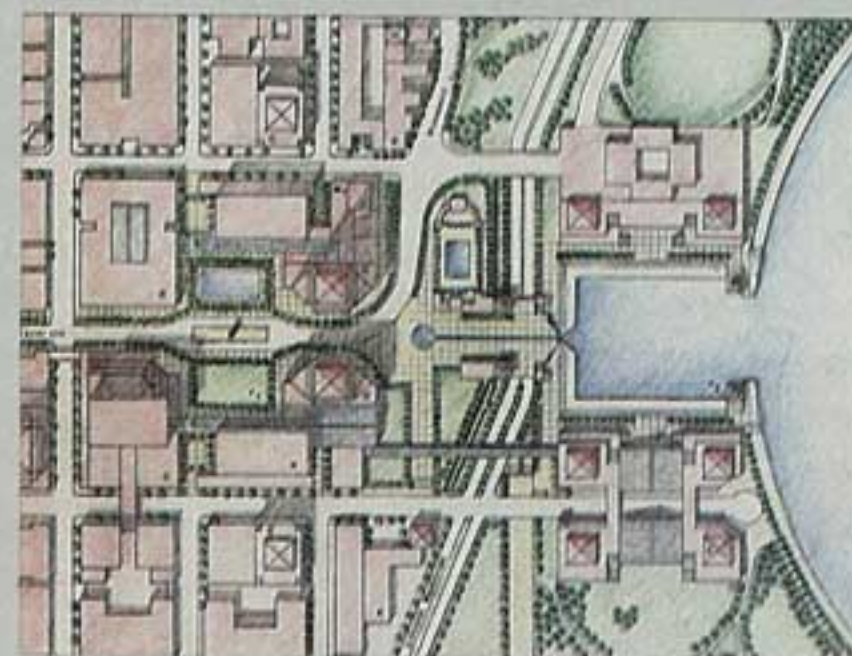
I thus conclude where I began. The competition revealed the typical and traditional weaknesses and problems of designers and the design professions. It confirmed my position that fundamental changes are essential; the state of the art in city design (as of design in general) is pretty woeful.

Notes

1. E. W. Wood, Jr., S. N. Brower and M. W. Latimer, "Planners' People," *AIP Journal*, 32:4 (228-234) (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1966).
2. S. M. Low, *Professional Culture: The Boundary between Theory and Practice in Design* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, NIE, Education Resource Information Center, No. ED 2129290, 1982).

The urban character of the city center would be extended to the south:

- The underlying grid would be continued.
- Housing would be street-oriented, with minimal setbacks.
- Interior courts would be enclosed within a block, creating space for semi-private gardens, play areas and parking.
- Buildings at corners would vary in form to accommodate shops.



The meeting of Wisconsin Avenue and the lake is a symbolic focal point. Because pomp and ceremony are essential to urban life, formal areas are as important as informal ones. A sequence of squares and plazas, a reshaping of the waterfront, and public and private buildings would combine to demonstrate the drama and power created when a city's built form is united with its most important natural asset.

Places Are Not Impositions

William Turnbull, Jr.

Reviewing the entries for the International City Design Competition in Milwaukee, I was struck by the similarity of the attitudes expressed to those of previous generations who had addressed this problem, whether in literary form, as in George Orwell's *1984*, or in architectural drawings, as in Tony Garnier's ideal city of 1917.

Frustration with the failure of the design community to meet reasonable environmental expectations has led the explorers of the future to make bold strokes of prognosis. Just as Big Brother is the literary outgrowth of big bureaucracy, megastructures are the descendants of the linear city and Corbusean ideals.

What seems to be missing in the competition essays into futurism is an awareness that we have already looked at the future and found it to be us.

"Us" is not metaphorical. "Us" is the multiplication of the species. More and more humans inhabit a limited planet that is stressed by our atmospheric pollution and ozone depletion.

For an increased population to coexist in harmony, not chaos, requires rules of deportment, rules that are stratified and organized into regulatory laws and municipal codes. The

ones that concern the city of the future are municipal zoning and planning ordinances and building codes dealing with public health, safety and welfare. These are our constraints, the invisible boundaries that normally encompass us and wall in the enthusiasm, idealism and energy that can be expressed in design competitions.

Once, not so long ago, these walls were broken down in the United States by the Federal Government under the programs of urban renewal. Wholesale house cleaning was the model of the day in the 1950s and early 1960s. Whole blocks and older neighborhoods were leveled in cities across the country; in some the Corbusean ideal of city living was attempted, others became pastures of urban weeds.

For the most part our fellow citizens, the clients and inhabitants of our efforts as designers, did not rejoice in these utopian visions of the future. The comfortable and known, albeit tired and dirty, had given way to the unfamiliar, unremarkable and all too often socially disastrous places of inhabitation. The visionaries' dreams of the future disintegrated with the dynamited remains of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis.

People responded in the voting booth by electing officials whose priorities lay elsewhere; they cut off funds to existing urban renewal programs and evolved new ones with tax incentives to rehabilitate existing structures.

People were saying, in effect, the world around us gives us security, emotionally as well as physically. The professionals can play their games of one-upmanship with the latest fashions if the corporate and private patrons will support such childlike activities. But we the public do not wish these games played on our turf, in our neighborhoods.

And the people drew this old armor of laws and codes and zoning around them and settled down more aware than ever of the physical and social-political values of Little Italy, Chinatown, Over-the-Rhine, or whatever their ethnic neighborhoods were called.

But the problems of life still exist. Indeed, they are exacerbated by the continuing increase in the number of people—affordable housing, decent education, jobs proximate to where we live, parks, recreation opportunities and safe streets.

It seems to me, looking over the visionary energy invested in this competition, that the grass is not always greener on the other side of the street; the bold stroke cuts the Gordian Knot but kills the fabric of the community.

A better design attitude might be to take a myriad of little steps based on an understanding of how people inhabit space, both their own and that of the common realm. Add to it gently, repair it when it is broken and reinforce its qualities in the consciousness of inhabitants. The tyrannies of Haussman made Paris a great whole, but little people, wrestling with pragmatic daily problems of keeping afloat, created the wonders of Venice.

To make a "place" need not be an act of imposition; that is a violence all too easy to acquire. To work with the opportunities inherent in people, place and circumstance takes longer and is harder for a young designer, but in the end produces the physical settings our society chooses to protect and conserve. From Beacon Hill to Telegraph Hill, places are for, by and of the people. To make them you must understand the inhabitants and their feelings and needs. Only then is our future believable.

Journey home, my friend, know the flowers in your own garden before trying to pick the stars from the sky.

The river is perceived as the commercial and residential spine of downtown. The additions and alterations to the river would implicitly conform to the existing urban character and create a sense of cohesiveness. A continuous street would be maintained along the river edge in order to prevent privatization of a public amenity. Office and retail activities would capitalize on the river, maximizing their frontage by opening shops and outdoor cafes along the edge. This would enliven the riverfront during and especially after work hours. River taxi stops would be located to facilitate travel along the river and to initiate retail development.

[illegible]

(Gold Medalist)