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MICHIGAN
OCZM GRANT #04-8-M01-334
Subtask

North Riverfront Park

City of Alpena, Michigan

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1980

VILICAN·LEMAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.

NORTH RIVERFRONT PARK

ALPENA, MICHIGAN

PREPARED FOR

CITY OF ALPENA, MICHIGAN

AUGUST 1980

Vilican-Leman and Associates, Inc.
29621 Northwestern Highway, Southfield, Michigan 48034

R.S. Scott Associates, Inc. - Consulting Engineers
405 River Street, Alpena, Michigan 49707

Financial assistance for the preparation of this report and construction documents were provided by the Coastal Zone Management Act, administered by the office of Coastal Zone Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Michigan Coastal Management Program, administered by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land Resource Programs.

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Alpena is moving forward in its efforts to improve the physical environment, recreational opportunities and economic stability of the community. A major sewer separation project is nearing completion, and the first phase of a continuing program of physical improvements within the central business district is currently under construction. Vehicular traffic has been rerouted, parking conditions improved and decorative paving, lighting and landscaping provided along the sidewalks; all in an effort to make the C.B.D. a more productive and enjoyable place within the community.

A major goal of the C.B.D. improvement project has been to provide a more safe and pleasant experience for the pedestrian. A valuable source of recreational and visual interest right within the downtown area has been poorly utilized in the past: the Thunder Bay River and Lake Huron shoreline. The C.B.D. Design Plan prepared by Vilican-Leman and Associates, Inc., and adopted by the City Council in 1980, taps this tremendous resource by providing major access points along this urban waterfront and by strengthening the commercial area's relationship with them. The redevelopment of this urban waterfront in an important part of the total downtown revitalization effort and will benefit the entire community by providing: green areas for relief from the surrounding urban development, small boat mooring for those coming to the downtown area by boat as an alternative to automobile travel, improved public access to the waterfront, a needed and safe public fishing area, and an area for passive recreation and relaxation for both patrons and employees in the C.B.D.

A key part of the city's plans for the waterfront is the Riverfront Park, which will act as a visual connector to unify both sides of the Thunder Bay River, provide water-oriented recreation and relate closely with and help promote the downtown redevelopment efforts. This park actually consists of two parcels of land, each being on opposite sides of the river; approximately 1.6 acres on the

southern side and 2.3 acres on the north. Construction of the southern portion of the park has recently been completed. A parking lot, walkway along the river, pedestrian lighting, landscaping and benches have been installed to provide an area for passive recreation and dock fishing. The docking of small boats is prohibited along the south dock (except for special occasions when additional mooring is needed), reserving space for larger ships which dock here from time to time in conjunction with the Federal Building or National Guard Armory functions.

The parcel on the north bank of the river was purchased by the City in 1977 through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, for the purpose of establishing a public park. This report deals with the preparation of a plan for the development of this North Riverfront Park, a project being financially assisted by the Coastal Zone Management Act, administered by the office of Coastal Zone Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Michigan Coastal Management Program, administered by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land Resource Programs.

PROJECT REPORT

The proposed North Riverfront Park site is located on the north side of the Thunder Bay River and south of the Second Avenue Bridge, as shown in the Location Map. The property contains 2.28 acres, including 560 feet of river frontage, and is accessible from both Second Avenue and Fletcher Street. The property has been under City ownership since 1977, and although no improvements have been made, the site is open to public use on a limited basis. A number of small sailboats are generally moored at makeshift docks along the riverfront, and equipment storage is allowed in existing structures on the site. Major physical conditions are noted on the Site Analysis enclosed in this report.

At the time the park design was initiated, the City's development plans included dock mooring, dock fishing, and a large area for rest, relaxation and limited picnicking. A similar treatment as that of its southerly counterpart was intended, although the larger size of the northern parcel and direct access from Second Avenue near the center of commercial activity would allow a more pedestrian-oriented facility. The existing, decayed docking and timber piling along the waterfront would be replaced, and the riverfront would then be developed as a focus for all park activities.

A site analysis and conceptual site development plan were prepared by the Landscape Architect for presentation to the Alpena Planning Commission at their April 1, 1980 meeting. A public invitation was published in the local paper in an effort to involve local citizens in the development of the park program and design. The Conceptual Plan indicated possible activities which could be provided within the park and portrayed spatial requirements and related supporting facilities. Using this plan as a basis of discussion, the following directives were resolved at this meeting:

1. Park uses should be basically "passive" in nature, and pedestrian and water-oriented. The Planning Commission saw the park as a green reserve near the downtown, providing relief from intensive development in the area. Adequate active recreation opportunities are provided by other park sites.

2. Site amenities and development should be kept to a minimum to discourage active uses (ball games, large picnic groups, etc., and related vehicular traffic).

3. A boat launch and related parking area would command too great an area of the site and should be deleted from the program.

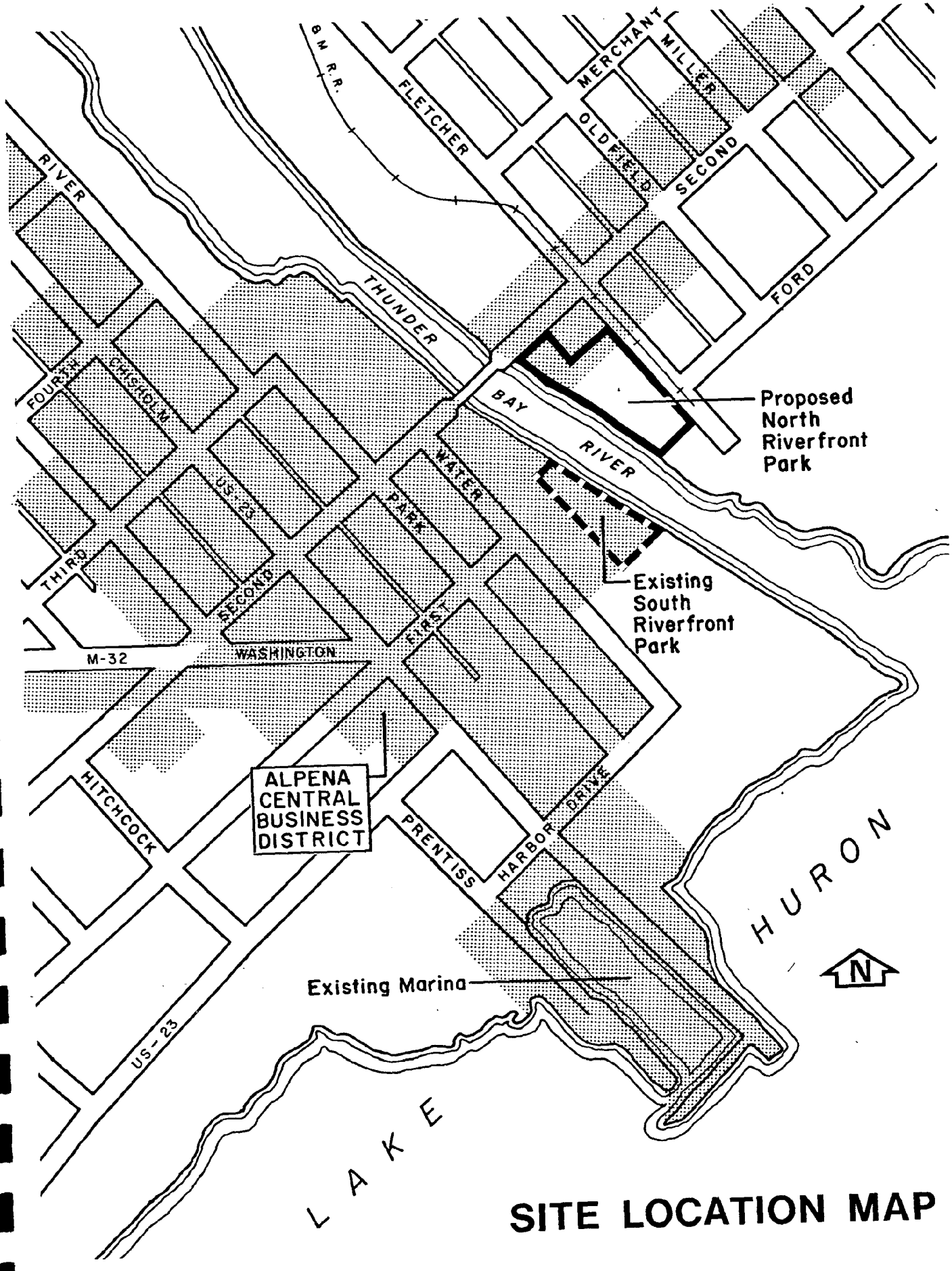
4. An open shelter, boardwalk, security lighting, and informal seating area for small groups of people should be provided.

5. Boat mooring and fishing areas should be provided along the riverfront.

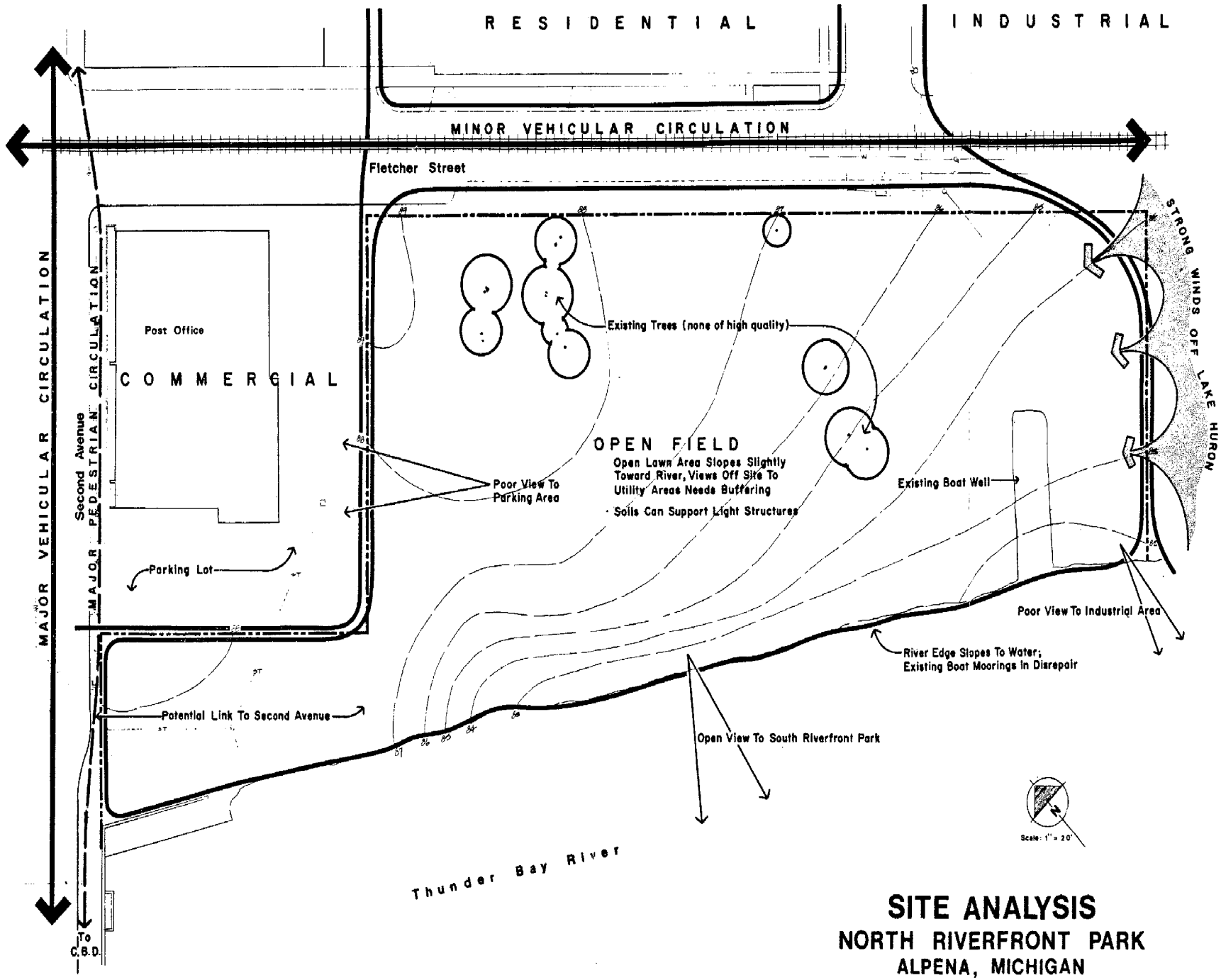
6. A limited parking area should be provided in the southwest end of the park site, adjacent to the existing industrial area and away from the residential area facing onto the park across Fletcher Street. This lot would provide short term parking and a loading and unloading area for fishermen and boaters.

A preliminary site plan (Plan "A") was prepared based upon the above directives. While presentation of this plan was on the agenda of the May 6, 1980 Planning Commission meeting, the issue of the park development was raised in the interim at a City Council meeting. The Council's position differed drastically from that of the Planning Commission. Citizen demand for a boat launch facility was made to the Council, and the Council suggested that such a facility be incorporated into the park plan.

A second preliminary site plan (Plan "B") was prepared to illustrate what effects the inclusion of a boat launch would have on the overall park development, and both plans were then presented at the Planning Commission meeting of May 6, 1980. The Commission objected to the extensive use of space related to the boat launch and recommended adoption of Plan "A" to the Council.

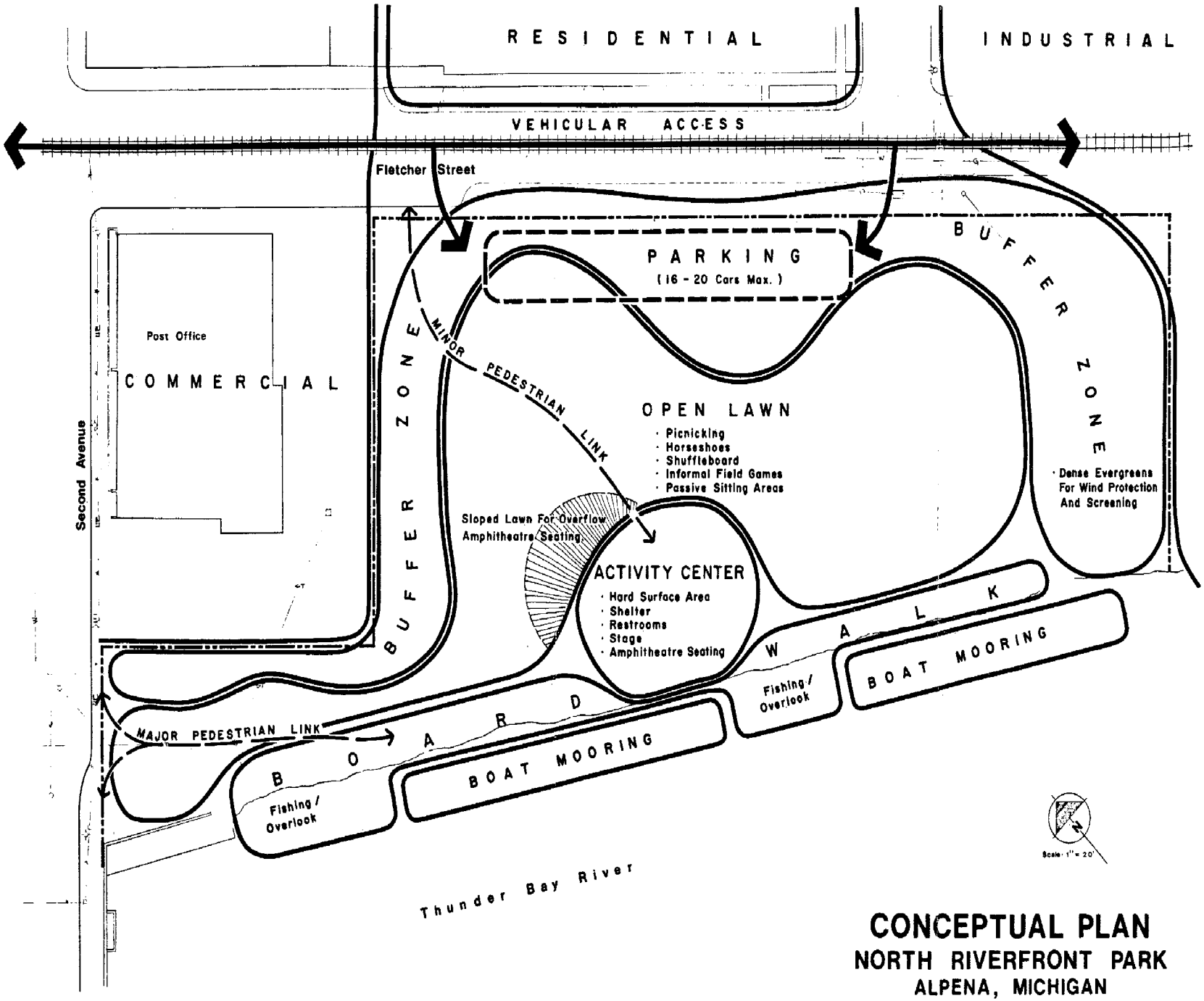


SITE LOCATION MAP



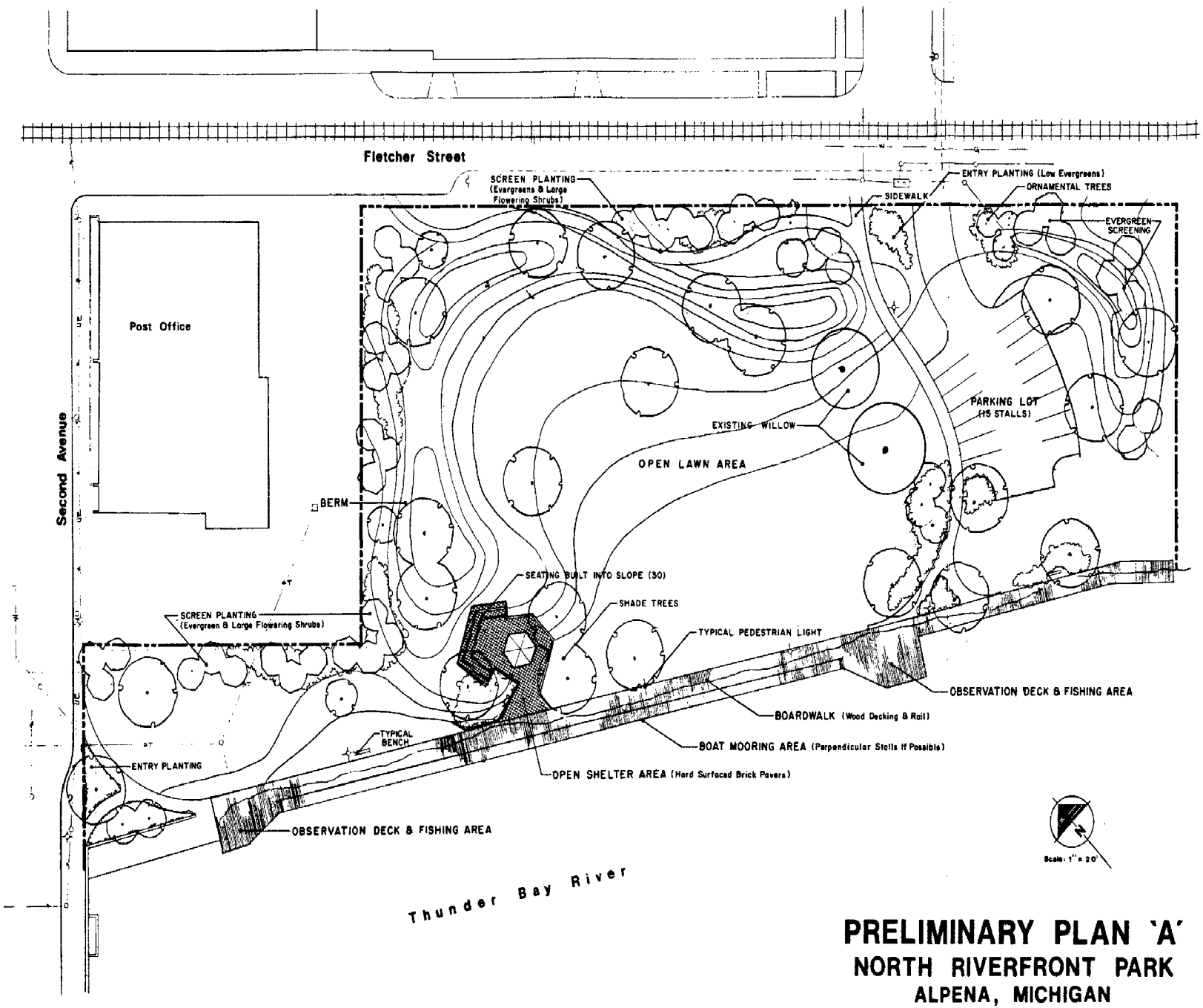
SITE ANALYSIS
NORTH RIVERFRONT PARK
ALPENA, MICHIGAN

VILICAN LEMAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.



CONCEPTUAL PLAN
NORTH RIVERFRONT PARK
ALPENA, MICHIGAN

VILICAN-LEMAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.

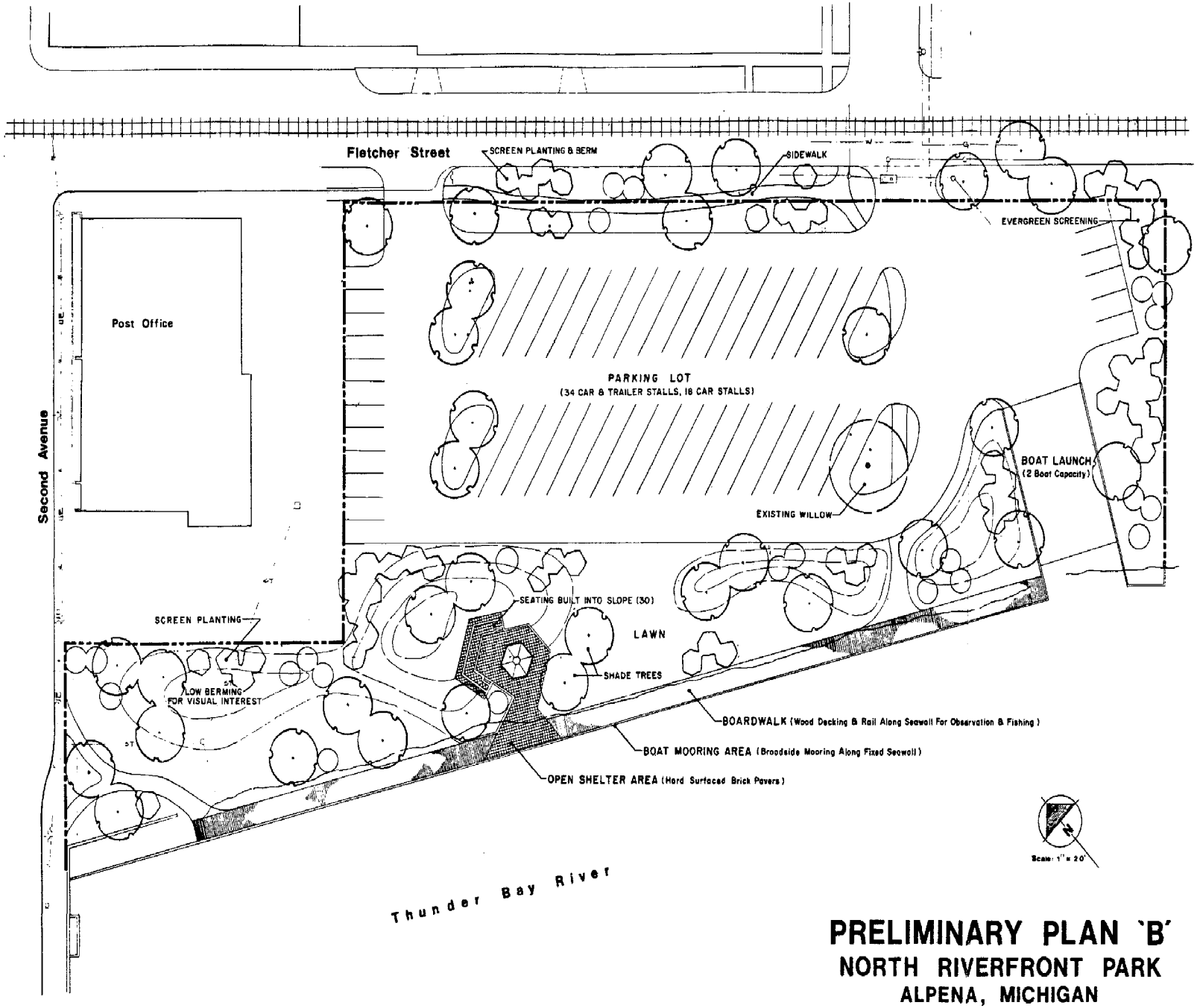


PRELIMINARY PLAN 'A'

NORTH RIVERFRONT PARK

ALPENA, MICHIGAN

VILICAN-LEMAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.



PRELIMINARY PLAN 'B'
NORTH RIVERFRONT PARK
ALPENA, MICHIGAN

VILICAN-LEMAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.

The Council, at their next meeting, reviewed Plan "A" and "B". The issue of the inclusion of a boat launch was again addressed. Demand for the launch site was based upon the failure of the existing city-owned marina and launch facility to serve the needs of local fishermen during the early spring and winter fishing seasons, when ice in the marina area prevented launching of boats. The river site would provide excellent access during these periods, as the river remains ice-free during the extended boat fishing season of Thunder Bay. The Council felt this was a valid concern, but to serve this need a car and trailer parking capacity much less than normally associated with such a launch facility would be adequate. The Council then directed the Landscape Architect to incorporate a boat launch in the park design, but that the parking area be reduced significantly to relieve conflict with passive uses and green space in the remainder of the park.

A final Master Plan was then prepared which provides an acceptable compromise. The integrity of the green space, pedestrian-oriented development along the waterfront and dock fishing area have been preserved, yet a boat launch facility meeting the expressed needs of the local fishermen has been included in the park development.

The basic elements of the Master Plan are as follows:

1. Fishing Pier - The existing seawall at the Second Avenue Bridge will be extended approximately 100 feet to the south to provide a dock fishing area separate from both pedestrian and boat traffic. This will require some minor filling along the water's edge to accommodate the existing change in grade along this section of the riverbank. The filling will be kept to a minimum by the use of a short section of steel sheet piling along the seawall edge, with rock rip-rap placed along the underwater bank slope at the base.

2. Boardwalk and Pedestrian Areas - A wood boardwalk with railing, pedestrian-scale post lights and benches will be provided along the riverfront. Pedestrian access to the C.B.D. and adjacent residential area to the north will be assured by an 8 foot wide walkway meandering through the park, connecting the riverfront boardwalk to Second Avenue and Fletcher Street. Greenspace is maintained between the pedestrian areas and adjacent parking lots, both on and off-site, with buffering of these areas enhanced by dense screen plantings and earth mounds created by excavation from the riverfront.

3. Shelter/Amphitheater - An open wood shelter with decorative concrete block paving and a small amphitheatre-type seating area will serve as the focal point of the park. Informal gatherings of small groups for meetings or other social activities (i.e., meetings of a local sailing club which now uses the site as a rendezvous point, informal performances of local actors and artists during the annual Brown Trout Festival) will occur here.

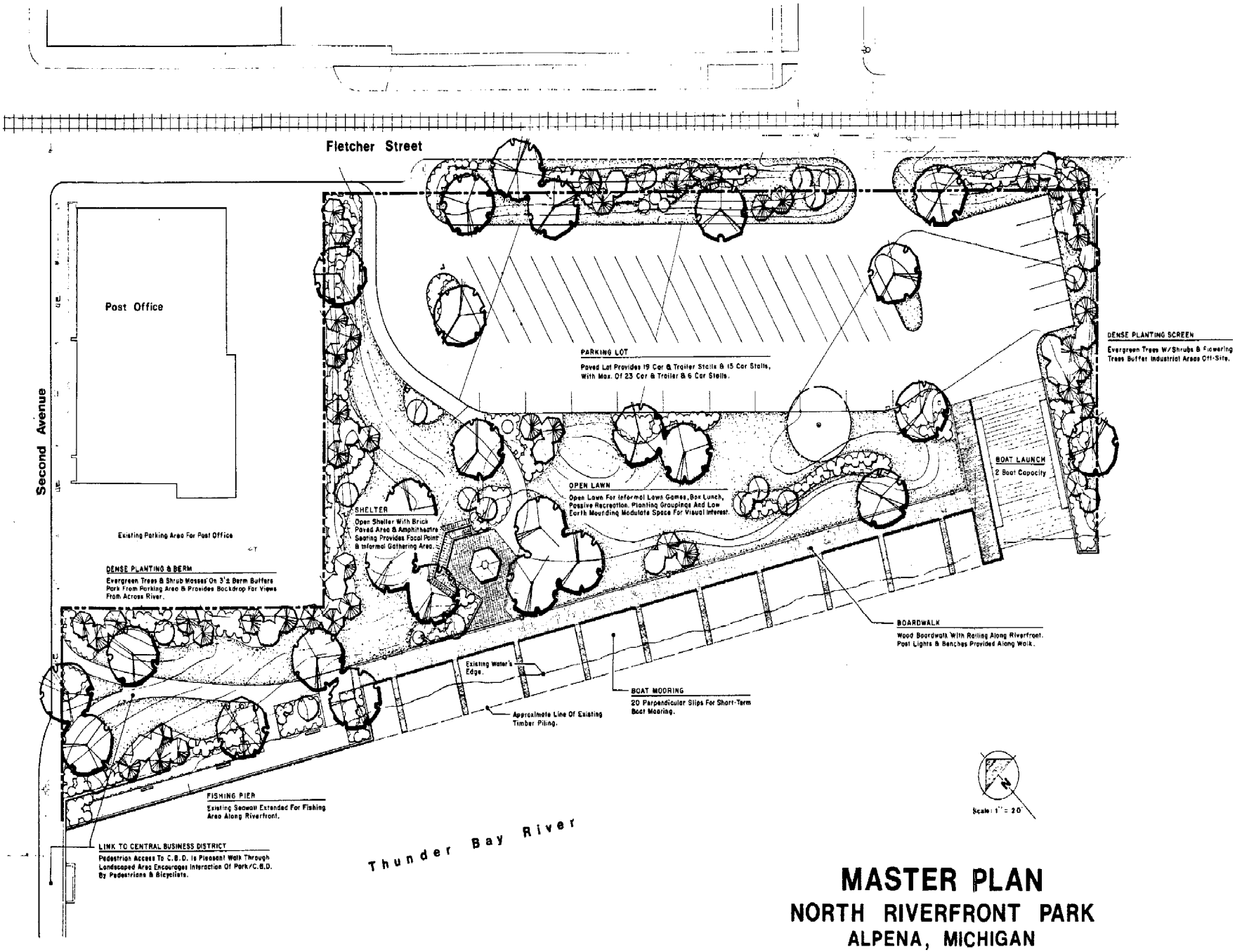
4. Boat Mooring - Twenty perpendicular slips with floating docks will provide short-term boat docking for patrons of the C.B.D. who may elect to travel by boat as an alternative to automobile. Many local citizens and vacationers who are on Thunder Bay could travel by boat to shop in the downtown area or attend Thunder Bay Theatre performances in the summer, for example. This area would also help to serve the large number of boats attracted by the annual Brown Trout Festival and other such activities. The existing public marina is often filled to capacity by long-term moorings and cannot meet the demand for short-term docking.

   The mooring area will be created by cutting into the existing river bank and installing steel sheet piling to retain the shoreline; this allows maximum mooring capacity without protruding beyond the line of existing timber piling or reducing available green space in the park. Also by cutting into the bank much shorter lengths of piling will be required. Floating docks will offer more convenient use at all water levels and require less maintenance than fixed piers.

5. Boat Launch Facility - A ramped access to the river is located at the southernmost end of the riverfront, where launch traffic will have minimal impact on the mooring and fishing areas.

   Although a single ramp would meet the expressed needs of the local fishermen, a double ramp is proposed. The additional cost of providing a wider ramp is not a significant factor and the larger launch area would trap less debris and therefore require less maintenance. A paved lot and drives for access to the ramp and car and trailer parking is provided in the plan. The limited capacity of this lot (23 car and trailer stalls maximum) should be adequate to serve the users of the boat launch, as well as provide some short-term parking for other park users. Vehicular access has been restricted to Fletcher Street to reduce conflict with the remainder of the park site, which is pedestrian-oriented. Earth berming and dense screen plantings along the parking area border will provide visual protection for residences across Fletcher Street and separate the park from adjacent industrial and parking areas.

Copies of this plan were sent to the Waterways Division and the Land, Lake and Stream Protection Section, Division of Land Resource Programs, of the DNR for their review. Their letters of response are enclosed in the appendix of this report.

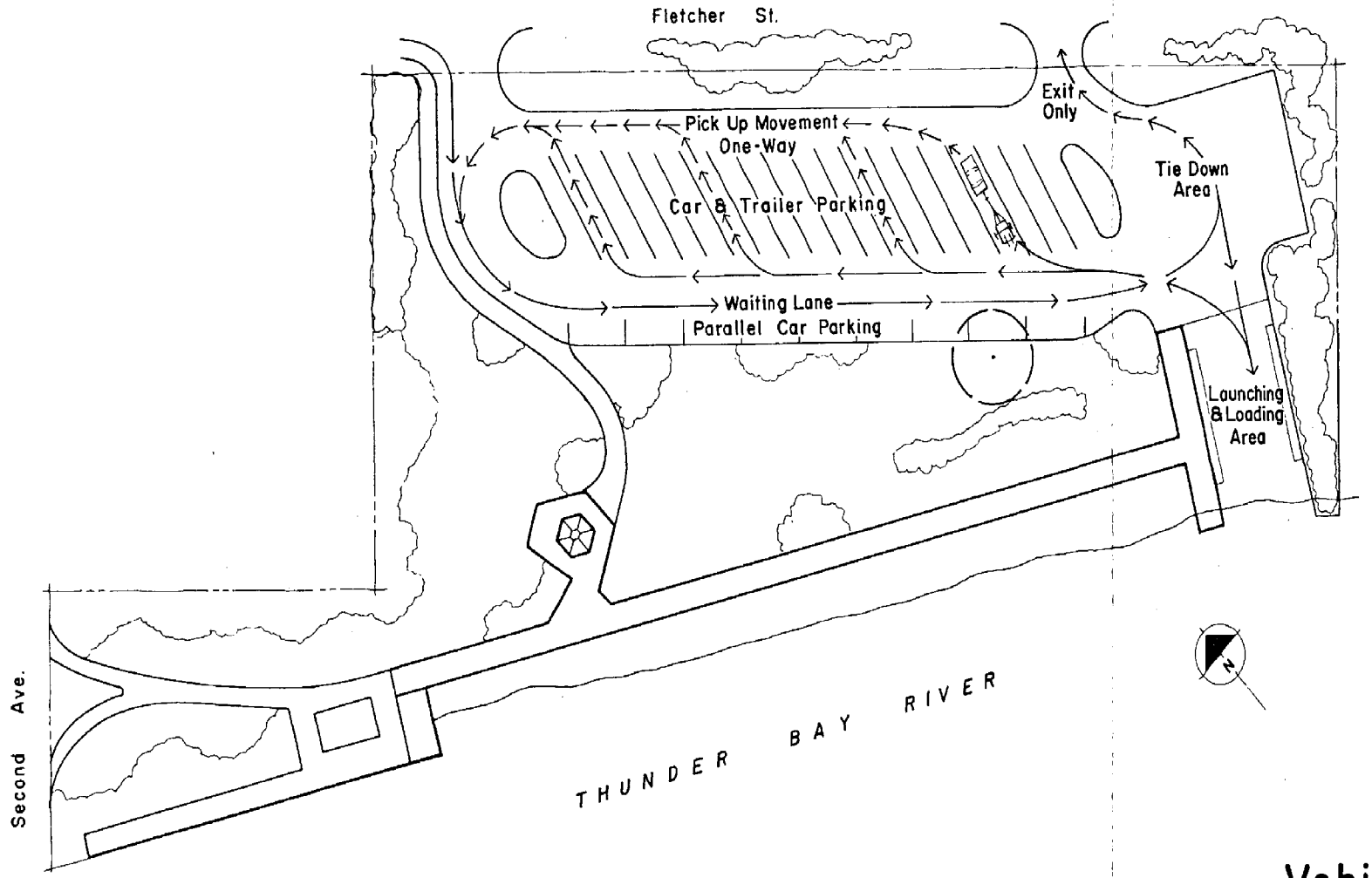


MASTER PLAN

NORTH RIVERFRONT PARK

ALPENA, MICHIGAN

VILICAN LEMAN & ASSOCIATES, INC.



Vehicular Circulation

CONSTRUCTION COSTS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

A preliminary estimate of probable site development costs is as follows:

Riverfront Development (fishing pier, boat mooring, boardwalk, and boat launch)	$394,200
Parking Lot	102,000
Lighting and Site Furnishings	22,050
Shelter with Amphitheatre Seating	15,625
Landscape Materials	36,000
Pedestrian Walks	6,750
	$576,625
+15% Contingency	86,495
Grand Total	$663,120

Cost data is based upon estimates of probable costs of fall, 1980 construction. Should the development of the park be phased over a longer time period, construction could be divided into three stages, as detailed below, with a minimum of additional cost incurred. Such phasing involves some duplication of work and equipment set-up expenses; this combined with annual increases in construction costs and inflation generally results in a greater number of dollars required to complete the project.

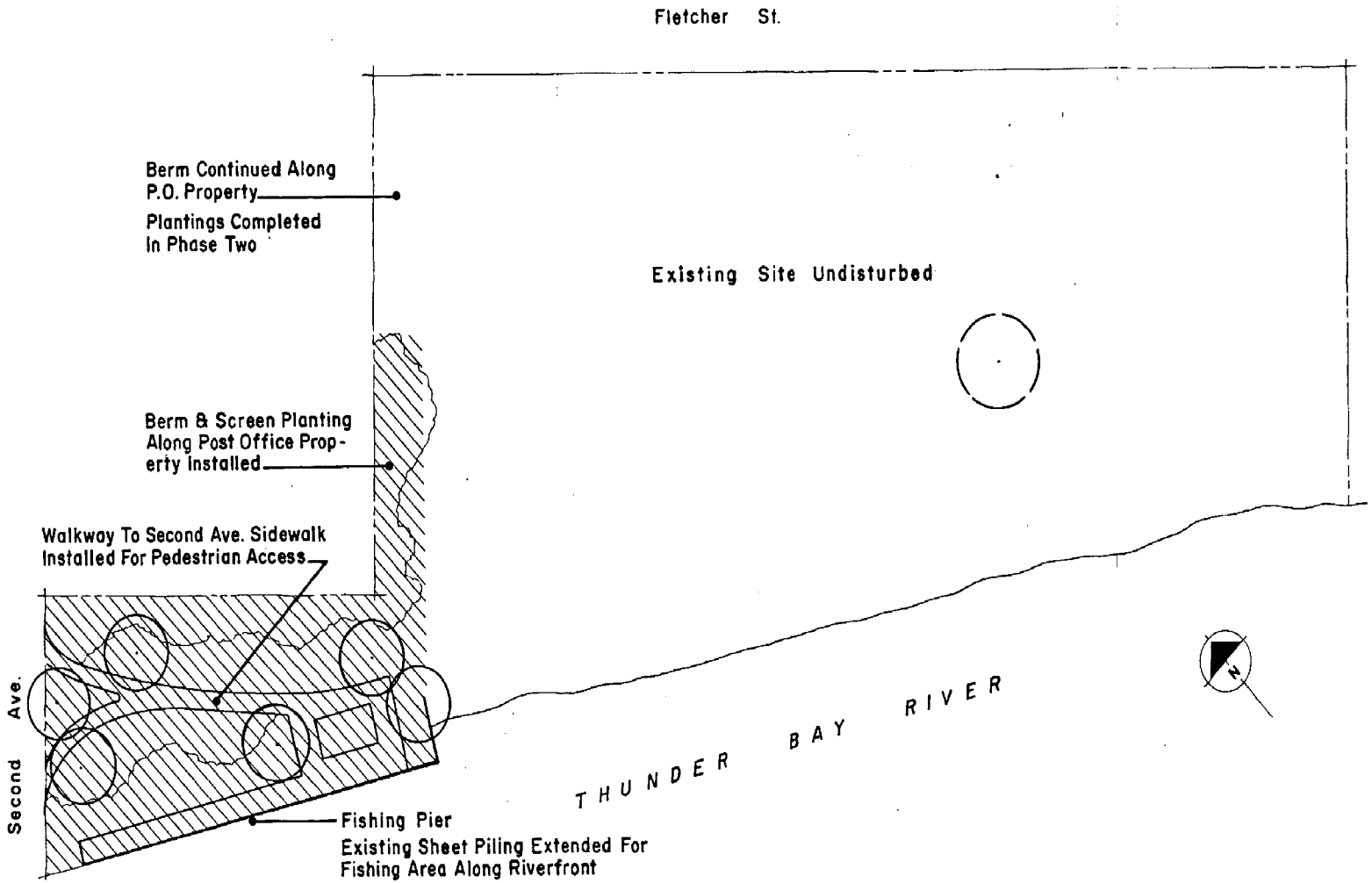
An estimate of probable site development costs for a three-phase construction program, based upon 1980 unit prices, is as follows:

PHASE ONE — Fishing Pier, including all walks, lights and landscape development in the shaded area of the Phase One Plan $105,540

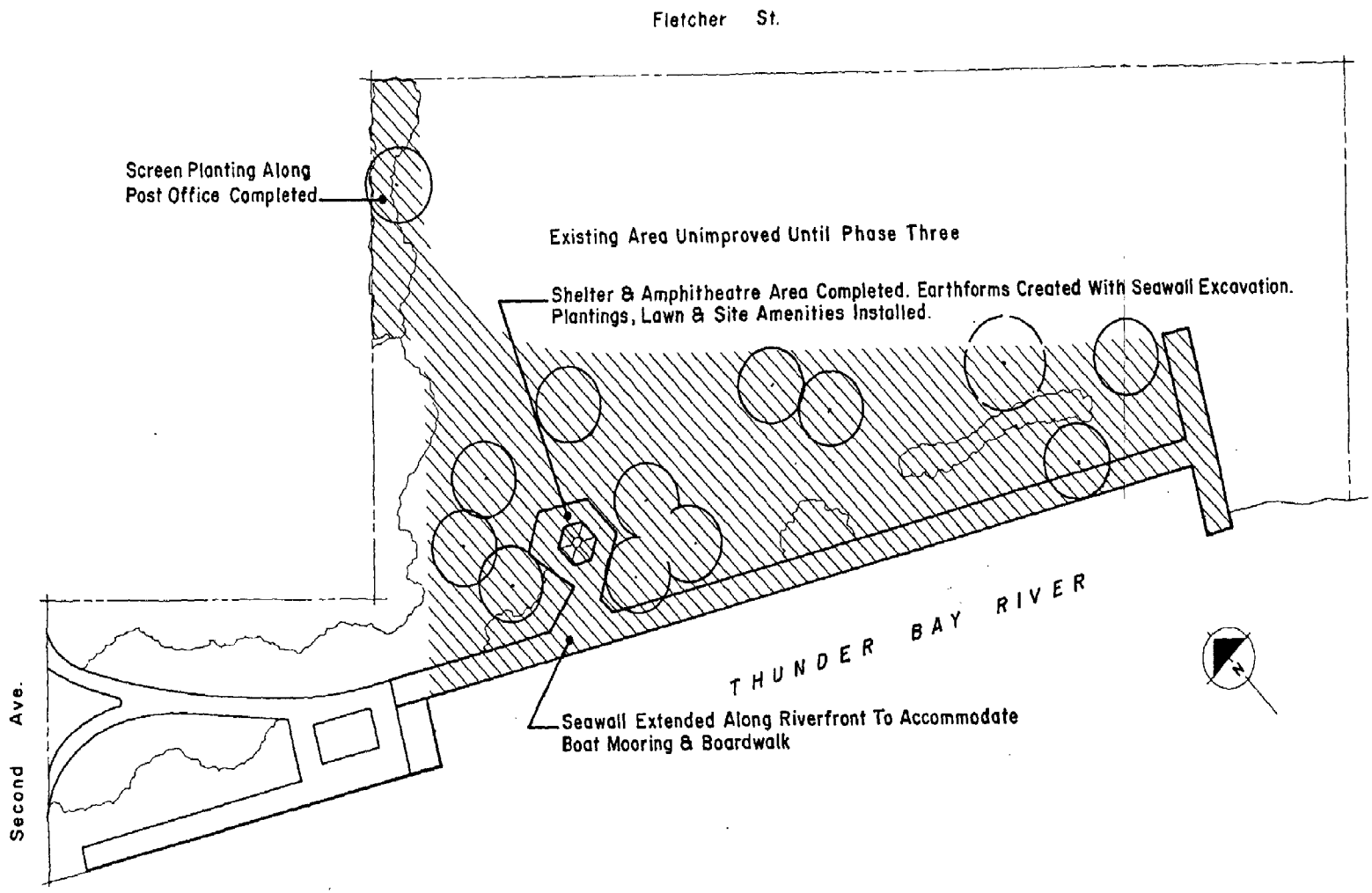
PHASE TWO — Boat Mooring and Pedestrian-oriented Park, including complete development of shaded areas of the Phase Two Plan $322,860

PHASE THREE -- Boat Launch, including parking lot and remaining elements to complete the park construction.....	$241,225
Estimated Total for Phased Development.....	$669,675

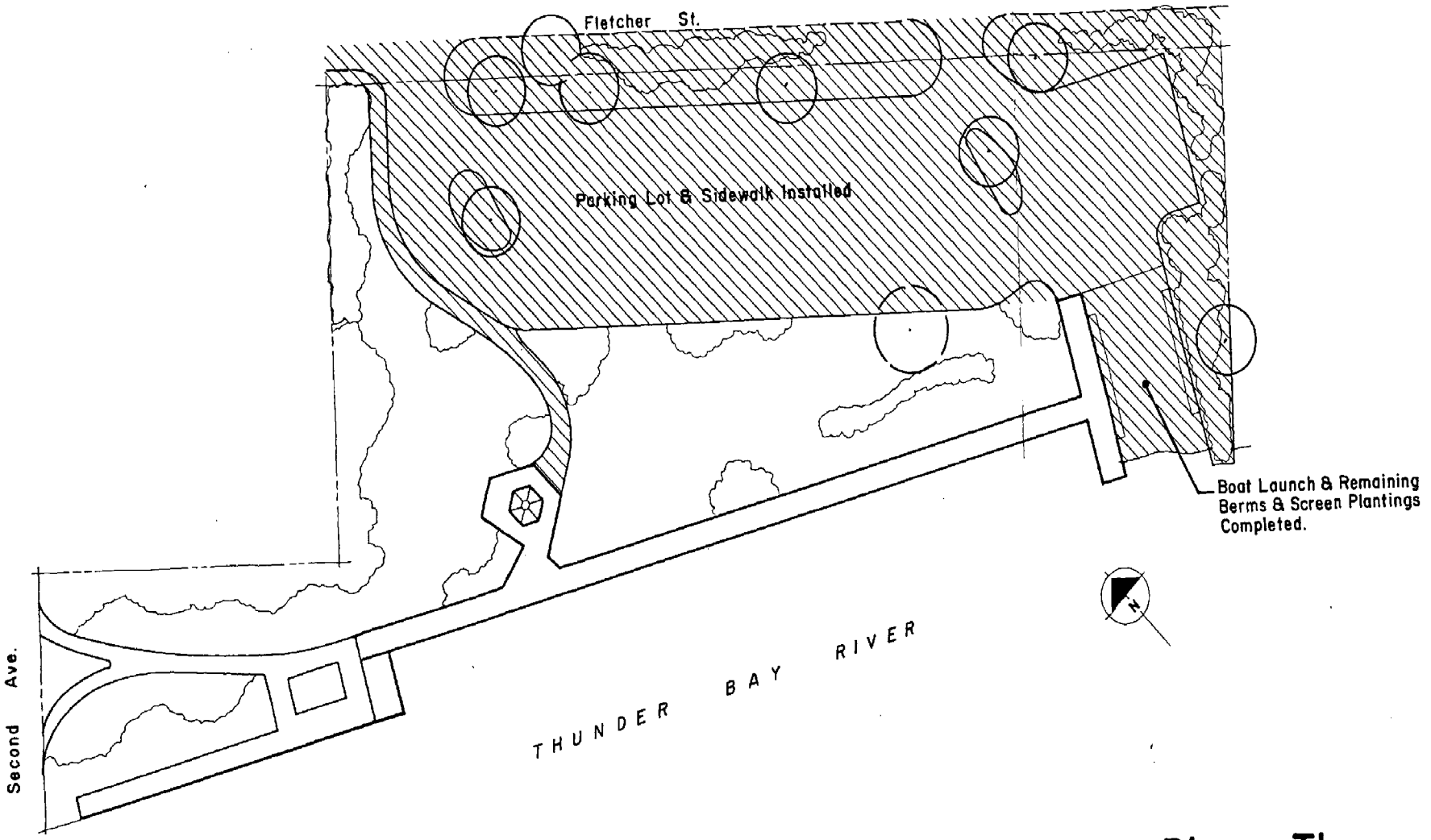
The above figures include a 15% contingency factor.


Fletcher St.
Berm Continued Along P.O. Property
Plantings Completed In Phase Two
Existing Site Undisturbed
Berm & Screen Planting Along Post Office Property Installed
Walkway To Second Ave. Sidewalk Installed For Pedestrian Access
Second Ave.
THUNDER BAY RIVER
Fishing Pier
Existing Sheet Piling Extended For Fishing Area Along Riverfront

Phase One


Fletcher St.
Screen Planting Along Post Office Completed
Existing Area Unimproved Until Phase Three
Shelter & Amphitheatre Area Completed. Earthforms Created With Seawall Excavation. Plantings, Lawn & Site Amenities Installed.
THUNDER BAY RIVER
Seawall Extended Along Riverfront To Accommodate Boat Mooring & Boardwalk
Second Ave.
N

Phase Two


Fletcher St.
Parking Lot & Sidewalk Installed
Boat Launch & Remaining Berms & Screen Plantings Completed.
N
THUNDER BAY RIVER
Second Ave.

Phase Three

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The City of Alpena may utilize the following sources as a means of financing development of the North Riverfront Park:

- Land and Water Conservation
- Federal Revenue Sharing
- Community Development Block Grants
- General Obligation Bonds
- Pay-As-You-Go Financing
- Special Millage
- General Fund
- Urban Fisheries Program

The following provides a brief summary of the above programs:

1. Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program is a Bureau of Outdoor Recreation program administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Funds to local governments are provided on a 50/50 basis where one-half of the total cost of a program receiving Land and Water Conservation Funds must be borne by the community. The fund presently provides monies for the acquisition and development of park sites and recreation areas. Since acquisition funds for property were provided by this program, implementation of the park plan would appear to be a high priority for this agency.

2. Federal Revenue Sharing

In recent years, the federal revenue sharing program has provided local monies for public purposes including recreational facilities. These funds may now be used for "local match" with any project receiving other federal assistance. The availability of revenue sharing programs is somewhat variable from year to year depending upon congressional action to fund the program.

3. Community Development Block Grants

Under the auspices of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, block grant funds can be made available to municipalities to undertake various improvements that may include recreational facilities.

4. General Obligation Bonds

General obligation debt may be assumed by the City, subject to charter permissives and provided further that the debt is approved by referendum. Certain other bonds may be issued by the municipality after council approval and after a required interval to permit referendary petitions to be filed requesting a vote by the public.

General obligation bonding may be attempted if other financial assistance cannot be secured, but other attitudes will be critical to its success.

5. Pay-As-You-Go Financing

A widely used financial tool involves the pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) method. This type of financing is best suited to programs that can be broken down into small enough units to make the financing practical on a yearly basis (i.e., through annual capital budgets). Funds may also be accumulating from year to year in the public improvements fund.

6. Special Millage

A voted millage can be established and funds raised specifically for recreation purposes. If a millage could be established to support recreational and environmental improvements in a special district encompassing the entire Thunder Bay River Corridor, partial funding for the North Riverfront Park might be obtained from this source.

7. General Fund

Monies from the general fund may be used for recreation purposes.

8. Urban Fisheries Program

The Urban Fisheries Program is a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Program administered by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Funds to local urban governments are provided on a "matching" basis for projects which support the use of the state's fishing resources.

Generally, these funds have been expended in the larger urban areas of southern Michigan. However, this program is a potential source of financial support for the North Riverfront Park, particularly those components of the park which directly involve sport fishing and related activities.

STATE OF MICHIGAN

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
JACOB A. HOEFER
E. M. LAITALA
HILARY F. SNELL
PAUL H. WENDLER
HARRY H. WHITELEY
JOAN L. WOLFE
CHARLES G. YOUNGLOVE

WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

HOWARD A. TANNER, Director

WATERWAYS COMMISSION
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STUART E. SHEILL
LEONARD H. THOMSON

P. O. Box 30028
Lansing, Michigan 48909

322-1311
Area Code 517

August 5, 1980

Serial No. 2447-80
File No. ALP-Alp

Mr. John F. Cusick
Vilican-Leman & Associates, Inc.
29621 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48034

Dear Mr. Cusick:

This is in answer to your letter of July 16, 1980, requesting the comments of this Division on your project report on the North Riverfront Park, Alpena, Michigan.

We have a number of comments on this plan which are as follows:

1. There is an existing launching ramp a relatively short distance from this location which is already developed and which figures prominently in the plans of the City for the future. In this regard, alternative plans are being considered which will provide additional protection to this area which will further enhance launching at this location. We question the need for this particular installation.

2. The property proposed for development is relatively small for use as a boat launching facility. Since less than 25 car-trailer units are being proposed, only a single ramp is needed. A skid pier could be placed at the edge of the ramp and would adequately serve the boatmen.

   If the site is to be developed, it would appear that a better traffic flow would result if the approach to the car-trailer places was reversed so that, after launching, the boat, the car-trailer could be driven past the island and parked. On retrieval, the opposite would occur.

3. If the property requires shore protection, rip rap would be much less expensive than sheet piling. Further, we do not provide holding piers or any other conveniences of this nature as a general rule for boats capable of being launched. However, should the City wish to provide something of this nature, this limited need would be accommodated by providing a floating pier parallel to the river at which these craft could be tied broadside.

I trust this provides the desired information.

Sincerely yours,

Keith Wilson, Chief
Waterways Division

KW:efg

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
JACOB A. HOEFER
E. M. LAITALA
HILARY F. SNELL
PAUL H. WENDLER
HARRY H. WHITELEY
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CHARLES G. YOUNGLOVE

STATE OF MICHIGAN

WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

STEVENS T. MASON BUILDING
BOX 30028
LANSING, MI 48909
HOWARD A. TANNER, Director

August 1, 1980

Mr. John F. Cusick
Vilican Leman & Associates, Inc.
29621 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48034

Re: Riverfront Park
Alpena, Michigan

Dear Mr. Cusick:

We have received your proposed park site preliminary plans being funded by the Coastal Zone Management Program for the Thunder Bay River.

We agree in concept with the proposed design which provides public access to the riverfront. We suggest that all fills into the river be kept to a minimum. The plans do not indicate if construction of the fishing pier will require filling of the river. We would suggest that rock riprap be placed along the underwater bank slope and that a cantilever fishing pier be designed to overhang the water. The rock riprap should provide suitable habitat for a variety of fish on a year-round basis and not result in a loss of aquatic habitat.

We appreciate the opportunity to review your proposal. Upon submittal of the necessary application forms, we will process your project application promptly.

Sincerely,

LAND RESOURCE PROGRAMS DIVISION

Hal F Harrington

Hal F. Harrington, Chief
Lakes and Streams Protection Unit
Land, Lake and Stream Protection Section

HFH/cs

Enclosures

cc: LRPD, Region II
Coastal Zone Mgt Section

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