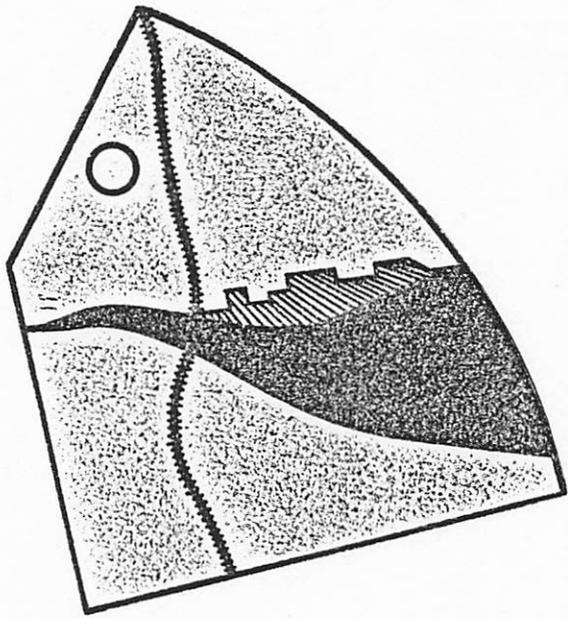


GIBSON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORK BRIEF



prepared by  
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December 15, 1978

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Project Description

#### Section I: Situation Report

- A. Baseline Data
  - 1. Population
  - 2. Employment
  - 3. Income
  
- B. Economic Condition
  - 1. History
  - 2. Industry
  - 3. Commerce
  - 4. Agricultural
  
- C. Access Analysis
  - 1. Transportation
  - 2. Utilities
  - 3. Resources
  - 4. Communications
  
- D. Social Profile
  - 1. Health
  - 2. Education
  - 3. Community Well-Being
  - 4. Environment

#### Section II: Economic Proposals

- A. Industrial
  - 1. Program Description
  - 2. Component Businesses
  - 3. Implementation Strategy
  - 4. Impact Projection
  
- B. Commercial
  - 1. Program Description
  - 2. Component Businesses
  - 3. Implementation Strategy
  - 4. Impact Projection
  
- C. Agricultural
  - 1. Program Description
  - 2. Component Businesses
  - 3. Implementation Strategy
  - 4. Impact Projection
  
- D. Supplemental
  - 1. Organization
  - 2. Financing
  - 3. Management Training and Operations
  - 4. Consultants

Section III: Visible Impact

A. Land Use

1. Prose Description
2. Environmental Impact
3. Map of Facilities
4. Projected Land Use

B. Architectural Sketches

1. Site Projections
2. Floor Plans
3. Sketches
4. Community View Before and After

Section IV: Projected Costs

A. Capital Budgets

1. Major Rehabilitation
2. Minimal Remodeling
3. New Construction
4. Land Development

B. Business Proformas

1. Start-Up Investments
2. First Quarter by Weeks
3. First Year by Months
4. Three Years by Quarters

C. Funding Frame

1. Public Funds
2. Private Funds
3. In-Kind Resources
4. Local Resources

D. Technical Assistance

1. Architectural
2. Legal
3. Construction
4. Business Planning and Financing

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Gibson, North Carolina is a one and one-half square mile area located ninety miles east of Charlotte and 90 miles south of Raleigh on the border between North and South Carolina. Gibson is a small farming town of the North Carolina sand hills situated 10 miles from Laurinburg in Scotland County. The Gibson Human Development Project involves the social and economic development of the entire community. The Project was begun through the cooperative efforts of community leadership and the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The intention of the project is to recover a viable economic base and to involve the creative potential of Gibson residents in establishing structures and services which insure inclusive care and citizen involvement in all aspects of community life.

## SECTION I: SITUATION REPORT

## A. BASELINE DATA

POPULATION According to the 1970 U.S. Census, the population of the Town of Gibson was 502. At the same time, Scotland County, in which Gibson is located, had a population of 26,929. The 1975 estimates by the Bureau of the Census, list 477 for Gibson and 29,483 for Scotland County. The 1920 census reported that the population for the Town was 264, and the County was 15,363.

EMPLOYMENT The national unemployment rate in 1970 was 4.9% and the rate for North Carolina was 4.3%. At the same time, the unemployment rate for Scotland County was 4.9%. No figures are available for the Town of Gibson. A recent survey by the Institute of Cultural Affairs indicates that the current rate of unemployment in Gibson is 12%. A significant black population lives in an area immediately outside of the incorporated town limits and accounts for much of the high unemployment and underemployment in the community. The two main causes for this higher rate are: 1) the 30 to 50 mile round trip required to work at places of major employment in the area and, 2) the lack of the necessary skills required by these employers.

INCOME The 1970 Census reported that the per capita income for the Town of Gibson was \$2,383.00 and \$2,033.00 for Scotland County. The 1975 estimate was \$3,692.00 for Gibson and \$3,093.00 for the County. A recent survey by the Institute of Cultural Affairs indicated that the median income of Gibson is \$7,660.00 as compared to the current median national income of \$14,094.00. This same survey revealed that 200 local residents receive medicaid payments, 100 households receive AFDC payments, and 95 households receive food stamps

## B. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

### HISTORY

The economic history of Gibson is closely related to agricultural production, particularly cotton and tobacco. The town began during the first half of the nineteenth century when a stagecoach reststop was established at Noah Gibson's General Mercantile Store. Other commercial establishments sprung up around Gibson's Store. Further commercial expansion occurred when the Seaboard Airline Railroad built on the west side of this commercial district. Homes, churches, shops, livery and blacksmith shops, doctors' offices, hotels, and a business finishing school were built. The peak of development in Gibson was reached around 1940. The community began to experience a decline after World War II. The principal reason for this decline was the rapid mechanization of agriculture.

### INDUSTRY

Local industrial activity consists of two cotton gins, a small sewing plant, and a recently established wood product industry which makes wooden pallets and crates for other plants located outside of Gibson. The two cotton gins provide seasonal employment except for a small number of maintenance personell.

### COMMERCE

The downtown commercial district consists of twenty buildings. At the present time only half of the buildings are occupied. These businesses include a general merchandise store, a bank, a doctors' office, a drug store, two gas stations, a fish market, a small grocery, and the United States Post Office. The remainder of the occupied buildings are used for parttime businesses and for storage. The available commercial services are limited and all other shopping is done in other towns which are at least ten miles away from Gibson.

### AGRICULTURE

As mentioned above, agriculture is still the dominant economic activity in Gibson. The farming operations consist of seven family-owned farms. Fifty percent of the land within the corporate limits of Gibson is used for agricultural purposes.

### C. ACCESS ANALYSIS

**TRANSPORTATION** Gibson is located 90 miles east of Charlotte, North Carolina. Situated on State Highway 79, Gibson is located ten miles from the junction of U.S. Highways 74, 401, and 501. Gibson's location makes it readily accessible to motor carrier transportation. The Seaboard Coastline Railroad serves Gibson with four trains daily. The railroad closed the depot several years ago, but side rail service to two customers loading cotton and unloading coal and fertilizer continues. The Fayetteville Airport, which is 60 miles northeast of Gibson, provides passenger and air cargo service. The Laurinburg-Maxton Airport provides general aviation service for privately owned aircraft.

**UTILITIES** The Carolina Power and Light Company provides electrical service to Gibson. Propane gas for home heating is provided by the Domestic Gas Company. Fuel oil is also available. The town operates a public water system to the community and a sewer system that serves about one third of the homes.

**AGRICULTURE** Land is the primary resource of the area both for the wood industry and for farming. The soils are well suited for the production of cotton, tobacco, and soybeans. This area is situated above the bountiful underground water supplies of the coastal plains region.

**COMMUNICATIONS** Telephone service is supplied by the Southern Bell Telephone Company. The U.S. Postal Service operates a third-class post office in Gibson. The Charlotte Observer and the Laurinburg Exchange are available locally.

## D. SOCIAL PROFILE

## HEALTH

Gibson is served by two medical doctors, and a registered pharmacist on a full-time basis. Scotland County Memorial Hospital is located ten miles away in Laurinburg. The nearest dentist is also located there. The Scotland County Health Department in Laurinburg offers free medical services to Gibson residents.

## EDUCATION

Pate-Gardner Elementary is the only school in Gibson and offers kindergarten through fourth grade. The Carver Middle School which serves students in grades five through eight is located six miles away in Laurel Hill. Students in grades nine through twelve attend Scotland High School in Laurinburg. The Gibson Headstart Center serves a limited number of children from low income families. The Richmond Technical Institute offers a wide variety of courses in both vocational and continuing education and is located fifteen miles west of Gibson.

COMMUNITY  
WELL-BEING

Civic organizations in Gibson include a Cub Scout Pack, a Brownie Troop, a Jaycee chapter, a book club, a home demonstration club, and a senior citizens' club. A neighborhood park, which includes a children's playground and a picnic area, and two downtown mini-parks were built by community residents. Gibson residents are actively involved in five local churches. A number of local residents are active in the volunteer fire department. The Scotland County Recreation Department operates an organized athletic program at the vacant junior high school campus. This facility includes a gymnasium and a baseball field.

## ENVIRONMENT

Gibson is located in the sandhills area of North Carolina. Much of the soil in the area is referred to as "Carolina Bays" which were created by falling meteorites many years ago. At the present time there are no vacant housing units in Gibson. Of the 232 houses in the community approximately 32% are in substandard condition. Approximately half of the substandard units are unsuitable for renovation.

## SECTION II: ECONOMIC PROPOSALS

### A. INDUSTRIAL: LIGHT INDUSTRY COMPLEX

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

This program is designed to develop small scale industry in Gibson. This industry would provide needed materials and goods to many of the larger manufactures in Scotland County.

**COMPONENT BUSINESSES**

The Crossroads industries complex has four components. First, the ancillary products program will produce various items needed by major industries in the surrounding area which are not presently available. Second, the local manufacturing program will produce finished products to market at retail activity centers throught the surrounding area. Third, the industrial services program will provide services to operate and maintain industrial operations in the designated industrial zones. Fourth, the resource development program will explore local resources such as sand and wood.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

The ancillary products program has already secured one industry, The Scotland Wood Products, a manufacturing of wooden pellets for Libby-Owens Ford Glass Manufacturers. The process for setting up a sub-assembly plant to supply pre-cut styrofoam spaces has not been initiated. The local manufacturing program has begun by investigating the feasibility of a furniture cube manufacturer, which will occupy one of the vacant buildings on the fringe of the Central Business District. Other opportunities have been investigated with the assistance of county and state economic development agencies. The resource development program also has begun to explore local resources working in a liaison capacity with other economic development organizations. No individual offices are planned for operating this program, rather it would function in conjunction with the Community Development Association.

**IMPACT STRATEGY**

This program will generate employment for local people. It will integrate the large scale manufacturing operations of Scotland County with smaller scale manufacturers thus enabling Gibson to acquire a greater share of industrial growth and prosperity. The new industries will also increase year round employment and reduce the distance some residents travel to work.

B. COMMERCIAL: SMALL BUSINESSES ENTERPRISE

PROGRAM  
DESCRIPTION

The small businesses enterprise program will utilize existing buildings of the central business district of Gibson to facilitate the needed commercial enterprise. This will augment Gibsons economic base by providing services for basic human needs.

COMPONENT  
BUSINESSES

Four component businesses of the small business enterprises are: a laundromat, a family restaurant, a textile outlet store and a realty-insurance office. A laundromat will provide services for washing and drying clothes, especially for those who don't have home laundry facilities. A restaurant would provide a place to eat other than home. It would create an environment for social interaction among individuals and families and would also provide a meeting place for civic and social organizations. A textile outlet would enable people to purchase fabric, linens and related items at a cheaper price. It would also create opportunities for local textile manufacturers to sell and to generate more interest in their products. A combination realty-insurance office would provide necessary services for marketing and selling real estate. This service would be especially for newcomers to Scotland County who are seeking residences in a small town environment.

IMPLEMENTATION  
STRATEGY

All of the businesses will be located in vacant buildings within the Central Business District whose former uses are most compatible with new uses. All of the buildings will be renovated to preserve Gibson's original visual character, yet reflect the unique qualities of the new activities. The laundromat will contain 12 washers and 8 dryers. The financing will be provided by the C.D.A. and the business sold or leased. The restaurant will be designed as a unique dining environment to attract customers from both Gibson and the surrounding area. The textile outlet will receive its inventory from any of the many local textile manufacturers. The store will be located in a building formerly occupied by an outlet store which operated during the 1940s'. The combination realty-insurance office will function in co-ordination with other offices in Scotland County. This will increase the marketability of Gibsons' property and augment the chances of new development.

SECTION II C: ENVIROMENTAL  
DOWNTOWN RECLAMATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM  
DESCRIPTION

The downtown reclamation program will transform the downtown area with a well ordered interior and exterior space. Town buildings will be restored.

COMPONENT  
BUSINESSES

The downtown reclamation scheme consists of four components. First the Architectural Landscaping Program will provide the overall plan for reclaiming the downtown area as a viable commercial district. The plan will emphasize the historical uniqueness of the buildings in the area and the beautification of Maine Street. Second the Building Restoration Program will provide assistance for the structural restoration of the buildings. Special emphases will be placed on the restoration of the store fronts to their original design and finish. Third the Social Nodes Program will create congenial gathering places for people to rest and socialize in the downtown area. This will include landscaped mini-parks with walks and benches. Fourth the Interior Design Program will encourage merchants to design and decorate their interiors to a unifying theme.

IMPLEMEN-  
TATION  
STRATEGY

To Implement the Downtown Reclamation Program an architect, engineer, landscape architect, and interior decorator will be recruited to facilitate the submitting of proposals for the store front renovations, landscaping and interior design. Space for new buildings will be selected and made available to new establishments. The cleaning of existing land and buildings will be done by organizing work days. Seed money for use as operating capitol will be secured by the Community Development Association.

IMPACT  
STRATEGY

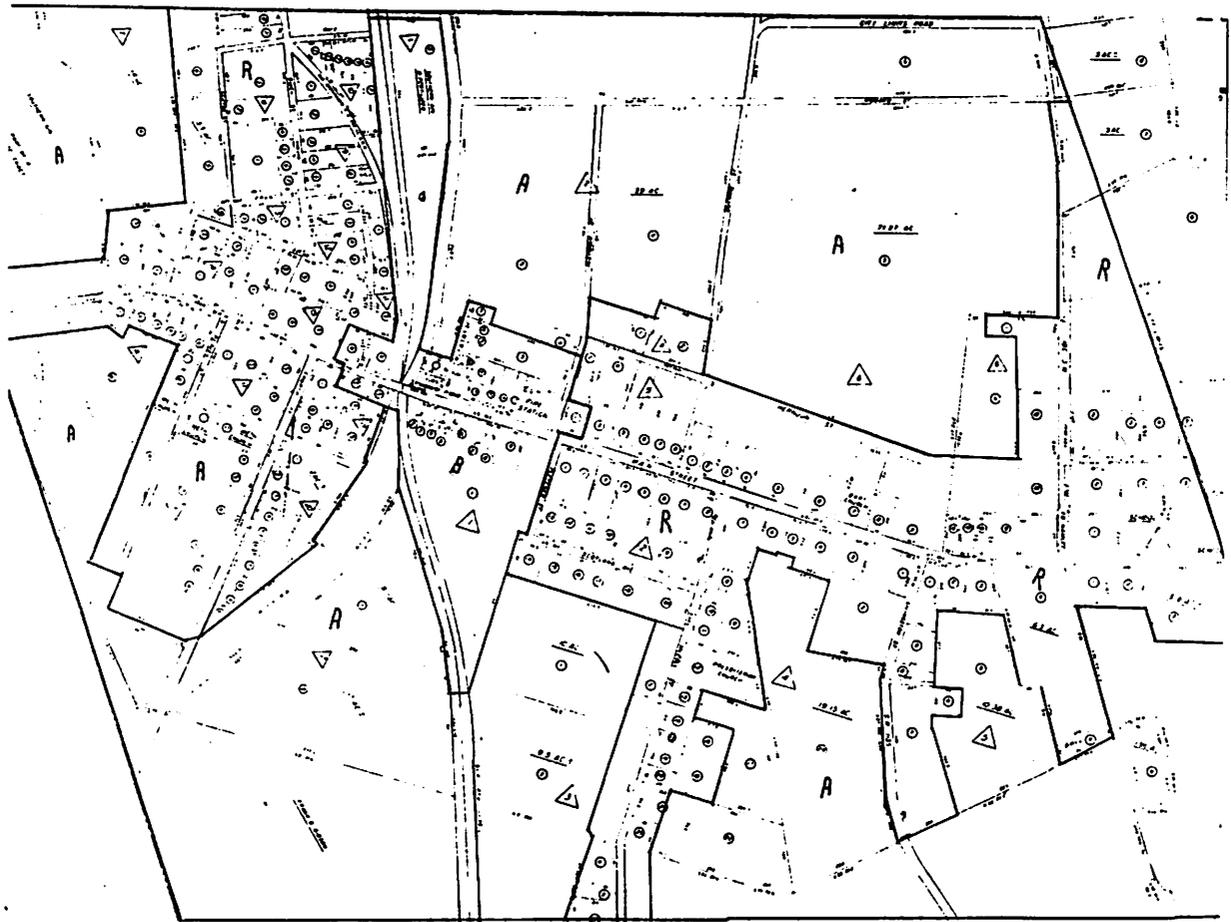
The Downtown Reclamation Program will engage a construction corps comprised of local citizenry to restore and renovate much of the downtown area. New industrial and commercial enterprise will be recruited to Gibson as the Downtown Reclamation Program attracts attention around the county and state.

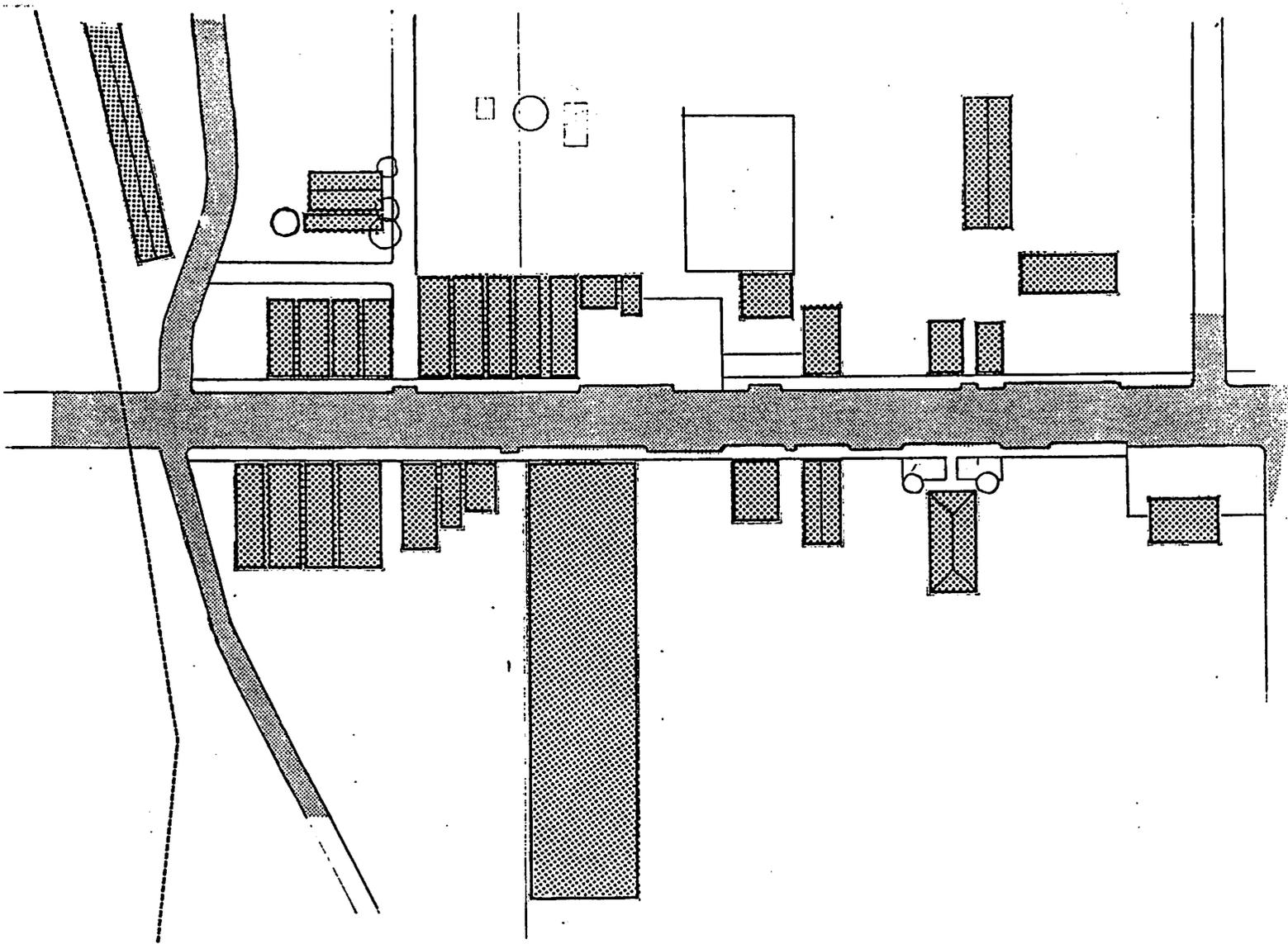
IMPACT  
PROJECTION

The success of the retails products program is ascertained by the fact that they would not compete with any existing markets, rather they would draw from a local community which has been inconvenienced by driving to another town for basic services. The small business services program will remedy this situation by capitalizing upon the vacant buildings within The Central Business District. This will hasten redevelopment of the downtown and allow local money to circulate within the community.

GIBSON LAND USE MAP







DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS PLAN(Existing)



PERSPECTIVE OF DOWNTOWN LOOKING FROM THE SOUTHEAST

D. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ARCHITECTURE      The services of an architectural student have been secured from North Carolina State University. He is working with the community on a volunteer basis on a weekly basis particularly in regard to the Downtown Reclamation Program. A professional firm will be involved in particular site plans for buildings and landscape projects.

LEGAL              The project now obtains in-kind legal assistance from a lawyer residing in Charlotteville, N. Carolina. This expertise is required for advice on legal contracts.

CONSTRUCTION      Construction expertise is needed for costing out of renovation, rehabilitation and new building projects. The project is in process of securing these services on an in-kind basis. There is some expertise within the community itself. The project is presently involved in training 5 local men in construction skills through the CETA program.

BUSINESS  
PLANNING AND  
FINANCE              Business planning and fiscal management expertise is required for training local people who will be involved in the initiation of new commercial ventures. Some of this expertise has been secured on an in-kind basis from North Carolina State University.

### C. FUNDING FRAME

#### PUBLIC FUNDS

Gibson as an incorporated town is eligible for federal and state funds directed to units of local government. However, other than minimal funding from EPA and the county for step 1 of a 201 study for upgrading the sewer system, no federal funds have been received by the town in recent history. It is anticipated that federal funds will be necessary for the capitalization of economic programs as well as housing rehabilitation and construction.

#### PRIVATE FUNDS

A local non-profit development corporation has been incorporated in Gibson. This is the primary vehicle for the coordinated funding of economic and social programs. This has already attracted a substantial grant for economic revitalization of the downtown area from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Part of this grant is to initiate a revolving loan fund to initiate new economic ventures within the community.

#### IN-KIND RESOURCES

In-kind resources play a major role in the initiation of many programs within the project. They provide an initial injection of resources which allow a project to begin with very little cash outlay and substantial community labor.

#### LOCAL RESOURCES

Local resources are the beginning point of any project. They symbolize the community's decision and commitment to take responsibility for its own future. These resources are in the form of land, equipment, facilities, labor and to some degree in cash savings.

D. SUPPLEMENTAL

ORGANIZATION

The focal point of the organization of the economic programs in the Gibson Project is the Community Development Association which is now a legally constituted organization. It serves as an umbrella for the development and financing of all industrial and commercial ventures. The membership is from a broad based community representation. The association considers the creation of all extension programs necessary for the successful implementation of the major economic proposals for development efforts.

FINANCING

Initial funding of the project has been handled by gifts from individuals and institutions, in-kind contributions and community labor and equipment. Major capitalization will be sought from public agencies at the national and state level as well as from corporations, foundations and concerned individuals within the private sector.

MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND OPERATIONS

Commercial and industrial ventures will involve community residents who will require some degree of fiscal management training. This will range from those who need basic management training to those who will need more involved training in management skills to expand their operating expertise. A Management Board will be established by recruiting the additional expertise from business and professional people in the surrounding urban centers.

CONSULTANTS

A crucial aspect of the project success and rapid implementation will be the impact of objective outside expertise. The ICA residential auxiliary staff of volunteers see to enable this. They represent the organizational and methodological skills that will build the institutional capacity of the community to carry on by itself

LOCAL PROJECT FRAMING

PUBLIC FUNDS		VOLUNTARY NETWORK	PRIVATE RESOURCES	
Federal	State	Technical Assistance	Corporate	Foundations
<b>D. of Commerce--EDA</b> CHARLES GALEY - REGIONAL LEE BRANN - COUNTY OFFICE DALE TAYLOR - C.D.R. PROGRAM	DEPT. OF COMMERCE W. W. WELLSLGER JR. TRANS. AND DEV. PROGRAM DIR. BILL FITZMAN - STATE OFFIC.	<b>Industrialist</b> ENGINEER WILLIAM BIRNCHAM NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIV.	DUKE POWER CO. CHARLOTTE, N.C.	MARY REYNOLDS BRADLOCK FUND WINSTON SALEM, N.C.
<b>Small Business--Admin.</b> WILEY S. MELICK - REGIONAL DIR.	DIV. OF BUS. ASST. FINANCE D. W. ARDEL CRAWFORD	<b>Businessman</b> STEVE REDFORD	CREDIT LABORATORY LAURINBURG, N.C.	Z. SMITH REYNOLDS FUND WINSTON SALEM, N.C.
<b>D. of Agricult.--FHMA</b> LAL PERRY - STATE DIR.	DEPT. ENVIRONMENTAL MGMT. JACK McCOMB Raleigh, N.C.	<b>Agriculturalist</b> NEELSON GIBSON SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE TRUS.	First Union National Bank Charlotte, N.C.	Z. V. DATE MEMORIAL FUND LAURINBURG, N.C.
<b>D. of H.U.D.</b> ROSS WYATT - AREA DIR. VEDRIS MASTIN - DISTRICT DIR. EDNA COLE - COUNTY DIR.	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT NATURAL RESOURCES + COUNTY DEV. OFFICE OF COUNTY DEVELOPMENT JOHN WYCH - C.D. ADMINISTRATOR JOHN HARRIS - COUNTY MGT. DIR.	<b>Contractor</b> BOB DEATHER MORRISTOWN CITY		
<b>D. of H.E.W.</b> FRANK GROSCHALLE - C.D. DIR.	NC DEPT. OF H.C. AFFAIRS Lyell Wertz	<b>Doctor</b> DR. TOM GIBSON CIDCO, N.C.		
<b>ACTION-VISTA</b> PAUL JAMES - REGIONAL DIR. ARTHUR BRANN - N.C. DIRECTOR	DEPT. OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<b>Architect</b> RICHARD ANDREWS NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIV.		
<b>LEAA</b>	OFFICE EMPLOYMENT + TRNG.	<b>Lawyer</b> GEOFF THAVIS CHARLOTTE, N.C.		
<b>CSA</b> WILLIAM WALKER - DIR. REGION	4 COUNTY C. A. P. MR. MOORE	<b>Educator</b> BETTY THOMAS Princip. of R.L. Goodner School		

31