The bulwark of the economy of the State of Michigan is the automobile industry. However, that which is such a boon to the state and its financial support of this and other institutions of higher education is at the same time a bane to the physical environment of these institutions. Each day thousands of cars proceed to, from and through the heart of Western Michigan University's campus creating traffic jams, parking problems and a dangerous inter-mingling of flesh and steel. Given these problematic conditions, and the prospect of an increasingly worsening situation, campus planners began several years ago to study and develop workable solutions.

Architectural sketch on preceding page shows the pedestrian parkway which will replace Vande Giessen Road on the West Campus. The building on the right is Mary Moore Hall, as you look toward the north from a point between Sprau Tower and Instructional Facility #1, which would be to your left out of the sketch.
There is no single answer to the problem, unless it be the generalization that all vehicles should be eliminated from the University environs. Yet, this is not only an oversimplification, but an impractical position. Where would the thousands of commuters store their automobiles? How would thousands of traveling citizens efficiently reach other areas of the community without some appropriate means of avoiding the campus? How could the surrounding community absorb the traffic and parking problems caused by prohibiting all vehicular travel on University grounds? And how could the daily vital services of groups and individuals outside the University community be carried out without vehicular access to the campus?

It is obvious that the planners could not dismiss these problems by simply declaring a permanent moratorium on vehicles on and adjacent to the campus.

Above sketch is a future view looking along the Dorothy Upjohn Dalton Promenade toward the south from a point near the Wood Hall parking lot, which is to your right rear. In the left foreground is Instructional Facility #1, behind it is Sprau Tower, and to the distant right is the University Auditorium. The structure in the right foreground is a future building which will indeed turn the Dalton Promenade into a pedestrian mall.
The problems of congestion have been compounded by the explosive growth of both the University and the Kalamazoo community in the decade of the 60's. For instance, large new residential areas have developed west of the campus, thereby increasing the volume of traffic through the campus. Meanwhile, the University was tripling its enrollment during the same 10 years to a peak of 20,125 students in the fall of 1969. As many as 5,000 student automobiles are driven into and on the campus each day. Faculty and staff growth has accompanied the increase in enrollment and has greatly multiplied the problems of traffic and parking. The campus congestion is heightened at the morning, noon and evening hours, but it remains a problem throughout the day with changes of classes at every hour producing heavy vehicular and pedestrian movement.

Several alternatives have been explored in an attempt to overcome these problems. Among them were such considerations as tunneling traffic under West Michigan Avenue through the campus, constructing several pedestrian bridges across West Michigan Avenue which presently divides the main campus. After carefully studying the costs and desirability of the various possibilities and after holding preliminary discussions with officials of the city of Kalamazoo, the University planners determined that the most feasible solution to the problem of traffic congestion was to close the campus portion of West Michigan Avenue to vehicular-through traffic.

As early as 1962 when the Campus Development Plan was initiated, the architectural planning consultants proposed the concept of a pedestrian campus. This plan called for the conversion of West Michigan Avenue to pedestrian use exclusively and the development of an academic core of buildings which would be centered in the vicinity of Wood Hall. This plan was accepted by the University with the understanding that if West Michigan Avenue were to be closed to vehicular traffic, an alternate

WMU’s first multi-tiered parking ramp opened this year just north of Gary Physical Education Center. It holds 608 cars on four levels, with 400 metered spaces, the rest for students, faculty and staff. It’s open 20 hours daily.
Western Michigan University's Campus Development Plan, as shown in this color drawing, includes the pedestrian campus concept as an integral ingredient. The letter keys to the various usage designations as contained on this drawing are as follows:

- **a**—athletic uses including recreation
- **b**—buffer strips
- **d**—dormitory areas
- **e**—main campus entries
As can be seen, Michigan Avenue will cease to penetrate the entire campus. From the west it will extend only to near the Student Services Building and from the east to the Administration Building. Vande Giessen Road will be closed as will part of Gilkison Avenue. This drawing was prepared by the WMU Campus Planning Department.
provision must be made to accommodate the flow of traffic around the perimeter of the campus.

In order to accomplish this necessity the University and the city planners proposed what is now known as the Howard Street extension. This thoroughfare is planned as a multi-lane street which would begin at the intersection of Stadium Drive and the present Howard Street, proceed west across the former University golf course, then connect with and proceed north on what is presently Sutherland Avenue, intersect with West Michigan Avenue and continue north and west to an ultimate junction with West Main Street and U.S. 131. Thus all traffic from the areas west and north of the University could easily and quickly move toward the downtown business district of Kalamazoo without passing through the campus.

With the completion of the Howard Street Extension, there would no longer be a need to maintain Vande Giessen Road as a means of ingress and egress for the campus. It would be closed to traffic and converted into a mall for pedestrian use. All University-bound vehicles would park on the perimeters of the campus on surface lots and in strategically-located campus parking structures and would avoid penetrating the heart of the campus. In this way, the University’s projected academic facilities could be concentrated according to the present campus plan between Howard Street on the west, the Kalamazoo

One of the distinguishing features of the Liberal Arts Complex is the Dalton Promenade which will connect the Sangren Hall area to the Auditorium area. The southerly portion of this lovely pedestrian mall is already done. The inset photo on page 14 is a blowup of the plaque which identifies the Dalton Promenade, as shown in the large photo.

Photo on this page shows a portion of Instructional Facility #1, which represents a dramatic departure in a classroom building design in that it consists of three connected structures grouped around a central courtyard. The structures will be an instructional communications classroom building, a faculty office building, and a lecture hall, using pre-cast concrete sections.
College boundaries on the east, Stadium Drive on the south and the north boundary of the Goldsworthy Valley residence halls. There would be no need for the University to acquire land for expansion of academic building sites west of the Howard Street Extension.

Even though the completion of the Campus Development Plan will result in a rather high density of building on the main campus, this heavy concentration plus the elimination of through traffic will make possible a truly pedestrian campus. The plan calls for an imaginative architectural and landscaping treatment of buildings and walkways as a means of creating functional, attractive physical facilities in an aesthetically appealing environment.

When the plan is fully developed, faculty and student travel to the East Campus will be drastically reduced, and the major academic facilities will be within easy walking distance from the center of the West Campus. There is a firm belief that the realization of the Campus Development Plan will not only eliminate unnecessary congestion, but will bring into existence a University campus which will be a source of pride to the students, the faculty, the alumni and the entire community of Kalamazoo. With the interest and the support of all who benefit from and take pride in the growth of Western Michigan University, we look forward to the day which brings the return of the pedestrian.

This article was written by Dr. Myron L. Coulter, WMU Vice President for Institutional Services.
Photo to the left is a view looking north across the Liberal Arts Plaza toward Wood Hall from near the Auditorium while the above photo shows the striking plaza fountain with Sprau Tower behind it.