Plans Made For ‘New’ Houston

By JAMES DOYLE

The sixth year graduate architects finished a 3-week project Wednesday. It involved developing conceptual schemes for the growth and relocation of Houston's population.

The students sought to check the dispersion of populace that runs rampant in Houston by installing a three level community concept. The architects attempted to centralize the population in such a fashion as to facilitate a denser and more mobile urban organization.

The city would be circled by belts of freeways ringing the city at varying radii like the lines of a dart board. These belt-ways would be connected by a series of spoke-like thoroughfares emerging from a business and cultural core.

3-Part Project

The project participants were divided into three teams, each taking an area of 15,000 population in which they were to develop a high-density, highly mobile community. The areas were each within the influence of the city.

The first area, Park City, was located adjacent to the downtown core. The problem was to redevelop the pie slices between the emerging spokes of the freeway system, an area which is essentially two-dimensional due to its lack of high rise structures.

A second team organized a community, Crossroads City, at an intersection of the freeways.

The third team constructed a city which bordered the outward bound spokes in rural-suburban areas, such as Clear Lake City. This city was to be named Gate-way City, because the project developed into lineal housing or a split level, just as he did before. The advantages of such a high-rise existence are varied. The resident would be offered a more compact community for neighborhood social life, the conveniences of services and small businesses on the lower floors of the complex itself, and greater mobility through moving sidewalks, rapid transit,

Height Is Key

By adding a third dimension to the cities, the teams showed that they could increase tenfold the density of a city that is now only 50% developed. These large-scale community projects would be apartment buildings rising twenty times higher than the traditional two or three story homes which now predominate in urban Houston.

The buildings would be constructed to allow the occupant to design his own home just as in a conventional community. Living space would be sold by volume rather than area, and the owner could organize his volume any way he wished.

More Compact

A buyer could enjoy the advantages of a garden, a patio, and an efficient freeway system.

Pedestrian Population

The difference in the community's organization would be basically due to the advantages of the third dimension. Buildings 5,000 feet long and forty stories tall would facilitate this centralization and intensification of population, as demonstrated by one of the teams. These high-rise communities would create a pedestrian public that could move about the city from community to small businesses, downtown businesses, and outward centers with the greatest of efficiency and speed.

Also, with the creation of more space by this skyward growth, Houston, which is now 50% underdeveloped, would be given additional land to alleviate its deficiency in parks and civic centers.

A NEW HOUSTON COMPLEX

Rice Architects' Proposal

Photo by Burgess

parallel to the existing freeways, forming a gate to the urban center.