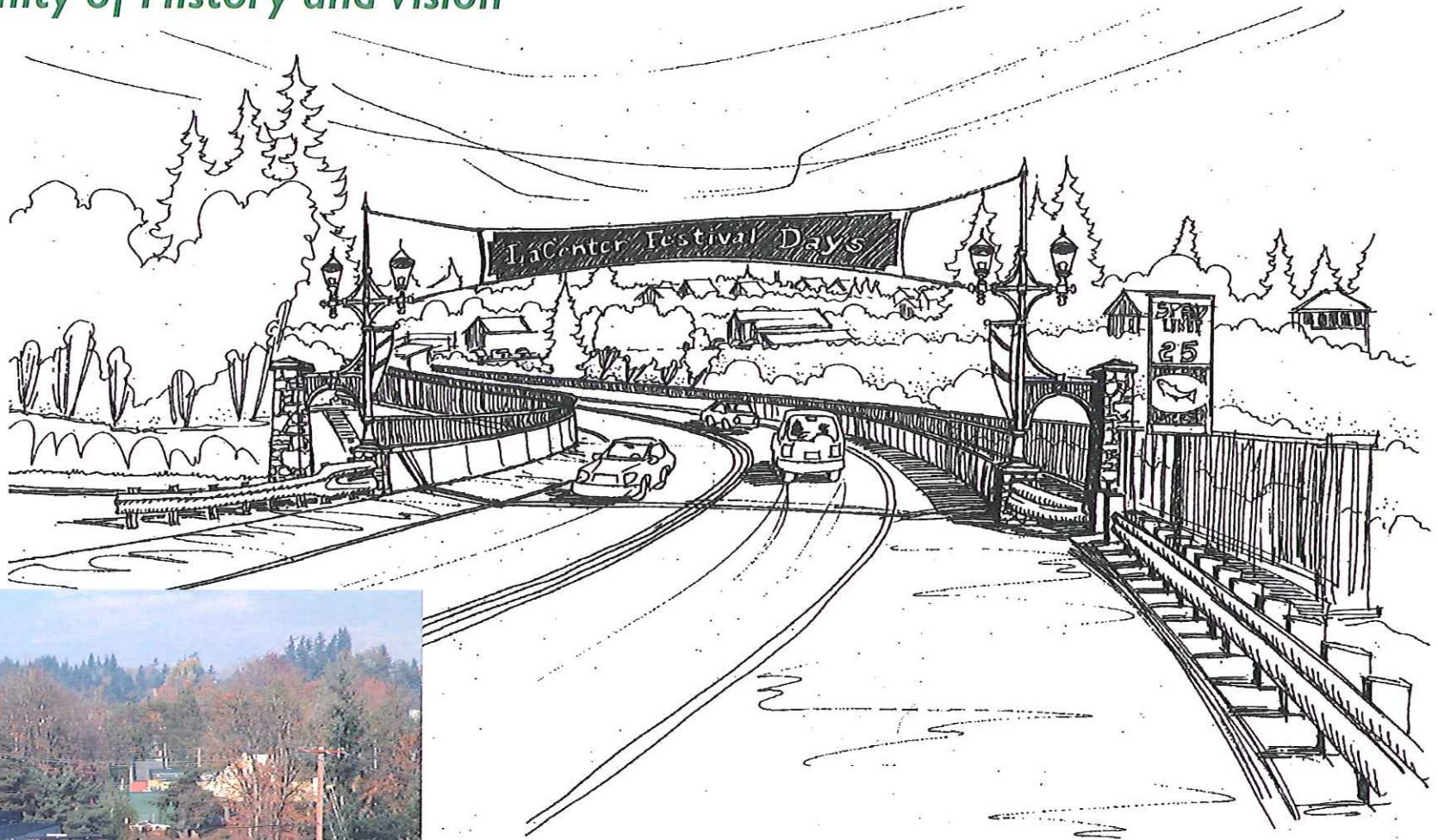


A Community of History and Vision



The La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

MorganCPS ~ Foster Consultants ~ H. Lee and Associates ~ Benner Stange Associates



The La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

Adopted May 25, 2005 ~ Resolution No. 05-253

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INTRODUCTION

La Center is a charming and historic community. Its location on the Lewis River surrounded by the pastoral and wooded lands of western Washington creates an idyllic and beautiful setting. As a community it is marked by older and newer neighborhoods, excellent schools, and a downtown area that serves as an economic and cultural focus.

Downtown Planning and the Role of this Plan

La Center has undertaken an extensive planning effort for its downtown. The first phase of this project resulted in the adoption of the "La Center Downtown Plan" in January 2004. This document states:

The La Center Downtown Plan is a key step toward the re-emergence of downtown as the heart of La Center. This plan is intended to guide public and private investments that will enhance business vitality and pedestrian activity in the downtown.

That plan established a vision for downtown and set a general planning and design direction. It also studied the economic profile and market for downtown. It established a land use plan and an urban design framework.

This document is Phase 2 of the downtown planning process. It is an implementation of the Downtown Plan, refining the design analysis and establishing design guidelines to be used in working with the development community to encourage and guide new downtown investment. It includes an inventory of the design elements of Downtown, design plans for streets and public places, and design guidelines for individual buildings.

Other components of the Phase 2 planning process include a detailed transportation and street analysis and plan, and proposed amendments to relevant city plans and codes to implement these planning efforts.

La Center's Downtown

La Center's Downtown is very unique. It exhibits a small area with a classic "Main Street" feel along 4th Street. It includes public buildings along



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5th Street, a new mixed use center between 4th and 5th along Cedar, and numerous houses. A major component of Downtown is the four casino buildings clustered around the intersection of Pacific Highway and 4th. These buildings each exhibit unique attractive architecture. The casino uses also have large parking lots surrounding the buildings and in adjacent blocks. The casinos are the major employers in the community with over 600 employees. The other downtown businesses are limited in scope and number focusing on convenience shopping and dining.

La Center is a growing community, growing so fast in fact that it has been the fastest growing area of Clark County over the last decade. New homes and neighborhoods are quickly rising on the hills above Downtown. As the entire Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area continues to grow, La Center will capture a significant portion of the growth given its desirable setting and high quality of life, and its close commute distance to the employment centers to the south.

Downtown, however, has not kept pace with this growth. The Heritage Center at the east end of downtown, a combination convenience store/deli/gasoline station, is the only new commercial development in several

years. For major day-to-day shopping, such a major grocery purchases, or any durable good shopping, the people of La Center go to the major shopping areas to the south including Salmon Creek, Hazel Dell, and Vancouver.

Downtown La Center has not expanded as quickly as the community as a whole. It has not yet emerged as a thriving center that attracts the people of La Center for both shopping for a portion of their needs and a cultural and community center that serves as a strong heart for the community.

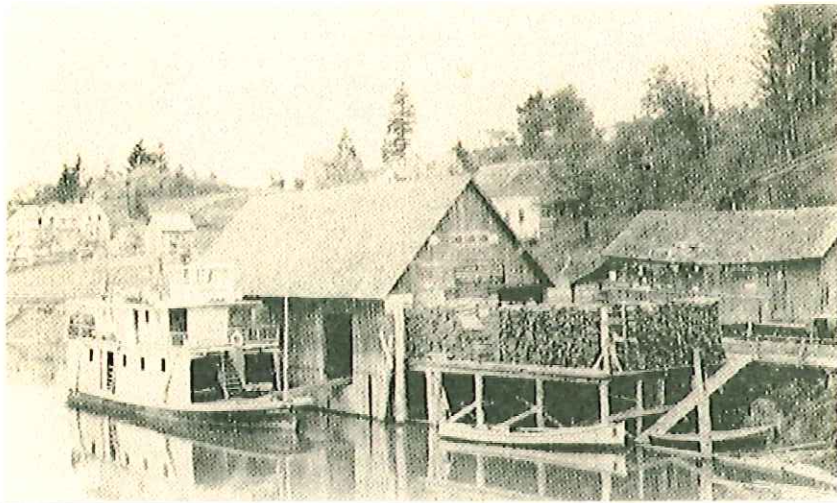


Downtown La Center—1908

These Design Guidelines are intended to help the community define and grow its downtown. They set a standard for both expectations and excellence in design not to establish regulations, but instead to

encourage private and public investment in something special.

These guidelines establish something special. They envision a downtown La Center that is vibrant and prosperous because it is a cohesive whole made up of many diverse parts. These parts are tied together by an eclectic yet tasteful and attractive design atmosphere. They are also tied



The Steamboat Landing—c. 1870

together by a network of streets, sidewalks, and public spaces that are delightful in their design and experience.

These guidelines are designed to implement the community's goals and vision for Downtown as found in the Comprehensive Plan. Without establishing a detailed strategy and direction, the aspirations of the Comprehensive Plan would not be fulfilled.

The La Center Comprehensive Plan – Goals

1.3.4 La Center shall encourage downtown commercial development which fosters La Center's small town, main street ambiance. The following aspects of this ambiance should be considered within the La Center zoning code, or other policies and practices:

- a) Store fronts should be located on the street along right-of-way lines.

- b) Business activity should be oriented towards the streets, through use of sidewalk cafes, tastefully designed awnings or similar features.
- b) Parking areas should be located behind, or at a minimum on the sides of buildings.
- c) To the extent possible, commercial activities should use original building facades and appropriately sized and designed signs. New construction should be compatible with surrounding design.
- d) With the exception of gas stations, new drive through facilities shall be prohibited in the downtown area.

The La Center Downtown Plan established this vision for Downtown. It was confirmed during the development of this Design Plan:

The Downtown Vision Statement

Downtown La Center will continue as the historic heart of the community. It is where the entire community comes together to celebrate the best of both the established and newer aspects of the city. La Center envisions the downtown as:

- The City's primary location for small shops, local services, and civic uses
- A people-friendly area that is pleasant for walking yet accommodates cars and needed parking
- A mixed-use center where new housing and services are encouraged
- A place for community events, including both local celebrations and events that draw visitors

La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

- *Visually and physically connected to the Lewis River Wetlands Stewardship Park, the La Center School District Campus and surrounding neighborhoods*
- *Providing attractions and services for all ages*
- *Supporting existing business, including gaming, while diversifying its economic base and planning for the future*

This Plan is intended to be guided by and to help implement these statements of goals and vision.



The La Center Main Street Hotel ~ Pre-1896



INVENTORY

The following inventory describes the various sections of the 17-block downtown district. The inventory is important in that it identifies the existing character and resources of the area and helps establish the places and ways significant gains can be made with redevelopment and new development.



Businesses Along 4th Street

Historic Retail on Downtown 4th Street

Inventory

4th Street is the Main Street of La Center. It connects the city's neighborhoods, civic institutions, and commercial activity. It is heavily trafficked linking the Pacific Highway to areas east of the city. The street overlooks the



Main Street Business

banks of the Lewis River where the community was originally founded and provides a feel and a view that is uniquely La Center's. At the center of this street is a one block stretch of historic commercial use buildings that are built in a traditional downtown form. This includes downtown business like the La Center Video, Giovanni's Pizza and Espresso, the Li'l General Store, and the La Center Tavern. This block is unquestionably considered the heart of downtown.

Building and Site Design

The traditional layout of the historic block gives the area a downtown feel. The buildings are built to the lot line and have narrow frontages on the 4th Street side. They have varied facade types and finishes along with unique overhangs. Much of the historic character of these buildings is hidden due to non historic facades, and changes in use. The general store building, built in 1914, originally had an entrance directly on to 4th street. The entrance has been moved to the side of the building facing the gas station while the entrance and windows once on 4th Street are boarded up.

The East End of Downtown at 4th Street

Inventory

The east end of Downtown at 4th Street is a mix of newer office and retail buildings along with a few residences. Dominating the south side of the street



Converted Store Front

La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines



Heritage Center

in this section is the TDS Telecom headquarters. This regional telephone company employs around 75 people in La Center. Its main building is three stories tall and overlooks the wetland surrounding the East Fork of the Lewis River. It is set back from 4th Street, separated from the street by City Hall and another smaller TDS building. This other TDS building is built directly adjacent to 4th Street. It is used for training rooms and holds the main switchboard for the phone network.

On the north side of the street are three single family residences. There is also the new Heritage Center building. This development



Downtown Housing on 4th Street

includes a full sized Chevron gas station, a market, and offices on the upper floors.

Building and Site Design

The main TDS Telecom building is a newer building surrounded by well landscaped grounds that transition into

the adjacent park and wetlands. The building was not built on the street grid and retains a suburban, as opposed to a main street, feel. The smaller TDS building which is located directly on 4th street was built in 1956 as the headquarters of TDS, then called the Lewis River Telephone Company. This building is one story and completely cinder block construction. It has a limited number of windows and most of those are narrow rectangles oriented horizontally about six feet off the ground. The City Hall is also between the main TDS building and 4th Street. Its entrance is not on 4th Street; instead the entire building is oriented toward a parking lot. On the 4th Street side the building only has one window and otherwise is a large concrete wall.

Two of the homes on the north side of 4th Street are older bungalow style homes well set back from the street. The other home is a converted church with several additions and modifications. This building



City Hall

has several historic features including a second story doorway that leads to nowhere. On the block to the east of these homes is the Heritage Center. This new building has a high pitched roof, many eaves and overhangs, wood siding, and a large amount of ornamentation. It also uses framed windows and stonework to suggest a rural, small town feel in a modern building.

Commercial/Card Room District

Introduction

The casinos that surround the intersection of the Pacific Highway and 4th Street consist of card rooms and restaurants. The large casino buildings are surrounded by even larger parking lots. This area receives many visitors from outside the community and vehicle traffic is heavy to these buildings.



Casino in the Commercial/Card Room District

Building and Site Design

The four casinos are built to be distinct from each other and the buildings around them. Each is decorated with bright lights and signs designed to get



Casinos Fronting Pacific Highway

customer's attention. Although these buildings appear to be big box construction, a large amount of detail is added to the exterior of the building to add interest. This includes bright paint, detailed woodwork, false fronts, balconies, patterned facades, and awnings. Generally only the restaurant sections of these buildings have any windows. Although the casinos are built close to the lot line, abutting the street right of way, their entrances and



Back side of Casino facing Aspen Avenue

general orientation face the parking areas, not the street. In some cases the casinos service sections, which include dumpsters, storage sheds, and/or blank walls, directly abut the street. This is highly visible to vehicle traffic and changes the pedestrian experience in these sections from that of a lively casino district to that of a deserted back alley.

5th Street

Introduction

Unlike 4th Street, traffic on 5th Street is infrequent and generally calm. It is wide and connects to Pacific Highway but is not heavily traveled



Fire Station in 5th Street Area

except directly adjacent to the casino area. At its eastern end, the street rises into the residential areas of the city and at the top of the hill an oak tree stands in the middle of the road. This area has long been considered part of the commercial core

but does not have retail use. The area includes the police and fire station along with the La Center Evangelical Free Church. It has one

commercial storage building and a few single family homes with large amounts of vacant land in between them.

Building and Site Design

Few of the buildings on 5th street have

entrances on that street; instead they are oriented towards the side streets. Nearly all the buildings are set back from the street and there



Equipment Bays at Fire Station

are vacant lots on the north side of the street that make the area seem undeveloped. The fire station is the newest building in the area. It uses two façade types, colored block and wood, which break the large building into sections and adds



La Center Police Station in 5th Street Area



Older Home in North Downtown

visual interest. As is typical for the area, the main entrance is on Cedar Ave. and its four engine garages are on Birch Ave. Its largest frontage, which is on 5th Street, does not have an entrance and is built below street level separated from 5th Street by a steep slope of plantings. The houses in the area include both bungalow and ranch style buildings. The Police

Station's main entrance faces 5th Street but because the street changes alignment, the view looking west down 5th Street presents only a blank side wall of the building. This cinderblock building is surrounded by parking and has distinctive architectural detail only on the entrance side and not on the two other sides, which are highly visible.

North Downtown

Introduction

This area covering the northern edge of downtown contains no commercial activity and is populated by single family homes. There are a large number of vacant lots in the area. It maintains the traditional street grid of the city, but not all the streets are fully improved and sidewalks

are intermittent. The north/south streets in the area do not connect to the newer residential areas except for Aspen Avenue.

Building and Site Design

This area has a mix of older homes from different styles and eras. This includes mostly bungalow and ranch style homes but there is also a mobile home and traditional American farm style house with a front porch. The vacant lots and undeveloped land make the area feel like neither a neighborhood nor a downtown. Some of the oldest homes appear to be on the west side of Aspen Ave. These homes are similarly set back and oriented to the street. Since they are on a gentle slope this row of homes create a picturesque residential streetscape.

Gateway

Introduction

This area includes the bank directly on the north side of the Lewis River Bridge as well as the city park overlooking the East Fork of the Lewis River. This area is the first impression of La Center for most visitors since the bridge is the most direct route to the Interstate. Although the area is the location of the earliest settlement of the city there are no historic structures remaining here. The park includes access to the La Center Bottoms Trail, picnic areas, and an open air amphitheater. The area also includes the city's wastewater treatment facility.

Building and Site Design

The bank is the first building that vehicular traffic comes to when entering from the south of town. It is block construction with a large blue metal roof. Although the bank is out of context with the bright



Downtown Entryway Landscaping at Pacific and 4th

look of the casinos or the traditional streetscape of 4th Street, its dark colors ensure that it does not visually stand out. Adjacent to the bank at



The Wastewater Treatment Plant South of Downtown

the corner of the Pacific Highway is a section of landscaped ground including a totems pole which creates a pleasant welcome to the city. The sewage treatment plant is varying shades of white and grey which make it stand out. Since it is well below street level it can be overlooked by some

passer byes, but for those who spend time to take in the view from 4th Street or use the park the sewage plant can be a real eyesore.

Pacific Highway

Introduction

This area is on the west side of the Pacific Highway, north of the casinos. It includes the La Center Bed And Breakfast and a small retail building containing a florist and a coffee shop. Across Pacific Highway from these shops is a large casino parking lot. The block furthest to the north in this area has a mix of well kept homes.



Bed and Breakfast Along Pacific Highway

Building and Site Design

The bed and breakfast appears to be a historic home with a Dutch colonial roof line and a verandah on two sides of the building. The house's lot is defined by a white picket fence which is in stark contrast to the casinos and parking lots nearby. The retail building is built without setback on the Pacific Highway side and parking is behind the building. It is newer construction with grey residential plank siding. It has large windows on the Pacific Highway side but because of the slope only half of the windows are at the pedestrian level.

THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Introduction

These Design Guidelines are established to set the City's expectations of new development and redevelopment in Downtown. They establish a cohesive design direction covering both the design of buildings and the



The Steamboat La Center ~ Approximately 1870

design of public spaces. It should be noted the Design Guidelines do not establish a specific architectural theme. Rather, they establish a broader pallet of styles and colors that are intended to create a eclectic, vibrant commercial district that is based in the era with river boats frequented La Center.

These guidelines are also intended to be used by the City and by property owners and developers as the foundation of work as a public/private team to create a viable and exciting Downtown.

The Guidelines are broken into three sections:

1. Overall Character

This section describes the overall character and feel being planned for downtown. It describes the general design styles and how they fit into a cohesive whole.

2. Improvements in the Public Spaces

Improvements in the outdoor public spaces are defined and described. These may be implemented by land owners and merchants in the yards and sidewalks adjacent to buildings. And they may be implemented under the leadership of the City for larger areas or projects.

3. Building Design

As new buildings are designed and constructed, and as existing buildings are remodeled, these architectural standards will guide development in a manner that is consistent with and helps to implement this Plan and its vision and goals.

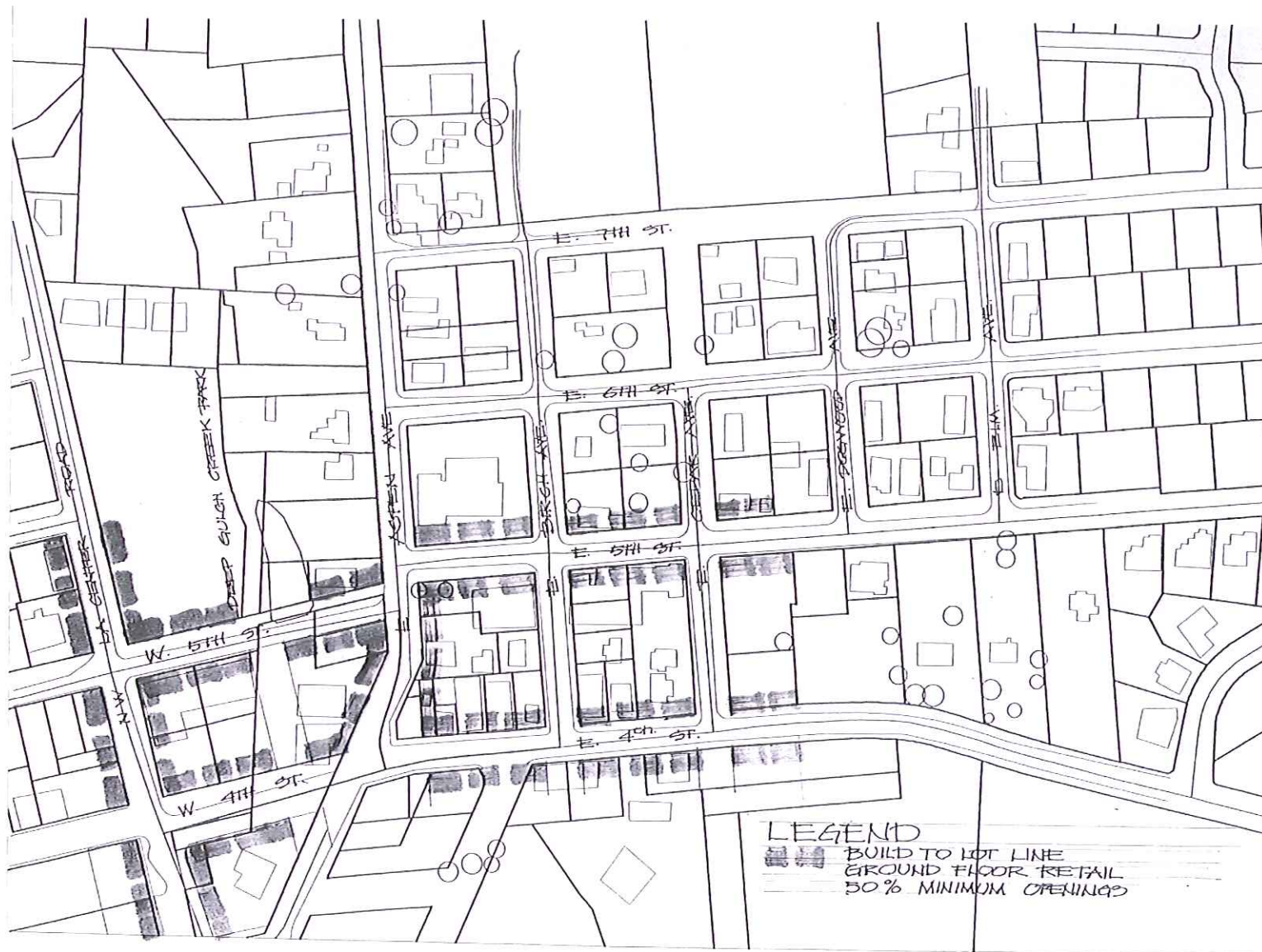
The Overall Character of Downtown

Reinforce La Center's Historic and Architectural Character

PURPOSE ~ It is the intent of these Design Guidelines to encourage an eclectic blend of architecture in Downtown creating a vibrant and attractive atmosphere and experience. Garish styles and colors are discouraged.



La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines



Downtown La Center

La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

- New construction and redevelopment of existing buildings shall be developed with architectural styles that were prevalent in the days of La Center’s historic role as a port for riverboat navigation.

Acceptable architectural styles include:

- Victorian
- Classic Revival
- Craftsman
- Cascadian
- Frontier



Victorian Architecture



Craftsman Architecture



Arts & Crafts Architecture



Cascadian Architecture



o CLASSIC REVIVAL STYLE



o MIXED ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

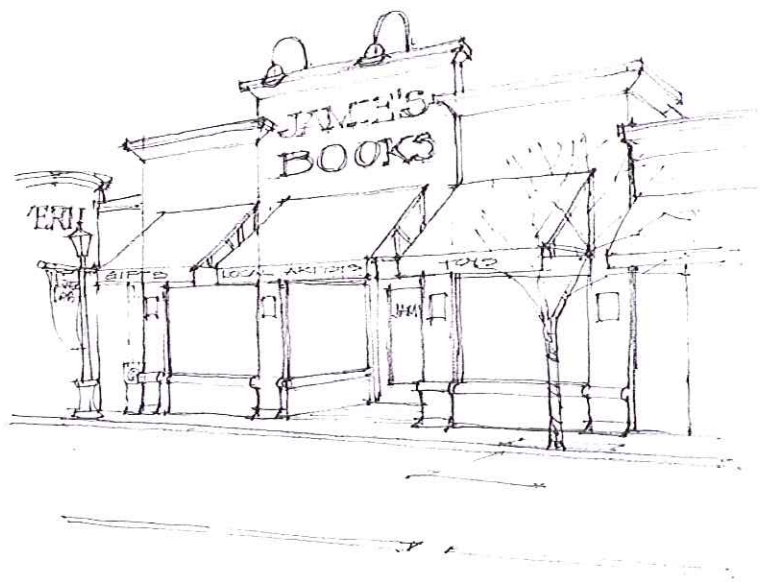
- Arts and Crafts
- Unacceptable architectural styles include any modern style that was not commonly used between 1850 and 1930.
- To the extent possible, commercial activities should use original building facades and appropriately sized and designed signs. New construction should be compatible with surrounding design.

La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

- Facades shall be varied and articulated to provide visual interest to pedestrians. Within larger projects, variations in facades, floor levels, architectural features, parapet height, and exterior finishes shall create the appearance of several smaller buildings with a maximum apparent storefront width of 60 feet.

Enhance La Center's Main Street Ambiance

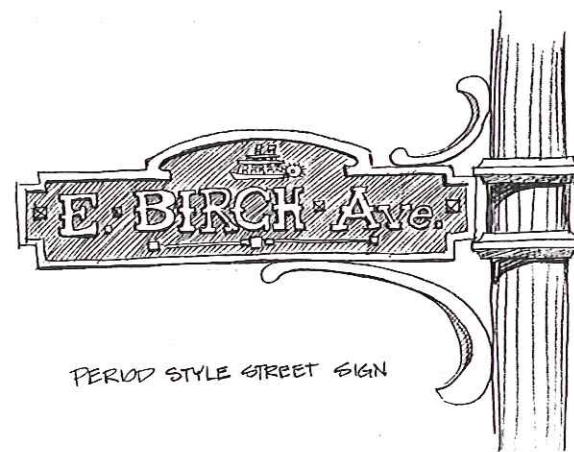
PURPOSE ~ To encourage downtown commercial development patterns which foster La Center's small town, main street ambiance and support



ADDRESS
50% OPENINGS ON GROUND FLOOR
GROUND FLOOR LEVEL
LOT LINE INDICATED
TEMPORARY HOUSING SIGNAGE
ADDRESS
WELL SIGNAGE

economic vitality.

- Storefronts shall be located on the street generally along right-of-way lines. Business activities should be oriented towards the streets through the use of sidewalk cafes, tastefully designed awnings or similar features. Buildings may be set back as much as 10 feet if the space between the building and right-of-way is used for permanent landscaping, outdoor display of merchandise, or outdoor seating for dining establishments. These areas may not be fenced off from the street except for a decorative fence not to exceed four feet in height.
- Provide ground floor retail, services, or offices.
- With the exception of gas stations, new drive-through facilities shall be prohibited from taking access directly to 4th Street.
- Discourage blank walls within the downtown.
- Preserve and restore La Center's historic buildings
- Provide street signage with a historic look integrated



PERIOD STYLE STREET SIGN

into the street light design.

- Maintain and extend the existing block pattern in order to develop a bigger yet more cohesive Main Street District. Develop new and re-develop existing commercial areas using the existing 200± foot blocks with 60 foot rights-of-way.

Establish Architectural Standards to Guide Private Investment

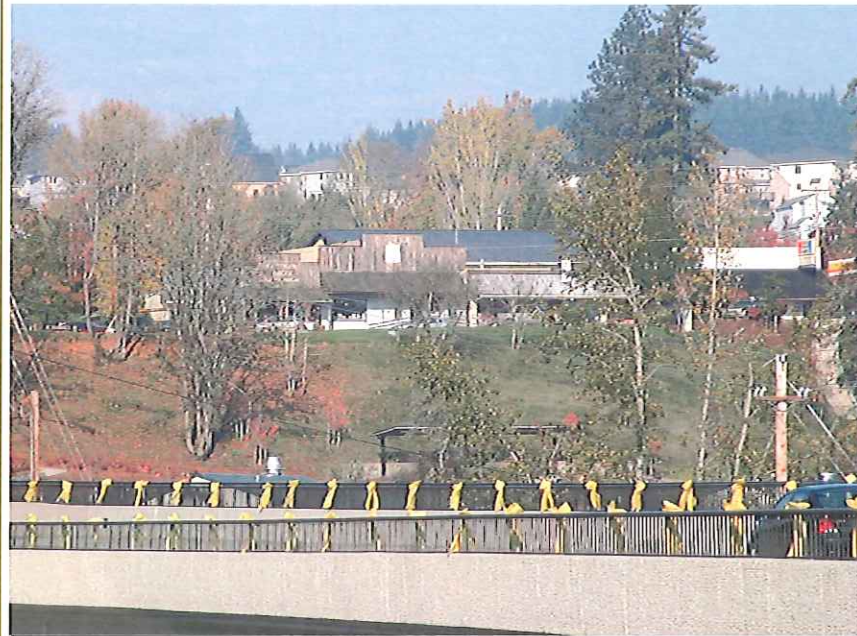
PURPOSE ~ For new buildings traditional storefront elements are required in order to invoke the classic “Main Street” character being sought in the Downtown Plan. These elements include the following and are described in more detail in the Building Design section:

- Front and side building walls placed within ten feet of abutting streets.
- For multi-building complexes, building frontages meeting these standards facing both the adjacent streets, and internal walkways and parking areas.
- Clearly delineated upper and lower facades
- A lower facade dominated by large display windows and a recessed entry or entries.
- Smaller, regularly spaced windows in the upper floor
- Decorative trims, such as window hoods, surrounding upper floor windows
- A decorative cornice near the top of the facade
- Change in Relief of Building. Buildings must include changes in relief

on ten percent of their street side facades. Relief changes include cornices, bases, fenestration, fluted masonry, or other treatments for pedestrian interest and scale.

Relationship to the River and View

- The backs of buildings on the south side of 4th Street shall be finished with windows, balconies, and other features similar to those used on the front for two reasons; first, to encourage uses that relate to the view of the Lewis River and the Wildlife Refuge, and second, to enhance and preserve the view of Downtown from the Lewis River Bridge. All garbage equipment and facilities shall be screened from



The View of Downtown from the La Center Bridge

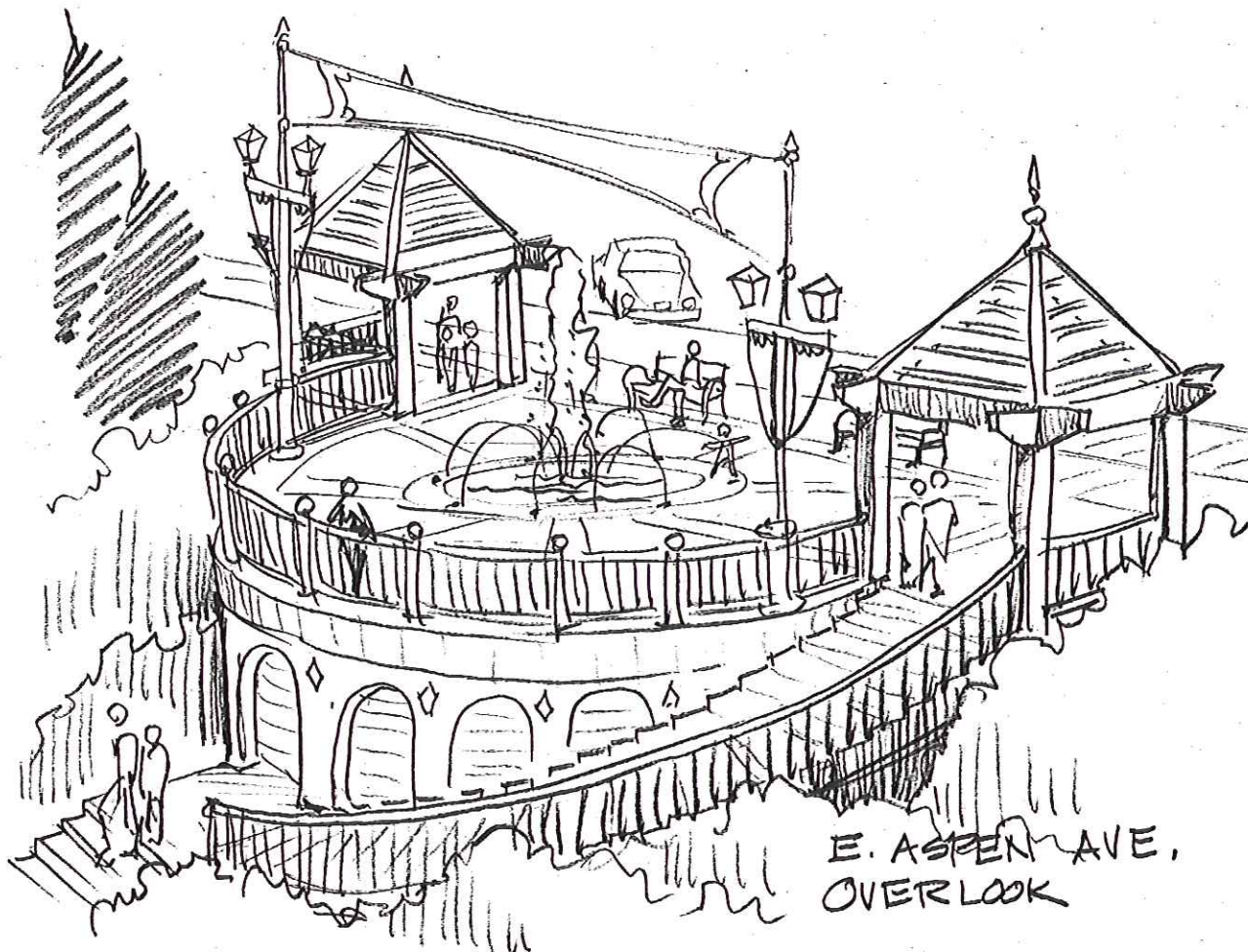
view.

Improvements in the Public Spaces

Public Spaces

PURPOSE ~ The heart of Downtown is its public spaces. These are the places that support the extraordinary events and activities that distinguish Downtown from conventional shopping areas. Cultural and Social activities find their home in the public spaces, which then supports the surrounding merchants, making Downtown a stronger and more viable place.

- Create public spaces that can be used for fairs, shows, displays, and public gatherings.
- Close streets for large public events being mindful of the need for parking for merchants that may be disadvantaged by losing parking directly in front of stores. The ability to close streets for public events helps drive the need to create internal parking areas within each block.
- Create resources for the community and visitors such as a

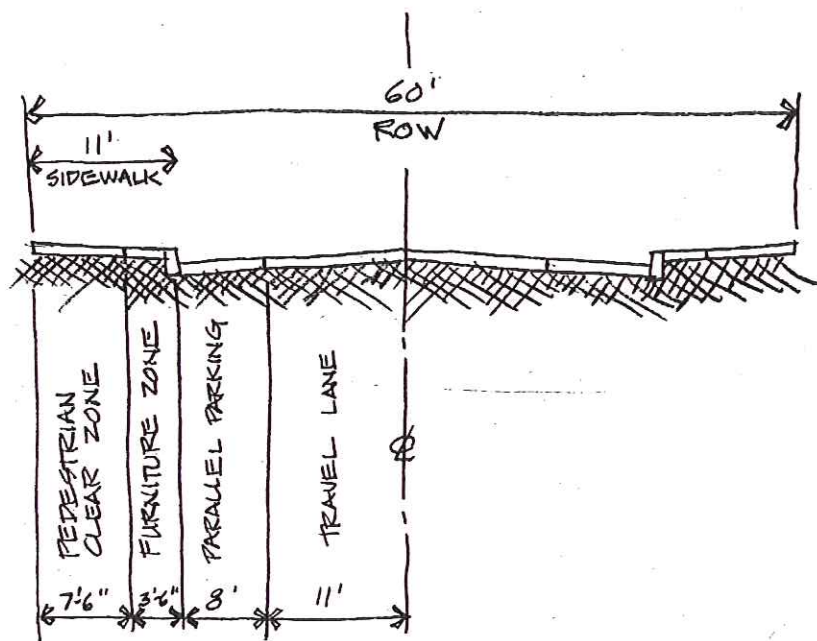


community reader board and a tourist assistance kiosk.

- At the south end of Aspen Avenue there is an outstanding view of the park, the river and beyond. This view could be framed and enhanced with an outdoor plaza space for public gathering. This view should be preserved and when future development occurs in

this area it could also help define the space and the view. Benches, fountains, arbors, stairs to the park, lighting, ornamental railings, accent pavements, sculpture, and a tourist kiosk and all manner of outdoor facilities could be accommodated in this space. A program of activities should be scheduled each weekend of the summer for this space.

- The sewage treatment plant should be relocated to enhance the view and the experience of the Park. Also, this will provide land for redevelopment into uses complementary with the park.



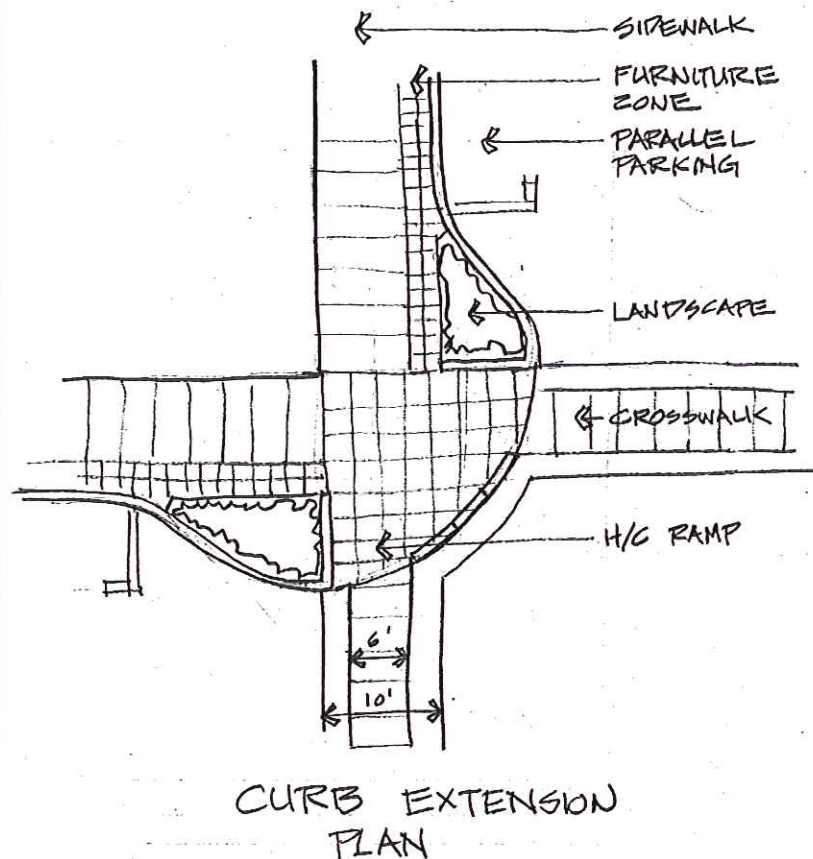
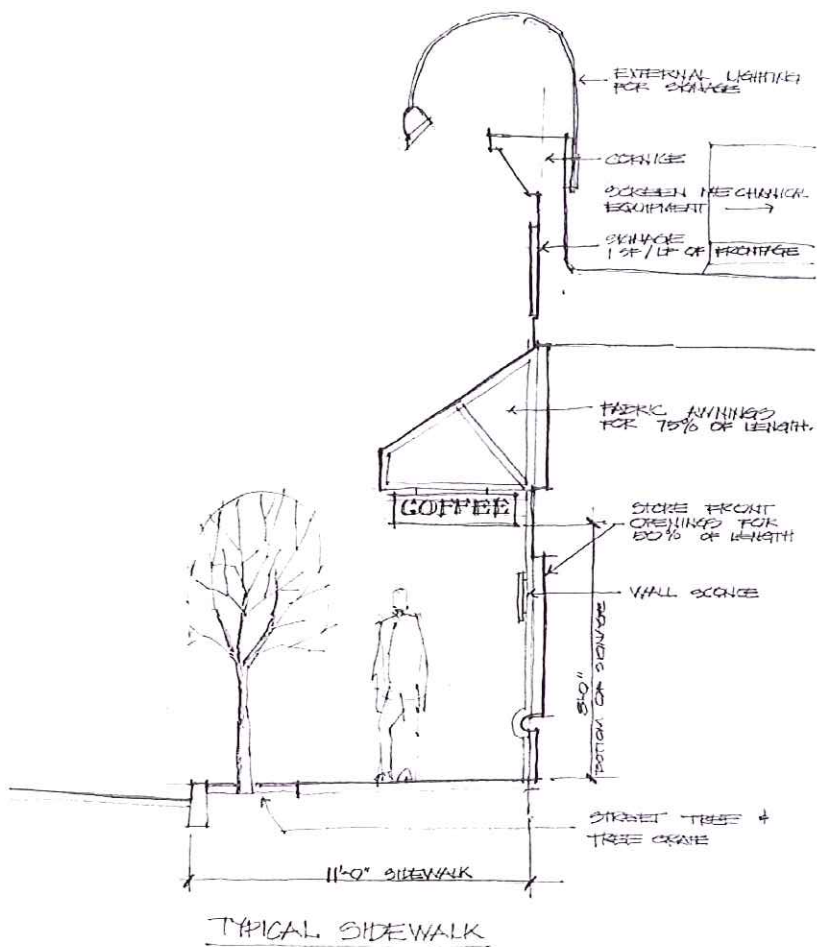
STREET SECTION WITH PARKING

- Provide a direct pedestrian linkage from Breezy Creek to Steamboat Park through the block.

Sidewalks, Crosswalks, and Streets

PURPOSE ~ The public right-of-way and the improvements therein serve as the conduit for all activity within Downtown, as a means of safe and convenient travel for vehicles and pedestrians, and as a very evident visual element of Downtown's character. The purpose of this section is to define design directions for these improvements so that all these intents are met.

- Provide wide sidewalks within Downtown. The ideal sidewalk within the available 60 foot right-of-way will be 11 feet wide generally with a 3.5 foot street furniture and landscaping zone and a 7.5 foot pedestrian zone. The street furniture zone is to accommodate street trees, lighting, benches, street signs, mail boxes, newspaper boxes and other urban accessories. Americans of Disability Act standards require a 5 foot corridor be maintained for pedestrian movement along the sidewalk. This leaves 6 feet to accommodate special activities such as outdoor display of merchandise or outdoor seating. These activities must fit within areas of street furniture however, that area can move from adjacent to the street to adjacent to the building depending on local designs needs.
- An important part of Downtown's character and pedestrian friendliness is weather protection. Awnings are encouraged for all building frontages along sidewalks and over entryways facing parking areas.
- Street furniture is critical to creating the character of Downtown



CURB EXTENSION PLAN

and to enhancing the shopping experience. It also creates an environment supportive of social and cultural activity. Street furniture includes benches and wastebaskets as its basic elements, but may also include unique items such as tables, information kiosks, planters, and sculpture.

- Crosswalks are important at every intersection Downtown. These



are both for safety and also to provide aesthetic improvements for every block.

- Curb extensions are proposed for every corner. These extensions are the width of the parking lanes, therefore reducing the overall crosswalk length by approximately 16 feet. The curb extension accommodates the pedestrian by narrowing the street and making it safer to cross. The extensions are designed to follow a consistent radius around each intersection.
- Curb extensions slow traffic, provide opportunities for planting and give opportunity for a change of pavements as a pedestrian warning of the intersection as well as being aesthetically pleasing. These extensions will also incorporate handicapped ramps in light with each crosswalk. The crosswalks should be delineated by a distinctive color, material, or texture to differentiate them from the street paving.

Downtown Gateways

PURPOSE ~ Downtown La Center is at the crossroads of several major traffic routes. There are four major entryways to Downtown. Each provides an opportunity to create gateway to Downtown. Each of these gateways should be a unique feature that delineates the edge or approach to Downtown. These gateways will provide an opportunity to help make Downtown a special place.

- Gateway to Downtown from the north on Pacific Highway
This entryway should be defined by a gateway structure on each side of the street at approximately 8th Street.

- Gateway to Downtown from the Northeast on Aspen Street

This gateway can reflect similar design to the Pacific Highway structures.

- Gateway to Downtown from the East on 4th Street

This is an important linkage to the school campus area, Library, and Post Office which are separated from Downtown by Brezee Creek and its deep ravine. Replacement of the existing culvert with a significant bridge provides a unique opportunity to create a very special gateway. The bridge should incorporate wide sidewalks as well as lighting and railings consistent with the Downtown design elements.

- Gateway to La Center on the south side of town at the South Fork of the La Center Bridge

This is the most important entryway to Downtown due to high traffic volumes. It already presents a spectacular entry to Downtown as the La Center Bridge curves gently toward Downtown offering a beautiful vista of the district sitting above Sternwheeler Park and Lewis River.

This gateway can be enhanced by adding character features to the bridge, such as lighting, banners, flower baskets, or other enhancements. New gateway sculptures can be added at the southern terminus of the Bridge, again reflecting the design shown in the northern gateways.

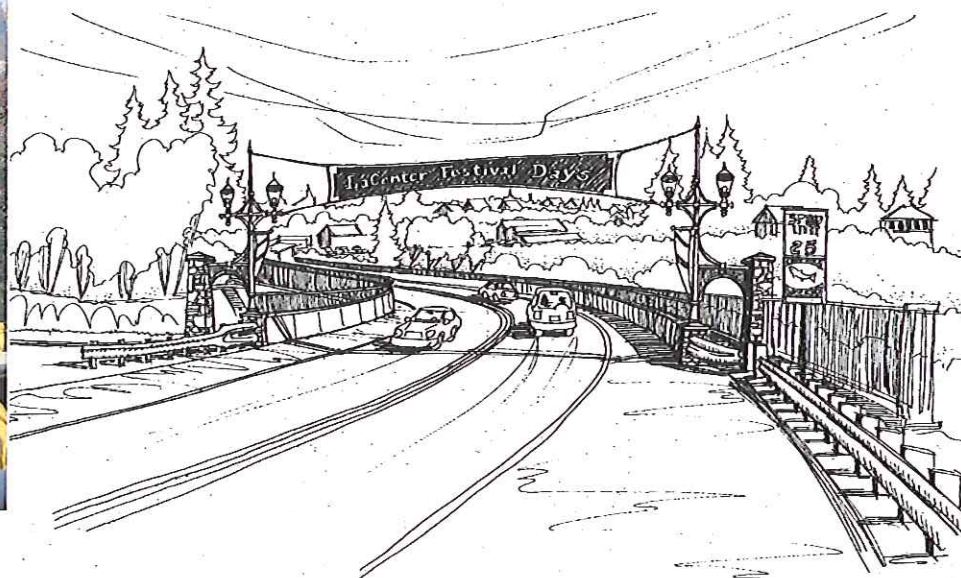
Street Trees and Landscaping

PURPOSE ~ Landscaping provides an important visual break from the broad asphalt surfaces of the City's street system. It provides a vibrant

aesthetic element to the district. It also is the consistent factor that ties the Downtown together as it develops with an eclectic mix of architecture.

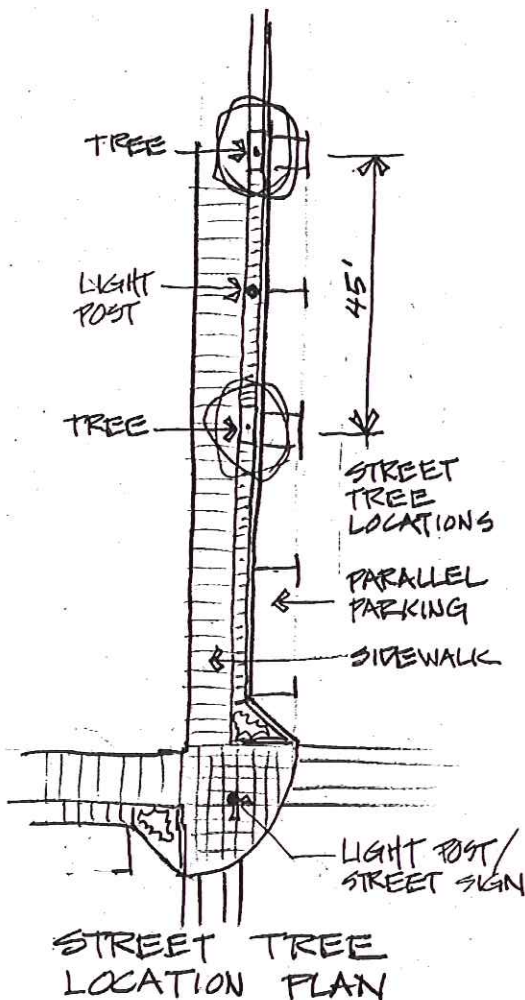
- Provide street trees at approximately 45 feet on center. The trees are to be planted in 5'x5' cutouts in the sidewalk located in the street furniture/landscaping zone. Decorative tree grates should be provided to both protect the trees and to provide another opportunity to introduce a design element into Downtown. Provide trees from the City's approved street tree list at 1-1/2" minimum caliper DBH. Provide irrigation and maintenance until trees are fully

The Downtown Gateways share common themes of stone columns, period lighting, ironwork, and distinctive pedestrian arches reflecting the historic bridge rail and synonymous with the time and stone that was used throughout the City. These simple structures define the entryways to Downtown creating an extraordinarily attractive and unique statement about Downtown as a special place. The Gateways tell the visitor they have arrived in a place



The La Center Bridge and Proposed Gateway Enhancements

established.



4th Street Plan showing sidewalk improvements, street trees, parking, bulb-outs, and crosswalk

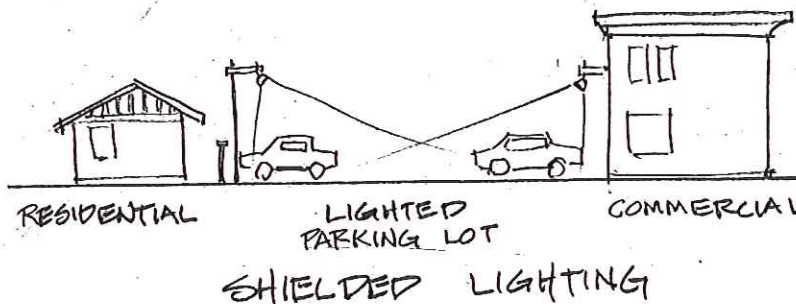
- Street trees shall be coordinated with parking and street lights to lessen conflicts with parked cars and pedestrian movements.
- Flower beds, planters, and hanging baskets will be established throughout Downtown coupled with seasonal banners. These will host significant seasonal displays of flowers to serve as bright, colorful, and vibrant elements of the district's character.

Outdoor Lighting

PURPOSE ~ Downtown at night should be as vital and viable as during the day. Outdoor light is important in creating a pleasing nighttime

character to create interest and vitality to the streetscape, while ensuring security. The lighting should be both functional and architecturally compatible.

- Consider the light from within the building storefront windows as it contributes to the general illumination, as well as adding animation and interest to the nightscape.
- Choose lighting fixtures that complement the character, style, and scale of the building to reinforce the character of La Center.
- Choose lighting fixtures that perform an architectural function, such as indirect lighting for signs and building facades.
- Provide 14 foot tall decorative street lights at corners and at mid-block. Street lights shall be selected that conform to the architectural character of the block in which they are placed.
- Street lights and street trees should be coordinated to minimize conflicts and give maximum amenity value while providing safety to the community. Set back street lights a minimum of 15 feet from any street tree.





A Clark Public Utilities Approved Streetlight Appropriate for Use

- Provide lighting in all off-street parking areas to a minimum of 0.5 foot candles level with a maximum pole height 14 feet.
- All street and parking lot lighting to have optics or shielding to direct the lighting downward.
- Encourage the use of sconce building lighting at the pedestrian level.
- Encourage the use of building lighting from the top using shielded fixtures.

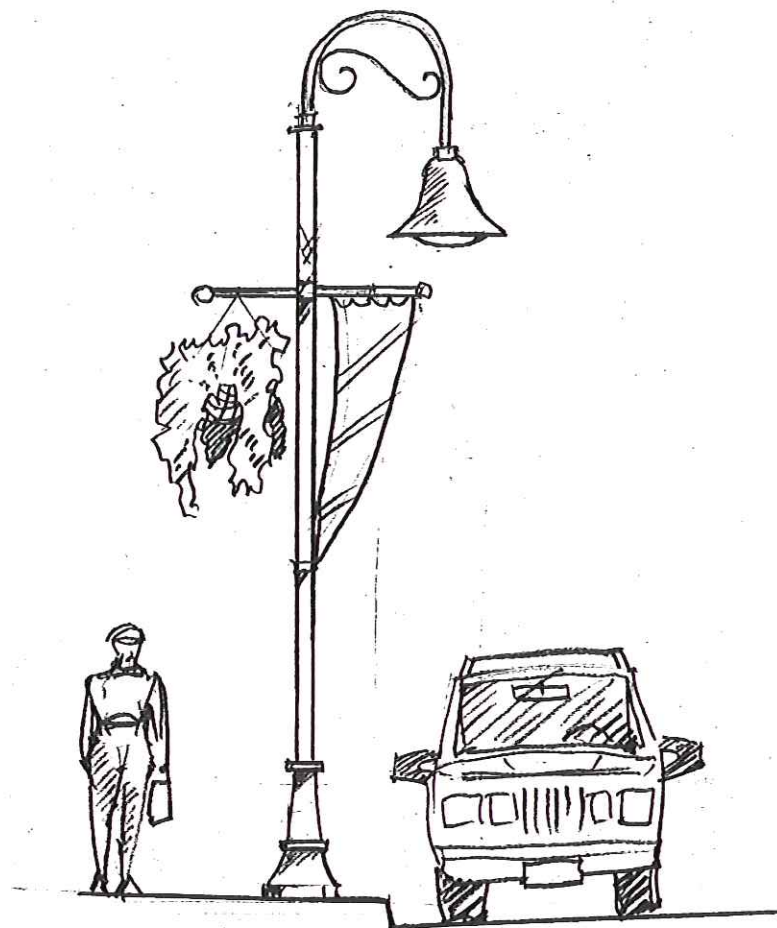
fixtures.

- Commercial lighting shall not produce glare or light trespass onto any residential use.

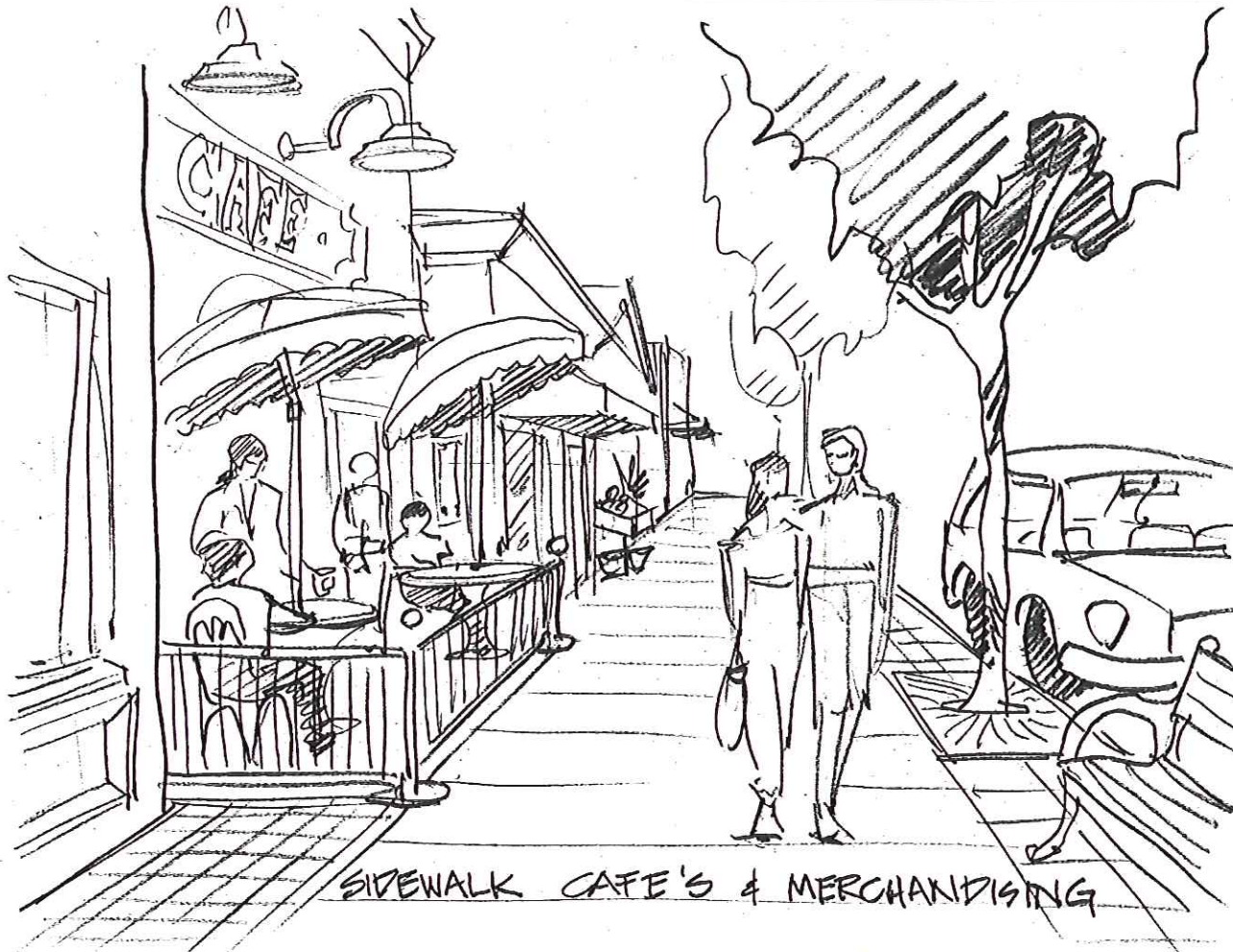
Outdoor Cafés and Merchandising

PURPOSE ~ Opening the outdoors to the commercial activities of the Downtown will make it a more inviting place for customers and will give flexibility to merchants and restaurateurs for seasonal sales and activities.

- The merchant should take every advantage of the store front and opportunities to display product out of doors. Where the sidewalk width permits and where alcoves in buildings occur, the merchant should set up outdoor space for cafés, merchandise display, and any



STREET LIGHT WITH HANGING BASKET & BANNER



stores where possible.

Parking

PURPOSE ~ Parking is an essential function for any downtown area. It is critical to commercial success to have convenient and available parking for service and retail businesses. It is critical to provide adequate employee parking in a manner that does not take away customer parking. It is also important that parking not become the dominant visual element of the district. These standards establish a parking strategy that meets these purposes speaking to both individual parking lots and to joint district-wide facilities.

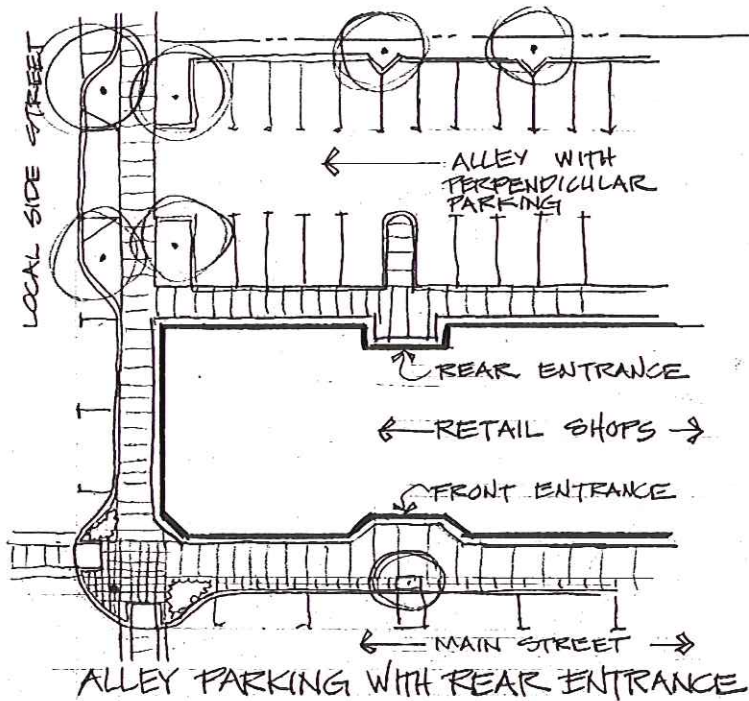
- The parking strategy for Downtown is based on developing a series of smaller parking areas infused through the Downtown and generally located mid-block in between buildings facing the streets. The City shall facilitate the development of this

other means that will engage the public and thus promote his or her products or services.

- Create interesting & usable outdoor spaces with direct access to

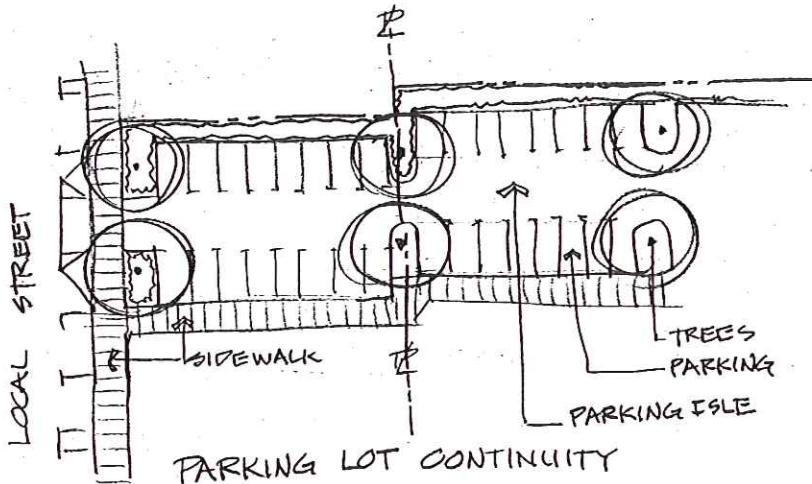
parking and may create these as municipal parking lots if funding sources can be found.

- Existing on-street parking will be maintained.



This illustration demonstrates several parking lot design concepts. An alley is created that has parking on both sides. This space becomes very important for parking and for providing a secondary public space between 4th and 5th Streets, and perhaps other streets in the future. Inviting entrances are provided through the rear of businesses allowing direct access to the parking lot. Trees are shown bordering the parking lot which improves the aesthetics as well as helps keep the space cooler in the summer. Trees should be spaced at approximately one per eight linear parking spaces. The entrance to the parking lot from the street has a "gateway" made up of curb extensions with landscaping, trees, and screening.

- New parking areas shall be located preferably behind buildings. Parking lots are not allowed between the front of a building and the street.
- Parking shall be encouraged to be developed in the internal portion of blocks along public alleys or private drives. These small parking areas will also serve as a second frontage for the adjacent businesses.
- Access to internal-block parking areas shall be encouraged along east/west alleys or drives accessing the north/south streets.
- Parking requirements of the Development Code for individual uses should be met through combined parking areas rather than through individual lots. Required spaces and other Code provisions should be met except the current standard of 3 spaces per residence is excessive in meeting the Downtown's needs and should be revised downward.
- A joint parking facility for downtown employees is encouraged to be located on the periphery of the downtown area.
- All parking lots shall contain a consistent distribution of street trees in order to enhance the lot's appearance and to provide shade, thereby lowering air temperatures.
- Provide trees in landscaped islands in off-street parking areas at the rate of one tree per eight spaces in the interior and in addition a rate of one tree per four lineal spaces around the perimeter. Trees in the interior may be evenly spaced or clustered.
- Off-street parking areas that abut streets must be adequately screened with landscaping and/or a sight-obscuring wall that is a minimum of 4 ft. tall. Required vision clearance must be maintained.



This illustration shows continuity both for cars and pedestrians. Each is linked across property lines to minimize curb cuts and driveways to adjacent streets. This guideline fosters joint use between merchants and

- Provide continuity between adjacent parking areas for both autos and for pedestrians.
- Driveway access to arterial streets shall be minimized. Access to local streets shall be encouraged.
- Discourage off-street parking lots or parking access within 60 feet of street corners.
- With the exception of gas stations, access to new drive-through facilities shall be prohibited from east/west street and focused on north/south streets.

Building Design

Building Facades

- Ornamental devices, such as molding and friezes, are required at the roofline. Where such ornamentation is present in the form of a linear molding or board, the band must be at least 12 inches in height.
- Buildings must incorporate features such as arcades, roofs, porches, alcoves, porticoes, and awnings to protect pedestrians from the rain, wind, and sun. Awnings and entrances may be designed to be shared between two structures. If the building abuts a street right-of-way, then the weather protection feature must be extended at least five feet over the sidewalk with appropriate easements or agreements with the City to allow placement within the right-of-way. If the building does not front on the right-of-way, the weather protection feature must be extended at least five feet along any pedestrian area between the building and an adjacent pedestrian walkway or sidewalk.

Material

- Exterior building materials shall convey an impression of durability. Materials such as masonry, stone, stucco, and wood are encouraged. Metal is not allowed as the primary exterior building material, but it may be used for accents including awnings.
- Where masonry is used for exterior finish, decorative patterns must be incorporated. Examples of these decorative patterns include multicolored masonry units such as brick, stone, or cast stone, in layered or geometric patterns, or split-faced concrete block to simulate a rusticated stone-type construction.
- Wood siding must be bevel, shingle siding, or channel siding and must

not be applied in a diagonal or herringbone pattern. T1-11 style siding is not permitted.

- Preferred colors for exterior building finishes are darkened and richened shades of primary and secondary colors. White, earth tones, creams, and pastels of earth tones are also allowed. Primary and secondary colors, metallic colors, and black may not be used as primary wall colors, but may be used as trim colors when trim in such color does not exceed 5% of the total wall area.
- Accessory structures such as attached and detached canopies, utility buildings, storage sheds, sales kiosks, etc., shall conform to the design and color guidelines and be built in the same style as the main building.

Roof Materials, Parapets, and Roof Pitch

Roof Pitch

- Pitched roof structures shall have a minimum roof pitch of 6:12. Large buildings, meaning those with a footprint of at least 3,000 square feet, may have portions of the roof at a lesser pitch, as long as the roofline is varied with areas of lesser pitch, dormers, or other significant architectural features.

Roof Designs

- Rooflines shall establish a distinctive “top” to a building. Except where impractical due solely to the size of the building, all roofs shall be of a peak roof style. No flat, mansard, or shed roof styles are allowed. On larger buildings where peak roofs cannot be used, architectural features shall be used that exhibit a peak roof style with



EXTERNALLY LIGHTED SIGNS
TWO-STORY, V-PITCHED PARAPET HEIGHTS
VERTICALLY PROPORTIONED WINDOWS ON SECOND STORY.
SCULPTURE HEIGHTS.
CORNER
BUILDINGS
STREET LIGHTS & STREET TREES.

facades, partial roofs, and other techniques that meet the intent of these provisions. In building areas without a peak roof, a flat or shed roof shall be used. When flat roof areas are proposed, a cornice or frieze molding a minimum 12 inches high projecting a minimum 6 inches from the wall at the top of the wall or parapet shall be provided.

- Parapet corners must be stepped or the parapet must be designed to emphasize the center or primary entrance(s), unless the primary entrance is at the corner of the building.
- Visible sloped roofs must be dark gray, black, or dark brown.
- Visible roof materials must be wood or architectural grade composition shingle or sheet metal with standing or batten seam.
- All roof and wall-mounted mechanical, electrical, communications, and service equipment, including satellite dishes and vent pipes, must be screened from public view by parapets, walls, or by other approved means.

Windows

Windows Required

- First floor walls fronting streets will have a minimum of 50% openings in the form of glazed storefronts, glazed doorways or glazed entries. Windows which allow views to the interior activity or display areas are required.
- Ground floor windows are also required on facades facing any parking lot. The minimum requirement is 10 percent of the facade.



Examples of Building Exteriors in darkened and richened shades of primary and secondary colors

Window Designs

- Window frames and shutters in proportion to the window will count against the required percentage. All storefront glazing will be clear glass so as to be used for displays. Blank walls are prohibited.
- Windows shall include sills at the bottom and pediments at the top. Required windows must have a sill no more than four feet above grade. Where interior floor levels prohibit such placement, the sill must be raised to allow it to be no more than two feet above the finished floor level, up to a maximum sill height of six feet above

La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

grade.

- Glass curtain walls, reflective glass, and painted or darkly tinted glass shall not be used.
- Windows should be wood or vinyl in a color appropriate to the building.
- Operable windows will be casement or sash, not sliding.

Second Story Windows

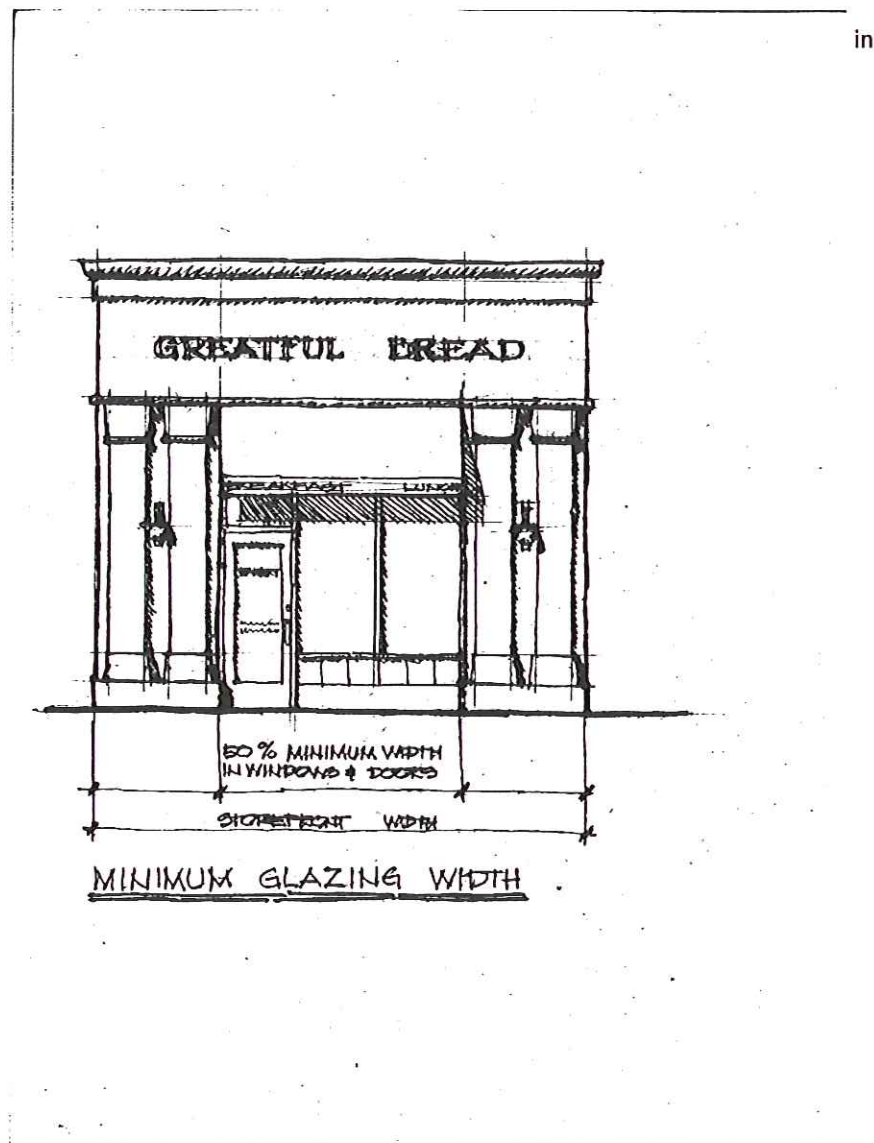
- Windows on a second story and above should be vertical in proportion with dimensions not to exceed 7 feet tall and 5 feet wide.
- At least half of all the window area in upper floors must be made up of glass panes with dimensions no greater than 2'x3'. Windows that have mullions on an approximate 1'x1' grid inside double-pane glass are appropriate and are encouraged.

Building Heights

- Buildings should be multi-story wherever possible
- Buildings are limited to 35 feet or two stories, whichever is greater, for office, service, and retail uses
- Buildings are limited to 45 feet or three stories, whichever is greater, when a ground level of office, service, or retail use is combined with a residential use above.

Building Lighting

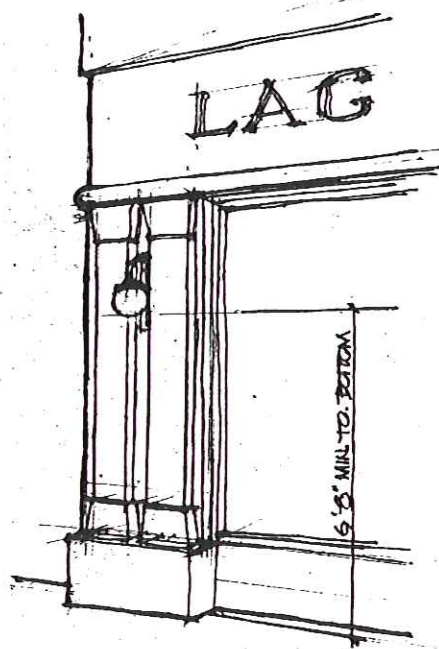
- All building entrances and exits must be well lit.
- Exterior lighting must be an integral part of the architectural design and be



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keeping with the overall architectural character of the downtown. Building accent lighting, sconces, detail lighting, and other lighting techniques that enhance the building design and that do not create glare or detract from other properties or the street and sidewalk are encouraged.

- The minimum lighting level for building entries is four foot-candles. Lighting must be a pedestrian scale and the source light must be shielded to reduce glare.



SELECT WALL SCONCE
LIGHTING FOR:

LOW BRIGHTNESS LAMP

COMPATIBLE WITH
CONTEXT

VANDAL RESISTANCE

WALL SCONCE

- All lighting shall be directed downwards and shall not shine into the sky.

Signage

PURPOSE ~ Wherever they are used, signs should be subordinate to the overall character of the area and to the individual buildings to which they are related. Traditionally, signs were relatively simple in La Center. Historic photographs illustrate a limited range of types. Signs were mounted flush on storefronts, projected over the sidewalk, or painted on windows. The character of the signs complemented the overall street scene and added to the "Main Street" ambience. This should still hold true today.

Sign Design

- Sign materials should be compatible with the facade materials.
- Painted wood and metal are encouraged as sign materials because they relate well to the buildings. Use plastic only in limited amounts. Avoid highly-reflective materials that will be difficult to read.
- Invest in high quality sign materials. Well-crafted signs convey a sense of high quality for the business.
- Encourage applied letter or painted signage to the building face.
- Fonts should complement period style signage consistent with the architecture.
- Reader boards are encouraged within the allowable sign area.
- Corporate design standards are never to be used as a justification for granting a variance to the sign standards.
- Sign design should be incorporated into the Building Design Review process.



Sign Illumination

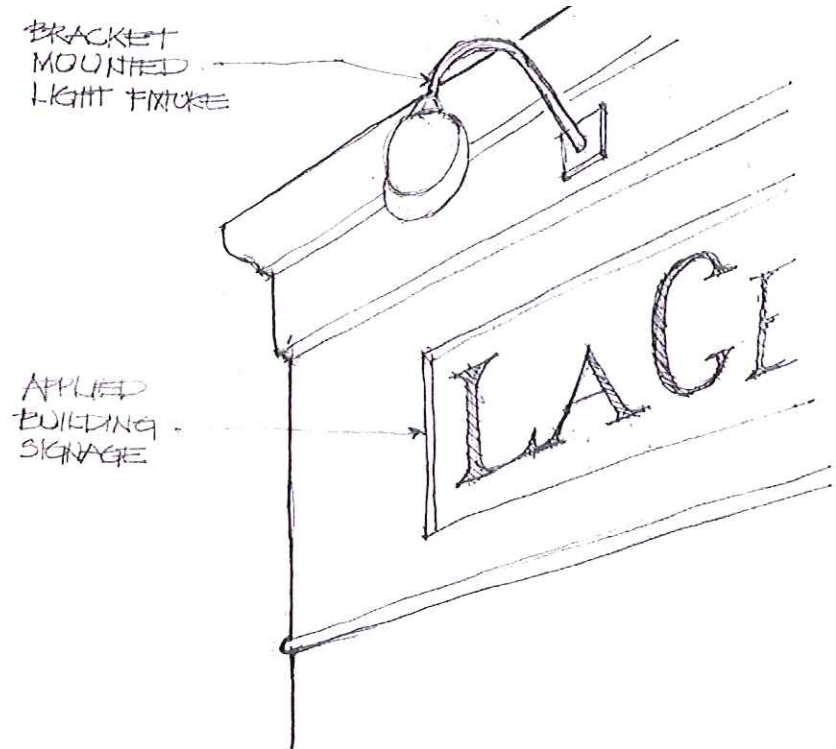
- Illuminate signs in such a way as to enhance the overall composition of the facade.
- Encourage externally lighted signage. Discourage internally lighted signs.

Sign Mounting and Placement

- Encourage signage on the awning or canopy fascia or blade signage perpendicular to the sidewalk with a minimum of 8 ft. to the bottom of the sign.
- To the extent possible, commercial activities should use original building facades and appropriately sized and designed signs. Mount signs so they will not obscure any architectural details.
- Locate projecting signs along the first floor level of the facade, not above.
- Position flush-mounted signs so they will fit within architectural features.
- Awning signs are especially useful where space is unavailable on the building front.

Pole Mounted Signs

- Pole mounted signs are discouraged in favor of façade or awning signs.
- When they are used, locate pole-mounted signs in landscaped areas instead of within parking lots.
- Keep the height of pole signs in scale with pedestrians.
- Ornamental features, pole coverings, etc. should be used to add to the

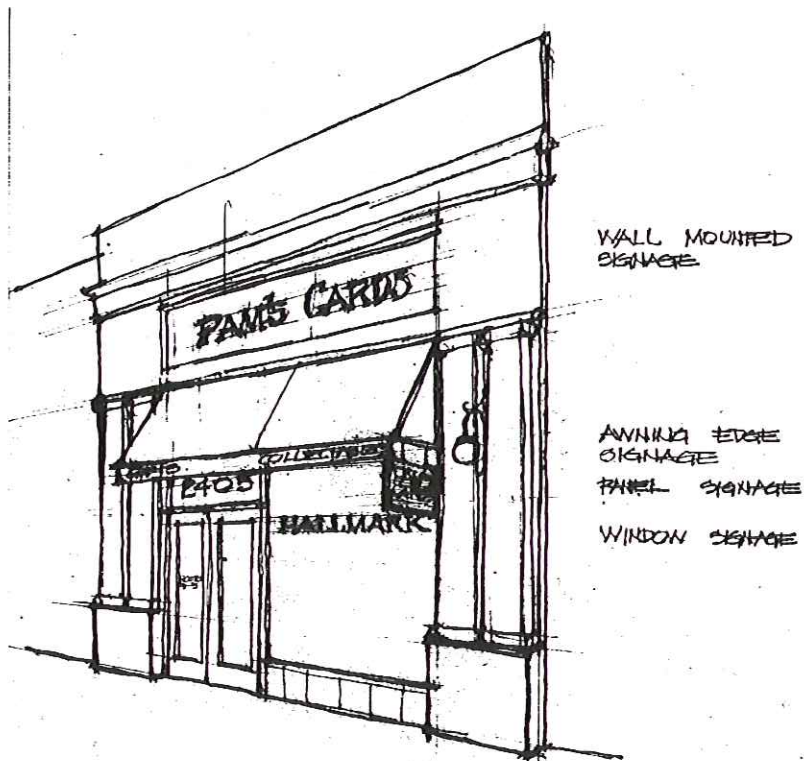


EXTERNALLY LIGHTED SIGNAGE

aesthetics of pole signs. Pole signs should be designed to match the architecture of the main building.

Environmental Design

PURPOSE ~ As Downtown develops, it can incorporate design features which create a more sustainable environment. These features can primarily focus on the management of rainwater to see that not only is flooding



SIGNAGE TYPES

avoided, water quality is maintained as waters flow from Downtown into the Lewis River and its wetlands and wildlife refuge. Also, new buildings can be encouraged to be energy efficient.

- The City shall require or foster control of the quality and quantity of storm water discharge from development projects with emphasis on on-site retention, treatment and infiltration of run-off to minimize impacts on the established wastewater system and local streams, rivers wetlands and lakes.
- Foster the use of retention and detention in the downtown area planned and implemented on a district wide basis.
- Promote the use of roof systems that retain and treat rainwater.
- Promote the use of porous paving to allow direct recharge of surface water without conveying as much water through a piped system.
- Promote new buildings that are designed and built to achieve LEEDS (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.



STREETS AND CIRCULATION

The goal of the Downtown Circulation Plan is to provide mobility for motorists as well as create a pedestrian oriented activity center. The most common principle in providing mobility in conjunction with a pedestrian oriented environment is to create a grid system of streets with short blocks of 300 to 500 feet. This achieves many routes for motorists to use to access downtown businesses as well as create many routes to dissipate traffic more quickly. The short blocks with sidewalks also create the most ideal pedestrian environment with a scale of development that is easily walkable.

The development of the Downtown Circulation Plan was more of a conceptual exercise focused on creating a 20-year street grid network rather than a purely technical exercise. The justification for the development of the grid system is to meet the downtown development goals of balancing mobility with a pedestrian oriented downtown.

Alternatives for 4th Street

Fourth Street is the primary street through the downtown La Center area as well as one of the primary routes to the city's residential area. In the future, alternatives need to be considered to either increase the capacity of 4th Street or to divert traffic to other parallel, east-west routes. Two primary alternatives have been developed to address future capacity needs of 4th Street.

The first alternative developed to address future capacity needs along the 4th Street corridor is to create a one-way couplet with 4th and 5th Streets. Fourth Street would only be used for eastbound traffic. Fifth Street would only be used for westbound traffic. A one-way system would also be

created with Aspen and Cedar Avenues. Aspen Avenue would only be used for southbound traffic. Cedar Avenue would only be used for northbound traffic.

The second alternative developed to address future capacity needs along the 4th Street corridor was to create a less intrusive way to encourage traffic to divert to 5th Street. A traffic signal is proposed in Alternative 2 at the Pacific Highway/5th Street intersection. The Pacific Highway/4th Street intersection would remain unsignalized. This would create easier access outbound of the downtown area at the Pacific Highway/5th Street intersection and provide motorists incentive to divert away from 4th Street.

Preferred Improvement Proposals

Improvement 1 – Correction of 5th Street Offset at Aspen Avenue

Fifth Street will play an important part of moving traffic through downtown La Center in the future. It is parallel to 4th Street and provides an alternative to 4th Street as 4th Street becomes more congested. Fifth Street also provides an opportunity to separate inbound and outbound traffic through downtown La Center. Currently, both inbound and outbound traffic to La Center is primarily focused on 4th Street and the intersection of Pacific Highway and 4th Street. There is an opportunity to divert outbound traffic going through downtown La Center to 5th Street if it can be developed into a more efficient route. The elimination of the offset at the 5th Street/Aspen Avenue intersection is the first step in developing 5th Street as a primary outbound route.

Improvement 2 – Signalization of the Pacific Highway/5th Street Intersection

Signalization of the Pacific Highway/5th Street intersection accomplishes two main goals. First, it provides a safe outbound route for westbound to



La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

southbound traffic. The westbound to southbound traffic movement is the most significant traffic movement in the A.M. peak hour as La Center residents commute to work. Second, it encourages the use of 5th Street over 4th Street for outbound traffic by providing a more efficient route with less delay. By reducing traffic volumes along 4th Street, 4th Street can focus on becoming more pedestrian oriented and the center of downtown activity.

Improvement 3 – Closure of West Leg of the Pacific Highway/4th Street Intersection and Development of New Access to Casino at 5th Street

The offset of the eastbound and westbound approaches at the Pacific Highway/4th Street intersection is a problem that will worsen over time as the traffic volume increases. At some point in the future, the increase in traffic will likely reach a threshold where significant vehicle conflicts will arise which will result in an increase in accidents. To correct this problem, the west leg at the Pacific Highway/4th Street intersection should be eliminated and a new access developed for the casino.

Improvement 4 – Realignment of Aspen Street

Aspen Avenue currently terminates at 4th Street at a skew. This skew makes it difficult for the southbound left turn traffic at the Aspen Avenue/4th Street intersection to make its turn. By straightening Aspen Avenue as it approaches 4th Street, this problem can be corrected. It will also make the intersection more functional and provide a triangular space at the northwest corner of the intersection that can be recaptured into a pedestrian/public feature.

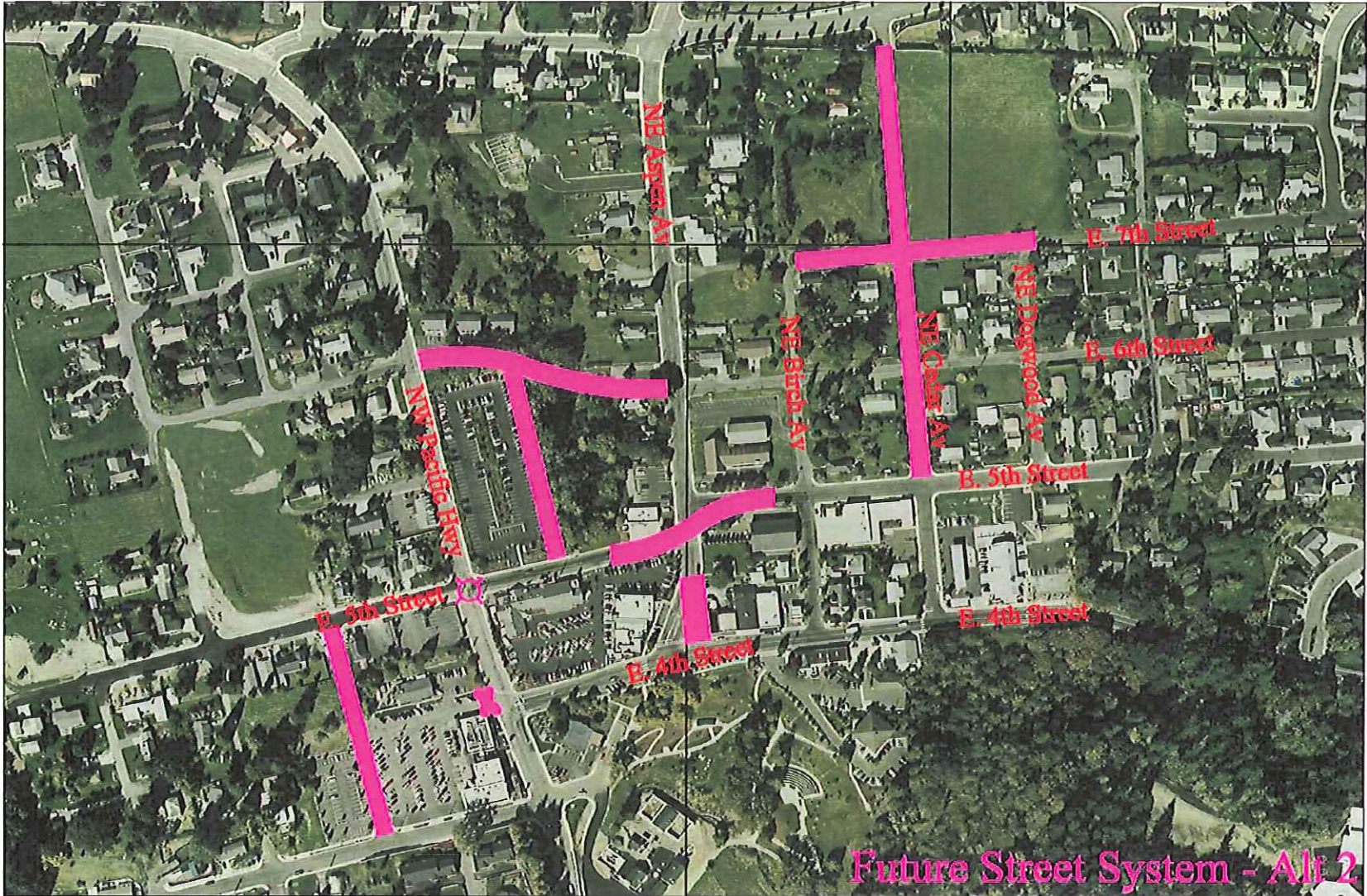
Improvement 5 – New Future Streets

There are several logical extensions of the existing street system that should be considered. These include the following:

- 6th Street extension from Aspen Avenue to Pacific Highway – This new roadway would provide a third access to Pacific Highway in the future. It

is likely a 15-20 year project and may be only possible with redevelopment of the casino and its parking lot. As La Center grows, it will be important to provide as many accesses to Pacific Highway as possible from the downtown area. Three accesses into the downtown area from Pacific Highway is the minimum that should be planned. Two accesses are needed for the main accesses to the downtown area and to meet future travel demand. The third access should be planned for redundancy and to provide for an alternate route in case of an emergency, construction, or other situations that would close one of the major accesses.

- New North-South Street between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue – To maintain the existing block length with the potential future redevelopment of the casino and its parking lot, a new north-south street between Pacific Highway and Aspen Avenue should be considered. This new section of street would be between a future 6th Street extension and 5th Street. This potential street is likely at the end of the 20-year planning period and would only occur with the redevelopment of the casino and its parking lot. If the casino sites do not redevelop, this new street is not likely to be constructed.
- 7th Street extension between Dogwood Avenue and Birch Avenue - The development of the missing section of 7th Street helps complete the grid system within the downtown area.
- Cedar Avenue between 7th Street and 6th Street - The development of the missing section of 7th Street helps complete the grid system within the downtown area.

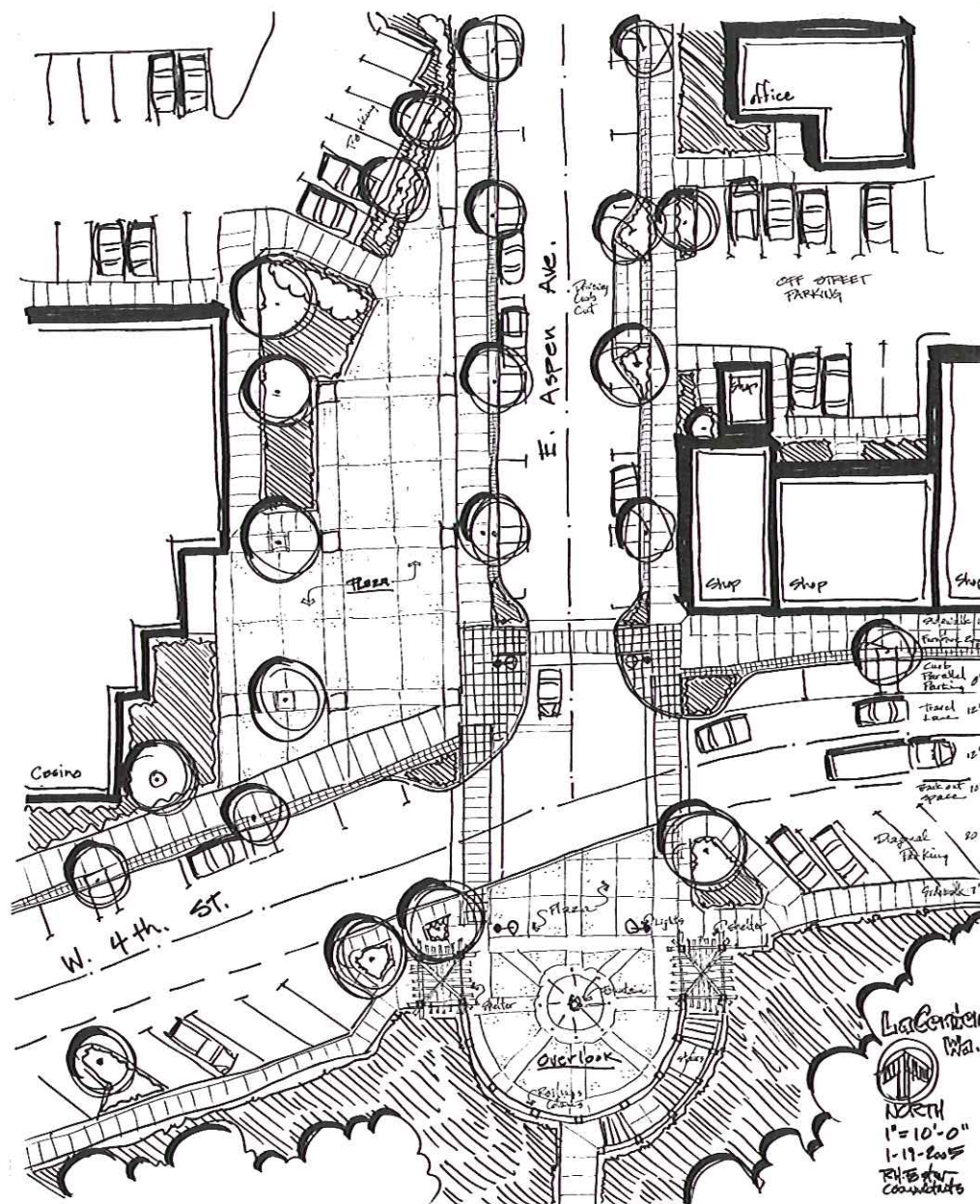


CATALYST PROJECT

In order to stimulate the continued development and expansion of Downtown, the city will invest in a project to serve as a catalyst to both private and additional public investment. As part of this planning project, a great deal of work went into finding a catalyst project that met these goals:

- The project will create a dramatic physical and experiential difference in Downtown La Center.
- The project will stimulate business activity.
- The project will encourage significant additional investment in Downtown by existing property owners and through new development.
- The project will engage the citizens of La Center as a place of public gathering, commercial activity, and a source of pride.
- The project will leverage a great deal of economic and non-economic return.
- The project serves to help achieve the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Many options were examined including traffic improvements, aesthetic improvements such as flower baskets and signage, and building the gateways. However, the option that is selected is the most dramatic, the most transformational, and the one that is identified as best in truly stimulating the





La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

development of Downtown and the assurance of its economic and social success.

The Aspen Street Project is selected as the catalyst project. This project has the following elements:

- Realignment of Aspen Street between 4th and 5th so it intersects 4th at a 90° angle. This will require acquisition of one private property with a small commercial building.
- Building a new improvement on Aspen Street incorporating two travel lanes, two parallel parking lanes and sidewalks on both sides.
- Making intersection improvements at the intersection of Aspen and 4th with sidewalk improvements, curb extensions, access ramps, street furniture, lighting, and landscaping.
- Removing the old street surface and replacing it with a public plaza. This plaza is to be constructed of an attractive concrete surface, be surrounded by landscaping incorporating benches and other street furniture, be well lit, and incorporating electrical, water, and other services that will support active uses on the plaza such as a farmers market.
- Acquisition of the private property along the south side of 4th Street. This land is needed to provide the linkage between Downtown and the Park, as well as the site to build the Aspen Street Overlook. The property extends for approximately two blocks on either side of Aspen Street. The City should design this area appropriately for locating the overlook and adjacent landscaped areas designed to enhance the view of the river valley. Land at either end of this new park improvement should be resold, possibly in conjunction with adjacent sloped from the park, as development sites. New buildings on

these sites should be developed consistently with this Plan and should extend from 4th Street down toward the Park. Views of the River are to be emphasized.

- Building the Aspen Street overlook at the end of Aspen overlooking the Lewis River and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. This landmark feature will provide a major tie between Downtown and the natural area to the south. It will incorporate a very comfortable and exciting plaza for sight seeing, stairs to Sternwheeler Park, water play in the fountain, establishment of tourist information facilities, and community events such as the annual Christmas Tree lighting.

This project will serve as a major catalyst for these reasons:

- It will provide a way to bring new business activity into Downtown, through a farmers market and other commercial uses of the Aspen Street Plaza, without major private investment.
- These temporary uses will bring a great number of people into the Downtown which will stimulate customer flow into surrounding businesses, business growth for existing merchants, and new investment in Downtown buildings.
- The Aspen Street Project will provide a permanent site for community festivals and events.
- The project ties together the casino district, the 4th Street businesses district, and the Wildlife Refuge.
- If necessary, the project can be built in phases as funding allows.

The following page shows the Aspen Street Overlook from the perspective of the Bank property. Also shown is a new building on the slope leading down toward the park east of the overlook as well as the amphitheater.





THE DOWNTOWN DESIGN PLAN

The Downtown Design Plan identifies each of the projects recommended by this Plan to be undertaken by public effort and to occur primarily within the right-of-way and on public property. This is the City's investment in Downtown's revitalization. The private sector will be primarily responsible for development and redevelopment of private property in accordance with the adopted architectural and site design standards.

Working together in this public/private partnership, the community of La Center can position its Downtown to compete effectively in the marketplace. The goal is to provide a place where the citizens of La Center can conveniently shop, where they can recreate, and where they can gather socially in their own outdoor "living room." Downtown should be a place where everyone prospers, be they successful merchants, property owners enjoying appreciating values, city government with stable and adequate revenues, or the Citizens who have a Downtown meeting the Community's economic, social, cultural, and livability needs.



LA CENTER DOWNTOWN DESIGN PLAN

MorganCPS - Foster Consultants - H. Lee and Associates - Benner Stange Associates





PLANNING DOCUMENT REVISIONS

This Downtown Design Plan as adopted drives the need to amend the Comprehensive Plan and the Development Code. This section of the Plan identifies needed amendments.

A. Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan contains the "...community's vision and goals for how land use and development should occur in the future." The following changes are intended to emphasize the importance of the City's downtown and its special place within the community. The proposed language can be used to support either mandatory or voluntary design guidelines.

Vision Statement – It would be appropriate to include the downtown as part of the City's vision. Suggested language is as follows:

A vibrant, aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly downtown, creating a focal point for the community and visitors alike.

1.3 Commercial Development – This Section establishes policies for commercial land uses. Item 1.3.4 addresses downtown related policies. It may be appropriate to specifically identify the downtown area – that is – the specific blocks the City wishes to consider design standards.

2.1 Transportation – This section can be amended to encourage a pedestrian-oriented downtown. This reinforces the basic concept plan and purpose behind the project. Suggested language is as follows:

2.1.11 – The City will support and encourage the creation of a

pedestrian-oriented downtown through building design and transportation planning.

3.1 Housing – The Zoning Ordinance currently permits residences within the downtown commercial area. It may be appropriate to amend this policy to specifically note – and encourage – that particular use. Residential living within the downtown helps support the downtown economy.

4.1. Capital Facilities – Revitalizing the downtown will require a combination of public and private investment. The City may want to establish a policy that at least considers this option. Suggested language is as follows:

4.1.9 – The City shall consider the use of urban renewal or similar financial strategies to support redevelopment of the downtown.

5.1 Economic Development – Item 5.1.5 could be revised to emphasize the importance of the downtown and the support of the project. Suggested language is as follows:

The LaCenter downtown shall be the primary commercial retail center for the community. In support of this objective, the City shall actively explore means of attracting additional locally oriented commercial activity to the downtown area through incentives, marketing programs, aesthetic improvements and requirements, or other methods.

6.1 Parks & Recreation and Open Space – The plan discusses connections between the downtown and the adjacent river and area parks. It may be appropriate to add language that encourages that connection as part of the



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design plan. The following is suggested:

The City shall encourage the creation of improvements to promote the connection between the downtown and area parks and open spaces.

7.1 Historic, Archeological and Cultural Preservation – The design standards are not just about aesthetics but address historical and cultural aspects of the community. This can be reinforced in Section 7.0 with the following:

7.1.6 - In support of the current efforts to maintain the historical character of the community, the City shall establish (recommended) design guidelines for the downtown.

8.3 Urban Growth and Annexation – The Section encourages a balanced approach to growth while ensuring housing, commercial and industrial land needs are met. Item, 8.3.2 might be amended to indicate that any future annexations for commercial uses will not compete or adversely impact the downtown. The intent here is to provide some protection for the City's potential investment.

Development Ordinance (Chapter 17)

The Downtown area is regulated by the

standards of Chapter 17.35, the General Commercial District, Chapter 17.40, the Commercial/Historic Preservation District, and Chapter 17.45, the Commercial/Cardroom Combining District. A review of these chapters does not reveal any significant conflict with the recommendations of the Downtown Design Plan.

This Plan recommends adoption of specific ordinance language to implement its recommendations. While it was originally intended that these design standards would be guidelines that would be used to encourage private development in a



The La Center Bridge and Downtown ~ Post 1883



La Center Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines

manner consistent with the City's wishes, it was determined that embodying the standards in regulations was the only way to assure the most successful development pattern for Downtown. Also, it was concluded that these standards are not onerous and in fact enhance the economic viability and vitality of Downtown, as long as they are evenly applied. Therefore, this Plan recommends the following amendments to the Zoning Ordinance be developed with specific ordinance language and adopted:

Parking – in the CG District, residential uses are permitted but must meet the required off-street parking requirements. Consideration should be given to eliminating this requirement in order to encourage residential uses.

Parking - Section 17.65.020 allows joint use of parking facilities. It might be amended to reflect the Plan's discussion of municipal or joint parking lots, identifying that required parking spaces can be located in these facilities.

Design Requirements – Chapter 17.35 establishes the development requirements for the GC zone. Section 17.35.060 could be amended to identify design requirements as outlined in the Downtown Design Plan. This may include such items as architectural style, color, window treatment and parking lot improvements. This would establish minimum standards for development with the "Design Plan and Guidelines" providing more detailed information for projects.

Site Design Requirements - The Commercial/Historical Preservation District (17.40) includes several site design standards (17.40.050(10)) that focus on an expected project style. These establish standards for building orientation requiring elements orienting to the street. These same types of standards could

be included in the GC District.

Downtown Overlay Zone – The City could establish a zoning "overlay" which would prescribe specific design regulations only for downtown commercial uses. An overlay is similar to flood plain zoning in that it applies to a specific area - in this example - properties that are subject to flood hazards. For this project, the overlay would only apply to GC and CCD zoned land within the designated downtown area. The regulations could be as encompassing and detailed as the City desires. The intent is not to change the GC zoning but to simply recognize there is an unique area in the community

Financial Incentives – It is likely that not all design requirements will be fully supported. They may require additional monies to implement or possibly are contrary to a preferred commercial theme. Developers often respond to financial incentives to meet stiffer design requirements. Chapter 17.07 identifies impact fees. The City may want to consider waiving or possibly reducing certain fees if a new commercial development (or possible redevelopment) complies with adopted design guidelines. For example, it may be reasonable to consider reductions in the transportation fee for a new building if the design of that building conforms to the purpose of the standards supporting pedestrian-oriented businesses.

Procedures - Chapter 17.200, Land Use Review Procedures, may be amended to include a process for reviewing the site and building design for new construction or major remodeling, if the City adopts design standards as part of the Code. Decisions the City will need to make if adopting such standards include:



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- How will the review be done? Are the standards to be specific so they can be reviewed administratively (Type II Procedure), or more subjective so they need review and judgment by a citizen body (Type III Procedure)?
- Who will do a Type III review, the Planning Commission or a new Design Review Board?
- How can the review be accomplished without stifling economic development? The City may wish to establish a two track process where a project that meets specific standards can be approved as a Type II application while one where the developer wishes to propose alternatives to the specific standards goes through a more subjective process with a hearing as a Type III application.

IMPLEMENTATION

The City of La Center and its citizens must undertake six tasks to effectively implement this Plan:

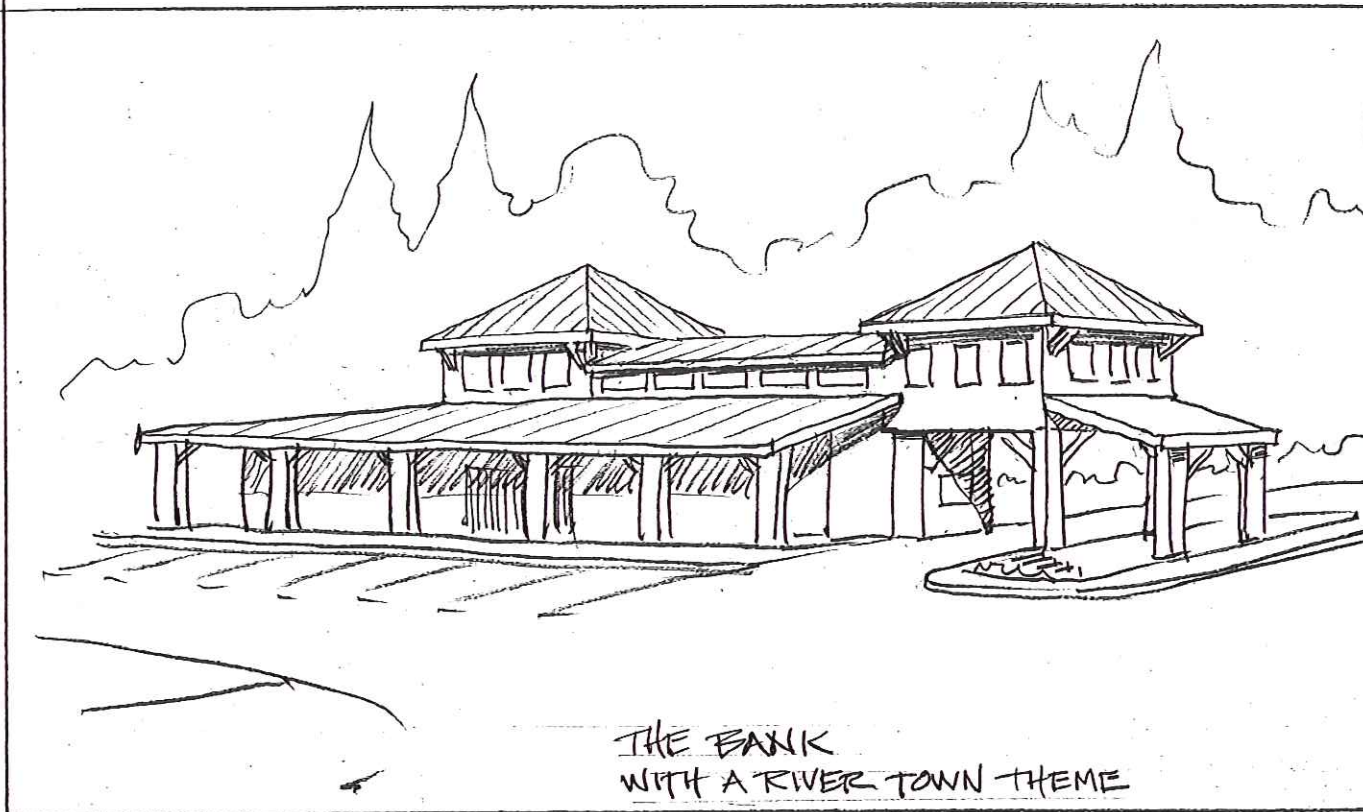
1. The City should proceed with selecting, designing, and building a catalyst project that encourages private investment in accordance with these guidelines.
2. The City should complete a traffic study of Downtown, looking at circulation routes, through traffic, street locations, pedestrian needs, and parking. The study should be guided by the principals of this Plan and should offer recommendations consistent with these Guidelines. However, the traffic study may result in recommendations that will require amendment to this Plan.
3. The City must examine its Comprehensive Plan and Implementing Ordinances to determine where amendments should be made to be consistent with and implement these recommendations. Those amendments should be made in the immediate future.
4. The City must market Downtown to potential investors, merchants, and customers using this Design Handbook as a selling tool.
5. The City must strengthen its role as the leader, advocate, and champion for this Plan. It must actively promote the initiatives of this Plan. It must strongly advocate for conformance with the guidelines with property owners and merchants. It must actively seek funding and public support for the various public projects. Most importantly, it must market Downtown as an exciting and viable place in which to invest, locate, and shop because of the vision expressed in and re-



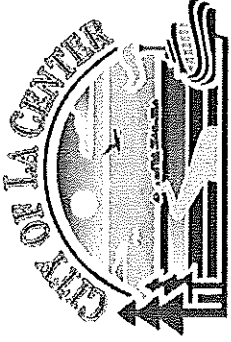
An Example of a Building Remodel to Meet Design Standards ~ A sketch analysis using the frontage of City Hall facing 4th Street as an example. This frontage currently has one solid door and no architectural detail. The sketch shows the addition of windows, a windowed door, awnings, craftsman style details on the roof face including a cupola, and a new covered entrance leading to the sidewalk. This type of renovation is relatively

fined in this Downtown Design Plan.

6. There must be a programmatic element to the Downtown involving active management of this Plan and its recommendations, advocacy with the community, programming, scheduling, and marketing public events for the public spaces including the park amphitheater, and maintaining quality through code enforcement.



A sketch analysis of First Independent Bank at the foot of the La Center Bridge. The current building with its 1970's modern architecture does not meet the Design Guidelines. This study shows how the building could be remodeled to incorporate these guidelines and therefore blend in better with Downtown. An added bonus is that the building becomes a more significant entry structure into Downtown. The bank benefits by addition additional space without significant additional cost.



RESOLUTION NO. 05-253

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE LaCENTER DOWNTOWN DESIGN PLAN AND GUIDELINES

The LaCenter City Council adopts the following findings:

WHEREAS, at City Council direction, the Planning Commission undertook a public process for formulating building design guidelines for the LaCenter downtown; and

WHEREAS, the City engaged John Morgan, of Morgan CPS to serve as consultant and facilitator to a steering committee and project team consisting of citizens, representatives of LaCenter's downtown businesses and the City's planning consultant; and

WHEREAS, the steering committee and project team held the following public workshops and meetings to gather input, comment and opinions about the form and style of design guidelines suitable for the City of LaCenter:

February 9, 2005	City Council
January 26, 2005	Steering Committee
January 19, 2005	Public Workshop
December 13, 2004	Steering Committee
December 8, 2004	City Council
November 22, 2004	Steering Committee
November 9, 2004	City Council/Planning Commission Joint Workshop
November 8, 2004	Steering Committee
November 1, 2004	Public Workshop

WHEREAS, the steering committee and project team completed a draft of the LaCenter Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines, a copy of which is attached to this Resolution as Exhibit 1, and presented them to the City Council at its regular meeting on May 11, 2005, at which time comment was received from the public, city staff and the City Council.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that, based on the foregoing findings, the LaCenter City Council hereby adopts the final draft of the LaCenter Downtown Design Plan and Guidelines attached to this Resolution as Exhibit 1 and incorporated herein by this reference. This document shall serve as the design guideline for the subsequent promulgation of legislative

amendments to the LaCenter Municipal Code and Comprehensive Plan. These design guidelines shall not be independently applicable, but shall be implemented through specific provisions of the Municipal Code and Comprehensive Plan as may be adopted.

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IT IS SO RESOLVED and passed this 25th day of May 2005, by a majority of the LaCenter City Council.

AYES: _____

NAYS: _____

ABSTAIN: _____


ABSENT: _____




James T. Irish, Mayor of La Center

ATTEST:

Approved as to form:



Suzanne Levis, Clerk/Treasurer



Daniel Keams, City Attorney