

**Planning for Downtown Revitalization  
Stevenson • Washington**



June 1991

Planning  
Urban Design  
Landscape Architecture

## Walker & Macy

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June 30, 1991

Ms. Arlene Johnson, Director  
Skamania County Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 1037  
Stevenson, Washington 98648

Dear Arlene:

We have enjoyed working with you, members of the Oversight Committee, and other interested citizens in the preparation of this study of downtown Stevenson. It is always a pleasure to work in a community where individuals are actively committed to bettering their community situation and environment. We hope this study will prove beneficial to this end.

For this study, we re-assembled the team which successfully completed the Skamania Lodge Study. Key members of the study team included the following firms and individuals:

Walker & Macy

J. Douglas Macy  
Wayne P. Stewart  
David Dougherty

E.D. Hovee & Company

Eric Hovee

John Kyle, Architect

John Kyle

As most team members had previously worked on the Skamania Lodge Study, we were familiar with the City and had already worked with a number of community activists. This enabled us to get up to speed rapidly, consequently shortening the necessary time for delivery of this study.

As many Stevenson residents already know, the City is on the verge of major change and possibly significant population growth. Key factors of this transition include:

- the opening of Skamania Lodge in the spring of 1993
- the explosive growth of sailboarding in the Gorge
- an increased interest in the Gorge on the part of recreationists and tourists
- implementation of the Gorge management plan, specifically the encouragement of development in urban areas (and the discouragement of growth outside of urban areas)

This report summarizes the results of our efforts over the past two months. It is only one step on the road leading to a downtown plan that can be embraced by the entire community. Many more community meetings will be needed before consensus is reached regarding the desired shape and character of downtown Stevenson.

Stevenson lies within a setting of incredible natural features--the Columbia River, the Gorge, and Rock Cove. The small, physically constrained downtown area, lends itself to development of an inviting pedestrian atmosphere. The City is positioned for metamorphosis into a vibrant community, attractive to both residents and tourists. Our team looks forward to assisting the community in bringing this vision to fruition.

Very truly yours,  
WALKER & MACY

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne P. Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wayne P. Stewart

## PLANNING FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

### STEVENSON, WASHINGTON

*Planning is an on-going evolutionary process of refinement, not a momentary reaction to periods of major change. It will require good will, hard work, and reflective thought on the part of the citizens of Stevenson over a long period of time to achieve the City's tremendous potential. Let us continue the journey...*

Prepared by:

Walker & Macy  
Landscape Architects & Planners  
Portland, Oregon

E.D. Hovee & Co.  
Vancouver, Washington

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    A. Economics Study

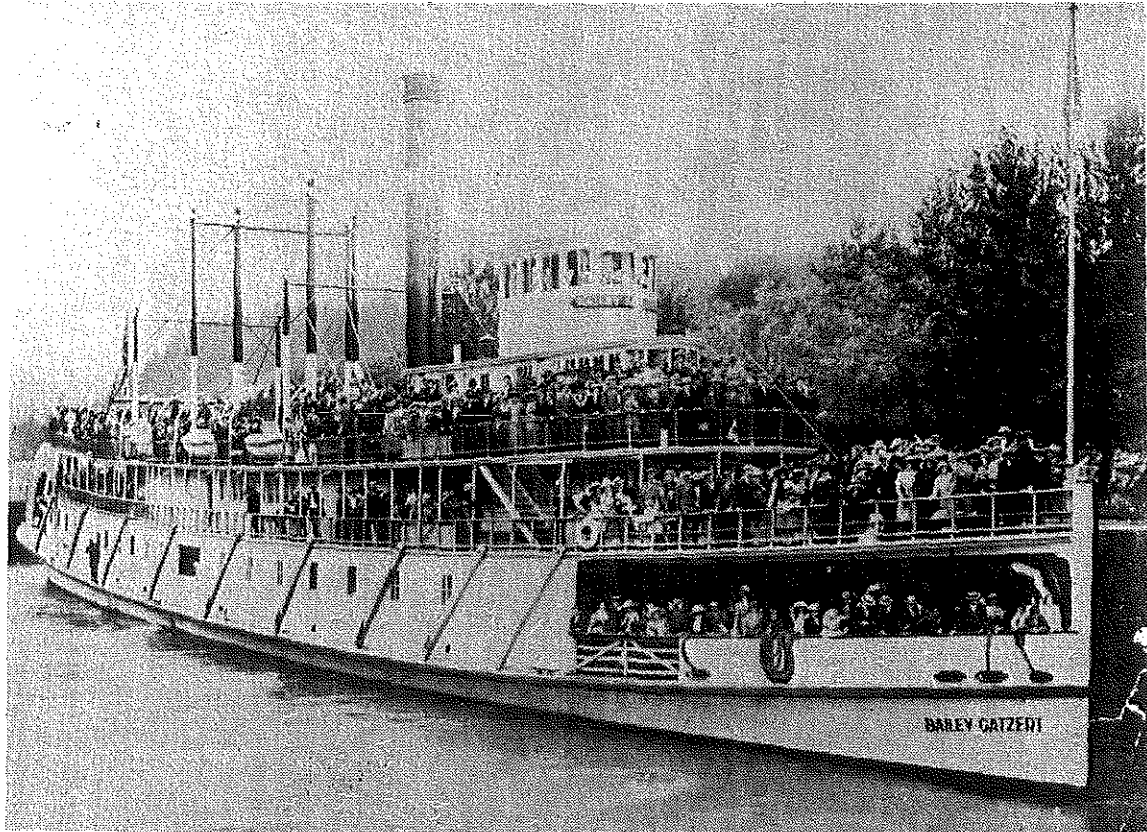
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*Other Photographs*

*Michael Parker, Aerial Photographer*  
*Skamania County Historical Society and Museum*  
*Dave Dougherty, John Kyle and Mark Stewart*

# Introduction

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In April, 1991 a planning grant was received from the Department of Community Development of the State of Washington. This grant was intended to enable Stevenson to accomplish the following:

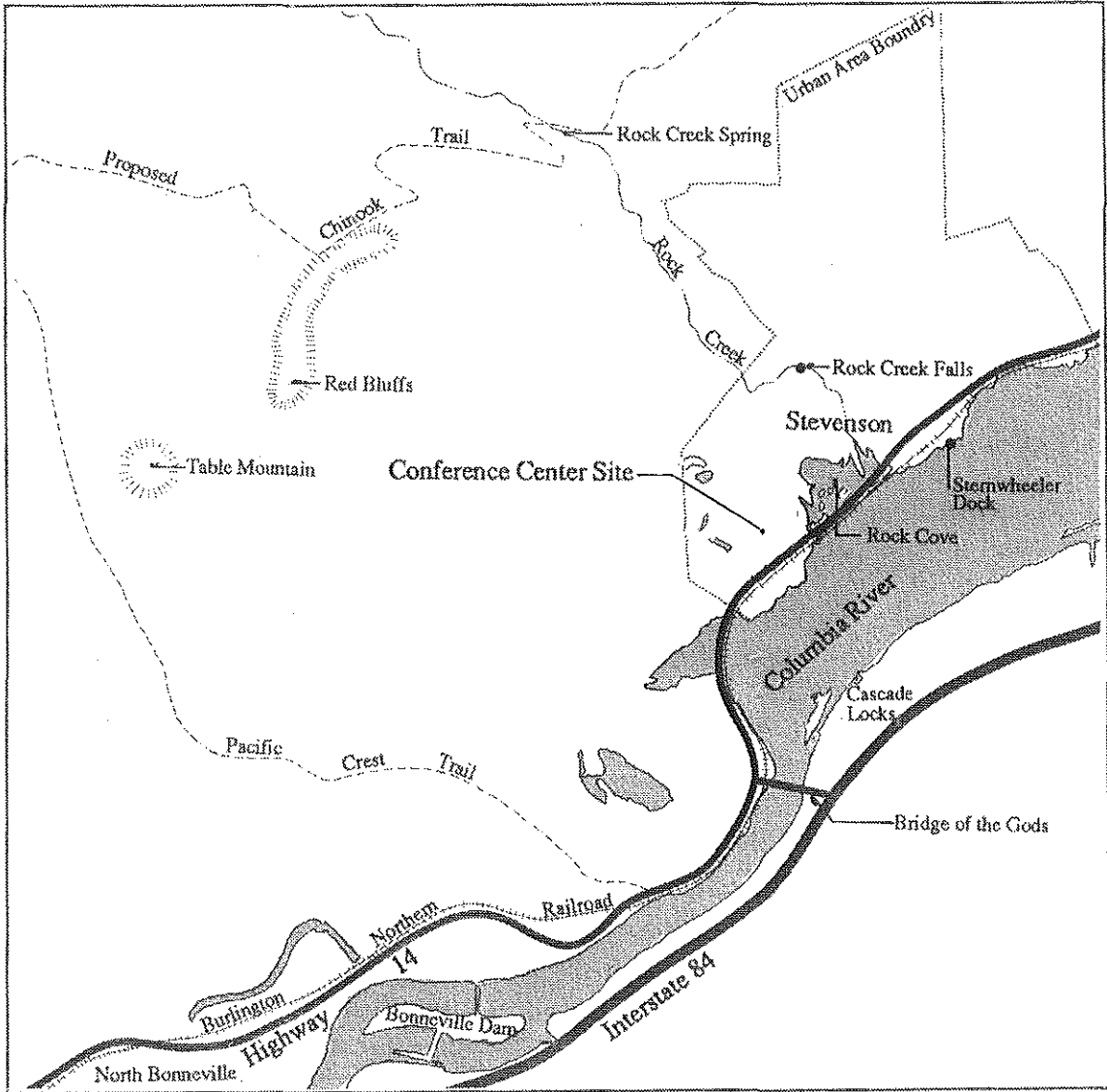
- Analyze alternative pedestrian and bicycle routes to link Skamania Lodge and downtown Stevenson, recommend the best available route, and develop schematic designs and details sufficient to estimate construction costs.
- Conduct an economic review of the business community to update an earlier "retail leakage" study, forecast the probable economic impacts of the opening of Skamania Lodge, suggest a marketing strategy, and review the feasibility of establishing a "parking and business improvement association".
- Analyze several factors related to the downtown area including traffic on State Route 14, the adequacy of parking, architectural character of existing buildings, pedestrian circulation, and opportunities for commercial expansion.
- Update the central business district plan.

This report summarizes work accomplished related to the downtown area. Design work related to the pedestrian linkage tasks has been provided under separate cover.

Unfortunately, the time available to accomplish the work was too short to allow for an appropriate number of citizen involvement meetings and regulatory agency reviews. As a consequence, the consultants recommended to the City that the downtown planning effort be divided into two parts. This report represents work completed during part one (data collection, analysis, preliminary citizen reviews). Part two will require at least six to nine months to allow sufficient time for citizen involvement. Key elements to be included in the phase two study are:

- Reviews by the City Council, Planning Commission, and County Commissioners
- Conduct about six public workshops
- Development of a downtown plan and improvement program
- Preparation of preliminary land use regulation materials
- Refinement of an SR-14 improvement plan

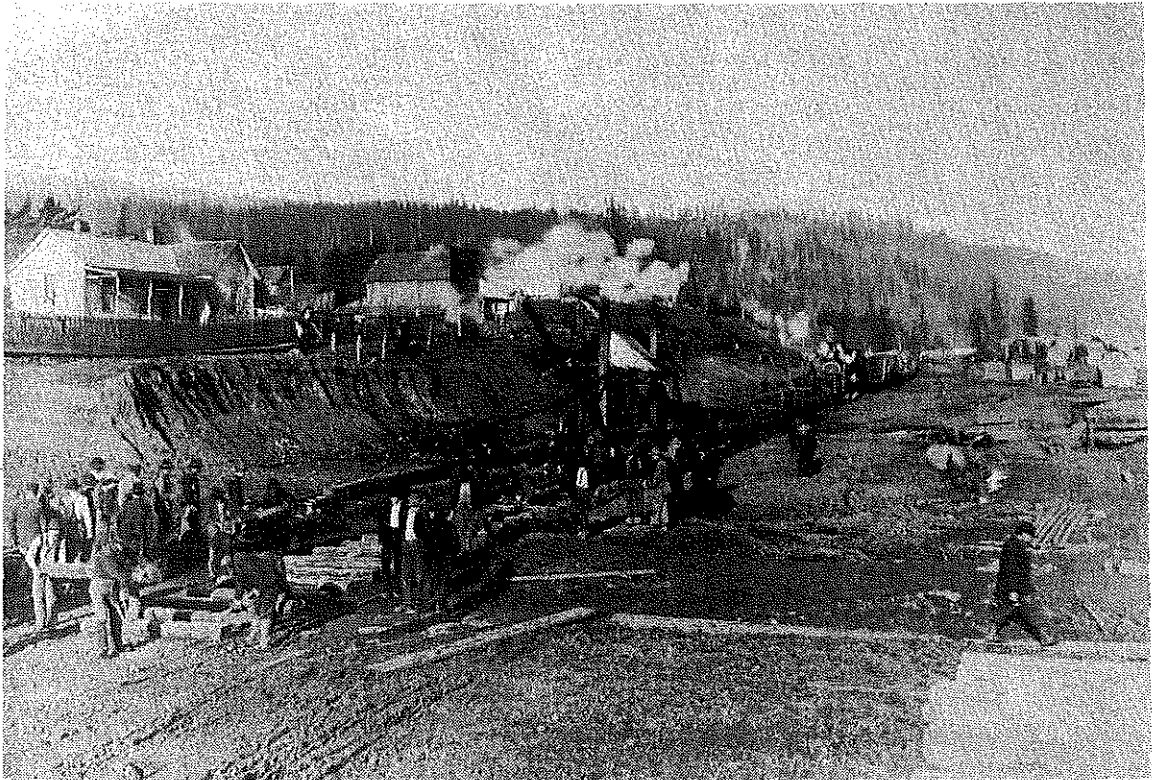




Vicinity Map

# Economic Review

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## 2. RETAIL MARKET EVALUATION

This chapter summarizes the results of a retail market evaluation for downtown Stevenson, Washington. The market evaluation has been prepared for the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce by the consulting firm of E.D. Hovee & Company in cooperation with Walker & Macy. A more detailed market evaluation is provided as an appendix to this report.

The purpose of this market evaluation is essentially to evaluate opportunities for increased retail sales from: a) sales leakage recapture; and b) recreation/tourism development.

The result of this analysis is to suggest a marketing strategy for the business community intended to: a) increase business trade; and b) business space utilization. A corollary objective is to review the feasibility of a parking and business improvement area (PBIA) as a mechanism for downtown management and funding.

### Retail Sales Analysis

With a 1990 population of 1,147, Stevenson accounts for about 14% of the county's population. The total population countywide of 8,289 represents an increase of 5% from 1980.

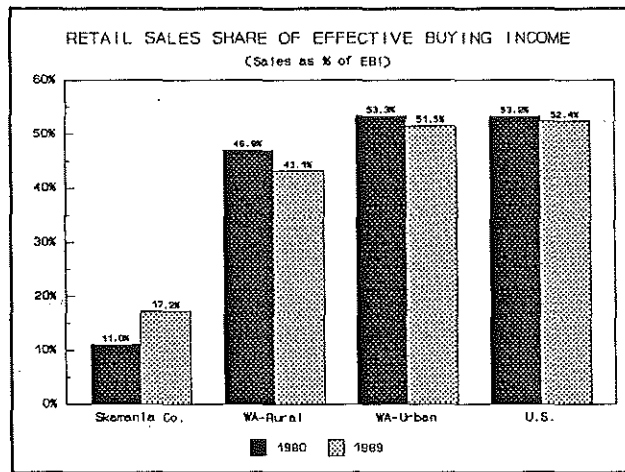
Even though Stevenson comprises a relatively small portion of the county's population, it is the major urban center. Stevenson's position as the county's dominant retail center is strengthened by:

- Limitations placed by the General and Special Management Plans for rural commercial centers in the National Scenic area outside of the incorporated cities.
- Proximity of the major new activity generators to Stevenson, i.e. Skamania Lodge and the proposed Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center.
- Stevenson's central location within the county and existing retail base which far surpasses that of any other community in the county.

Skamania County's total effective buying income (EBI) has dropped by 14% since 1980. Median household income has dropped more dramatically, by 29%. However, despite declining population and income, Skamania County retail sales experienced strong growth in the latter part of the decade from 1987-89. In fact, retail sales growth in Skamania County exceeded that of the other rural counties in the state of Washington and of the country as a whole for the 1987-89 period.

Retail capture rates are a measure of how effective area retailers are at capturing locally available buying income. Capture rates are expressed as retail sales as a share (or %) of effective buying income. The following graph compares capture rates for Skamania County, the rural and urban counties of Washington, and the United States for the years 1980 and 1989.

### Retail Capture Rates (1980 and 1989)



Nationally, just over one-half (52.4% in 1989) of effective buying income (EBI) ended up at a retail cash register. The rest of buying income was spent for housing mortgage payments, utility bills, services and some went to savings.

By comparison, retail sales account for a very similar percentage of buying income for the urban counties of the state, but significantly less for the rural counties. The fact that retailers in Washington's rural counties captured only 43% of the local effective buying income could reflect either different expenditure patterns for rural consumers or sales leakage as rural residents travel to larger cities to make many of their retail purchases.

It is noteworthy that retailers in Skamania County capture an extraordinarily low share of local effective buying income. In 1980, only 11% of effective buying income ended up as retail sales in Skamania County. By 1989, the capture rate had increased significantly to 17%, but was still well below statewide and rural area averages.

Bottom line, Skamania County is capturing only 40% of the local retail sales potentially available. The other 60% represents net sales leakage.

Using this method of determining leakage results in a total estimated sales leakage estimate of \$15,783,000.

## Retail Sales and Leakage Estimates

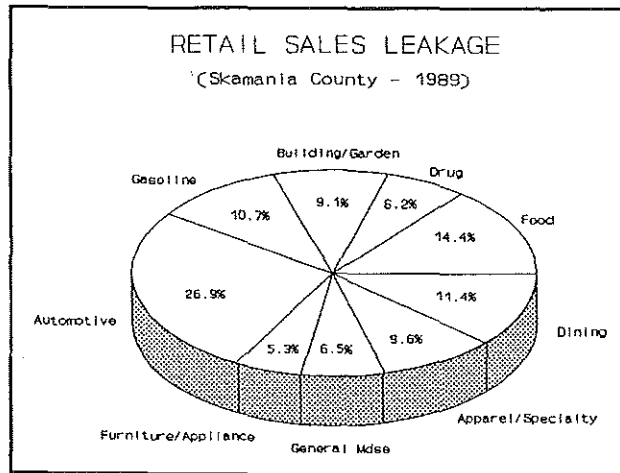
	Retail Sales (x \$1,000)		
	Skamania County 1989 Sales	Estimated Sales Leakage	Total Sales Potential
Food	\$5,389	\$2,269	\$7,658
Drug	\$366	\$983	\$1,349
Building & Garden*	\$571	\$1,436	\$2,007
Gasoline*	\$467	\$1,681	\$2,148
Automotive	\$311	\$4,239	\$4,550
Furniture & Appliances	\$43	\$838	\$881
General Merchandise	\$709	\$1,019	\$1,728
Apparel & Specialty*	\$1,233	\$1,514	\$2,747
Dining	\$1,361	\$1,804	\$3,165
Total Retail Sales	\$10,449	\$15,783	\$26,232

\* Note: These categories estimated by E.D. Hovee & Company based on available data from U.S. Census of Retail Sales and Washington Department of Revenue.

Source: Sales and Marketing Management, *Survey of Buying Power*, 1989.

This chart and the accompanying graph illustrate where leakage is occurring by sales category. As the chart and graph indicate, over one-quarter of sales leakage is in automotive purchases, accounting for \$4.2 million of leakage per year. The next largest category of sales leakage is in food store sales of about \$2.3 million per year. Other categories with significant amounts of leakage are: dining - \$1.8 million, gasoline sales - \$1.7 million, apparel/specialty - \$1.5 million, and building/garden - \$1.4 million.

## Distribution of Retail Sales Leakage



How much of the almost \$16 million in sales leakage now occurring could Skamania County businesses legitimately expect to recapture by offering the right mix of selection, pricing and service? And how much of the countywide recapture would occur at businesses in Stevenson?

It is our opinion that the small population base of the county makes it unlikely for Skamania County to recapture all the theoretically available sales from leakage recapture. Sales volumes associated with leakage are not great enough to attract the major retailers that require draw from a larger market.

On the other hand, much of the leakage that is recaptured will undoubtedly accrue to the benefit of Stevenson businesses. Overall, we assume that Stevenson retailers could conceivably recapture up to 50% of sales leakage in most retail categories except automotive (only 15% recapture -- primarily in accessories and parts), and general merchandise (25% recapture primarily for local variety and drygoods stores).

Using these ratios, Stevenson retailers could reasonably be positioned to recapture as much as \$6.2 million (or just under 40%) of the estimated \$15.8 million of total sales leakage now occurring (as of 1989).

## Tourism Potentials

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Skamania Lodge indicates that Stevenson could capture total direct and indirect benefits during the first year of an additional \$8 million in spending. Of this, approximately 54% would be spent for retail items, with the remainder paid for services and other non-retail items. Therefore, total retail spending impact (direct and indirect) is an estimated \$4.3 million in additional retail sales per year.

Of the \$4.3 million in additional retail sales associated with Skamania Lodge, approximately \$2.4 million would reflect dining expenditures. The other major categories that would benefit are apparel and specialty retail sales (of just under \$0.9 million in additional sales).

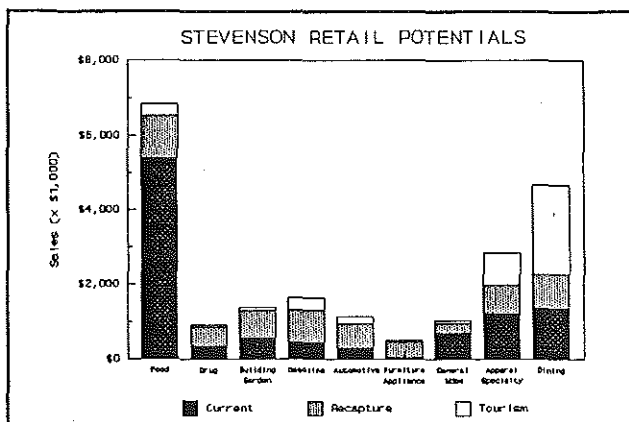
## Combined Retail Sales Potentials

The combined sales potentials associated with both leakage recapture and tourism (resulting from Skamania Lodge) are shown by the following table and graph.

### Skamania County Retail Sales Potentials

	(All figures are sales x \$1,000)				
	Current Sales	Leakage Recapture	Tourism Potentials	Total Sales Potential	Total Added Sales
Food	\$5,390	\$1,130	\$310	\$6,830	\$1,440
Drug	\$370	\$490	\$60	\$920	\$550
Building & Garden	\$570	\$720	\$80	\$1,370	\$800
Gasoline	\$470	\$840	\$330	\$1,640	\$1,170
Automotive	\$310	\$640	\$190	\$1,140	\$830
Furniture & Appliances	\$40	\$420	\$30	\$490	\$450
General Merchandise	\$710	\$250	\$80	\$1,040	\$330
Apparel & Specialty	\$1,230	\$760	\$860	\$2,850	\$1,620
Dining	\$1,360	\$900	\$2,400	\$4,660	\$3,300
<b>Total Retail Sales</b>	<b>\$10,450</b>	<b>\$6,150</b>	<b>\$4,340</b>	<b>\$20,940</b>	<b>\$10,490</b>

## Stevenson Retail Potentials



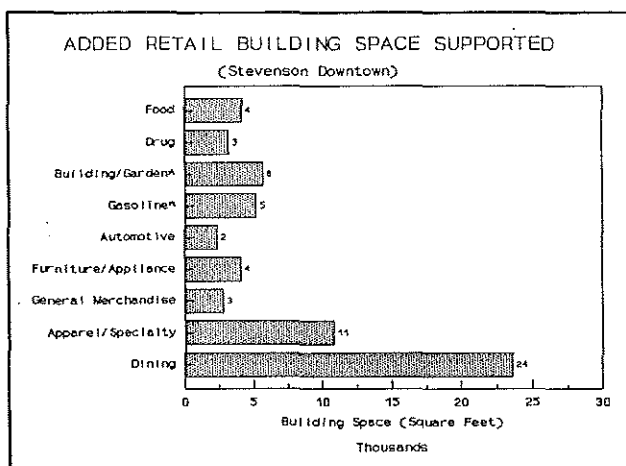
Tourism impacts exceed sales potentials associated with sales leakage recapture in dining and apparel or specialty retail. In virtually all other categories, sales recapture represents a more significant source of additional retail sales potential.

If both the recapture and tourism potentials were realized, total retail sales in Skamania County would virtually double from \$10.5 million currently to \$20.9 million.

## Development Potentials

The final step in the analysis is to convert retail sales potential to the amount of retail building space that might be supported.

## Added Retail Building Space Supported





These figures indicate that downtown Stevenson could support up to an additional 62,000 square feet of retail space. The greatest amount of additional space would be in dining, followed by apparel and specialty retail. These two categories combined account for over one-half of the additional retail space supported.

Due to concerns over potential timber impacts, it is unlikely that all of this space potentially supported will actually be developed in the next 2-3 years. It is more likely that there will be a phased addition of an initial amount of additional retail, particularly to serve the recreation/tourism destination market.

We would estimate a first phase of development in the range of 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of additional retail. However, it is important to again emphasize that once the transition has been made from the current situation of timber-related economic uncertainty, there may be potential for a considerable amount of additional retail.

### **Marketing Strategy**

The Stevenson and Skamania County business community is faced with a challenging dilemma in the next several years. On the one hand, local job cutbacks are likely to occur as the result of reduction in federal timber sales.

On the other hand, construction and operation of Skamania Lodge together with increased visibility of the Scenic Area and potential construction of the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center will introduce a whole new market segment that can cushion or perhaps offset the reduction in business from local trade.

While no plan is perfect, here is the outline of a strategy to consider for downtown Stevenson retailers to survive and ultimately thrive from the economic transition that will inevitably occur. Basic elements of the strategy suggested are severalfold:

1. Expect some contraction in local retail trade; watch for the point where the market bottoms out.
2. Focus initial downtown improvements, marketing, business expansion and recruitment efforts on activities that can serve the needs of visitors associated with Skamania Lodge.
3. Upscale the image and presence of Stevenson businesses, but without sacrificing casual, friendly service.
4. Continue to encourage and serve local trade.
5. Backfill with additional local serving retail as demand becomes apparent.

6. Establish a strong physical connection between downtown Stevenson and Skamania Lodge.
7. Market downtown Stevenson as a fun place to be -- in cooperation with the marketing organization of Salishan Lodge.

**The PBIA Option**

Washington downtown organizations have a self-help mechanism available for funding of local promotional, management, improvement and related organizational costs. That mechanism is called a Parking and Business Improvement Area, abbreviated as PBIA.

A PBIA assesses business owners located within a geographically prescribed district. The PBIA concept is similar in many respects to the more familiar concept of a local improvement district (or LID) which assesses property owners.

Pertinent advantages and disadvantages of using a Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA) to fund a downtown revitalization program are summarized by the following chart.

Advantages	Disadvantages
May be used to fund capital improvements and/or ongoing activities such as promotion, entertainment, management, planning, parking, maintenance and security.	PBIA is less suitable to fund capital improvements than ongoing operations since a PBIA is not considered as adequate security for bonding.
May provide a stable source of funds for annual operations of a downtown organization.	Requires support of at least 60% of business owners, some of whom may be reluctant to participate.
Mechanisms for assessment offer flexibility, but also equity of payment from project beneficiaries.	Collection from delinquent owners is not as easy for a PBIA as for an LID since a lien cannot be placed against the property.

This discussion illustrates the potential value of using a PBIA to fund an ongoing program of downtown revitalization.

## A Vision For Downtown

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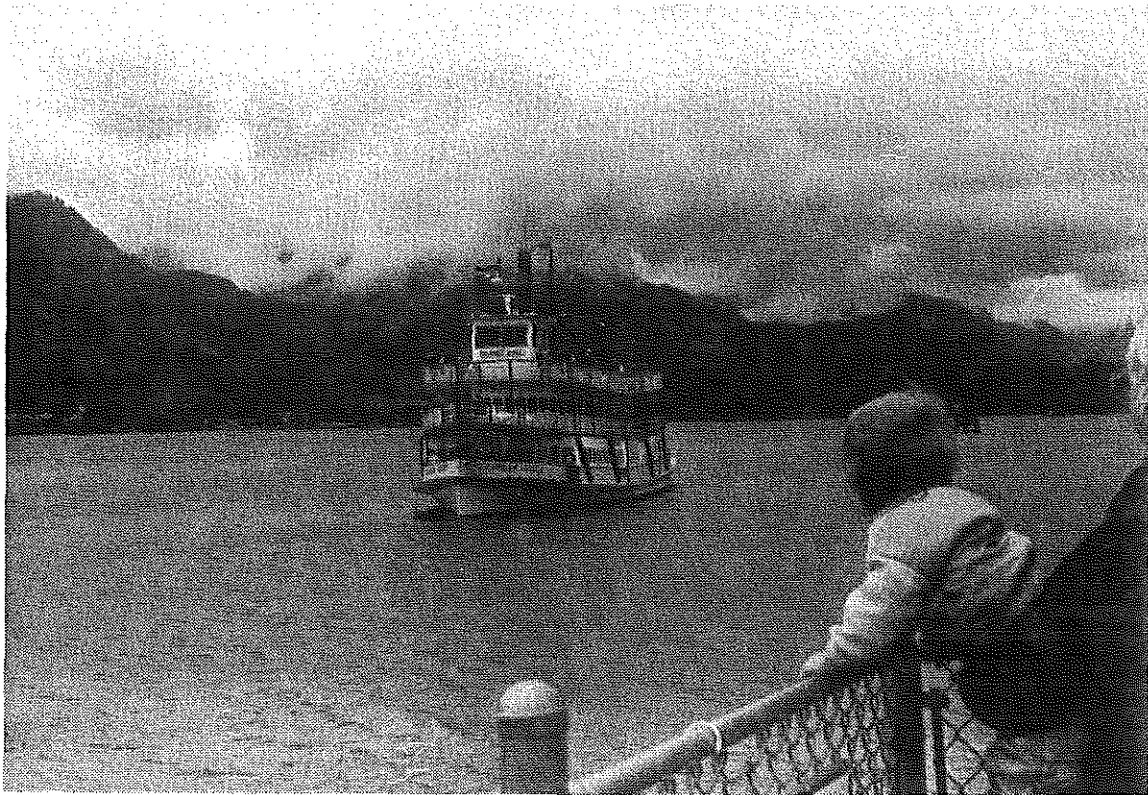


### 3. A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

#### A. Overview

The setting for downtown Stevenson is enviable. The expansive Columbia flows past at the foot of Russell Street. In times past, the waterfront was a working area for steamboats plying the river, moving passengers and freight and periodically replenishing fuel wood. Now, the Sternwheeler Columbia Gorge makes scheduled stops and cruise ships periodically call at Stevenson.

Stand anywhere in the downtown area and look around. The majesty of the mountainous terrain is awe inspiring. The view is not static. As the sun moves from east to west and the clouds pass through the area, light conditions change and views are constantly altered. A wisp of fog here, a bright spot of sunlight there, the glint of sunlight bouncing off waves--these are all part of the setting.



The downtown area is compact. It is tightly bounded by the Columbia River on the south, Rock Creek and Rock Cove to the west, Kanaka Creek and wetlands to the east, and steep land to the north. These physical boundaries have encouraged development to occur with urban density along the terraces which form the downtown. Unlike most American cities, Stevenson does not have to contend with strip commercial activities that tend to blight surrounding roadways and pull vitality from the commercial core.

In a way, Stevenson has benefitted from being a bit isolated from the rush of urban life. The commercial core is small enough to be pedestrian friendly; traffic, although growing, is still manageable; parking is plentiful; and room for compatible "village scale" commercial expansion is available; and, of course, the city's physical setting is spectacular.

Growth is coming. By acting now, the community can remain ahead of development pressures. As long as community leaders continue to look and plan ahead, it should be possible to guide and accommodate growth in a manner that will benefit current and future residents and tourists.

## **B. Physical Attributes**

### **Columbia River**

The Columbia River forms the southern boundary of the downtown area. Of the approximately 3800 feet of shoreline between Rock and Kanaka Creeks, all but about 1000 feet is already in railroad or public ownership (Port of Skamania). Existing uses along this waterfront zone include the Port offices, a large industrial building, the sternwheeler dock, Bob's Beach, and several private residences. The Port will be constructing a 40,000 square foot building in the near future. The Port also plans to develop a park along the edge of the waterfront extending from near the mouth of Kanaka Creek to a point about 1200 feet upstream.

The riverfront edge is an important community asset and should be developed in a manner that encourages and accommodates public use. The City is fortunate in that the Port intends to extend a public path along the length of its ownership adjacent to the river. As finances permit, the Port should be encouraged to develop this public path and associated amenities as rapidly as feasible.

## Rock Cove and Rock Creek

Rock Cove was created when the lake behind Bonneville Dam was filled, flooding the low-lying area. It is now a major community asset. The Cove is almost completely surrounded by public land (only the eastern edge is privately held), and the islands within the cove are publicly owned wildlife areas. Once the former LP sawmill site is improved, the public will have access to almost the entire perimeter of the cove.



In addition to being a scenic asset, the Cove also provides an ideal location for sailboarding lessons, paddle boating, swimming and fishing. The Skamania County Fairgrounds and the Rock Creek Recreation Center and park also take advantage of the spectacular setting.

Rock Creek tumbles down from the mountains to the north through a scenic boulder strewn channel cut into the bedrock. About one mile upstream from the Cove is a waterfall which entices the few who know how to find it. With a serious trail building effort, an attractive pedestrian connection can be developed to this natural asset.

## **Burlington Northern Railroad**

The railroad mainline traverses the city near the waterfront. While having a rail line through the city may be viewed as a detriment by some, there are others who enjoy trains and are awed by the spectacle of a 100-car freight train being pulled by powerful locomotives. AMTRAK'S Empire Builder passes through Stevenson on its run between Chicago and Portland.

In terms of positive attributes, the BN mainline provides a clear demarkation between the retail commercial area and the waterfront area. This encourages compactness of development, which is inherently easier to traverse on foot. The wide railroad right-of-way may also provide an opportunity to develop additional public parking. Finally, while AMTRAK does not stop in Stevenson at present, providing a stop for a charter or special train would not be a problem. When tourism further increases in the Gorge, AMTRAK may be willing to consider adding a stop to serve Stevenson and Skamania Lodge.

## **State Route 14**

State Route 14 transverses the business district and has been the main locational determinant for retail activity in Stevenson. With the notable exception of Russell street, almost all commercial operators have chosen to locate along SR-14. Location adjacent to a state highway is, clearly, essential to the viability of small commercial operations. At the same time, the presence of activity immediately adjacent to a highway (storefronts, parked cars, pedestrians) creates "friction" which slows drivers and creates traffic congestion.

Traffic volumes are expected to increase in Stevenson over the next few years when the Port's new building opens, Skamania Lodge is completed, and more recreationists discover Stevenson. According to a recent Intergovernmental Resource Center (IRC) study, by 1995 left turns onto SR-14 from Second Street Extension and from Russell Avenue will be extremely difficult.

Change will come to SR-14 in the near future. What form this change will take is not clear. The issue of SR-14 is dealt with in greater detail later in this report.

## River Terraces

Stevenson is built on a series of terraces formed centuries ago by the river and more recently by the earth-moving abilities of man. These terraces do several things. First, they provide reasonably level benches which are easy to build upon. This has further encouraged compactness. Second, as the terraces step back from the river, wide vistas across the Gorge are available from each. Finally, the east-west orientation of these terraces provides for solar heat gain, creating a warmer microclimate.

## Climate

Stevenson's climate is strongly influenced by the Pacific Ocean, Cascade Range, and the Columbia River Gorge. The Pacific Ocean provides plentiful moisture and moderate temperatures; the Cascade Range's height reduces the moisture holding capacity of the air, leading to increased precipitation; and the sea level river route creates a wind tunnel effect whenever there are differences in barometric pressure between the west and east sides of the mountains.

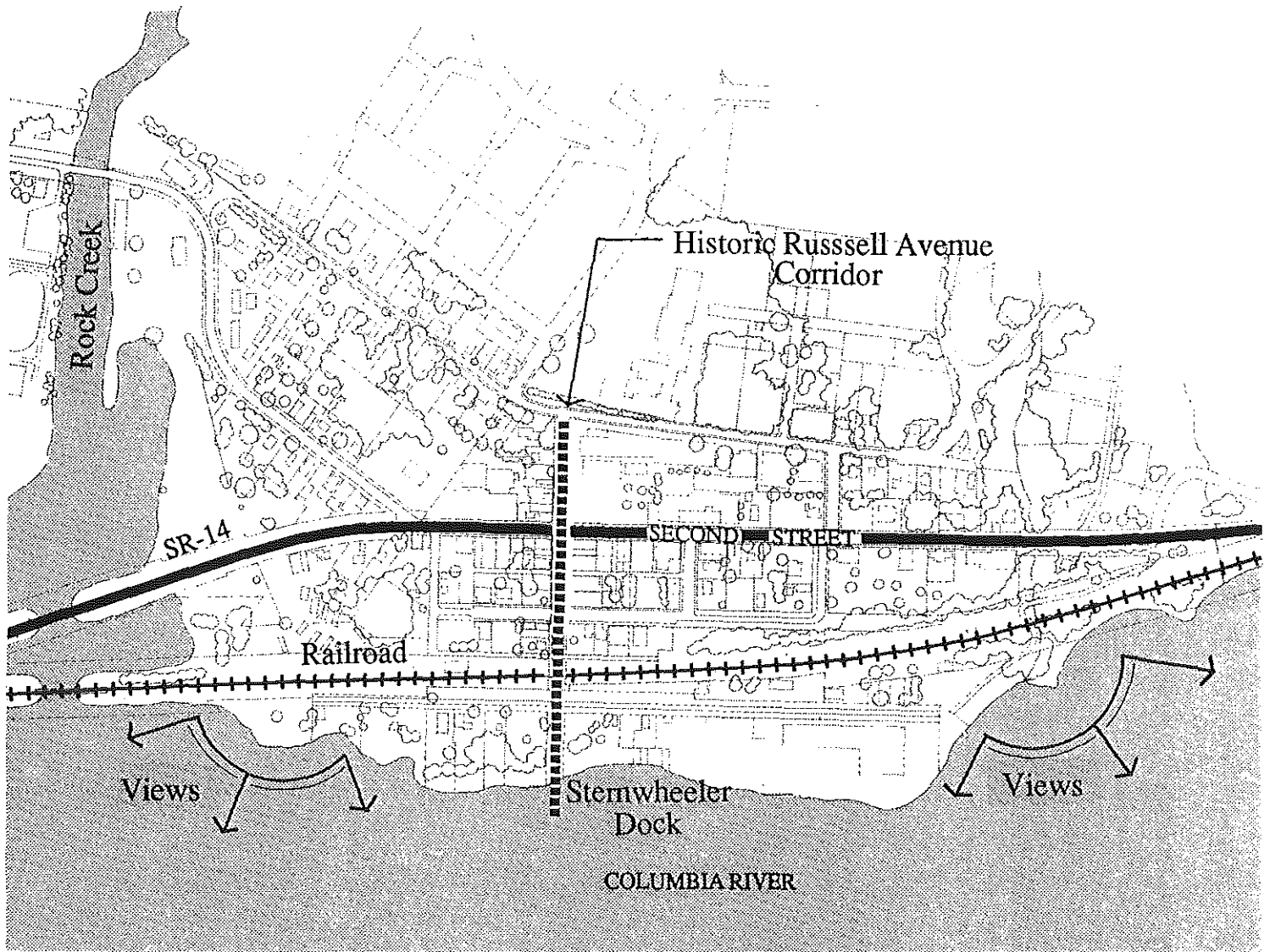
The abundant precipitation provides support for the lush vegetation of the western Cascades. The towering conifers, moss covered rock outcroppings, waterfalls, boulder strewn mountain streams, and ever changing cloud patterns are all part of the Stevenson setting, thanks to high rainfall levels.

The steady winds of the Gorge support sail boarding activities, a recreational activity that is attracting participants to the Gorge from around the world.

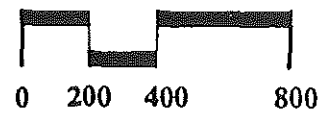




Figure 3.1



**PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES**



## **C. Comprehensive Plan/Previous Downtown Plans**

### **Comprehensive Plan**

On April, 1984, the City of Stevenson prepared a Comprehensive Plan to guide future growth of the community. The Comprehensive Plan is:

"A statement of public policies about how the natural and man-made resources of Stevenson are to be managed to meet the needs of people now and in the future."

The plan contains a number of general policies which relate to the downtown commercial area. Relevant policies include:

- Encouraging development of a healthy, diversified economy which will provide local employment and support for businesses and services.
- Providing a clean, visually attractive city with a small-town atmosphere.
- Protecting the natural and scenic qualities of the area by regulating use and carefully managing urban growth.
- Managing tourism to the benefit of the local economy and yet protecting the way of life.
- Developing and improving cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities.

The transportation section of the comprehensive plan stresses the need to manage traffic in a manner which contributes to community appearance and livability and minimizes negative effects. Special consideration is to be given to supporting the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. Tourist access to the sternwheeler dock, scenic vistas and other parts of the city are to be provided via convenient walkways. Finally, implementation of the 1977 Downtown Improvement Plan is encouraged to provide adequate access and parking for employees of downtown businesses.

### **1983 Work Session**

In late 1983 the Stevenson Business Association met and conducted a design workshop to discuss a range of ideas, topics and visions for the downtown area. The following lists some of the ideas that were recommended:

1. Develop a parking system to serve the needs of both patrons and employees, especially on Second Street.

2. Consider reverting Russell Avenue back to a two-way street between Second and First.
3. Incorporate rain and inclement weather protection for pedestrians.
4. Develop a 'signage control' system.
5. Provide public restrooms for tourists and shoppers.
6. Repair and extend sidewalks and other pedestrian routes in the downtown area.
7. Develop a multi-purpose plaza or courtyard, possibly including an amphitheater, on the Courthouse lawn.
8. Encourage seasonal 'sidewalk cafes'.
9. Develop a palette of durable street furniture (street lights, drinking fountains, benches, planters, trash receptacles).
10. Encourage renovation of existing buildings and structures.
11. Consider a water feature along Russell Avenue.
12. Consider the potential for a marina capable of accommodating high-masted sailboats.

### **1977 Downtown Improvement Plan**

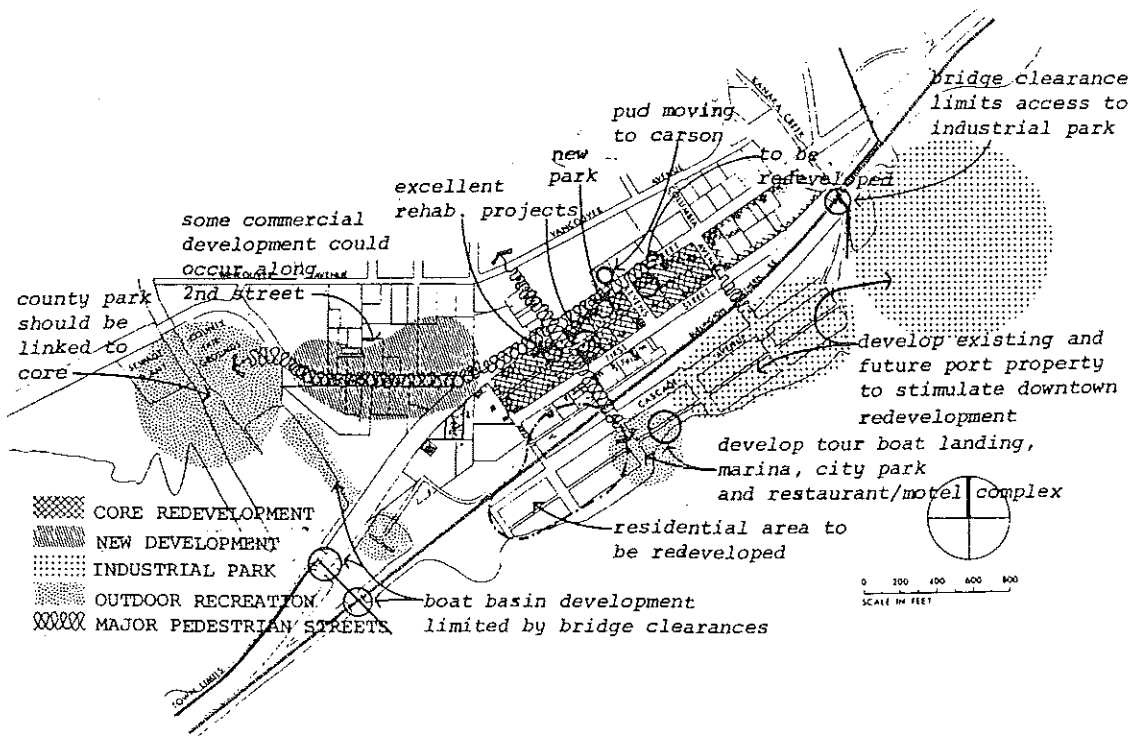
In 1977 the city undertook a study specifically oriented to improvement of the downtown area. This plan was intended to serve as a guide for coordinated public and private decision making within the downtown core area. The plan recommends a general revitalization and development framework for the downtown area. Included in the document are three concept sketches which illustrate recommended improvements. These sketches are included later in this chapter for reference. As will be noted, some of the recommendations -- such as construction of a pedestrian bridge to the fairgrounds, sternwheeler dock, and signalization of the railroad crossing at Russell Avenue have already been accomplished.

## Summary of Previous Planning Efforts

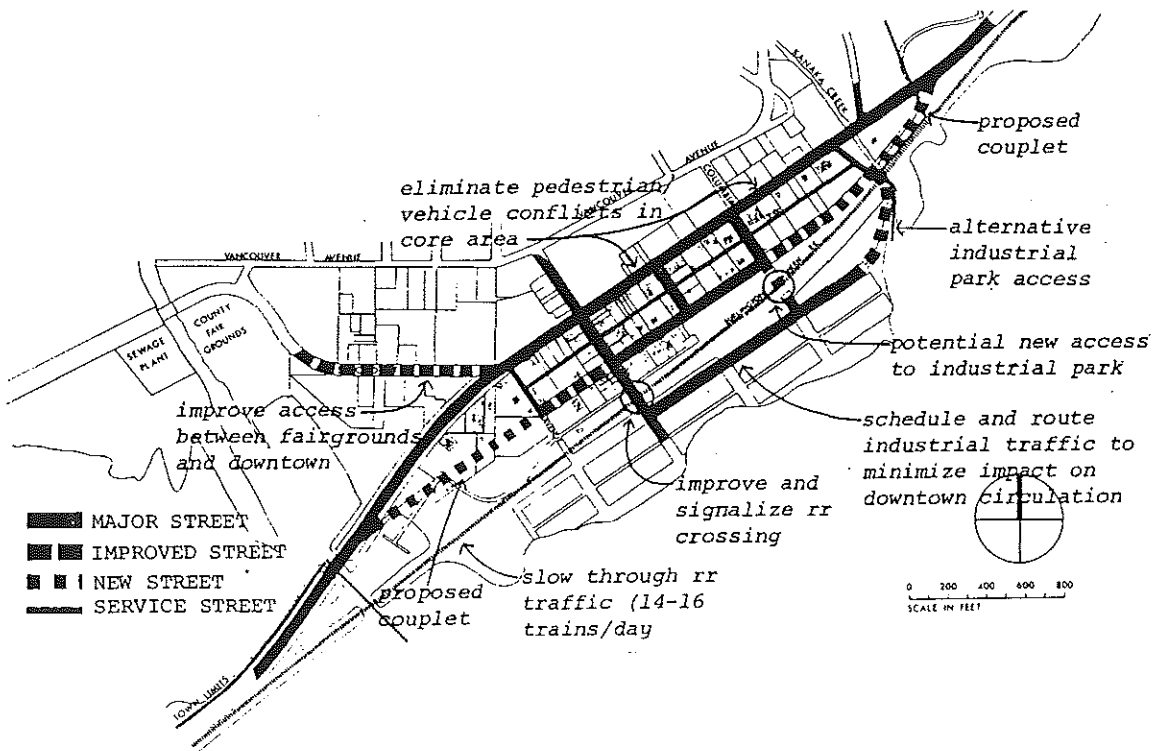
In 1977 the City developed a plan to guide future growth in the downtown area. While some of the improvements recommended in that study have been accomplished, a large number have yet to be acted upon. In 1983, the Business Association conducted a design workshop and identified a number of improvements. Very few of these ideas have been effected. The City's Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1984 with a view towards managing the natural and man-made resources of Stevenson to meet citizen needs. Again, while many good ideas were put forward, few have been implemented.

It is now 1991. Once again, a downtown planning study is underway. Whether the current effort will lead to community improvement, or become yet another planning study collecting dust on a shelf, will be seen within the next few years.

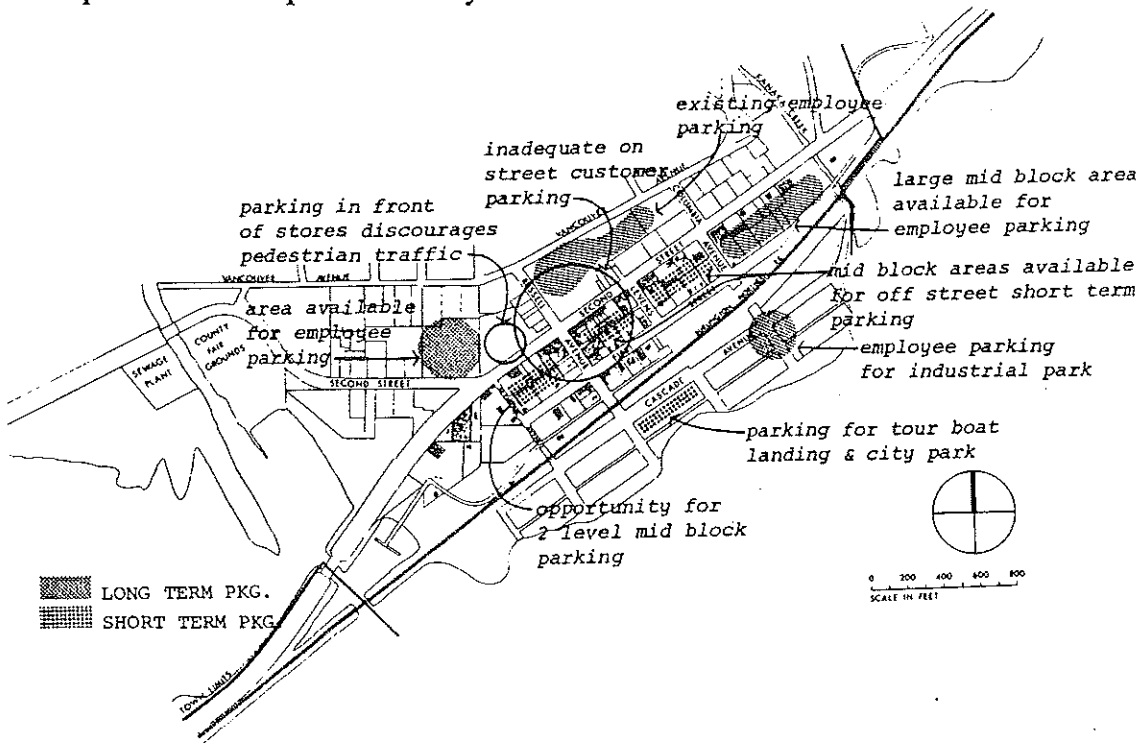
Change is coming to Stevenson, and soon. The community can choose to get behind a downtown improvement program and guide change in appropriate directions. Or, the community can watch while uncontrolled change occurs and then respond in piecemeal, in-effective fashion to a tangle of discordant forces. The consulting team sincerely hopes that the community will choose a pro-active approach.



Development Concept of 1977 City Plan



Transportation Concept of 1977 City Plan



Parking Improvement Concept of 1977 City Plan

#### **D. Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area**

Implementation of the Gorge Management Plan will further strengthen the economic position of downtown Stevenson. The management plan will restrict higher density development to identified urban areas (such as Stevenson) and will restrict commercial activities outside of urban areas.

Implementation of the management plan will tend to create compact urban communities separated from each other by low density rural areas. This development pattern is very similar to European towns, where a compact urban community is surrounded by rural countryside.

Infill and intensification of use in the downtown area will occur over time as the demand for commercial space increases in response to increased visitation. Residential development will also tend to occur at slightly higher densities, also favoring walking and bicycle riding as alternatives to the use of the automobile.

#### **E. Future Growth & Change**

The population of Stevenson and of Skamania County has been fairly stable over the past several decades. Economic expansion opportunities have been limited, unemployment has been far too high, and many residents have moved to other areas seeking opportunities not available locally.

Conditions are changing. There are a number of factors at work that will increase interest in Stevenson and will likely lead to improved economic conditions. These factors include the following:

- The Portland metropolitan areas population is expected to increase by about 500,000 people over the next 20 years. Certainly there will be many more recreationists seeking to "get away" from the city. In addition, some location independent companies may choose to locate in the Gorge. Finally, the metropolitan area is only 45 minutes away; well within commuting distance for some people.
- Ground breaking for Skamania Lodge is expected in July, 1991. Construction activities related to the Lodge (including expansion of Stevenson's sewage treatment plant) will provide jobs for Skamania County residents, additional business for Stevenson merchants, and an expanded sewage treatment plant capable of accommodating additional population growth.

Once the Lodge opens, a large number of permanent jobs will be available. The Lodge will attract many conferees and other recreationists who will seek out the charms of Stevenson while in the area.

- Interest in the Gorge has increased in recent years. Board sailing, of course, is a recreational activity with world-wide appeal. The Columbia River Gorge is recognized by enthusiasts as one of the premier board sailing locations in the world.
- Passage of the National Scenic Area legislation, and the attendant development of the management plan has focused much attention on the Gorge and the communities located in the Gorge. Many people, who formerly were unaware of the beauty of the Gorge are now coming to see for themselves. Proposed implementation actions -- including Skamania Lodge, the Columbia River Gorge Interpretive Center in The Dalles, a Gorge-wide signage program oriented to tourists, and the Skamania County Interpretive Center -- will all further increase interest in the area.
- Housing availability in Stevenson is becoming limited. For a variety of reasons, a number of people have sought out housing in the Stevenson area in recent years. The supply of houses available for sales has now declined to the point where subdivision and housing developers are beginning to look at the Stevenson market. If development and construction financing will be available at reasonable rates in the near future, an increase in housing construction can be anticipated.

## Access and Circulation

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## **4. ACCESS AND CIRCULATION**

### **A. Automobile movement**

Access to downtown from the west is via SR-14 or Second Street Extension. Access from the east is via SR-14. Access from the north is via Vancouver Avenue to either Russell or Columbia.

East-west movement along Second Street is unhindered by stop signs or signals. All the streets that intersect with SR-14 are controlled by stop signs. This favoring of traffic on the state highway is clearly an advantage for regional traffic, but at the price of inconvenience for local motorists who try to cross or turn left onto SR 14.

All of the streets in the downtown area have two moving lanes, and operate in a two-way mode (except for short stretches of Russell Avenue and Leavens street. Parking is generally allowed along both sides of most streets. Issues related to SR-14 will be discussed later in this section.

### **B. Pedestrian Movement**

Pedestrian needs have been reasonably accommodated in the downtown core. However, as one moves away from the center of town, gaps in the sidewalk system appear. In a few instances, such as along Cascade Avenue, no provision has been made for pedestrian comfort and safety. The needs of the elderly and movement impaired individuals have not been given much attention.

As the commercial area expands and more visitors are attracted to downtown Stevenson, the deficiencies in the sidewalk system will have to be corrected. Missing sections will have to be filled in, sidewalks extended, broken or settled sections repaired, and wheelchair ramps constructed. Figure 4.5, Sidewalk Improvements, illustrates portions of the sidewalk system that need attention.

### **C. Rail Service**

Stevenson does not, at present, have rail passenger service. As pointed out in Chapter 3, a stop can be provided for charter and special trains. As interest in the Gorge increases, the likelihood of organized groups putting together rail tours will also increase. With the Sternwheeler Columbia Gorge as an attraction, and with the opening of Skamania Lodge, an attractive rail tour can be developed.

A Burlington Northern right-of-way through Stevenson is sufficiently wide and level to accommodate a platform for rail users. It is appropriate for City officials to encourage BN to manage their holdings through the city in a manner that will accommodate--and encourage--future rail passenger use.

City officials should also manage adjoining street rights-of-way so as to provide a pleasant pedestrian experience for visitors arriving by rail. While significant public improvements are not yet warranted, private and public improvement proposals in the vicinity of the BN mainline should be reviewed to ensure that future rail passenger use will not be foreclosed or degraded.

#### **D. Access Via Water**

The sternwheeler dock at the foot of Russell Avenue provides access for visitors arriving or departing via the Sternwheeler Columbia Gorge. Visitors are dropped off adjacent to a well maintained public park, a short distance from the main commercial area. Visitor parking is also provided along Cascade Avenue adjacent to the dock access.

City access for private boaters is not provided. Provision of a guest dock for short-term use would encourage visitation to Stevenson via water.

#### **E. State Route 14**

The Intergovernmental Resource Center in Vancouver, Washington has recently completed a study entitled "Columbia Gorge Conference Center Traffic Study". This study forecasts traffic movements through Stevenson in 1995, when it is assumed that Skamania Lodge, the Skamania County Interpretive Center, and the new Port of Skamania building will all be in operation. For reference, base traffic information is presented for 1989.

In summary, the study forecasts that the number of vehicles using SR-14 through Stevenson will increase substantially between the 1989 base year and 1995. At some intersections, the level of service (a qualitative measure of operating conditions) will decline to an 'E' or 'F' rating. Since a level of service (LOS) of 'D' is the lowest acceptable standard in most urban areas, it is clear that, at least during the afternoon peak period, drivers will be dissatisfied with conditions on and near SR-14.

According to the study, by 1995, the following two intersections in downtown Stevenson will have an unacceptable level of service:

Intersection	Problem movements
SR14/w Second Street Extension SR14/w Russell Avenue	Left turn onto SR14 (LOS 'F') Left turn onto SR14 (LOS 'E') Crossing SR14 on Russell (LOS 'E')

The IRC study suggests a number of possible improvements that might be implemented to improve traffic flows through Stevenson. Since the focus of the study is to improve the movement of vehicles, not much time is spent discussing impacts on the businesses and citizens of the city. Finally, the study does not indicate how or when these improvements will be funded or which agencies will be responsible for making improvements. The following roadway improvements are listed in the report as possible improvement options:

1. Install a traffic signal at SR-14 and Second Street Extension; realign the intersection, possibly to connect to Seymour.
2. Install a traffic signal at SR-14 and Russell Avenue, with left turn lanes; convert Russell to two-way operation south of SR- 14.
3. Remove parking along SR-14 to accommodate a two-way left turn lane.
4. Install a raised center median along SR-14 with left turns at intersections.
5. Acquire additional right-of-way along SR-14 to accommodate four moving lanes.
6. Create a one-way couplet through town using SR-14 as the west bound leg and First Street for east bound traffic.

During the past two months, the Walker & Macy consulting team has met with Stevenson citizens in three workshop sessions to discuss various ideas for downtown improvements--including potential changes to SR-14 and intersecting streets. At the last workshop (June 24th), substantial time was spent discussing the impacts and benefits of alternative courses of action. Four alternatives were discussed. These included undertaking minimal changes to SR-14, constructing one-way and two-way couplets and widening of SR-14. The remainder of this section covers these four alternative approaches.

## **Minimal Changes**

One approach is to make changes slowly over time as delays become more serious and as public funds become available. Using this approach, it is likely that changes will first be needed along SR-14 at the intersections of Second Street Extension and also at Russell Avenue. Figure 4.1 illustrates these changes. The benefits and detriments of this approach are discussed below.

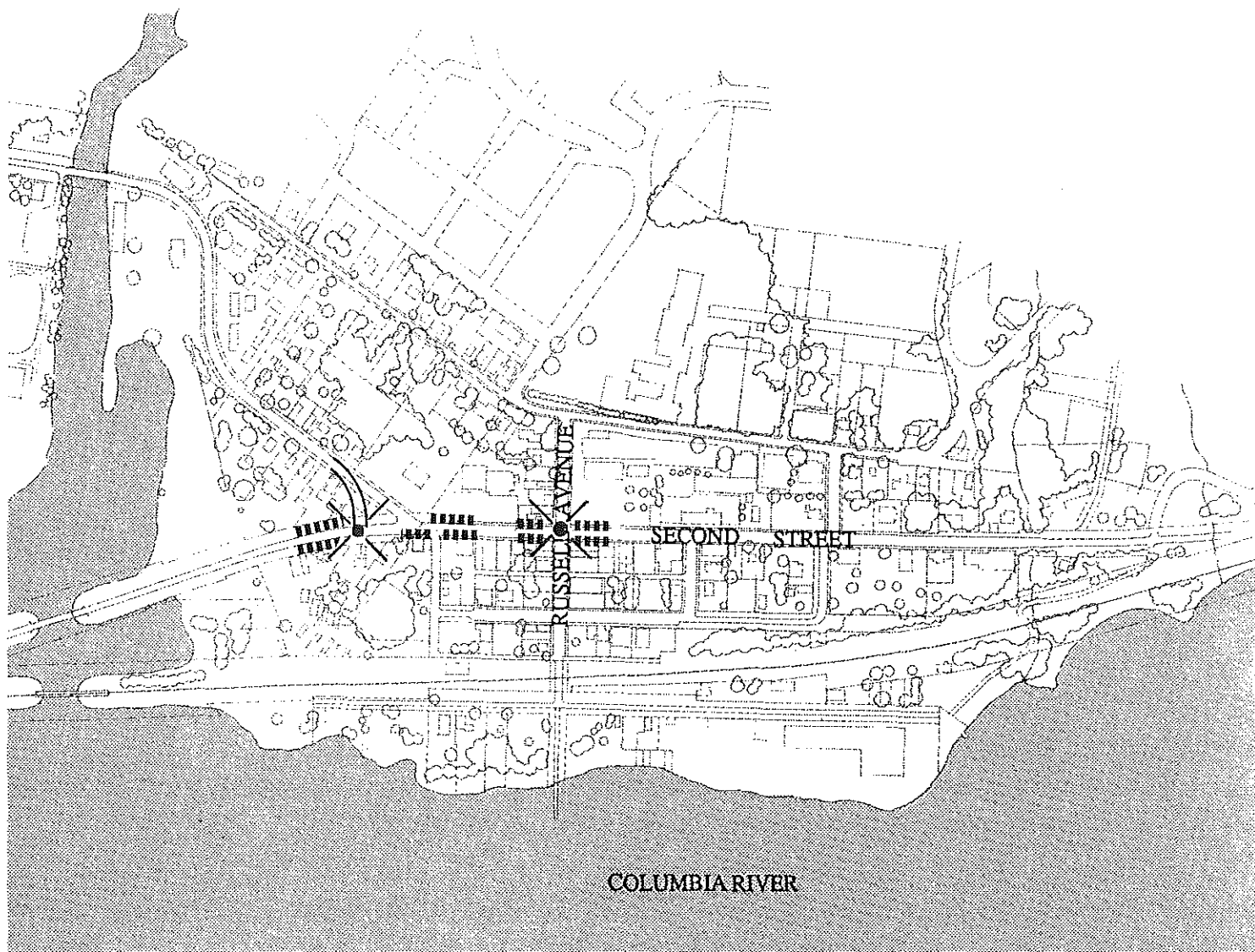
### **Benefits**

1. Changes can be made as needed, in response to specific problems.
2. Costs may be reasonably low, and will be spread out over time as changes are made.

### **Detriments**

1. As traffic problems get worse, pressure to remove parking along SR-14 will increase. Merchants along SR-14 will fight a losing battle related to parking.
2. Minimal changes may not be sufficient in the long run to accommodate traffic. If that happens, a major highway improvement project may well be necessary anyway.

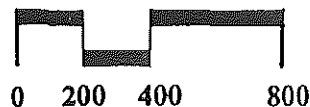
Figure 4.1



**Legend**

- ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ Remove Parking
- ⊗ Traffic Signal
- ⤵ Realign Intersection

**SR-14 OPTIONS  
MINIMAL CHANGES**



## **One-Way Couplet**

Another approach is to develop a one-way couplet using Second Street (west bound) and First Street (east bound). Figure 4.2 illustrates this approach. The benefits and detriments of this approach are:

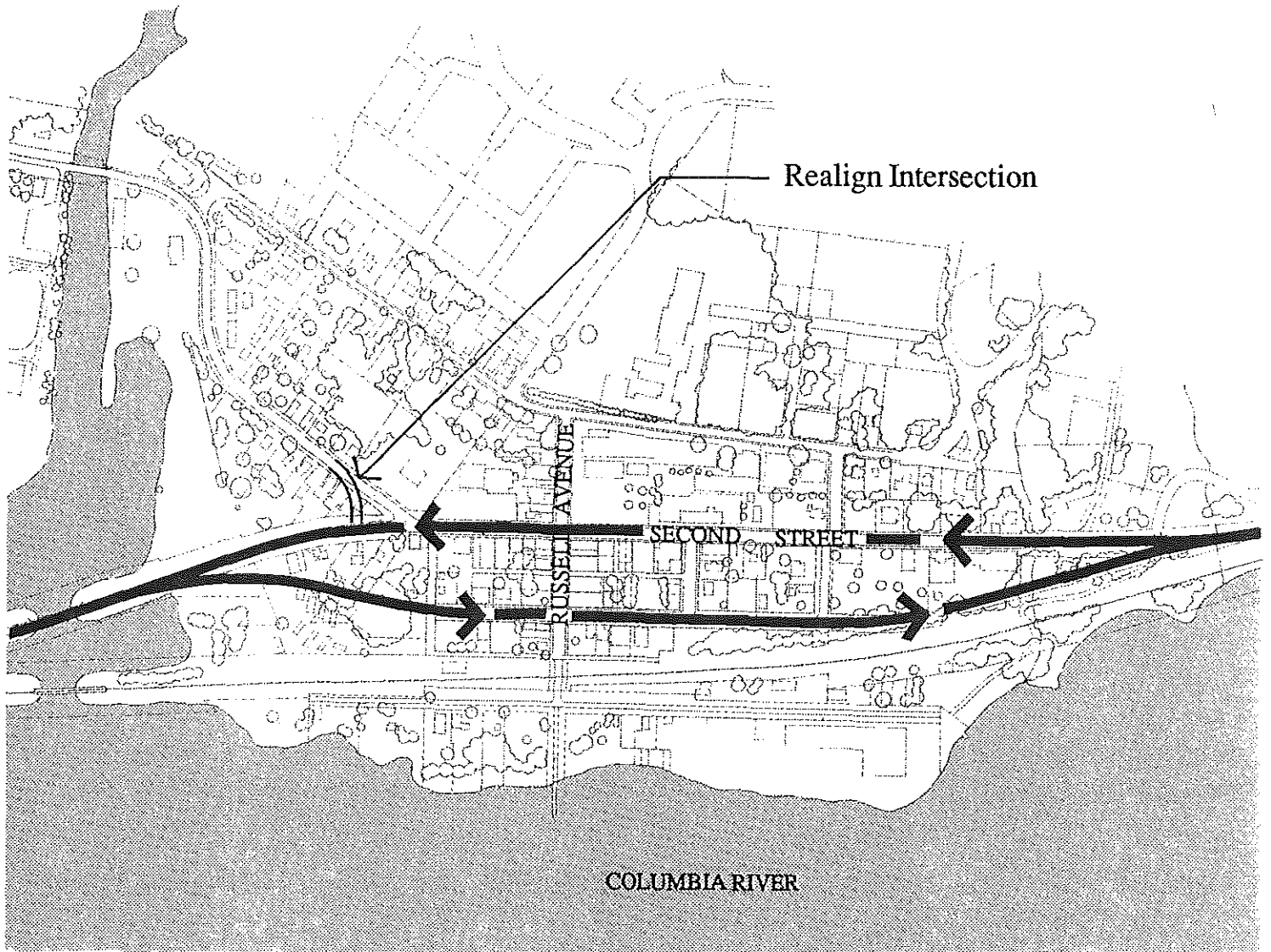
### **Benefits**

1. Ample highway capacity will be created. Additional improvements should not be needed for many more years.
2. Major construction activities will occur along First Street, where traffic flow along SR-14 will not be seriously impacted.
3. Additional land along First Street will become attractive for commercial development.
4. Pedestrian and automobile movement across Second Street will become easier as traffic will approach from only one direction.

### **Detriments**

1. A change from two-way to one-way operation may negatively effect some existing commercial enterprises.
2. At least in the short term, motorists traveling west to east may not realize that Stevenson has a downtown commercial area.
3. A relatively quiet street (First Street) will be subjected to heavy automobile and truck movements. Businesses such as the bed and breakfast will likely not survive.
4. Substantial right-of-way will need to be acquired.

Figure 4.2



**SR-14 OPTIONS  
ONE-WAY COUPLET**



## **Two-way Couplet**

A variation on the couplet idea is to develop a two-way couplet system. During the first years, Second street can continue to function as a two-way state highway. First Street would function as a by-pass for individuals seeking to avoid congestion along SR-14.

If traffic eventually builds up to the point where a one-way couplet is needed, this system can be modified fairly easily. A key differentiation between this approach and development of a one-way couplet is that this approach reserves flexibility to either stay with existing traffic patterns or move to a one-way system. Figure 4.3 illustrates this approach. Benefits and detriments of this alternative are:

### **Benefits**

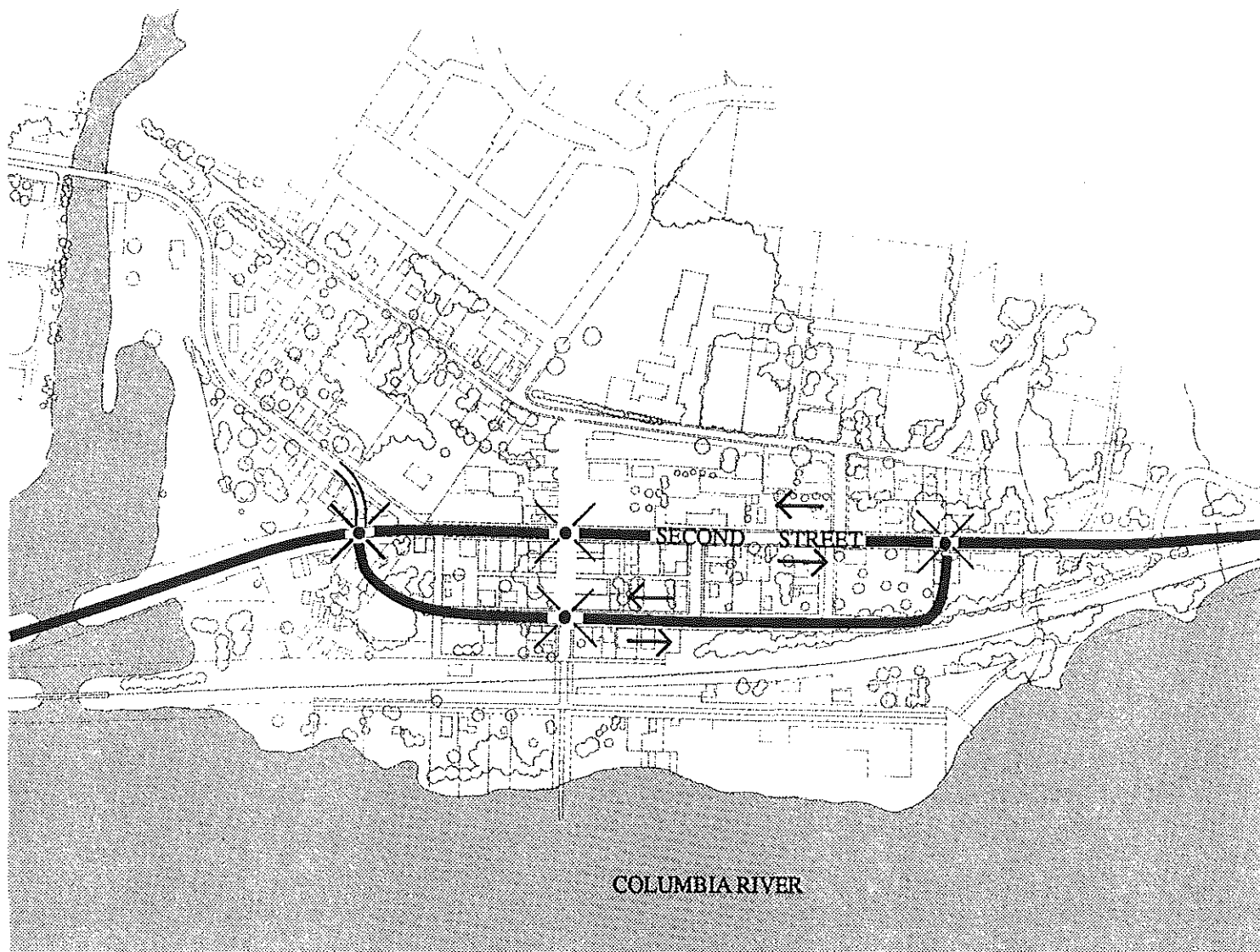
1. Ample highway capacity will be created (two moving lanes in each direction).
2. Major construction activities will occur along First Street, where traffic flow along SR-14 will not be seriously impacted.
3. Improvements need not all be made at once; costs can be spread out over time.
4. Additional land along First street may become attractive for commercial development.
5. Business owners will have a number of years to consider whether to reorient their business toward First Street or maintain an orientation towards Second Street.

### **Detriments**

1. A relatively quiet street (First Street) will be subjected to increased traffic movements.
2. Substantial right-of-way will need to be acquired.
3. A change to a one-way operation, if implemented in the future, may negatively impact some existing businesses.



Figure 4.3



**Legend**

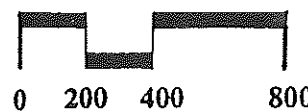


Traffic Signal



Realign Intersection

**SR-14 OPTIONS  
TWO-WAY COUPLET**



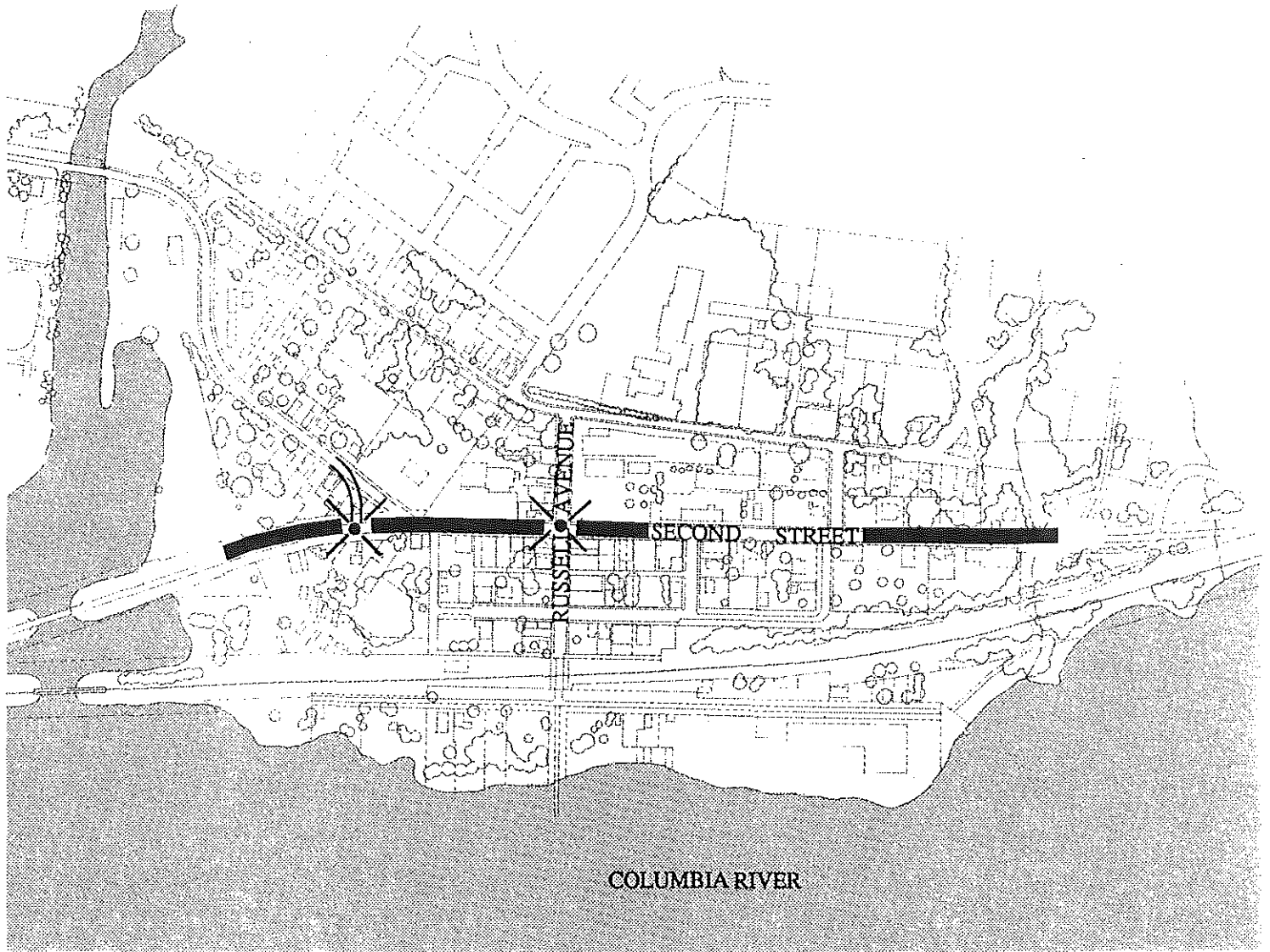
## Widened Road

The final possibility considered by the community was to widen SR- 14 to provide four travel lanes. As the Second Street right-of-way is too narrow to accommodate a widened road, additional land would need to be acquired. As indicated in the IRC study, the least expensive approach to widening would be to acquire additional land along the north side of the street. This, of course, would impact both financial institutions, a restaurant, a gas station, a real estate office, a church, several residential properties, and possibly the motel. Figure 4.5 illustrates this alternative. There appear to be no community benefits associated with a widened road approach other than creation of ample highway capacity. Detriments of this approach are:




1. Substantial right-of-way will have to be acquired to make this approach feasible.
2. Pedestrian crossings will be less friendly since the crossing distance will be greatly increased.
3. Traffic speeds through the downtown area will likely increase due to the wide streets.
4. Businesses along the entire north side of the street will lose their buildings, most likely through a condemnation process. Not all of the business owners will choose to rebuild in Stevenson. Some may retire, others may relocate elsewhere.
5. The community character created by the existing small scale buildings of varying ages will be lost. There is no way of anticipating what types of buildings may be constructed on these lots by future owners.

At the conclusion of the workshop it was clear that no one in attendance favored a widened highway approach. This alternative should be dropped from further consideration.

Figure 4.4



**Legend**

-  Traffic Signal
-  4 Travel Lanes Plus 2 Parking Lanes
-  Realigned Intersection

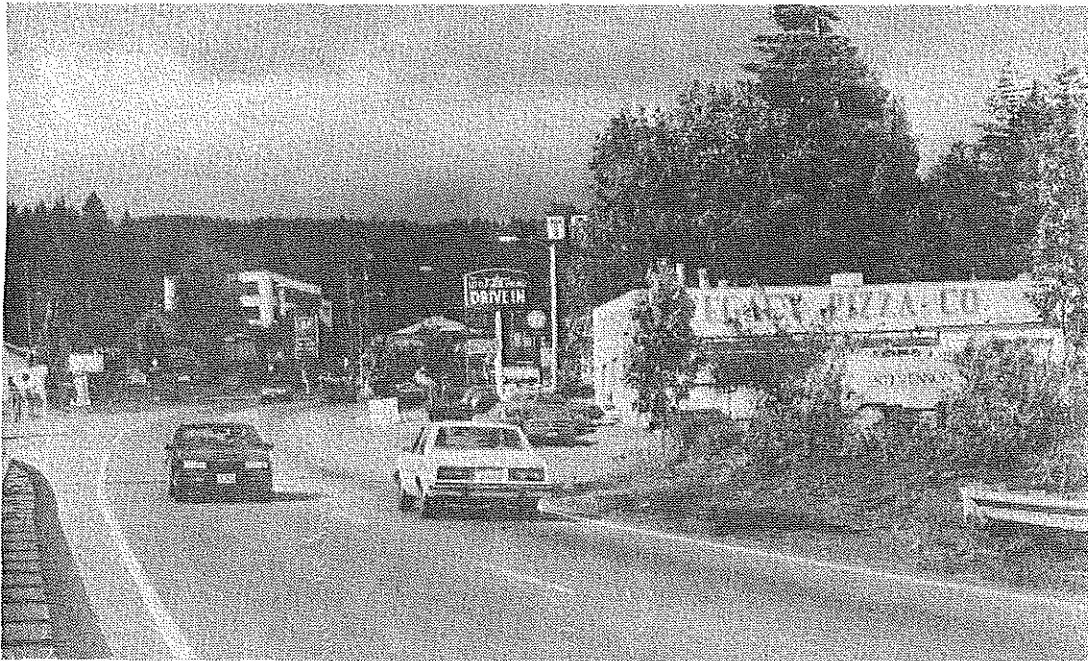
**SR-14 OPTIONS  
WIDENED ROAD**

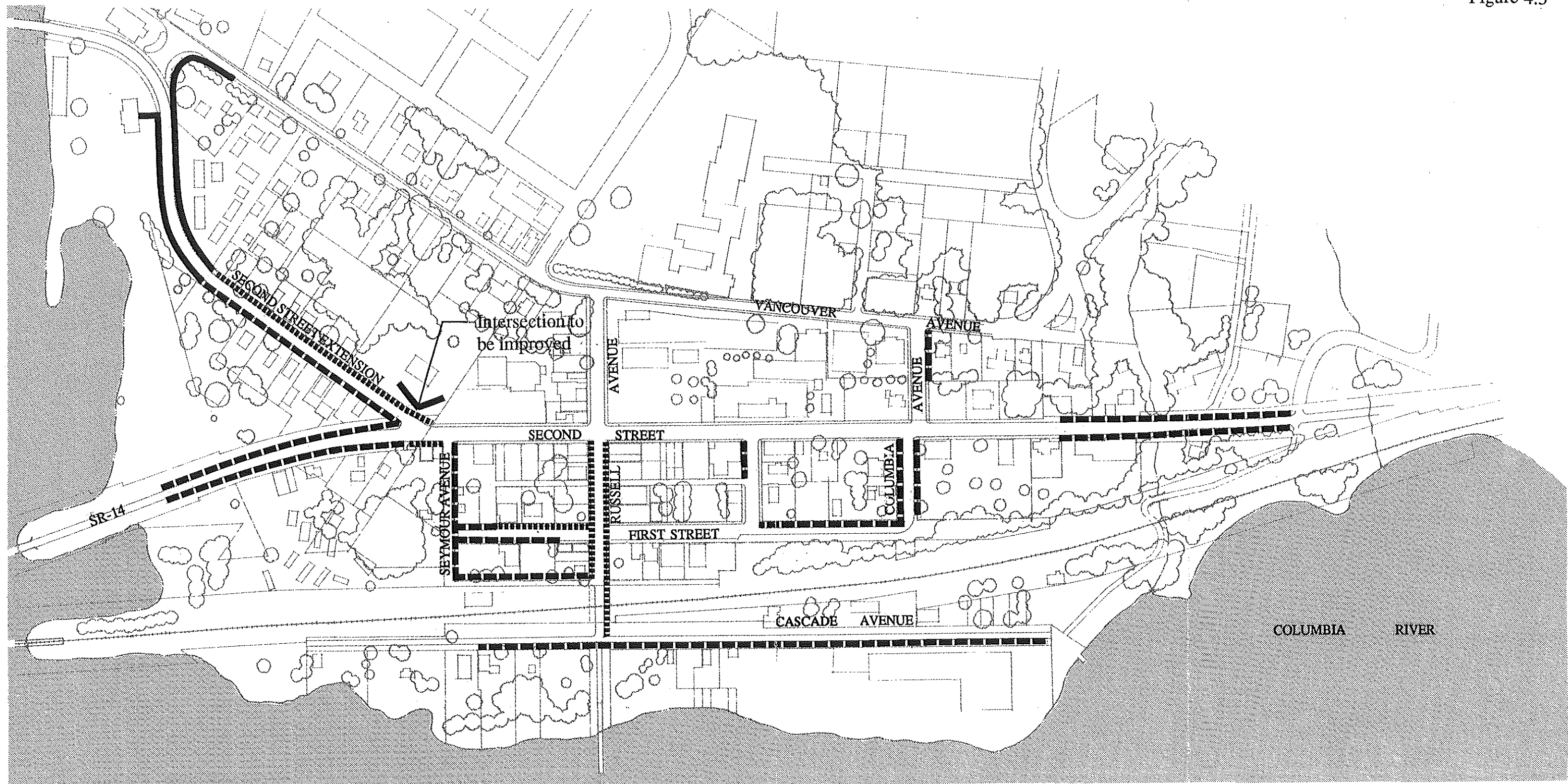


## Recommendations




The issue of SR-14 is extremely important to the community. Much additional discussion on impacts, benefits and costs is needed before a final approach is selected. Based on the brief review possible during the past few months, the consultants tentatively recommend the following approach for additional evaluation:

1. Realign Second Street Extension near the intersection of SR- 14 to improve intersection geometry.
2. Install traffic signals along SR-14 at Second Street Extension and at Russell Avenue.
3. Remove a few parking spaces along SR-14 where sight distance is a problem.
4. Conduct a detailed analysis of the two-way couplet to determine if the traffic carrying capacity is adequate and to determine the most appropriate alignment.
5. Facilitate a meeting between community leaders and state highway officials to discuss improvement options, funding, and construction timing. Attempt to arrive at a consensus position between all parties.

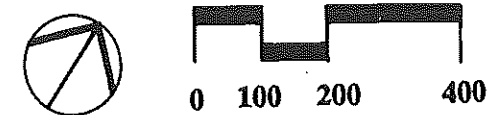




**LEGEND**

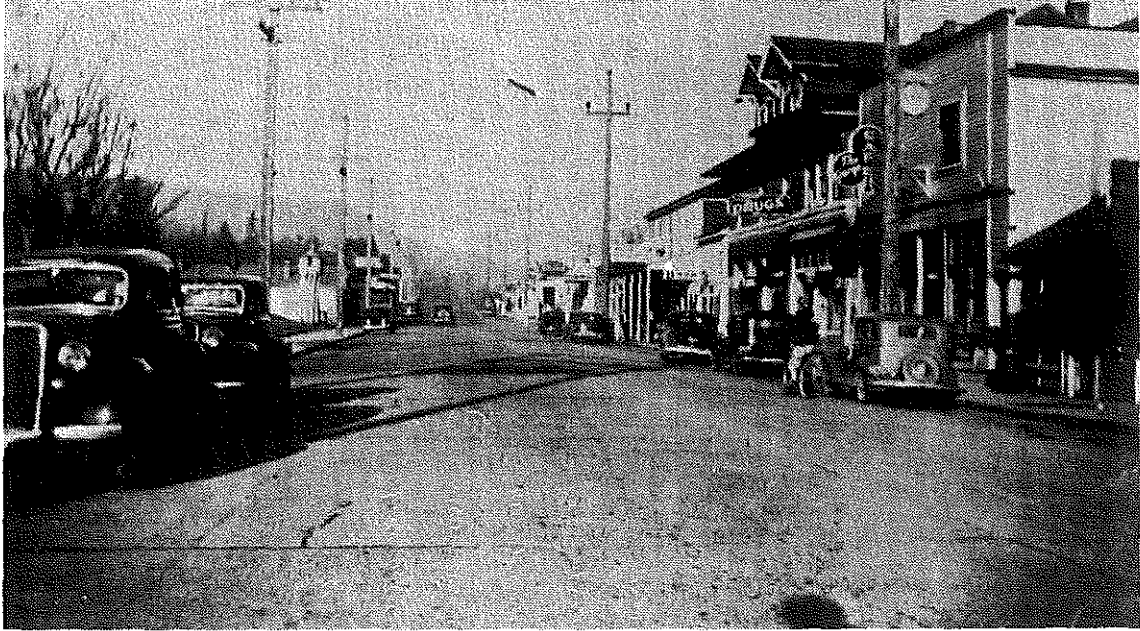
-  Phase I Curb and Sidewalk
-  Future Curb and Sidewalk
-  Existing Sidewalks to be Improved

**SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS**



# Parking

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## 5. PARKING

### A. Parking Demand

The demand for parking spaces in the downtown area is, of course, created by employees, shoppers, visitors, and delivery/service people. In a small community such as Stevenson, it can generally be assumed that most employees will drive their own vehicle to work. Employee vehicles are typically parked all day, with some being moved during the lunch hour.

Shoppers may arrive with one to three people in the vehicle depending on individual circumstances. Visitors, likewise, may arrive with more than one person per car. Delivery and service personnel typically stay for short periods of time and often need direct access to their destination from an adjacent parking space.

A specific demand analysis was not conducted as part of this study. However, most smaller communities have found that parking demand falls somewhere in the range of 3.5 to 5.5 vehicles per 1000 square feet of retail and office floor space (excluding storage areas). Assuming conditions in Stevenson are typical of other small communities, the following indicates the probable parking demand:

	<b>Parking Demand (Current Conditions)</b>	
	<u>@ 3.5 spaces/1000 sf</u>	<u>@ 5.5 spaces/1000 sf</u>
Core Area* (approx. 50,000 sf)	175	275
Business District * (approx. 65,000 sf)	230	360

\* See Figures 5.1 and 5.2 for boundaries.

After Skamania Lodge is opened and the new Port building is occupied, it is anticipated that an additional 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of retail space can be supported (see Development Potentials, Chapter 2). The following indicates the projected increase in parking demand that will be created by a retail expansion of 30,000 square feet. It has been assumed that 20,000 of the 30,000 square feet will be located in the core area.

**Parking Demand (Expanded Retail)**  
@ 3.5 spaces/1000 sf      @ 5.5 spaces/1000 sf

Core Area* (approx. 70,000 sf)	245	385
Business District* (approx. 95,000 sf)	335	525

\* See Figures 5.1 and 5.2 for boundaries.

**B. Parking Supply**

Within the core area there are approximately 115 spaces on-street and an additional 160 spaces in parking lots providing a total of 275 spaces. Figure 5.1 illustrates the boundaries of the core area. By comparing parking demand with parking supply, it can be seen that there are adequate spaces in the core area to support the existing level of development. Within the expanded business district boundary, a total of about 500 spaces are available (260 on-street spaces, and 240 spaces in parking lots).

If retail expands as anticipated, the demand for parking in the core area will increase to between 245 spaces and 385 spaces. Since there are only 275 spaces available, it is likely that parking will be perceived by many shoppers as inadequate.

However, when the total amount of parking available in the business district is considered (a total of about 500 spaces), a different pattern emerges. Within the entire district, there appears to be more than ample parking to support retail expansion well in excess of 30,000 square feet.

In summary, the total amount of parking appears to be ample for Stevenson's needs. However, parking may be tight in the core area as the commercial area expands. Even when an additional 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of retail space is added, the parking supply appears to be adequate to meet demand.



### **C. Parking Location**

Most people, of course, prefer to park as close to their destination as possible. In large cities, people are willing to walk up to 900 or 1000 feet from a parking lot to their destination--and pay dearly for the privilege. In middle sized communities, people are willing to walk shorter distances--probably on the order of 400 feet. In small communities, such as Stevenson, the maximum acceptable walking distance is probably on the order of 200 to 250 feet.

Our analysis of parking demand and parking supply within the core area suggests that there may be some times when motorists will be unable to find a parking space within what is perceived to be an acceptable distance. There are several ways to deal with this locational problem. The total amount of parking can be increased, efficiency can be improved through striping and other techniques, and employees who park all day can be encouraged to park outside the core area. The next section deals with both structural and non-structural (operational) techniques to improve parking availability.

### **D. Parking Opportunities**

The following is a list of possible ways to expand the amount of parking in downtown Stevenson:

1. Increase parking efficiency by refreshing paint stripes and removing yellow painted curbs where they are no longer needed.
2. Maximize the number of off-street spaces accessed from alleys.
3. Widen shoulders along uncurbed streets and encourage parking.
4. Develop head-in and parallel parking along Cascade Avenue.
5. Encourage the use of vacant parcels for parking on an interim basis until needed as a building site.

In addition to the above physical changes, parking availability can be increased by a number of operational techniques. The following describes some of the non-structural approaches that can be implemented.

1. Encourage business owners to direct employees to park in locations well away from prime shopper and visitor locations.

2. Encourage the County to re-stripe and reassign parking stalls to better accommodate courthouse visitors and jurors. County employees can be assigned to the lower lot (below the annex), freeing up additional spaces for use by prospective jurors and visitors.
3. Encourage government leaders, business owners, and employees to form, promote, and use car pools.
4. Sign core area streets to limit parking to a reasonably short time--say two to four hours--to eliminate all-day parkers. Issue parking tickets to offenders.
5. Allow weekend shoppers and visitors to use parking lots that are not normally used on weekends. Examples include the courthouse complex parking lots, bank parking lots, and Port industrial area parking.
6. Encourage the Eagles Lodge to allow their lot to be used during the week by downtown employees and, if appropriate, during weekend days by shoppers.

Figure 5.3 illustrates parking opportunities identified during this study.

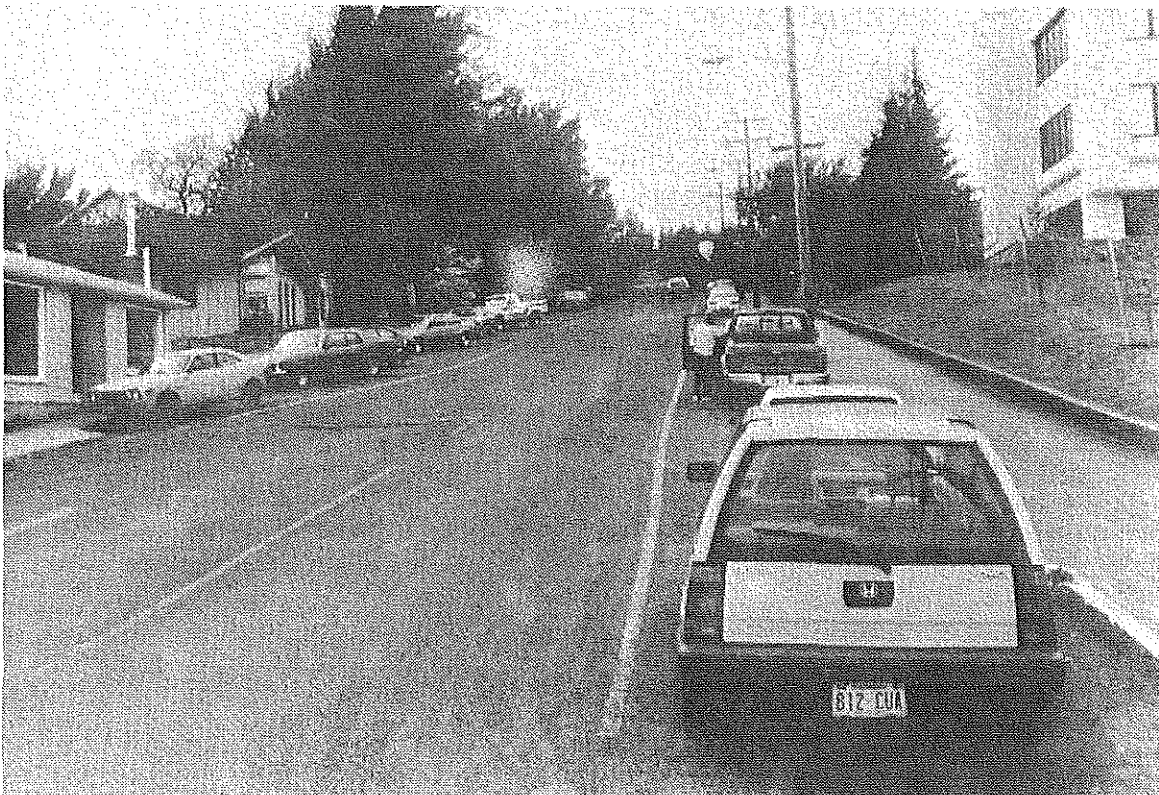
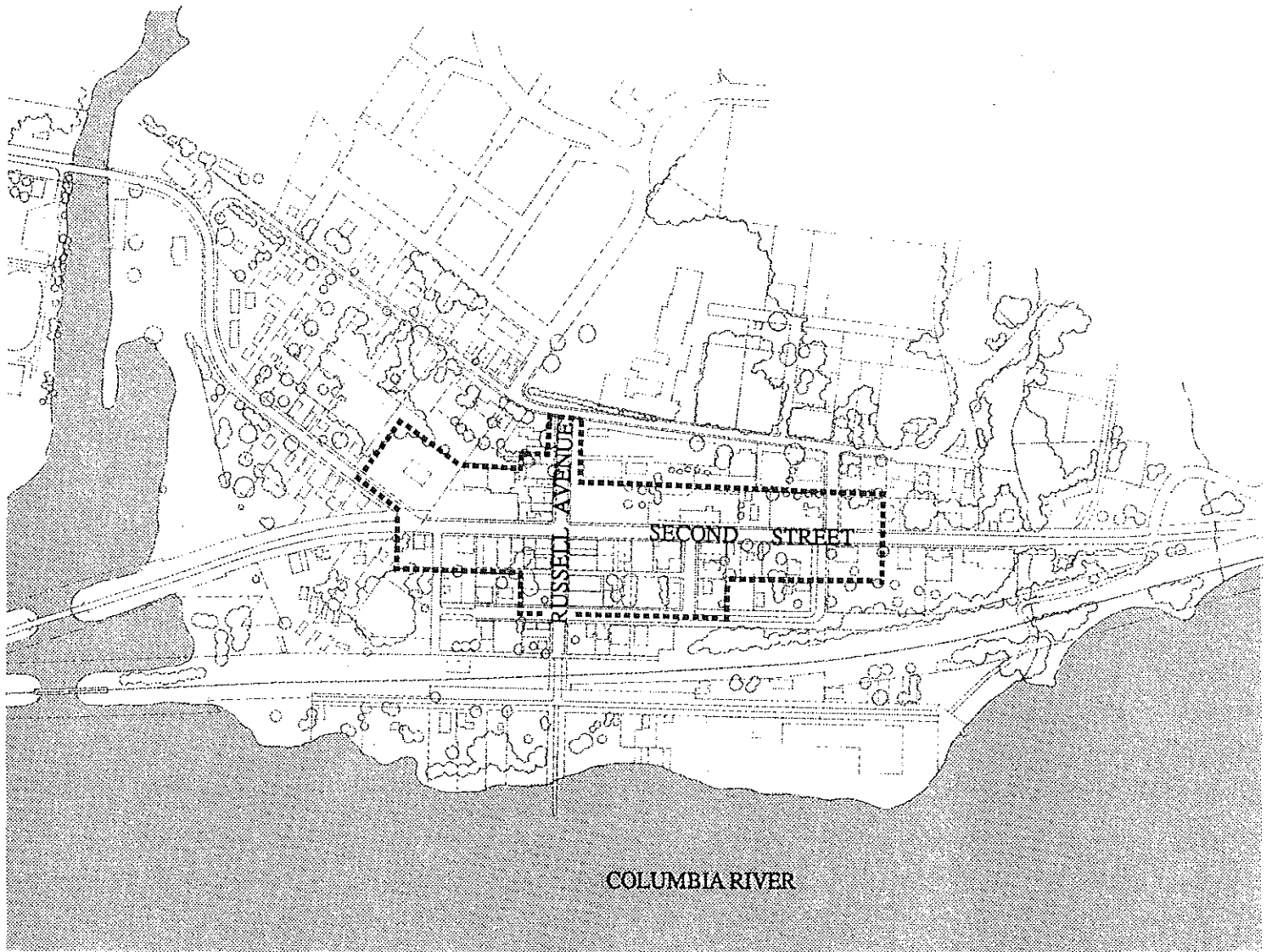


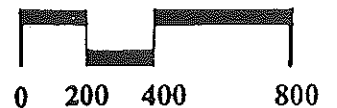
Figure 5.1

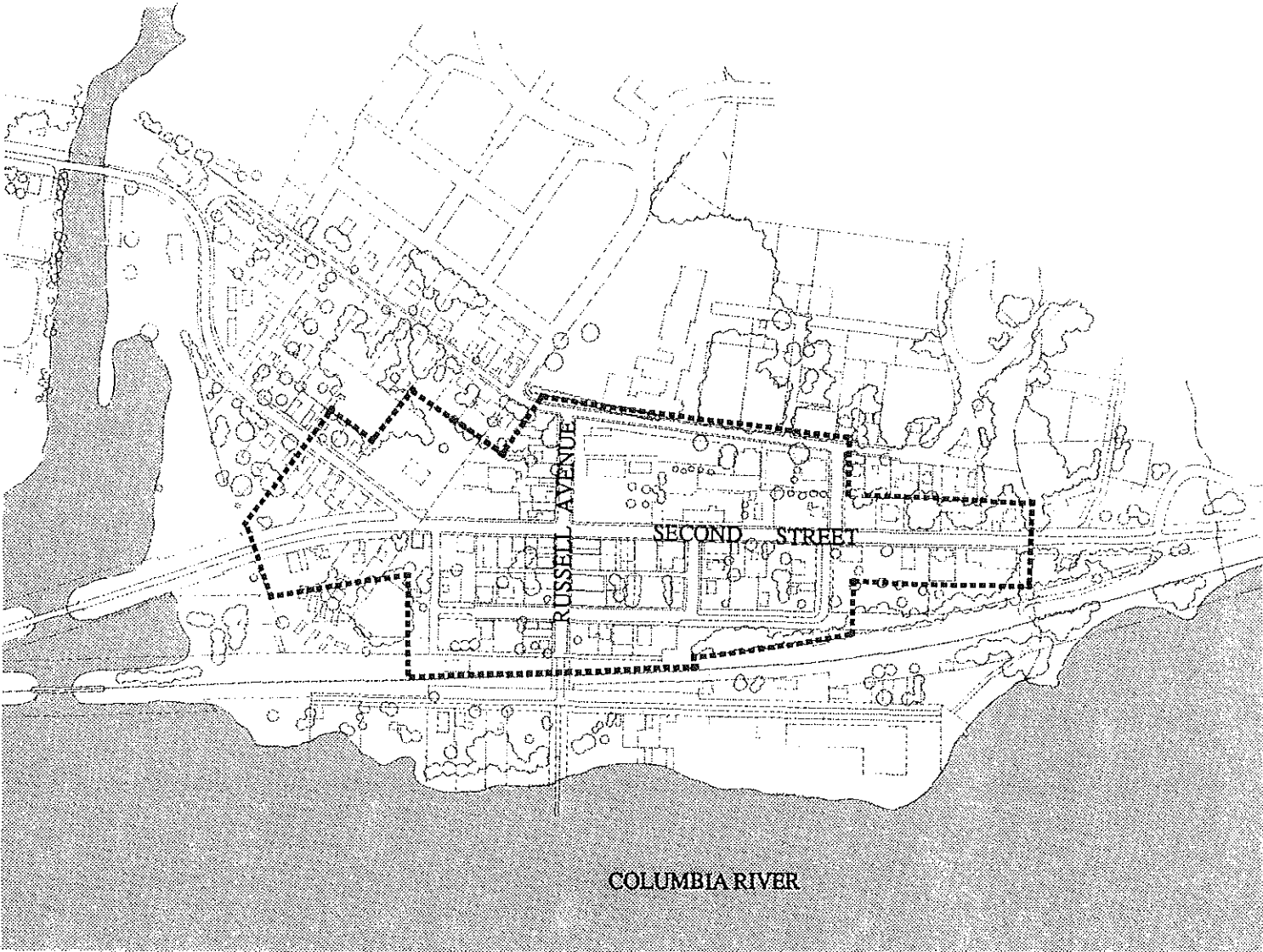


**Legend**

- Core Area
- 115      Approx. No. of On-Street Spaces
- 160      Approx. No. of Customer/Employee Spaces in Lots

**CORE AREA PARKING SUPPLY**





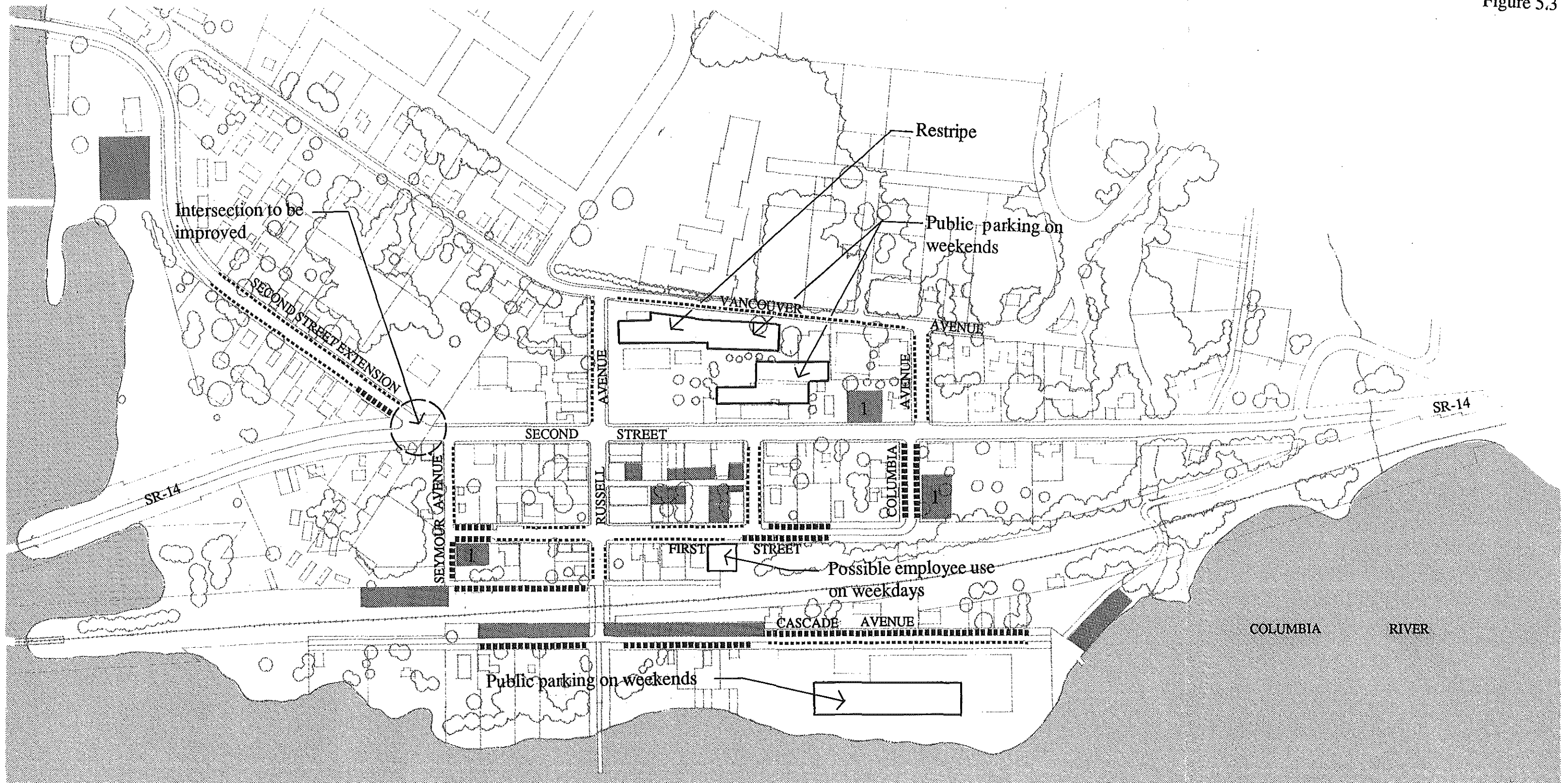
Legend

- Business District
- 260      Approx. No. of On-Street Spaces
- 240      Approx. No. of Customer/Employee Spaces in Lots

**BUSINESS DISTRICT  
PARKING SUPPLY**



Figure 5.3

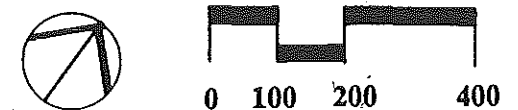


**LEGEND**

- Existing Underutilized On-Street Parking
- ..... Potential New On-Street Parking
- Underutilized / Potential Parking Lot

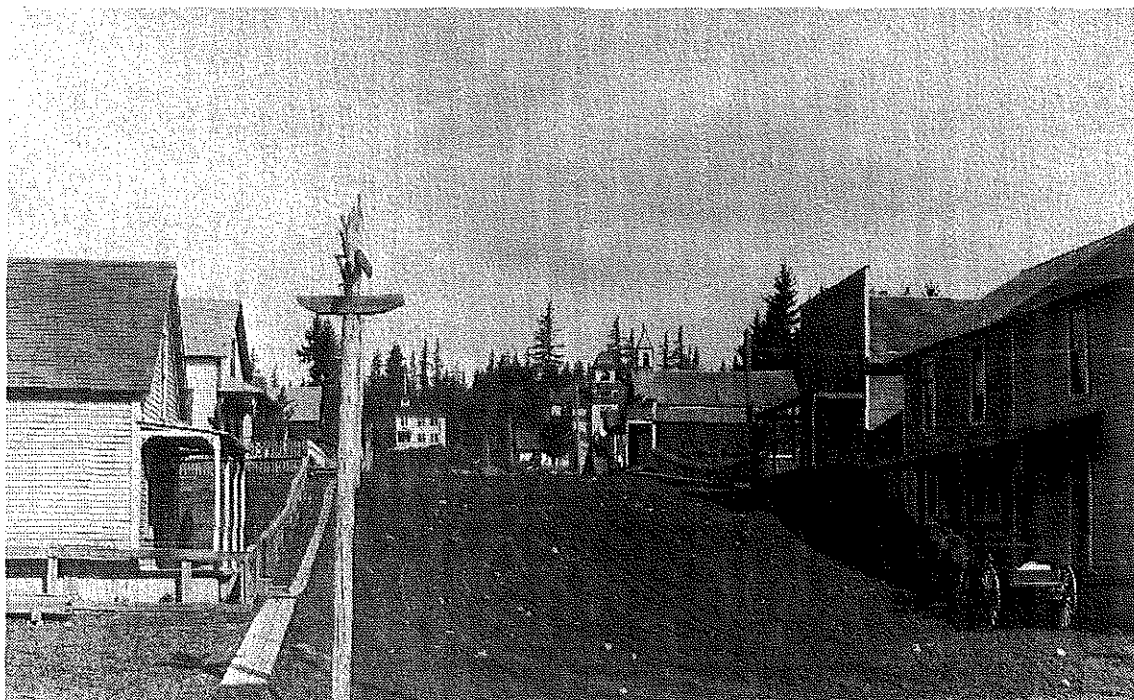
Note 1: Possible interim use until the site is needed for a building.

**PARKING OPPORTUNITIES**



# Building Character Development Opportunities

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## 6. BUILDING CHARACTER/DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### A. Overview

To preserve and enhance the downtown business district, Stevenson must respond to the increase in tourism by becoming a more functional and interesting place to be. While businesses must ultimately provide the visitor a reason to stop, the City's character must communicate the value of that stop at both pedestrian and highway speeds. At present, Stevenson generally does not communicate interest or prosperity. This is significantly due to the presence of vacant lots and unrestored buildings within the central core area. However, the consultants and citizens that participated in this study agree that many opportunities exist for development, aesthetic improvements, and provision of visitor amenities and conveniences.

As a guide to the stylistic development of the community, it was agreed by study participants that an aesthetic "theme" can best be found in an exploration of the town's past and an honest expression of its identity rather than the adoption of some unified character from elsewhere; especially a foreign land. While this requires more thought and attention to individual sites, and a community effort to discover its identity, it will provide a real opportunity for creating a unique character and instilling community pride.

Compared with some other cities, Stevenson is not particularly rich in architectural tradition; however, there are plenty of visual resources from which to build. Additionally, there is much documentation by interested local historians. The value of historical preservation and the use of history and tradition in the design of new buildings is well established at this time. A return to small town or "main street" America, and shopping for quality merchandise from specialized small vendors, is also an established tourist tradition.

Stevenson's history is not only as a commercial center, but also as a waterfront and industrial town. While many of the most dramatic aspects of this -- the mills, docks, and warehouses -- are gone, one still enters the town from the west past Brix Maritime tugboat station, a stern wheeler calls at the Russell Avenue dock, the railroad is a substantial presence, and waterfront development is occurring again under the sponsorship of the Port. These are all events of interest in the development of a Stevenson aesthetic.

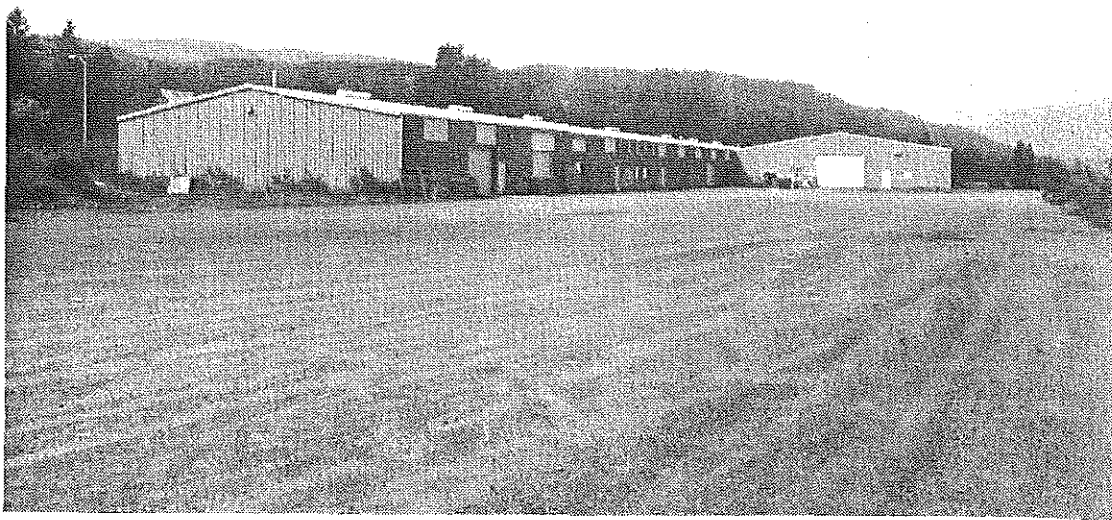
It might be symbolic of future opportunities for the downtown that the riverboat now services a tourist industry rather than transporting cargo and passengers.

## B. Building Analysis

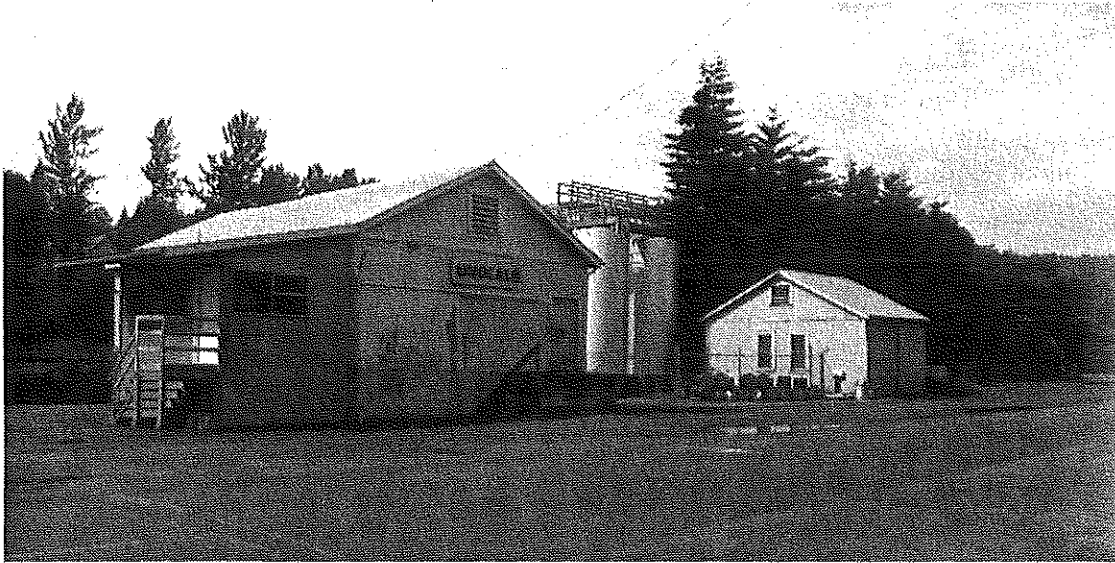
This grant has made possible an inventory of downtown opportunities and development of suggested directions for aesthetic improvements. The limitations of our work also need to be noted. Architectural comments are confined to the possibilities of improving buildings and storefronts. No account of the condition or function of structures or building systems has been included. The conceptual point has been made to participating business managers and property owners that improvement of street frontages makes a maximum contribution to the town character, while involving a minor portion of a building's volume (and therefore its cost).

There are four basic building types, and therefore styles, that make up the bulk of the present downtown commercial district.

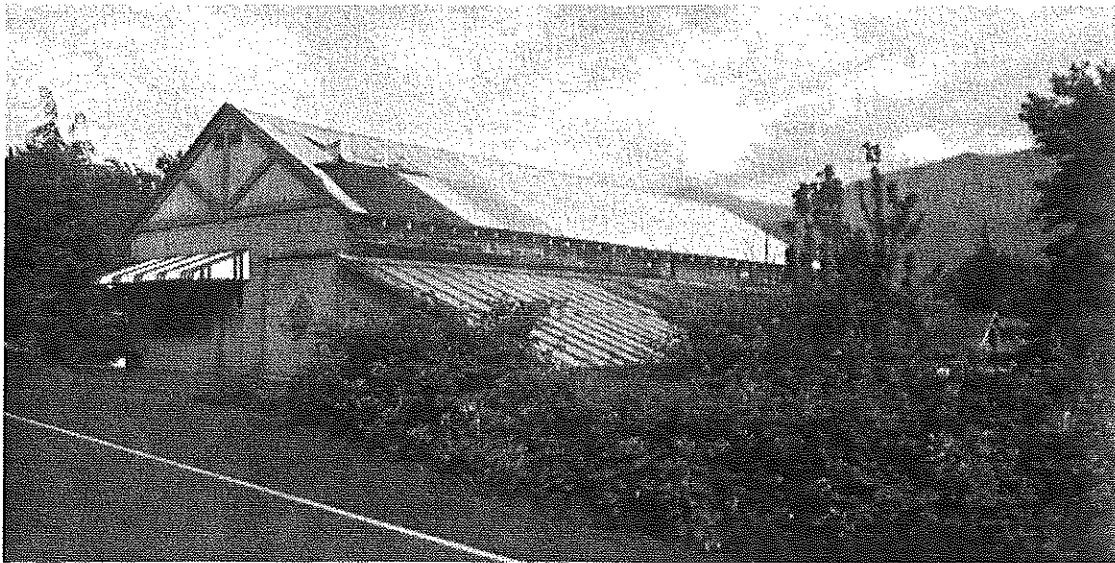
- Industrial Buildings: New and historic buildings for industrial use are part of the downtown, located primarily near the waterfront and the railroad. Newer buildings in this category are primarily ventures by the Port of Skamania to attract commercial and industrial businesses to town. This effort continues and there are more projects scheduled. The Port can be a key player in the development of the waterfront aesthetic. Other important industrial aesthetic elements, that are not architectural in nature, are the sternwheeler pier and railroad machinery.





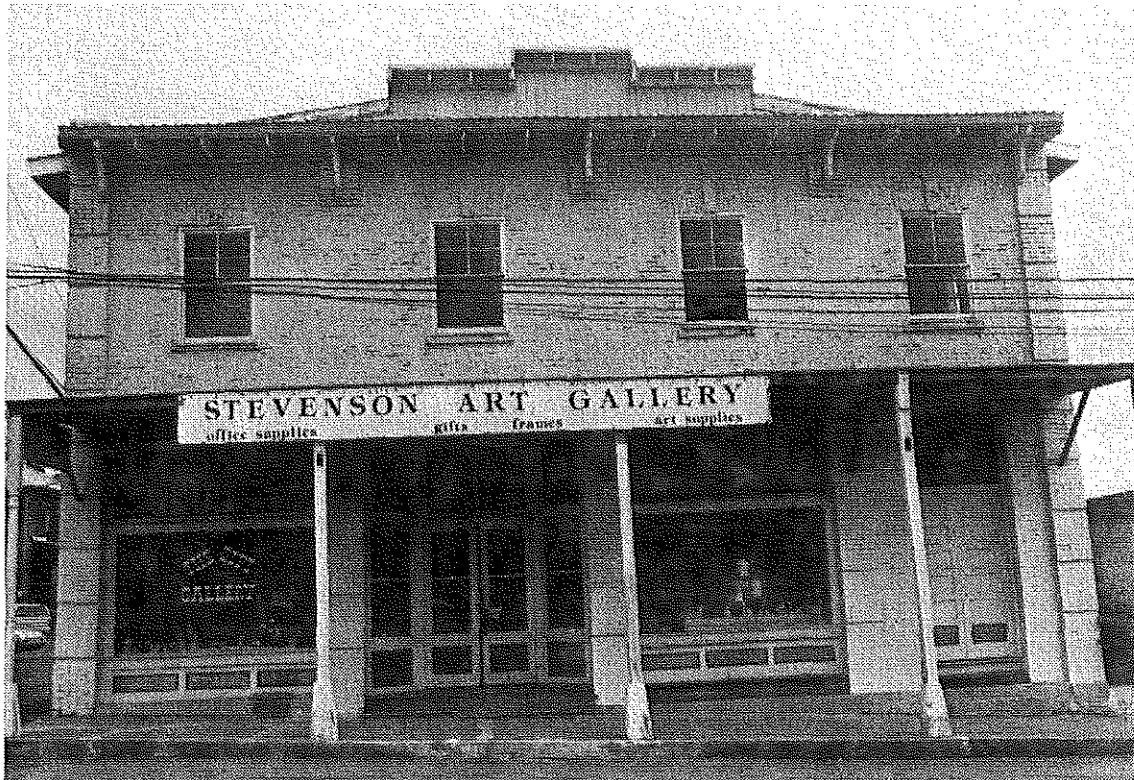


*Oil distributorship on Cascade Avenue facing the waterfront. Primarily corrugated metal with painted wood trim.*



*Old wooden structure still in use (marginal exterior condition). Facing first street on full property through to the railroad.*

- Storefronts: Retail establishments which present themselves and their merchandise to the customer, comprise this class of building structure. There are many examples of this building type in the downtown; some restored and most restorable. They typically have large display windows, an emphasized entry, and no setback from the sidewalk. New buildings could greatly benefit the streetscape by adopting these frontage principles. The key is to develop structures of this type in concert with the parking plan so it is the storefront and not a parking lot that the visitor embraces.



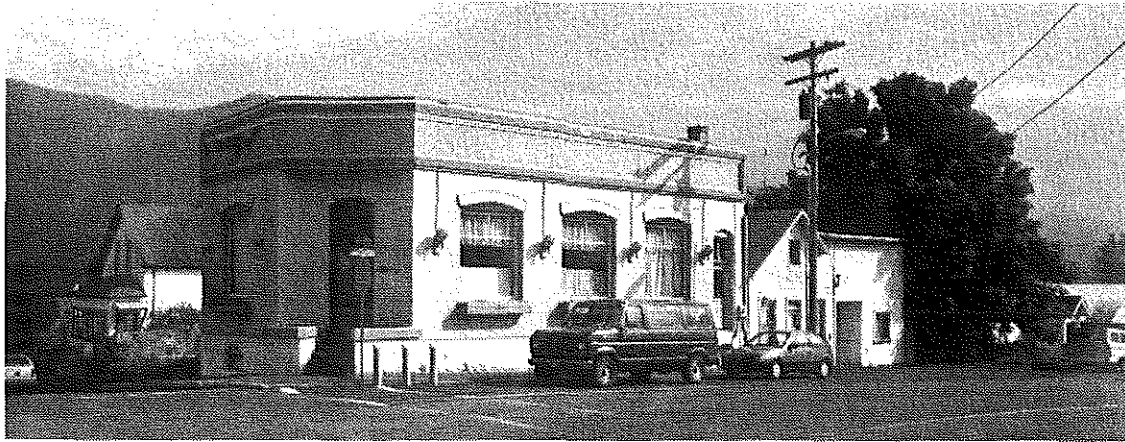
*Classic large storefront with portico facing Russell Avenue; presently in use and in reasonable repair. Minor historic restoration would make this building a major contributor to the town and street and a visual resource for the design of new commercial structures.*



*Avary building - originally a hospital and doctors residence. Because of its size, visual interest, good condition, and position on Second Street across from the courthouse, it is a key building in the town fabric.*



*Spar Tree Tavern - one of the best old style storefronts in town. This building is in a highly visual location and could be a real asset to the community if restored.*



*Original Bank Building - on the corner of Russell Avenue and First Street. This building is in restorable condition and is presently in use as a residence.*



*Port Offices - an outstanding example of a classic small storefront. This building is located near the waterfront on Cascade Avenue and has been recently restored.*

- Contemporary Buildings: There is a fourth category of buildings that are contemporary in style and in excellent condition so that, alterations would not seem necessary. These are not concentrated in any one area, and while they will not contribute to a "theme" as such, they do contribute a quality backdrop for historical or traditionally styled buildings. The four most notable in this category are the Bank, Savings and Loan, the Food Fair, and Joseph's.



*Contemporary savings and loan building facing Second Street. Exterior walls are of stained board siding with a wood shingle accent; the roof is of red corrugated metal.*

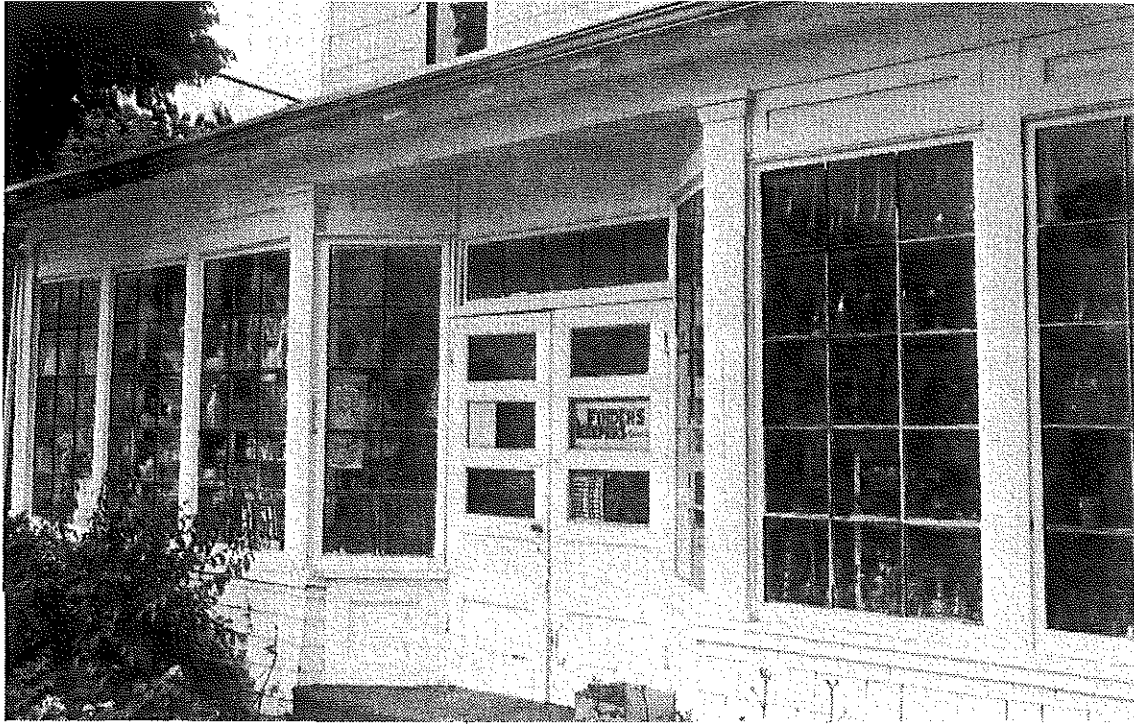


*A retail store with stucco walls, wood windows and red corrugated metal roof.*

- Residential Buildings: The downtown contains a number of historic houses in both Victorian Cottage style, and more classical adaptations of Greek Revival or Federal styles. While some are used as residences, many currently house businesses. Their set-back from the sidewalk provides space for a front yard or garden setting for the structure. Because of their human scale, they make an important contribution to the character and interest of downtown. Their preservation is to be encouraged.



*Cottage on Second Street, currently in use as a professional office.*



*Antique and second hand store on Russell Avenue, originally built as hotel.*



*Restored Victorian style cottage on First Street near Russell Avenue. This building, which orients toward the river, is now in use as a bed and breakfast.*





*Simple style historic house supporting a small nursery/garden store in the side yard. This building is located along Russell Avenue and is currently being restored.*

### C. Architectural Character

#### What gives Stevenson its form, character, and sense of place?

- It is a straightforward working community with a family tradition. Even the historical buildings of quality and interest tend to be relatively un-embellished vernacular interpretations of their given styles.
- It is defined by three east-west linear functions: the river, the railroad, and the highway. The industrial nature of these three functions has been previously noted.
- Its downtown area is defined topographically as well as divided by the three linear functions. The area available to the downtown has been historically limited by the waterfront (and the rising Bonneville pool) and steeply sloping land to the north.
- The scale of the town is intimate, with a variety of the four building types mixed together in a loose urban weave.
- There are many traditional historic structures remaining.
- There is still an active industrial presence especially related to transportation modes; (river, railroad, and highway.)
- Because of the slopes and the overpowering scale of nature, there are dramatic landscape backdrops all around.

#### What policies will preserve and enhance the architectural character of the town?

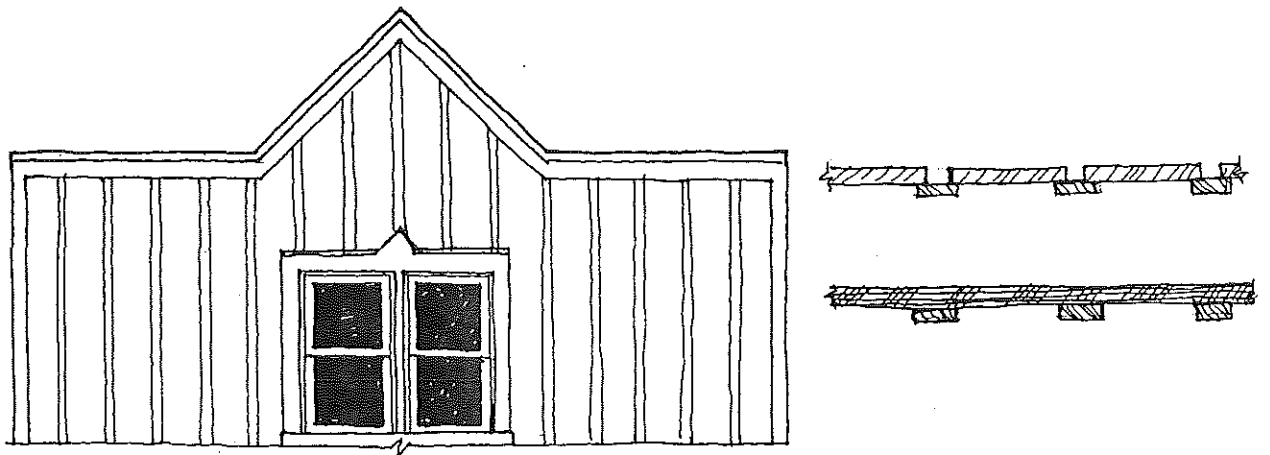
- Adopt an honest, traditional aesthetic which reflects historic Stevenson and main street America.
- Concentrate on new and existing street facades of buildings.
- Encourage public and private signage of quality and character. Encourage something other than the backlit plastic signage that characterizes most cities.
- Provide quality improvements in public spaces to complement the buildings and support the desired community character. Carefully select pavements, benches, street trees, plantings, public signage, street lighting, etc.

What architectural elements provide a vocabulary to build the town's aesthetic character?

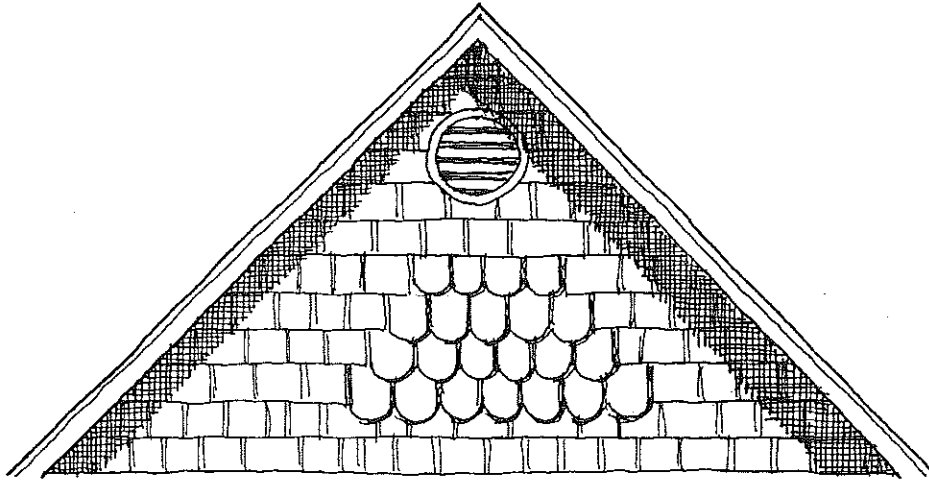
- **Scale:** The downtown at present, is primarily composed of single or double story commercial buildings with many residential and small buildings mixed in. This provides the town, especially certain streets, with variety and intimacy. Future development should respect this asset. Where feasible, small enterprises should be developed and any large scale structures should be composed of elements that will relate to the other buildings without appearing monolithic or domineering.
- **Siding and Roofing:** Stained wood siding, whether solid or plywood, and cedar shakes are contemporary siding materials. Historic materials used in Stevenson and other small communities include painted wood siding in bevel, drop, or board and batten patterns. These are still available in wood as well as composite materials. There is also a precedent within the city for plaster or stucco finish and brick. Patterned shingles are decorative in the Victorian style. Perhaps more controversial is corrugated metal sheathing, but there is precedent for its use and we do not object to its proper application.

Roofs should be pitched at 4 and 12 or more (exposing the roofing to views) if the roofs are not to be flat. Appropriate roofing materials include cedar and composition shingles and corrugated metal.

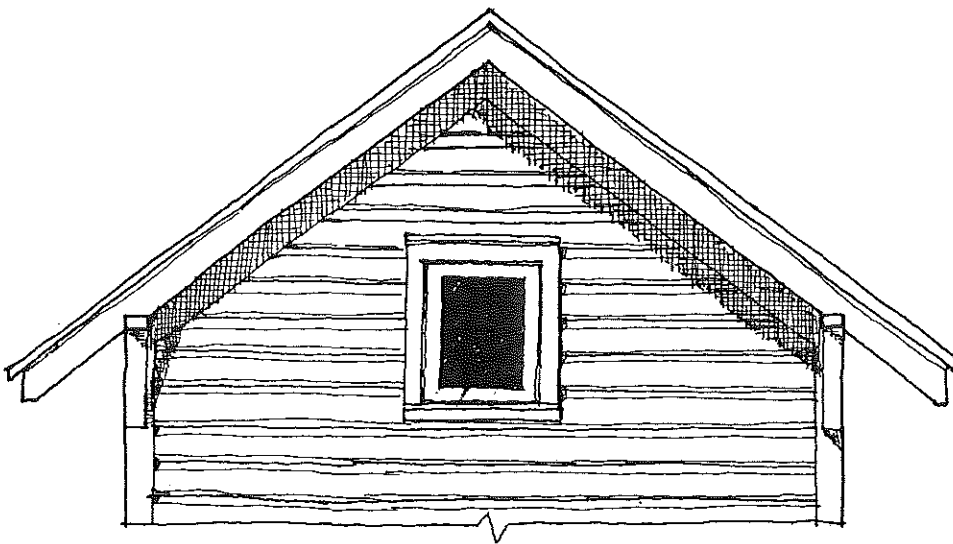
Siding Examples:



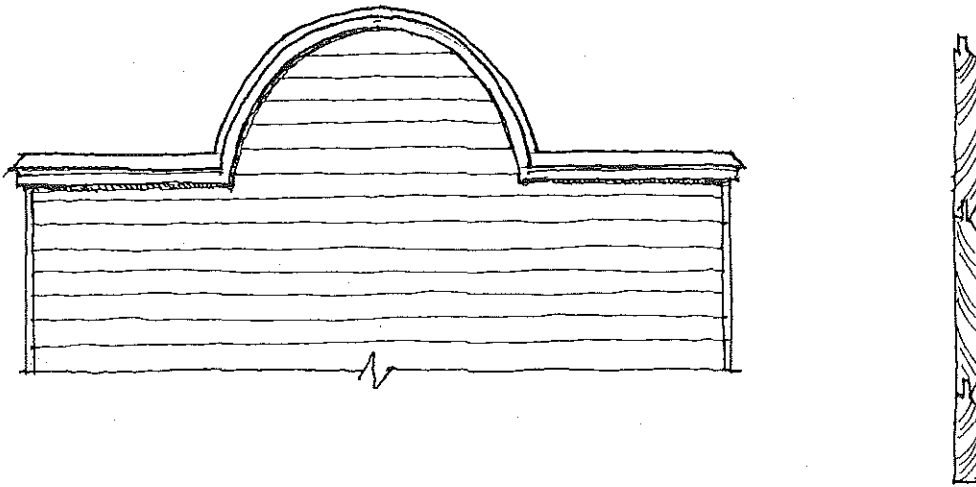
Board and batten siding with wood fascia and trim boards; shown applied to a small storefront. Plywood can be used in place of boards.



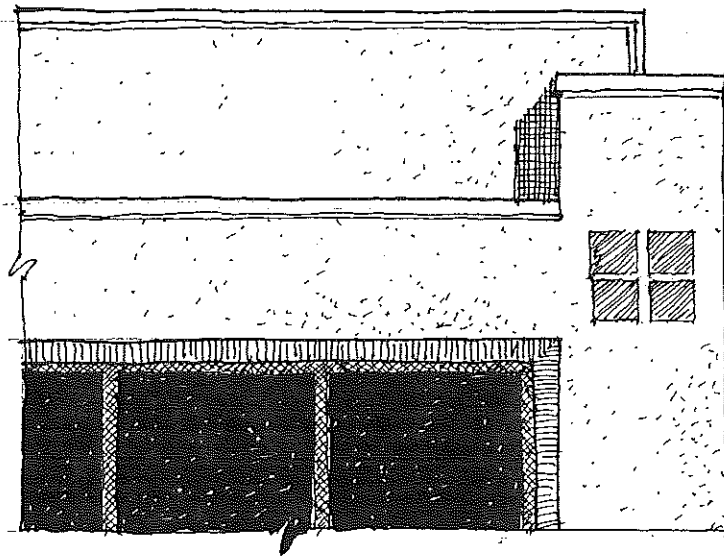
Shingle siding shown in contemporary Victorian style gable end. Resawn and rebuted, and "Pigeon Feather" patterns are available from manufactures.



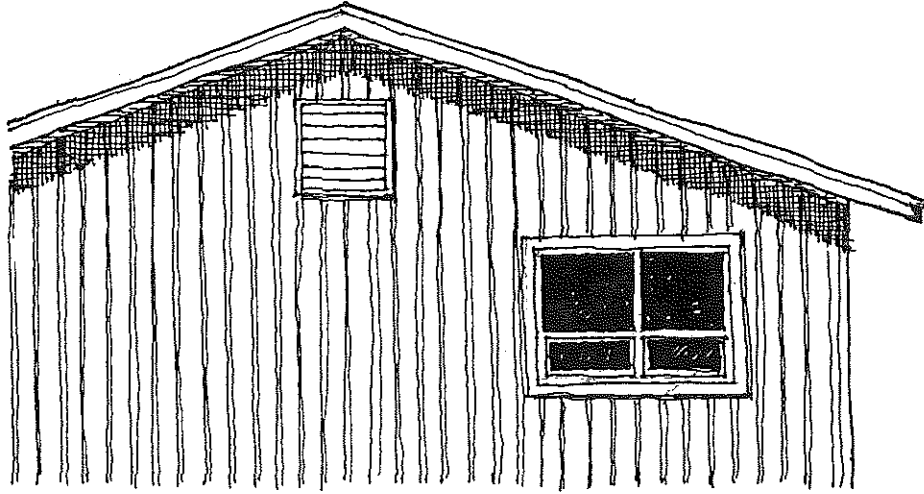
Drop siding shown applied to end wall with roof overhang and brackets. Siding is available in wood, composite, vinyl and perhaps metal.



Smooth tongue and groove applied horizontally to a storefront form. Wood shown. Similar siding patterns are available in wood, composite and metal.



Stucco applied to a 1920's era simple storefront. In addition to traditional stucco, synthetic stucco finishes, and synthetic stucco over insulation board is also available.

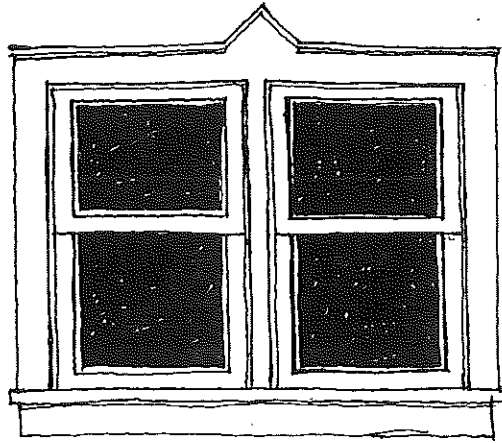


Corrugated metal siding applied to an industrial stock building with roof overhangs and detailed windows. Available in factory finish colors.

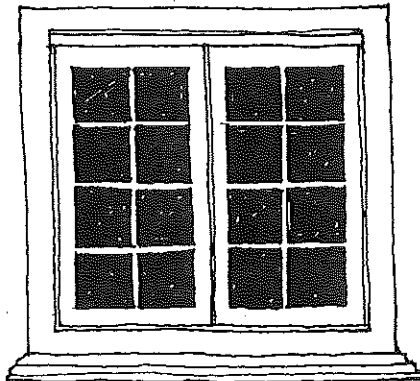
- **Windows and Doors:** These are the key elements in the detail of buildings and there are many historic patterns present in town. Wooden windows and doors of appropriate patterns are now widely available from many manufacturers.

Concerns about maintenance can be solved by exterior aluminum or vinyl cladding over the wood pattern and are available in many good colors. Some buildings in town have lost a great deal of their character by having old, presumably decayed, windows replaced by aluminum sliders, or boarded up. In some cases, this might be an economic decision, however, it is also possible that building owners are simply not aware of the variety of products available, often at an insignificant additional cost. Double hung, awning, and casement windows are all appropriate types. The Portland area also has many salvage yards where used, but sound, building components are available.

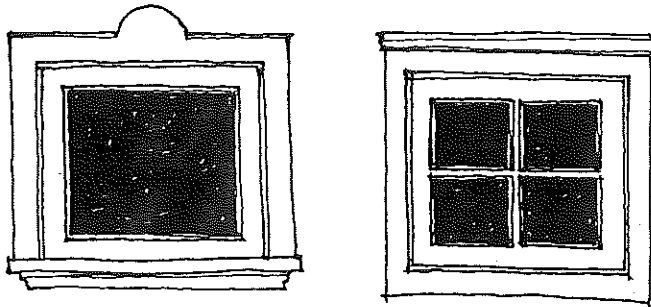
Window Patterns:



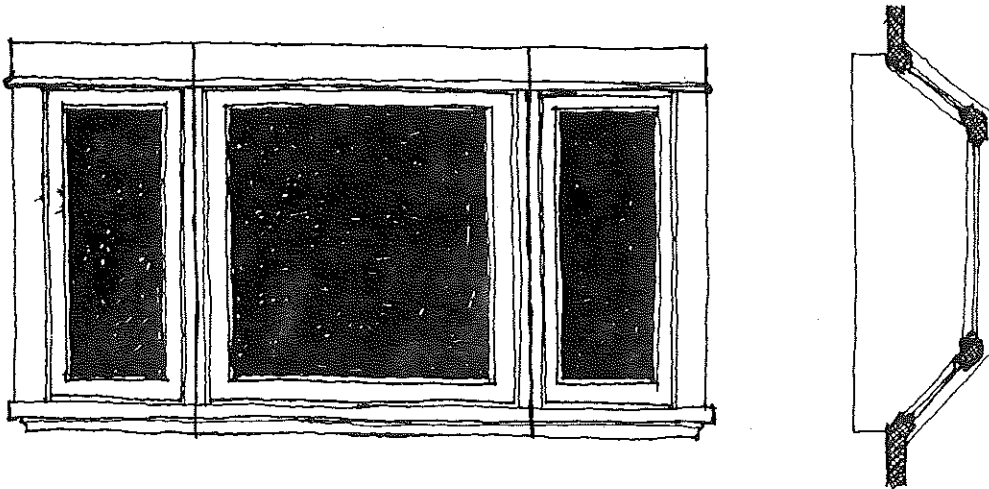
Pair of double hung windows with simple Victorian style trim. Available in a variety of sizes from many manufacturers in wood, with or without vinyl or aluminum cladding. This type of window is also available in aluminum (called single hung).



Pair of casement windows (swing outward from the side) shown with classic simple trim and crown moulding made up of stock lumber yard mouldings. Shown in wood with divided lights. Also available in aluminum without divided lights.



Awning windows (swing outward from top) shown with simple wood trim. Also available in aluminum without divided lights.

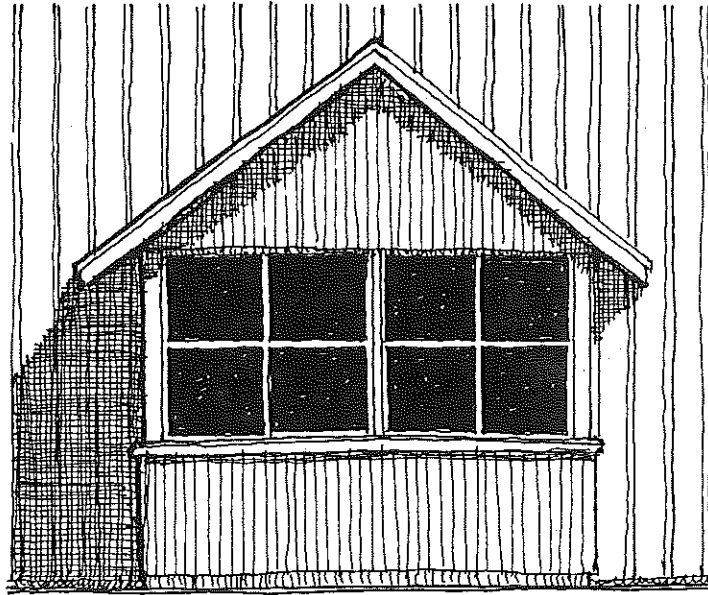


Where appropriate circumstances exist, a bow or box window (square projection) makes a wonderful display window. Available in wood and aluminum from many manufactures. Divided lights are also available.

- Building Entries: Places where people are welcomed to a building should be given special attention. Entries announce the building's purpose, provide a visual message of welcome, can provide weather protection, and add interest and scale to a facade.



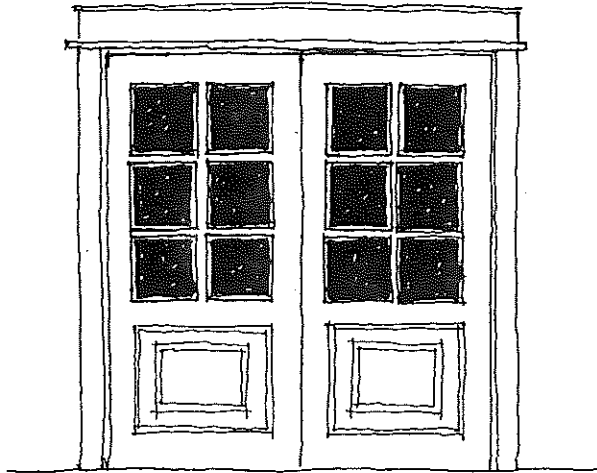
## Building Entries



Protected entry (door behind, opening at side) which could also be developed as an air lock for energy savings. Shown applied to a standard metal building to lend character to the building and emphasize the entrance.



Glazed entrance with a single door and sidelights. Widely available in wood, steel, and aluminum in many patterns.



Double entrance doors shown in stile and rail pattern with divided lights. Many combinations available in wood and steel.

- **Weather Protection:** Porches, overhangs, and awnings provide a measure of protection from inclement weather and can provide an aesthetic enhancement to commercial establishments.

A continuation of these elements from building to building, encourages pedestrian movement along a street. As tourism increases, this would provide an added inducement to stop and shop.

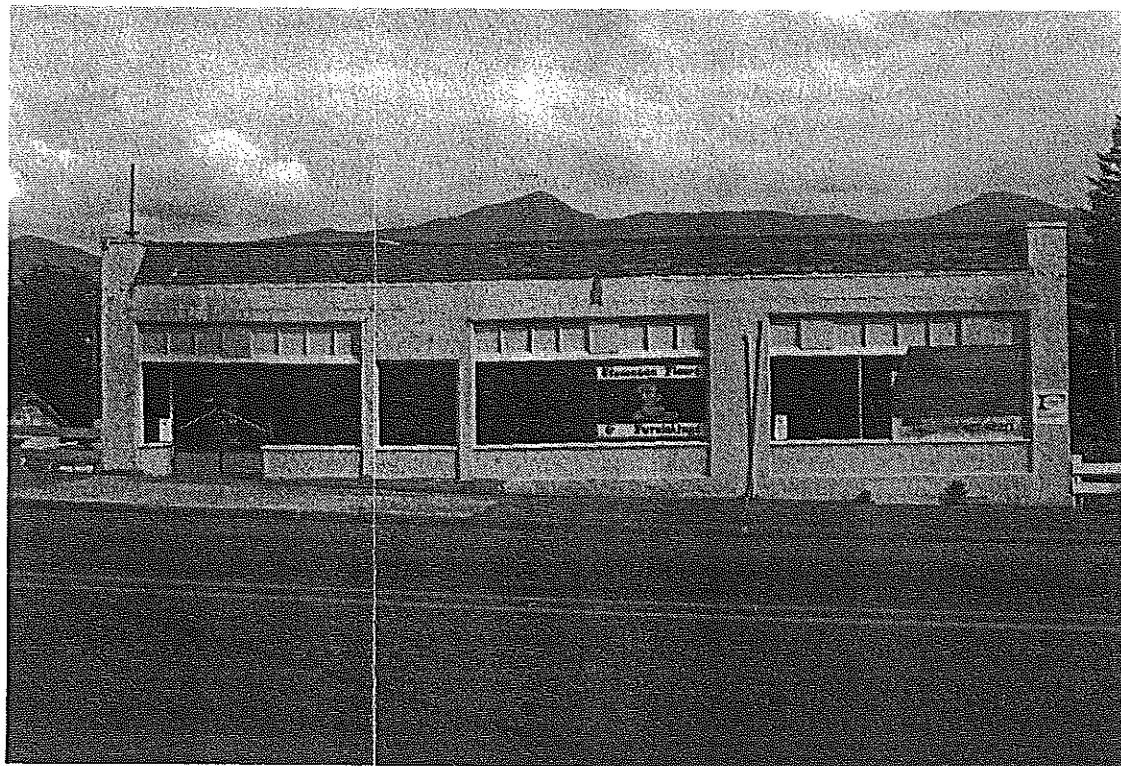
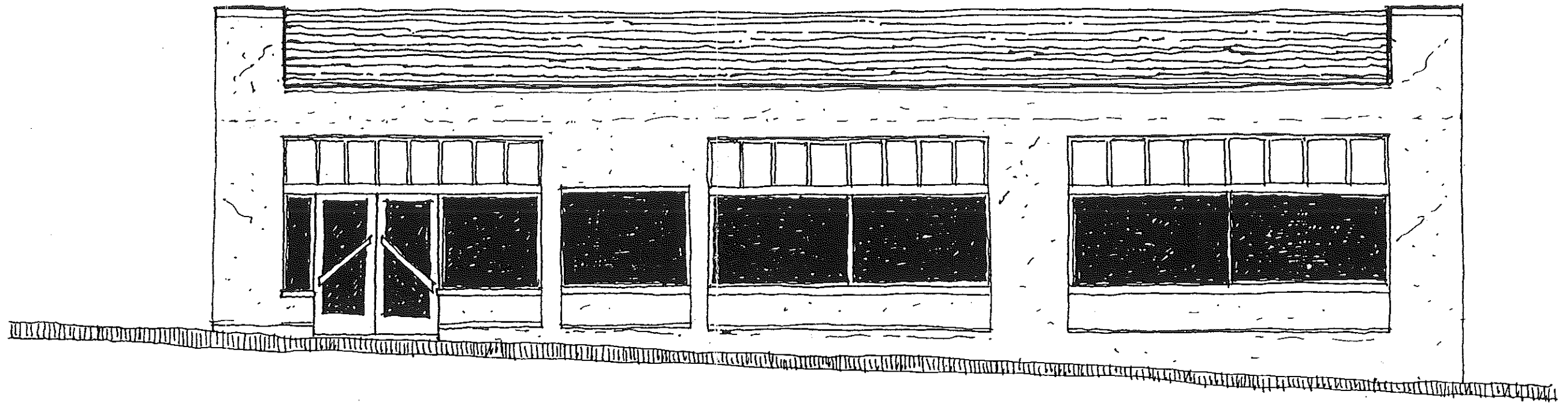
- **Color:** Color is a matter of personal preference, but we can probably all agree that there are good and poor color schemes and that color can make the most impact for the dollar compared with other forms of architectural expression. Many downtown buildings could benefit from a well coordinated, strong color treatment. Architectural details can be color accented for maximum impact.

#### **D. Building Facade Studies**

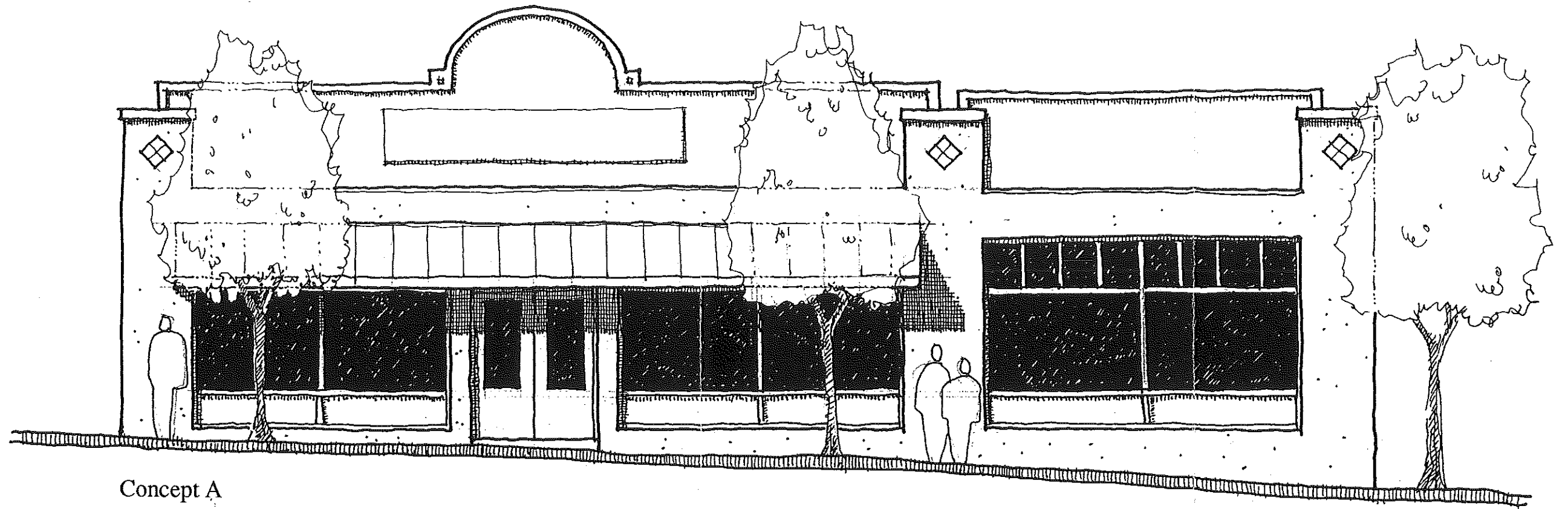
Studies were conducted of the facades of four buildings to illustrate how simple changes can create significant visual enhancement. These studies are preliminary in nature. Additional refinement and structural analysis of each building will be required before settling on the best enhancement approach.



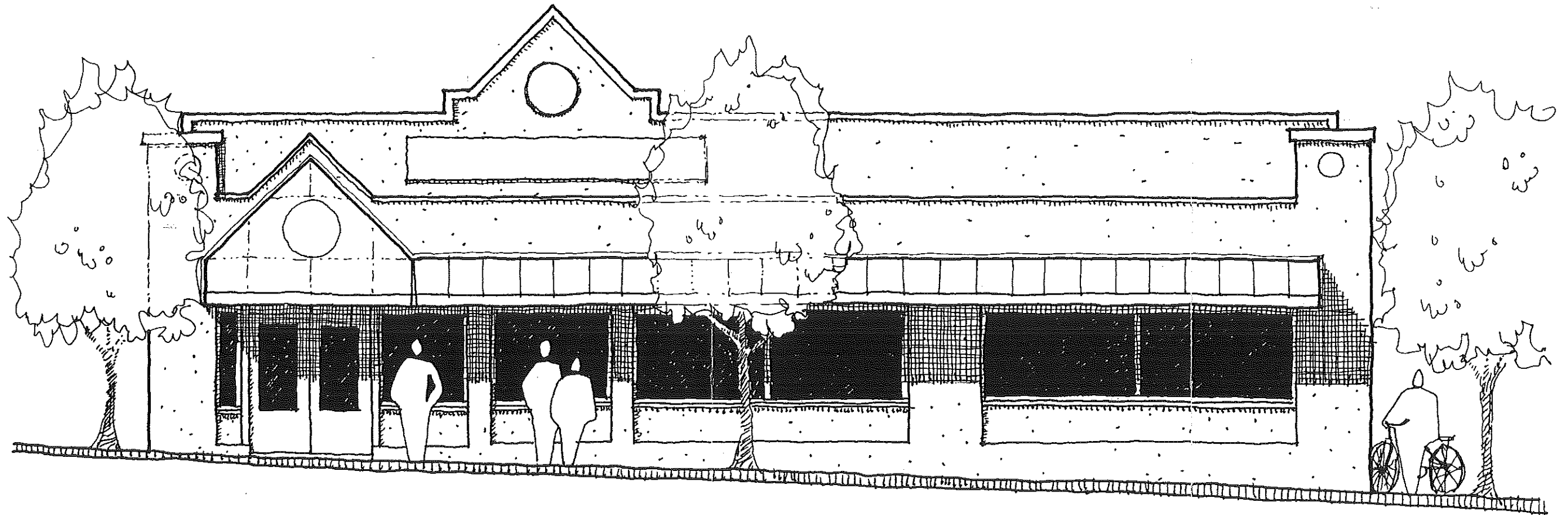
Illustrated are simple additions and restorations of the three most important structures facing the main highway. The composition of these three, and a proper restoration of the storefronts, can make a significant contribution to the town's image to the travelling public. The Avary Building is in good condition and is shown with an awning added for color and to bring the ground floor down to "street" scale. The barbershop and adjacent facades show material and storefront restorations to "original" without structural alterations. Willy-J's/Keller Electric is shown with a factory finish colored corrugated metal roof.



A simple stucco storefront that has been somewhat abused, and was damaged by a recent fire. This view shows it as it exists. Following are two concepts that show restoration that keeps the stucco finish. The existing asphalt shingle mansard roof is replaced with a "storefront" element to create street presence and provide for signage. The stucco is restored with minor decorative elements and an awning added. One concept uses the front as it exists and the other makes minor changes to the entry and window system without altering the structure.



Concept A



Concept B

### **E. Development Opportunities**

As discussed in Chapter 2, there appears to be a market for an additional 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of retail space in downtown Stevenson. We have reviewed available properties and have identified 16 that are located appropriately to be used for retail or office purposes. These 16 properties in the aggregate contain about 240,000 square feet, more than ample to support the 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of unmet retail demand. Figure 6.1 indicates the location of these parcels.

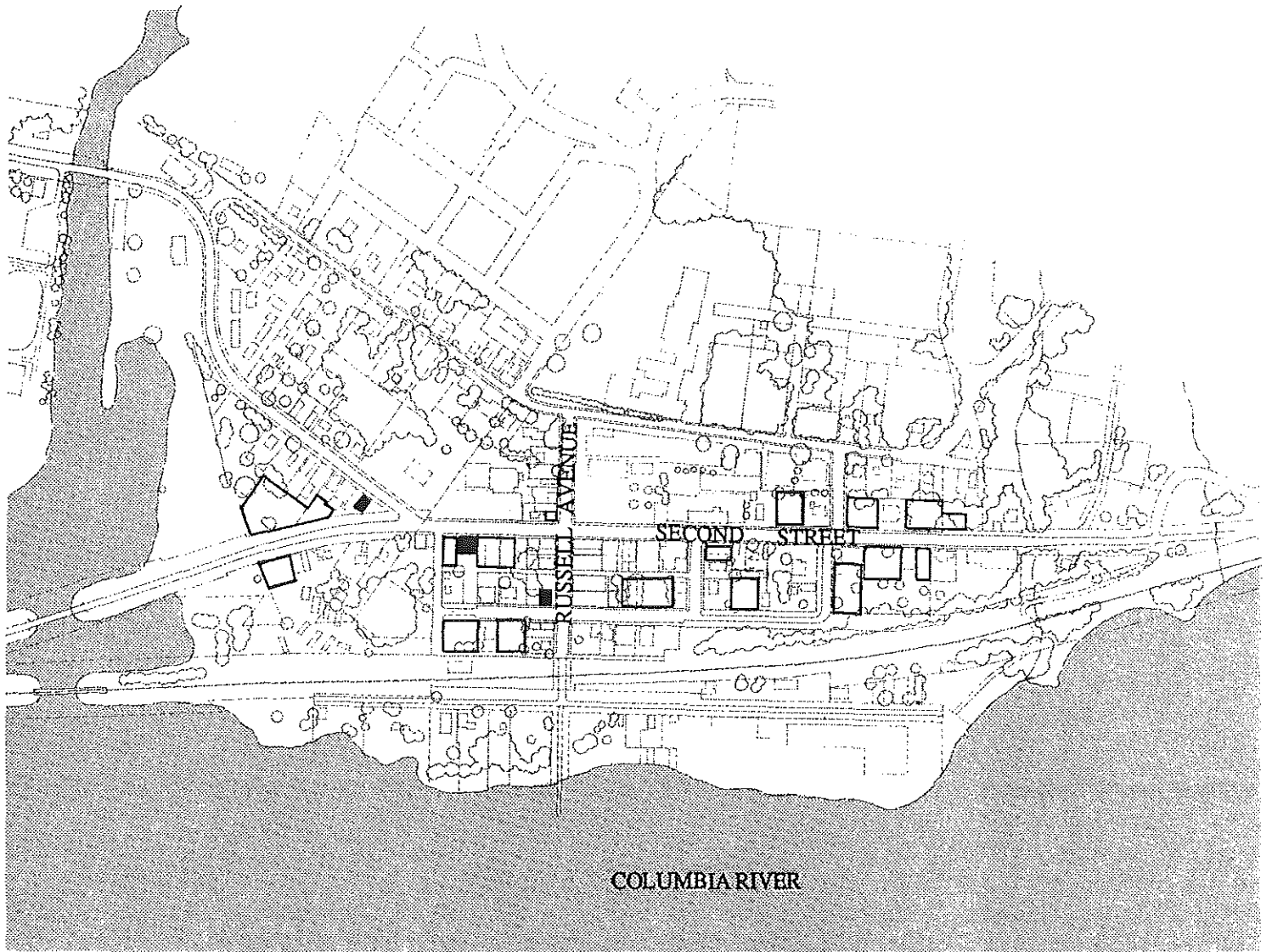
There are also several buildings that are either vacant or are underutilized. Figure 6.1 shows the location of three of these underutilized buildings.

The former carpet store suffered a fire some time ago and will soon be rehabilitated. Sketches of possible facade improvement ideas for this building were illustrated earlier in this chapter.



A 1960's eclectic structure is located at Russell and First. This building was never completed or occupied due to building code issues. This building should either be brought up to code and then put to a productive use, or removed.

A car wash is located at the intersection of SR-14 and Second Street Extension, a key location. While the existing use is probably economically viable, the high visibility of the site would lend itself well to a more intense use. Redevelopment of this corner should be encouraged once a decision is made on appropriate geometry for the SR-14-Second Street Extension intersection.

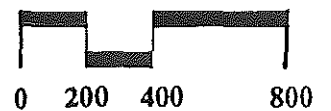
Figure 6.1



Legend

-  Vacant Site
-  Vacant or Underutilized Building

**DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**









## 7. DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT IDEAS

Following are a number of improvement ideas that were discussed during the public workshops. While no analysis of these ideas was undertaken during this study, a number of them have potential and should be further considered. During the next phase of work, these ideas should be further studied and either implemented or dropped, as appropriate.

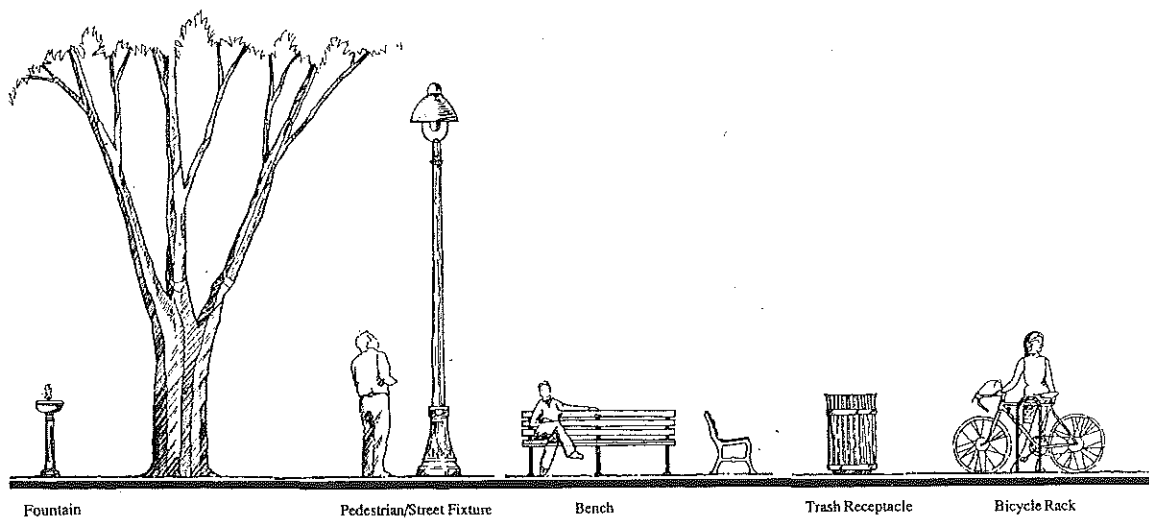
### A. Building Related Ideas

1. Require buildings to be constructed to street lines, to enhance the sense of enclosure that this provides for pedestrians.
2. Encourage the provision of rain protection along sidewalks.
3. Encourage the use of building forms, materials and colors that have been used successfully elsewhere in the downtown area.
4. Prohibit, or at least control, the placement of parking in front of buildings.



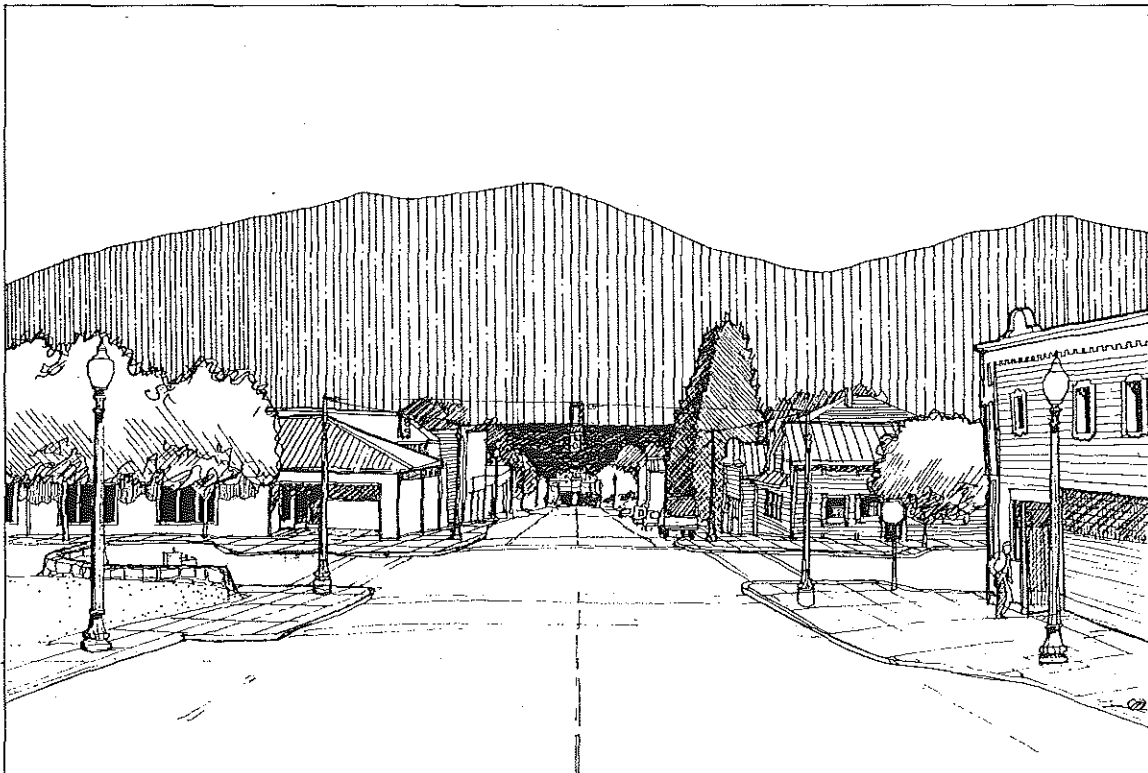
## B. Street Related Ideas

1. Improve parking (see Parking Opportunities, Chapter 5)
2. Improve existing sidewalks and extend them throughout the downtown area.
3. When possible, convert overhead power lines to underground service.
4. Complete the street tree planting program which is underway.
5. Strengthen the sense of arrival into the community from the east, west, and south. Extend the idea of "gateway" to visitors arriving from the east and for visitors arriving from the Columbia River.
6. Acquire and install appropriate street furniture to develop a sense of continuity throughout the area.
7. Improve uncurbed streets to an appropriate width and install curbs, storm drains, and sidewalks.



### C. Land Use Controls

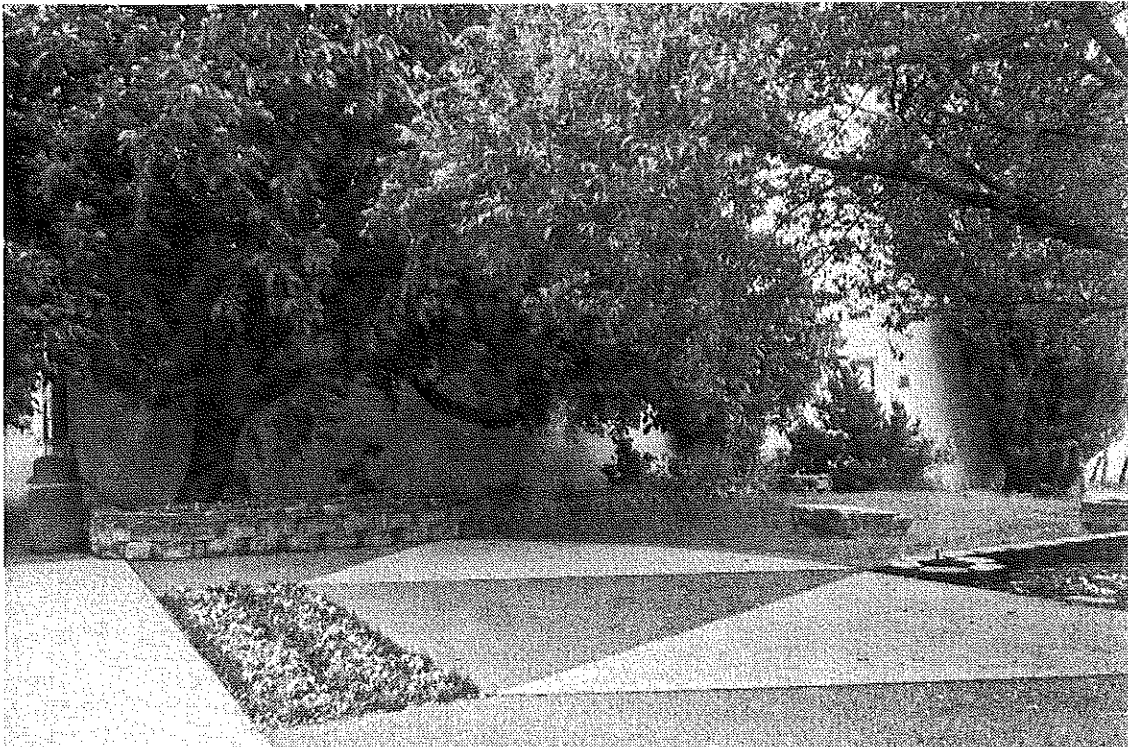
1. Review and, if appropriate, modify the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it remains up to date.
2. Review the zoning ordinance to ensure that it meshes with the Comprehensive Plan. Consider the various downtown improvement ideas presented in this and other studies. Ensure that the zoning ordinance provides adequate flexibility to accommodate new developments.
3. Severely restrict or prohibit strip commercial development, both in the city and in nearby county areas. Encourage the County to adopt appropriate zoning regulations to ensure that the entire Stevenson area develops appropriately.
4. Consider the development of design guidelines and a more rigorous design review process to encourage appropriate development in the downtown area.

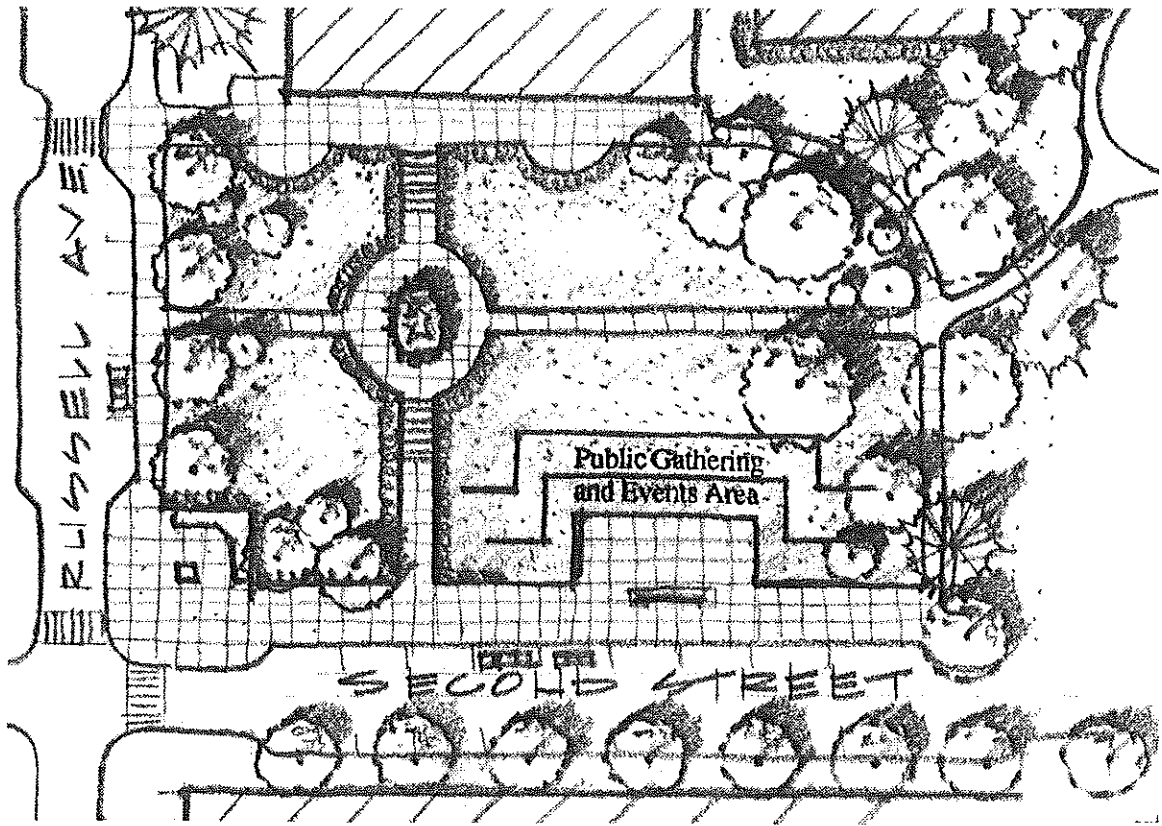


Russell Avenue Looking South

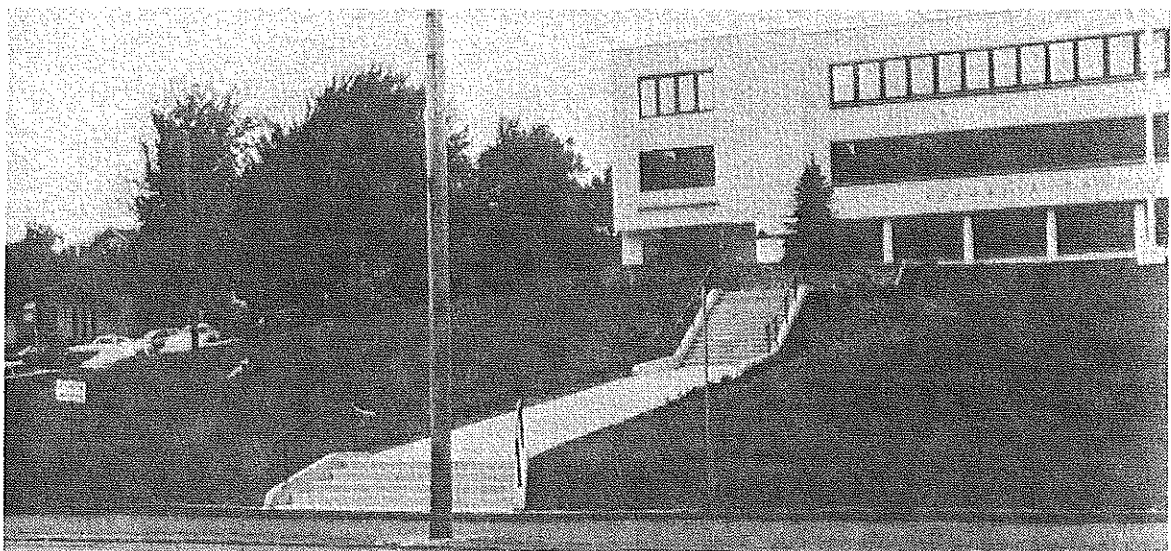
**D. Open Space/Riverfront Development**

1. Encourage the Port to move forward, as financially possible, with completion of waterfront improvements along the Columbia River.
2. Conduct additional programming and design studies of the Courthouse lawn to determine how best to use this valuable public asset.
3. Complete the park adjacent to the Willy 'J' Restaurant.
4. Continue to make improvements at Rock Creek Park and the Fairgrounds as envisioned in the Fair master plan. Develop an attractive pedestrian connection into the downtown from the Rock Creek pedestrian bridge.
5. Improve Kanaka Creek Road between SR-14 and Cascade Avenue. Develop a pedestrian trail following this general alignment to better connect downtown and the east end of the city's waterfront.





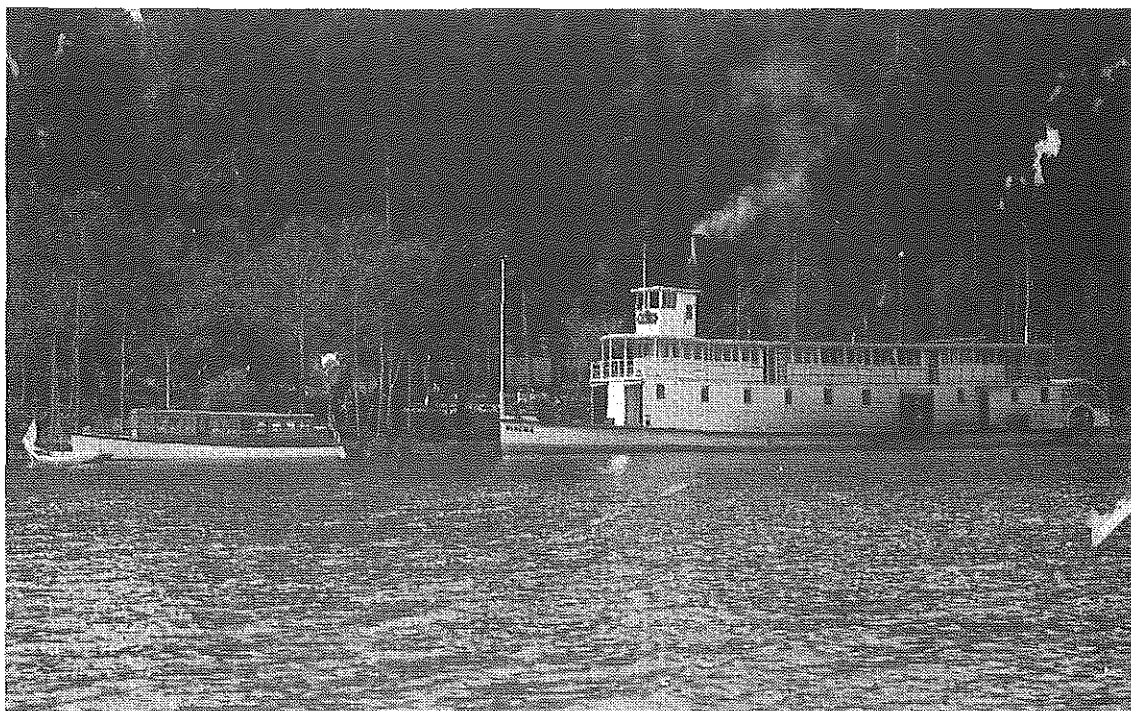
Courthouse Lawn





## Future Work

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## 8. FUTURE WORK TASKS

To carry the effort started in this study to fruition, additional work will need to be accomplished. The consultants recommend a phase two planning program that extends over a six to nine months period. This period of time is sufficient to develop dialogue among all parties and, hopefully, arrive at consensus positions. At the conclusion of phase two, a detailed plan for the downtown area will be prepared. In addition, a program will be prepared that sets forth priorities and steps that need to be accomplished to make the plans a reality.

The following lists the major tasks that should be accomplished in phase two:

- A. Conduct about six public workshops to discuss major issues such as SR-14 changes, effective use of waterfront enhancement, streetscape improvements, and design controls.
- B. Engage the Stevenson City Council, Skamania County Commission, and Stevenson Planning Commission in discussions about the downtown plan. Obtain concurrence with the goals and direction of the planning program.
- C. Engage the Intergovernmental Resource Center and the Washington Department of Transportation in discussions about the future of SR-14. Attempt to develop a consensus position that is beneficial to Stevenson.
- D. Encourage a local business organization to take a leadership position in carrying out the downtown plan. A strong voice will be needed to carry an improvement program forward.
- E. Encourage the Port Commission to complete public waterfront improvements and to consider reorienting future port buildings to maximize riverfront values.
- F. Working with city and business officials, determine what changes should be made to local land use regulations (zoning, land development, design review).
- G. Develop an illustrative plan, graphic materials, and accompanying text that describes the downtown plan and program. Prepare a summary document and print numerous copies for distribution.

- H. Analyze downtown buildings more carefully and prepare facade studies for as many of the commercial buildings as practical. Suggest modest changes, as appropriate, to enhance building appearance while respecting original architectural character. Suggest appropriate materials and colors.
- I. Work with the Skamania Lodge marketing staff and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a year around marketing approach for Stevenson.
- J. Assist in the preparation of grant applications for funds to help upgrade downtown Stevenson.



# Appendix

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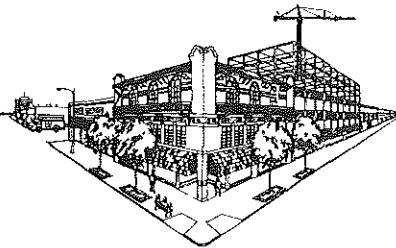
**STEVENSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION:  
RETAIL MARKET EVALUATION**

**Prepared for:  
Skamania County Chamber of Commerce**

**June, 1991**

**E. D. Hovee  
& Company**

Economic and Development Services



**STEVENSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION:  
RETAIL MARKET EVALUATION**

**Prepared for:**

Skamania County Chamber of Commerce  
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P.O. Box 1037  
Stevenson, Washington 98648

**Prepared by:**

E.D. Hovee & Company  
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**In cooperation with:**

Walker & Macy  
Planning, Urban Design & Landscape Architects

**June, 1991**

## STEVENSON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION: RETAIL MARKET EVALUATION SUMMARY

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This is a *summary* of the major findings resulting from an evaluation of retail market opportunities available to support downtown Stevenson revitalization activities. This evaluation has been prepared for the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce by the economic and development consulting firm of E.D. Hovee & Company in cooperation with Walker & Macy.

**Purpose of Evaluation:** Evaluate opportunities for increased retail sales from:  
-- Sales leakage recapture  
-- Tourism development

<b>Demographics:</b>	<u>1990 Population</u>
Stevenson	1,147
Skamania County	8,289
Stevenson as % of County	14%

**Incomes:** Effective buying income (EBI) has declined countywide since 1980 (by 14%), reducing local purchasing power.

**Retail Sales:** Skamania County captures only 40% of potential local retail sales. The other 60% represents sales leakage. However, both total sales and the capture rate have increased since 1980.

**Sales Leakage:** Approximately \$15.8 million as of 1989. However, only \$6.2 million is assumed subject to recapture.

**Tourism Potentials:** Estimated at up to \$4.3 million -- from first year impacts of Skamania Lodge operation.

**Total Added Sales Potential:** Up to \$10.5 million. Strongest growth opportunities are: dining, apparel & specialty, food and gasoline service.

**Added Building Space Supported:** Up to 62,000 square feet. Due to concerns over potential timber supply impacts, first phase may be 20,000 - 30,000 square feet.

This evaluation also includes a discussion of a Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA) as a potential mechanism for funding an ongoing downtown revitalization program.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This report contains a retail market evaluation for downtown Stevenson, Washington. This evaluation is prepared as part of a revitalization plan for Stevenson's downtown.

The market evaluation has been prepared for the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce by the consulting firm of E.D. Hovee & Company in cooperation with Walker & Macy.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this market evaluation is essentially to evaluate opportunities for increased retail sales from: a) sales leakage recapture; and b) recreation/tourism development.

The result of this analysis is to suggest a marketing strategy for the business community intended to: a) increase business trade; and b) business space utilization. A corollary objective is to review the feasibility of a parking and business improvement area (PBIA) as a mechanism for downtown management and funding.

### **Approach**

The approach (or methodology) used in this report is to utilize existing available published data describing economic and demographic characteristics, purchasing power (effective buying income), and retail sales for Skamania County and Stevenson. Utilizing this data, E.D. Hovee & Company has estimated current sales leakage, i.e. purchases made by Stevenson and Skamania County residents outside the local market area.

It is not likely that Skamania County will be able to recapture 100% of the leakage that is now occurring -- at least in the near future. Due to the county's relatively small population base and proximity of other competitive retail locations in Hood River and Portland, sales leakage for major retailing will probably continue to occur. Rather, the focus has been on identifying categories of merchandise for which Skamania County could become more competitive given its current population base and local purchasing power.

Retail sales growth that could be attributed to tourism is predicated on development of the Skamania Lodge project, funded in part by the federal government. For this evaluation, we have relied on prior estimates of economic impacts for the conference center made in the Step II proposal and the draft Environmental Impact Statement for Skamania Lodge.



## **Qualifications**

The data contained in this report has been compiled from sources that E.D. Hovee & Company deems to be reliable. We do not, however, guarantee the accuracy of any of these data sources.

Every effort has been made to research the basis for findings as thoroughly as is reasonably possible. A number of specific limitations of the data or analysis methodology are noted in the report. The findings and conclusions are those of E.D. Hovee & Company and should not be construed as representing the opinion of any other party without their prior express approval.

## **Organization of Report**

This report is organized to cover the following topics:

Demographic and Economic Profile  
Marketing Strategy

Accompanying the main report are two technical appendices:

Appendix A. Skamania County Taxable Retail Sales  
Appendix B. The PBIA Option

## II. RETAIL SALES ANALYSIS

Any analysis of retail sales is inevitably more complicated than one might initially think. A key constraint is that conclusions often depend upon the data source that is used. Different data sources can provide widely varying estimates of, for example, retail sales. In this report, we provide three alternative sets of sales figures for Skamania County as a basis for comparison.

For Stevenson and Skamania County, preparing a useful and reliable retail analysis is further complicated by several additional factors:

- The most recent year for which there is a relatively good set of annual retail sales data available is 1989.
- Economic conditions may have changed considerably in the last one and one-half years since the end of 1989 -- on the other hand, 1989 is a good reference year because it reflects normalized sales *before* the recent economic disruptions associated with the timber supply issue.
- Economic prospects will undoubtedly change dramatically as a result of reductions in timber supply from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest -- yet available forecasts differ greatly on how great the impact will be or when it will occur.
- Sales data is available for Skamania County, but very little published information is available for Stevenson due to its small population base.

These qualifications and limitations should be borne in mind when interpreting the results and conclusions of this analysis.

### Demographics

Stevenson and Skamania County 1990 population estimates are shown by Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Skamania County Population (1990)**

Area	1990 Population	As % of County
Incorporated Cities:		
- Stevenson	1,147	14 %
- North Bonneville	411	5 %
Subtotal	1,558	19 %
Unincorporated Area	6,731	81 %
Total Population	8,289	100 %

Source: U.S. Census of Population, preliminary 1990 census data.

As this chart shows, Stevenson accounts for about 14% of the county's population (over 4 out of 5 people in Skamania County live in the unincorporated area). The total population countywide of 8,289 represents an increase of 5% from 1980.

Even though Stevenson comprises a relatively small portion of the county's population, it is the major urban center. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that Stevenson will capture the majority of additional retail sales potential that would be generated in Skamania County. Stevenson's position as the county's dominant retail center is strengthened by:

- Limitations placed by the General and Special Management Plans for rural commercial centers in the National Scenic area outside of the incorporated cities.
- Proximity of the major new activity generators to Stevenson, i.e. Skamania Lodge and the proposed Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center.
- Stevenson's central location within the county and existing retail base which far surpasses that of any other community in the county. For example, in 1990, Stevenson had a reported total of \$7.1 million in taxable retail sales while North Bonneville had just over \$500,000.

### **Incomes**

In 1989, total effective buying income of Skamania County approximated \$61 million. Median household effective buying income was \$17,100. Skamania County's median household effective buying income was approximately 61% that of the entire state of Washington.

Remarkably, Skamania County's total effective buying income (EBI) has dropped by 14% since 1980. Median household income has dropped more dramatically, by 29%. By comparison, median buying income per household statewide increased by 35% during the same period. The decline in purchasing power is actually greater when one considers the effects of inflation during this time period. <sup>1</sup>

Another way of evaluating the same data is to say that, in 1980, EBI for the *typical* household in Skamania County was 19% *above* the comparable statewide figure. By 1989, the typical household in Skamania County had 39% *less* income than the typical household statewide.

### **Retail Sales**

As noted, there are three alternative sources of retail sales data available for counties throughout the state of Washington:

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<sup>1</sup> Source of data is Sales and Marketing Management magazine, *Survey of Buying Power*, 1981 and 1990.

- Washington taxable retail sales data -- provided by the Washington Department of Revenue. Taxable sales covers both retail items that are subject to the state sales tax *as well as* other construction, manufacturing, wholesale and other non-retail items also subject to sales tax.
- United States *Census of Retail Trade* -- published by the U.S. Department of Commerce every five years. The last year for which data was published was 1987. Detailed sales data are provided for ten categories.
- *Survey of Buying Power* -- published by Sales and Marketing Management magazine every year. SMM provides retail sales for six detailed categories for every county in the United States every year. While SMM provides more current information, it does not cover as many categories as the U.S. Census of Retail Trade information.

The last year for which sales data was provided from all three sources was 1987. A comparison of these sources is provided by Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Comparative 1987 Retail Sales Data**

<u>Source of Retail Sales Estimate</u>	<u>Estimated 1987 Skamania County Sales</u>
Washington taxable sales data:	
- Retail items only	\$7,670,837
- All taxable sales	\$18,651,431
U.S. Census of Retail Trade	\$9,054,000
Sales and Marketing Management	\$9,185,000

All of these sources purport to measure sales activity in Skamania County. Yet, the figures differ greatly depending upon the data source used.

Using information on all taxable sales provided by the Department of Revenue greatly overstates retail sales, especially in Skamania County. In Skamania County, only 41% of taxable sales are on retail items.

However, Washington taxable sales data for *retail items only* understates sales estimates made by the U.S. Census of Retail Trade and Sales and Marketing Management. This is because the taxable sales data covers items which are taxable only. It greatly underreports food and pharmacy items which are not subject to sales tax.

For Skamania County, the U.S. Census of Retail Trade and Sales and Marketing Management estimates are very close to each other (within 1.4%). We use these SMM and Census figures from 1987 as the *benchmark* for the remainder of the retail analysis.

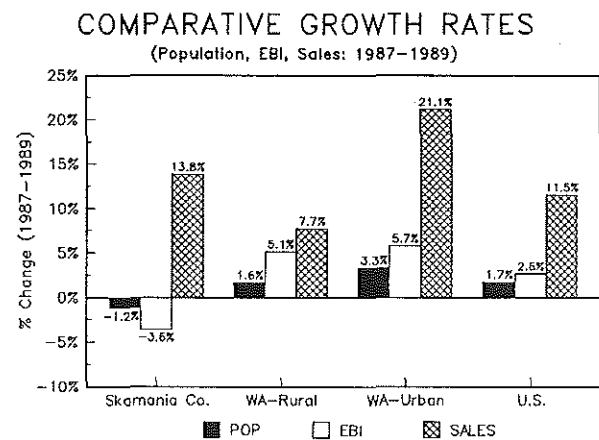
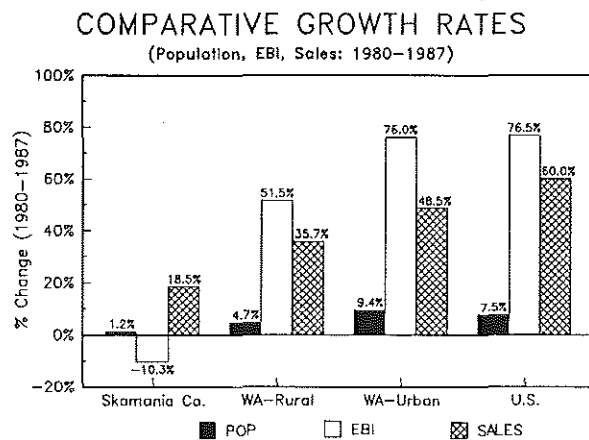
Detailed retail sales data available from each of these three sources is provided by Appendix A.

## Comparative Growth Rates

It is interesting and informative to compare rates of growth and population, effective buying income, and sales. In the chart which follows, we have made this comparison for Skamania County, the rural counties of Washington, urban (or metropolitan) counties of Washington, and the United States. This analysis is further split into two charts. The first (Figure 3) covers the 1980 to 1987 period. The second graph (Figure 4) shows the more recent experience of the last two years (1987-89).

**Figure 3. Comparative Growth Rates (1980-87)**

**Figure 4. Comparative Growth Rates (1987-89)**



Between 1980 and 1987, population, income and sales growth in Skamania County lagged the entire U.S., as well as urban and rural areas of the state of Washington. As previously noted, effective buying income actually declined in Skamania County while increasing in all of the other comparison areas.

It is also noteworthy that despite declining income, retail sales in Skamania County did increase, though not nearly at the same rate as in the rest of the state or country. This is a reflection of either recapture of some sales leakage or increased tourism related business.

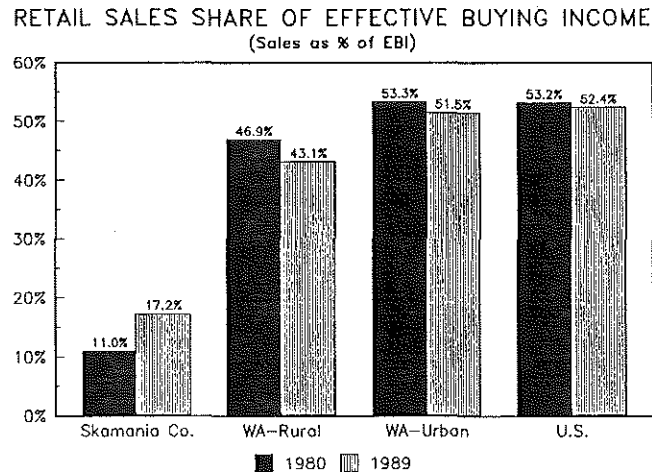
Figure 4 illustrates comparative growth rates for the *more recent period* of 1987-89.

The pattern of 1987-89 is very similar to that of the rest of the decade in that population and incomes declined in Skamania County while increasing elsewhere in the state of Washington and the U.S. The surprise is that despite declining population and income, Skamania County retail sales experienced strong growth. In fact, retail sales growth in Skamania County exceeded that of the other rural counties in the state of Washington and of the country as a whole. Again, this is an indication of even stronger sales leakage recapture and/or capture of visitor traffic through the area.

## Capture Rates

Retail *capture rates* are a measure of how effective area retailers are at capturing locally available buying income. Figure 5 compares capture rates for Skamania County, the rural and urban counties of Washington, and the United States for the years 1980 and 1989.

**Figure 5. Retail Capture Rates (1980 and 1989)**



Nationally, just over one-half (52.4% in 1989) of effective buying income (EBI) ended up at a retail cash register. The rest of buying income was spent for housing mortgage payments, utility bills, services and some went to savings.

By comparison, retail sales account for a very similar percentage of buying income for the urban counties of the state, but significantly less for the rural counties. The fact that retailers in Washington's rural counties captured only 43% of the local effective buying income could reflect either different expenditure patterns for rural consumers or sales leakage as rural residents travel to larger cities to make many of their retail purchases.

It is noteworthy that retailers in Skamania County capture an extraordinarily low share of local effective buying income. In 1980, only 11% of effective buying income ended up as retail sales in Skamania County. By 1989, the capture rate had increased significantly to 17%, but was still well below statewide and rural area averages.

If one assumes that what Skamania County businesses could potentially capture is as great as for other rural counties in Washington, then approximately 25.9% of local buying income could be considered as sales leakage. This is the difference between 43.1% and 17.2%.

*Bottom line*, this means that Skamania County is capturing only 40% of the local retail sales potentially available. The other 60% represents *net sales leakage*.

Using this method of determining leakage results in a total estimated sales leakage estimate of \$15,783,000, as is detailed by Figure 6.

**Figure 6. Retail Sales Leakage**

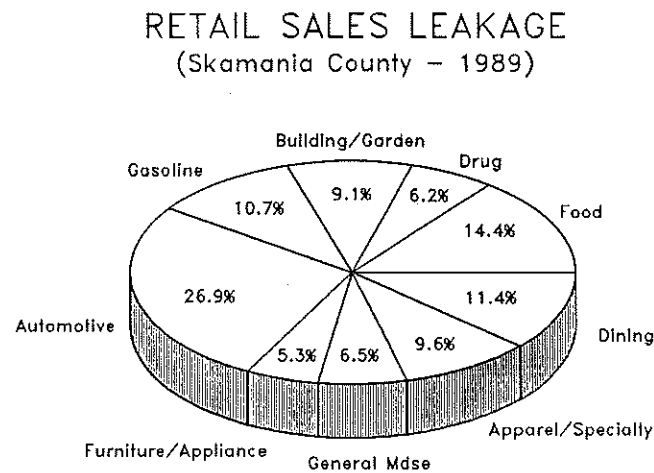
	Retail Sales		Sales as % of EBI			Estimated Sales Leakage
	Skamania County	Washington Rural	Skamania County	WA Rural	% Leakage	
Retail Sales (\$000)						
Food	\$5,389	\$1,306,301	8.8%	12.6%	3.7%	\$2,269
Drug	\$366	\$230,049	0.6%	2.2%	1.6%	\$983
Building & Garden*	\$571	\$342,249	0.9%	3.3%	2.4%	\$1,436
Gasoline*	\$467	\$366,341	0.8%	3.5%	2.8%	\$1,681
Automotive	\$311	\$776,188	0.5%	7.5%	7.0%	\$4,239
Furniture & Appliances	\$43	\$150,271	0.1%	1.4%	1.4%	\$838
General Merchandise	\$709	\$294,699	1.2%	2.8%	1.7%	\$1,019
Apparel & Specialty*	\$1,233	\$468,469	2.0%	4.5%	2.5%	\$1,514
Dining	\$1,361	\$539,876	2.2%	5.2%	3.0%	\$1,804
Total Retail Sales	\$10,449	\$4,474,443	17.2%	43.1%	25.9%	\$15,783
Total EBI (\$000)	\$60,909	\$10,389,376	100.0%	100.0%		

\* Note: These categories estimated by E. D. Hovee & Company based on available data from U.S. Census of Retail Sales and Washington Department of Revenue.

Source: Sales and Marketing Management, *Survey of Buying Power*, 1989.

This chart and the accompanying graph illustrate where leakage is occurring by sales category. As the chart and graph indicate, over one-quarter of sales leakage is in automotive purchases, accounting for \$4.2 million of leakage per year. The next largest category of sales leakage is in food store sales of about \$2.3 million per year. Other categories with significant amounts of leakage are: dining - \$1.8 million, gasoline sales - \$1.7 million, apparel/specialty - \$1.5 million, and building/garden - \$1.4 million.

**Figure 7. Distribution of Retail Sales Leakage**



### Leakage Recapture

How much of the almost \$16 million in sales leakage now occurring could Skamania County businesses legitimately expect to recapture by offering the right mix of selection, pricing and service? And how much of the countywide recapture would occur at businesses in Stevenson?

These questions could be debated at length. It is our opinion that the small population base of the county makes it unlikely for Skamania County to recapture all the theoretically available sales from leakage recapture. Sales volumes associated with leakage are not great enough to attract the major retailers that require draw from a larger market.

For example, sales leakage in general merchandise within Skamania County approximates \$1 million. However, major department stores or discount operators generally require minimum store sales of several times that amount to justify opening a new store.

On the other hand, much of the leakage that is recaptured will undoubtedly accrue to the benefit of Stevenson businesses. Overall, we assume that Stevenson retailers could conceivably recapture up to 50% of sales leakage in most retail categories except automotive (only 15% recapture -- primarily in accessories and parts), and general merchandise (25% recapture primarily for local variety and drygoods stores).

Using these ratios, Stevenson retailers could reasonably be positioned to recapture as much as \$6.2 million (or just under 40%) of the estimated \$15.8 million of total sales leakage now occurring (as of 1989).



## Tourism Potentials

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Skamania Lodge indicates that Stevenson could capture total *direct and indirect* benefits during the first year of an additional \$8 million in spending. Of this, approximately 54% would be spent for retail items, with the remainder paid for services and other non-retail items. Therefore, total retail spending impact (direct and indirect) is an estimated \$4.3 million in additional retail sales per year.

It is worth noting that total spending impacts of Skamania County are estimated to virtually *double* between the first and tenth year of operation. However, we have used the first year figures as the basis for evaluating tourism potentials associated with Skamania Lodge through 1995. If the lodge gets under operation quickly, these retail sales projections could be conservative.

Another potential source of visitor activity is the proposed Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center in Stevenson. If this facility is operating before 1995, retail spending could be increased further above these conservative spending estimates.

Of the \$4.3 million in additional retail sales associated with Skamania Lodge, approximately \$2.4 million would reflect dining expenditures. The other major categories that would benefit are apparel and specialty retail sales (of just under \$0.9 million in additional sales).

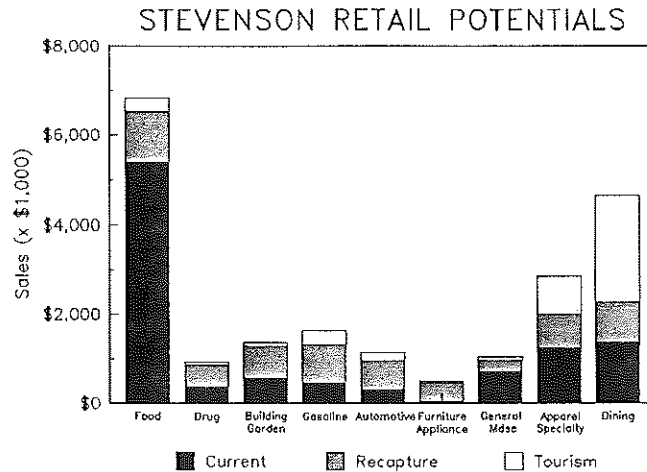
## Combined Retail Sales Potentials

The combined sales potentials associated with both leakage recapture and tourism (resulting from Skamania Lodge) are shown in numerical form by Figure 8 and graphically by Figure 9. These figures compare current sales with leakage recapture and tourism potentials by type of merchandise.

**Figure 8. Skamania County Retail Sales Potentials**

	(All figures are sales x \$1,000)				
	Current Sales	Leakage Recapture	Tourism Potentials	Total Sales Potential	Total Added Sales
Food	\$5,390	\$1,130	\$310	\$6,830	\$1,440
Drug	\$370	\$490	\$60	\$920	\$550
Building & Garden	\$570	\$720	\$80	\$1,370	\$800
Gasoline	\$470	\$840	\$330	\$1,640	\$1,170
Automotive	\$310	\$640	\$190	\$1,140	\$830
Furniture & Appliances	\$40	\$420	\$30	\$490	\$450
General Merchandise	\$710	\$250	\$80	\$1,040	\$330
Apparel & Specialty	\$1,230	\$760	\$860	\$2,850	\$1,620
Dining	\$1,360	\$900	\$2,400	\$4,660	\$3,300
<b>Total Retail Sales</b>	<b>\$10,450</b>	<b>\$6,150</b>	<b>\$4,340</b>	<b>\$20,940</b>	<b>\$10,490</b>

**Figure 9. Stevenson Retail Potentials**



The graph, in particular, illustrates the different impacts that recreation/tourism versus sales recapture can have on different retail categories. For example, tourism impacts exceed sales potentials associated with sales recapture in dining and apparel or specialty retail. In virtually all other categories, sales recapture represents a more significant source of additional retail sales potential.

If both the recapture and tourism potentials were realized, total retail sales in Skamania County would virtually double from \$10.5 million currently to \$20.9 million.

There is no guarantee, of course, that either the leakage recapture or tourism potentials will materialize. It is possible that one set of benefits could occur without the other.

For example, if the economic prospects associated with Skamania Lodge are viewed to be more certain than stability of the underlying job base of Skamania County (as a result of *spotted owl* issues), then the tourism related opportunities may be stronger, at least in the short run. However, once the economic transition in the timber industry does occur, there is reason to believe that there could be significant retail sales growth for non-tourism related retailing. The key determinant of sales potentials for local residents will be to either reaffirm the existing timber base or to establish a new alternative source of income, whether it be recreation and tourism related, small industries or retirees.

### Development Potentials

The final step in the analysis is to convert retail sales potential to the amount of retail building space that might be supported. This additional building space could be comprised of both new construction as well as occupancy and remodeling of currently vacant or underutilized space in downtown Stevenson.

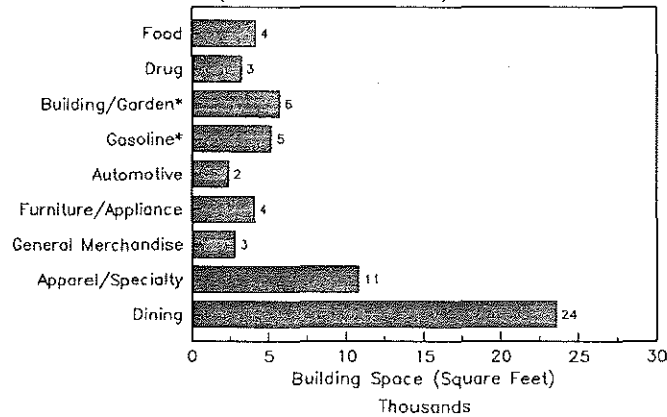
Sales potentials are converted to retail building space supported by using sales per square foot that are typical to shopping center or freestanding units in smaller neighborhood centers. The results of this analysis are shown by in tabular form by Figure 10 and graphically by Figure 11.

**Figure 10. Added Retail Building Space Supported**

	Total Added Sales Potential (x \$1,000)	Typical Sales per Square Foot	Retail Space Supported (Sq. Ft.)
Food	\$1,440	\$340	4,200
Drug	\$550	\$170	3,200
Building & Garden*	\$800	\$140	5,700
Gasoline*	\$1,170	\$225	5,200
Automotive	\$830	\$350	2,400
Furniture & Appliances	\$450	\$110	4,100
General Merchandise	\$330	\$120	2,800
Apparel & Specialty*	\$1,620	\$150	10,800
Dining	\$3,300	\$140	23,600
<b>Total Retail Sales</b>	<b>\$10,490</b>		<b>62,000</b>

**Figure 11. Added Retail Building Space Supported**

ADDED RETAIL BUILDING SPACE SUPPORTED  
(Stevenson Downtown)



These figures indicate that downtown Stevenson could support up to an additional 62,000 square feet of retail space. The greatest amount of additional space would be in dining, followed by apparel and specialty retail. These two categories combined account for over one-half of the additional retail space supported.

Due to concerns over potential timber impacts, it is unlikely that all of this space potentially supported will actually be developed in the next 2-3 years. It is more likely that there will be a phased addition of an initial amount of additional retail, particularly to serve the recreation/tourism destination market.

We would estimate a first phase of development in the range of 20,000 to 30,000 square feet of additional retail. However, it is important to again emphasize that once the transition has been made from the current situation of timber-related economic uncertainty, there may be potential for a considerable amount of additional retail.

### III. MARKETING STRATEGY

The Stevenson and Skamania County business community is faced with a challenging dilemma in the next several years. *On the one hand*, local job cutbacks are likely to occur as the result of reduction in federal timber sales. Under normal circumstances this could devastate local businesses.

*On the other hand*, construction and operation of Skamania Lodge together with increased visibility of the Scenic Area and potential construction of the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center will introduce a whole new market segment that can cushion or perhaps offset the reduction in business from local trade.

This combination of opportunity amid hardship may be traumatic for the community -- economically and socially. While no plan is perfect, here is the outline of a strategy to consider for downtown Stevenson retailers to survive and ultimately thrive from the economic transition that will inevitably occur.

#### Strategy Elements

Basic elements of the strategy suggested are severalfold:

1. *Expect some contraction in local retail trade; watch for the point where the market bottoms out.*

It is possible to make a case that business loss may not be as great as suggested by just watching unemployment statistics. First, unemployment and other benefits should provide an income flow (albeit at reduced levels) to serve as a base for locally generated retail activity. Second, some timber or mill workers who leave the community may be offset by newcomers with the financial resources to live and make purchases even if they do not work locally.

2. *Focus initial downtown improvements, marketing, business expansion and recruitment efforts on activities that can serve the needs of visitors associated with Skamania Lodge.*

This presumes that Skamania Lodge construction proceeds essentially as originally planned -- with groundbreaking in 1991. Stevenson businesses should plan to make their investment in an improved downtown even as Skamania Lodge is under construction -- so that both are *ready and open for business* at the same time.

Skamania Lodge will be marketed as a *destination* rather than as a *pass-through* establishment for the traveling public. Downtown Stevenson should also begin to reposition its retail image to that of a visitor destination -- both for Skamania Lodge visitors and others drawn to the area (as for the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center).

3. *Upscale the image and presence of Stevenson businesses, but without sacrificing casual, friendly service.*

Visitors drawn to the area have significantly higher disposable incomes than do Skamania County residents. They will be willing to pay for quality merchandise and pleasant shopping environment with welcoming service.

4. *Continue to encourage and serve local trade.*

Local trade provides the *backbone* of retail support during slow business periods. In a generalized way, local residents can be looked on as meeting business overhead needs and visitors as providing the profit potential. The most successful businesses will often be those that serve both market segments well. An example would be a restaurant that draws a local crowd but is also comfortable for visitors.

5. *Backfill with additional local serving retail as demand becomes apparent.*

Once there is some sense of economic stability -- either with a stable though possibly lower timber supply or with new residents with independent sources of income -- it then becomes appropriate to move to Phase II of a development and marketing program. Stores with the greatest potential to expand or locate in Stevenson at that point could include food, automotive and gasoline, building and garden, furniture and appliance.

6. *Establish a strong physical connection between downtown Stevenson and Skamania Lodge.*

It becomes essential to establish an actively used corridor between the two areas -- with access by car, walking or bike riding, etc. Uses along that corridor must also be aesthetically appealing and enjoyable. These include increased utilization of the Skamania County Fairgrounds, Rock Creek Recreation Center, the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center and other future recreation/tourism development along Rock Cove.

7. *Market downtown Stevenson as a fun place to be -- in cooperation with the marketing organization of Salishan Lodge.*

More resources should be given to cooperative marketing -- involving the entire business community. Also look for opportunities to work with Salishan Lodge on joint promotions and events. Leverage one or two events each year that can begin to serve as regional visitor draws as well as provide an important focus for community pride.

## **APPENDIX A. SKAMANIA COUNTY RETAIL SALES DATA**

On the following pages, retail sales data is provided from key information sources:

Figure 12. Skamania County Taxable Sales (1981-1990)

Figure 13. 1989 Taxable Retail Sales - Skamania County and State of Washington

Figure 14. 1987 U.S. Census of Retail Trade Sales Data

Figure 15. SMM Retail Sales Data

**Figure 12. Skamania County Taxable Sales (1981-1990)**

Location	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Unincorporated Skamania County	7,737,150	7,626,949	7,631,958	12,369,753	10,687,367	9,783,288	11,588,336	10,630,954	11,134,189	11,516,146
North Bonneville	1,114,847	600,883	490,363	334,885	379,014	392,472	421,410	425,644	369,666	506,263
Stevenson	6,820,542	5,493,572	6,500,066	7,233,191	7,051,505	6,225,284	6,641,685	7,394,217	7,545,453	7,139,908
Skamania County Total	15,672,539	13,721,404	14,622,387	19,937,829	18,117,886	16,401,044	18,651,431	18,450,815	19,049,308	19,162,317

Note: These figures cover taxable sales on both retail and non-retail items. For example, in 1989 only \$7,081,883 out of \$19,049,308 total taxable sales were due to sales of items from retail stores. The other \$11,967,425 represents taxable sales of manufactured, wholesale and service sector firms.

Source: State of Washington Department of Revenue.



**Figure 13. 1989 Taxable Retail Sales - Skamania County and State of Washington**

Industry	Units	Skamania Co. Taxable Sales	Washington State Gross	Taxable
Retail Trade	188	\$7,670,837	\$26,387,830,277	\$18,520,194,224
Building Materials/Hardware	23	\$784,880	\$1,215,304,141	\$1,152,077,928
Lumber/Bldg Materials	10	\$163,929	\$518,871,139	\$501,583,834
Hardware Stores	6	\$542,585	\$417,336,316	\$395,443,933
Nurseries/Garden Supplies	3	\$1,942	\$498	\$69,241,117
General Merchandise	3	\$487,895	\$3,246,209,440	\$2,929,993,375
Other General Merchandise	3	\$487,895	\$453,749,564	\$308,698,701
Food	19	\$2,401,554	\$6,839,168,035	\$2,557,943,628
Grocery Stores	16	\$2,381,506	\$6,573,232,889	\$2,470,964,877
Other Food Stores	3	\$20,048	\$88,518,966	\$35,803,667
Auto Dealers/Gas Stations	23	\$1,416,803	\$6,242,566,206	\$4,115,017,147
Service Stations	11	\$140,498	\$1,420,286,369	\$266,172,896
Apparel/Accessories	8	\$45,934	\$1,167,745,915	\$1,134,649,685
Clothing	3	\$25,060	\$973,492,281	\$945,714,812
Shoes	D	D	\$134,429,237	\$132,603,160
Other Accessories	5	\$20,874	\$59,824,397	\$56,331,713
Furniture/Furnishings/Equip	17	\$91,377	\$1,483,565,614	\$1,356,371,364
Furniture	7	\$48,925	\$700,282,325	\$652,102,957
Appliances	7	\$37,224	\$151,013,672	\$144,734,631
Radio/TV/Music	3	\$5,228	\$632,269,617	\$559,533,776
Eating/Drinking Places	20	\$1,511,317	\$2,821,431,601	\$2,682,739,638
Miscellaneous Retail	75	\$931,077	\$3,371,839,325	\$2,591,401,459
Drug Stores	D	D	\$926,173,390	\$550,052,149
Misc Shopping Goods	19	\$152,434	\$1,299,194,728	\$1,196,180,803
Non-store Retailers	26	\$173,062	\$334,839,882	\$257,249,320
Fuel/Ice	3	\$237,543	\$264,517,263	\$148,190,510
Other Retail Stores	27	\$368,038	\$547,114,062	\$439,728,677

Industry	Units	Skamania Co. Sales	Washington State Gross	Taxable	Skamania County	Washington State
Retail Trade	182	\$7,081,883	\$32,248,292,623	\$22,579,952,694	-7.7%	21.9%
Building Materials/Hardware	19	\$716,073	\$1,490,940,171	\$1,316,059,392	-8.8%	14.2%
Lumber/Bldg Materials	9	\$70,030	\$681,026,950	\$652,728,333	-57.3%	30.1%
Hardware Stores	6	\$634,994	\$460,739,169	\$431,545,630	17.0%	9.1%
Nurseries/Garden Supplies	D	D	\$111,297,814	\$106,452,272	-100.0%	53.7%
General Merchandise	3	\$406,601	\$4,120,418,639	\$3,596,361,502	-16.7%	22.7%
Other General Merchandise	3	\$406,601	\$339,527,545	\$262,091,411	-16.7%	-15.1%
Food	14	\$2,758,668	\$8,022,300,767	\$3,009,206,554	14.9%	17.6%
Grocery Stores	14	\$2,758,668	\$7,720,620,120	\$2,885,979,286	15.8%	16.8%
Other Food Stores	D	D	\$90,155,701	\$53,424,120	-100.0%	49.2%
Auto Dealers/Gas Stations	20	\$840,166	\$7,688,811,988	\$5,158,609,374	-40.7%	25.4%
Service Stations	6	\$133,451	\$1,573,555,353	\$316,564,491	-5.0%	18.9%
Apparel/Accessories	10	\$16,787	\$1,360,945,632	\$1,312,982,254	-63.5%	15.7%
Clothing	D	D	\$1,122,597,648	\$1,082,214,493	-100.0%	14.4%
Shoes	D	D	\$160,795,990	\$157,443,370	ERR	18.7%
Other Accessories	10	\$16,787	\$77,551,994	\$73,324,391	-19.6%	30.2%
Furniture/Furnishings/Equip	16	\$107,306	\$1,984,717,885	\$1,783,482,839	17.4%	31.5%
Furniture	8	\$89,685	\$871,584,716	\$800,359,605	83.3%	22.7%
Appliances	5	\$12,397	\$231,045,111	\$217,429,382	-66.7%	50.2%
Radio/TV/Music	3	\$5,224	\$882,088,058	\$765,693,852	-0.1%	36.8%
Eating/Drinking Places	19	\$1,331,389	\$3,331,091,418	\$3,219,621,605	-11.9%	20.0%
Miscellaneous Retail	81	\$904,893	\$4,249,066,123	\$3,183,629,174	-2.8%	22.9%
Drug Stores	D	D	\$1,130,356,799	\$657,549,321	ERR	19.5%
Misc Shopping Goods	28	\$189,088	\$1,622,014,054	\$1,450,499,186	24.0%	21.3%
Non-store Retailers	24	\$130,381	\$427,354,226	\$315,090,097	-24.7%	22.5%
Fuel/Ice	4	\$215,529	\$287,373,418	\$164,156,687	-9.3%	10.8%
Other Retail Stores	25	\$369,895	\$781,967,626	\$596,333,883	0.5%	35.6%

Source: Quarterly Business Review, Washington State Department of Revenue, 1989.

Figure 14. 1987 U.S. Census of Retail Trade Sales Data

Store Line	Skamania County # of Firms	Sales (\$1,000)	Rural WA # of Firms	Sales (\$1,000)	Urban WA # of Firms	Sales (\$1,000)	WA State # of Firms	Sales (\$1,000)
Building Materials/Garden Supplies	4	D	399	\$285,012	1,064	\$1,257,000	1,463	\$1,542,012
General Merchandise	1	D	147	\$277,942	319	\$3,074,591	466	\$3,352,533
Food Stores	8	\$4,666	869	\$1,160,031	2,953	\$5,045,862	3,822	\$6,205,893
Automotive Dealers	1	D	469	\$671,921	1,623	\$4,668,596	2,092	\$5,340,517
Gasoline Service Stations	2	D	492	\$304,894	1,511	\$1,429,671	2,003	\$1,734,565
Apparel/Accessory	0	\$0	405	\$129,906	1,698	\$1,241,518	2,103	\$1,371,424
Furniture/Home Furnishings	0	\$0	379	\$124,031	1,767	\$1,232,677	2,146	\$1,356,708
Eating/Drinking Places	10	\$1,078	1733	\$444,273	6,361	\$2,518,662	8,094	\$2,962,935
Drug/Proprietary Stores	3	D	211	\$193,963	658	\$844,193	869	\$1,038,156
Miscellaneous Retail Stores	5	\$1,068	1052	\$260,029	4,389	\$2,085,029	5,441	\$2,345,058
Total All Establishments	34	\$9,054	6156	\$3,852,002	22,343	\$23,397,799	28,499	\$27,249,801
App+Misc as % of SMM	45.5%	NA	62.1%	39.8%	70.3%	55.3%	68.5%	53.1%
Other								
Gas as % of Gas + Bldg	33.3%	NA	55.2%	51.7%	58.7%	53.2%	57.8%	52.9%

Source: 1987 U.S. Census of Retail Trade.

**Figure 15. SMM Retail Sales Data**

	Skamania County	Washington Rural	Washington Metro	U.S.	Washington State
<b>1980 Data:</b>					
Total Population (000)	8.1	821.9	3,370.4	228,497.1	4,192.3
Median Age	31.2	NA	29.9	30.4	30.1
Households	2.9	307.6	1,272.2	81,901.8	1,579.8
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	\$7,750	\$3,062,811	\$15,797,269	\$965,745,665	\$18,860,080
Food	\$3,033	\$803,480	\$3,382,154	\$219,399,025	\$4,185,634
Eating/Drinking	\$875	\$320,533	\$1,777,215	\$87,309,502	\$2,097,748
General Mdse	\$0	\$224,384	\$2,064,293	\$123,157,012	\$2,288,677
Furniture/Furnishings/Appliances	\$31	\$120,660	\$778,307	\$44,162,313	\$898,967
Automotive	\$528	\$469,939	\$2,609,698	\$169,808,262	\$3,079,637
Drug	\$755	\$147,334	\$629,659	\$31,986,000	\$776,993
Other	\$2,528	\$976,481	\$4,555,943	\$289,923,551	\$5,532,424
Total EBI (\$000)	\$70,450	\$6,529,479	\$29,659,487	\$1,814,166,815	\$36,188,966
Median Household EBI	\$24,548	NA	\$21,041	\$19,146	\$20,600
Sales as % of EBI	11.0%	46.9%	53.3%	53.2%	52.1%
<b>1987 Data:</b>					
Total Population (000)	8.2	860.2	3,688.7	245,622.7	4,548.9
Median Age	32.3	NA	31.9		32.1
Households	3.1	333.8	1,445.1	90,849.0	1,778.9
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	\$9,185	\$4,156,329	\$23,456,536	\$1,544,896,955	\$27,612,865
Food	\$4,483	\$1,172,023	\$4,953,730	\$321,934,228	\$6,125,753
Eating/Drinking	\$1,294	\$449,209	\$2,642,214	\$150,555,375	\$3,091,423
General Mdse	\$330	\$299,487	\$2,666,915	\$180,569,113	\$2,966,402
Furniture/Furnishings/Appliances	\$0	\$174,376	\$1,216,403	\$4,022,231	\$1,390,779
Automotive	\$432	\$791,084	\$4,783,838	\$338,079,962	\$5,574,922
Drug	\$279	\$178,119	\$859,478	\$6,063,838	\$1,037,597
Other	\$2,367	\$1,092,031	\$6,333,958	\$543,672,208	\$7,425,989
Total EBI (\$000)	\$63,175	\$9,889,790	\$52,200,487	\$3,202,847,131	\$62,090,277
Median Household EBI	\$17,126	NA	\$28,427	\$25,888	\$27,225
Sales as % of EBI	14.5%	42.0%	44.9%	48.2%	44.5%
<b>1989 Data:</b>					
Total Population (000)	8.1	873.7	3,809.9	249,840.3	4,683.6
Median Age	32.7	NA	32.4	33.0	32.6
Households	3.0	342.9	1,504.6	93,450.9	1,847.5
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	\$10,449	\$4,474,443	\$28,417,158	\$1,722,085,523	\$32,891,601
Food	\$5,389	\$1,306,301	\$6,253,927	\$349,810,512	\$7,560,228
Eating/Drinking	\$1,361	\$539,876	\$3,192,384	\$173,702,476	\$3,732,260
General Mdse	\$709	\$294,699	\$3,318,735	\$203,279,551	\$3,613,434
Furniture/Furnishings/Appliances	\$43	\$150,271	\$1,557,430	\$89,346,946	\$1,707,701
Automotive	\$311	\$776,188	\$5,559,822	\$381,909,001	\$6,336,010
Drug	\$366	\$230,049	\$1,043,415	\$60,835,684	\$1,273,464
Other	\$2,270	\$1,177,059	\$7,491,445	\$463,201,353	\$8,668,504
Total EBI (\$000)	\$60,909	\$10,389,376	\$55,196,688	\$3,287,489,252	\$65,586,064
Median Household EBI	\$17,106	NA	\$29,020	\$25,976	\$27,901
Sales as % of EBI	17.2%	43.1%	51.5%	52.4%	50.2%

Source: Sales and Marketing Management, "Survey of Buying Power", 1981, 1988, 1990.

## APPENDIX B. THE PBIA OPTION

Within the state of Washington, downtown organizations have a *self-help* mechanism available for funding of local promotional, management, improvement and related organizational costs. That mechanism is called a Parking and Business Improvement Area, abbreviated as PBIA.

A PBIA assesses *business owners* located within a geographically prescribed district. The PBIA concept is similar in many respects to the more familiar concept of a local improvement district (or LID) which assesses property owners.

### Differences Between PBIA and LID

Key differences between an LID and PBIA are severalfold:

- The LID assesses *property* owners while the PBIA assesses the *business* owner.
- An LID assessment can be used exclusively to fund capital improvements, while a PBIA can also fund decorations of public places, promotion, entertainment, management, planning, parking, maintenance and security.
- An LID can be used as security for bonding, while PBIA has generally not been considered as adequate security for bond underwriting.

### PBIA Procedures

Key procedures covered by Washington enabling legislation for a PBIA are summarized by the chart on the following pages.

This comparison is intended as a preliminary guide to describe important LID and PBIA features. It does not constitute a legal analysis, nor are all provisions of statutory requirements of the state of Washington covered. Questions concerning interpretation or application to specific projects should be referred to appropriate legal counsel.

Comparison Category	Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA)
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<i>Legal Reference</i>	RCW 35.87A provides the authority for Parking and Business Improvement Areas.
<i>Who is Assessed</i>	The business which can include "all types of business, including professions". (35.87A.020)
<i>Authorized Purposes</i>	The general purpose is "to aid general and economic development and to facilitate merchant and business cooperation which assists trade". (35.87A.010)
<i>Eligible Costs</i>	<p>Authority is given for local jurisdictions to levy special assessments on all businesses within the area who are "specially benefited by Parking and Business Improvement Area to pay in whole or in part the damages or cost incurred therein". (35.87A.010)</p> <p>Purposes are identified by 35.87A.010. They cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The acquisition, construction or maintenance of parking facilities for the benefit of the area</li> <li>(b) Decoration of any public place in the area</li> <li>(c) Promotion of public events which are to take place on or in public places in the area</li> <li>(d) Furnishing of music in any public place in the area</li> <li>(e) Providing professional management, planning, and promotion for the area, including the management and promotion of retail trade activities in the area</li> <li>(f) Providing maintenance and security for common, public areas</li> </ul>
<i>Bonding</i>	No apparent reference to bonding is made Chapter 35.87A. We have noted elsewhere in this report the practical difficulties associated with issuing revenue bonds backed solely by PBIA revenues. This is primarily due to difficulties of assuring collections.
<i>Method to Form</i>	PBIA can be formed either by petition or resolution. The statute is in conflict over the percentage of business owners who need to petition. RCW 35.87A.010 indicates that a petition should be submitted "by the operators responsible for 60% of the assessments by businesses within the area". A subsequent section 35.87A.030 indicates that "the initiating petition shall also contain the signatures of the persons who operate businesses in the proposed area which would pay 50% of the proposed special assessments." Contacts with other cities who have initiated PBIA's indicate that they have used the higher figure of 60%.
<i>Petition Requirements</i>	An initiation petition or resolution needs to contain a description of boundaries, listing of proposed uses and projects, and estimated rate of levy of special assessment "with a proposed breakdown by class and business if such classification is to be used." (35.87A.080)
<i>Remonstrance</i>	Pursuant to 35.87A.060, "proceedings shall terminate if protest is made by businesses in the proposed area which would pay a majority of the proposed special assessments."

<b>Comparison Category</b>	<b>Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA)</b>
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*Procedural Steps*

City council receives a petition or adopts a resolution calling for a PBIA. If by resolution, the resolution would set a date and time of public hearing.

The public hearing requires notification in a newspaper plus mailing to each business in the property area 10 days prior to the hearing.

The PBIA automatically terminates at the hearing if those representing a majority of the assessment protest.

Pursuant to 35.87A.100, the city council following the hearing can establish the proposed area by ordinance. The ordinance is required to contain the following information:

- "(1) the number, date and title of the resolution of intent pursuant to which is was adopted;
- (2) the time and place the hearing was held concerning the formation of such area;
- (3) the description of boundaries of such area;
- (4) a statement that the businesses in the area established by the ordinance shall be subject to the provisions of the special assessments authorized by RCW 35.87A.010;
- (5) the initial or additional rate or levy of special assessment to be imposed with a breakdown by classification by business, if such classification is used;
- (6) a statement that a Parking and Business Improvement Area has been established;
- (7) the uses to which the special assessment revenue shall be put..."

*Assessment Formulas*

Considerable discretion is given by (35.87A.080) which stipulates that: "the legislative authority may make a reasonable classification of businesses, giving consideration to various factors such as business and occupation taxes imposed, square footage of the business, number of employees, gross sales, or any other reasonable factor relating to the benefit received, including the degree of benefit received from parking."

The legislative body is also authorized to establish more than one separate benefit zone "based upon the degree of benefit derived from the purpose and may impose a different rate of special assessment within each such benefit zone." (35.87A.150)

*Collection*

The statute provides little direct guidance on this matter, simply indicating that (35.87A.130): "Collections of assessments imposed pursuant to this chapter shall be made at the same time and in the same manner as otherwise prescribed by Title 35 RCW or in such other manner as the legislative authority shall determine."

<b>Comparison Category</b>	<b>Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA)</b>
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*Other*

The city council is given the authority to make changes in assessment rates or the boundaries of the district subject to requirements to establish a resolution of intention and at least 15 days prior to a public hearing. Changes are subject to the same remonstrance provisions as during initial establishment. (35.87A.070)

A specific exemption of up to one year from the assessment is given to new businesses (35.87A.170).

A PBIA may be disestablished at a subsequent hearing. "The legislative authority shall adopt a resolution of intention to disestablish the area at least 15 days prior to the hearing required by this section." (35.87A.180)

**PBIA Advantages and Disadvantages**

Pertinent advantages and disadvantages of using a Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA) to fund a downtown revitalization program are summarized by the following chart.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<p>May be used to fund capital improvements and/or ongoing activities such as promotion, entertainment, management, planning, parking, maintenance and security.</p>	<p>PBIA is less suitable to fund capital improvements than ongoing operations since a PBIA is not considered as adequate security for bonding.</p>
<p>May provide a stable source of funds for annual operations of a downtown organization</p>	<p>Requires support of at least 60% of business owners, some of whom may be reluctant to participate.</p>
<p>Mechanisms for assessment offer flexibility, but also equity of payment from project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Collection from delinquent owners is not as easy for a PBIA as for an LID since a lien cannot be placed against the property.</p>

This discussion illustrates the potential value of using a PBIA to fund an ongoing program of downtown revitalization.

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1 Some cities in Washington have reported difficulties in developing and enforcing adequate collection procedures. A court in Redmond, Washington disallowed collection from three property owners. The reasons relate to: a) improper validation of signatures on the petition supporting the PBIA; b) no proof of business ownership; and c) signatures from businesses no longer in operation. The court's ruling applied only to the three businesses involved in the lawsuit. This case, however, illustrates the need to carefully follow all legal procedures required to validate and implement a PBIA. Other cities have had better success with the PBIA funding mechanism. Longview is one example that has successfully collected assessments over a multi-year period.