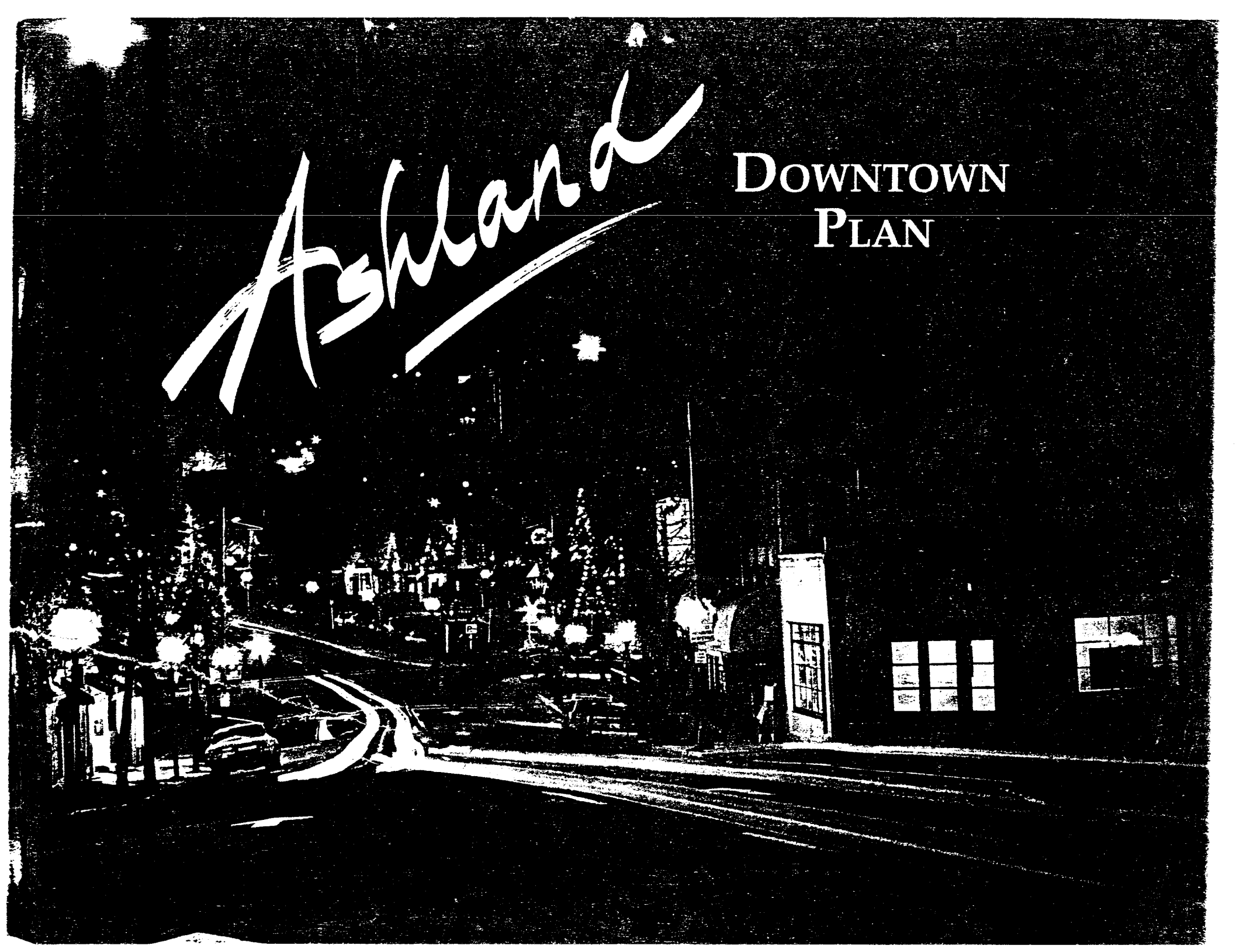


Ashland

DOWNTOWN
PLAN



The City of Ashland Downtown Plan

approved by the City Council July 19, 1988

Acknowledgements

This Downtown Plan was developed from October 1986 to July 1988. During that period, many people contributed long hours at workshops, meetings, and hearings. The result is a syntheses of that process, reflecting and being influenced by each participant. Since it is the result of the work of so many, any list of contributors will undoubtedly slight a few. Nevertheless, throughout the project's development, the Ashland Planning Commission was the major guiding force. The Ashland Downtown Association, was also a constant force in shaping and guiding the plan. Many thanks to the people that contributed hundreds of hours in the development of this plan.

Produced by the Department of Community Development, City of Ashland

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Adopted by the Ashland Council July 19, 1988

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Introduction

Ashland's downtown is arguably the most important fifty acres in the city. More people are employed there than in any other area of Ashland. If all the downtown businesses were combined, that single employer would be the largest in the community, and among the top ten employers in Jackson County. The downtown is the historical and cultural center of our city. It is the site of pre-settlement Indian campsites, the birthplace of Ashland Mills in 1852 and the community's economic center for over 100 years. One of the most beautiful parks in the country and site of the former Chautauqua building stands nearby. The world-reknown Oregon Shakespeare Festival now draws thousands of playgoers each year to the same location.

Ashland's history — her successes and failures — are reflected in the city core. The traditional town center remains the heart for those activities that indicate civilization — art, commerce, and social interaction. While urban blight and national trends toward decentralization and specialization have eviscerated many American city centers, Ashland's core remains vital, a living reminder of a time when city design focused on people, rather than on automobiles.

Although Ashland's downtown evolved slowly over a number of years, some critical decisions were made in the late 1960's. A group of residents joined with the City Council to direct their town's destiny. The Ashland Central Area Plan, adopted by the Council in 1967, was the result. While some predictions of the now twenty-year-old document missed their mark, the plan did guide the downtown area development. The best ideas were adopted, modified where necessary, and implemented.

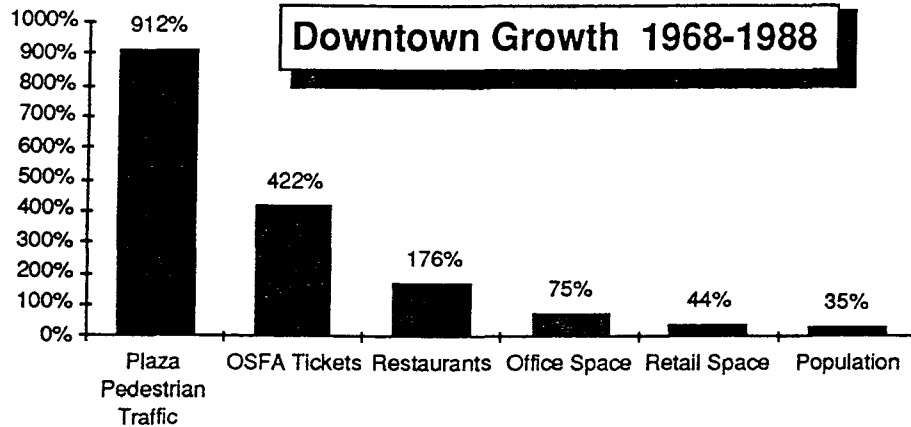
We can attribute some of the downtown's success to ideas first officially endorsed in this plan. Much of the 1967 plan was accomplished, although not always in the way predicted. While the plan envisioned a downtown public/private convention center development adding 100 new rooms, additional shops, and restaurants, the city did not participate in a large central redevelopment. Small businesses, however, introduced new lodging, retail shops and restaurants, with results made more interesting and attractive by their variety.

The city became deeply involved in the construction of the Angus Bowmer Theatre, first issuing warrants for construction and later securing a Federal Grant to complete the project. Private interests worked hard at fundraising and completed this important Ashland resource through intense community effort.

The downtown has surmounted obstacles with planning and good fortune during the last twenty years and has increased tremendously in size and quality. While the city's population rose from 11,000 to 16,000, the

downtown's retail spaces increased, the office spaces almost doubled and tourist traffic grew over 600 per cent. Downtown automobile traffic has almost doubled and pedestrian traffic counts have risen from 200 per cent to 900 percent.

Changing times demand different plans. By Ashland tradition and by state law, the city's guiding document is the comprehensive plan which provides an overall look at the city's development and need not be explored here. Past experience indicates that unrealistic programs are not implemented and that the city's primary role is to support, service, coordinate and finance projects to fulfill the requirements that private initiatives generate. Therefore this plan will be limited in scope, realistic in its recommendations, and will examine actions that the city, as a municipal corporation, should pursue in order to improve the downtown area.



Downtown economic growth has dwarfed the population growth in the last 20 years.

Goals of the Downtown Plan

Although the Downtown Plan frequently employs technical terms such as "economic expansion," and "efficient traffic flow", it strives to achieve one important result — a definition of the community's shared vision of the downtown. What should the downtown look like when it is finished? Although

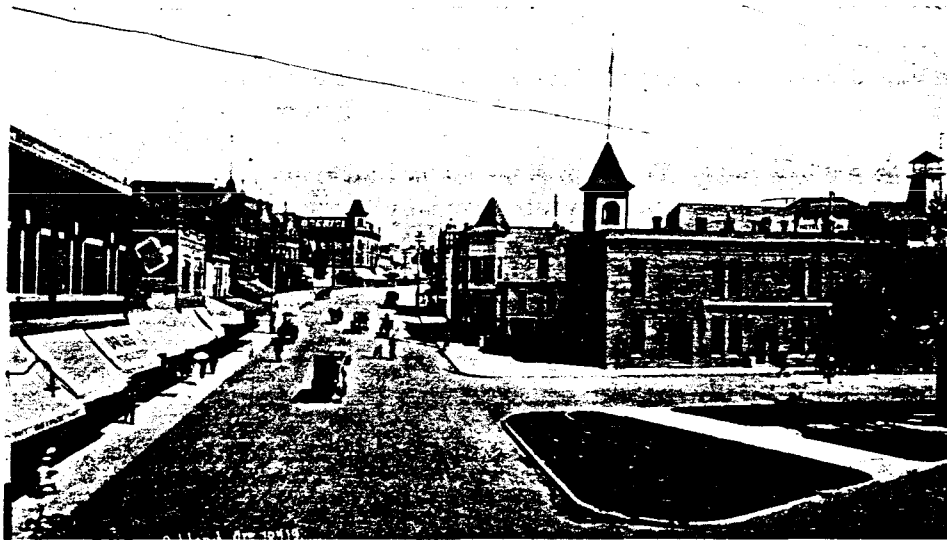
the downtown is a dynamic entity and will never really be completed, everyone's personal vision holds an ideal for the town's future appearance. Although most people can describe their vision generally, many details are unclear. There exists enough consensus in Ashland to assure these goals and to form a target for the plan.

At the public hearing where many of this plan's ideas were formed, Ashland citizens discussed the "perfect" downtown Ashland. The picture that emerged suggested some general characteristics:

- An economically healthy downtown, where business owners can make a decent living with a good idea, solid management, and a little luck.
- An attractive downtown of which we can be proud.
- A downtown that continues to be Southern Oregon's cultural and arts center.
- A downtown that accommodates the pedestrian, the bicyclist, and the automobile with equal ease.

- A downtown that appeals to both local residents and tourists and tolerantly accommodates varying lifestyles and philosophies of both visitors and citizens.

This hypothetical future downtown, closely resembles Ashland today. This plan examines the downtown area and considers what assets need enhancement in order to reach our community goals. Primarily an action plan for the city, it concentrates on short range, realistic goals most likely to be accomplished and avoids overly ambition schemes. Recognizing that Ashland's downtown has much that is right about it, the plan offers fine tuning and attention to detail to allow the continued evolution of a special, unique community.



In these two photos, taken circa 1910 and 1950 Main Street appears little changed. However the street was realigned 115 feet and all the buildings on the north side of Main Street were removed. The 1910 Photo was taken from the roof of the building that houses Alex's Restaurant; the 1950 photo was taken from the roof of the Oddfellows Building.



Historic Development of the Downtown

A review of Ashland's history is important to a plan that considers its future. Because our perspective as citizens is limited to our memories, recent events tend to be weighted more heavily than equally significant events in the past. We must review past successful choices and examine their character. Since we do not have the perspective to view the preconceptions of our own time, a study of our history will help us place the present in its proper context. The downtown's many changes mark an interesting trail, and the community frequently acted in concert to develop needed facilities. The past has given Ashland its current unique character and distinguishes it from places overwhelmed by unbridled self-interest.

The Early Years: 1851-1880

These years are best recounted by one who lived through them. In 1879 after a fire destroyed most of the downtown, the Masonic Hall was reconstructed and a letter describing Ashland's early history was placed in the building foundation with other mementos. Composed by W.H. Leeds, the brief sketch described Ashland's early development. The town was small but had several distinguishing characteristics, some of which are pertinent today. Industry was well developed and Ashland served the region as a manufacturing center. The city had a number of good buildings for a small village, and it had a plaza, indicated by an 1867 city map, which records that name for the clearing in front of the flour mill.

The name, plaza, is unique for a city not settled by Spanish or Mexican pioneers. "Plaza", is Spanish in origin, and indicates the public area that forms the center of towns and cities. The American tradition for city design was inspired first by English cities and towns, and later by rambunctious American pioneers who gave little thought to city form. Western pioneer settlements rarely dedicated a valuable downtown space for public use and if they did,

Written on the 4th day of August, 1879, by W. H. Leeds.

"The first permanent settlers came to this place from California in the winter of 1851-1852, R. B. Hargadine arriving about the last of December 1851, and Eber Emery, J. B. Emery, A. D. Hellman, James A. Cardwell and Edward Hurley arriving on the 9th of January, 1852. They found on the present site a band of about twenty (20) Rogue River Indians under a chief called "Tipsee". The Indians remained here about one year after the settlement, and then departed, going east of the mountains to some portion of the territory now embraced in Lake County.

"As soon as they arrived, Eber Emery, J. B. Emery and Ed. Hurley began construction of a sawmill, which, on the 17th of June, 1852, turned out the first lumber made at a saw mill in the basin of the Rogue River....

"In the summer of 1854, a flowering mill was built in the settlement, and still stands as the older portion of the fine flowering mill about 150 feet east of this hall, and in 1860 Eber Emery built the hotel which with many improvements and additions, stands today as the Ashland House.

"R.B. Hargadine built and opened the first store of the settlement, some distance east of the site of this hall in 1859.

"The first school house was built in 1860, and is still in use, being situated upon the easterly border of town.

"The village of Ashland grew in size slowly until the year 1867, when an enterprise was begun which gave impetus to settlement, and was followed by a rapid growth of the town. A joint stock company was formed, with a paid-up, cash capital of \$30,000, raised in Jackson County, for the building of a woolen mill, which today does much for the maintenance of the town.

"In 1870 an academy building was begun, which was finished three years afterward and is this year to be made into a college and normal school. This has contributed much to the growth of the town.

"On the 4th of March, the present year, a conflagration burned a large portion of the business part of town. This apparent calamity has already resulted in the erection of better buildings than were burned. The building of this hall was also made necessary by this fire.

"The Town of Ashland, and its environs, now contains about 600 inhabitants... The assessed valuation of the property of the town is \$197,733."

called it a square or a park. The source of the name for our city center remains a mystery, but possibly can be traced to Ashland's first settlers. They came west via the Isthmus of Panama and spent two years in California. Ceded to the United States by Mexico in 1848, that state's towns were as Latin as their names. These settlers may have noted how plazas were used in California and brought that memory north with them to Oregon. Ashland's plaza apparently developed accidentally. The mill stood near the present entrance to Lithia Park and a mill-race was dug in the hill that parallels Ashland Creek. The stage road came close to the mill, hooked toward it, but turned by the hill which carried the millrace. Buildings were gradually built up around this configuration, sandwiched between the road and the creek. This left a triangular area around which traffic moved in a circular pattern as farm wagons and stage-coaches passed the mill, the stores and the hotel. Although this area was muddy or dusty depending on the season, early pioneers called it a plaza, so naming it on an early city map in 1867, and began decorating it. They first planted a tree, then erected a flagpole, and later built statues and fountains. The first public hall and later the

city hall eventually were located nearby. The name, "The Plaza", remained for 130 years and has always defined the center of town.

Other Ashland institutions developed in those early years. Citizens held higher education in great respect and established a college town by building the Ashland Academy when the community was twenty years old. The town was self-reliant and depended on local ideas, products and initiative to develop its basic industries. Lodging was available for travelers along the major north-south route of the west coast. The town's location at the base of a difficult pass through the mountains made it a natural stopping place for those journeying in either direction.

The City Develops 1880-1910

During this era the town became a city and the Plaza shrank in size as buildings crowded the space. The island developed in the center was adorned by a single tree. Businesses soon outgrew the area and spread out East Main Street, with contiguous commercial structures reaching past Pioneer Street and intermixing commercial development and homes as far as Second Street. In 1894 Ashland became the home of the Chautauqua and

annual gatherings introduced summer tourism to the site where the Elizabethan Theatre now stands, and picnics were held Roper's Grove. Ashland's image as a cultured place grew with the college's expansion, the laying out of Siskiyou Boulevard (reportedly inspired by Paris's Champs Elysees), and the construction of an opera house at the corner of Pioneer and East Main Streets.

The city's industries also began to change. The obsolete flour mill was razed in 1909, and a city park begun on its site. Rail service, introduced in 1887, led to a local economic boom and lessened the isolation that had prevailed in earlier days. Reliable transportation encouraged specialization in export commodities, particularly shipping produce from mature orchards. Ashland's early efforts toward self-improvement flourished with the vision of several influential people. They saw that the area's natural beauty made the city attractive to visitors and that the combination of rail access and automobiles could create a new revenue source that would replace declining traditional industries. This era ended in a flurry of public works. Most downtown streets and the Plaza were paved at a cost of \$350,000, and city-owned electric power was established. Ashland blossomed.

The Promise of Lithia Water 1910-1935

A current resident could easily recognize the downtown during this era. With the exception of the Plaza area, by the mid 1930's East Main Street looked much as it does today. Commercial development reached Third Street, stopped, and began to fill in toward "C" Street. The Chautauqua Dome was enlarged and the reconstruction gave us the circular masonry walls which surround the Elizabethan Theatre today. In 1928 the downtown had three gas stations and the city's design began to change to accommodate the automobile, offering a variety of automotive services.

Perhaps the most dramatic changes were those spawned by the national City Beautiful movement and a local desire to increase tourism. The inspiration for a park along Ashland Creek was seen to its fruition in the early 'teens with hopes of exploiting the healing qualities of Lithia water. Fifty acres were added to the park's original eight and included land where mills, foundries businesses and residences stood. The park plan was



In the 1880's, the Plaza was the city's commercial and industrial center. Note the scales in front of the mill and the Ashland House. The center of the plaza was decorated with a tree and a flagpole.



By the early 1900's, the Plaza was surrounded by substantial brick buildings. The industrial uses waned and the Plaza saw primary use. Although concrete sidewalks replaced the wooden ones, crossing the Plaza in the winter must have still been a challenge to pedestrians.



After the 1910 paving project, the Plaza received the island which serves as a refuge for pedestrians. Soon after, the city's first public art was erected — The Carter Memorial statue. The tree in the foreground was planted in the 1850's and still stands.

implemented by master landscape architect, John McLaren who had been a student of Frederick Law Olmstead, the designer of Manhattan's Central Park and a leader in the City Beautiful movement. McLaren, designer of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, planned the beautiful Ashland park that would become a popular local gathering place for both residents and visitors. Although extensive commercial use of Lithia water did not develop, the park's brilliance remained undiminished. The city received many philanthropic gifts during these years, including: The Carter Memorial Fountain on the Plaza, the Butler Perozzi Fountain, the Chapman Memorial Fountain in front of the library, and the statue of Abraham Lincoln. The Carnegie Library and the current Ashland Community Center building were constructed. The Lithia Springs Hotel, known today as the Mark Antony Hotel, was built by local investors to attract visitors and to serve as Ashland's convention center. While the advent of "miracle drugs" diminished the attraction of Lithia water, and the Depression kept the Lithia Springs Hotel from flourishing, other accomplishments of this era vitally contributed to the quality of life we enjoy in Ashland today.

Shakespeare Comes To Ashland 1935-1960

The year 1935 marked the beginning of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The story of the first performance is well known, but the theater's impact on the city's economy was not realized until much later. The Shakespeare Festival was founded to provide local entertainment and to offer a creative outlet for local actors. At the end of this era, the festival drew outside talent and attracted playgoers from large metropolitan areas. This growth encouraged larger audiences and additional funding sources.

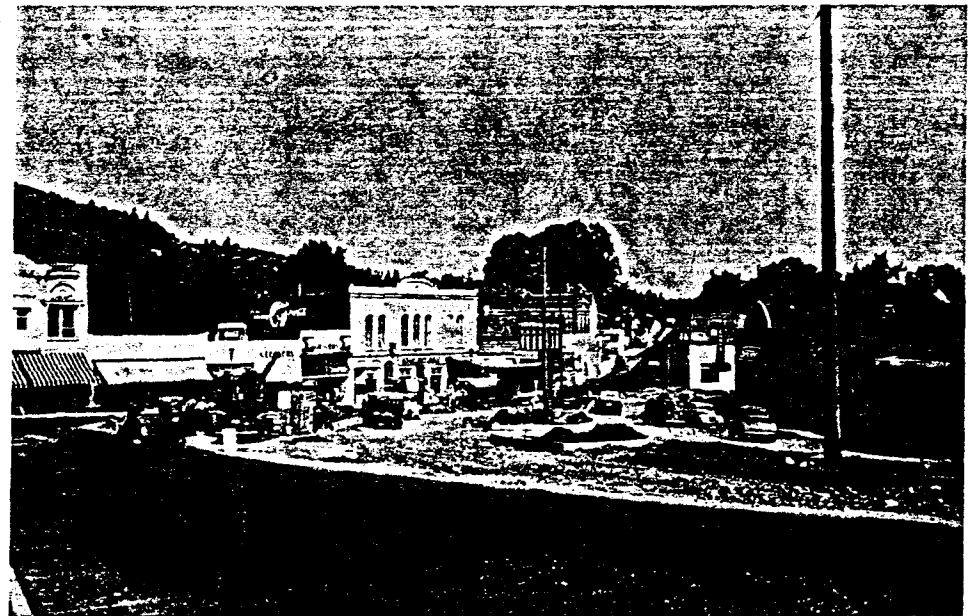
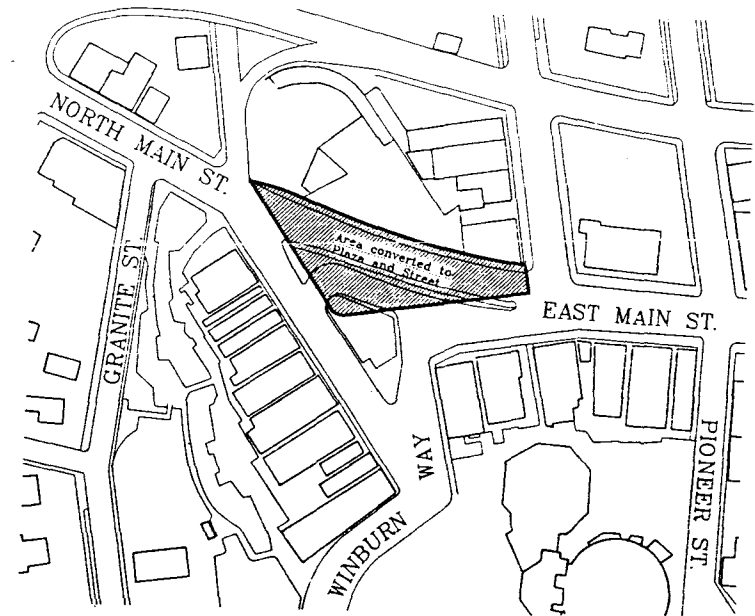
The downtown's physical development continued and major changes occurred. The original hook in Main Street, which brought the road by the Plaza, functioned well during Ashland's early days but now required adjustment. As part of the major north-south Highway 99, Main Street had to accommodate increasing automotive and truck traffic. In 1947 the Plaza configuration was altered by smoothing out the hook, facilitating traffic flow and enlarging the Plaza to over one acre in size. This change, occurring during the post-war road building boom, was essential but required removing a block of historic buildings. Although its intimacy was forever changed, the Plaza as we know it today began to develop.

In 1957 the second major alteration occurred — again to accommodate exploding traffic volumes. Two-way traffic on Main Street was changed to one-way. The alteration required "C" Street to be developed into a one-way couplet to parallel East Main Street. This demanded further expansion of the Plaza, the development of Lithia Way, the construction of the viaduct, and the extension of "C" Street. The downtown could now accommodate a larger traffic volume, but "C" Street was incorporated into the main downtown area. It had been a semi-industrial area, but increased traffic brought heavy automotive uses. The combination of prior intense commercial development, strictly automotive use, and lack of pedestrian amenities or attractive architecture, has consistently hindered development of "C" Street. This era closed with the reconstruction of the Elizabethan Theatre in 1959, giving the Oregon Shakespeare Festival an expanded facility.

The Recent Past 1960-1987

In 1960 the downtown was in poor condition. The 1967 Central Area Plan stated:

"Visually the downtown gives a rather negative impression. Most buildings are old; most store fronts are poor; and almost no landscaping or other amenities are provided along Main Street."



The realignment of the Plaza in 1947 was the most radical change to the downtown's design in the city's history. It doubled the size of the Plaza and increased pedestrian space in the island.



Sign control was non-existent and projecting signs and billboards competed for viewers attention. Both food and retailing businesses were poorly represented and historic buildings were unappreciated and regularly demolished.

Ashland bright spots included the Oregon Shakespeare Festival which attracted 61,000 viewers in 1967, and Lithia Park, which suffered from vandalism and a pinched budget but was consistently popular with visitors. The College saw a period of rapid growth and expanded to the present 4000 full time equivalent students.

In this era the construction of Interstate Five through the area constituted the major transportation change. While some citizens worried that traffic would bypass the downtown, the future of Ashland profited from the ready access that the freeway provided both to metropolitan areas and the regional market.



Downtown improvements made in the 1970's greatly increased the area's beauty. Public amenities such as street trees and sidewalks are complemented by the improved appearance of the buildings. The changes are evident in these photographs.

The year 1967 was a turning point for the city. Strong sign control visually improved the downtown. The construction of the Angus Bowmer Theatre in 1969 gave the Oregon Shakespeare Festival expanded seating in the summer and fall and spring seasons. The Festival has produced theatre and dance that rivals cities much larger than Ashland in diversity and quality. The visual arts developed in Ashland, and numerous galleries opened in the downtown area. The downtown's historic nature, considered to be a detriment in the 1967 plan, became an asset with the rediscovery of our architectural heritage.

In 1946 Ashland adopted zoning, which has grown in sophistication to the present day. Commercial development was limited outside the core area and the result was a Siskiyou Boulevard uncluttered by commercial strip development and increased commercial development in the downtown area. Although the seeds of demise were sown in many downtowns during this era, Ashland wisely avoided the trend. Downtown remained a major service center for the whole community and while tourism became an important catalyst for improvements, the downtown remained accessible to both local and regional residents.

Downtown continued to change physically through the years. Major projects included the parking lots on Hargadine Street and Water Street, Plaza re-landscaping, Guanajuato Way development, street tree additions and sidewalk improvements. The renovation of older buildings, first on the Plaza, and then throughout the downtown, brought additional important changes. Extensive remodeling of second floors and basements put these spaces into productive use and increased the usable retail floor space without substantial new construction. Downtown office space increased by 75 percent.

Conclusions

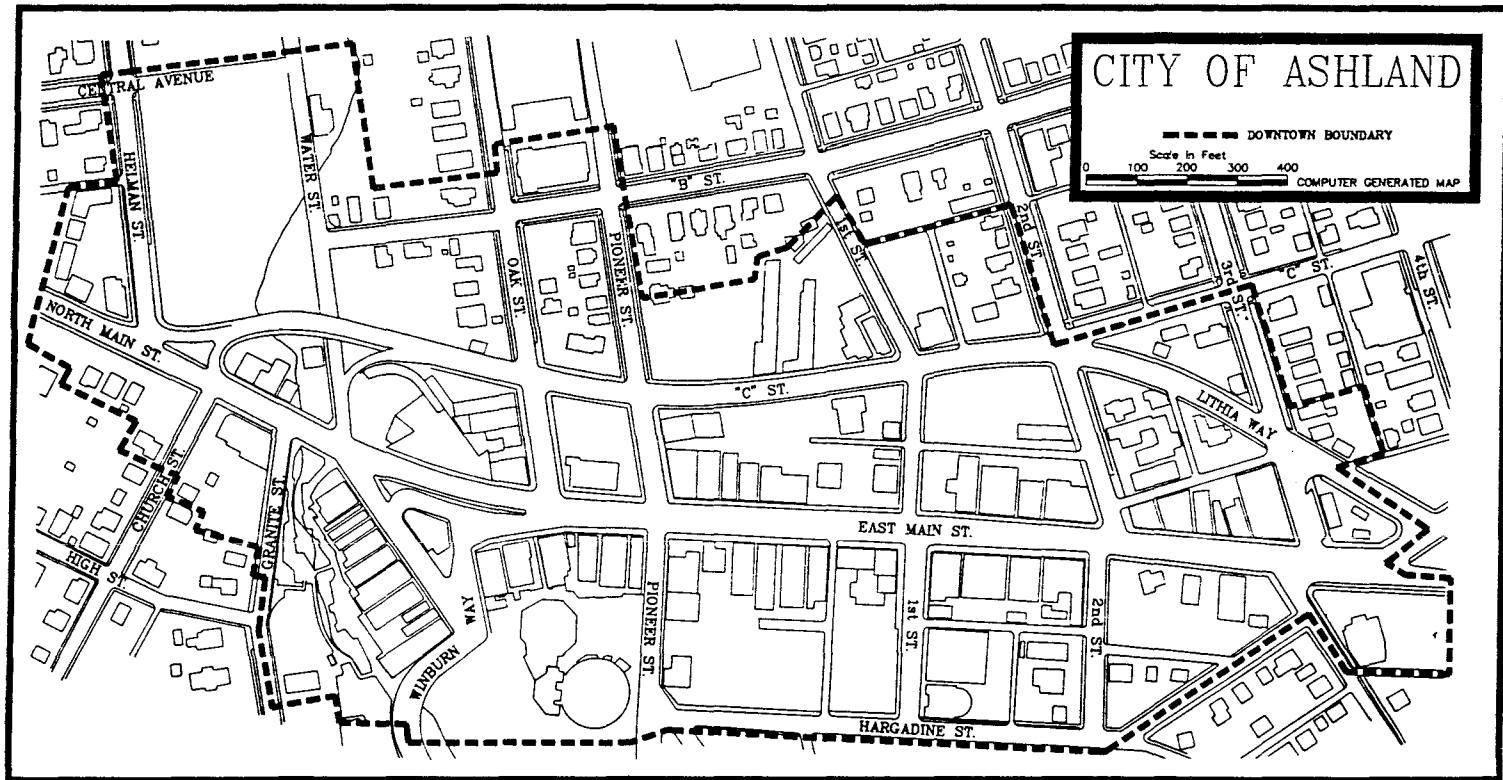
The review of Ashland's history reveals several themes that have characterized our past. Although populated by many different groups, Ashland residents historically have maintained deep affection for the city and a love of its beauty. The desire to increase the culture, physical grace, and the economy has encouraged residents to support the college, Lithia Park, and the Shakespeare Festival. Because these are our most treasured city resources and since this plan will be incremental rather than revolutionary, we must draw inspiration from the past for the future. While tourism has been part of Ashland's development since the construction of the Ashland House in 1860, improvements have benefited local residents as well. This suggests why good theatre and Lithia Park have seemed so appropriate and why tour buses and curio shops have been avoided. Ashland attracts highly educated tourists who, like local residents, enjoy the small town atmosphere. Ashland has always had the most success with ideas of substance.

While individuals have made great contributions to Ashland, each large step forward has been a community effort. The city has never lacked the resolve to stride boldly on its own path. The community has a history of drawing together to fund necessary improvements — whether it is a new woolen mill, park, theatre, or downtown improvement. Community participation has been the common thread that formed the present and predicts our future path as well.

Downtown Ashland Now...

The downtown is Ashland's most vital and dynamic area. While many cities' downtowns have lost their importance and have been replaced by suburban malls and shopping centers, Ashland has retained and strengthened its downtown area, creating a multi-purpose, multi-use city core. Ashland is envied by many other cities.

This plan focuses on the most concentrated downtown area. (The boundaries are shown on the adjacent map). Historically the city center, the downtown began at the Plaza area and extended southeast along East Main Street. Only about one-half mile long, the area now extends from the intersection of Helman



and North Main Streets on the northwest, to the Ashland Library on the southeast. It is approximately one-quarter mile wide and extends from Hargadine Street to "B" Street. Main areas are the Plaza, including the entrance to Lithia Park and Guanajuato Way, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival theatres, the East Main Street business district, the business area around the Ashland Library, Lithia Way/"C" St., the property surrounding the old armory, and the Newbry property — the large vacant parcel of land bounded by the viaduct and by Helman Commercial, and Water Streets, known as the Water Street Annex.

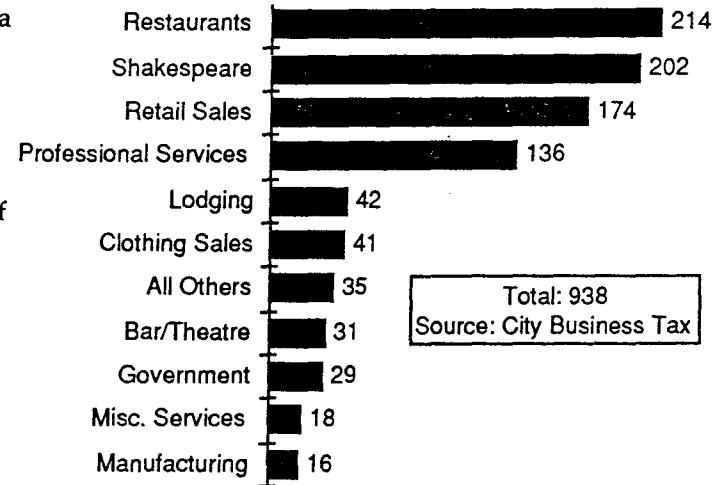
The center and heart of Ashland, the downtown lies in this small area of 55 acres. It is the **employment center** of the community, where 938 people, or 25% of all employees within the city limits work each day. The largest number of workers are involved with restaurants, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and retail businesses. These three areas account for 63% of the total number of downtown employees. The large number of employees in these categories underscores tourism's importance to the downtown. Many of the employees work in businesses which cater primarily to visitors during the summer months. There are many employees in the professional services, indicating that many services used by local residents are also situated in the downtown area.

The downtown, with 197 establishments, is the city's **business center**. The businesses are diverse, ranging from light manufacturing and auto repair to tourist gift shops, attorneys, and grocery stores. This diversity contributes to the unique quality of downtown Ashland. Goods and services required by both tourists and residents are located downtown, thus creating a much more vital area than exists in a standard mall or shopping center. Retail businesses comprise most of the square footage and are concentrated along Main Street.

Many of the downtown retail shops are specialty stores. Because of this unique blend, downtown Ashland also functions as a **regional specialty shopping center**, and attracts consumers throughout Southern Oregon and Northern California. This is especially true during the Christmas season, when many people want to find the perfect gift.

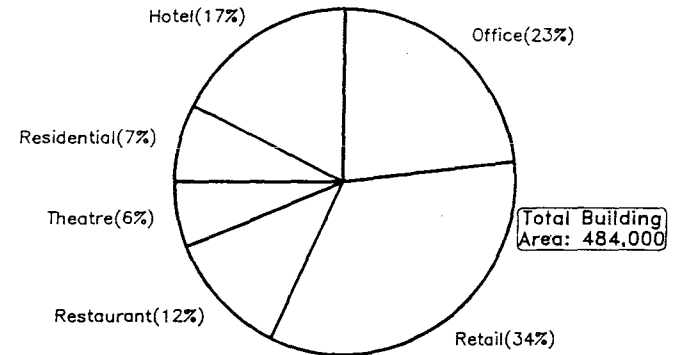
The downtown has remained an active element of the local economy primarily for its ability to serve three different economic markets, and for its lack of

1987 Downtown Employment



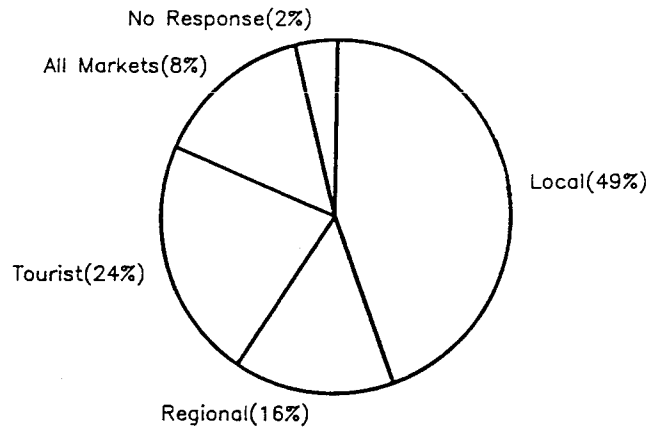
The employment of the downtown businesses indicates both the relative strength of entertainment and retailing and the diversity of the activity.

Uses By Area



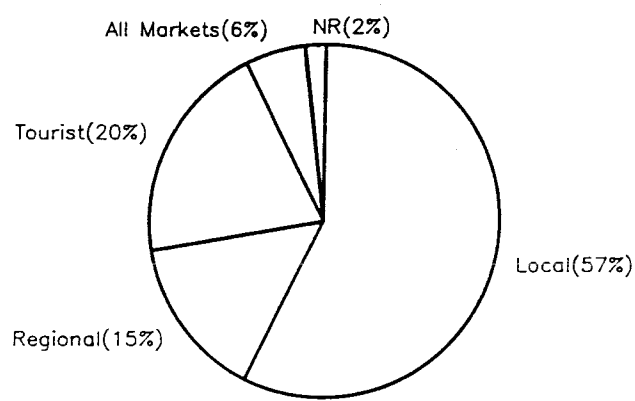
Although the downtown building area, almost a half a million square feet, is comparable to a regional shopping mall, it offers a much wider selection of goods and services.

Perceived Target Market



When surveyed, a majority of the downtown business owners responded that the local market was the most important market.

Potential Target Market



When asked in which market they wished to expand, the downtown business owners again indicated that the local market had the most potential.

dependency on any one of them. The first is the local market, which provides goods and services for local residents including Southern Oregon State College students. These range from banking and professional services to groceries and personal goods. The second is the regional market, in which the downtown is a specialty shopping center for the Southern Oregon-Northern California region. The third market is tourism. Ashland is a well-known summer tourist area, and the downtown is the focal point for many activities, including entertainment and shopping.

The downtown's ability to capture a significant share of each of these markets has allowed it to long remain the economic center of the city. It is interesting to examine which of these markets is most important to the city center retailers. A survey done by Southern Oregon State College students in the winter of 1987 asked the question "What is the residence of your primary target market?" Surprisingly, over 49% of businesses reported that the local market was the most important. Asked what markets they hoped to reach, 54% of businesses indicated that the local market had the greatest potential. Although these are perceptions of local businesses rather than sales data, they indicate that the local service area is the foundation on which the tourist and regional markets are based. As the foundation, the local market is both the most important element and the one most taken for granted.

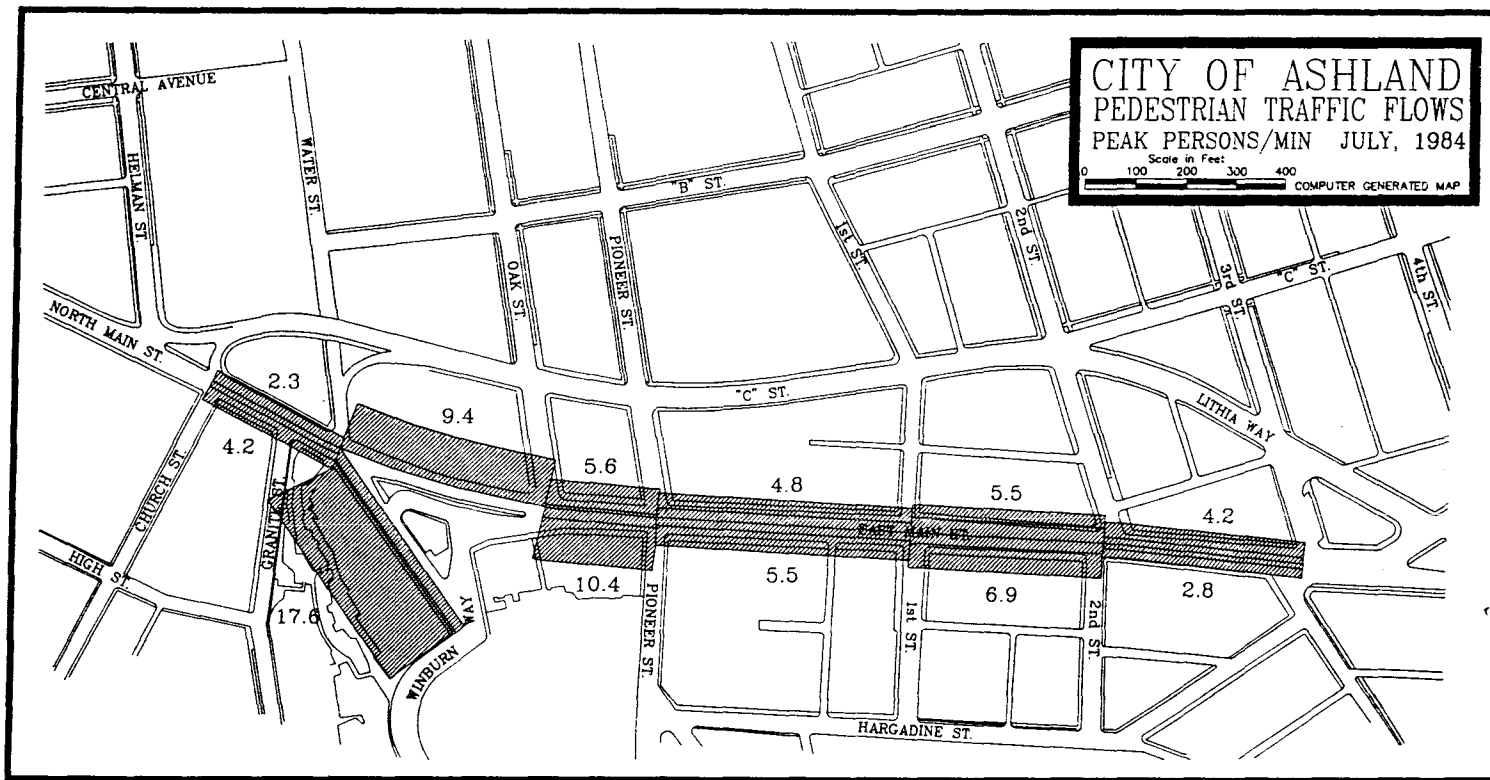
Not only is downtown Ashland the community's arts and entertainment center but the region's and the tourists' as well. The downtown is the home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and of several smaller theater companies such as the Actor's Workshop Theater and Studio X. Nightclubs and small theaters such as the Oregon Cabaret Theater regularly offer live entertainment downtown. Fine downtown restaurants give both tourists and residents the opportunity for a complete evening out without having to leave the downtown area.

The downtown is the transportation center of the city, and more cars travel through it than pass by on Interstate Five. Over 14,000 vehicles per day pass southbound on East Main while almost 12,000 pass northbound on Lithia Way — a total of over 26,000 vehicles per day traveling through the downtown. By comparison, 13,400 vehicles travel southbound and northbound per day on Interstate Five south of the north Ashland exit (exit 19).

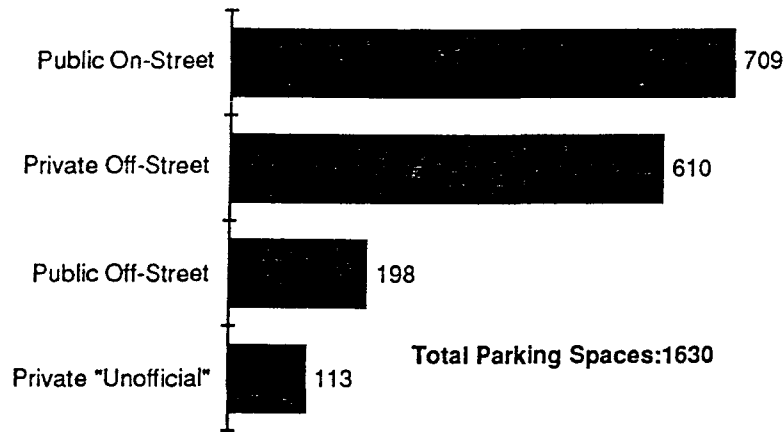
Mass transit is also available in the downtown area. Greyhound Bus Lines has a station here and Rogue Valley Transit District has several stops, located northbound and southbound along East Main and Lithia Way.

Foot traffic is heavy and peak pedestrian flows through the Plaza exceed seventeen persons per minute. The pedestrian map shows that most people are concentrated in the Plaza area, and that the numbers of pedestrians decline as they move down East Main Street toward the Library. No pedestrian traffic flows are available for other downtown streets.

Perhaps more important, downtown Ashland is the City's social center, a neighborhood of business people, artists, tourists, shoppers and residents, who occupy and utilize the same common area. This mix most clearly distinguishes the downtown from a mall where residential use cannot be found. There are thirty-nine downtown residential units, ranging from small apartments over businesses to single family residences. People who live downtown offer security and a sense of continuity. Downtown Ashland provides street corners where business can be discussed, ideas exchanged, and problems resolved. The downtown functions as our collective living room and expresses us and our city as can no other section of Ashland.

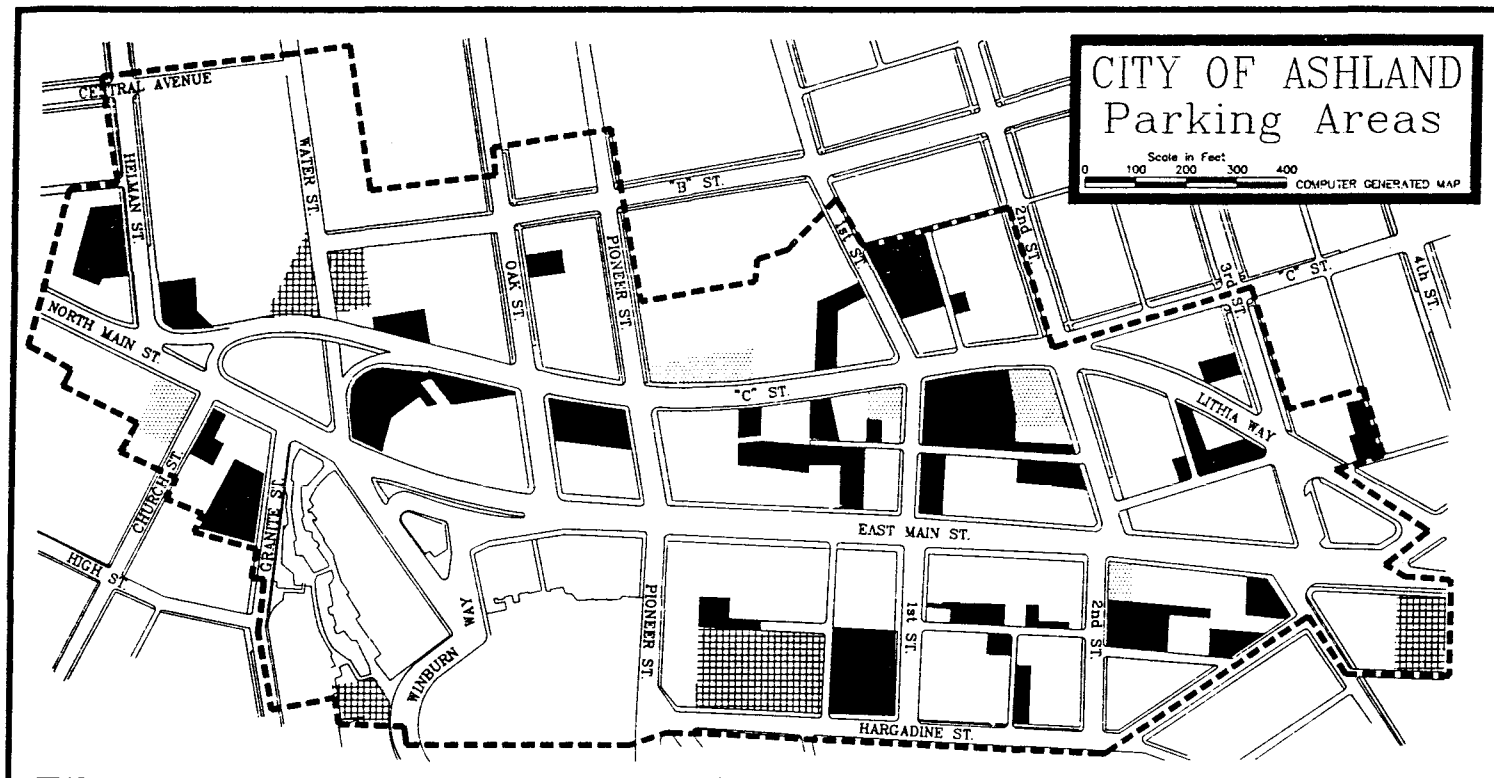


Downtown Parking



Parking is frequently identified as one of the main capacity problems of the downtown area. The city has long been concerned with parking problems, and the lack of a comprehensive solution was the original impetus for this plan. The problem is rooted in past policies that, while good for their time, have become outdated.

In 1967, the Bear Creek Area Transportation Study surveyed the city's parking situation. The city had 1100 public parking spaces downtown, but the maximum demand was only 700, and this occurred at 2 p.m. The city adopted a special zone for the downtown that did not require any off-street parking, except for hotel and residential uses. This had many benefits: it encouraged development in the downtown area (which was desperately needed at this time), it allowed the concentrated form that typified downtowns, thereby enhancing the pedestrian viability of the city, and it better utilized the existing parking facilities already in place.



While a shortage exists, much of downtown land area is devoted to parking. In this map the black lots indicate private parking, the gridded ones are public, and the lots with a dot pattern are "unofficial" lots.

Some time in the twenty years that followed, this excess capacity was consumed and no new provisions were made to provide parking for continuing development. The current parking inventory indicates that only 1630 spaces are available, including public on-street, public off-street, private off-street, and unofficial parking areas — vacant lots. A map of the parking spaces shows that considerable area is devoted to parking, but that it is inefficient due to the small size of most lots, where a relatively large amount of space is devoted to traffic lanes. Private land ownership also discourages the “pooling” of spaces, in which one businesses parking demand peaks while another lags.

We do not know how many spaces are needed to meet the demands of the downtown’s various activities.

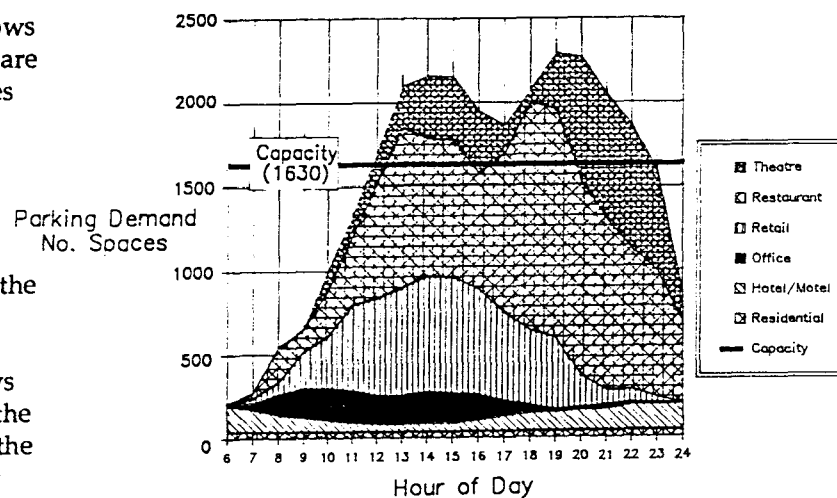
Most existing parking demand models are simplistic and designed to estimate parking for shopping malls where retailing is the dominant activity. However, the Urban Land Institute has developed a model designed for downtowns. It estimates parking needs by assembling the composite demand from the requirements of various types of activities. The model allows estimates to be adjusted and takes into account needed office, retail and theatre spaces. It allows estimates to be made on an hourly basis, so that spaces used by offices by day are available to theatre patrons in the evenings. Although these individual profiles are norms for the nation, they can be adjusted for local conditions.

The Urban Land Institute model was applied to downtown Ashland and the results are shown in the graph at right. The estimated peak demand is 2300 spaces, about 700 more spaces than are available at present. This represents a theoretical optimum, and other considerations, such as economic realities and the accuracy of the model as it applies to Ashland, must be balanced against it.

The sheer lack of spaces, however, is only part of the parking problem. Surveys conducted in 1985 and 1986 of downtown parking occupancy, concluded that the parking demand could almost be met by existing facilities for eight months of the year, but that the summer tourism peak caused severe problems. The graph at right shows the parking demand for a single day in the tourist season. Approximately 10% of the on-street public parking spaces were available at the peak hour, 8 p.m., for the entire downtown. The Plaza parking spaces were most in demand, with almost no available spaces, but the area around Second Street rarely exceeded 65% occupancy. This fact, combined with the pedestrian flow map, indicates that the downtown’s various parts clearly lack adequate communication.

The last map in this section provides an interesting comparison by superimposing a map of the Rogue Valley Mall on downtown Ashland. The heavy line is the parking lot boundary. Shoppers park at one end of the mall and walk throughout the complex without complaint. As the map indicates, this is the

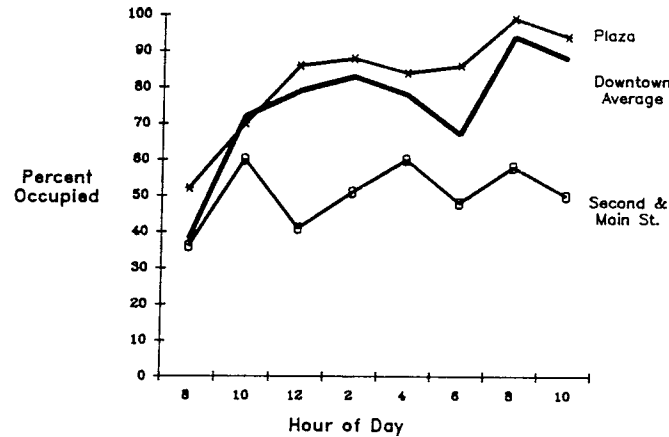
Downtown Parking Demand Model



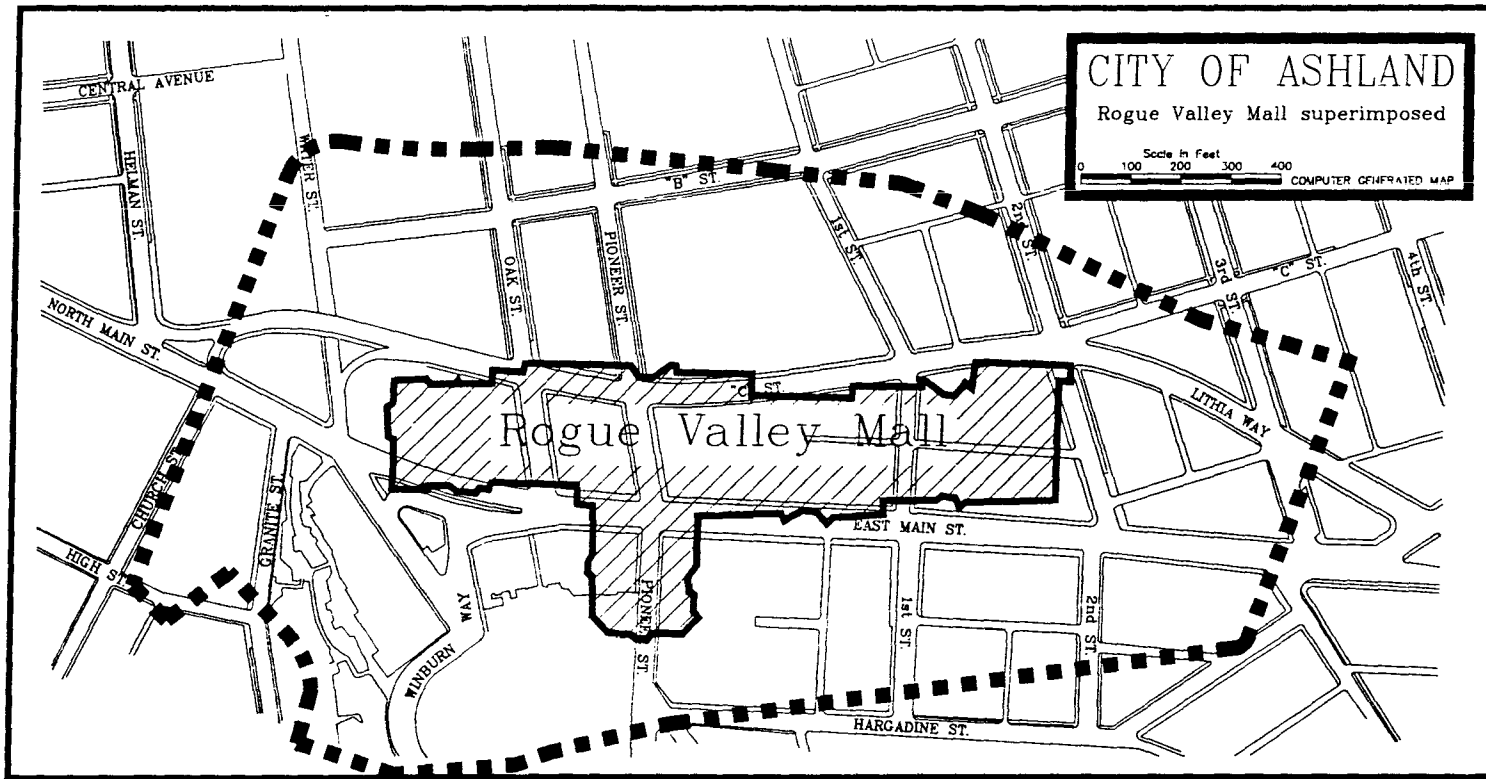
equivalent of parking on Second Street and shopping to the Plaza and back—an excursion that the data reveals is rarely accomplished. Malls are designed with major attractors at opposite ends to stimulate the pedestrian traffic. Amenities such as seating, attractive window displays, quick food service, entertainment, and weather protection are provided the pedestrian.

To solve Ashland's parking problems, not only must more spaces be added, they should be located to encourage pedestrian travel through the entire downtown. Amenities are necessary and must be designed to attract and serve pedestrians. Much research has been conducted on pedestrian amenities in the last fifteen years, and applying a few simple rules to existing and future pedestrian areas and corridors will help encourage more pedestrian use of the city center. The solution to the problems of the downtown lie both in the modern enclosed mall and the traditional downtown: centralized, shared parking, dispersed attractions, and effective, well designed pedestrian amenities.

Parking Occupancy on July 12, 1985



While downtown parking spaces have low occupancy, the demand is concentrated in the Plaza. Spaces available a few blocks away remain unoccupied throughout the day.



This overlay of the Rogue Valley Mall over Ashland's downtown area shows that in both places the distances pedestrians walk are similar. The mall's design, with available pedestrian amenities, provides better use of parking facilities and more foot traffic past all businesses.

What Is Working...

Before embarking on a program of improvements for the downtown, we must examine successful downtown components and identify problems that need to be addressed. The Ashland downtown, an increasingly attractive center for both local residents and visitors, must retain all the elements that have contributed to its success. Ashland can be viewed as a loosely knit group of several hundred thousand, where 16,000 fortunate people live permanently. These residents must not only look after their own welfare, but function as stewards of a beautiful and unique place that thousands visit each year.



Saturday Market on Guanajuato Way shows Ashland's pedestrian environment at its best—Ashland Creek, friendly people, music, and unique handcrafted goods.

The basic reasons that the downtown is so successful are:

Attractiveness

The downtown is an attractive place, with landscaping and buildings in basically good condition. Its apparent historic quality and restored buildings give a sense of permanence to the downtown area. Various downtown buildings have been enhanced to suit contemporary tastes without altering the original architecture. They give the area a unique character — one that can not be imitated by a modern development.

The effects of sign controls and the design review recommendations of the Historic and Planning Commissions are evident and the business owners' creative efforts, worked within legal limitations, have tastefully drawn attention to their buildings without garish signs or colors.

Inviting Pedestrian Environment

While it can be improved, the downtown's pedestrian environment is a major asset. A healthy pedestrian flow can be found any day in downtown when the weather is pleasant. Many things draw pedestrians downtown, but the attractive setting, high density of development, and amenities, combine to produce our enviable "European" environment.

Location and Traffic

Ashland's downtown is centrally located to its markets and is readily accessible to local, regional and tourist users. The downtown grew up around the main road which has retained its importance, notwithstanding the freeway's development. More than 22,000 vehicles pass through downtown Ashland each day, contributing to its success. When crowded, however, this traffic flow has a negative side. The traffic patterns re-emphasize the downtown's central position in the city, and each day advertises its activities to many local residents and to most tourists.

Selection and Quality of Goods and Services

The preceding section has outlined one of Ashland's major advantages: a unique blend of retail goods, services, and entertainment. Ashland's strength is derived from the high quality of goods, restaurants, and entertainment, notably theatre, concentrated in the town center. This attracts people and contributes to the downtown's vitality. The combination of restaurants, theatre, and nightclubs particularly allows Ashland to serve as an entertainment center of high quality.

Shakespeare and Lithia Park

Ashland's primary local and tourist attractions, Lithia Park and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, are located downtown. These magnets draw people downtown and businesses attract their attention. Both were developed by local initiative and although meant primarily to please local residents, they were also intended to interest visitors who would share the community's apparent good taste.



Ashland's famous Shakespearean Festival is located in the heart of downtown. Annual attendance, over 320,000 people, is one of the major reasons for the downtown areas success.

A Real Town

Ashland combines the attractive qualities of a tourist town — more services than could be supported by the local population — with the advantages of being a real center for a small rural town. The continued location of the City Hall on the Plaza symbolizes the combination. The importance of governmental accessibility must not be discounted.

Downtown's ambiance cannot be copied. It comes from the city's life style as much as from some secret promotion formula. It has prevented Ashland's success as a tourist town from overwhelming the city's character. Merchants recognize local residents as the most important future market thereby assuring that the past's good sense will continue.

...and What Isn't

Before we become too self-congratulatory, we must recognize that this document's primary purpose is to identify downtown core problems and to recommend specific solutions. The major problems identified with Ashland's downtown can be placed in four major categories: economic, traffic and automobile, pedestrian traffic and amenities, and organization and communication.

Economy

The single most common complaint of the downtown community is the seasonal nature of the economy. There is a marked summer peak and a secondary winter peak, but the late fall and early spring are economically slow. The summer tourism peak causes this, but other factors contribute as well. Tourist activity in the winter drops off nationally, except in ski areas where the peak is reversed. The local summer tourism peak is based on tradition and climate. Ashland's climate is less than ideal in the winter. To expect that the solution that works so well in the summer extend into winter's depths may be unrealistic. Other less well-acknowledged portions of the downtown economy must also be investigated.

Although the regional demand for quality entertainment is occasionally underestimated, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival grew and prospered with a regional audience, and the Britt Festival operates on a largely regional market today. Exploitation of the regional entertainment market can incubate the growth of other performing and visual arts. Additional arts development should be an important component of economic development of the downtown area. This potential development has the added attraction of increasing the tourist season offerings from April to October, the most likely peak season. The Oregon Cabaret Theatre and other theatres will be essential in diversifying the downtown economy.

Ashland is dangerously dependent on a single facet of its tourist industry — the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. The downtown's economic success or failure is too closely tied to Festival's future and this lack of economic resiliency is potentially devastating. The Shakespeare Festival, with capacity in the 95% or higher range for the majority of seasons, is extremely successful. Ashland should continue to support the health and the continued success of the Festival, as it moves into the next century with quality productions. However, the circumstances that led to the growth of Ashland's tourist economy during the late 1970's and early 1980's has dramatically changed. As the graph on this page points out, the Festival was able to increase ticket sales from 1970 to 1985. However, the past few years and the Festival's own projections show that ticket sales have been, and are projected to level off. This is a natural maturing process, and the Festival will now concentrate on maintaining and improving the quality of productions.

At the same time, any significant growth must come from new endeavors. One of the advantages of having a successful and mature theatre company is that many smaller theatres and performing arts groups spring up around it. New performing spaces, such as the nascent Ashland Performing Arts Center and the smaller Oregon Cabaret Theatre, and newer theatre groups, such as the Actor's Workshop Theatre, the Lyric Theatre, and the many other groups that exist, should be recognized as healthy, and necessary, diversity in the performing arts community. They should receive appropriate levels of city support so that they also can contribute to our City's success.

The downtown community has neglected efforts to attract Southern Oregon State College students, a large residential population. This body, composed of 5,000 people, has a significant disposable income. College students should find the town center a natural destination for entertainment and shopping, but many believe they are only welcome downtown in a few taverns and nightspots. Were it reversed, this situation could make a significant difference.

Finally, the downtown retailers do not yet work as a group to compete with other regional shopping attractions. The selection, size, and unique qualities of Ashland empower it to draw regional shoppers and to retain local shoppers who would shop first in Ashland when they recognized its synergistic shopping opportunities.

While individual stores occasionally run advertising campaigns, group marketing power is not currently exercised. Group marketing could boost downtown in the winter, especially during the Christmas season. The volunteer Ashland Downtown Association, provides some coordination, but lacks the effectiveness of a paid staff. Twenty-five cities in Oregon now have professionally-staffed downtown associations. Most began with some city support, which was phased out after a few years. The Ashland Downtown Association should strive to become a full service downtown organization.

Automobiles and People

The downtown is nearing its effective traffic capacity because it contains a through highway that most residents must use whether or not the downtown is their destination. This is beneficial in some ways, but contributes heavily toward downtown traffic congestion. A bypass of the downtown for through traffic is essential.

Parking is a real problem seasonally and a perceived problem for much of the year. The downtown faces increasing competition for spaces downtown when tourists arrive in the spring with high parking demands that continue until October. Although November is slow Christmas brings a second peak. There are only a few months when the local shopper can find the perfect space—in front of the store they wish to visit and fortunately this occurs during cold weather. The rest of the year, however, parking is hard to find. Although one must often walk 200 feet—a walk taking about 60 seconds—the same shopper will walk this distance in a shopping mall without complaint. Distances are perceived as farther downtown, because of habit, resentment toward tourists who take the best parking spots, and because of the slight grades Ashland.

The summer's peak season causes a serious capacity problem. There are only 1600 parking spots available downtown and only 1000 of these are public spaces. Unofficial spaces number 116—vacant lots whose owners do not chase trespassing drivers away. These lots assuredly will disappear as buildings rise—construction that will generate more traffic. By comparison, the Rogue Valley Mall has 3500 spaces. Most are used only a few days a year, but the extra will accommodate traffic even on the highest peak days.



Cars often invade pedestrian sanctuaries. Cars parked illegally on Guanajuato Way are the most obvious offenders.

Ashland, however, is unique. Residential and tourist housing is available near downtown. Some hotels offer free van service to shopping, theatres and restaurants, making it difficult to model the parking demand. There is a great deal of pedestrian and bike traffic to the downtown. It may not be necessary or financially wise to accommodate the highest peak day, as is done at the Rogue Valley Mall. Ashland can probably accept the ten to twenty days a year when parking demand exceeds availability. These facts indicate that we need more parking although possibly not as much as predicted.

Finally, downtown traffic patterns confuse strangers. The Plaza entrance from Oak Street and locating off-street parking are examples. Downtown needs to be easily understood — both by new visitors and the local residents.

Pedestrian Traffic

Although cars are dangerous to pedestrians, important activities occur just where cars and pedestrians meet. To lessen the conflict pedestrian paths must separate the two — and join them frequently. Natural focal points occur where their paths cross and suggest likely locations for pedestrian amenities. The downtown must analyze, evaluate and improve this network. Both pedestrian and auto traffic have increased dramatically since the 1967 plan was completed. The percentage increase is much greater than the population increase. Although this is a result of the downtown's outstanding success, each traffic type yields its own unique problems.

The last major downtown renovation occurred between 1968 and 1972 and results of downtown's heavy use is apparent. Architectural styles have also changed. In 1968 downtown's historic resources were not as widely appreciated and concepts of pedestrian use were simpler, both in Ashland and the nation. The age of the most recent downtown improvements causes additional problems. The Plaza's design is dated and its center pool usually empty. Planters on East Main Street need rejuvenation — the plants are overgrown and spindly. Current taste suggests more flowers.

The street trees on Main Street need immediate attention. A variety of sweetgum, large at maturity, they are lifting downtown sidewalks. The city has ground down the sidewalk corners in places and now much of the material is gone. The trees have been trimmed only in emergencies, and are becoming overgrown. Downtown trees must be kept in check and must not overpower the architecture. Prudent downtown tree management would replace a few trees each year with a different species, so that a variety of species, of different ages would flourish as an urban forest—hardier and more resistant to disease.

Increasing litter and trash cause additional problems. Many businesses discover that success produces a trash problem larger than planned. Some businesses do not plan for trash at all. Although Guanajuato Way provides a single example, the difficulty exists throughout downtown. Public trash receptacles are cheaply designed and are in poor repair. As downtown use grows the sidewalks become increasingly dirty. A full-time litter patrol should work during the months of peak use.

While Main Street and the Plaza are designed to accommodate pedestrians, "C" Street, Lithia Way, the side streets and alleys have few pedestrian amenities. The Plaza is the only gathering place, or pedestrian node, in downtown Ashland. This may contribute to the long perceived distances from available parking to shops.



As the downtown's street trees mature, they will need a regular program of maintenance and control. In many areas of the downtown, sidewalks must be rebuilt to correct the damage done by the tree's roots.

Weather protection downtown is a problem. Although awnings are popular, their lack of continuous use means that shopping is neglected on even slightly rainy days. More awnings and an umbrella loan program would help ease the pedestrian's reluctance on inclement days.

Finally, Ashland lacks the life contributed by street performers and sidewalk cafes. In his landmark work, "The Social Life of Small Urban Space", William Whyte identified these two attractions as major contributors to urban space success.

Organization

Downtown is one of Ashland's most important economic centers. A large part of the city's work force is employed here, and the town's financial center focuses here. Downtown provides the largest shopping center for durable goods, entertainment, and clothing. The downtown, therefore, demands proportionally more city services than do other city areas. A merchant organization which would promote cooperative marketing, address the downtown needs, and effectively manage the city center, would greatly contribute to the downtown's success.

The Program

The preceding analysis has outlined the history, current status, and strengths and weaknesses of the present downtown. However, any effective plan must recommend ways to alleviate current or future problems. This section considers the improvements needed to continue the downtown's success.

Since this plan is primarily action-oriented, it has a short time frame. Recommended actions are specific and intended for implementation within five years — most within two years. However, because these actions define a direction for the downtown, several long range policies are also described. These should be implemented after the successes or failures of prior actions, and changing conditions are evaluated.

The actions are divided into four major sections: Physical Development, Downtown Management, Regulation, and Economic Development. Physical Development includes capital intensive projects such as parking and pedestrian improvements. Downtown Management involves changes in ordinances, policies, and operating procedure, the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities, and the identification of revenue sources to support the programs. Regulation includes changing the city's laws and plans to better implement this plan. Economic Development involves policies or actions which will enhance the downtown's economy.

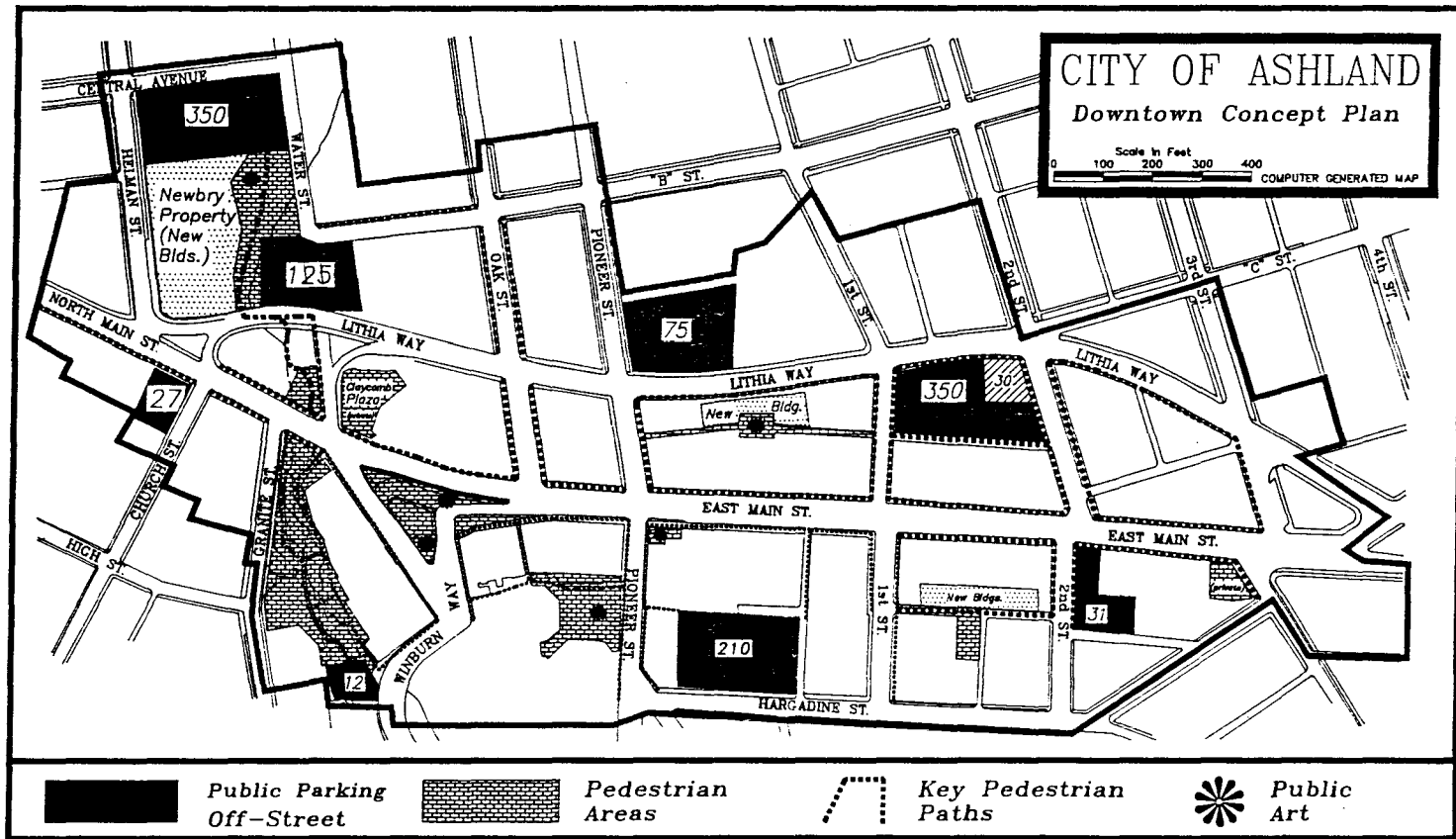
Most of these actions will be taken by the municipal government, but it will necessarily include the city's partners in downtown improvements — the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, the Ashland Downtown Association, The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and others.

Physical Development

The Concept Plan

It has been suggested that Ashland suffers from too much traffic, not enough parking, a lack of pedestrian amenities, and little to tie the downtown together as a unit. Attacking the problems one at a time sounds sensible, but because these elements are interrelated, a concept plan with an integrated solution must be adopted. The plan on the following pages shows all future parking areas, pedestrian attractors (small urban spaces designed to please pedestrians), and pedestrian paths.

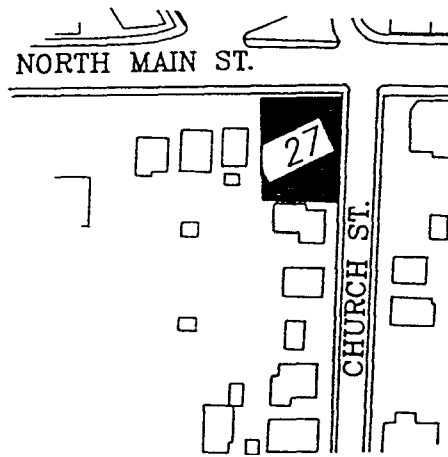
The plan's concept is to encourage downtown users to view it as a whole, store their cars in centralized areas, and use the downtown on foot. By placing parking lots at visible sites a block or two from the main downtown attractions, (the Shakespeare Festival, the Plaza, and Lithia Park) and by expanding



other potential downtown attractions (new pedestrian areas, outdoor markets, and new performing centers), pedestrian traffic will increase. Parking areas are a necessary ingredient but equal partners with pedestrian attractors and improved pedestrian paths. The plan identifies several potential parking areas, new plazas and parks, and indicates well-defined paths to connect them.

Parking Areas

There are several new parking areas and expansions of existing ones. The plan places the parking areas on the downtown perimeter to facilitate access to any part of the core area. The parking areas, their estimated costs, number of potentially available spaces, and layouts follow:



#1 North Main St. and Church St.

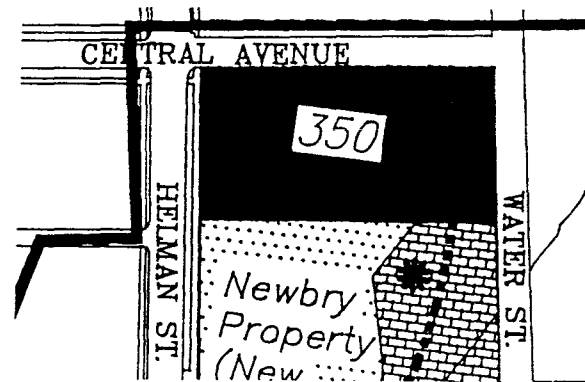
Number of proposed Spaces — 27
 Lot size — 32,000 sq. feet
 Existing use — unofficial parking area
 Acquisition and development Costs — \$181,000
 Cost per new space — \$6,705

Comments:

This is a particularly good location due to its proximity to the area that currently has peak parking demand. Very visible, it would encourage more pedestrian activity along North Main Street, currently a low-flow area. Because of its location and suitability for commercial exploitation, the land is expensive—\$6.93 per square foot.

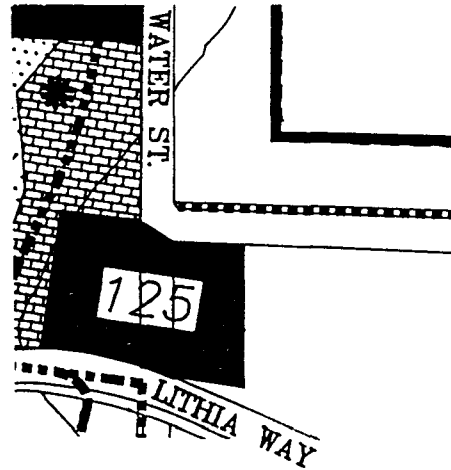
#2 Helman & Central

Number of Proposed Spaces — 350
 Ground level — 135
 Second level — 65
 Third level — 150
 Existing use — vacant
 Acquisition and development Costs — \$1,700,000
 Cost per new space — \$4,956



Comments:

This project should wait for the development of the Newbry property, currently owned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival Foundation. That land could develop either as a fourth theatre, or a commercial and residential venture. The parking area might be shared publicly and privately ; the ground floor providing parking for site use and the upper stories providing parking for the rest of the downtown. Central Street's completion should be accomplished in the first phase of the development.



#3 Water Street Parking Decks

Number of Proposed Spaces — 70
Existing Use — Public Parking area — 55 spaces
Acquisition and development costs — \$540,000
Cost per new space — \$6,000

Comments:

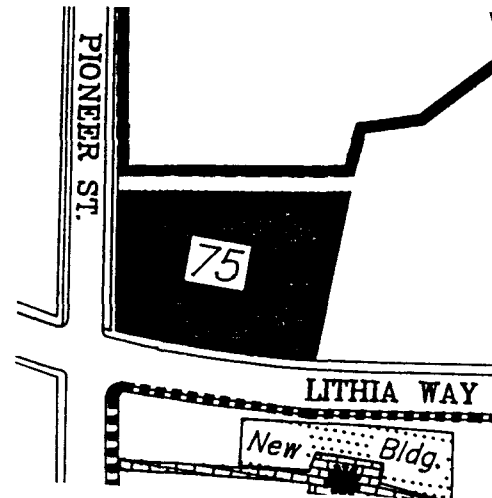
This project would deck the existing two parking lots on Water Street. Entrance would be off "B" Street. The proposed deck would span the two lots and Water Street as well, providing about 30,000 square feet of parking area.

#4 Lithia Way and Pioneer

Number of Proposed Spaces — 75
Existing Use — Unofficial parking area
Acquisition and development costs — \$450,000
Cost per new space — \$6,000

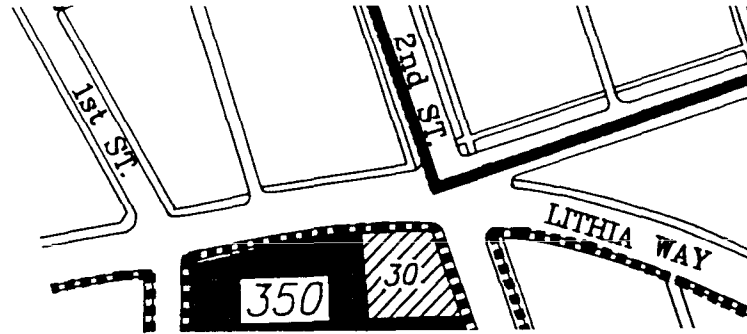
Comments:

This lot would provide parking spaces in a downtown area presently in need. Its short walking distance to East Main Street and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival theatres enhances its desirability. The pedestrian traffic increase associated with its development could help develop properties along Lithia Way.



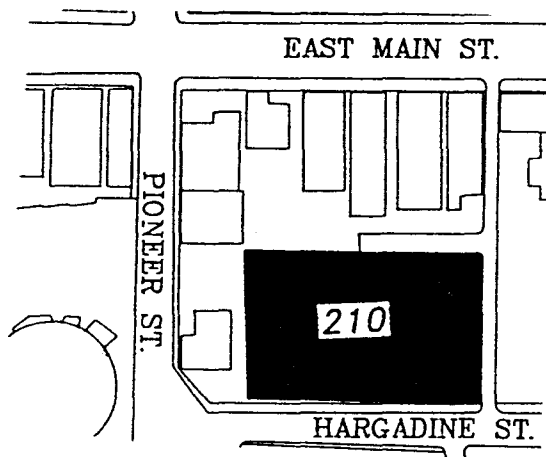
#5 Elks Corner lot — Lithia Way and First St.

Number of proposed spaces — 30 (Phase1)
350 (Phase2)
Existing use — fenced, vacant
Acquisition and development costs — \$175,000 (Phase1)
Cost per new space — \$5,833 (Phase1)



Comments:

The first phase of this lot's development would utilize presently fenced vacant land not in use at the present time. It would provide parking for vehicles entering the downtown area from Siskiyou Boulevard and for the southeast end of the downtown. Phase Two would be the construction of a three-story parking facility, with commercial uses on the first story, and parking on the second, third, and roof levels.



#6 Pioneer & Hargadine

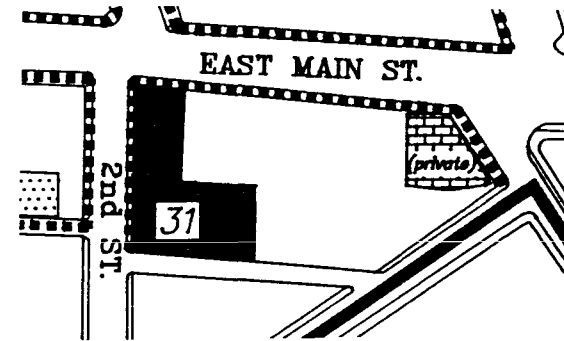
Number of Proposed Spaces — 120
Lot size — sq. ft.
Existing use — City owned surface parking lot — 90 spaces
Acquisition and development costs — \$720,000
Cost per new space — \$6,000

Comments:

This proposal involves decking of the present surface parking lot near the Oregon Shakespeare Festival theatres. This development would result in a three-story parking structure containing over 200 parking spaces. Since the City of Ashland already owns this property, no acquisition funds would be required.

#7 East Main & Second

Number of Proposed spaces — 31
Existing use — unofficial parking and private parking
Acquisition and development costs — \$207,000
Cost per new space — \$6,675



Comments:

This parking area would provide a very visible downtown parking area and increase the appearance of adequate parking. This proposal might be modified to only acquire the rear of the property, allowing the development of a commercial building on the front parcel.

#8 First & Second St. Parking — Diagonal Design

Number of proposed spaces — to be determined
Lot size — on-street parking
Existing use — parallel on-street parking and two-way traffic
Acquisition and development Costs — minimal
Cost per new space — minimal

Comments:

These new parking spaces would transform First and Second Streets to one-way streets with single-lane traffic. Diagonal head-in parking would be provided along both sides of the streets.

#9 Leased Spaces

This concept suggests that the city lease extra parking from new developments. When new large commercial buildings are built, for example, roof top parking can be provided. This parking can be screened by architecturally detailed parapets.

#10 On Street Parking Efficiency Improvements

On-street parking is the most desirable in the downtown area. Several downtown parking areas may be re-designed, thus saving the city thousands of dollars. If a rarely used loading zone is converted into three parking spaces, it can gain \$18,000 worth of parking. Off-street parking may inspire the city to increase on-street parking efficiency in some innovative ways and for negligible costs. The costs are negligible.

Pedestrian and Aesthetic Improvements

Ashland has many good existing areas for pedestrian activity. Some, like the Plaza, have been part of the city's design since its inception. Others, such as Guanajuato Way, are recent additions. None has been enhanced for at least fifteen years and some are either obsolete in design, deteriorating, or under-utilized. The following concepts are planned integrate them into the downtown plan and to make them more attractive.

Existing Areas

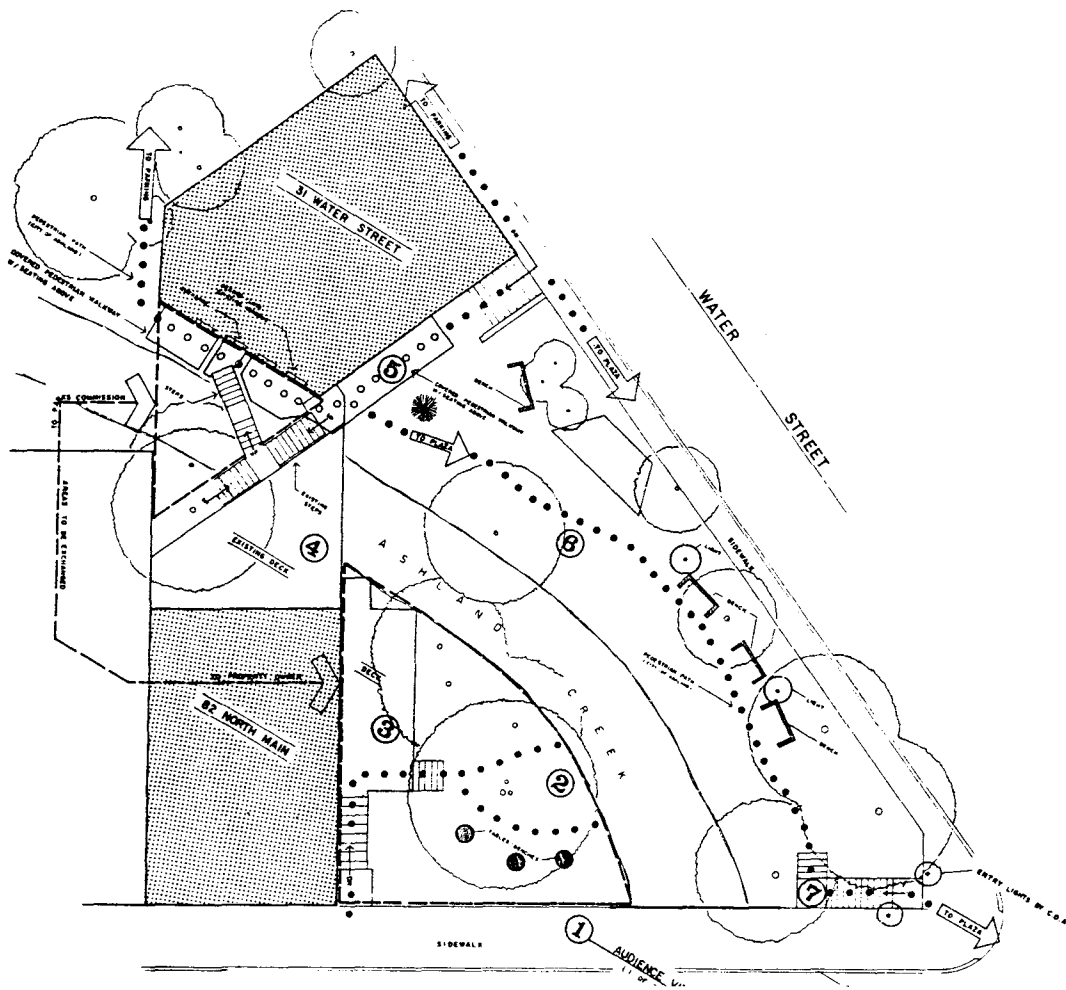
Guanajuato Way

Guanajuato Way was given to the city by the owners of the properties fronting the Plaza. Although dedicated park land, it is also used as rear access to the adjacent structures. Developed in 1971 by city staff, the Parks Commission now has maintenance responsibility. It is named after Ashland's Sister City, Guanajuato, Mexico, a beautiful colonial city famous for its plaza and narrow streets. Until recently, however, Guanajuato Way did not attract much pedestrian traffic. In the last five years, usage is much greater, due to Plaza building redevelopment. The summer Saturday Market has contributed to the area's popularity. The space's problems stem in part from design deficiencies and lack of maintenance. Located in the city's heart, the attractive development of adjacent public and private properties mandate a refurbishing.

The proposed re-design of Guanajuato Way will correct several deficiencies. Common trash disposal areas accommodate increasing trash problems. Removable bollards block off the east side of the creek from traffic during pleasant weather, allowing expanded food service and performances. A deck expansion connects the west side of the creek to the east side, providing more spontaneous movement, and the west side, with sidewalks and grassy shaded areas, is graced with decorative benches and lights from Guanajuato.

Bluebird Park

Bluebird Park was created in the early 1970's. Two buildings which spanned the creek were demolished and a small, pocket park developed. The park was landscaped and developed by volunteers until 1982 when the Parks & Recreation Commission accepted the park as dedicated park land. It is the only area in the downtown where one can reach the creek. Its proximity to the water and the combination of stream sounds and surrounding walls indicate great potential as an exciting, popular urban space. Bluebird Park, however, was designed as a refuge — not the best design goal for a downtown park, especially



when Lithia Park is so close. The small park suffers poor access, and the same lack of pedestrian activity common to other sunken plazas. There is no commanding reason to go down to it, and being there suggests the feeling of the bottom of a well. Sunken downtown parks or plazas can be successful when streets, mezzanines, and decks exist nearby. This forms a stage for activity at the bottom and creates various levels as components of the space. More successful areas also have a destination such as stores, or a subway that encourages pedestrian traffic. Most downtown use is very purposeful and the enjoyment of public spaces should enhance this use, not serve as a destination in itself. Bluebird Park must be integrated with the downtown. Located between parking and the Plaza, surrounded on two sides by redeveloped buildings, and offering only one entrance, it becomes a dead end. The park needs more opened accesses, pedestrian flows, and areas to overlook it from surrounding streets and buildings.

The design changes provide three new park accesses: a broad stairwell which opens from the corner of Water and North Main Street, a narrow stairway which provides access to the bottom floor of the building west of the park, and a bridge hugging the side of the building that fronts on Water Street above the creek. These changes will make the park a desirable area to walk and offer several activity levels to intrigue the passers-by to and from the Water Street parking areas.

The stairs should each be designed with landings — both for safety and as spots to overlook the park. The west side of the park, across the creek from the main

The proposed redesign of Bluebird Park would trade some public property for an access to the Water Street parking areas. Combined with a new stairway at the corner of Water and Main Streets this would intergrate the park into the downtown pedestrian traffic flow.

body, is only visually useful and could be exchanged for access to the parking area. It should be used only for decks and stairways, and the heavy tree cover should be retained. Several activity levels on the sidewalks, stairs, and decks overlooking the park area would provide a path through the park.

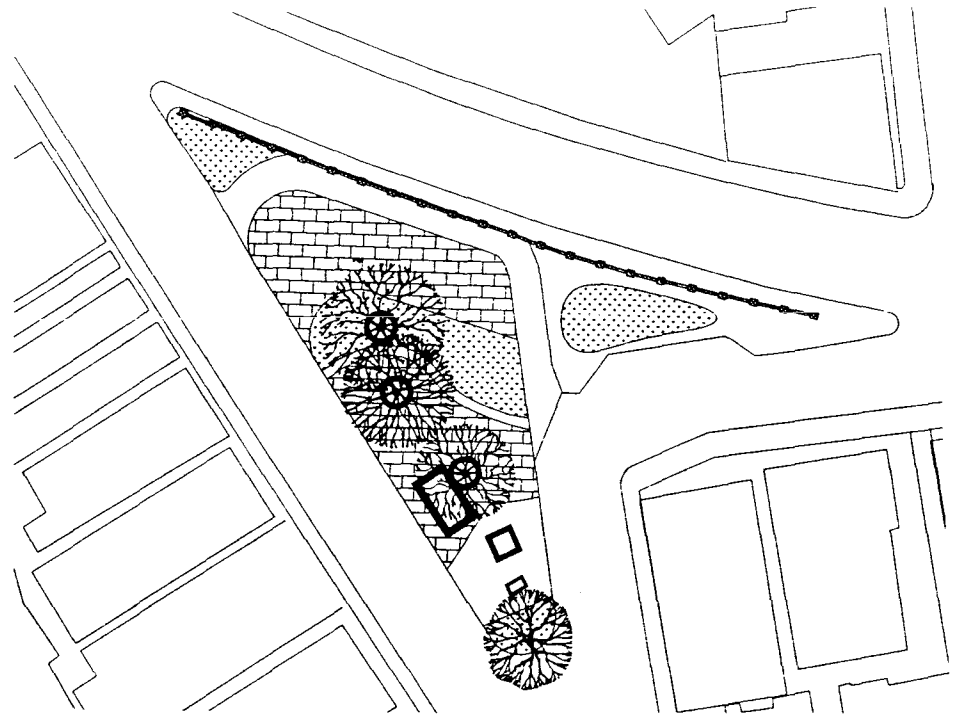
The Plaza

The city's oldest, most vital, and important public space has some shortcomings. Most of these stem from its design — created to encourage people to pass through rather than to linger. Succeeding generation's redesign of the plaza is almost an Ashland tradition, and while we should respect major landscaping and monuments, some aspects can be slightly changed to enhance it. Major changes concentrate on the island section north of the Carter Memorial Fountain. Although this area has large trees the grassy area is not suitable for gatherings and the pool is mostly non-functional.

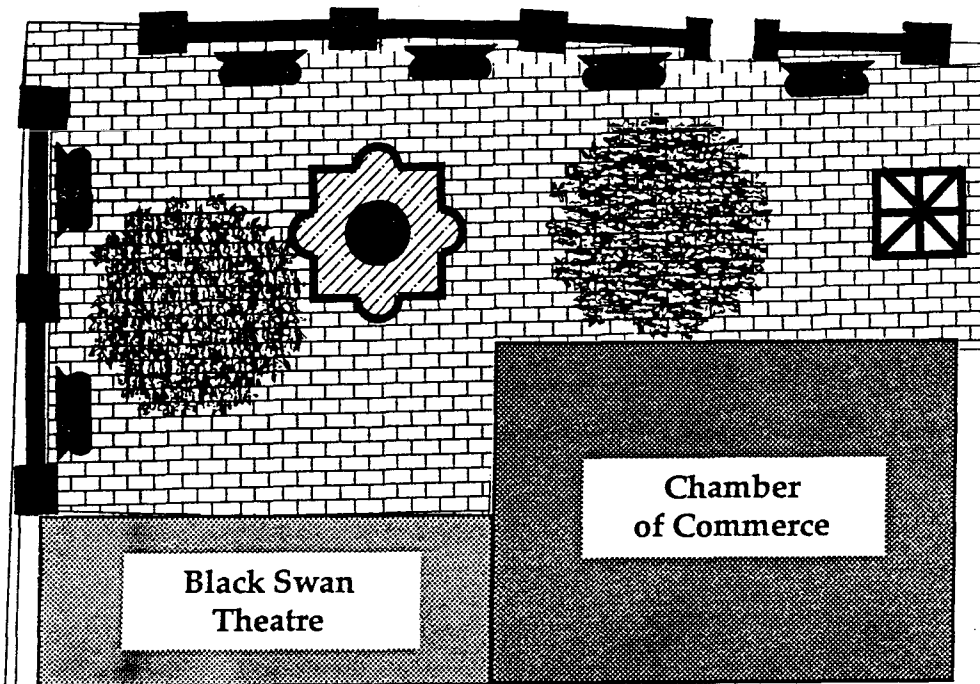
The new design suggests that most of the low growing shrubs and evergreen trees be removed, the four other trees be limbed to a height of twelve feet, the pool area removed or redesigned into a simple water-works fountain, and that an area formed by broad stairs with more seating be constructed. Brick paving would replace some of the grass and a low wall would surround the new plaza. The focus toward the center, the white noise from the fountains, the noise attenuation and sense of security from the walls should transform the plaza area and create a central place for various activities.

The Plaza's traffic pattern would be altered. The entrance from Oak Street, and the parking on the north side of the Plaza island would be removed. The parking would be recovered at the beginning of East Main Street, the Plaza therefore suffering no net loss in traffic. Cutting off Oak Street would reduce congestion at that intersection, increase its capacity to handle traffic, and eliminate a confusing situation. Traffic would swing wide and allow wider sidewalks in front of City Hall and adjacent businesses. Although the route across the north of the Plaza would remain, its width would be reduced. Removable bollards would block off the small section when activity in the plaza warranted it. This route serves only as a convenience road and is not necessary for the Plaza's function. The Plaza would function more like its namesakes in Latin America.

The Plaza is also a proposed location for a much-needed public restroom. Several locations are possible, on the Plaza, at the base of the Shakespeare stairs, or in another location. Whatever the final decision, it should be located in an area of high pedestrian traffic, or nearby such high traffic flows. The existing information booth would be redesigned, removing the peaked roof and expanded. The same building



This concept plan of the redesigned Plaza shows an area for urban interaction, much like the public squares in other cities. More of the island area would be surfaced with brick-in-sand, like the Shakespeare Plaza, thus allowing a variety of pedestrian activity and options. Seating is concentrated around the Plaza trees. A public services building provides information, restrooms, mail, newspapers, public phones, and theatre ticket sales.



The Black Swan Plaza offers a pedestrian attraction in the heart of the shopping district. Trees form a shady canopy and a small fountain or sculpture provide a focal point. Comfortable benches draw the pedestrian in and the information displays are relocated to a wall where they may be studied in detail.

The redesign removes the existing landscaping and relocates the information map to a wall out of the plaza's center. Shade trees are provided in sufficient density to form a shaded canopy and benches accommodate seating around a small courtyard. The area is defined by a low wall and a fountain incorporating a sculpture provides a central point of focus and white noise to mask traffic sounds. An important aspect of this design is to extend the Plaza area to the curb, so pedestrians have a sense of entering and leaving the Plaza, even if they are only strolling down East Main Street.

Lithia Way and Sidestreets

This project places more pedestrian amenities on Lithia Way and on the Oak, Pioneer, First, and Second Streets between East Main and Lithia Way. These amenities include street trees, wider

would also consolidate mail boxes, public telephones, and vending machines for newspapers. The structure could also be used as a box office for performing arts groups, providing a convenient outlet for budding organizations.

The development is proposed in two phases. Phase I includes the restroom construction, brick paving, seating, and trimming or removal of evergreen shrubs. Phase 2 consists of the expansion and re-routing of traffic.

Black Swan Plaza

The public space in front of the Black Swan Theatre and the Chamber of Commerce building is so poorly designed that it is rarely used. Large concrete planters occupy most of the space and are filled with holly bearing small, painful thorns. The planters ledges, which could provide some sitting space, are too narrow to accommodate even casual pedestrian seating. The space has little of interest to draw people although located on an excellent corner where pedestrian traffic from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival intersects East Main Street's heavily trafficked sidewalks.

This area has the potential of being a very successful Plaza, and a location for significant public art pieces.

and more decorative sidewalks, low-level street lights and benches. These amenities should extend off of Lithia Way particularly around the projected parking lots and down Oak Street to the proposed Ashland Performing Arts Center, and down Pioneer to the new parking area on Lithia Way and Pioneer Street.

Because much of Lithia Way is undeveloped some of these improvements could be required of new developments. A master plan should be plotted early in the downtown plan's implementation and policies developed to require public development right-of-way when adjacent improvements are made.

New Developments

While Ashland has many downtown areas that simply need fine tuning, opportunities exist for larger improvements. Important pedestrian amenities will attract traffic to areas where it is currently lagging and will provide a pedestrian activity center on each downtown block. Potential areas already exist although design deficiencies prevent their use by the downtown community.

Will Dodge Way & Enders Alley

These two alleys have only recently acquired their formal names. Each has a few businesses that front only on these alleys, and most of the businesses that front on East Main Street also have public entrances on the alleys. The alleys have good pedestrian activity potential if they are re designed for it.

Will Dodge Way, where more businesses front and where more land is available for development holds the greatest potential. The proposed development plan map shows the alley closed to traffic for the peak pedestrian times of the day, from 11:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. All the new buildings and some of the existing buildings have double frontages. With the alley closed outdoor eating, food vendors, and outdoor merchandising can flourish. A central courtyard, about fifty feet square, draws pedestrians down the alley. Buildings at least two stories in height are required along Lithia Way in order to enclose the alley and give it an intimate atmosphere.

Light Replacements in the Historic Commercial Area

Two kinds of lamp posts exist on the Plaza and East Main Street; a tall mast arm-type designed primarily for vehicle lighting on the streets, and smaller twelve-foot high decorative lamps for better sidewalk level lighting. These lower lights are modern in design, and have little relevance to the historic buildings. These street lights would be replaced with cast iron posts similar to the older models removed in the late 1950's and 1960's. The modern lights would be reinstalled on Lithia Way to increase sidewalk amenities and to blend with the contemporary building design on Lithia Way.

Viaduct

Although the area underneath the Lithia Way Viaduct is completely undeveloped, it holds a pivotal place in the downtown plan. Traffic between the Newbry site and the Plaza must travel under the viaduct — a high, open air space with shade and rain protection. This area needs a few pedestrian paths, night lighting and landscaping. It would be suitable for an outdoor market if additional space is needed.

Ashland Creek Park Extension

As the Newbry site expands and develops, Ashland Creek's flood plain must be considered. Occasional violent floods preclude the construction of buildings, but correct development of the area would yield a rich space. Although the Parks Commission hesitates to accept such a special use area as dedicated park land, it should be dedicated as an extension of the Ashland Creek area and viewed as an exclusively pedestrian plaza site developments would front. Designed correctly from the outset, it could accommodate all the activities of a downtown open space. The parking area on the north of the site will be the largest in the city, and the space should expand to attract pedestrians along this route. Near the middle of the creek area, an area should be set aside for a large sculpture fountain. Access to the creek, with stairs and wading areas, would create major amenities.

Public Art and Fountains

Our downtown has several major public sculptures. The Plaza has the Carter Memorial statue, the Library has the Chapman-Mickelson statue, and the Butler-Perozzi Fountain graces the area near the bandshell in Lithia Park. A statue of Abraham Lincoln, currently under restoration, will soon stand again in the park. Sculptures are important because they express the artistic sense of the time and form focal points for public spaces. Fountains add the benefits of climate modification, masking noise, and cooling feet on hot days. Sculpture fountains combine the benefits of both.

There are four areas where additions of sculpture or fountains would particularly enhance the open spaces they occupy:

The Plaza Fountain

Although the Plaza is already rich in sculpture, its re-design will concentrate people in the island. The present low wall will not provide enough sound buffering to insulate the space from auto impact. Replacing the present pool with a low maintenance re-circulating fountain will provide splashing water to buffer noise in the area and provide a focal point for the plaza seating area.

Black Swan Plaza

The Black Swan Theatre plaza needs both a strong focal point and noise buffering for which a small sculpture fountain would be suited. As this will be one of the first projects undertaken, it should be a well chosen piece of public art. The fountain and sculpture should be an appropriate scale for the small intimate area of this plaza.

Will Dodge Way Plaza

The new central plaza on Will Dodge Way will be large enough to support a larger-than-life-size sculpture. A fountain is not necessary here since the buildings and less traffic reduce the noise level. The sculpture's placement in the plaza will focus attention in an enchanting area.

Ashland Creek Extension

The plaza in front of the Ashland Creek development should have an artistic focal point. Given the area's size, a sculpture fountain seems appropriate, but final decisions regarding type and location should await the site's future development.

Management

While the preceding section deals with necessary physical changes for downtown improvement, the following considers potential changes in downtown management—both by the public agency responsible for services, and by private groups that drive the downtown economy.

Street Names

The first recommendation is simple. Since the development of the two-way couplet of Lithia Way, "C" Street, and the viaduct, confusion has existed over the street's name. The name "C" Street confuses it with the rest of "C" Street, a primarily residential route. The entire street should be renamed "Lithia Way" — thereby giving it a single identity and recognizing the street's relationship to downtown.

Litter

Litter control is a growing problem and has increased with take-out food locations and a growing population. The city, however, still applies ten-year-old solutions that worked when downtown was much quieter than it is today. A full-time downtown litter patrol should function during the busiest

months. The patrol could serve in other ways as well. The Portland Transit Mall employs two people who keep the area spotless, watch out for trouble, and provide assistance to persons unfamiliar with the area. This management seems perfect for downtown Ashland, and the “janitor-ambassador” job could be a popular summer employment opportunity.

The city and the Ashland Downtown Association should sponsor the annual cleanup of the downtown by Scouts, service groups, and the like every spring. This would give the community a sense of involvement in the downtown, as well as improve the appearance of the city and increase awareness of littering. Also, a program of annually steam cleaning the sidewalks should be instituted to remove the stains that accumulate with heavy use during the year.

Trash

Trash is a public and private problem. Public trash is accommodated by trash receptacles along Main Street. They are home-made, break easily and should be replaced with more durable and attractive receptacles. Although private trash is a problem in several areas of the downtown, it is especially severe on Guanajuato Way. Adjacent businesses should jointly use and screen trash receptacles. Similar solutions must be found to the problem on Guanajuato Way. The site review process must insure that trash containers are adequate in size and screened from view. A corrective program to screen trash areas along Guanajuato Way and an ordinance prohibiting trash from being stacked in publicly visible areas should be instituted and enforced. While the city needs to take a stronger stand in enforcing trash laws, the Council, The Parks and Recreation Commission, and the individual landowners need to work in a cooperative manner to resolve the existing trash problems.

Limited Access on Alleys and Guanajuato Way

The use of Guanajuato Way for deliveries, auto traffic, and illegal parking is an obvious conflict. These inhibit the use of the street for pedestrian use. Other routes, such as Will Dodge Way will experience the same problem. As they develop, however, the alleys must be kept open for deliveries and trash disposal during certain hours of the day. Pedestrian streets must be closed to auto traffic from 11:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily in the busy season and the closure should be accomplished with removable, attractive bollards. However, as we plan the conversion of these areas to greater pedestrian use, we must maintain designs that accommodates the free flow of delivery vehicles during the hours they operate.

Sidewalk Cafes

Using sidewalks for restaurant service is an old custom. They are common and popular in Europe and Latin America, and are used increasingly in the United States. Sidewalk restaurants have appeared in Seattle, Portland and Eugene in the last two years and provide good locations for a popular pastime —

watching people. The restaurants require a wide sidewalk or a street dedicated solely to pedestrian travel. Ashland has several areas where limited seating can be accommodated but additional areas should be identified and exploited both on public and private lands. The best cafes are at sidewalk level in full view of passing traffic.

Performers

Both formal and informal performances are part of many popular downtowns. In Ashland formal performances are limited to Saturday Market on Guanajuato Way and informal performances are banned as begging. Areas can be developed that will be perfect for both formal performances such as brown-bag concerts and traditional Christmas concerts, to spontaneous jam sessions held during downtown festivals. The downtown performers, while at times delightful, should be controlled so that they do not become an excuse for panhandling, or degenerate into behavior that most find obnoxious.

Main St. Trees & Planters

Although East Main Street was improved when planters and street trees were added, the landscape elements have since been largely ignored and have received little other than minimal maintenance. The trees need trimming; some are breaking the sidewalks. The sidewalks need a repair schedule and diseased or overgrown trees demand attention. The planter areas need to be redesigned, with a better variety of plants, better, more comfortable seating, and they should include several pedestrian services, such as mailboxes, bulletin boards, information, bus stops, or the like.

Newspaper Vending Machines

The location of newspaper vending machines on the public sidewalks is both unsightly and a detriment to the pedestrian. They are not well distributed in the downtown, of a poor design, and some have very poor maintenance. These should be banned from the public streets in the downtown area, and replaced with vending machines built in at appropriate location, e.g. plazas and the corner planters. Sufficient number should be provided to accommodate the large variety of newspapers now sold in the downtown.

Awnings and Loaned Umbrella Program

The city can encourage sidewalk weather protection on key downtown pedestrian paths. The Ashland Downtown Association can support this by purchasing 100 or so brightly colored umbrellas with a unique logo. The umbrellas could be loaned to shoppers downtown, and redistributed at the end of the day. Coloration and wording on the umbrellas would discourage theft. Ashland could boast of providing the world's first portable mall.

Regulation

The city's charter authority to enact laws is its second best tool to affect change, after its power to allocate and expend the public resources. Ashland's land-use laws are some of the most effective. These laws, and the policies that affect the Planning Commission's discretionary decisions must be reviewed and this plan's recommendations brought into conformance.

Vacant Lands

Newbry Site

The Newbry site is the last large parcel of vacant land in the downtown area. Its development will affect the downtown for many years to come. The city must give careful thought how its development can enhance the downtown not detract from it. The parcel has many possibilities, but whatever the development of this property, it must be considered an extension of the downtown and the functions of this area must support the healthy economic expansions of the downtown area. It seems to lend itself to a mixed use commercial development — retail shops, tourist and possibly residential housing, and restaurants. Any potential area developer must address the concept plan and work within the four basic elements indicated: the land for development, the Ashland Creek Greenway plaza, the public parking area, and the sculpture of fountain focal point. The development of Central Street should be accomplished whenever this area is developed, as it will provide better access to the downtown, and a bypass for local traffic that does not have a destination downtown.

Other Vacant Lands

Other downtown vacant lands are suitable for a wide range of developments. In the downtown, unlike other areas of the city, buildings should be placed immediately adjacent to the sidewalk and generally be two or more stories. While suburban development patterns are designed for the automobile shopper, the downtown should focus on the pedestrian. Setbacks in excess of five feet should be devoted to some pedestrian activity such as outdoor seating. Building adjacent to the sidewalk and developing the rear of parcels or central atriums as landscaped areas, provides a better solution. Traditional enhancements of the sidewalk environment—arcades, awnings, alcoves, and broad storefront windows should be included in each design. Where new or redeveloped buildings front on an existing or potential pedestrian alley, frontages to both areas should be included.

Redevelopment

Three large historic buildings will probably see very different and more intense uses in the next twenty years — the Masonic Lodge, the Elks lodge, and the Mark Antony Hotel. Other buildings will undoubtedly redevelop, and conformance with both the city's historic guidelines and the downtown development criteria should insure that the developments are positive.

The following criteria are adopted with this plan and shall be used as part of the land use approval process.

Developments on Pedestrian Paths outlined in the Concept Plan should adhere to the following criteria:

- Parking lots adjacent to the pedestrian path are prohibited.
- Pedestrian amenities such as a broad sidewalk, arcades, alcoves, colonnades, porticoes, awnings, and sidewalk seating should be provided where possible.
- Weather protection on adjacent key pedestrian paths are to be required by all new developments.
- Windows and other features of interest to pedestrians should be provided adjacent to the sidewalk. Blank walls adjacent to sidewalks should be avoided.
- Two-story development should be encouraged downtown, with the second stories seeing commercial, residential, or parking uses.
- Automotive uses such as service stations, auto sales, and tire stores should be discouraged in the downtown. The city should use its discretionary powers, such as Conditional Use permits, to discourage or deny such uses.

Parking Ordinances

The city currently allows development to occur in the C1-D zone without requiring off-street parking. Although downtown redevelopment would be impossible without this feature, it is irresponsible to continue the policy when downtown parking is critically short. Requiring off-street parking for each development would be either impossible or detrimental to pedestrian flows. It should be made a conditional use and its appropriateness reviewed.

One solution is to set up a funding mechanism allowing increased downtown property values to pay for new parking and pedestrian developments. Most downtowns use this method called a tax increment district. The third phase of this plan's implementation is to investigate the setting up such a district.

Housing

Although downtown housing was thought to be incompatible with the development of urban centers, in recent years the value of a downtown resident population has increased. The downtown resident's round-the-clock eyes and ears reduce crime. Downtown apartments suit many lifestyles—that of the single person, student, actor, writer and senior. They offer independence from automobiles in a stimulating urban atmosphere.

Downtown housing also provides a profitable use for second and third stories which often stand vacant. Current ordinance, however, inhibits downtown's use for housing by requiring a conditional use for residential uses, off-street parking on the site, and by demanding that twenty-five percent of the lot be landscaped.

Housing should be introduced downtown on upper stories. Allowing it outright and removing off-street parking requirements encourages owners to rent to travelers and enhances the area's diversity. This will allow a flexible downtown housing pattern and encourage appropriate downtown multi-story development.

It should be pointed out that downtown housing and traveler's accommodations are the only uses that require off street parking in the current code. This should be changed, as the parking patterns of these uses usually peak at night, when other parking demand is low, and they do not require as much off street parking per square foot as many permitted uses.

City Hall

Finally, the city should officially state that City Hall will remain in its present location for the immediate future. While as the city grows some functions will have to be relocated, the continued presence of the municipal government ties it to the downtown, and therefore to the people. With the absence of a City Hall downtown, there is some danger that the downtown will lapse into a tourist amenity. The presence of a City Hall downtown provides at least these important enhancements: it shows a commitment to the downtown to work together on its problems, reinforces the downtown as the city center, and continues a tradition begun by the first settlers.

Elizabethan Theatre

One of the upcoming projects that will have a substantial impact on the city will be the renovation of the Elizabethan Theatre. The current construction, dating from 1959, is dated, and the rising ambient noise level of the city has degraded the performance quality significantly in recent years. The stage needs to be buffered from the traffic and the street. These changes will change the appearance of the streetscape, and it must be done in a sensitive manner, considering that it lies on the border between residential and commercial uses. Nevertheless, the Elizabethan Theatre is Ashland's flagship playhouse, and is the cornerstone of much of the Festival's success. Its renovation is an important project that must be accomplished if the high quality of the Festival is to be maintained and improved.

Economic Development

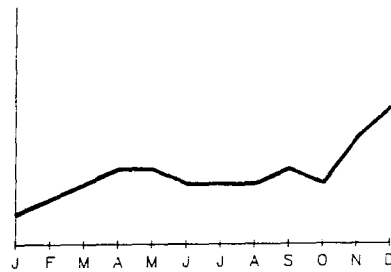
A group of active, involved downtown community members is essential for a successful program. The Ashland Downtown Association plays a key role for the downtown, and provides a voice long lacking in the community. The city should support these activities and involve members in decisions to assure that they will support the actions on behalf of their businesses.

The Visitors and Convention Bureau receives the largest subsidy of public moneys of any private agency from funds developed through the motel-hotel tax. Since the downtown has the largest tourist attractions in Ashland, the Shakespeare and Lithia Park, and is an attraction in its own right, the downtown and Visitors and Convention Bureau must cooperate to market the city to visitors.

Downtown economic development must enhance the three major downtown markets, local, regional and tourist. Each should be developed without undue concentration on a single one. The resulting economic activity will enhance the existing economy and make it more resilient.

Finally, the city must support the continued health of the Shakespeare Festival and encourage new enterprises such as the Ashland Performing Arts Center and the Oregon Cabaret Theatre. Both existing and new arts groups are needed to insure a vital arts community in Ashland.

**Monthly Activity Model
Local Retail & Services**



Local Retail and Services

The downtown should establish a festival to draw local residents downtown after the tourist crowds have departed. Although the Halloween celebration has flourished the period between Halloween and New Year's Day should emphasize local resident's interests. The student population's special needs should be acknowledged and this holiday season used to introduce them to the downtown. Entertainment should cater to the local market and retailing should continue throughout the year.

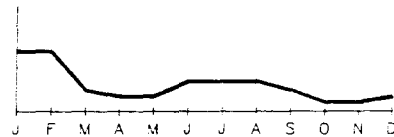
Regional Retailing and Services

The downtown should capitalize on its tourism reputation to supplement the off-season local market with a regional market. More people are coming into the valley to the Rogue Valley Mall and Ashland could encourage overnight stays to take advantage of restaurants, plays, concerts, and local shopping. Lithia Park, and the downtown offer good potential attractions for regional visitation at Christmas. Activity would peak during the summer and at Christmas.

**Monthly Activity Model
Regional Retailing & Services**



**Monthly Activity Model
Outdoor Sports**



Outdoor Sports

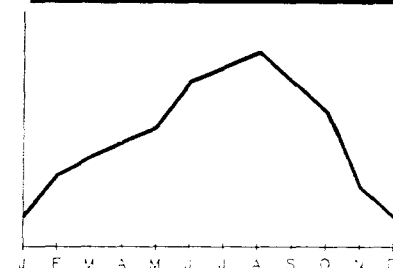
The downtown's tie to outdoor sports should be better developed. Skiing could provide a needed boost to the downtown — skiers are known consumers of restaurant services as well as other commodities. Golf and rafting could provide summer peaks. While not the activity center, the downtown would benefit from the resulting increased tourism.

Performing Arts Tourism

Ashland's downtown is the Shakespeare Festival's center. The Festival's continued strength is essential, and the city should support its efforts at expansion and continued quality.

The city must also diversify and improve its offerings in the field of performing arts. The Oregon Cabaret Theatre is an important development. The proposed Ashland Performing Arts Center suggests

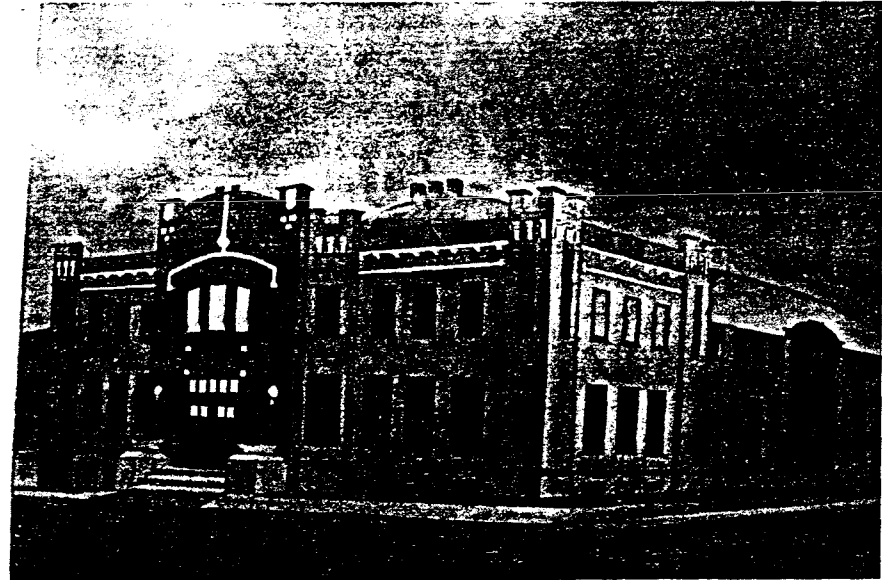
**Monthly Activity Model
Performing Arts Tourism**



that Ashland can develop a second arts center — distinct from the Shakespeare Festival but with similar high standards.

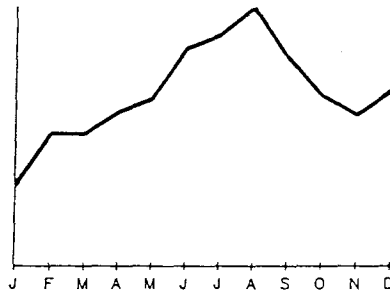
Performing arts of substantial quality benefit both the cultural life of Ashland's residents and the economy of tourist related businesses in many ways. The city should encourage and support new initiatives.

Other seasons and other attractions must also be promoted. The Visitors and Conventions Bureau, the Ashland Downtown Association, and other organizations should work closely with new theatre and entertainment groups to develop a coordinated approach to performing arts advertisement in Ashland. The information booth on the Plaza, for example, could be used as a centralized box office. The visual arts are an increasingly important aspect of our economy, and festivals which emphasize them should be developed. Since tourism relies on travel from metropolitan areas for support, it will continue to have a pronounced summer peak. However, the difference between the summer and other seasons can be reduced.



The Ashland Performing Arts Center proposes a new, 1,000 seat facility; capable of welcoming local, national and international artists. It offers an exciting expansion of the performing arts beyond current levels.

**Monthly Activity Model
The Composite Economy**



The Composite Economy

The effect of a multi-pronged attack on the seasonal economy problem is demonstrated in the graph at right, the sum of the preceding graphs. While it shows a summer peak, the level of economic activity year round is higher. The resiliency of the model is that if any single component suffers a loss, the others may be able to compensate. This insulates the city as a whole from radical swings in the economy.

Action Plan

The following four phases are designed to implement this plan. The first phase is no-cost or low-cost programs — preparatory actions for later more complex work. The second is the first of three construction phases and is the most detailed. The third and fourth phases are long range, relatively expensive projects that will require re-evaluation as the proposed construction date approaches. They are intended to be included in the city's capital improvements program. While this plan's adoption does not guarantee

to be included in the city's capital improvements program. While this plan's adoption does not guarantee that the action will take place, it indicates general agreement with the concepts presented.

The city should appoint an ad hoc committee composed of Planning Commissioners, City Council members, and downtown business people to oversee the project, develop the required support, and advise the staff in the design and implementation of this plan.

Phase 1, Low Cost, No Cost, and Preparations

Organization and Management

The downtown plan requires actions and coordination between several city agencies. It demands commitment to the plan by department heads and elected officials, and requires an understanding of their roles. City agency coordination functions well as long as roles, responsibility, and funding are well defined. Muddled definition may result in conflict, inaction and hard feelings. The first requirement of the plan, therefore, should be a clear delineation of the agencies various responsibilities.

Traffic and Streets

- 1) Change 'C' Street to Lithia Way from Third to East Main St.
- 2) Close Guanajuato Way to all traffic from 11:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. from June 1 to October 15, and seasonally as required at other times of the year. The costs for this are negligible.
- 3) Convert First and Second Streets into one-way couplets between Lithia Way and East Main to permit diagonal parking. The change would permit twenty additional spaces at minimal cost, a savings of about \$100,000 over purchase and development of land.
- 4) Relandscape the planters downtown with more annuals, and prune the street trees. When the tree's size permits, limb up to twelve feet in height.
- 5) Implement parking efficiency improvements to existing downtown streets, including a study of diagonal, compact, loading zones, and other spaces.
- 6) Develop a bikeway plan for the downtown to better accommodate bicycle traffic downtown.
- 7) Work with the RVTD to develop a better Ashland shuttle and other mass transit facilities for the downtown.

Plan & Ordinances

- 1) Develop a sidewalk and public space use ordinance to permit and regulate the following in the downtown area:
 - a) Sidewalk seating for restaurants. As most sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate seating, a plan for widening the sidewalks where appropriate should be included in Phase 1.
 - b) An ADA and city sponsored program of music in the plazas during times that people gather at these spots.
- 2) Modify the downtown planning ordinances to:
 - a) Expand the C1-D district to the downtown plan area.
 - b) Regulate and discourage off-street parking for new developments along critical pedestrian paths as defined in the Concept Plan.
 - c) Permit housing downtown above the ground floor as an outright use, with special regulations that consider the unique needs of downtown housing.
 - d) Study the need for creating a tax increment district.
 - e) The existing downtown employee ban on parking in the summer should be more vigorously enforced.

Studies for Phase 2

Develop the following for Phase 2:

- 1) Adopt a parking plan that will add 100 to 200 new spaces to the downtown.
- 2) Pre-design and cost out the improvements.
- 3) Pre-design and cost out associated pedestrian improvements for Phase 2, not less than 15% of the parking improvement's cost.
- 4) Acquire appraisals for the acquisitions.

- 5) Determine if condemnation will be necessary, and if it is, retain a condemnation specialist to proceed with condemnation plans.
- 6) Pass the necessary funding plan for Phase 2.

Phase 2

Improvements

• Lithia Way and Pioneer Lot.....	\$450,000
• A second lot (either 2nd and Lithia Way, 30 spaces, 2nd and East Main, 31 spaces, or a half deck over the existing Hargadine Lot).....	\$200,000
• Pedestrian Amenities, to include the following: Repair and improvement of sidewalks and street trees, relandscaping and improvement of the existing planters downtown, development of a public restroom on the main pedestrian flow in the downtown, development of a plaza in front of the Black Swan Theatre	\$200,000
• Additional Parking lot Purchase	<u>\$100,000</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$950,000</u>

City Grants	\$300,000
State Lottery Funds	<u>\$100,000</u>
TOTAL GRANTS	<u>\$400,000</u>

The remainder could be financed by the city government through sale of bonds. The annual debt services could be met through a variety of income sources, that would spread the load among the users and beneficiaries of the downtown.

Net to Finance\$550,000

Financing Costs:

Principal	Interest Rate	Term	Payment
\$550,000	7.50%	20	\$53,951

Income Sources (per annum):

Motel-Hotel Tax	\$16,875
Property Levy	\$7,500
Parking Fines	\$8,500
<u>Business Levy</u>	<u>\$21,076</u>
Total	<u>\$53,951</u>

The property levy would be assessed at about \$15.50 per 1000 square feet of building area, or of lot area for vacant lots.

The city now dedicated \$1.00 per parking ticket to downtown parking, this would continue the practice.

The assessment against businesses downtown would be assessed based on the amount of off-street parking required, minus the amount provided. The requirements are from the Ashland Zoning Code. \$12.18 would be assessed per year per space required and not provided on site. An approximate breakdown of charges would be as follows:

Cost per demanded parking space \$12.18

<u>Use Type</u>	<u>Parking Demand per unit of measure</u>	<u>Cost per unit of measure</u>
Office	2.50 per 1,000 sq. ft.	\$30.46
Retail	3.33 per 1,000 sq. ft.	\$40.62
Restaurant	10.00 per 1,000 sq. ft.	\$121.85
Theater	0.25 per seat	\$3.05
Residential Unit	1.5 per unit	\$ 18.28
Hotel Unit	1 per unit	\$ 12.18

Phases 3 & 4

Phase 3 will occur in 1995; Phase 4 about the year 2000. The major project will be additional parking projects picked from this plan and from associated pedestrian improvements. Specific projects should be developed close to the implementation date.

The funding should come from a variety of sources, but is essential that the downtown select a source of funding that will grow with the downtown. Tax increment financing accomplished just this, and should be investigated as soon as Phase 2 is completed. The tax increment district should be established in Phase 3, and last 20 years. The increment will develop over the 7 years between 1988 and 1995, and could be used for Phase Three. The increment will increase during the next five years, and could again be used to fund improvements. The district must be established before major new improvements are made, i.e. on the Newbry property, along Lithia Way, or the redevelopment of existing properties and buildings, and as existing tax-exempt properties re-enter the tax roles.

Conclusion

This plan's primary emphasis is to retain Ashland's position as a premier city. We must have the faith necessary to let the city continue to blossom in the direction it is already moving. The plan's purpose is to attend to the details — parking, a new plaza design, and new achievements in arts and culture. Ashland's creative energies are phenomenal, the residents' common concern for the city indicates that we share many common values.

City leaders' greatest challenge is to listen to good ideas and formulate the path that will lead us all into our imagined future. Ashland's history tells us that prospects are excellent; that we will find the balance between organization and chaos that keeps order, but still nurture the creativity that gives security to the majority while tolerantly accommodating the non-conformist. Twenty years from now, this plan's best epitaph will not be that we accomplished everything it contained, but that we were thoughtful, did what was necessary, and included in our dreams room for each other's aspirations.

The biggest challenge may have been issued by the great American urbanologist, Lewis Mumford, in a speech to the City Club of Portland, given in 1938. These words are a challenge to all Oregonians, but especially apply to Ashlanders:

"I have seen a lot of scenery in my life but I have seen nothing so tempting as a home for man than this Oregon country... . You have a basis for civilization on its highest scale, and I am going to ask you a question which you may not like. Are you good enough to have this country in your possession? Have you got enough intelligence, imagination, and cooperation among you to make the best use of these opportunities?"

"Rebuilding our cities will be one of the major tasks of the next generation... . In providing for new development you have an opportunity to do a job of city planning like nowhere else in the world."

Ashland has proven that it can meet the rigors of city planning. The communities actions in implementing this plan will answer Mumford's challenge with a resounding yes.

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