

Eugene Park Blocks Master Plan

Prepared for the City of Eugene

October, 2006

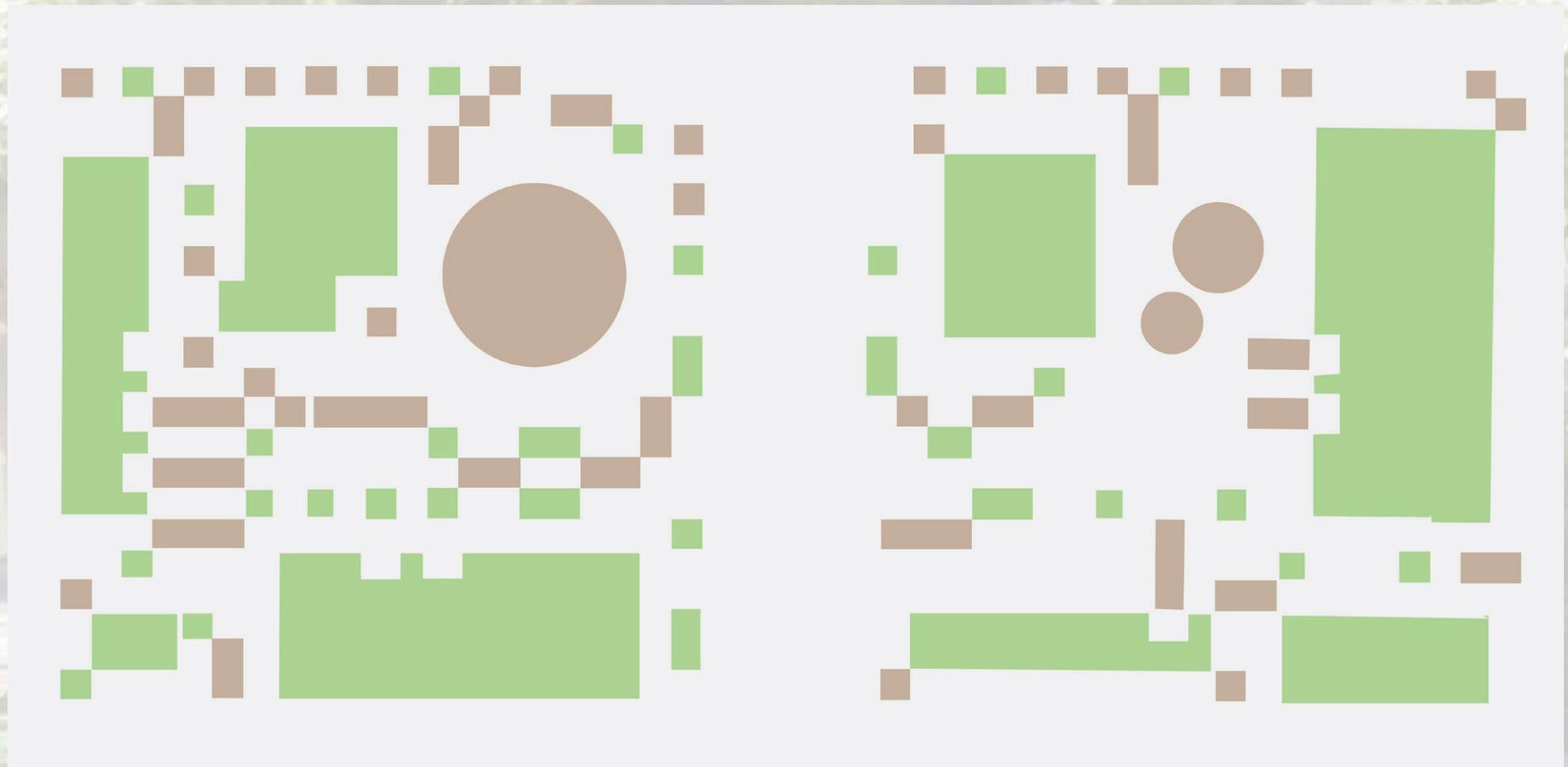




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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Park Blocks are Eugene's most vital and active urban open space. The cedar trees and fountain are icons of our community. The Saturday Market and Lane County Farmers' Market attract thousands downtown each weekend, and Farmer's Market, along with some Saturday Market vendors, add vitality and important shopping opportunities on Tuesdays. The value of the markets, a search for a new City Hall, completion of a new Federal Courthouse, and the plan for Great Streets are amongst the issues prompting a Park Blocks Master Plan.

The Park Blocks Master Plan has been generated in order to provide a consistent and comprehensive view of the Park Blocks, the role they play in our community, and how they affect (and are affected by) other components of our city. The Master Plan is intended to serve as a guide that will allow decisions made concerning the Park Blocks and components of the blocks to be consistent, organized, and logical. The plan was developed by a diverse committee with representatives from Lane County, the City of Eugene, Saturday Market, Lane County Farmers' Market, arts, business, and neighbor groups. The committee presented its work to the public in two meetings, and the resulting input was incorporated in the plan.

Background

In 1853 early settlers donated land for the Park Blocks. What was first known as Eugene Rest Park began as a full city block offset a half block from the city grid, and provided the site for Lane County's first courthouse. Later, streets cut the block into quarters. The northern blocks have historically been home to the farmers' market, the county courthouse, sheriff's office, and city hall. The current park design was completed by Wilmsen Endicott Architects and Lloyd Bond Landscape Architect in 1958. The park is unique in the Northwest and is mentioned in at least two texts covering architecture of the region, including the following:

"In the first instance of a contemporary park in Oregon, local landscape architect Lloyd Bond designed a multiple level sequence of spaces with fountains, sculpture, and arched canopies-all without precedent in the state."

Wallace Kay Huntington, *Space Style & Structure*, 1974.

Eighth Avenue is identified as a Great Street in the Downtown Plan (City of Eugene Downtown Plan, 2000). It is envisioned as the link from downtown to the riverfront area. Eighth Avenue is a candidate for conversion to two-way traffic. It is an area of high pedestrian activity on weekends and is a designated bike street. Other traffic changes may affect Oak in the future. Today there are nearly 70 busi-

nesses located in buildings surrounding the Park Blocks. The markets are thriving and Lane County Farmers' Market seeks space for growth.

Park Blocks Values

The following values have been identified as fundamental in guiding the future of the Park Blocks. They are intended to reflect what is best about the Park Blocks, and what are known to be values of the community. Recommendations of the Master Plan have grown out of the Values identified by the committee, design team, and public input, and are listed below.

- Respect historical integrity of the Park Blocks design
- Enhance the Park Blocks for market day activities
- Enhance Park Blocks for non-market day activity
- Enhance activity along Park Blocks edges
- Maintain contemplative atmosphere
- Enhance pedestrian experience
- Improve security, safety, & accessibility
- Strengthen connections between the Park Blocks & adjacent areas
- Reinforce Great Street component of the Downtown Plan
- Be sustainable
- Avoid "either/or" thinking
- Do no harm

Master Plan

The following statement is a vision of what the Park Blocks could be. It is the descrip-

tion of the outcome of multiple projects over an extended period of time. This vision is based on the values listed above. The Eugene Park Blocks Master Plan envisions a vibrant urban open space with active building uses fronting the surrounding sidewalks. The report recommends that the distinctive 1958 design, with cedar trees, stone walls, sculptures and round fish fountain, be preserved as part of Eugene's identity. A re-established northwest Park Block and new building should replace the Butterfly Parking Garage. The building should face the new plaza and form the north boundary of the park. Parking lost from the Butterfly Garage should be replaced elsewhere. The northwest block would compliment the historic Park Blocks to the south, and provide a unique opportunity for gatherings and performances in downtown Eugene.

The park serves as a gateway along Eighth Avenue, announcing the role of the street as a connector between downtown and the River. Eighth is imagined as a two-way street with a unique character of paving, art, and amenities. A walk down Eighth should take us past buildings with both civic and private uses, all with main entrance storefronts along the sidewalk. Eighth Avenue will be developed in a manner consistent with its designation as a "Great Street."

The Park Blocks will consist of flexible spaces that support a variety of activities. There are to be places for contemplation,

performance venues for larger gatherings, and, several days of the week, a lively market space. The surrounding park streets should be curbless, allowing park activities to expand into the street while preserving access to adjacent businesses. A space for an expanded Lane County Farmers' Market is envisioned, allowing it and the Saturday Market to fulfill their potential in enhancing the cultural and economic strengths of the community. The markets are accommodated in a way that enables efficient operation while providing customers with an energetic yet comfortable and accessible environment. When the markets are not in session, the southeast block contains an engaging new water feature attracting family use as part of a growing downtown residential neighborhood. The Park Blocks will be safe and pedestrian friendly with clear connections to the rest of downtown.

Based on the Values described above, the Master Plan includes recommendations for each of the following elements.

Master Plan Elements

- Streets
- Fountains
- North Blocks
- Enclosure
- Redevelopment
- Connections & Gateways
- Markets
- Performances
- Shelters
- Infrastructure & Amenities

Lighting
Art
Pavement
Bicycles
Plantings
Management & Implementation

Implementation

The Master Plan assumes that improvements to the Park Blocks will be incremental. It establishes guidelines for the gradual implementation of the complete vision.

Short Term

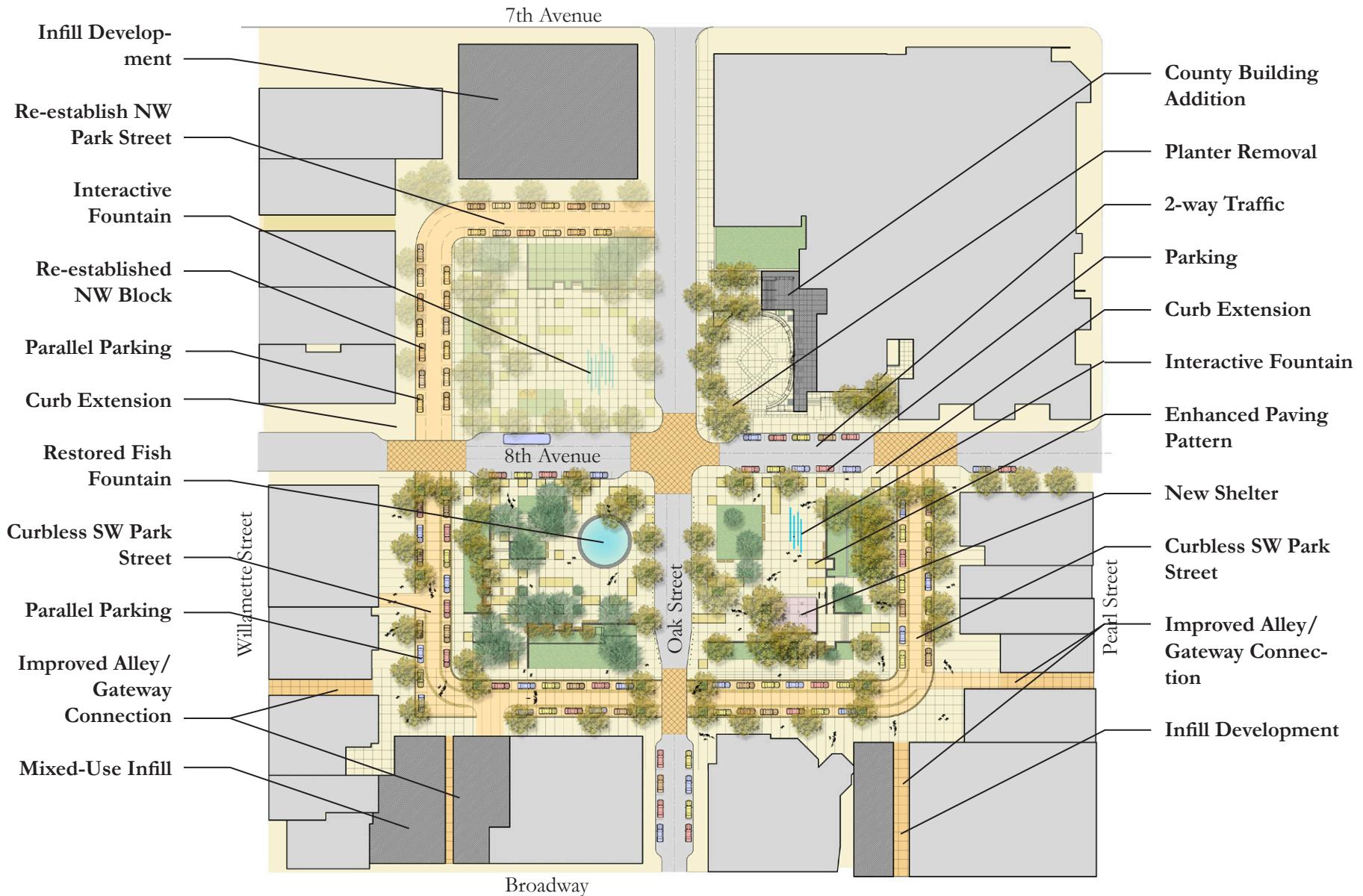
- Improve Farmers' Market configuration
- Curb extensions along Eighth and Oak
- Lighting improvements
- Bollards along Oak Street
- Install public art
- Repairs
- East block interactive fountain
- Southeast block shelter

Mid Term

- In-fill development
- Facade redevelopment
- Curbless park streets
- Paving improvements
- Alley improvements

Long Term

- Re-configure Pearl/Oak couplet
- Remove Butterfly Lot
- Northwest Park Block options
- Northwest Park Street
- Integrate Free Speech Plaza



Park Blocks Master Plan, 2006

Introduction



Downtown Eugene

Description

The Park Blocks are Eugene's most vital and active urban open space. Located in the heart of downtown, the Park Blocks are at the center of the city and its history. The cedar trees and fish fountain are memorable and instantly recognizable as icons of Eugene. Home to the Saturday Market and Lane County Farmers' Market, the Park Blocks attract thousands to the center of the city each weekend. Throughout the year citizens gather to crown the Slug Queen, meet a friend for lunch, or spend a few moments with a book on a summer's day. The Park Blocks are in the midst of employment, city and county governments, commercial activity along Broadway, Oak and Willamette, the Fifth Street district, the Hult Center and Shedd performing arts venues.

The Park Blocks currently consist of four quadrants bisected by Oak Street and Eighth Avenue. The two southern blocks, owned by the city, are each about 200 by 200 feet. The fragments of the original northern blocks are found in the Free Speech Plaza and the northwest parking facility (the Butterfly Parking Garage) and its edges around the garage. The northern blocks are owned by Lane county.

Issues prompting a Master Plan

The Master Plan was prompted by a variety of recent efforts occurring within downtown Eugene. Both private and public sector development are under discussion in and around the Park Blocks. The new Wayne Morse Federal Courthouse, designed by the internationally known

architectural firm of Morphosis, is a visible invitation calling the city to new possibilities along the Willamette River. The Eugene Downtown Plan (July 2002) and Federal Courthouse District Plan (April 2004) identify Eighth Avenue as the Great Civic Street extending from the historic urban center to parks and bikeways along the river. In essence, Eighth Avenue will connect urban park to river greenway. The recent decision by the Eugene Water &

Electric Board to relocate their operations yards will open over 20 acres of riverfront land at the terminus of Eighth Avenue to more public use. These issues increase the significance of both Eighth Avenue and the Park Blocks.

As we work towards our goal of making downtown a vibrant, dynamic, safe, and healthy place to live, the Park Blocks will become an even more important outdoor



Park Blocks location map

space for members of our community. The City is beginning the task of planning for new downtown parks, and seeks to understand how these plans can be integrated with the Park Blocks and other existing amenities.

The highly successful Saturday Market and Lane County Farmers' Market remain amongst the most important Park Block activities. The Farmers' Market resides in a cramped location poorly designed for the purpose. Up to 50 more booths are desired to accommodate the number of local farm businesses wishing to participate in Farmers' Market. Both markets are in need of infrastructure improvements.

The public sector is engaged in planning for a new Eugene City Hall, Lane County Public Health Building, and East Side Parking Garage. Each of these could affect current and future structures in and around the Park Blocks. Civic buildings are important in their relationship to the street and public open spaces. This report seeks to understand the relationship between the Park Blocks and these vital projects.

Downtown Issues Related to the Park Blocks

- Desire for improvements for markets
- Diversity of use, including housing
- Great Streets
- Federal Courthouse & River District
- Downtown redevelopment, Whole Foods and West Broadway
- New East Side Parking Structure
- New Eugene City Hall planning
- County Public Health Building

- planning
- Planning for new downtown parks
 - Planned conversion of Eighth Avenue to two-way



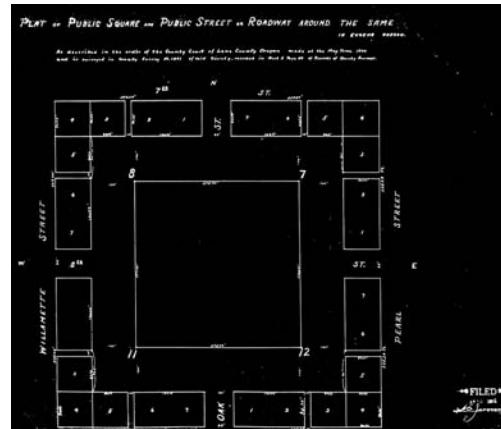
Background

Eugene Rest Park, 1912



History

The Park Blocks began with a land donation from Charnel and Martha Mulligan and settlers Eugene and Mary Skinner in 1853. The land was set aside for civic purposes. A plat map from 1866 shows a block nearly 400 feet square, shifted off the prevalent grid of city streets by one half block. Located in what would otherwise be the intersection of Eighth and Oak, the block made both streets discontinuous. This configuration was precipitated by the nature of the land donations of Skinner and Mulligan. The donation of the former extended from the center line of Eighth Avenue northward, while Mulligan's donation extended from the center line southward. As each benefactor expected the county courthouse to be sited on his donation, the building was constructed in the middle of what is now Eighth Avenue in 1855. This decision resulted in the

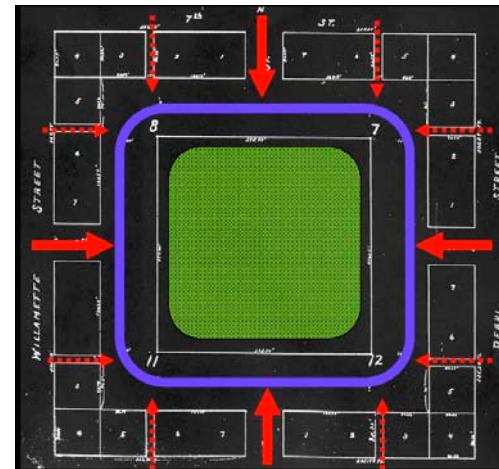


Plat Map, 1866

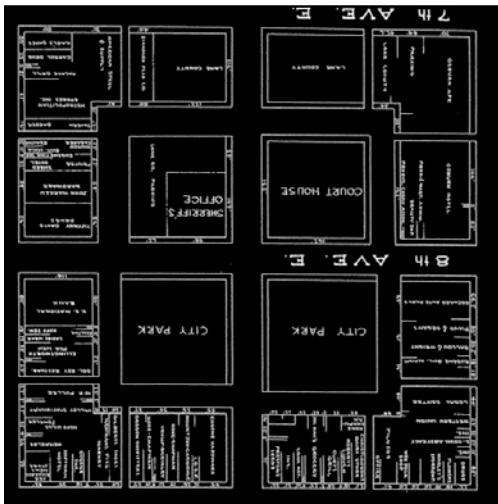


Lane County Court House, Osburne Hotel, and Park Blocks, After 1898

configuration illustrated in the plat map seen at left. The diagram (right) illustrates the consequences of the configuration. The Park Block served to terminate vistas from important streets at the public and civic center of the city. Primary circulation occurred around the block, with Eighth and Oak discontinuous. Access to the block was augmented by eight alley connections, resulting in a strong edge that at the same time provided multiple points of access from each side of the park. As the discontinuity of Eighth Avenue and Oak Street was perceived to be an encumbrance, the courthouse was moved northward around 1870.



Circulation & Connections, 1866

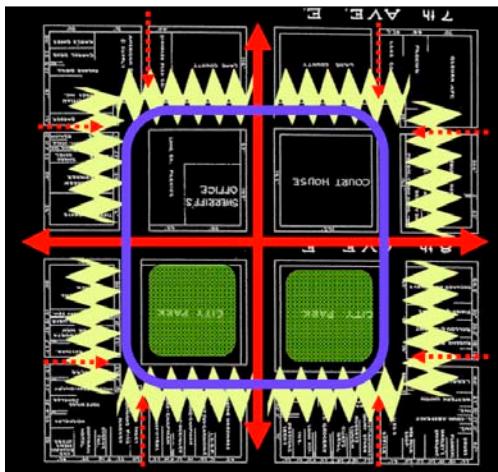


Use Map, 1956 (shown north up for consistency)

The relocation of the courthouse allowed Oak and Eighth to extend through the park, dividing it into four quadrants. The two southern blocks were referred to as the Eugene Park. An early city hall, jail, and



Park Blocks, ca. 1959



Connections and Vitality of Edges, 1956

fire house were built on the Park Blocks in 1875. The original wooden courthouse of 1855 was replaced by a masonry structure on the northeast block in 1898. By 1912, photos show an orchard-like grid of trees and grass that constituted the Eugene Rest Park. The northwest block was occupied by a Sheriff's office. A farmers' market was located on the northwest block in a structure with a permanent roof and lattice walls.

A land use map from 1956 (upper left) indicates a lively district of businesses surrounding the park. Early photos show retail shops facing the park. Nearly 50 ground floor businesses had immediate park frontage including 28 retail stores, five restaurants, nine banks and professional offices, and two hotels. The diagram (left) illustrates that, due to the numerous alley connections and the location of primary streets, the permeability of the park edges



Civic Center Model, ca. 1958

was inherited from the original plat. The alleyways insured that access to the park was available from all adjacent areas. This condition of permeability and connectivity seems to have resulted in strong and vital edges (see photo, previous page).

In 1957 the old Lane County Courthouse was torn down to make way for a new Courthouse and meeting space. The courthouse project also included the redesign of the Park Blocks. The result was the conception of a cohesive civic center that

included both administrative, parking, and park components (see photo above). The new courthouse, completed about 1959, featured a screen of aluminum fins. To the south of the courthouse was an arched shaped meeting space, Harris Hall. This new complex extended across the park streets north of Eighth. Soon afterward, there was a movement to create a new Lane County Park on the site of the Eugene Rest Park. Wilmsen Endicott Architects were selected to design both the courthouse and the park, as well as the Butterfly Parking

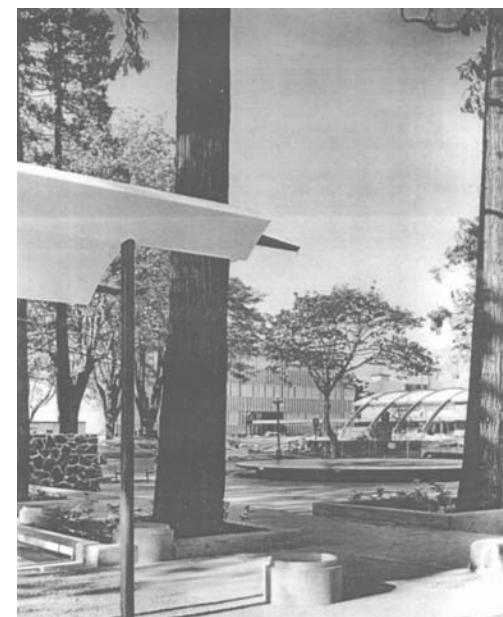
Garage located on what was the northwest park block. The garage was sited such that North Park Street was eliminated.

An Artful Design

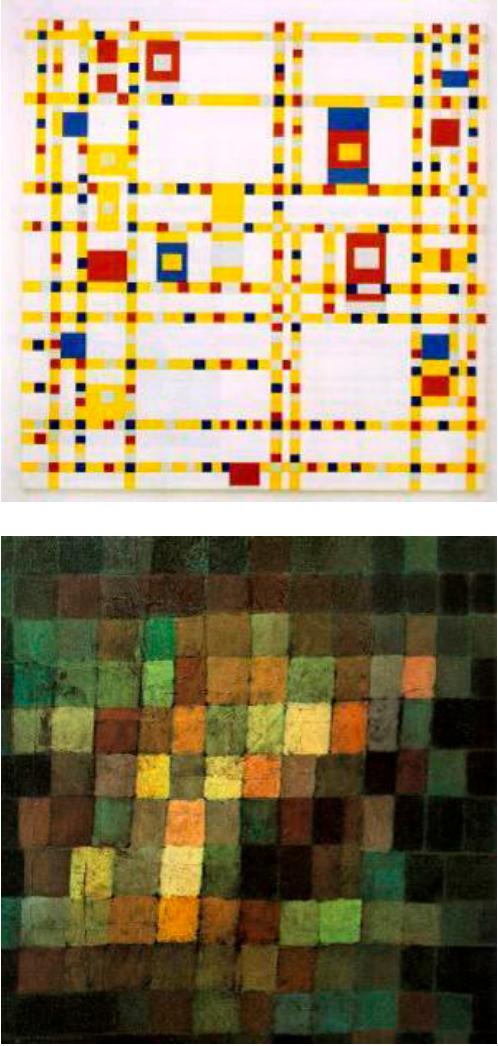
The book *Style & Vernacular* (1983 by the Southwestern Oregon AIA and the Oregon Historical Society) offers the following description of the Eugene Park Blocks:

"The park blocks form an open link between the complex of government buildings to the north and east and the commercial area to the south and west. Historically a focal point of the downtown area, they were redeveloped on the site of an earlier park in conjunction with the present courthouse."

The book further lists Wilmsen Endicott



Southwest Block, about 1959



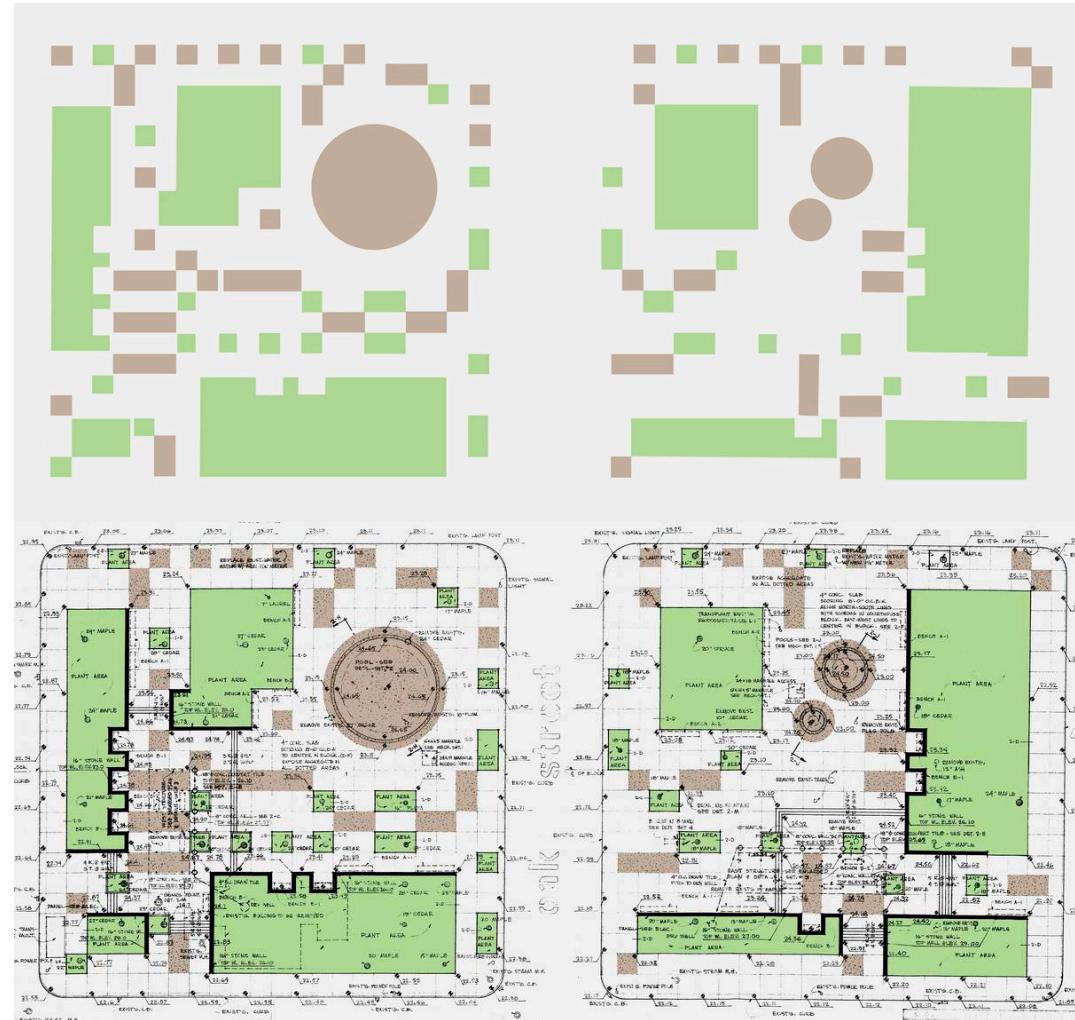
Above, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, Piet Mondrian, 1943. Below, *Ancient Sound*, Paul Klee, 1925

Architects and Lloyd Bond Landscape Architects as the designers and J. M. Steinmuller Jr. as the builder. Copies of some of the design drawings and all of the construction documents were found as

part of the work of this master plan (see Bibliography).

The 1958 park design is one of only a few mid-century modernist civic open spaces in the Northwest. The plan shows a strong connection to art of the first half of the

20th century, including such modernist painters as Paul Klee and Piet Mondrian. Civic open spaces of the time were predominantly picturesque in the tradition of Olmstead and his descendants. In contrast, the Eugene Park Blocks design features interlocking planar elements of paving,



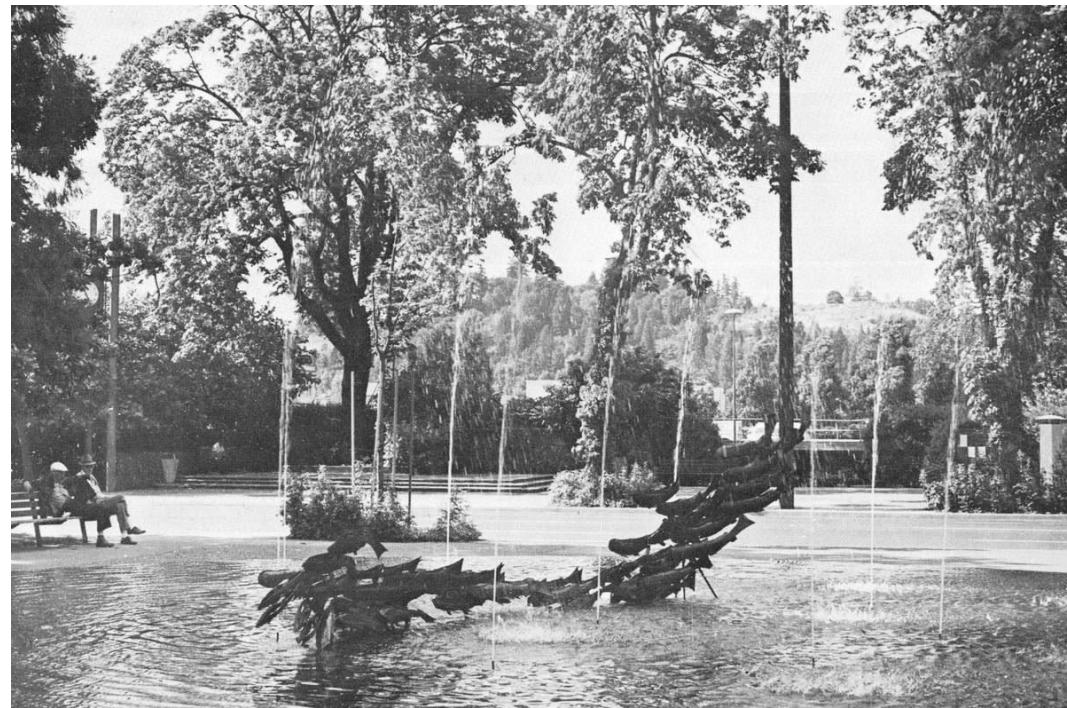
Park Blocks design and analysis diagrams

walls, platforms, shelters, and hovering fountains. The forms are geometric, following a strict eight foot grid that provides both a system of order and a means of establishing a dynamic and energetic composition. Like Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, there is a syncopated rhythm to the paving, walls, and elevated elements. The walls of angular basalt and use of rounded river rock in selected paving areas lend an aesthetic reference to mountain and stream. The Oregon Cascades landscape is a counterpoint to the built forms. Plantings consist of cedar trees, rhododendrons, and forest understory. Native plant materials combined with basalt walls, a tranquil fountain, and a memorable fish sculpture evoke Oregon forest and Cascades Rivers. It is the McKenzie foothills made urban.

The fish sculpture, placed within the fountain by Oregon artist Tom Hardy, and the wall mounted metal castings, by University



Three Standing Forms, Jan Zach, 1959



Southwest Park Block, with clock and Skinner's Butte, before 1974

of Oregon Professor and nationally known sculptor, Jan Zach, are important parts of our community art legacy.

"In the first instance of a contemporary park in Oregon, Local landscape architect Lloyd Bond designed a multiple level sequence of spaces with fountains, sculpture, and arched canopies - all without precedent in the state. The stress on space, form and texture rather than on botanical interest was innovative, but even more remarkable was the high quality of sculpture highlighting the design."

Wallace Kay Huntington, *Space Style & Structure*, 1974.

Changes Since 1958

The 1958 design has been modified several times since its original construction. A clock from the original county courthouse was installed in the park on steel columns as part of the initial design. In the 1970's, the clock was destroyed by a windstorm. The cut face of the H shaped steel columns can still be seen in the northwest block near the current bus shelter. In 1977, benches were added, planting changed, and a concrete walk was installed in the north lawn of the southwest block. This walk is composed of rectangular bands of



Southeast Park Block, about 1959

concrete, together forming a diagonal path across the lawn. Bicycle parking areas were added, featuring interlocking brick pavers and wood bollards intended to accommodate the locking of bicycles. One of these areas remains at the east side of the Butterfly Parking Garage. In 1991, two round fountains on the east block were removed. The original planting bed at the southeast corner of the southeast block was greatly reduced in size as part of the same project.

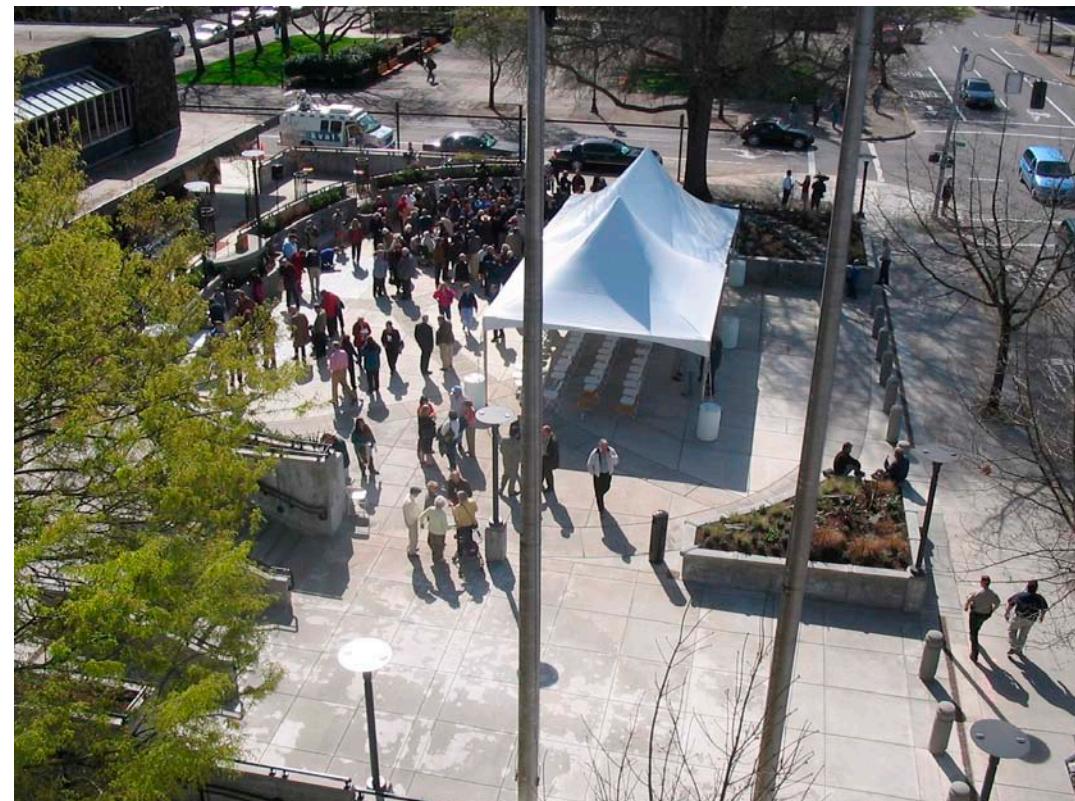
In 2001 some of the stone walls were shortened by several feet with the intention of making the park more open. A segment of the original height walls remains at the southwest corner of the southwest block (housing the existing electrical panel). At the same time, a circulation path through the east wall of the southeast block was created, further enhancing the openness of the park.

Various infrastructure changes have also

been made to provide power and water to support park activities, particularly the markets. Plant materials have changed to improve durability and reflect desires for native plants in certain areas. Some trees and planters have been removed.

As part of the current Lane County Courthouse, the northeast "Park Block" consisted of steps along the sidewalk and raised platform about three feet above grade providing access to the county buildings. The original Courthouse and plaza

were designed by Wilmsen Endicott, the architects of the Park Blocks. This area has long been home to the free speech plaza. In 2000 funds were donated for construction of a more accessible free speech plaza, including a statue of Senator Wayne Morse. In 2005, the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza was constructed, with the majority of its area lowered to the level of the sidewalk. The project consists of an oval shaped plaza bounded by retaining walls and planters.



Free Speech Plaza

In 2006, renovation of the southeast corner of the southeast Park Block was completed. This work included installation of a new ramp and stone wall, new seating alcove, removal of tree wells, removal of concrete pipe drywells serving the shelter roofs, revised seating area and planter bed, and other items. These renovations increased the sense of openness of the southeast block, integrated the ramp leading to the elevated platform, and improved

conditions for the operation of Saturday Market.

Great Streets

The Eugene Downtown Plan identifies Eighth Avenue as the Great Civic Street:

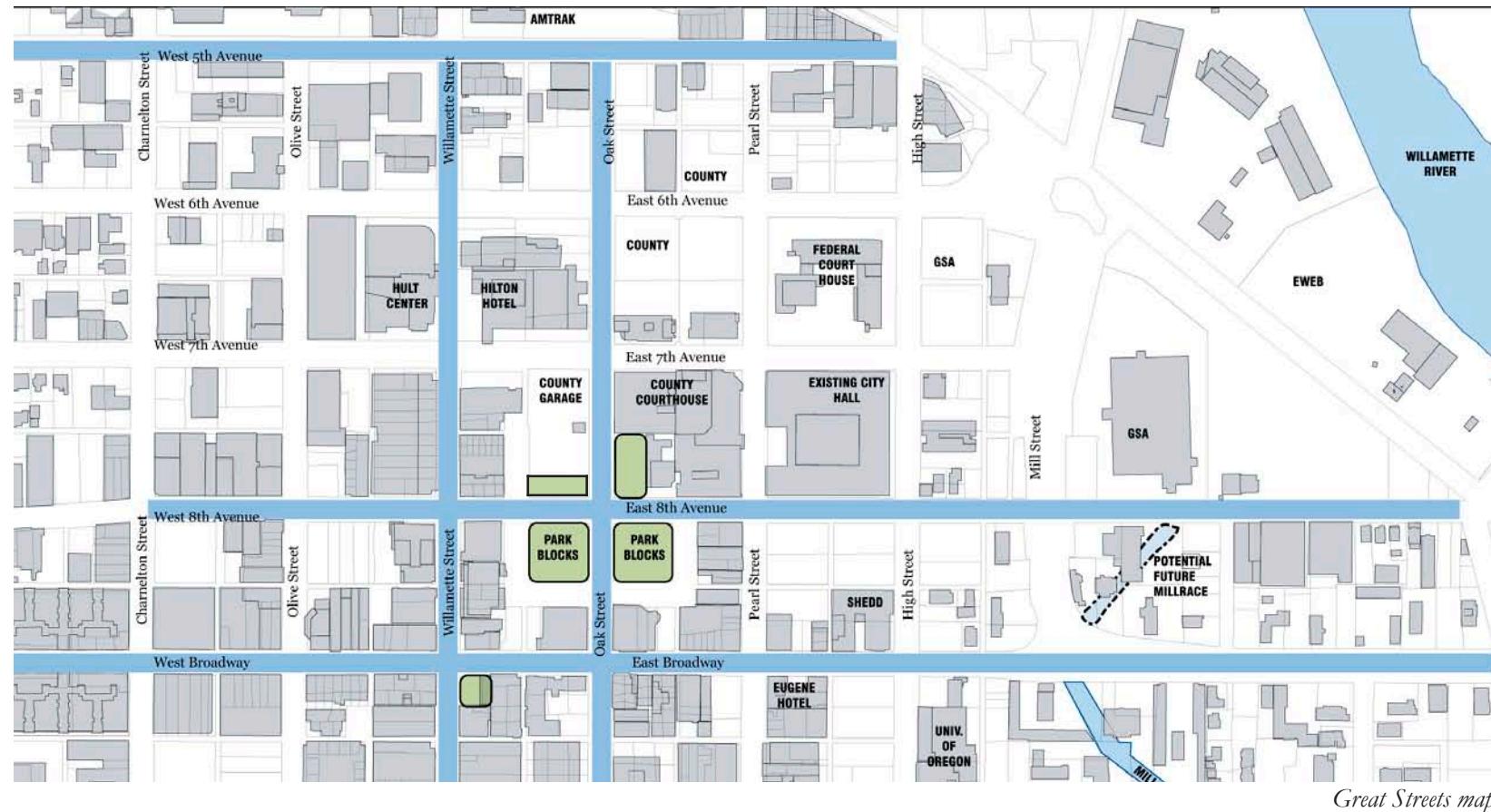
"The civic character of Eighth Avenue should be reinforced through a linked series of existing and planned open spaces. These include the

Park Blocks, Cannery Square in front of the new Federal Courthouse, the Millrace, and a proposed waterfront plaza."

The Eugene Downtown Plan, 2004

The viability of Eighth Avenue as a Great Street is dependent on, and a result of, the Park Blocks. As such, the Great Streets concept is inextricably related to the Park Blocks Master Plan.

While the Park Blocks are bisected by



Eighth Avenue, they are also within a half block of two other Great Streets: Willamette and Broadway. The design team identified a number of characteristics of Great Streets which correspond to features described in the Downtown Plan.

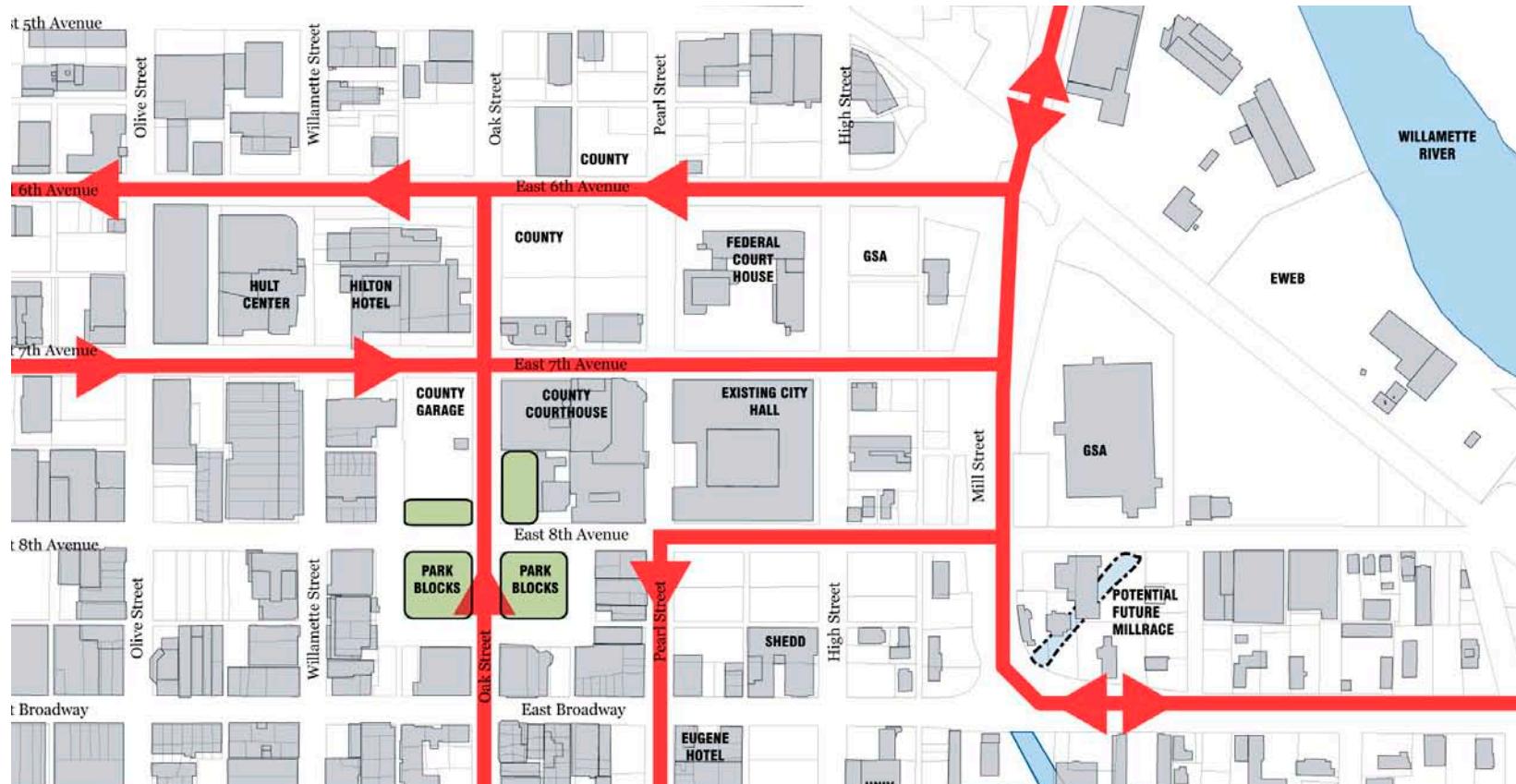
Features of Great Streets

- Pedestrian oriented
- Wide sidewalks with room for outdoor display & seating

- Active building fronts on the street
- Accommodation of bikes
- Slow moving automobile traffic
- On-street parking
- Emergency vehicle access
- Incorporation of public art
- Incorporation of community history
- Street trees
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting

goal of developing a public improvement strategy to reinforce the special character of each Great Street. Eighth Avenue is designated as the Great Civic Street, and the Downtown Plan recommends the placement of a new city hall somewhere along Eighth between the Park Blocks and Mill Street.

The Downtown Plan further states the



Existing primary circulation patterns

Cars, Bikes, & Buses

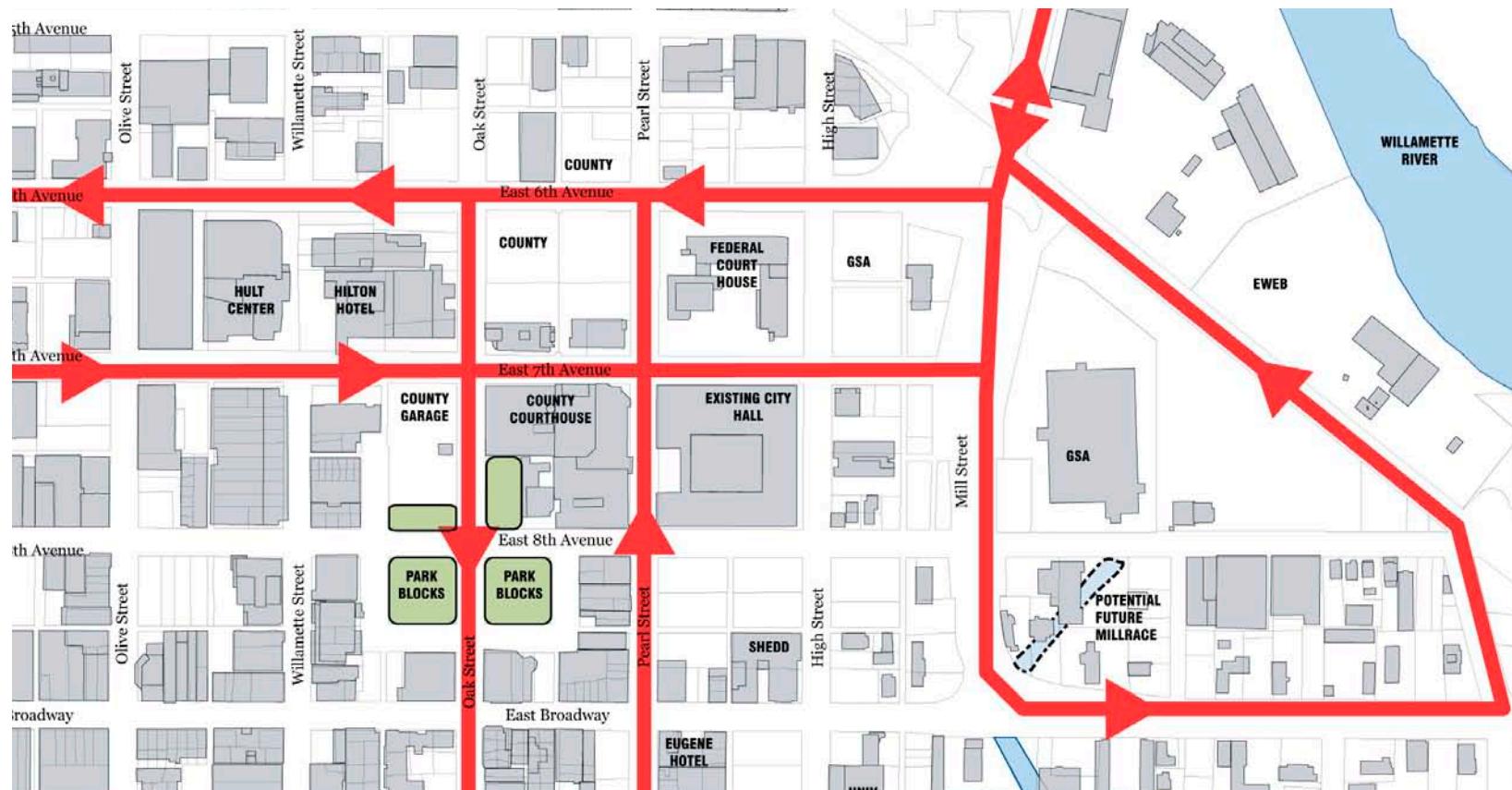
As is the case in any healthy downtown, the mixture of cars, pedestrians, bikes and buses creates a desirable level of vitality. Current vehicular traffic is one-way west bound on Eighth Avenue and one-way northbound on Oak. The quieter park streets offer considerable parking in diagonal spaces. The park streets also provide access to private parking lots, basement

level parking, and service alleys. There is a bike lane on Eighth.

Buses use both Eighth Avenue and Oak Street. Bus traffic is rerouted on Saturday in response to the operation of the markets. Additionally, Saturday Market closes off the east and west lanes of Oak street when in operation. There is a bus stop on the north side of Eighth near West Park Street. Lane Transit District intends

to enact route changes in the near future. These changes will re-route some of the buses traveling north on Oak Street. These buses, constituting about a quarter of those currently using Oak Street, will instead use Olive street.

Pedestrian crossings are concentrated at the signalized intersection of Eighth and Oak. Oak Street crossings also occur at South Park Street. Pedestrian routes across the



park streets are dispersed due to low traffic levels.

Current traffic patterns can be evaluated according to direction of travel through downtown. In general, north/south traffic utilizes one-way couplets consisting of Oak and Pearl. The primary east/west couplet is Sixth and Seventh. At their eastern terminus these streets combine at Mill Street which then becomes Broadway, and then east of Alder street becomes Franklin Boulevard.

Southbound traffic from the Ferry Street Bridge exits onto Eighth Avenue and then turns south on Pearl. A new signal will soon be installed at the intersection of Eighth and Mill. Westbound traffic from Broadway (Franklin Boulevard) currently follows Mill Street to Sixth Avenue. A new street following the railroad diagonally through the Federal Courthouse District, soon to be constructed, is intended to divert traffic from Mill. This change should facilitate pedestrian crossing at Mill and Eighth.

As a required component of the East Side Parking Garage, Eighth Avenue will become a two-way street between Mill and High Streets. City traffic engineers are considering changing Eighth Avenue to two-way traffic further west, perhaps as far as Charnelton Street. These changes will be implemented concurrently with the construction of the East Side Parking facility and the Whole Foods development.



Saturday Market

A potential consideration is reversing the direction of traffic on both Oak and Pearl. In this scenario, Pearl would become one-way, northbound, and Oak one-way southbound. Although there is no immediate intention or means of implementing this idea, the configuration could improve movement of traffic both downtown and further south along the couplet if connections were made to Amazon Parkway. Between Broadway and 7th Avenue, northbound traffic is of greater quantity than southbound traffic. As a result, this change in couplet direction would result in less traffic through the Park Blocks on Oak Street.

Eighth Avenue currently features a west-bound bike lane on the north side of the street. Bike parking is facilitated by a portable rack located on the south edge of the southeast block, and by the bike parking area to the east and west of the Butterfly Parking Garage. The latter date from the improvements of 1977, and are ill-equipped to accommodate contemporary bike locks.

Current Activities

The Park Blocks are currently utilized by two separate markets. Saturday Market operates on the two blocks south of Eighth Avenue each Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. from April through November. Saturday Market, as a long-term user of the Park Blocks, has developed a highly refined system of booths, and has organized the booths in order to both solve logistical problems and create a specifically desired environmental character. Saturday Market fills the two blocks



Saturday Market



Full City Coffee & Palace Bakery from East Park Street

south of Eighth Avenue, creating a dense and vibrant atmosphere.

The Lane County Farmers' Market operates on the same days as Saturday Market between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.. On these days, Farmers' Market is located on the northwest Park Block and on West Park Street north of Eighth Avenue. Space for Farmer's Market is limited. Many vendors cannot be accommodated, and the space is very crowded. On Tuesdays between May and October, the Farmers' Market also operates on the northwest and southwest blocks. Some of the food vendors that participate in Saturday Market operate with the Farmers' Market on Tuesdays on the southeast block.

The Park Blocks are well used when markets are not open. Many people use the park as a place to eat lunch, take a break, or meet a friend. The southeast corner of the southeast block is used by patrons of the adjacent Full City Coffee and Palace

Bakery. Food carts use the Park Blocks on weekdays and are most active mid-day.

The Park Blocks are used several times a year as a performance venue. Downtown Eugene Incorporated has produced many concerts by utilizing the Willamalane portable stage. The stage is typically placed at the north edge of the southeast Park Block, utilizing the large open area at the center of the block as a place for an audience.



Lane County Farmers' Market

Values



Park Blocks Textures

The following values have been identified by the committee as fundamental in guiding the future of the Park Blocks. They are intended to reflect what is best about the Park Blocks, and what are known to be values of the community. Conflicts between values may occur and decisions may sometimes contradict certain values in order to respect others. The tension of decision-making is considered a healthy part of each issue. Policy recommendations of the Master Plan, described later in this report, grow out of the values identified by the committee and design team.

- **Respect historical integrity of the 1958 Park Blocks design**

Park land dates back to a donation from Eugene Skinner and Charnel Mulligan in 1853. The 1958 park is a significant design representing a unique period in the Northwest. It is also an important part of community history. To the extent that community interests are balanced, the 1958 park design should be preserved.

- **Enhance Park Blocks for market day activities**

The Saturday Market and Lane County Farmers' Market are highly successful. They attract large numbers of people downtown, add vitality, contribute to other local businesses, and are an important part of the identity of the community. The Park Blocks should continue to be the home of the markets and should be designed to support market activities.

- **Enhance Park Blocks for non-market day activity**

Park space in the downtown is valuable and limited. The park should support a wide variety of activities ranging from large gatherings such as the Eugene Celebration to a quiet lunch. It should attract and engage a variety of age groups including families.

Examples of non-market Park Block activities

- Interactive play
- Breaks and lunch
- Food carts and park dining
- Strolling
- Place to see and be seen
- Meeting place
- Contemplation, quiet activities
- Large community gatherings, arts, theater, and musical performances
- Art installations

- **Enhance activity along Park Blocks edges**

The park edges include the adjacent buildings, park streets, and sidewalks. The Park Blocks begin within the surrounding buildings and extend into the park. Seek tenants for vacant building spaces along the sidewalk. Encourage active building uses with windows, entries, and activities along the sidewalks. Improve sidewalks and park streets to facilitate active uses such as street vendors, outdoor dining, pedestrian and vehicular vitality, and retail display. Design

sidewalks and streets to support activities flowing out from surrounding buildings.

- **Maintain contemplative atmosphere within the Park Blocks**

The southwest block and its fountain provide a contemplative atmosphere. The sound of water masks traffic noise and reflections in the water reinforce a sense of calm. The level changes, stone walls, and perimeter seating offer places for one or two people while retaining the opportunity for them to watch others walking through. Preserve the contemplative quality of the park.

- **Enhance pedestrian experience**

Promote pedestrian use. Use traffic calming and enhanced crossing designs to enhance pedestrian safety and the quality of the pedestrian experience. Consider contrasting paving at crosswalks, curb extensions, and clear separation between cars and pedestrians. Low volume, low speed streets such as the Park Streets should provide clear delineation between traffic lanes, parking, and pedestrian areas, but may allow intermingling of these uses.

- **Improve security, safety & accessibility**

Increase the degree of real and perceived safety in and around the park. Safety concerns range from threats of harm inflicted by others to environmental hazards. Seek an atmosphere of security where neighbor-

ing businesses and traffic provide eyes on the park. Avoid hazards from level changes or accidental harm. Make level changes, way finding, and amenities accessible to persons of all abilities.

- **Increase connections between the Park Blocks & downtown**

Eighth Avenue, as the Great Street, and Oak are primary connections between the Park and the surrounding downtown. Consider how these streets can work to increase connectivity between the Park Blocks and other important places in the city. Alleys connect the Park Blocks with the surrounding streets, and are important as means of maintaining permeability of the park's edges. There are currently five public alleys or walks at mid-block leading to the park. They provide easy and plentiful paths in and out of the Park Blocks. The alleys represent opportunities to create gateways that speak to the unique role the Park Blocks play within our city. Enhance alleys as pedestrian routes from surrounding streets and commercial areas to the park. Enhancements might include paving, lighting, signs, refinished walls, business entrances, and plantings.

- **Reinforce Great Street component of the Downtown Plan**

Maintain a balance of commercial, housing, and civic buildings. Maintaining active uses along Eighth Avenue is fundamental to the Great Streets concept. The designa-

tion of Eighth as a purely civic street, lined with only governmental buildings, is counter to the Great Streets concept. Great Streets require diversity of use in order to insure that they are active places during business hours, evenings, and weekends. It is not essential that all civic buildings be located on Eighth. Civic buildings which are located on Eighth, including existing buildings, should provide a major entry facing Eighth. Eighth is unique in providing direct access from downtown to the Federal Courthouse and river. Reinforce the linkage between downtown and the river. Strengthen the concept of Eighth as a link with a strong sense of arrival at the

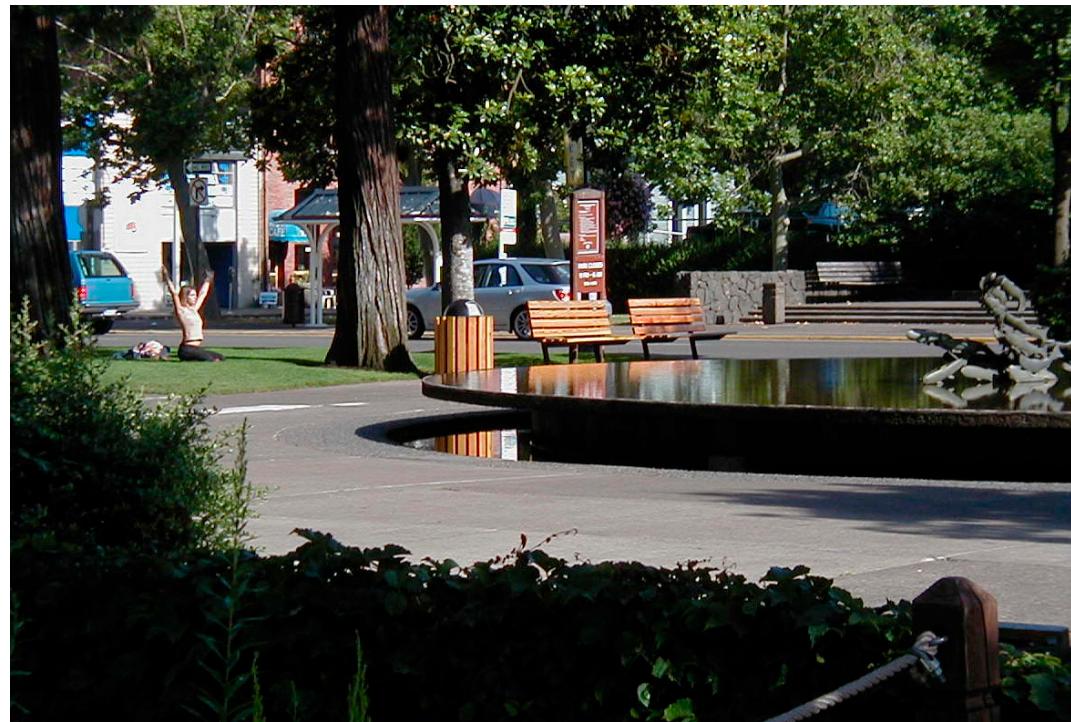
Park Blocks and at the river.

- **Be sustainable**

Consider broad values as criteria for decision making. It is common to think of physical improvements in terms of initial cost alone. This is a limited view of a long-term investment. The broad value must address the triple bottom line of social equity, economic performance, and environmental responsibility.

- **Avoid Either/Or Thinking**

Some choices may result in conflict



between two or more of the values. In each case, judgment may be required to balance multiple goals. While making decisions, continue to honor multiple values. For example, it may be possible for the park to support both boisterous and quiet activities.

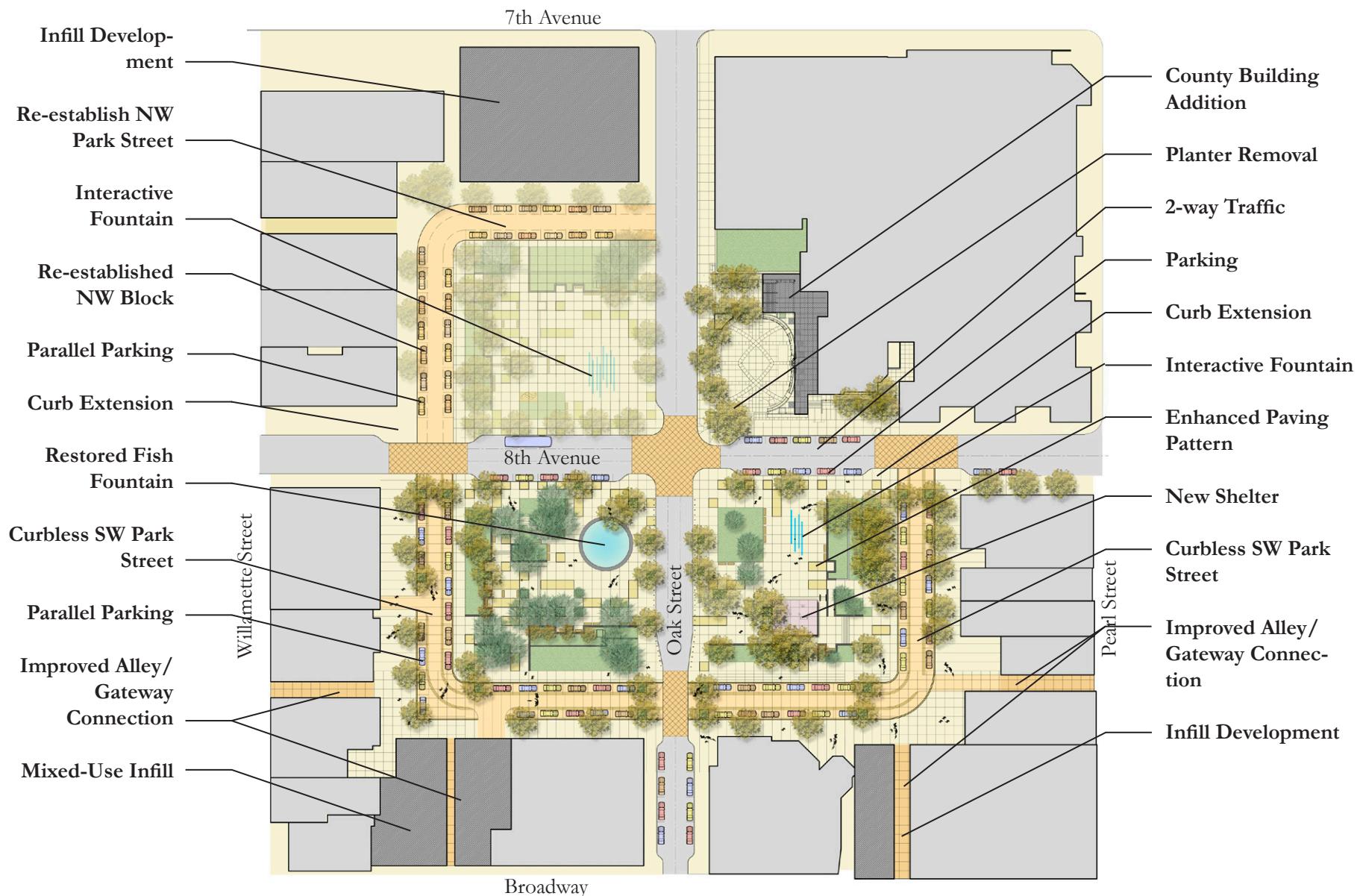
- **Do no harm**

Don't make detrimental changes. The Park Blocks are highly successful in many respects. Do not make changes which reduce benefits or which would remove successful features of the park.





Master Plan



Park Blocks Master Plan, 2006

Summary

The Eugene Park Blocks Master Plan envisions a vital urban open space enclosed by private and civic buildings that form a vibrant and active edge. The unique 1958 design with cedar trees, stone walls, sculptures and round fish fountain are part of Eugene's identity, and these elements are retained and complimented by changes and additions to the park. The plan imagines a re-established northwest Park Block and a new civic building replacing the Butterfly Parking Garage. The civic building should face the new plaza and frame the north boundary of the park. This revitalized open space remains the city's living room, and enhances the sense of community, economic vitality, and cultural diversity that make the Park Blocks a highly valued component of Eugene. The Park Blocks are safe and pedestrian friendly with clear connections to the rest of the city.

The park should serve as a gateway along Eighth Avenue. This gateway should enhance Eighth Avenue's role as the connection between downtown and the River. Eighth is a two-way street with a clear and deliberately established character of paving, art, and amenities. A walk down Eighth Avenue takes us past both civic and private buildings, all with main entries and active uses along the sidewalk.

The Park Blocks are envisioned by the Master Plan as flexible and supporting a variety of activities. The plan has char-

acterized the activity on each block. The southwest block should maintain its contemplative atmosphere, and the southeast block should continue to be an active place. The southeast block contains an engaging new water feature attracting family use as part of a growing downtown residential neighborhood. The northeast block, home of the Free Speech Plaza, is and should remain the location of civic activity.

The report proposes that the northwest block become a place of gathering. Here performances and other activities involving larger groups of people can be accommodated, as well as a greatly expanded and flexible place for market activity. The northwest block should be sympathetic to its historic neighbor yet a place of its own time promoting diverse activities. When the sun shines, it is a place where people can enjoy its warmth. It is a place that is comfortable and inviting all year round.

The surrounding park streets are curbless, allowing park activities to expand into the street while preserving access to surrounding businesses. These streets are distinguished from Oak and Eighth Avenue. The Park Streets are the realm of the pedestrian. Here automobiles are invited (and welcome) guests. Traffic is slow, and the curbless streets allow the Park Blocks to continue to the faces of the surrounding buildings. These streets can be used, on special occasions, as extensions of the Park Blocks.

The preceding represents a vision of what the Park Blocks could be. It reflects the values stated above and acknowledges that the recommended changes will likely occur in phases and over a long period of time. The summary above describes an overall vision of the plan. The descriptions of Master Plan elements which follow define detailed requirements.

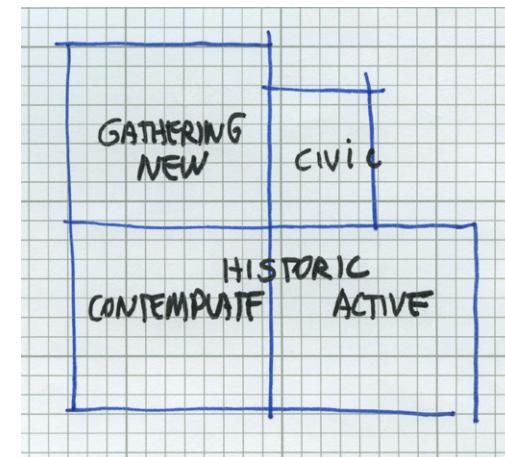


Diagram of possible diverse park uses

Streets

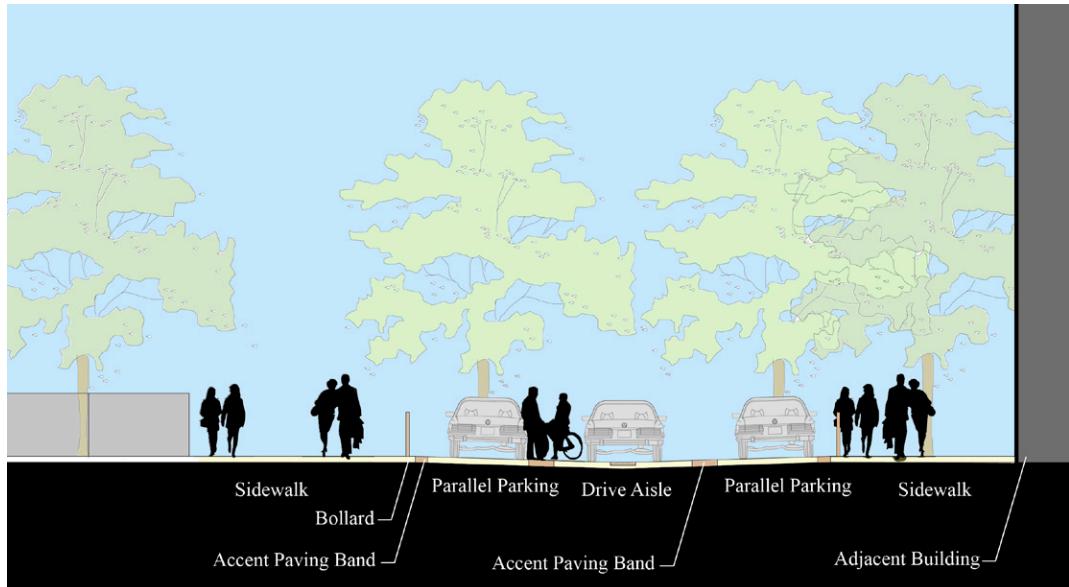
Park Streets

Current Condition: The park streets are quiet byways with low vehicular traffic volumes and safe intermingling of pedestrians with automobiles. The streets provide over 60 diagonal and parallel parking spaces as well as access to basement level parking below surrounding businesses. On market days, the park streets become loading zones and a place for drivers to visit with optimism, cruising for a spot to park. On Saturdays, West Park Street north of Eighth is filled with Farmers' Market booths and customers.

Recommendations: Reconstruct the park streets as curbless streets allowing multiple uses and a high degree of accessibility.



Northwest Park Street, existing (above) and photo simulation of proposed changes (below)



Retain parking capabilities during weekdays but allow pedestrian and market activities to utilize portions of the streets during market days and special events. The total number of parking spaces surrounding the south Park Blocks is currently 62. The Master Plan, using parallel parking, maintains 61 spaces. Create a distinct boundary

between traffic lanes and sidewalks using paving materials and bollards. Ensure that this boundary can be understood by people of all abilities. Maintain access to businesses and private parking areas and to alley ways. Replace individual parking meters with “central block pay stations” to reduce clutter. Use contrasting pave-



West Park Street



Revised South Park Street

ment to create a side street zone seamlessly flowing into the park but distinct from the surrounding arterials, Oak and Eighth. Using the width gained from changing from diagonal to parallel parking, design wide sidewalks fronting on surrounding businesses to encourage active uses such as dining, retail display, and signage. When the northwest Park Block is constructed, re-establish North Park Street through to Oak Street, mirroring the southern Park Streets.

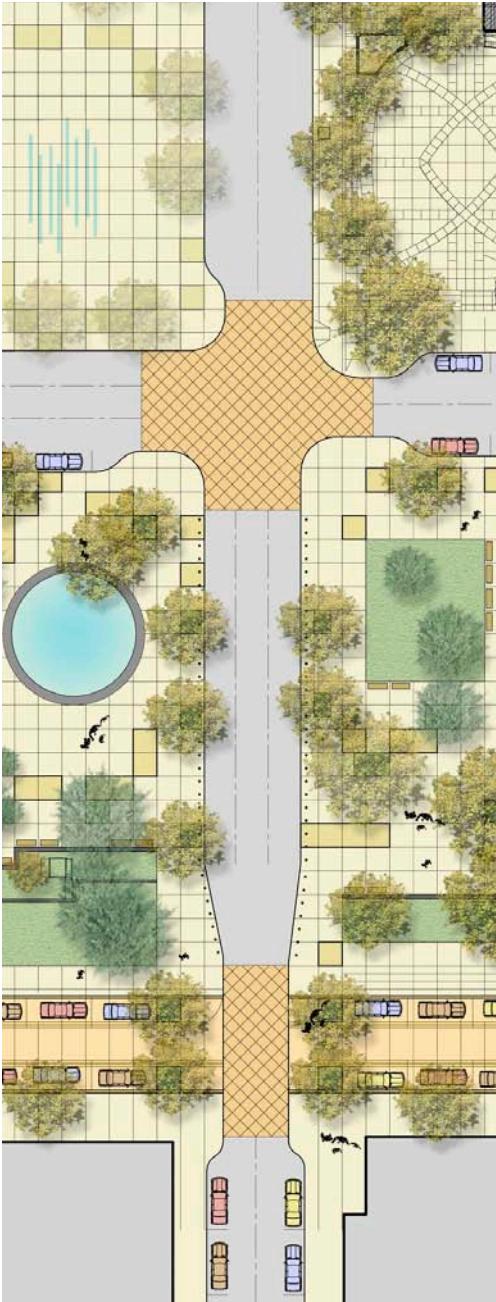
Oak Street

Current Condition: Oak is a primary northbound arterial through downtown. The intersection of Oak and Eighth is the busiest pedestrian crossing during market days. Oak is a major bus route with a bus-only lane along the east edge.

Recommendations: Implement curb extensions where practical. Curb extensions promote pedestrian safety by reduc-



Oak Street during Saturday Market



Proposed Oak Street configuration



Recommended bollard locations

ing crossing distances and increasing the visibility of pedestrians to drivers. Study the possibility of providing curb extensions on Oak Street at the north and south sides of South Park Street. Ensure that curb extensions are compatible with Lane Transit District's requirements. Provide a curb extension on the West side of Oak Street at the north side of Eighth Avenue. Provide bollards along Oak Street that could be used as a means of restricting mid-block crossings during market use (Saturday



Curb extension opportunities

Market currently places snow fencing along the street towards this end). Use contrasting paving materials to articulate crossings and reinforce the presence of pedestrian activity to drivers.

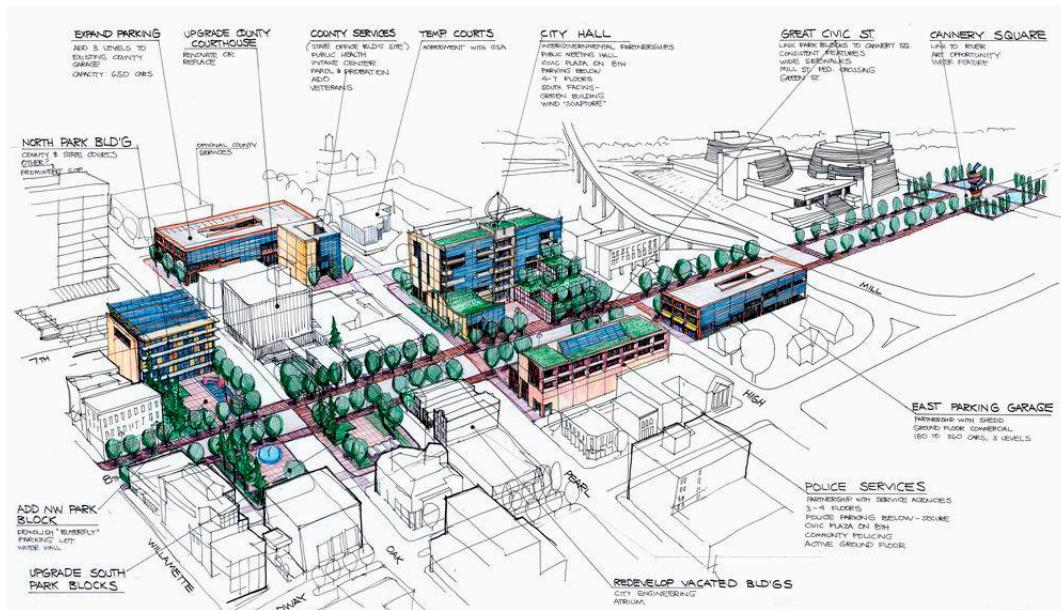
Eighth Avenue

Current Condition: Eighth Avenue provides two lanes of one-way traffic west bound and a designated bike lane. On market days, vehicles park along and within the street to load and unload.

Just two streets connect the central business district to the Willamette River, and Eighth Avenue is the only street with the potential to do so directly. Fourth Avenue provides an offset connection from the Fifth Street Market District to the river (at the EWEB Plaza). Eighth Avenue is unique in marching directly from the city center to the riverfront. Recent planning efforts have consistently recognized the value of Eighth Avenue's singular poten-



Eighth Avenue

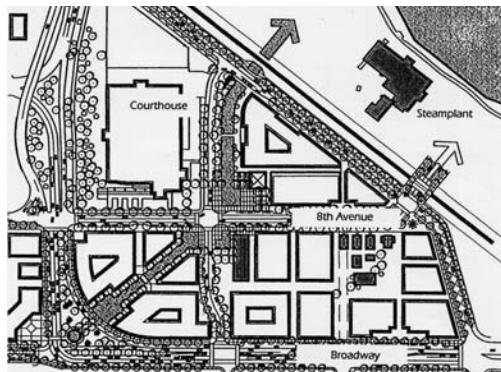


Eighth Avenue- design to the river. Eugene Civic Center AIA Charette, 2004

tial as a connection between downtown and the river. This potential has been an important consideration in the identification of Eighth Avenue as a Great Street. A full at-grade pedestrian crossing is

planned at the new Eighth and Mill signal. This crossing is an important step towards the realization of this Great Street as a conceptually clear and direct path to the river.

The Lane County Public Service Building and City Hall are situated along Eighth but offer no significant entry, connection, or activity apparent to those passing by. Only the new Federal Courthouse has a front door facing Eighth Avenue. The city is currently contracting with private developers to build a public East Side Parking Garage. This development is planned adjacent to a new Whole Foods Market. These projects will serve as important points along the path to the river.



Eighth Avenue- potential connection to the river

Recommendations: A unified design is required for Eighth Avenue extending from Charnelton Street to the River. A multi-disciplinary approach with a global view of the street and fronting blocks is needed. Embody the Great Streets principles of the Downtown Plan. Focus on the unique opportunity of connection to the river. New development should be designed with active uses facing Eighth in compliance with the Downtown Plan. Civic buildings should seek opportunities for active uses and significant entries on the street, and should consider the incorporation of non-civic uses. Eighth Avenue should link the Park Blocks with the proposed Cannery Square (located near the new federal court-

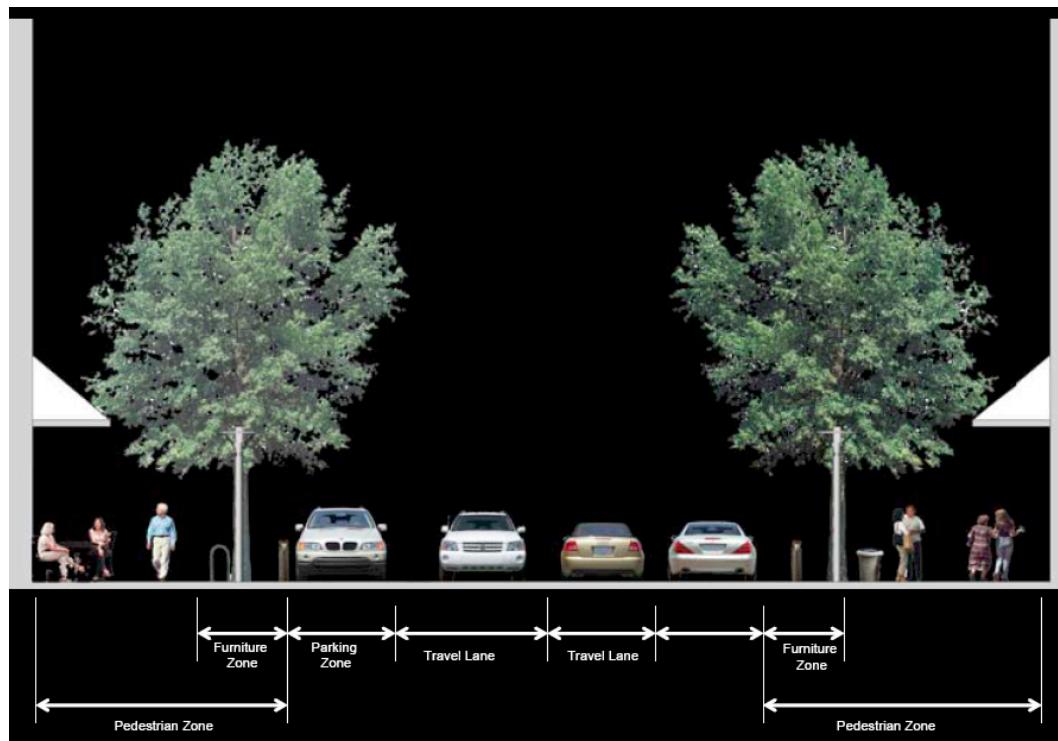


Lane County Public Service Building

house) outlined in the Downtown Plan. Conversion of Eighth Avenue to two-way traffic is considered a benefit to the Park Blocks. Redesign of the street needs to account for the use of Eighth Avenue for market loading and unloading activities. Loading and unloading capability should be an essential programmatic requirement of the design of the street. Design to support alternative modes of transit including buses and bikes. Encourage bus stops and service in the area of the Park Blocks and civic buildings. Eighth Avenue is an important westbound bicycle route. Maintain the viability of the street for bicycles. Employ

traffic calming measures to slow the speed of vehicular traffic. Bikes may either be commingled in slow moving traffic or provided a dedicated lane (see “Bicycles” below). On-street parking and curb extensions are desirable. A reduction of through traffic on Eighth benefits the Park Blocks. Consider means of encouraging through traffic to use other routes. These means could require changes to other streets in the vicinity.

As part of the improvements to Eighth Avenue, a study needs to be undertaken by the City including the Lane Transit District



Great Street section



Great Street principles in practice

(LTD) and the Markets. This study should help determine the feasibility of two-way traffic on Eighth Avenue and could also assess the affects of capacity reduction to two lanes on Oak Street at the South Park Streets (see “Oak Street” above). As mentioned above, the Markets currently close one traffic lane of Eighth Avenue for loading and unloading purposes and therefore would be significantly affected by the conversion to two-way traffic. Creating a situation where there is only one lane of traffic for each direction would preclude using a traffic lane for Market loading. The study should seek a means of providing both two-way traffic and market loading and unloading capability. Re-establishment of the northwest Park Block and North Park Street could provide acceptable areas for this activity. The study should examine the proposed changes to vehicular and pedestrian activity recommended by the Master Plan, and verify the feasibility and compatibility of each traffic related idea.

Consistent amenities are needed along



Eighth Avenue Edges. Areas marked in green represent edges that are active, while red designates inactive.

Eighth Avenue. Unifying elements such as a linked series of water features or green street strategies could enhance the “downtown to the water” theme. Other possibilities include intermixing of basalt stone walls and other park elements to interrelate the park and Great Street. Incorporate art, wide and well designed sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, plantings, and displays.

Eighth Avenue currently lacks identity. It has few of the amenities present on other downtown streets. Current civic buildings do not offer active fronts or significant entries facing the sidewalk. Currently, in contrast to Eighth Avenue, the park has a relatively strong identity. Eighth Avenue lacks consistent paving and street trees, and a pedestrian crossing strategy. Even the hanging flower baskets and banner arms, present on many other downtown streets, are missing.

A strong connection from the park to the

river should be the focus of Eighth Avenue design and planning efforts. This focus should lead to a clear, deliberate plan for Eighth Avenue, its continuation across the railroad tracks, its relationship to the Park Blocks, its character, and arrival at the river. The identity of Eighth Avenue needs to consider the street’s relationship to the park. Imposing a new Eighth Avenue aesthetic on the park could mean changing paving, trees, lights, street furniture and other elements of the park to match the street. This is counter to the strategy of emphasizing the special character and qualities of the park (see Values above). Policies which maintain park identity while strengthening the Great Street are needed.

Fountains

Current Condition: The fountain on the west Park Block is a part of the original design, has artistic merit, is an icon of

downtown, and reinforces the contemplative atmosphere of the park. The Thomas Hardy sculpture is a memorable and significant work. Concerns about the fountain include the lack of ability to interact with the water, potential un-cleanliness of the water, aging plumbing system, and possible trip hazard. It obstructs space within Saturday Market and is fenced off on Saturday.

Recommendations: The fountain should be restored as a valued feature. Preserve the historic value of the existing fountain. It is an essential component of the 1958 design. Improved plumbing is needed. A modern filtration system could result in improved water quality and lower maintenance.

Interactive fountains have proven to be amenities valued by communities. They can greatly enhance the use of public



Existing fountain with sculpture by Tom Hardy, 1958



Interactive fountain, Corvallis, Oregon



Southeast Block interactive fountain, photo simulation

spaces by families with children, and have the potential to enliven the Park Blocks when markets are not in session. They offer a means of diversifying the use and users of the Park Blocks, and extending the hours at which the park is an energetic and vital component of the city. Add a new fountain on the southwest or northwest Park Block. Ensure that the new fountain is interactive, and serves as a means of diversifying the use of the Park Blocks. Ensure that the new fountain does not hinder market operation in any way. The



Interactive fountain, Beaverton Oregon

fountain should be level with grade so that it can be shut off, allowing market activities to take place above it. Ensure that the drain system is capable of safely handling any of the diverse activities that will occur within the drainage area of the fountain. If located on the southeast block, consider the implementation of bollards along Eighth Avenues as a means of reinforcing the separation between children and traffic.

North Blocks

Free Speech Plaza

Current Condition: The Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza is valued by the community for its spirit of democracy and accessibility. The plaza is constructed as a distinct place with materials and design different from the other Park Blocks. Large planters and retaining walls separate the plaza from the park. The east edge of the plaza, due to the lack of active adjacent building uses, elevated position, and limited visibility from public ways, provides a concealed location for undesirable activities. The county is investigating improvements to building entries intended to reduce concealed and unsupervised spaces.

Recommendation: Restore the connection between the plaza and the Park Blocks. Remove planters and walls separating the plaza from surrounding sidewalks and streets on the south and west. As changes



Free Speech Plaza



Lane County Public Service Building

are made, use materials and design strategies which increase the link between the other Park Blocks and the plaza.

County Buildings

Current Condition: The County Courthouse provides a desirable definition of the north boundary of the park. The Public Service Building facing Eighth Avenue consists largely of blank walls and light wells down to basement offices. County buildings lack a clear entry with no visible front door from the street or sidewalk.

Recommendation: Changes to county buildings should continue to shape the enclosure of the park. Building and open space projects should seek to restore the original four quarter block park design of which the Free Speech Plaza is a part. When modifications to the County Buildings are made in the future, they should seek to create entries and active uses facing Eighth Avenue. A prominent and visible

front door is needed. Current plans to renovate the public entry to the courthouse offer an opportunity to create a more prominent front door to this important building.

Butterfly Parking Garage (The Northwest Block)

Current Condition: The Lane County Butterfly Parking Garage occupies prominent and valuable property fronting on the park and adjoining significant public buildings. About 240 parking spaces are provided on two levels. The parking serves county sheriff vehicles and other county employees. Removal of the garage would require replacement of lost parking. The parking garage does not comply with ADA standards for slope of the entry ramps or cross slope of the deck. It was historically the northwest Park Block. The area is frequently cited as a candidate for civic buildings and for increased Park Block area, and the Downtown Plan recommended the re-establishment of the northwest block.



Butterfly Parking Garage

Recommendation: The eventual redevelopment of the Butterfly Parking Garage could be of significant benefit to the Park Blocks. Removing the garage could make way for a future building on the northern portion of the block and for re-establish-



Two options for new building replacing the butterfly garage

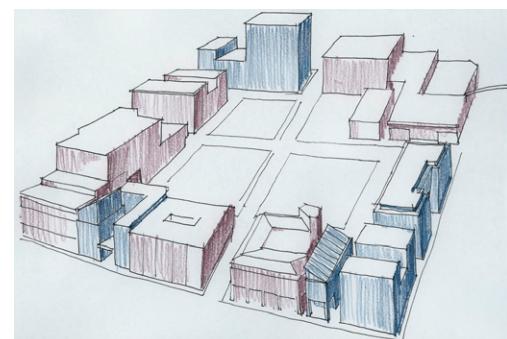
ment of a northwest Park Block on the remainder. Consider consolidation of the Butterfly property with underdeveloped private property at 7th and Willamette (currently housing the Rock N Rodeo) to form a half block site with connections to Willamette Street, the Hult Center, Oak Street, and the Eugene Conference Center. Develop a plan for replacement of parking spaces currently provided in the Butterfly structure. See also discussion of the Park Streets and of Enclosure of the Park Blocks.

The northwest block should serve to diversify the potential uses and time of use of the Park Blocks while improving conditions for current users, particularly the Lane County Farmers' Market. Create a place for large gatherings such as performances and speeches. Incorporate a significant interactive water feature related to that recommended for the southeast block. Ensure that the fountain, like that recommended for the southeast block, is flush with paving such that other uses may occur when the fountain is turned off. Include space for public art that can help the northwest block establish its own identity and that can reinforce the role of the Park Blocks as a gateway on the path to the river. Ensure that the block is open and flexible. Provide opportunities for Lane County Farmer's Market to explore a variety of booth configurations. Choose plantings that allow Winter solar access, prompting use when other portions of the park are shaded.

As the northwest Park Block is re-established, the design should respect the dominant elements of the south Park Blocks. The signature character of the mature incense cedars and mix species planting, black basalt walls, water elements, and paving patterns should be utilized. The design and programming elements of the northwest Park Block should meet contemporary needs while honoring the key elements of the south Park Blocks

Enclosure (Spatial Definition)

Current Condition: A number of existing buildings form a desirable sense of enclosure for the Park Blocks. This quality is similar to that of a European square and can also be described as the "Central Park effect." There are gaps between the current buildings, offering opportunities to increase enclosure. The most notable gap is the Butterfly Parking Garage. The designers of the Park Blocks utilized Skinner's Butte as the visual termination of



Enclosure. Infill opportunities shown in blue

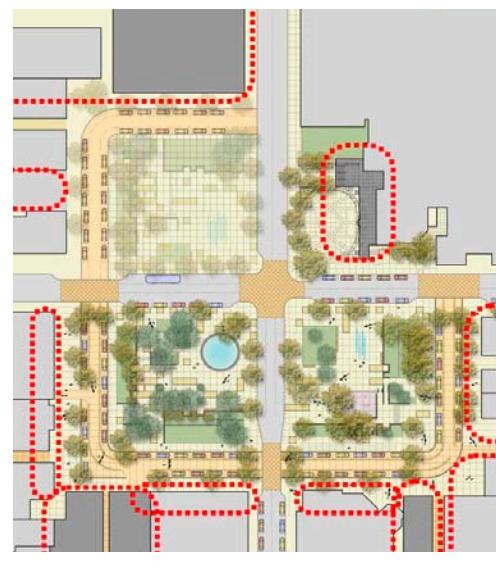
the northwest block (see photo, page 15). To facilitate this connection with an important feature of the landscape, the Butterfly Lot was built partially below grade, allowing for the unobstructed view and sense of continuity evident in the photograph. The subsequent construction of the Eugene Hilton obscured the butte, eliminating the benefit of the Butterfly Lot's low profile.

Recommendations: Encourage redevelopment of undeveloped and underdeveloped land surrounding the park to increase the degree of spatial enclosure. New buildings should form a continuous line of fronts along sidewalk edges surrounding the Park. Opportunities for future buildings completing the enclosure of the Park Blocks include the Wells Fargo Drive-through, Oviessi Parking Lot, South Park Building Parking Lot, and Butterfly Parking Garage. In addition, single story buildings between East Park and Pearl Street, could someday become more densely developed with multistory mixed use buildings (see Redevelopment).

Redevelopment

Current Condition: There is active discussion about a number of private and public projects in and around the Park Blocks. It is believed that each development is an opportunity to improve the downtown and the Park Blocks in general.

Recommendations: Apply Master Plan principles and policies to active redevel-



Redevelopment opportunities

opment projects. See also Enclosure discussion above. Examples of projects currently in discussion include the following:

- Whole Foods Market
- East Side Parking Garage
- Wayne Morse Federal Courthouse
- Eugene City Hall
- Lane County Public Health
- New Downtown Parks and Open Space Plan
- River District, presently EWEB

Connections & Gateways

Alley Connections

Current Condition: Alleys are currently used for pedestrian and vehicular access

to the park from surrounding streets. In particular, alleys connect the park to commercial zones along Pearl, Broadway, and Willamette. Due to the abundance of adjacent one-way streets, the alleys are important vehicular shortcuts, and some carry as much traffic as adjacent streets. The alleys are important parking and loading zones for commercial vehicles. Alleys lack signs and amenities.

Recommendations: Where not in conflict with needed vehicular use, alleys and public ways should be enhanced to increase pedestrian connections. Add signage, improve pavements, and increase pedestrian safety. Conversion of nearby one-way streets to two-way traffic has the potential to reduce the use of alleys by vehicular and commercial traffic, enhancing their ability to become more pedestrian friendly. Consider alleys as gateway entries. Provide



Alley Connections



Existing Alley (Above) and potential redesigned alley (below)

interesting and compelling views into the Park Block spaces. Use art and lighting hanging over the alleys to create magical and interesting spaces that draw people in and demand exploration. Add windows and doors from adjacent buildings. Opportunities include:

- West Park Building Enclosed Alley (Through the building)
- Sidewalk from Southwest Park to Broadway (adjacent to Wells Fargo,)
- Alley from South Park to Broadway

- Alley from East Park to Pearl
- Alley from Northwest Park to Willamette

Markets

Lane County Farmers' Market

Current Condition: The Lane County Farmers' Market has an immediate need for a bigger and better space. The current northwest Park Block area is too small for the current number of vendors. It contains

a number of obstructions preventing more efficient layout. The existing site utilized by the Farmers' Market is encumbered by elements from the 1958 design that, in some cases, have lost their utility. The area features a raised platform with a large opening that was provided for a mature tree that is no longer there. The platform prohibits accessibility for the other-abled, and constitutes a significant obstacle for the Farmers' Market, resulting in inefficient use of space and awkward booth configurations. The basalt wall bordering the west



Farmers' Market

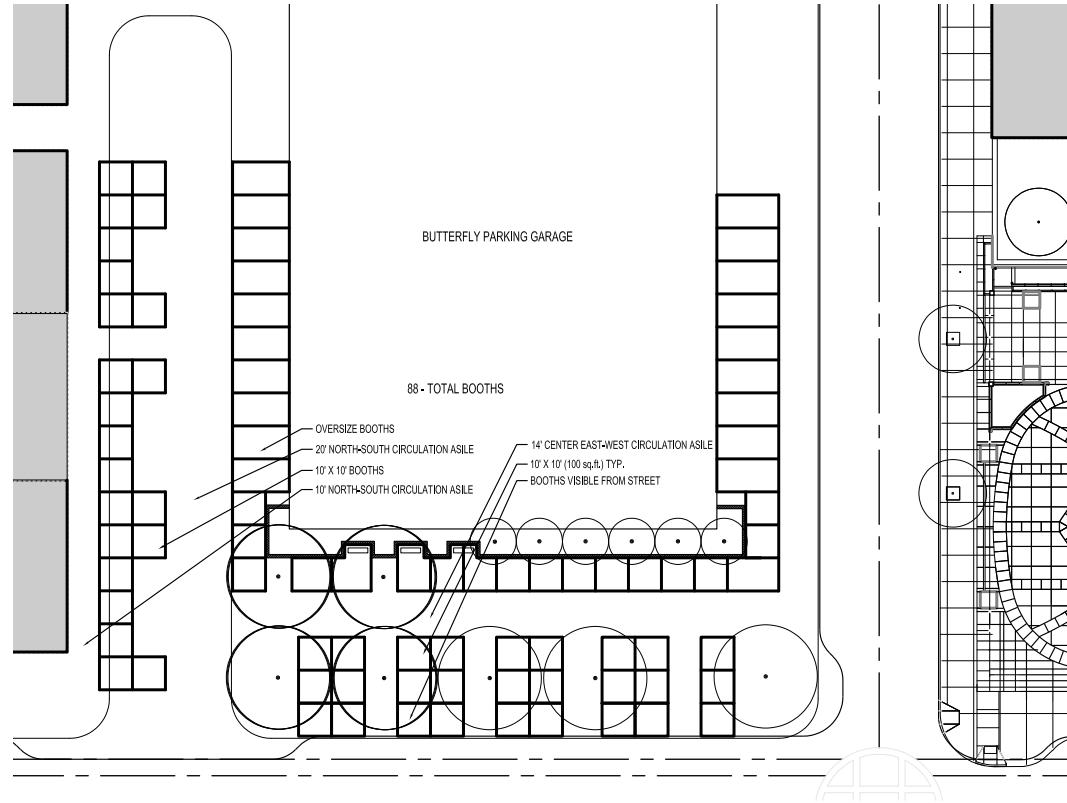


Lane County Farmers' Market,
Northwest Park Street

extent of the platform restricts circulation. East/west pedestrian movement is very difficult on Saturdays, due in part to the bottleneck formed by the wall. Just east of the wall and south of the platform there is a concrete pedestal which is the vestige of an abandoned drinking fountain. This pedestal is another encumbrance to the Farmers' Market. Use of the Butterfly Lot as market space is not feasible (see Butterfly Parking Garage above). There is a need for up to 50 more booths. The Farmers'



Lane County Farmers' Market



Possible booth layout within revised northwest block with the Butterfly Parking Garage remaining

Market operates on the northwest Park Block on Saturdays and on the northwest, southwest, and southeast blocks on Tuesdays of each week. A permanent structure facilitating set-up has been identified as highly desirable.

Recommendations: Provide a means of improving the existing market space and expanding the area for additional vendors. There is a breakdown of short and long-term measures later in this report. The long-term vision creates a new northwest

Park Block greatly increasing the area available to Farmers' Market. Short term measures can improve market operation significantly. Re-configuration of the existing area while the Butterfly Parking Garage remains will provide space that can be arranged in a multitude of ways, facilitating both market and non-market use. One of many possible Farmers' Market booth layouts possible as a result of proposed revisions to the area can be seen above. Remove the elevated platform at the north edge of the market area. Remove the

pedestal adjacent to the platform. Remove the basalt wall running north and south at mid-block. Execute changes in a fashion consistent with the design vocabulary of the historic blocks.

Saturday Market

Current Condition: Saturday Market is highly successful and is a good fit for the park, generating bustling activity on the southern blocks. There are currently 251 booth spaces, and the market has a membership of over 500 vendors. Market management has noted that it is important to maintain the compact, intense level of activity. Too much area would dilute the vitality of the event. The market has expressed a need for a better performance venue. They use a tent that is erected each Saturday at the north edge of the arched canopy of the southeast block. The city



Saturday Market



Saturday Market Stage

has acquired a new tent for the market stage. This new, larger, tent addresses some of the shortcomings of the old system, but the market would ultimately like to have access to a performance structure that did not require weekly set-up and tear-down, and that would be better able to direct the flow of water. The multiple drain locations of the existing canopies interfere with the back edge of the stage.

Recommendations: Seek ways to enhance the market and maintain the existing intensity of activity. The “curbless” design of the park streets, described elsewhere, offers the opportunity to expand market booths into the street. Consider the replacement of the canopy structure of the southeast block with a new structure suitable for use as a stage for small-scale performances, while providing shade and rain protection for vendors, performers, and visitors (see Shelters). Utilize traffic

calming measures and enhanced crossing designs for pedestrian safety.

Performances

Current Condition: A variety of performances occur at the Park Blocks. These include Coronation of the Slug Queen, Saturday Market Musical performances, musical events sponsored by DEI (Downtown Eugene Incorporated) and DEMI (Downtown Events Management Incorporated), and others. Stages for larger events have used the Willamalane Parks District portable stage consisting of an enclosed semi-truck bed. The stage has been set up along Eighth Avenue on the north edge of the southeast Park Block.

Recommendations: Flexibility and lack of obstructions are important to performance set up. Maintain freedom of obstructions for Willamalane stage use. Provide power in multiple locations. Improve Saturday Market stage (see Markets above). In the event of the development of the northwest block, configure the space such that performances can be an important part of its use.

Shelters

Current Condition: Park shelters consist of the original concrete vaulted canopies. One shelter is located at the south side of the southeast Park Block, while a second shelter is located on the west side of the southwest block. The canopies are sup-



Existing shelter (above) and proposed shelter (below), photo simulation



Automated pay toilet

ported by steel pipe columns on an eight foot grid. Each vault drains separately from a scupper. The current shelters are criticized for several reasons. The tightly spaced grid of columns create obstructions, multiple free falling drains conflict with market booths and create multiple and often unpredictable paths for water, the shelters do not work well for performances (see Saturday Market above), and there is a potential safety concern where the shelter spans over steps.

Recommendations: The west shelter should be kept but the east one replaced. A new design for the east site could retain the multiple arch theme while reducing the number of columns and forming a better performance venue. As a performance venue, the new shelter needs to facilitate small and medium sized events. Such a shelter should effectively address issues concerning the drainage of water in a way that creates no obstructions. Ensure that the shelter can be interpreted as a place for

activities other than performances; do not create something that looks like an empty stage when performances are not being held. Restore the original lighting scheme where applicable (see Lighting below). Maintain the shelters' roles as respite from sun and rain.

Infrastructure & Amenities

Public Rest Rooms

Current Condition: There are presently no permanent public rest rooms in the Park Blocks area. Portable rest rooms are set up for large events and for the markets.

Recommendations: Public rest rooms can be difficult to manage and maintain. It is recommended that park space not be taken by building permanent rest rooms within the park. Other options include:

- Pay toilets which are available as package units with automated cleaning features.
- Leasing of toilets in neighboring private buildings.
- Construction of toilets in a new public building.
- Continued use of Portable toilets.

Repairs

Current Condition: Much of the fabric of the Park Blocks is now 48 years old. Various components within the park are in need of repair or replacement. In conjunc-



Typical existing street lamp

tion with City maintenance personnel, areas needing attention have been identified as part of the work of this Master Plan. See appendix for the findings of this survey.

Recommendations: Execute repairs



Existing shelter lighting

when possible. Refer to the Values statement when making decisions concerning priorities of repair.

Lighting

Current Condition: The pole mounted light fixtures are simulated historic cast iron lamps typical of those used throughout downtown. The fixtures do not meet current city standards for night sky cutoff. They are generally poor sources of illumination and do not match the modernist style of the park. A new fixture is being investigated for use on Eighth Avenue in the Courthouse District. The shelters are illuminated by fixtures attached to the bottom of the concrete vaults. The shelters were originally illuminated by uplights mounted in the slab beneath the

shelters. These lights allowed the shelters to be unencumbered by light fixtures and conduit.

Recommendations: Develop a lighting design for the park which accomplishes the goals of increasing security and of making the site more festive. More attractive lighting would encourage night use of the Park by downtown residents. Consider lighting strategies that dramatize and reinforce the positive attributes of plant materials, water features, walls, pavement, and shelters. Where the original shelters are to be retained, restore the original lighting scheme and remove the conduit and surface mounted fixtures presently in place. Integrate “cobra head” street lights and park lighting.

Art

Current Condition: The 1958 design incorporated three sculptures, all of which remain. The largest of these is the metal fish sculpture found in the fountain of the southwest block. This sculpture was



Contemporary light fixtures



Festive lighting examples

created by regionally renowned artist Tom Hardy. Two other sculptures, by Oregon artist Jan Zach, are mounted on top of basalt walls, one near the northwest corner of the southwest block, and a second at the northeast of the southeast block. In 2005, a bronze sculpture of Senator Wayne Morse was placed in the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza.

Recommendations: The works by Hardy and Zach are of high quality, and are essential components of the historic fabric of the 1958 design. They should remain, and conservation efforts should be imple-



Plant Forms, by Jan Zach, 1959. East block, detail

mented. The portrait of Wayne Morse speaks to the intent of the Free Speech Plaza and commemorates an important figure in American and Oregonian politics. Other opportunities for the incorporation of both permanent and temporary artworks should be sought. Permanent artwork should be incorporated in any expansion of the northwest block. Provide “real estate” for public art. Park revisions may provide opportunities for the integration of art (see Pavement below). Art should be considered as a means of establishing thematic continuity for Eighth Avenue (see Great Streets).



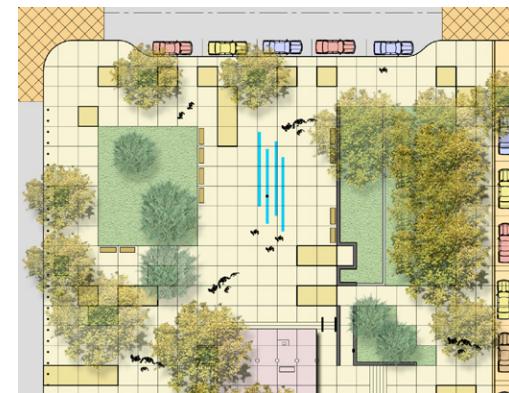
Existing exposed aggregate and broom finished paving textures

Pavement

Current Condition: The 1958 scheme featured a paving pattern realized by the use of broom finished and exposed aggregate areas of concrete. These two finishes were utilized to create an abstract pattern that is one of the elements that significantly contribute to the character of the Park Blocks as a good example of mid-century modern design (see History above). Over the years, repair and alteration of the Park Blocks has confused the scheme. Those surfaces that were once broom finished have now worn down so that fine aggregates are visible, blurring the distinction of the original pattern. Some concrete has been replaced, creating a patchwork of various textures and colors. The 8' grid of the 1958 design was originally reinforced by rigid adherence of control joints and most planter edges to the grid. Subsequent work has not always recognized the

significance of the grid, or has elected to create new control joints in the interest of limiting scope of work. The recent improvements to the southeast corner of the southeast block included replacement of some paving. The replacement paving was finished in a way that replicates the worn appearance of the areas originally broom finished, resulting in less variation of texture and color than was the case with previous repairs and alterations. All new work in the southeast corner respects the eight foot grid, and in some instances, restored the grid where it previously had been ignored.

Recommendations: Restore the clarity of the original pattern. Consider replacement of the areas originally finished with exposed aggregate. These areas could possibly be stone or concrete pavers engraved with words, symbols, or art to add interest.



Partial plan, southeast block, showing potential clarification of paving pattern. Also see diagram, page 16



Example of paving utilizing color, texture, and text

Similar paving themes could extend along Eighth Avenue forming continuity between the park and Great Street. Respect the 8' grid. Restore the grid where it has been confused or ignored. Consider restoration of the grid by altering or replacing pavement when replacing plant materials in areas not currently conforming to the grid.

Bicycles

Current Condition: Bicycles travel west-bound on Eighth Avenue in a bike lane, and the park streets offer calm riding conditions. Bicycles traveling north on Oak Street co-mingle with traffic. Broadway has recently been redesigned as a traffic-calmed pedestrian and bike friendly street. Bicyclists traveling east-west use this street as a calm connection.

Recommendation: The accommodation of bikes should be coordinated with the bicycle master plan and facilitated through the reduction in traffic volumes and redesign of Eighth Avenue as a Great Street. This street design should reduce traffic speed to below 20 mph with timed signals in the primary direction. Bicycles would co-mingle with vehicular traffic on the redesigned, pedestrian friendly, Great Street. The reduced volume and speed of vehicular traffic will facilitate safer biking. Bicycle parking should be accommodated on or near the Park Blocks. Locations for bike parking should include the south side of Southeast and Southwest Park Streets.

Planting

Current Condition: The Park Blocks today host a variety of plant species including several large incense cedars. These trees have become icons of the Park Blocks and add to their contemplative atmosphere. The original intent of this public



Example of paving



Existing incense cedar. Tree predates 1958

open space was to provide respite from the urban environment. This was accomplished by using many existing trees that were organized in an eight foot grid. The original planting plan created a garden-like woodland atmosphere using a variety of species including some native species. The inclusion of native species provides a fine complement to the mixed species composition, yet is not the dominant presence. The

use of ornamental species creates an urban place that is recognizably cared for and accentuates the park atmosphere.

Recommendations: A planting strategy that helps to maintain the contemplative atmosphere should be pursued. Replacement of the incense cedars as necessary and maintenance of mixed species in the planting beds will respect the original intent for this urban place. The plant species should not strictly be native, as these are not well-suited to the intense urban environment. Instead, a mix of species will ensure that Park Block plantings remain healthy. Use a proportion of native species to connect the urban environment with the region, but in acknowledgement of altered hydrologic and soil conditions, use urban-adapted species better suited to the circumstances of the park. Some native species that have been successful in the Park Blocks include: incense cedars, Oregon grape, vine maple, Pacific wax myrtle and Pacific dogwood. People tend to respect and protect spaces that they believe to be well maintained. The use of ornamental species ensures that the appearance of well-maintained plantings can be practically achieved. Choose plants that contribute to the contemplative atmosphere and celebrate the Park Blocks as a special place.

Management & Implementation

City-County Collaboration

Current Condition: The City of Eugene owns and maintains the southern Park Blocks. In addition, the streets and sidewalks surrounding the park are operated and maintained by the city. Lane County owns the Free Speech Plaza, County Building complex, Butterfly Parking Garage and Farmers' Market area. Lane County Farmers' Market operates under an agreement with the County. Saturday Market operates under an agreement with the city, and other users of the southern Park Blocks must obtain approval from the City.

Recommendations: The City and County could agree that joint management is in the best public interest. The Master Plan is intended to describe a common vision and form a guide for joint management. Such an agreement would include collaboration on improvements affecting the area.

Funding Opportunities

Current Condition: The Downtown Urban Renewal District encompasses the Park Blocks west of Oak Street. Districts for Multi-unit Property Tax Exemptions and the Downtown Eugene Vertical Housing Zone, as well as the Business Development Fund, all encompass the Park Blocks and surrounding buildings.

Recommendations: Urban renewal funds

may be used for improvements. Consider use of urban renewal money or (tax increment financing) for public improvements of Park Blocks including curbless streets, lighting, and alley treatments. Also consider low interest loan funds for store front entry improvements for businesses willing to reorient to the Park Blocks or those desiring upgrades and improvements. Encourage property owners to take advantage of the Multi-unit Property Tax Exemptions, Downtown Eugene Vertical Housing Zone, and the Business Development Fund.

City Council Budget

Current Condition: The City Council has approved \$300,000 of Urban Renewal Funds for improvements in support of the Farmers' Market in a downtown location. City Council action would be needed to approve improvements and to authorize funding.

Recommendations: Identify specific improvements for the Farmers' Market. See Markets above.

Adoption of Master Plan

Current Condition: There is currently no adopted plan for the Park Blocks.

Recommendations: The Park Blocks Master Plan should be presented to City Council and to the Lane County Commissioners in the interest of developing a

common understanding. In addition, some level of official adoption by the City of Eugene is desirable to encourage application of the Master Plan within the community and in particular, for private and public redevelopment projects.



Short, Mid, & Long-Term Visions



Implementation Strategies

The following are recommended improvements categorized by level of priority, potential for funding, and logic of sequence. It is acknowledged that the nature of public projects makes it difficult to predict the feasibility and scheduling of desired changes. This chart is therefore provisional, and it is anticipated that the actual sequence of changes will occur as funding and opportunity allow. In addition to the changes listed below, the Park Blocks are in need of various repairs. The repair issues are itemized separately and can be found in the appendix.

The chart is intended as a means of providing an easy way to consider the scope of changes recommended by the Master Plan. The categories listed here refer to detailed descriptions found elsewhere in the document. These detailed descriptions provide analysis of how various recommendations may work in conjunction with each other, and explain the breadth of issues related to each listed item.

Implementation Strategies

Short-Term Mid-Term Long-Term

Streets

Curbless South Park Streets		X	
Curb Extensions	X		
8th Avenue/Great Street Improvements		X	
Reconfigure Oak/Pearl Couplet			X

Fountains

West Block Fountain Restoration	X		
Southeast Block Interactive Fountain	X		

North Blocks

Free Speech Plaza Revisions			X
County Building Revisions		X	
NW Park Block Redevelopment (Remove Butterfly Lot)			X
Re-establish NW Park Street			X

Enclosure & Redevelopment

Infill Development		X	X
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Connections & Gateways

Alley Improvements		X	
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Markets

NW Park Block Farmer's Market Improvements	X		
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Shelters & Performances

Replace East Shelter	X		
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Infrastructure, Amenities, & Lighting

Lighting Replacement in Park and Shelters	X		
Establish Restroom Policy	X		
Repairs	X		

Art

Review Conservation Policies	X		
Incorporate New Art		X	X

Pavement

Paving Restoration	X		
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Bicycles & Planting

Provide Bicycle Parking	X		
Implement Planting Policy	X		



Appendix

Participants

Committee

Mike Penwell, City of Eugene
 Steve Loges, City of Eugene (PM)
 Glen Svendsen, City of Eugene
 David Suchart, Lane County
 Tom Peterson, Downtown Neighborhood Association
 Beth Little, Saturday Market
 Kim Still, Saturday Market
 Mary Unruh, DIVA
 Noa O'Hare, Farmers' Market
 Richie Weinman, City of Eugene
 Michelle Emmons, DEI
 Robin Hostick, City of Eugene
 Nan Laurence, City of Eugene
 Scot Milovich, City of Eugene
 Laura Niles, City of Eugene
 Ron Sutton, City of Eugene
 Rob Inerfeld, City of Eugene

Park Blocks Neighbors (* Comments by email)

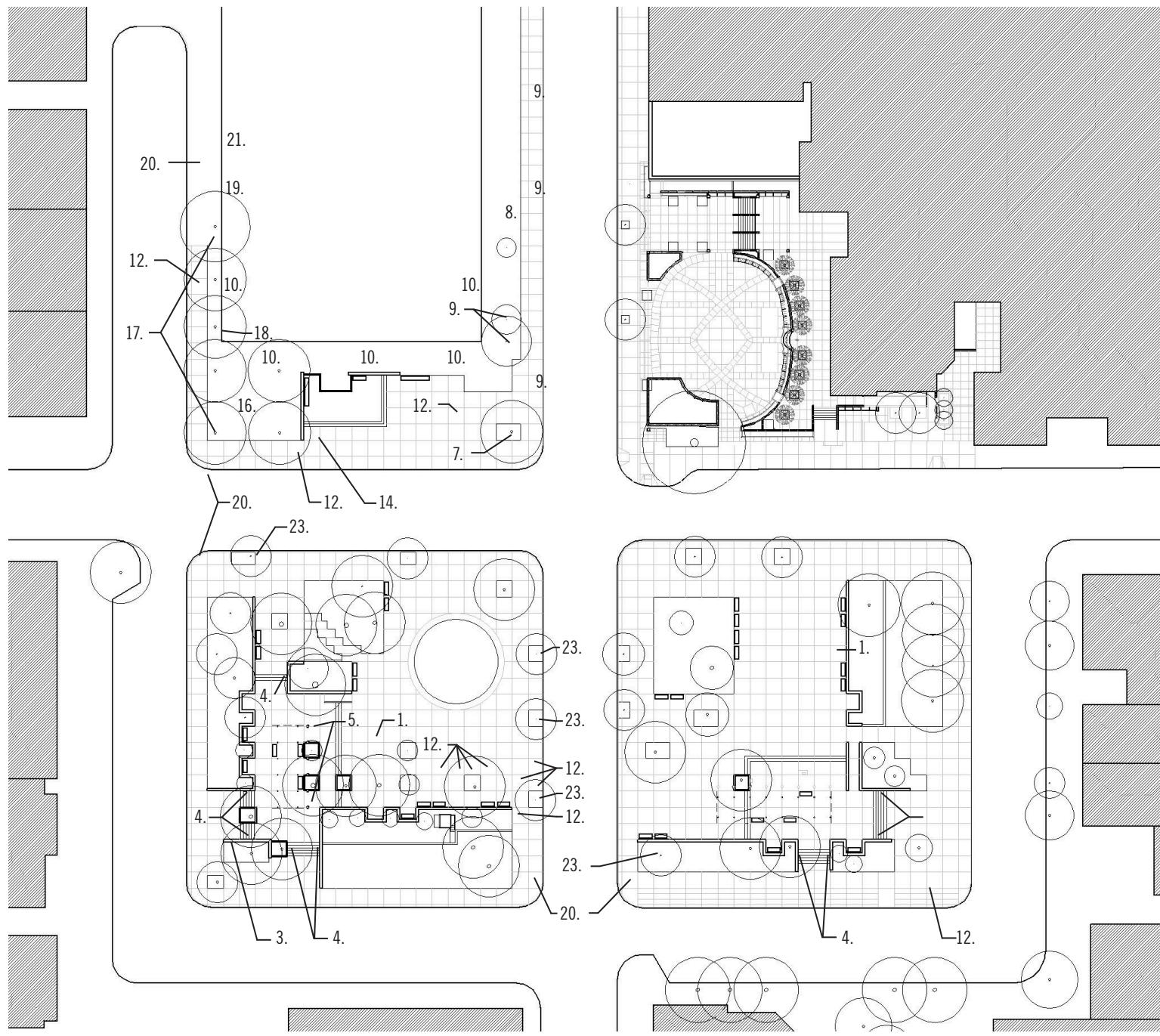
Aimee Allen, Letterhead
 Greg Brokaw, Rowell Brokaw Architects
 *Chad Kirkpatrick, Member of Downtown Neighborhood Association
 *Don Corson, The Don Corson Law Firm, P.C.
 *Tom McMahon, Cascade Title Co
 *Daniel Klute, Jerry McDonnell Architects

Design Team

Doug Macy, Walker Macy
 David Aulwes, Walker Macy
 Christopher Miller, Walker Macy
 Eric Gunderson, PIVOT Architecture
 Scott Clarke, PIVOT Architecture

Organizations

Downtown Neighborhood Association
 Ad Hoc Farmers' Market Group Citizens Committee to Enhance Farmer's Market
 Downtown Eugene Incorporated, DEI
 Saturday Market
 Lane County Farmers' Market
 Lane Transit District, Will Mueller, Service Planning Manager



Park Block Repairs & Maintenance Survey

Eugene Park Blocks Repair & Maintenance
Walkthrough, 7/10/06
Attendees: Ross (Extension Services), Noa O'Hare, Ron Sutton, Eric Gunderson

1. Consolidate electrical outlets, relocate
2. Provide more electrical outlets
3. Review electrical panel to reduce wall height
4. Lighting, verify operation of step lights and replace and upgrade
5. Replace shelter drains West Park Block; repair concrete planter wall
6. NW Block electrical. Ok?
(Need common maintenance philosophy)
7. Need ground cover, pavers or grating, able to sustain use for market
8. Pave or redesign gravel area for market
9. Remove trees.
Redesign corner for market
Extende along Oak to expand market
10. Add water vaults
11. Add phone line, get wired for credit card processing. Wireless. Service entire park

12. Repair broken pavement
13. Add DFs
14. Remove concrete pedestal (Former DF)
15. Add storage
16. Restore lawn (or replace, see master plan), fix sprinklers
17. Prune and maintain trees, dead limbs, shape
18. Remove Ivy
19. Add power outlet
20. Add accessible curb ramp
21. Bike racks in poor condition, repair
22. Coordinate street lights with park
(Ron)
23. Tree with root problems, replace
24. Benches and trash receptacles, rethink
25. Need recycle center, all 3 blocks need product and location
26. Fountain
Fish fountain sculpture restoration done by Tom Hardy about 1998-2000
Ron plans new coating to protect metal
27. Solve problem of pedestrian barrier at plant beds
Fence
Consider bollards by Timberform
(Ron)
See options from Walker Macy
28. Fix broken concrete planter wall

Pond floor- reseal exposed agg, agg.
Falling out
Trough replaced
Edge leveled
Replace plumbing, filtration, new jets, programmable
Fountain has pool lights now- upgrade with lighting work

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12. Eugene Park Blocks Design Drawings, Lloyd Bond Landscape Architect, 1958. Source: Lloyd Bond Collection of Documents, University of Oregon Library Archives.
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14. *Land donation contract dated April 12, 1856 Between Eugene & Mary Skinner and the Lane County Territory of Oregon Land donation contract dated April 12, 1856 Between Eugene & Mary Skinner and the Lane County Territory of Oregon*