

# **STEVENSON DOWNTOWN DESIGN PROGRAM**

**City of Stevenson, Washington**

**DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS**

**Spencer & Kupper  
Portland, Oregon**

**July 31, 1995**

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# DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## City of Stevenson Downtown Design Program

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### Introduction

This report contains findings and recommendations for a development and redevelopment program for downtown Stevenson. The goal of this task is to develop information and strategy necessary to carry out a commercial revitalization effort. All of the previously prepared economic development, transportation and downtown plans were reviewed, including: Planning for Downtown Revitalization, Walker & Macy, 1991; Port of Skamania County Stevenson Waterfront Access Master Plan, The Benkendorf Associates, 1993; State Route 14 Stevenson Access Improvements Environmental Assessment, WSDOT, 1994; and Stevenson Zoning Ordinance, City of Stevenson, 1994.

Task 1: Design Program has been completed by the consultant team. Preparing specific facade improvement and building lifecycle recommendations for individual downtown buildings was the product of this first task.

A Task Force made up of key property and business owners was established to identify development and redevelopment opportunities. A Downtown Development and Redevelopment Program was prepared: objectives were reviewed and prioritized; activities and projects were prioritized; special issues were examined; development opportunities were identified; public and private roles were discussed; and marketing and financial recommendations will be made.

This report was revised after consultation with the Task Force, then was reviewed by the individuals, groups and organizations represented on the Task Force and by other organizations concerned with economic development and tourism.

### Overall Factors Affecting Revitalization in Downtown Stevenson

- Stevenson's 1990 population of 1,147 represents 14% of Skamania County's population. In spite of its small population, Stevenson should capture the majority of additional retail sales potential that would be generated in the County. Stevenson's position as the County's dominant retail center is strengthened by: proximity to major new activity centers... Skamania Lodge and Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center; Stevenson's central location and existing retail base; and limitations for rural commercial centers in the National Scenic Area.

- Skamania County captures only 40% of potential local retail sales. Approximately \$6.2 million in potential recaptured sales was estimated for 1989. Retail sales county-wide are increasing.
- Potential sales related to the Skamania Lodge operation and the opening of the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center are estimated to exceed \$5 million. The strongest growth opportunities are dining, apparel and specialty retail, food and gasoline service. Additional hospitality/recreation projects located close to Stevenson are in the planning stages. These include Carson Hot Springs, a resort at North Bonneville and a new motel in Cascade Locks. All of these projects represent opportunities for retail growth in downtown Stevenson serving the tourism industry.
- The total added sales potential from both leakage recapture and tourism is conservatively estimated to exceed \$11 million. This translates into the need for an additional 62,000 square feet of retail space, a doubling of the amount of floor space now in downtown Stevenson. The greatest amount of additional space would be in dining, apparel and specialty retail, all uses compatible within a small downtown environment.
- SR-14 will be improved through downtown Stevenson, forming a two-way couplet on First and Second Streets. Future traffic levels (2015) on Second Street will be reduced slightly from existing levels (8000 ADT to 7000 ADT), while traffic levels will increase dramatically on First Street (800 ADT to 6000 ADT). Roadway improvements planned for First Street include on-street parking and sidewalks. Right-of-way will be required for First Street west of Seymour Street and east of Columbia Avenue. New gateways will be created at the east and west ends of downtown.

#### **Issues and Problems Associated with Downtown Stevenson**

- If downtown Stevenson is to target tourists/visitors as a primary market, downtown needs to extend to the riverfront. Good north-south pedestrian connections, and visitor attractions and services on the riverfront are needed.
- The two-way couplet on First and Second Streets will bring traffic, exposure and activity to First Street. New sidewalks and on-street parking will also be provided. The expected high traffic volumes may present access problems to the fire station and post office located on First Street. There are several vacant sites along First Street suitable for commercial development, and existing residential uses which may convert to office or retail uses.
- A high quality retailing area needs well maintained sidewalks and attractive streetscape. Sidewalks on Russell Avenue south of Second Street need reconstruction, particularly at the BNRR crossing. There are no sidewalks on Seymour Avenue, parts of First Street and Columbia Avenue.

- Insufficient parking is identified as a problem within downtown's core area. A parking analysis indicated that there are now 275 on and off-street parking spaces in the core area and an additional 225 spaces available within the commercial zone. An estimate of parking demand, assuming an additional 30,000 square feet of retail is developed downtown, concluded that the existing supply of parking spaces is sufficient.
- Future development of Port lands along the waterfront is critical to the extension of downtown to the Columbia River. The Port of Skamania County's Waterfront Master Plan calls for a multi-use park along Stevenson's waterfront. A small tourist-commercial development and restaurant are located between the Port office and existing industrial structures. The majority of land area is devoted to parklands and parking for windsurfing and boating activities. A greater emphasis on developing tourist commercial attractions and pedestrian connections to the downtown as well as the waterfront should be considered.

### **Development and Redevelopment Strategy**

This section contains a series of recommendations for public and private actions designed to support development and redevelopment within Downtown Stevenson. The responsibility for implementing the recommendations should be shared by the City of Stevenson, Port of Skamania County, business and property owners. Within each *italicized* heading, specific actions are listed in order of priority. In general, the overall priority of actions are:

*Assist Facade Improvement Program*

*Construct Sidewalk and Streetscape Improvements*

Russell Street as a pedestrian connection between the downtown and waterfront.

Improve the Courthouse Lawn as a public assembly space.

Other north-south streets which connect First and Second Streets.

*Develop Tourist Commercial Attractions on the Waterfront*

*Develop a Coordinated Marketing Program*

Emphasize the Skamania Lodge/Interpretive Center/Downtown Stevenson as a single experience.

*Make Parking Improvements*

Manage existing parking and newly created parking along First Street before constructing new parking facilities.

More specific recommendations follow.

*Public Actions: Facade Improvement Assistance*

- Develop a building facade improvement loan/grant program in co-operation with the Skamania County Economic Development Program and private financial organizations. Prepare a brochure and assistance packet and distribute to business and property owners.

*Public Actions: Sidewalk and Streetscape Improvements*

- Reconstruct sidewalks on Russell Avenue South of Second Street as part of the SR 14 couplet project. Provide for a generous sidewalk crossing of the BNRR line. Extend street tree program and street lights down Russell Avenue. Sketches of Second Street/Russell Avenue improvements are attached.
- Develop a plan and funding program to construct a public assembly space on the County Courthouse Lawn near the intersection of Second Street and Russell Avenue.
- Construct new sidewalks along Seymour Avenue, parts of Leavens Street and Columbia Avenue between First and Second Streets.

*Public Actions: Parking Improvements*

- Adopt and implement the parking opportunities found in Planning for Downtown Revitalization, 1991. These recommendations are attached. Implement the restriping recommendations as part of the SR 14 couplet project.
- Develop a signage program in order to direct visitors and shoppers to off-street parking, particularly parking at the courthouse complex and any public parking which may be developed on First Street.
- Consider the acquisition of the vacant parcel on First Street just south of Walnut Park. Develop a plan which extends the park down to First Street, maintains the view corridor to the river, and provides off-street parking.
- Consider amending section 17.42.080 of the Stevenson Zoning Ordinance, Off-Street (Parking) Facilities--Location Requirements. Add retail, service and office uses where the parking facility can be located within 300 feet of the building.

*Public/Private Actions: Promote Commercial Attractions and Pedestrian Improvements along the Waterfront.*

- Work with the Port Commission to revise the Waterfront Master Plan. A greater emphasis on developing tourist commercial attractions and pedestrian connections to the downtown as well as the waterfront should be considered, particularly along Russell Avenue.

*Public/Private Actions: Marketing and Promotion*

- In co-operation with the Port of Skamania County and the local real estate community, develop a marketing program focused on vacant land and buildings for sale downtown and

along the waterfront. The program could include preparation of a folder and inserts, ads in west coast periodicals such as Sunset Magazine, etc.

- In co-operation with Skamania Lodge and the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center, develop marketing programs for visitors, business expansion and recruitment.
- Conduct a local property and business owner survey to measure support for the creation of a Parking and Business Improvement Area. Report the results of the survey to the Stevenson City Council.

#### **D. Parking Opportunities**

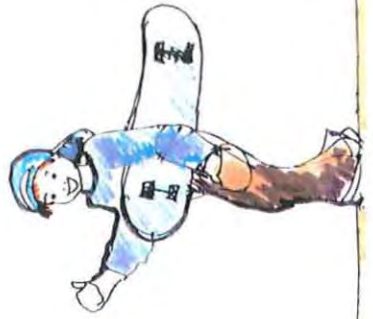
The following is a list of possible ways to expand the amount of parking in downtown Stevenson:

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

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

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

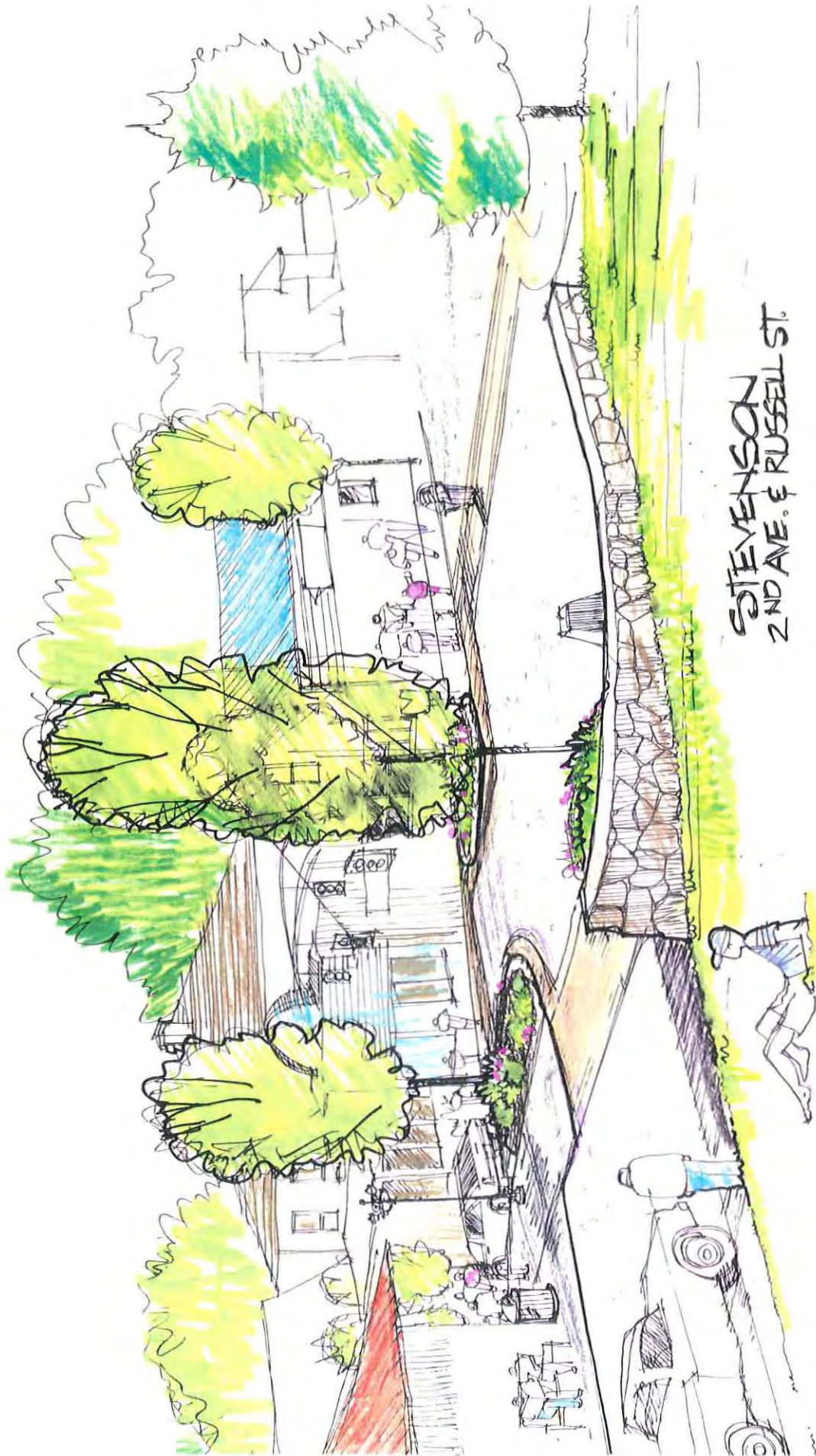




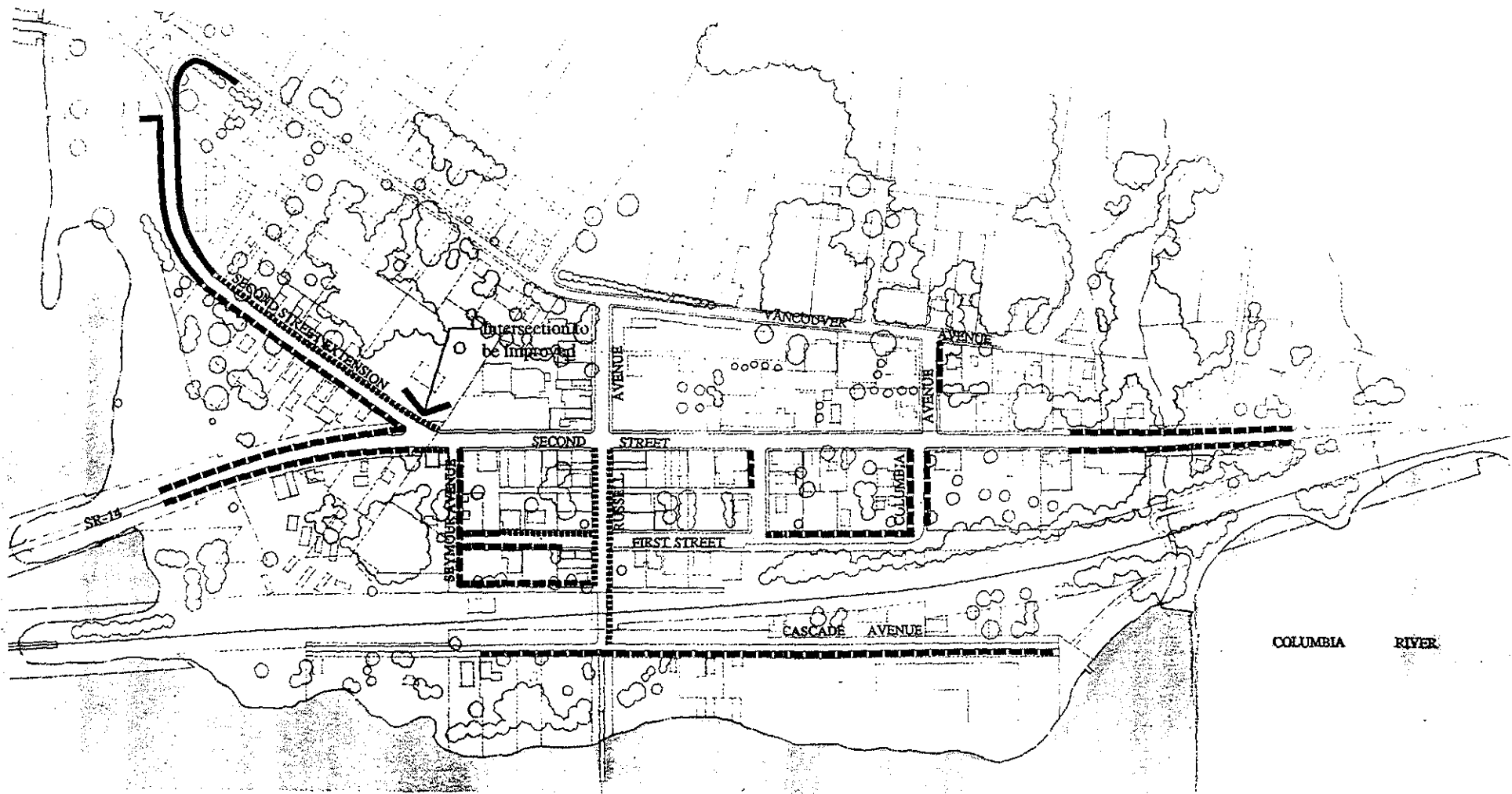
STEVENSON  
2ND AVE. & RUSSELL ST.










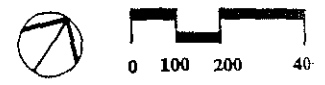
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**LEGEND**

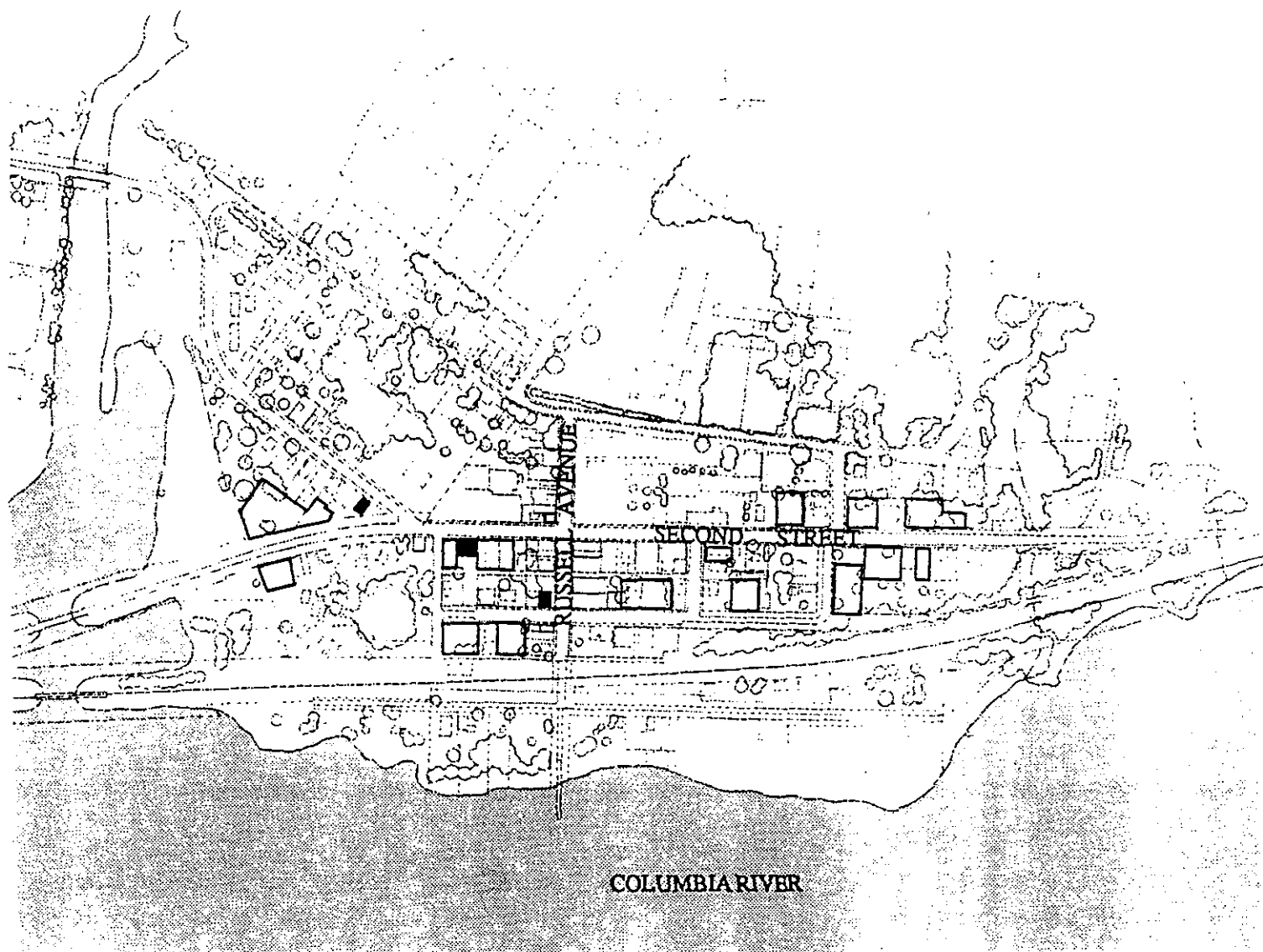
-  Phase I Curb and Sidewalk
-  Future Curb and Sidewalk
-  Existing Sidewalks to be Improved

**SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS**





Downtown Revitalization and Access Plan  
Stevenson, Washington

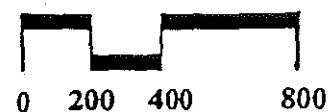
Figure 6.1

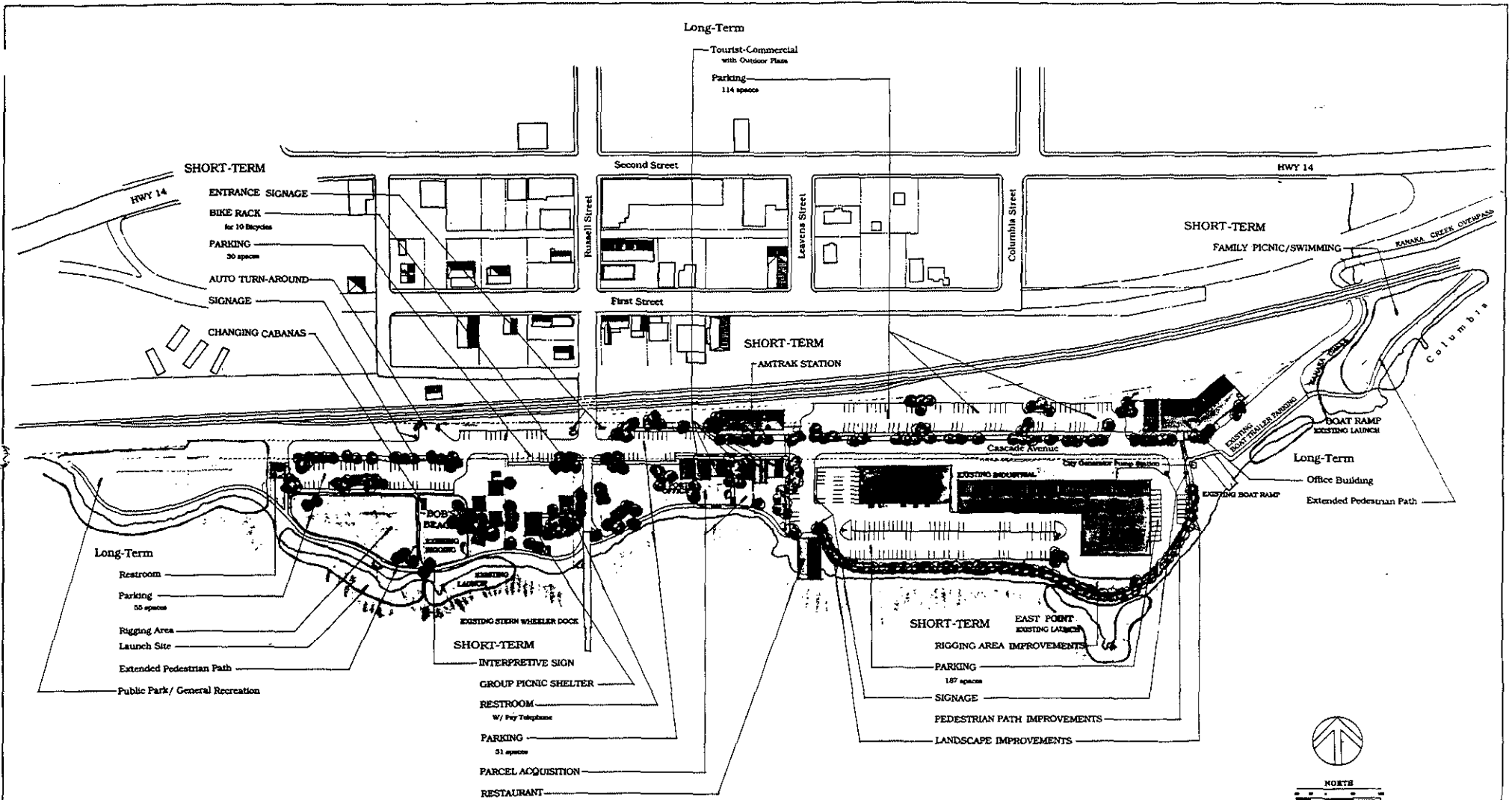


Legend

-  Vacant Site
-  Vacant or Underutilized Building

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES





# Stevenson Waterfront Plan

# Master Plan

Port of Skamania County

Stevenson, Washington

Funded by Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act, Washington Department of Natural Resources

The  
**Benkendorf Associates**  
 Corporation  
 122 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Portland, Oregon 97204  
 (503) 238-0088

# PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

City of Stevenson Downtown Design Program

July 31, 1995

Spencer & Kupper

Portland, Oregon

## Introduction

The goal of this task is to determine the feasibility of providing some form of transportation shuttle linkage between the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center/Skamania Lodge to downtown Stevenson. A general profile of potential ridership will be prepared, and options to serve that ridership will be identified. General capital and operating costs are defined, and recommendations as to feasibility and implementation are made.

## Ridership Demand

The potential sources of transportation shuttle ridership are assumed to originate from three primary sources: Skamania Lodge guests, Skamania Lodge conference center guests not staying at the lodge, and visitors to the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center. Table 1 and the related footnotes describe the assumptions used in estimating the total annual visitor days for each of these facilities. The estimate for the Interpretive Center is significantly below the expected

Table 1  
Potential Annual Ridership Estimates

Source of Ridership	Percent of Visitor Days Using Shuttle			
	5%	10%	15%	20%
Lodge <sup>1</sup> (83,800 visitor days)	4190	8380	12570	16760
Conference Center <sup>2</sup> (2500 visitor days)	125	250	375	500
Interpretive Center <sup>3</sup> (100,000 visitor days)	5000	10000	15000	20000
Total (186,300 visitor days)	9315	18630	27945	37260

<sup>1</sup>Assumes 194 rooms @ 1.5 persons/room, 80 % occupancy for 360 days/year.

<sup>2</sup>Assumes 50 persons/week non-hotel guests, 50 weeks/year.

<sup>3</sup>250,000 visitors estimated, but higher auto use assumed.



250,000 annual visitors, but it is assumed that most visitors will arrive by automobile, and will be less likely than lodge or conference center visitors to use a shuttle service.

Table 1 shows the estimated annual shuttle ridership assuming that from 5% to 20% of the total visitors days will result in one shuttle trip per visitor day. Approximately 9,300 annual shuttle trips will be achieved if a 5% ridership rate is achieved, increasing to about 37,300 shuttle trips if 20% of visitor days result in shuttle use. If we assume that a fare of \$1.00 is charged for each trip, fare box revenues may range from \$9,300 to \$37,300 per year.

### **Shuttle Options**

There are a wide range of small vehicles which may be appropriate for a Stevenson shuttle ranging from a modified mini-van, to a small 16-20 passenger bus with ADA approved access, to "historic" trolleys similar in style to turn of the century street cars.

The City of Oregon City has just purchased a gasoline powered vintage trolley that will provide shuttle service from the End of Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, to downtown Oregon City. The trolley will serve visitors to the Interpretive Center, and provide a shuttle service between new parking lots and the County Courthouse/offices for jurors and county employees. A \$1.00 fare will be charged. Operations will be part of the city's public parking program. Vehicles considered by the City ranged in cost from \$100,000 to \$225,000.

The Beavercreek Transit Oriented Development now being planned in Beaverton, Oregon will use electric powered shuttle vehicles to connect a small town center planed for a light rail station site with nearby employment campuses such as Nike, Tektronix and Sequent. The electric vehicle is somewhat experimental, which has an advantage in that the Department of Transportation, state transportation department and the local electric utility are willing to invest in vehicle acquisition as a demonstration project. Fares will be charged. Vehicles cost approximately \$50,000 and a battery charging facility will be required at a cost of \$120,000. Fare box revenues will provide about 30% of operating costs, with the remainder made up by major employers served by the system.

### **Operations and Maintenance Costs**

We have reviewed several feasibility studies for small scale shuttle bus service, and have discussed shuttle bus operations with Tri Met staff and transportation consultants experienced in designing shuttle systems. The most common method of quantifying shuttle operation and maintenance costs is cost per hour of operation for each shuttle vehicle. The very lowest O and M cost recommended by our contacts is \$25 to \$35 per hour. This would include a driver, fuel and regular maintenance of a small shuttle vehicle. For comparison, Tri Met estimates that their cost for operating a transit vehicle is in the \$75 per hour range.

Table 2 summarizes the annual operations and maintenance costs for one shuttle vehicle assuming a number of operating scenarios. The first two columns illustrate operating scenarios which extend throughout the year. O and M costs range from \$61,200 to \$85,700 annually.

The second two columns illustrate scenarios where shuttle operation would only occur during a six month period. Annual O and M costs for summer operation of one shuttle vehicle range from \$35,000 to \$49,000.

Table 2  
**Estimated Annual Operation and Maintenance Costs**  
 (One Shuttle Vehicle)

Operations/Maint. Costs	Hours of Operation/Week			
	35 <sup>4</sup>	49 <sup>5</sup>	40 <sup>6</sup>	56 <sup>7</sup>
\$25/hr	\$43,750.00	\$61,250.00	\$25,000.00	\$35,000.00
\$35/hr	\$61,250.00	\$85,750.00	\$35,000.00	\$49,000.00

### Conclusions and Recommendation

Table 3 summarizes the factors considered in this report. Capital costs for a trolley vehicle and any needed support facilities will range from \$50,000 to \$200,000 depending on the type of vehicles selected. Securing a donated vehicle, utilizing an existing vehicle such as the vans operated by the Lodge or senior shuttle vehicles operated by the County may be options, and securing local, state and federal funding for a vehicle will reduce capital costs.

Fare box revenues will likely support from 20 to 40 percent of annual operations and maintenance costs assuming that ridership will occur at the more modest rates shown on Table 1. This is in line with the 30 percent factor used for the Beavercreek TOD shuttle service. Annual operations and maintenance subsidies should be anticipated, particularly in the early years of a shuttle program. Sources include the City, County, Port, Skamania Lodge, Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center and possibly the downtown through formation of a Parking and Business Improvement Area.

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<sup>4</sup>10 am to 5 pm, 5 days/week, 50 weeks/year.

<sup>5</sup>10 am to 5 pm, 7 days/week, 50 weeks/year.

<sup>6</sup>10 am to 6 pm, 5 days/week, 25 weeks/year.

<sup>7</sup>10 am to 6 pm, 7 days/week, 25 weeks/year.



**Table 3**  
**Summary of Trolley Feasibility Analysis**

<b>Estimated Annual Ridership</b>	
12 Month Operation	9,300 to 37,260 riders
6 Month (Summer) Operation	5,600 to 22,400 riders
<b>Estimated Vehicle Acquisition Costs</b>	
One Vehicle	\$50,000 to \$100,000
Support Facilities	\$0 to \$100,000
<b>Estimated Annual Operations and Maint. Costs</b>	
12 Month Operation	\$49,000 to \$86,000
6 Month (Summer) Operation	\$25,000 to \$49,000
<b>Estimated Fare Box Revenues</b>	
Full Year	\$9,300 to \$37,260
6 Month (Summer) Operation	\$5,600 to \$22,400

The cost of providing a shuttle service will range from about \$2.50 to \$5.00 per trip, with fare box revenues accounting for roughly 1/3 of the cost. This represents a very large investment per potential downtown shopper. It is our recommendation that the City not pursue a shuttle service. Investments in promoting downtown activities to lodge and interpretive center visitors and completing the bike/pedestrian pathway to downtown and the waterfront should have higher priority.