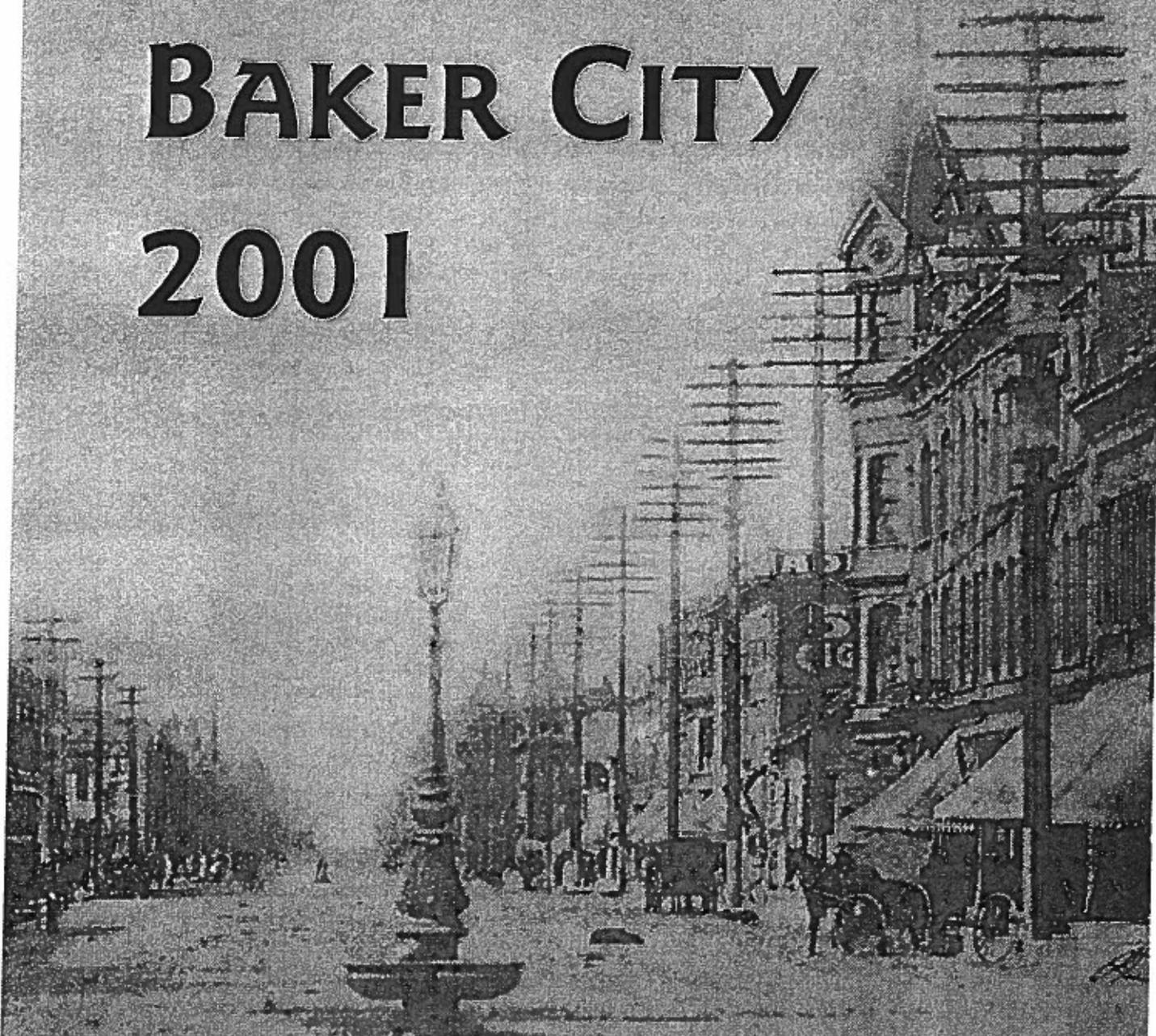


# PLAN OF HISTORIC BAKER CITY 2001



PREPARED FOR HISTORIC BAKER CITY BY PLANMAKERS

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Leo Adler Community Fund  
Baker County  
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Historic Baker City, Inc.

### **OCTOBER 2001**

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# INTRODUCTION

This report details a plan and action program for downtown Baker City, Oregon. The plan establishes a blueprint for the continuing revitalization of the downtown and offers the city and Historic Baker City (HBC) Inc., excellent opportunities for key improvements.

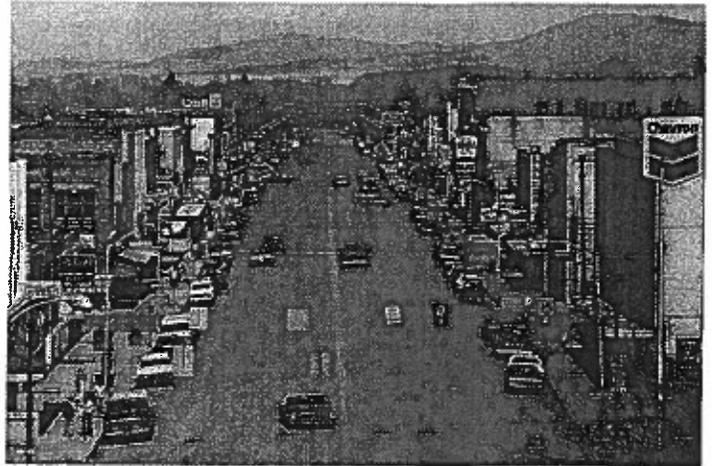
The report begins with the goals of the downtown, a historic perspective, problems and potentials, and then outlines special projects, design concepts, and specific details. Finally, tools and strategies for implementation of the plan are identified. The 1982 plan identifies the existing conditions of the downtown at that time.

This plan serves as a long-range working document for guiding development, preparing policies, determining design details, and setting priorities. Continuity in making decisions relative to the downtown can be assured with the plan serving to encourage and guide the area's development to the mutual benefit of the city, HBC, property owners, and the individuals who will use it. The plan of Historic Baker City requires an ongoing evolution of support, city approval, financial resources, and dedication to achieve a lasting and dynamic impact on the city's future success.

## 1982 DOWNTOWN PLAN UPDATE

This plan evolves from *A Plan for Historic Baker City* prepared by Planmakers in 1982 for the City of Baker City. It was adopted by the city and Historic Baker City, Inc. was formed to provide downtown management. The plan served as a catalyst for a downtown revitalization program and has had immeasurable success in developing downtown Baker City into a special place that is loved by the local community and visitors.

Baker City has become a more desirable place to live because of its attractive downtown. Although downtown Baker City is a far better place than it was nearly twenty years ago, it has not yet fully achieved its mission of a healthy and prosperous downtown. The 1982 plan was an excellent framework for reversing the



Baker City in 1982

decline of downtown; it showed how Baker City could stabilize and begin restoring its central city heritage. The revitalization of downtown was adopted by the city and county in 1987 as a fundamental part of the region's economic development plan. Blocks of rehabilitated buildings, rich in history and design, have become the magnets that draw people there. A milestone was the restoration and the 1998 reopening of Geiser Grand Hotel in 1998 with its signature cupola clock tower.

## HISTORIC BAKER CITY SUCCESSES

A key to the downtown's success was the formation of Historic Baker City, a non-profit, board-driven organization, and the creating of a Main Street manager position. Numerous projects have been completed or are underway. Successes include a façade program with over 75 historic façade renovations, streetscape improvements, improved signage, a marketing campaign, promoting events and special projects like Old Post Office Square. In 1998, the Economic Improvement District passed with 90 percent approval of the assessment, allowing the work of HBC, to continue for five additional years. These historic preservation successes have earned the city, HBC and property owners awards from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Oregon Downtown Development Association.

HBC has only been measuring economic development impacts in terms of new businesses and jobs since 1985.

The results:

- \$1.8 million in grant money has been leveraged towards a \$15 million private sector match.
- Net increase of businesses downtown is 65.
- Net increase of jobs (full-time, family wage) is 115.
- First floor Main Street vacancy rate is 6 percent; 1982 vacancy rate was 25 percent.

Downtown Baker City is the largest center of employment for Baker County with over 168 businesses in the downtown, employing more than 500 people. The district has over 138 property owners.

## MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### HISTORIC BAKER CITY MISSION

*The mission of Historic Baker City, Inc., is to develop and promote a healthy and prosperous downtown, serving a community rich with culture and history.*

### VISION

*The vision is to maintain Baker City as the premier rural downtown shopping experience in the Pacific Northwest.*

### GOALS

Goals for the downtown are identified below as accomplishments, partial accomplishments and projects to be accomplished.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Restoration of Baker City name – 1989
- Incorporated Historic Baker City, Inc.
- Established position of a downtown manager – 1993
- Supported Powder River Pathway Project – 1993
- Established building façade restoration grant program
- Restoration and rehabilitation of over 75 building façades, and including such landmark buildings as the Old Post Office, the Geiser Grand Hotel, and Baker Tower.
- Reconstruction of Main Street and downtown sidewalks, with trees and historic streetlights.
- EID established and expanded in 1998 for five years
- Formed partnership between HBC and Baker City

- Reconstruction of Post Office Square
- Launched downtown marketing campaign
- Established a design review commission
- Held several yearly downtown promotions
- Visitors and convention bureau established
- Placement of Interstate, city entrance, historic district, and building signs
- Installation of benches, bike racks and planters – 1998
- Published walking tour brochure – 1999
- Prepared downtown marketing video – 2000
- Business directory completed – 2000

### WORKS IN PROGRESS BY HBC AND PARTNERS:

- New armory underway
- Trolley-transportation from Campbell Street to downtown attempted
- Broadway Avenue streetscape improvements underway
- Resort Street streetscape plans prepared for future construction
- Additional building plaques installed
- Business directory updated
- Business recruitment initiated
- Oregon Trail Regional Museum improvements started
- More downtown trees/green space to be planted
- Promoted scenic byway tours
- Continued Façade Renovation Program

### LONG-TERM GOALS:

- Create a safe and accessible Main Street for all users
- Pursue 1<sup>st</sup> Street streetscape
- Prepare a downtown logo
- Establish volunteer recruitment program
- Adopt design standards for new construction in district
- Build Court Street Plaza as downtown gathering place
- Upgrade meeting facilities
- Encourage and promote upper story housing
- Develop a ghost sign program
- Complete Alleyway project
- Develop an arts/cultural facility
- Develop a multi-modal transportation center
- Underground utilities

## OBJECTIVES

*To establish an economically sound and attractive center for community life, offering a diverse mixture of shopping, entertainment, business, housing, and recreational opportunities.*

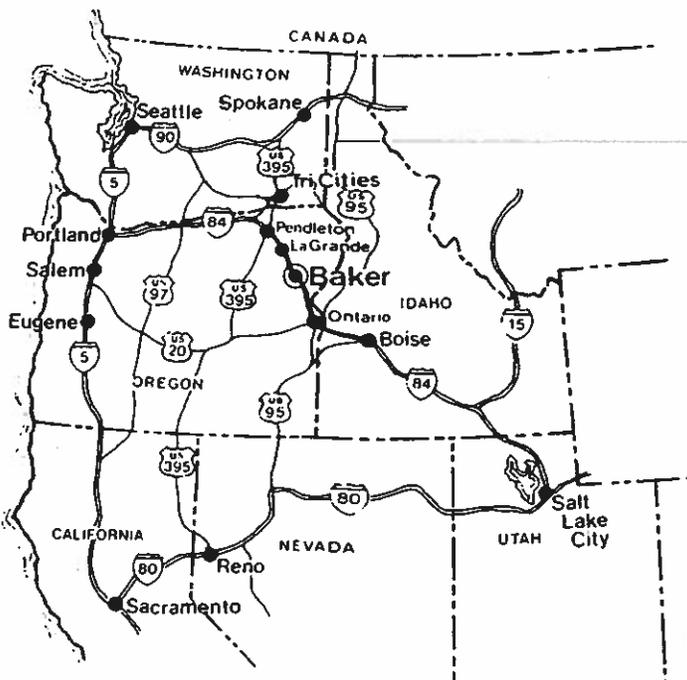
*To rehabilitate Baker City's historic building façades to their original appearance.*

*To stimulate expanded retail shopping and enhance business development, retention, and recruitment efforts.*

## SETTING

Located in the northeastern quadrant of Oregon and situated along the southern end of the Powder River Valley, the city of Baker City is partially surrounded by hills and mountains. The river valley extends twenty-five miles to the north, while the panoramic Elkhorn mountain range rises 9,000 feet to the west. The ridge is snow-capped ten months of the year. To the east, foothills rise to the Wallowa Mountains, which are snow-capped year round. Known as the Eagles, the mountain peaks reach 10,000 feet in elevation.

The city of Baker City is sited near the 45<sup>th</sup> parallel and has an elevation of 3,471 feet. Baker City's climate is typical of the temperate and semi-arid high plateau regions of the west; average annual precipitation is nearly 12 inches and the seasons are well defined.



Regional Location

Baker City is 304 miles east of Portland and 128 miles west of Boise. It is served by Interstate 84, U.S. 30, Oregon highways 7, 86, and 203, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the Baker City Municipal Airport, which accommodates general aviation.

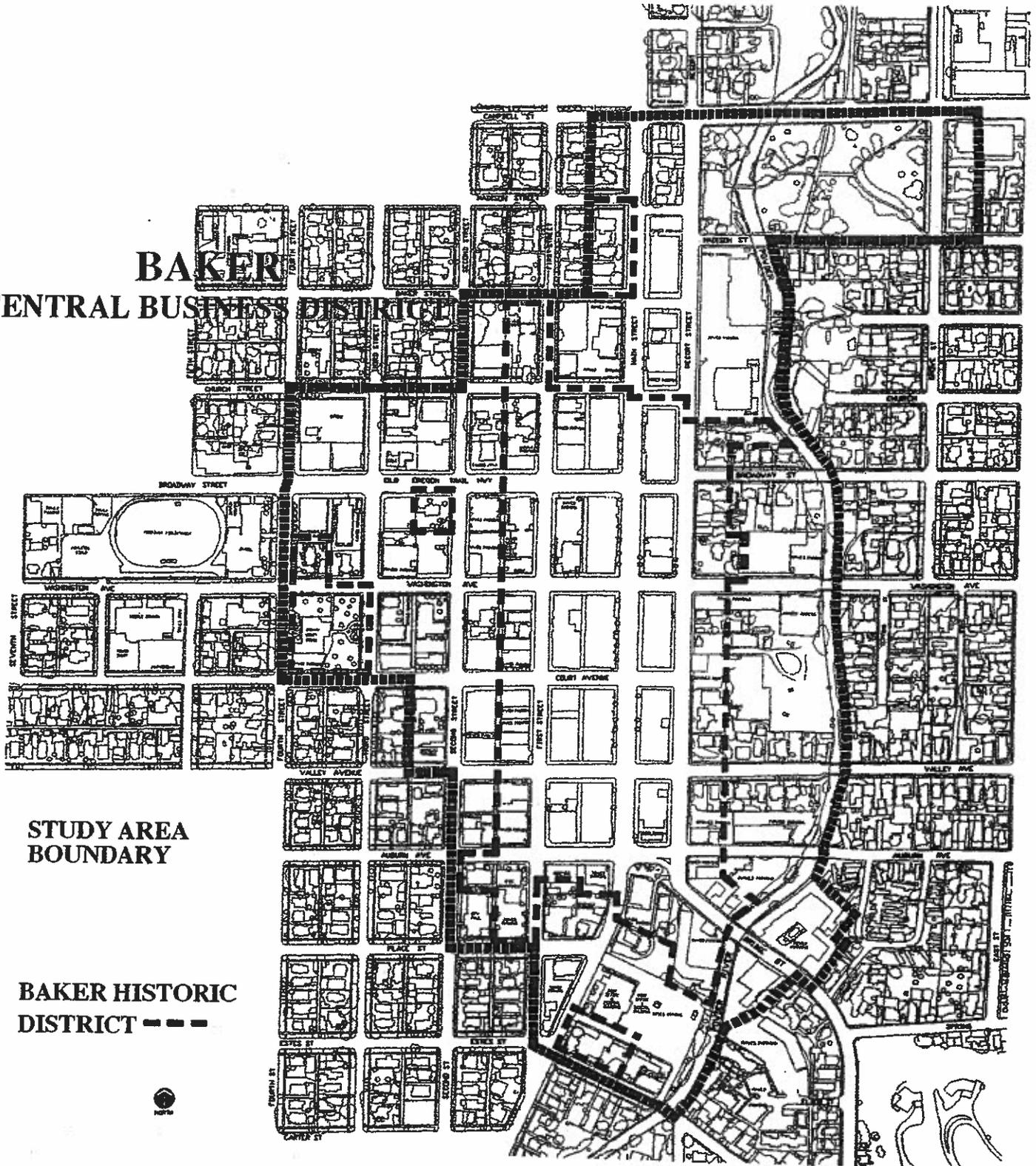
The community lies in the center of an enormous outdoor recreational area. The surrounding region includes the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla, and Malheur National Forests; the Hell's Canyon National Recreation area; and the Eagle Cap and Strawberry Mountain Wilderness areas. Other major attractions include the Anthony Lakes ski area, the Sumpter Valley Scenic Railroad, Sumpter Valley Dredge, and a host of ghost towns and old mines.

The city has a population of 9,880 in 2000 and serves as the county seat for Baker County. The area's economic base includes cattle, farm products, forest products, tourism, recreation, and mining. An addition to the economy was the opening of the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center five miles east of Baker City in 1992.

## STUDY AREA

This plan focuses on Baker City's central business district. The study area encompasses the equivalent of some 39 blocks with boundaries extending from the Powder River to 4<sup>th</sup> Street and from Estes Street to Campbell Street, and includes 15 block Baker City Historic District, downtown entrances, and adjacent commercial areas that constitute the city center. The study area includes Baker City's principal retail district, offices, financial institutions, and other service establishments. Also included are the city, county, and federal buildings, many restaurants and motels, and a few apartments and single family homes. The downtown is platted on a true north-south grid system with the majority of blocks being 252 feet by 216 feet with narrow 25- and 50-foot by 100-foot lots. Street rights-of-way are typically 80 feet wide with the exception of 100-foot Main and Broadway streets and 85-foot Resort Street. Alleys are generally 16 feet wide. Special emphasis in the study area was given to the heart of the commercial district along 1<sup>st</sup>, Main, and Resort streets.

# BAKER CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



**STUDY AREA  
BOUNDARY**

**BAKER HISTORIC  
DISTRICT** - - - -



# BAKER CITY HISTORY

Baker City possesses an especially rich historical heritage. The initial settlement was advantageously located along the southern end of the Powder River Valley where it lay nestled against the hills and was served by the Powder River. The small settlement began to flourish in 1861, a year after gold was discovered in the nearby mountains. Gold fever immediately generated activity and an influx of people, which in turn led to new strikes. Auburn, the first town situated in the mountains, was located near the first gold strike and established as the county seat in 1862. However, after the nearby mine began to peter out, the early settlers moved their businesses to Baker City and the growing settlement soon became the supply base for all of the mining towns in the vicinity. Another major influence on Baker City's growth was the flow of emigrants on the Oregon Trail who passed through the Powder River Valley during the 1850s and 1860s.

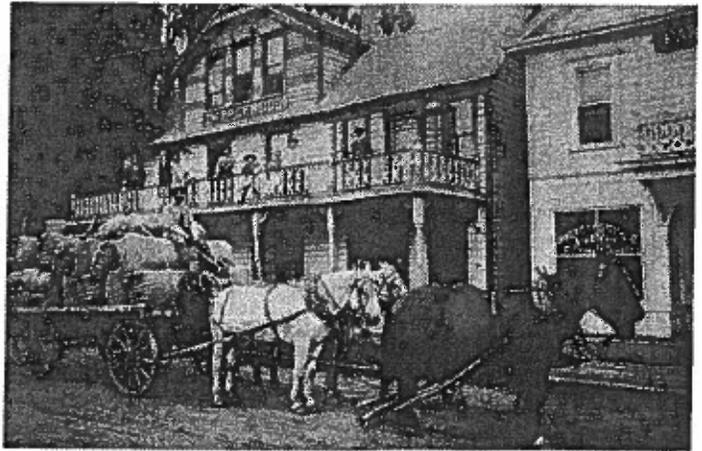
Originally, in 1865, R.A. Pierce secured the town site and called it Baker City, but later J.M. Boyd contested the ownership and was awarded the forty-acre town site of Baker City. The town platting was officially recorded in 1868 and laid out on a grid pattern with a true north-south, east-west axis. Baker City, as the town was originally called, was the namesake of Colonel Edward D. Baker, senator from Oregon who died leading his troops in the War Between the States. He was the only U.S. Senator to die in action while in office. The same year Baker City was approved as the new Baker County seat.



1892 Bird's Eye View of Baker City

## EARLIEST COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS

The earliest buildings in Baker City were a saloon, boarding house, hotel, blacksmith shop and livery stable, all catering to the surrounding mining activity. The first store was located on the northeast corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Valley streets and operated by A.H. Brown. Mercantile, furnishing, clothing, hardware, variety, and grocery stores followed these businesses. Baker City's first hotel, the Western Hotel, opened up on Front Street (now Main Street) in 1865 and was headquarters for the overland stages which served the city five times a week.

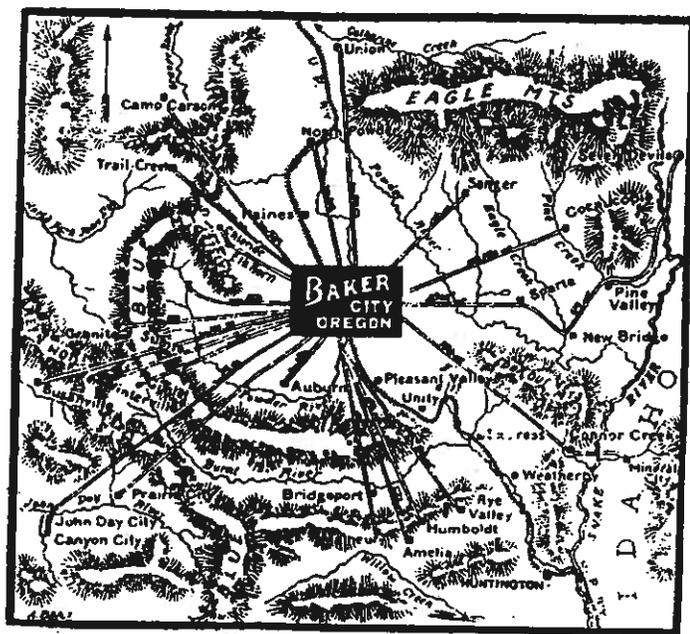


Packwood Hotel on 1st Street

In 1874 Baker City came of age and its people proceeded to form a city government. The 1870s also saw continued growth with the establishment of the *Bedrock Democrat* newspaper (now *Baker City Herald*), Basche Hardware Store, a county courthouse, school, churches, lodge halls, and homes. A number of buildings were now being constructed of brick, including the Cosmopolitan Hotel at Main and Court streets, built by Father DeRoo. As the staging center of eastern Oregon, The Cosmopolitan became the main stop for many of the freight wagons which kept gold and supplies moving around the country. Later, The Cosmopolitan was remodeled with the addition of a third-story mansard roof and renamed the Arlington Hotel. Another early hotel was the Packwood, built by entrepreneur, W.H. Packwood. In 1878, stone craftsman, John H. Jett opened the Baker City Marble Works, providing the city with stone and marble building materials and monuments. Stone began being used to provide relief to brick masonry.

new additions to the town were platted first to the east in 1870, beginning with the Fisher Addition, which extended from Main Street to the Powder River. This addition contained a row of narrow, 100-foot wide blocks between Main and Resort streets and large parcels from Resort Street to the river. Boyd's Addition to the north and Place's Addition south of the town, following the original block and street size, were platted in 1872. Place Street was the Baker City end of a toll road, which extended from Auburn. It was run by M.E. Place, who also operated a toll bridge over the Powder River leading to Pleasant Valley.

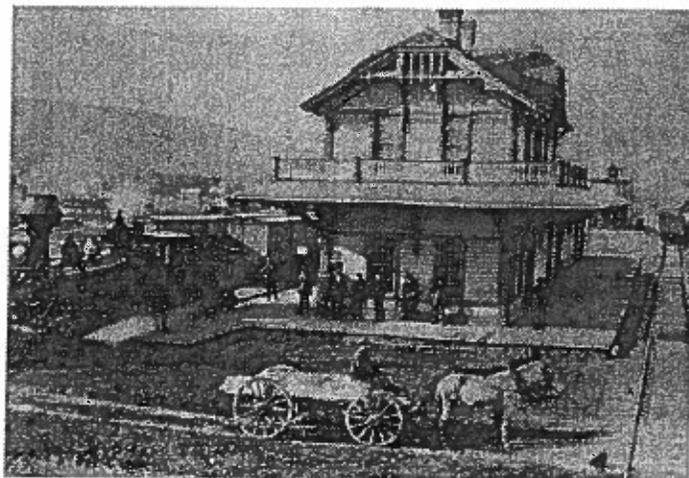
Many of the street names have been changed over the years. Broadway Street was first called Commercial Street and then changed to Center Street to give Baker City a more metropolitan air. Other renaming changes included Main to Front and back to Main in 1911, Wilson Street to 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Wood Street to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, California Street to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, East Street to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Charles Street to Estes Street, Baker Street to Valley Avenue, Well Street to Court Street, Marshall Street to Washington Street, Union Street to Church Street, Ann Street to Baker Street, and Fisher Street to Williams Street, which later became Madison Street. Campbell Street was once called North Street and was named after a Mr. Campbell who homesteaded on the river near the present street. Post Office Square, as it is called, faces the old Post Office on Auburn Street.



Center for the Mines

## BAKER CITY'S ECONOMY

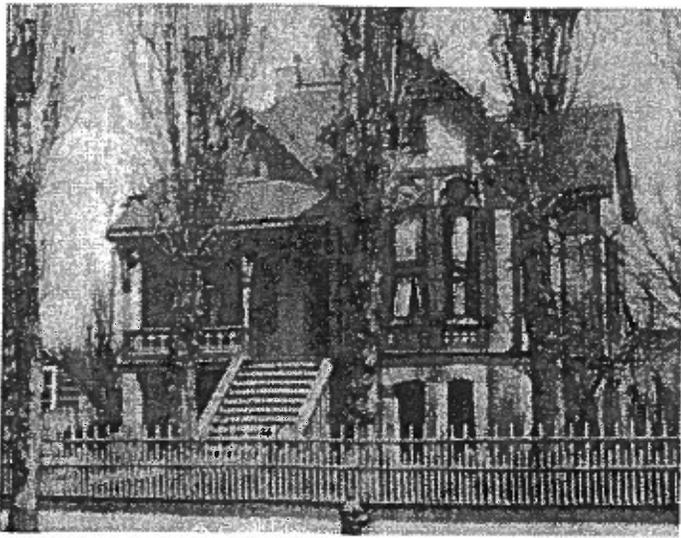
Baker City's economic base became more diverse in the 1880s with lumber, railway transport and small factories contributing to the expanding mining operations. Baker City was the undisputed center for the mines with new gold booms occurring northeast of the city. The nearby mines included Virtue, Flagstaff, Emma, Hidden Treasure, and Friday. Baker City's diverse resources included a brewery, soda factory creamery, soap factory, and cigar factory. The earliest bank, First National Bank of Baker City, founded by James Virtue, opened in 1882.



Railroad Depot

August 19, 1884 was a joyous day for the city with the arrival of Oregon Railway and Navigation Company. The railroad joined Union Pacific at Huntington to give Baker City direct rail service to the east and west. The train depot was built near Broadway and 10<sup>th</sup> streets and the surrounding area blossomed with hotels, saloons and a store, becoming known as the Waterfront. Baker City Stages carried passengers from the depot to the city's hotels. In 1900 rails were laid for a street railway to serve the city. The Baker City Street Railway and Motor Company operated a horse-drawn street car from Auburn Street along Main Street and then out Broadway to the O.R. & N. Depot. The line was never equipped with electricity.

Forestry products became a Baker City industry in the late 1880s with the opening of both lumber and planing mills. Manufactured lumber products included moldings, doors, windows, blinds, and general lumber.



Resort Street residence of Dr. O.M. Dodson facing Court Street

## RESORT STREET

The Resort Street area, of which very few historic photos exist, was platted in 1870 as Fisher's Addition, which extends from Main Street to the Powder River. During the 1870s and 1880s Resort Street, facing the commercial downtown, was one of the most prestigious residential locations in the city. Sreen B. McCord, Baker's first mayor and blacksmith, built his shop in 1871 and his home in 1873 at the corner of Broadway and Resort. Existing today, the buildings are the focal point of Baker City's early history. McCord was mayor for four terms, being elected on a reform movement platform, promising to clean up the gambling and prostitution which were pervasive in the city at the time. County Sheriff and Judge James Shinn built an attractive two-story, wood Italianate house on Resort Street in 1876. After his death his widow married James Wisdom, making additions to the home and adding out buildings to the lot, which extended to the river. The grandest home on Resort Street, a two-story masonry home with a round turret, was built by Luther B. Ison in 1887. The restored home is currently occupied by the Bank of America. Dr. O. M. Dodson's house stood on Resort Street facing Court Street. The Ross House (c. 1866), located at 1810 Resort, is possibly the earliest wood frame structure in the Baker City Historic District.

## CHINESE INFLUENCE

The Chinese, who came to the area to work the mines and build water systems like the Eldorado Ditch, contributed a great deal to the life and economy of Baker City. After the first gold rush was over, a good many stayed on and became part of the community. They built Chinatown adjacent to Resort and Auburn streets running to the river. A fine Joss House or Buddhist temple was built on Auburn Street in 1883. The Chinese proved extremely hard-working and independent, operating laundries and eating places, working as house servants, and growing and selling vegetables. The local Chinese often sold their wares from handcarts and baskets, giving lily bulbs to friends to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

## EARLY HOMES

Residential growth also began to take place on the East Side of the river and to the west of the downtown with the construction of the home of Edmund Perkins and John Wisdom, a druggist, in 1878. The home had a steep gabled roof and exhibited elements of the Gothic and Italianate styles. Another architecturally significant house was the 1880 Heilner House on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. This imposing house is of the Second Empire Style, highlighted by a mansard roof and set in a park-like garden. To the north, two almost identical Italianate style homes were built on Main Street in 1882 and 1890 — the Samuel Baer, now the Baer House Bed and Breakfast, and Leo Adler homes, now the Leo Adler Museum.

## THE 1890S – ERA OF ELEGANCE

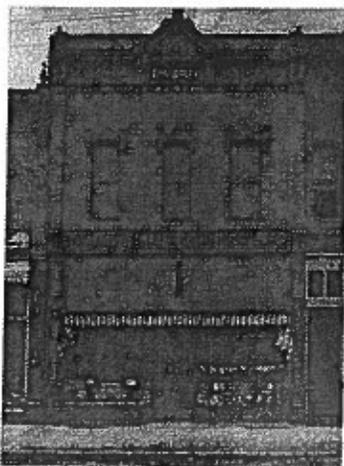
The 1890s were a period of tremendous growth for Baker City. The area was undergoing its second mining boom with the White Swan mine, claimed in 1893. The Baker City Iron Works began manufacturing mining machinery in 1892 along with finish castings and architectural cast iron. Baker City's first elegant hotel, the seventy room Hotel Washauer, later named the Geiser-Grand, was completed in 1889 and featured an elegant interior with a dining room which had a seating capacity of 200. Other hotels that served the city included the St. Lawrence, Sagamore, and, later, the Antlers.



Geiser Grand Hotel

With the installation of a city water works and a reservoir which supplemented earlier windmills and irrigation ditches, most services were now available to the city. Electricity, gas, and telephone franchises were established. Gas and steam plants were located along the Powder River off Washington Street. The city had a fire company and police service. Other metropolitan features included streets, hydrants and sewers.

In the late 1880s and 1890s, Baker City saw numerous new business buildings open. This was due both to the booming economy and the need to replace wooden store buildings lost through fires. Major fires burned entire blocks of mostly wooden frame buildings in 1886 and 1888. Handsome business buildings constructed of brick and stone replaced them and scores of new mercantile establishments went into operation. At the time, the stores on the west side of Main Street, including Nebergers, Heilners, Weils, and Baers, were

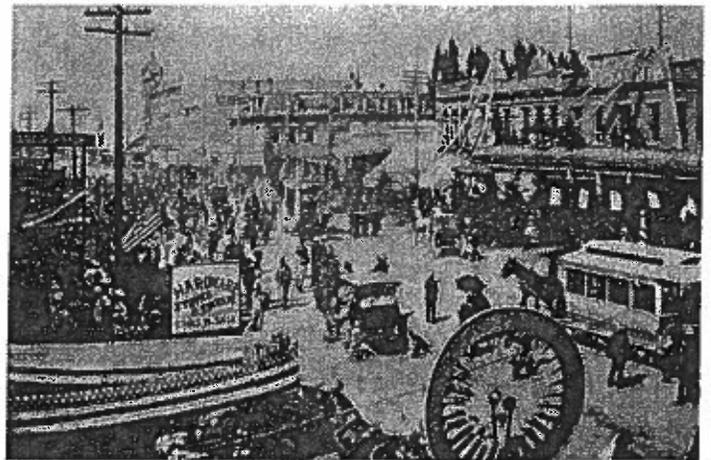


1888 Bamberger Building, now Betty's Books

considered very fashionable and proper, while the buildings on the east side of Main between Valley and Court streets housed five saloons. Young people and ladies were discouraged from frequenting the east side of Main Street with its saloons and houses of ill

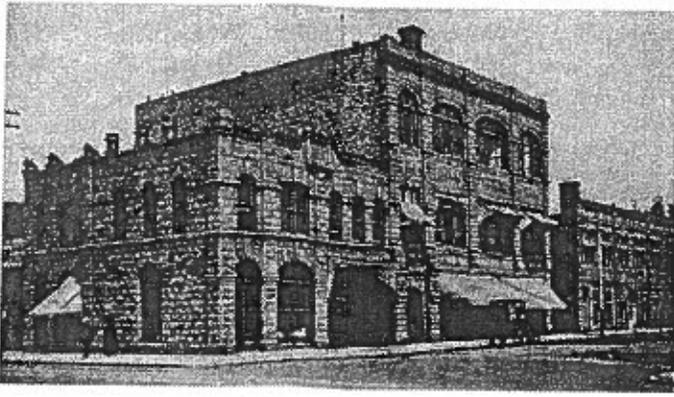
repute. Salvation Army members would march along Main Street, playing their music and preaching in front of the saloons.

Another major economic factor in Baker City's growth at this time was the Sumpter Valley Railroad Company. Affectionately called the "Stump Dodger," the narrow gauge railway extended 80 miles between Baker City and Prairie City. The railway was started in 1890 by David C. Eccles and reached Sumpter in 1897 and Prairie City in 1909. Their Baker City depot, which was recently renovated, was near the Union Pacific depot which burned in 1895. The railway served cattlemen, prospectors and lumbermen, and provided shipping between the John Day Valley and the main line of the Union Pacific Railroad. The Sumpter Valley Railway also provided passenger service and was considered one of Oregon's most picturesque lines. The railway carried passengers and mail until 1937, logs into Baker City until 1946, and then, in 1947, the line was abandoned and scrapped. Portions of the line have been rebuilt and the Sumpter Valley Railroad once again serves as a scenic and historic railway.



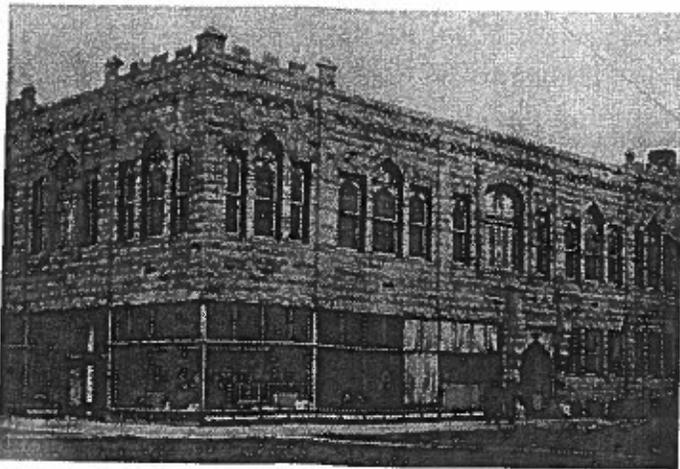
Main Street festivity

The prosperous years of the 1890s led to another substantial building boom in the early 1900s. Stonemason John Jett mastered his trade, expanding from rock foundations and ornamentation to entire stone buildings. Beautiful and impressive cut-stone buildings were dedicated in a period of strong civic pride. City Hall was built in 1902-03, St. Francis Cathedral in 1905, the Carnegie Library in 1908, and County Courthouse in 1906-08, Pythian Castle in 1907, Elkhorn Eagles Building in 1908, and the Rand Building



Valley Avenue stone buildings

in 1908. The buildings' volcanic tuff rock was quarried 12 miles south near Pleasant Valley. The stone was easily worked when quarried and then hardened with exposure, providing a strong design element in the downtown. This building period was crowned by the handsome, classical U.S. Post Office in 1909 and a large Y.M.C.A. in 1912.



Pythian Castle

## CULTURAL CENTER

Baker City was the cultural center of Eastern Oregon. This was because the early settlers planned and built a community based on the need for cultural living. Band concerts were featured every Wednesday night on Main Street until they were moved to the new bandshell in the park. Other Baker City events included Fourth of July parades held on Main Street, which featured various floats and summer carnivals, Chautauqua and tent shows, musical entertainment, and home talent shows.

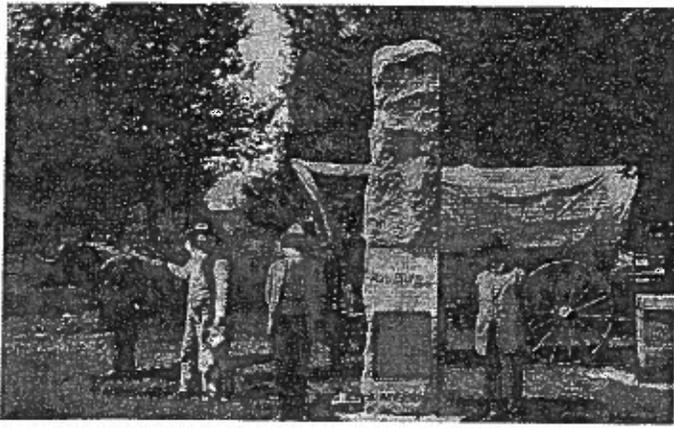
In 1897 pioneer brewer Henry Rust's Opera House was ruined by fire and subsequently replaced by the impressive Baker City Opera House, the finest of its kind between Portland and Boise. This magnificent theater made Baker City a regular tour stop to the best of the traveling companies, and always played to a full house. The Baker City Opera House later became the Clarick Theater; then, sadly, it was destroyed by fire in 1937.



Baker City Opera House

One of the most enjoyable events of the season was the St. Valentine's Day Masquerade Ball, often held in the Armory on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Broadway streets. Another popular attraction was a tally-ho, a high open coach pulled by four horses, that took lively groups on picnics and excursions.

Catering to other interests, the local literary society, the Alpha Club, was organized to help establish the library, and the Commercial Club was the predecessor to the Chamber of Commerce. Later events in Baker City included a celebration commemorating the Oregon Trail and the 1934 Baker Mining Jubilee, celebrating Baker City's history and mining activities. The free celebration featured a parade, pioneer picnic with the crowning of a Pioneer Queen Mother, and Queen of the Miners Jubilee, rock drilling and log sawing, concerts, air circus, water carnival, and baseball games. Other Baker City activity centers included the old race track, located one mile from town, which later became the fairgrounds, and the Sam-O Springs at the east end of Baker City, which featured natural warm water from the springs located in an octagonal spring house.



Ezra Meeker commemorating the Oregon Trail in Geiser-Pollman Park

Geiser-Pollman Park has served the city since the turn of the century. The Geiser-Pollman families deeded the two-block site along Campbell Street as a public park for the enjoyment of the citizens. The site along the Powder River existed as a grove of lovely trees since the first pioneers came to the Baker Valley. The property was first owned by Charles Fisher and known as Fisher's Grove. Later, Henry Rust used the grove as a beer garden. Over time, the city improved the park with sidewalks, play and picnic equipment, drinking fountains, electric lights, and a large band shell.

### **BAKER CITY'S POWDER RIVER**

The Powder River flows through Baker City's center and the fertile land of the Baker Valley. During the 1890s, cyanide from processing gold up stream poisoned the river and killed the fish. A major flood occurred in 1897, causing substantial damage and leading to a number of homes being moved. Early photos of Baker City show small pools and marshes to the east of the river. Over the years these areas were filled in. During the 1930s, the W.P.A. lined the riverbanks with stone and rechanneled the river, removing bends between Washington and Valley streets and between Bridge and Estes streets. The rechanneling allowed areas along the west side of the river to be reclaimed. In recent years, dams were built on the river, greatly reducing the potential for flooding.

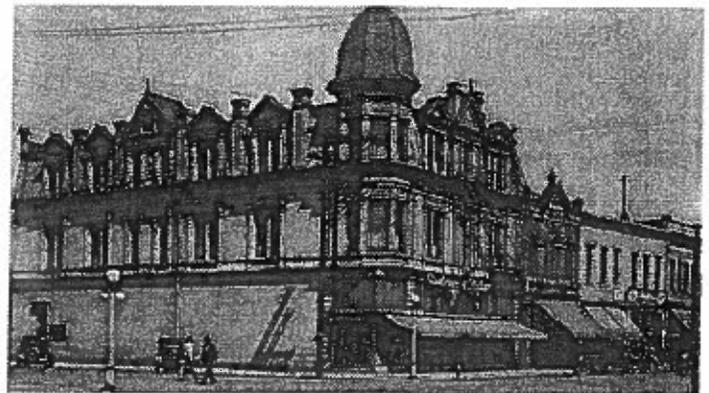
### **INDUSTRIAL DIVERSIFICATION**

Gold production declined throughout the 1910s, forcing the city to rely on its developing lumber and cattle industries. Prior to this, the extended period over which the mining booms occurred had the effect of giving Baker City time to develop a strong and varied culture. Lumber and cattle had become substantial parts of the local economy from the 1890s, but after World War I these two industries replaced mining as the mainstay of the economy. Cattle, first a result of the necessities of emigrants along the Oregon Trail, started a market for hay. The luxurious grasses of the valley fed herds of cattle and sheep. In addition to agriculture, wool also became a major product shipped from Baker City.

An indication of Baker City's changing awareness and efforts to become more modern came in 1911 when the citizens voted to drop "City" from its name. Citizens voted again in the 1980s to return the word "City."

### **SPECIAL FEATURES**

Baker City's pedestrians were served by a number of drinking fountains and streetlights located on the sidewalks in the downtown. Gas streetlights appeared in the 1890s, replacing kerosene lamps. Two gas streetlights were located at the intersection of Main and Broadway, and lit by a lamplighter. Later, large round bowls, with gaslight, hung in the middle of each intersection. These lights were eventually replaced with electric lights. For a period of thirty years, Main Street featured attractive, three-globed, cast-iron streetlights. Another special feature was a lighted fountain for horses, located at the center of the intersection of Main and Court streets.



Neuberger and Heilner Department Store. Notice the three-globe lights.

In 1920, an impressive welcome arch was erected on North 10<sup>th</sup> Street. This fine wooden structure with rock piers adorned the western entrance to the city. On the north, it stated: "Baker welcomes you; Enter with knocking and depart likewise." On the other side was the inscription "Baker wishes you good luck. Come again." The arch was a community effort erected by the Chamber of Commerce with donated materials and lighting provided by the city. The wood pilaster also called attention to the resources and advantages of the city as well as providing space for advertising.



Main Street ca. 1910

## THE AUTO ERA

During this same period, the automobile began to appear on Baker City's streets and influence the mode of city travel. The first car in Baker City was introduced in a parade in 1905. With advances in the private automobile making longer trips possible, auto travel became popular on the country's pioneer highway. Highway 30 was the main route to and through Baker City, utilizing Bridge, Main, and Broadway streets through the downtown. This early automobile travel led to auto camps, such as the Oregon Trail Auto Tourist Campground with cabins and auto stalls near Bridge Street. These auto camps were the predecessors to the city's motels. In 1929, Baker City built its largest and tallest building, the ten-story Baker Hotel. Today, it is still the tallest building in eastern Oregon.

In recent years, unfortunate losses to Baker City's architectural legacy include the demolition of the ornamental Elk's Lodge on Court Street for a new lodge-hall, the fire-caused destruction of Levinger Drug building on Main Street, and the original Citizen's National Bank stone building and the Imperial Hotel, both near the corner of Main and Washington streets. The banking community also replaced most of its old banking facilities with new ones. A recent loss was the



The Baker Tower was rehabilitated in 2001

demolition of the large stone St. Francis Academy on Church Street during the 1970s. Another was the loss to fire of the Rand Building at Washington and First Street.

## THE CHALLENGE

For decades, Baker City's downtown was the focal point of the area's commercial and social activity, the backbone of the marketplace where most of the goods and services people needed could be found. Downtown merchants prospered from the patronage — not only from local residents, but also from travelers of the region's major east-west highway, U.S. 30, which was routed through the downtown.

The completion of Interstate 84, in 1973, while decreasing truck traffic through the downtown corridor, also decreased the number of potential customers (travelers & vacationers) prior to the opening of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in 1992 and the marketing efforts of Historic Baker City, Inc. The advantages of interstate access to other cities such as Boise and LaGrande gave opportunity to local shoppers to leave town to do their shopping and created more of

a demand for better customer service and thoughtful selections from the remaining and potential retailers in the downtown area. While much of the historic façade of Main Street was covered by unsympathetic “updating” and remodeling, the programs and grants available through HBC have offered incentives and information resulting in over 80 historic restorations in the historic district alone. Pass-through funds were made available through grants from Meyer Memorial Trust, Ford Family Foundation, Leo Adler Community Fund, and USFS Old Growth Timber Initiative. The efforts of downtown property owners to reclaim their history and sense of place had a rippling effect on many of the adjoining neighborhoods and the historic preservation and restoration projects now extend in all directions of the downtown corridor in both residential and commercial districts alike.

Since the creation of HBC and the hiring of a full-time director in 1993, the number and variety of retailers has grown considerably. While no single department store has filled that existing gap, there are small clothing, sporting and dry goods retailers in addition to the newly constructed Bi-Mart in the Campbell Street corridor to greater satisfy the needs of local shoppers and traveling visitors alike.

The ongoing concerns of downtown parking and pedestrian safety and accessibility are being addressed in a number of ways. Currently the focus is on education and awareness. Although employee parking is still one of the main contributing factors to the perceived lack of parking, no specific areas have been identified to alleviate on-street parking. Minimal striping and signage due to the city public works budget constraints and limited enforcement of overtime parking violations further complicate the situation.

Restricted pedestrian movement in the downtown results from having to cross heavily traveled streets and/or from long walking distances encountered when crossing streets such as the 100-foot wide Main Street and Broadway Street. Efforts to create better awareness of pedestrian and cyclist safety issues and greater enforcement of the speed limit in the downtown have created somewhat safer conditions although the need

for enforcement is ongoing. The walking surfaces of many of the downtown sidewalks are in poor condition. No public restroom is available downtown. Truck traffic passing through the downtown creates excessive noise for the pedestrian and limits the viability of sidewalk seating for downtown eateries in addition to contradicting the design principal of unity required for a strong shopping environment.

**TABLE 1:  
BAKER CITY  
POPULATION  
1880 TO 2000**

Year	Population
1880	1,258
1890	2,604
1900	6,663
1910	6,742
1920	7,729
1930	7,858
1940	9,342
1950	9,471
1960	9,986
1970	9,354
1980	9,470
1990	9,140
2000	9,880

HBC grant writing efforts and generous funding from grantees such as the Leo Adler Community Fund, the Collins Foundation, Old Growth Diversification Fund, Pioneer Bank, and Cycle Oregon provided over \$48,000 for streetscape improvements. These improvements include the installation of benches, planters, banners, trash receptacles, trees, and bicycle racks on both Main Street and Broadway Street. Volunteer teams assembled and installed all of the various items creating a greater sense of pride and ownership in the heart of

downtown by residents, property, and business owners. There is no current organized system of watering and efforts to keep planters and trees healthy have been undertaken largely by business owners themselves. There have been no funds available to pursue the Resort Street Improvement Plan; overhead power lines and trash receptacles are still part of what gives Resort Street an alley image.

New and revitalized businesses along Main Street have helped keep the sidewalks and gutters clean, providing a more inviting feel for all users. Side streets are plagued with poor sidewalks and many are unsightly and in disrepair near vacant buildings. Although no bike lanes have been created along Main Street and current signage restricts riding on the sidewalks, more cyclists are using the Main Street corridor for touring and commuting. Other visual improvements to Main Street are due in part to the City’s Design Review

for changes to storefronts and signage in the historic district. The Design Review Commission also awards Big Deal Grant funding to help offset the costs of these improvements.

Commercial expansion along Campbell Street, which serves as the main connector from Main Street to Interstate 84, has been perceived as a threat to the economic health of businesses in the downtown. There is a sense of partnership growing between all area retailers due to the joint efforts of HBC and the Chamber of Commerce. The current focus is on creating smarter, stronger retailers in order to keep the downtown shopping district healthy while development continues in outlying districts. Future seminars and cooperative marketing efforts will continue to support that goal. The relocation of downtown's only full service grocer to the Campbell Street corridor re-emphasizes our need to address some type of public transportation in addition to maintaining and building more effective and safer pedestrian, cyclist, and handicapped accessibility.

## REVITALIZATION POTENTIAL

Downtown Baker City is in a most advantageous position, having a relatively compact city center which functions well commercially and possessing a strong identity through its numerous historic buildings. Access to the downtown from the surrounding city and Interstate 84 is excellent. Wide streets plotted on a grid system allow for smooth traffic movement, wide sidewalks, and on-street parking. Some of the strengths of the downtown include a large variety of retail establishments and services, numerous financial institutions and a governmental center.

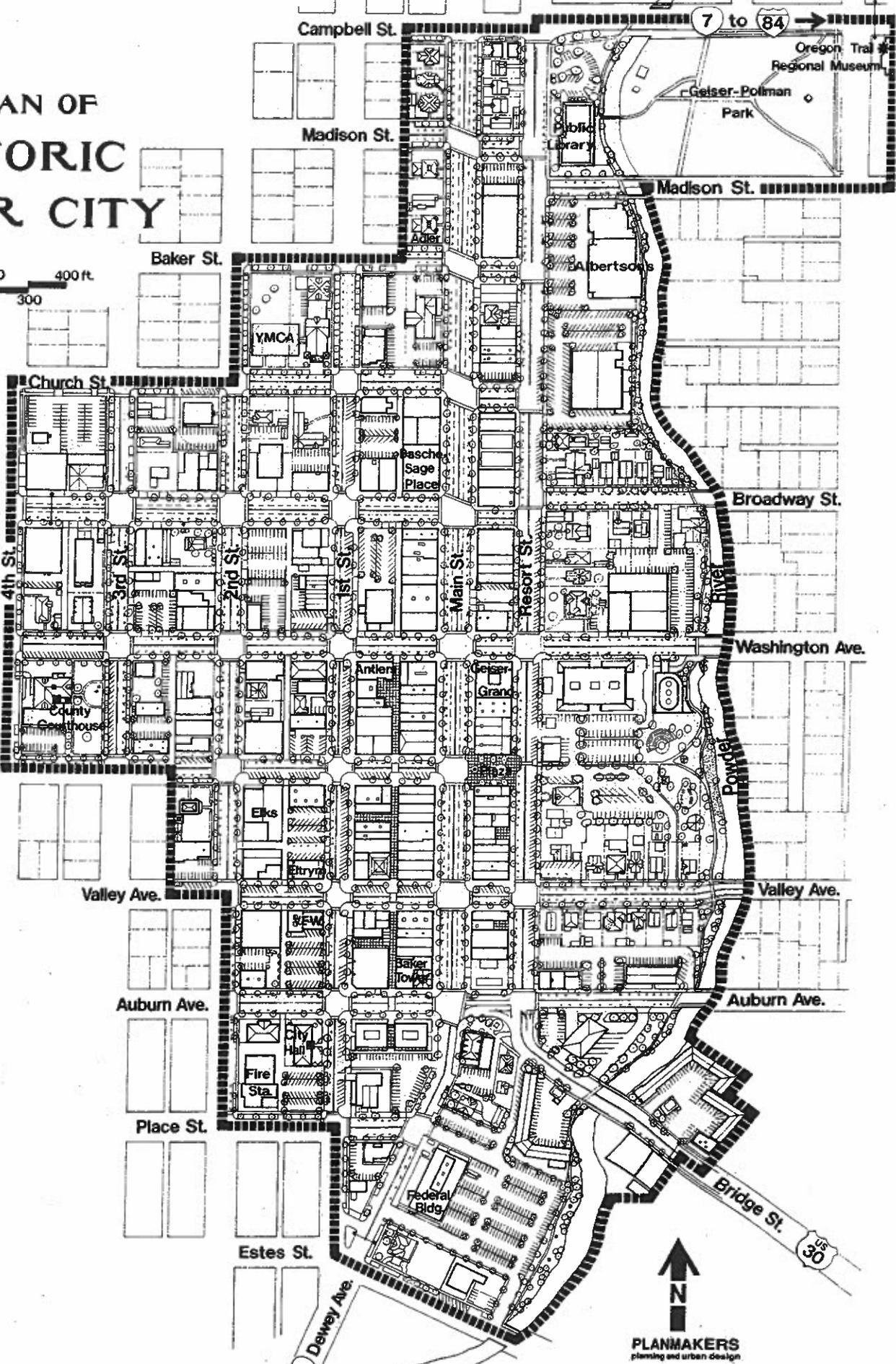
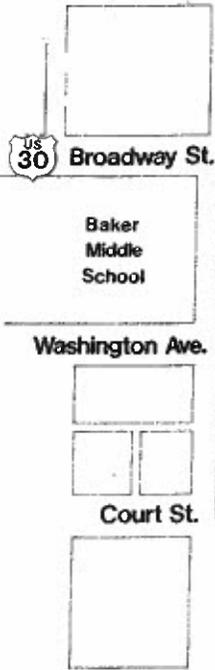
The downtown is fortunate to consist of primarily all commercial land uses with surrounding residential use and no industrial uses. Special amenities include the Powder River which flows to the east of the downtown, and the nearby Geiser-Pollman Park, Oregon Train Regional Museum and Baker County Fairgrounds. The downtown is also relatively close and easily accessible to travelers on Interstate 84 via Campbell Street and Highway 30.

The city and county adopted revitalization of downtown in 1987 as a fundamental part of the region's economic development plan. While the nation has been flourishing and Baker County's economy has struggled, downtown Baker City has not only managed to remain consistent, but also it managed to grow within these conditions. Key milestones include Main Street sidewalk and streetscape improvements in the 1980s, the opening of the National Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in 1992, and the re-opening of the Geiser Grand Hotel in 1998.

Baker City's major asset is its strong history and architectural character. Baker City is a unique place, unlike any other. With its skyline dotted with impressive towers and spires and its snow-capped mountain setting, Baker City has been described as looking like a European village. Distinctive large structures like the City Hall, County Courthouse, Geiser Grand Hotel, Baker Tower, and the Catholic Cathedral serve as landmarks and tend to draw people to the downtown, where they find streets lined with architecturally significant facades. Many buildings are constructed of stone. Baker City's numerous restored historic buildings provide a strong continuity, quality, and identity, which sets the stage for an attractive city center. Other attributes include Baker City's friendly atmosphere, the qualities of small town living, the surrounding, picturesque mountains, and convenient access to eastern Oregon's many recreational areas and scenic loops.

What factors elevate a city above the commonplace? One is a sense of scale; people want to feel that they fit — not as passengers or particles in a mass — but in an individual human dimension. Exceptional places are always walkable. Baker City is already pedestrian friendly. It can improve its river connections and expand the Leo Adler Pathway. Likewise, additional streetscape and pedestrian areas can be developed. Expanded parking and management will create a stronger community center. Additional marketing, more small shops, better signs, and upper floor housing and offices are to be encouraged. New fiber optics connections will support business and technology. The expansion of downtown arts facilities and programming will further strengthen the downtown into a viable and appealing shopping, residential, cultural, and entertainment area.

# A PLAN OF HISTORIC BAKER CITY



PLANMAKERS  
planning and urban design

The Proposed Plan

# THE REVITALIZATION PLAN

## LAND USE

Baker City's city center has excellent opportunities for improvement and growth, beginning with encouraging the expansion of retail, office, and residential uses. Sound planning and development decisions will be required for the downtown to maintain its unique character and to improve and expand in an orderly manner. No land use changes are recommended for the commercially zoned study area, but special design criteria are needed to insure protection of Baker's historic structures and guide compatible new developments. Those properties within the Baker Historic District require design guidelines which will assure that construction activity be in keeping with the character of the historic environment. The Baker City Design Review Commission will utilize design guidelines to maintain the architectural integrity of the historic district and work to protect, preserve, and enhance those qualities which make downtown Baker City a special place.

Future development guidelines are also recommended for the area between Resort Street and the Powder River. These land parcels represent a valuable resource for the city's future development. Small, piecemeal development, which would prevent future large-scale developments such as a convention facility or hotel in the downtown, should be discouraged.

Another important planning recommendation is to protect and enhance residential areas adjacent to the downtown, preventing encroachment into these strong residential neighborhoods. Utilizing upper floors of existing buildings for residential housing and constructing new higher-density housing on the periphery of the downtown should be encouraged.

Planning policies supporting downtown revitalization are required to achieve lasting city center success. Most important is that downtown Baker City be maintained as the commercial, social, and civic center of Baker County. To achieve this goal, the city and county must continue working together in making decisions and supporting policies which affect the downtown. The business district requires compactness and centrality so

that a strong economic environment can be maintained. It is recognized that the growth of additional retailing centers outside the downtown area could have an adverse impact on downtown revitalization. Policy should encourage such centers only when they would not have an adverse impact on the interests of the existing economic community, especially the downtown.

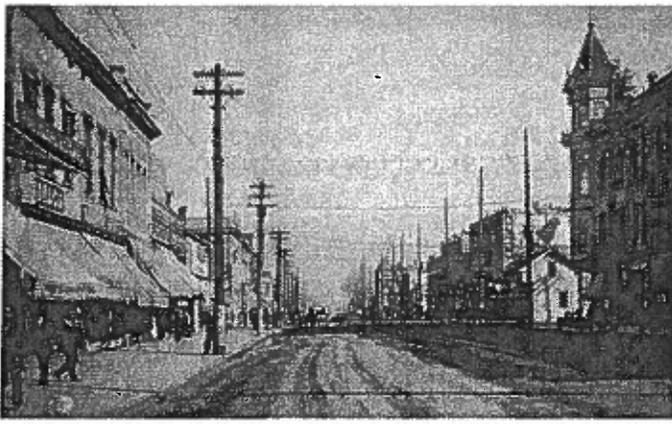
Attention is also called for in requiring adequate landscaping and quality signing for new development within the study area, and particularly on the main entrances serving the city.

Special tourist commercial zones serving Interstate 84 would complement the downtown by providing commercial activities necessary to traveling motorists. A strong downtown also needs a healthy and diverse economic base to draw from. Therefore, it is recommended that the city strive toward gradual growth and diversity through ongoing industrial and technology development.

## TRANSPORTATION

Generally, the city and downtown are well served by Baker City's transportation system. The downtown is favored by wide rights-of-way such as the 100-foot arterials on Main and Broadway streets. Another major asset for Baker City is that state and interstate highways advantageously serve the downtown. The downtown is relatively close and easily accessible to travelers on Interstate 84 via Campbell Street and Highway 30 and benefits from its central position to Baker City's residential neighborhoods.

Downtown traffic circulation can be further upgraded through the development of a safer and more functional system of streets and sidewalks. First priority should be given to designating a truck route that allows truck traffic to bypass the downtown business area. Other improvements call for the continued repair of downtown streets and improved regulatory and information signing. Those areas with heavy turning movements should be monitored; where necessary, turning lanes and/or signals should be installed to ease traffic congestion.



Early photo of Main Street

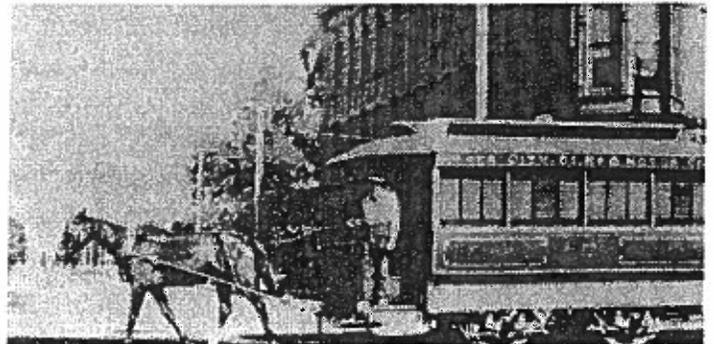
Main and Broadway streets are designated as the major arterials carrying traffic into and through the downtown. Minor arterials supporting the downtown include Resort, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Auburn and Washington streets. Special design considerations are called for on Washington and 4<sup>th</sup> streets due to the locations of Baker City Middle, Brooklyn and South Baker City schools and adjacent neighborhoods. Such design should insure safe movements for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicular traffic. Good design and signing will also minimize safety problems on portions of Resort, 1<sup>st</sup>, Valley and Court streets, where angle parking is recommended. Court Avenue, between Main and Resort streets, is also closed to traffic for a new park and special events area.

A critical component of the downtown is designing walkable, safe, and attractive areas. Emphasis is given to making the downtown pedestrian-friendly with full-width crosswalks, wide sidewalks, street plantings, street lights, information signs, benches, expanded streetscape areas, and connections to the Powder River. New sidewalk designs at a number of downtown intersections call for expanded curb lines, are designed to improve pedestrian circulation and safety, and facilitate traffic turning movements. Unique amenities, such as interpretive signs or public art, that are conducive to pedestrian activity are encouraged.

A bikepath proposed for the west side of the Powder River, the Leo Aldler Pathway, will encourage north-south bike and pedestrian movement. Two proposed six-foot bike lanes, striped for bike traffic on Washington Street, will connect Baker City Middle and Brooklyn schools and provide an east-west flow.

Although the automobile will continue to be the prime mode of transportation in Baker City, travel by bus and air continue to grow and efforts are underway to re-establish Amtrak. Improvements to all transportation systems are encouraged. The train depot has been rehabilitated and continued improvements are recommended to upgrade the visual character of the area and of Broadway Avenue entering the downtown. This is especially important in attracting visitors and creating a good first impression of the city. Likewise, an improved Greyhound bus terminal is needed, as is the continued support of the City-County Senior Citizen's Bus. The Baker City Municipal Airport, three miles north of the city, also requires enlarging and improvement so that it can expand its air service.

One of the future opportunities for Baker City is to refine its role as a transportation center by developing a terminal facility which would link all transportation systems together. From this facility, easy access could be gained to the airport, train, bus service, taxi, etc. The facility would enhance tourism and business travel, and be designed to welcome newcomers and promote visitor activities in Baker City. A preliminary concept of the Oregon Trail Travel Station is located on the triangular parcel between Bridge and Auburn streets and the Powder River.



Early streetcar

Presently, a major addition is needed to get visitors to and from the downtown when staying at hotel or motel accommodations located along Campbell Street near I-84. It is recommended that a uniquely styled bus or trolley be purchased, making these two areas easily accessible to the traveling public. Such a vehicle would

play an important role in meeting in-bound and out-bound trains, buses, and planes and could be financed jointly through public and private resources, with a major share being funded by hotel operators. The Baker City Street Railway and Motor Company once operated a horse-drawn streetcar from the downtown to the railroad depot.

Another transportation component to be addressed is the need for a bed and breakfast hostel to accommodate bicycle users who patronize the Bikecentennial 76 route going through Oregon. This bike route utilizes Highways 7 and 86 through downtown Baker City.

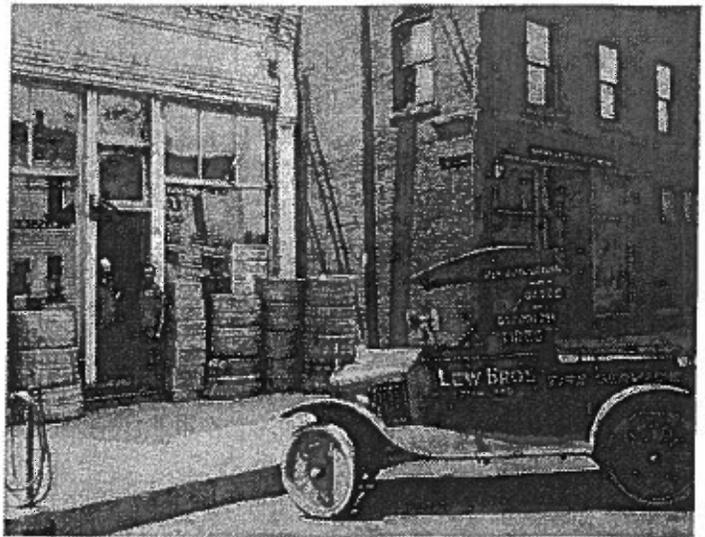
## PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for all city center uses to compete effectively, improved parking management by the city, HBC, merchants and property owners will be required. This calls for good signing and striping, enforcement, employee parking spaces, additional new facilities, and the redesign and improved utilization of many existing parking areas. These measures will provide an adequate supply of parking spaces to serve the downtown.

Currently, 2,189 parking spaces are within the project boundary. Under the proposed downtown plan, the parking spaces would increase to 2,681, an addition of 492 spaces, a 22 percent increase.

The greatest opportunity for additional parking in areas where it is most in demand, comes from the redesign of on-street parallel parking to angle parking on 1<sup>st</sup>, Resort, Court, Valley and Main streets. This public parking resource will provide the city with an additional 187 spaces, almost double that which currently exists on those blocks. The redesign of the spaces will also increase the visibility of available parking, further strengthening downtown capabilities.

A number of opportunities also exist to expand and improve off-street parking facilities, including new parking areas on the vacant land between Resort Street and the Powder River. One important aspect of the parking system is establishing outlying parking areas to provide downtown employees with a place to park, thus freeing central parking spaces for needed short-term use by shoppers and office users.



Former angle parking in front of Lew Bros. on Washington Street

Other elements of a parking management program include striping on street spaces, improved signing to indicate where parking is located and an ongoing enforcement of parking regulations by the City of Baker. Parking management is an ongoing need, with parking solutions being continually fine-tuned to best serve and promote the downtown.

TABLE 2	PROPOSED PARKING TOTALS		
	Existing	Proposed	Additional Spaces
On-Street Spaces	1,121	1,308	187
Off-Street Spaces	1,068	1,373	305
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,189</b>	<b>2,681</b>	<b>492</b>

The following parking details are recommended:

### Parking Information and Uniform Parking Time:

Periodic parking information is required to educate the public as to where parking is located and to regulations relating to time zone parking. Promoting the availability of close-in and convenient downtown parking should be an ongoing activity by the downtown merchants and HBC. Another important feature necessary to increase usage of lots is better directional signs. These signs should be placed at key points, specifying where parking is located. Also, parking signs should show a unified downtown parking signage system.

To provide a uniform on-street parking program, all curb areas within the city center should be signed and enforced for a two-hour maximum time limit. Shorter time zone hours may be set in some prime locations where quick turnover is required. With adequate enforcement and discouraged employee parking, the two-hour time zones would provide adequate turnover as well as free and convenient parking for the downtown user and shopper.

**Employee Parking Policy:** An employee parking policy should be facilitated by HBC and the City of Baker City to encourage employees to park outside of the prime shopping district. Shoppers would have maximum access to close-in short-term spaces while employees would use more distant long-term parking spaces. Such a program requires ongoing monitoring by employers and financial contributions by merchants, employers and the city. The funds would be used to lease or purchase and improve nearby long-term parking spaces. An outlying employee-parking reservoir is recommended:

**Calvary Baptist Church:** The church parking lot at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Church is available for employee parking during weekdays.

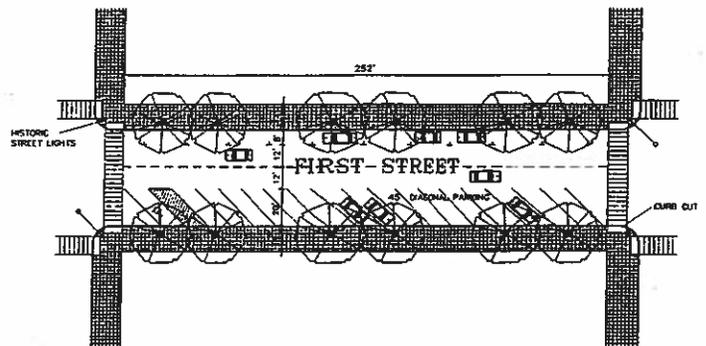


1st Street — notice angle parking and single-globe street lights

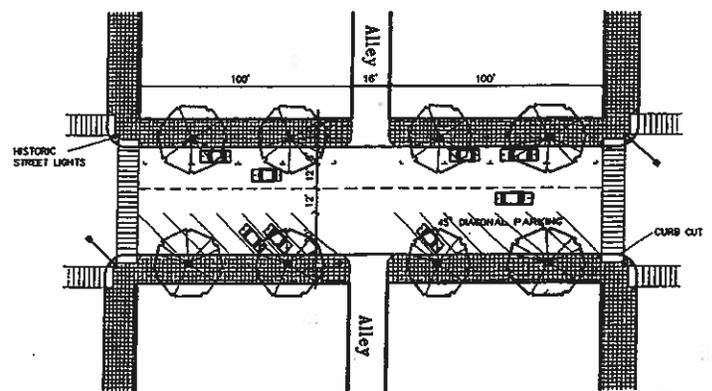
**On-Street Angle Parking:** A number of on-street spaces should be redesigned from parallel parking to angle parking. Re-striping on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in front of the County Courthouse recently provided 22 spaces, nearly double the former alignment. Depending on the width

of the street, either a 60-degree or 45-degree angle is recommended. The first stall is striped as a handicapped space and the last stall a compact space. Re-striping of all downtown on-street parking stalls is recommended. Striping modifications can be tried on a trial basis to monitor success. Angle parking also has the added benefit of slowing traffic. Increased angle parking is proposed for the following streets:

Resort Street would maintain angle parking on the east side. The 85-foot right-of-way will allow 60-degree angle parking. Parallel parking and delivery spaces would be maintained opposite the angled spaces. Approximately 22 spaces per block would be provided.

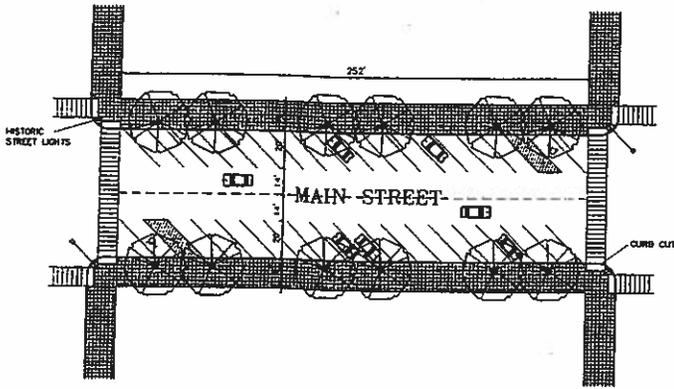


1<sup>st</sup> Street would change from parallel to angle parking on the east side of the street. This design allows for an excellent parking relationship with the central business area and minimizes pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. As illustrated, at a 45-degree angle, 16 spaces per block would be provided. Parallel parking currently provides 10 spaces per block. This public parking resource for six blocks will provide the city with an additional 36 spaces.



Valley Avenue, from Resort to the alley between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, would have angle parking on the north side.

Court Street, from Main to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, would be designed for angle parking on the south side.



Main Street with its 100-foot right-of-way has the capacity to allow angle parking on both sides of the street along with two lanes of traffic. As illustrated, 45-degree angle parking will allow 16 spaces per side. An added benefit of angle parking is slowing traffic on Main Street. Converting six blocks to angle public parking will provide the city with an additional 72 spaces. This future phase would provide additional parking, but is dependent on developing a truck route around the city center and the demand from upper floor use.

**Off-Street Parking:** A number of opportunities exist to develop off-street parking on vacant or underutilized space within the study area. Also, several existing lots require redesign, paving, striping, and signing so that they can be fully utilized and better serve the downtown.

**Former Rand Building site:** Referred to as the hole in the ground, this site at 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Washington would accommodate 22 spaces. The city or HBC should purchase this lot for parking.

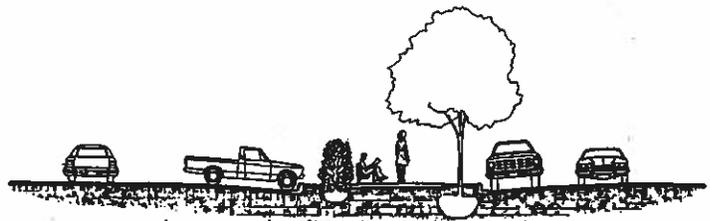
**Leo Adler Parkway:** Two vacant areas off of Resort Street between Broadway and Washington streets would be redesigned for parking space as part of the Leo Adler Parkway, with approximately 81 parking and two RV spaces to serve the downtown. See Leo Adler Parkway concept plan.

**Small Lot Development:** Property owners are encouraged to expand parking spaces by adding or improving parking on or near their business. Examples of proposed new parking areas include the northeast corner of Resort Street and Valley Avenue; an alley lot facing Resort Street between Auburn and Valley avenues; and a new parking area behind the former KBDR Radio building.

**Parking Policy and Management:** Though off-street parking is not required for new development or rehabilitation within the central commercial zone, all major new projects should be encouraged to integrate parking into the development.

Parking stall size should be modified, allowing twenty-five percent of the spaces for small seven- and one-half-foot by fifteen-foot spaces to accommodate small cars. All public parking should be periodically striped. A parking enforcement system must be established and maintained for control. Those living downtown would purchase a residential parking sticker allowing extended parking in the downtown.

**Bicycle Parking:** Continue installing secure bicycle racks in accessible, high visibility areas. An improved design will encourage use.



Screen off-street parking with landscaping

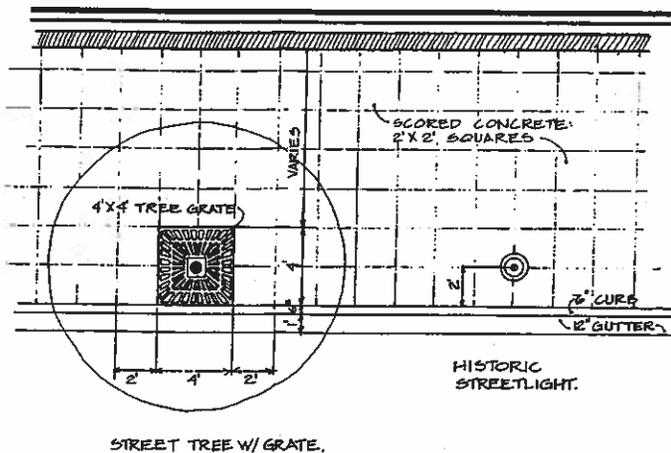
**Parking Lot Improvements and Landscaping:** Downtown off-street parking lots should be paved, signed, striped and landscaped. To create an attractive shopping environment it is important that the parking lots be well screened from view by landscaping. A five-foot landscaping setback from property lines should be established for all downtown parking lots. The figure illustrates the type of vegetation and/or fences and walls that should screen off-street parking lots.

# STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

## SIDEWALKS

Baker City's central retailing area requires more pedestrian appeal. An attractive city center streetscape improvement program assures the downtown its place as the prime commercial destination and helps to induce shopper traffic. Main Street sidewalks were handsomely rebuilt in 1986 with scored concrete, street lights and trees. But many of the side street sidewalks present a difficult walking surface because they are worn and broken. Resort, 1<sup>st</sup>, and all east-west streets lack interest due to a shortage of street trees, greenery, or pedestrian-oriented lighting.

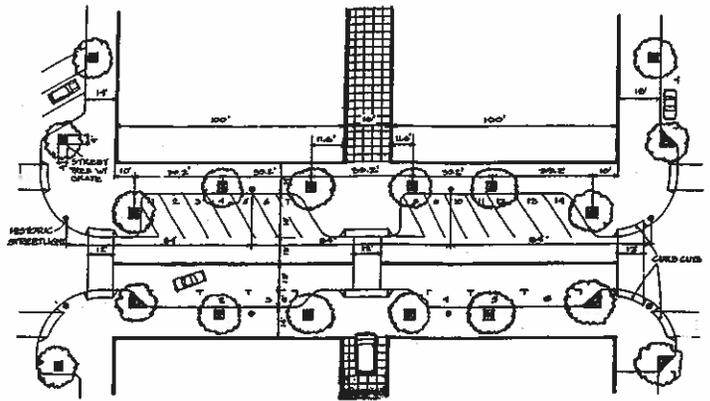
The sidewalk area, or streetscape, can be improved to play a major role in the downtown's revitalization. An overall singular identity can be established by utilizing consistent paving materials, streetlights, and trees. Such a streetscape improvement would enhance the shopping and entertainment atmosphere by providing a comfortable environment and a unifying design theme throughout the downtown. As has been proved repeatedly by successful shopping centers, presentation of an attractive image is simply good business.



Sidewalk detail

New sidewalk construction throughout most of the downtown is recommended to insure good pedestrian movement, improve walking safety, and provide an attractive entrance to businesses. Dimensionally, the typical 250-foot by 216-foot blocks are served with sidewalks varying from eleven to twenty feet in width. Main Street, for example, has two sixteen-foot wide sidewalks with most of the downtown's sidewalks averaging fifteen feet in width. All streetscape improvements will follow the City of Baker City's Standard Specification & Drawings for Public Works Construction.

The texture of the shopping floor is an essential visual element of the city center. Attractive paving materials should be used throughout the city center to guide the movement of pedestrians as well as to please the eye. Due to durability and cost considerations, it is recommended that scored concrete sidewalks continue to be constructed. All sidewalks would be scored with two-by-two-foot square patterns. This sidewalk standard will guarantee a uniformity of materials and finish. Utility improvements should coincide with the excavation of old sidewalks when access is available so a cost saving can be realized.

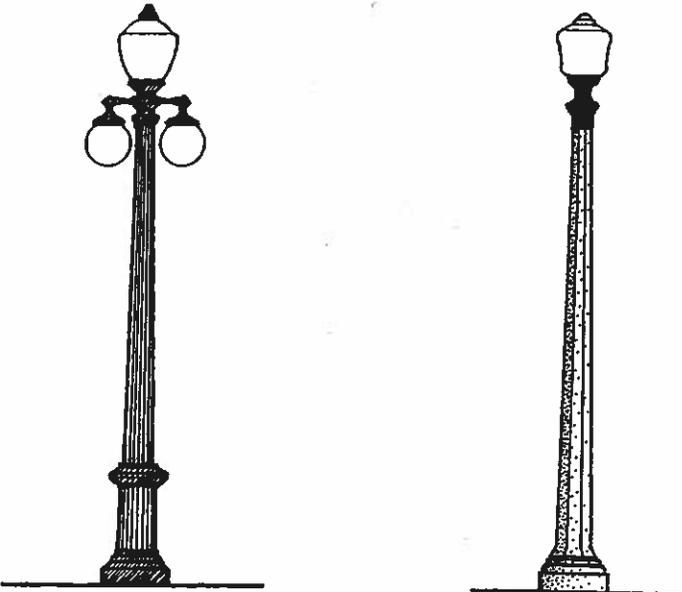


**Expanded Intersection Corners:** A number of the downtown's intersections are redesigned in this plan to shorten the pedestrian's street-crossing distance and better unify the shopping district. This is accomplished by expanding the curb line into the street or bulbing the corners. The design improves sight distance between the driver and the pedestrian entering the crosswalk and is beneficial in encouraging traffic to slow down.

Expanded intersection corners are proposed for Main Street at Madison, Washington, and Auburn avenues. The bulbed corners make it easier for pedestrians to cross the 100-foot right-of-way as well as slow traffic on Main Street. Other expanded intersections are proposed on portions of Resort and 1<sup>st</sup> streets. The expanded sidewalk area at the corners also offers optional uses such as additional landscaping, seating, bike racks, public art, and other street furniture. Overall, these strategically located intersections will tie the downtown shopping area together and reduce the conflicts generated by mixing vehicles and pedestrians.

### LIGHTING

Good lighting will allow the downtown to be fully used at night, provide security, and enhance the city. Two types of lighting would differentiate downtown use. The first would be the use of ornamental light standards along the sidewalks. As illustrated, two types of ornamental light standards are recommended. The three-globed light which once graced Main Street would be utilized in special areas such as the proposed Court Street Plaza. The single-globed concrete standard lights, which currently light Main Street and the Baker City Courthouse site, would be used on all streets in the downtown. The city has the original mold, which can be used to manufacture the standards needed in the downtown. These 14- to 15-foot high lights would contain energy-efficient power units and a non-breakable globe.



Street lights

Such accent lighting would provide a warmth of light and personalized atmosphere needed for the downtown. The pole and base of the light standard are attractive during the day and add another dimension to the street scene. Like street trees, unique lighting will provide a unifying environment for the business district.

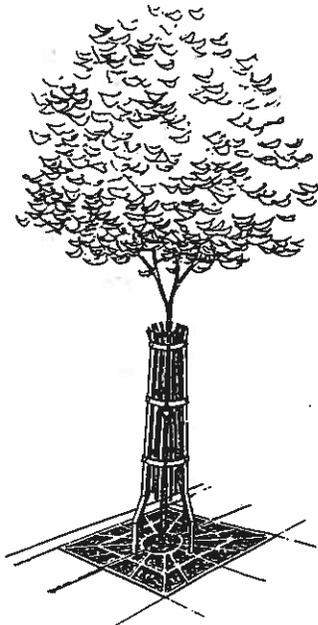
Other lighting would be contemporary overhead lighting to provide for the safe movement of traffic. These new lighting poles, some accompanied by traffic signals, would be located at major intersections. These poles would be of a dark color and unobtrusive in design. As an alternative to the contemporary poles, Valley Iron and Steel Company in Eugene manufactures poles and traffic controls which would enhance Baker City's historic theme.

### TREES

One of the major voids in the downtown has been the lack of greenery and trees. Trees, more than any other single element, enhance livability and provide a comfortable environment. Trees help soften the harsh effects of the summer sun and give visitors a more favorable impression of Baker City.

Street trees are a major component of the business area improvement program. Trees are to be incorporated within all public rights-of-way, excluding alleys, in order to add a much needed natural amenity to the streets and to provide a continuous and changing element which helps link the downtown together as an identifiable place.

Trees in the downtown will have to fit the growing site. The plan generally calls for a small to medium size species with good upright growth to fit narrow areas and for trees that are relatively maintenance free. Additionally, the new trees will have to withstand the downtown environment of traffic pollution, reflected heat from cars, and a limited water supply; and they must be pest resistant and long-lived. Another problem is vandalism and the killing effects of too much build-up of salt used for winter snow removal.



Tree, grate and guard

As illustrated, trees would flourish along Resort, Main, 1<sup>st</sup>, and all cross streets. Trees are set approximately 40-foot-on-center along sidewalk areas. An irrigation system is essential for the survival and low maintenance of the trees. For more detailed information about tree choice consult the City of Baker City Selection Guide for Street Tree Planting.

For the downtown area it is recommended that a variety of species be utilized. These include:

**Ornamental:** Flowering Crab  
Flowering Plum  
Flowering Cherry  
Flowering Pear  
Flowering Apple

**Shade:** Sunset Locust  
Green or European Mountain Ash  
Little-Leaf Linden

All trees should have a minimum trunk size of three inches when planted to ensure visual impact and durability. A four-foot square tree grate is recommended for both protection and esthetic value. For areas of high vandalism, tree guards should be employed to protect the trees; otherwise trees should be well staked.

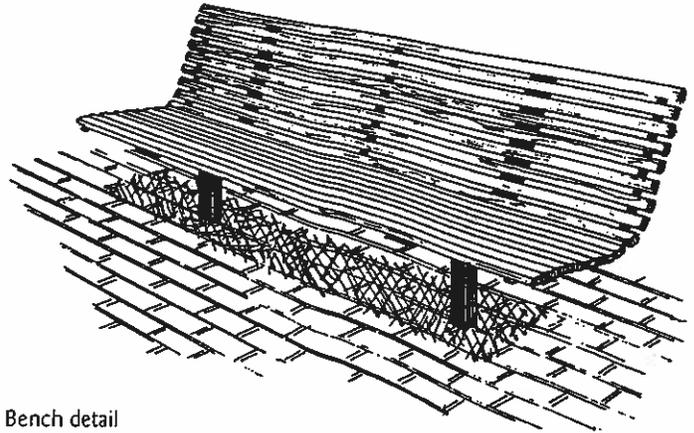
## PLANTINGS

In addition to trees, areas adjacent to parking lots require screening. Evergreen hedges would serve well to minimize parking areas. A minimum five-foot landscaped setback for all downtown parking areas is recommended. Other plants are encouraged at intersection areas with expanded corners, parks, and private landscaping.

## STREET FURNITURE

A number of street furniture elements should be strategically located in the downtown. HBC has developed a Streetscape Improvement Program to purchase and install trash cans, banners, bike racks, and street benches in the downtown.

The following are suggested for inclusion:



Bench detail

**Street Benches:** Seating for pedestrians invites visitors to linger longer. They are located in such a way as to facilitate conversation and pedestrian viewing. Benches installed on Main Street should be realigned to face the sidewalk. Examples include cast iron benches with wood slats, six feet long and bolted in place. Cost approximately \$550. Source: Blake Industries, P.O. Box 155, Abington, MA 02351 or 617-337-8772.

**Bicycle Parking:** Bike racks are located in accessible high activity areas of the downtown. A new bike rack design is recommended as current bike racks are not well used.

**Kiosks:** A few information kiosks accent the business district and serve as a mirror of current events. A number of historic markers would also complement the downtown.

**Trash Receptacles:** Unimposing small receptacles should be placed throughout the area to aid in litter control. Examples include a round receptacle, free-standing with mahogany slats. 24 gal. and 36 gal. capacity, with black metal tops (VIS-HF24M and VIS-HF324). The cost is \$463 and \$545 respectively. Source: Upbeat, Inc. 4350 Duncan Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110 or 800-325-3047.

**Banner Wires:** A few overhead wires or poles for banners, flags, or promotions will assist special city events.

**Drinking Fountains:** A number of outdoor fountains should be encouraged in order to serve the pedestrian environment.

**Awnings:** Fabric awnings that provide color and function are recommended for business storefronts. Awnings reduce glare and help serve as energy savers by controlling the amount of sunlight penetrating the storefront. Building orientation determines awning needs. Building fronts with northern exposures seldom require awnings. However, for those storefronts which need awnings, soft weather-treated canvas or vinyl materials which allow for flexible or fixed installations are recommended. Fabric colors that are visually compatible with the colors of the building's exterior should be selected. Awnings also present a good location for store signage.

Aluminum awnings or suspended fixed metal canopies should be avoided. If a fixed canopy must remain, it is recommended that an 18-inch ribbon of colorful fabric hang along the edge.

In conclusion, the incorporation of these important pedestrian amenities into the center of Baker City will create a pedestrian environment with great appeal to shoppers and visitors. Such streetscape improvements will help to increase retail patronage, encourage private investment by creating a progressive environment for business actions, and carry over to create a new image for the city.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Downtown Baker City is without the benefit of any park within close proximity to the commercial center along Main Street. Though Geiser-Pollman Park is on the edge of the downtown, its location is not close enough to adequately serve downtown shoppers and users. Likewise, Post Office Square is primarily dedicated to commemorate the Oregon Trail. Therefore, it is recommended that additional open space be developed to complement the city center.



Proposed Court Street Plaza fountain that once graced the intersection of Court and Main Streets (see cover)

## COURT STREET PLAZA

The best location for a new park is on Court Street between Main and Resort streets. This location is centrally located to the commercial heart of the downtown and involves utilizing a public right-of-way that has minimal traffic function. The public mini-park would be the focal point for downtown events, a place for relaxation and play by downtown users, and an intriguing public place for visitors.

The 80-foot by 132-foot park space should be designed to encourage public use and to educate its visitors about the rich history of Baker City. Potential park elements include a water feature, serving as a replica of the decorative cast-iron water fountain and light that once graced the intersection of Main and Court streets. Another element could include a large carved stone feature representing Baker City's abundance of stone architecture and honoring its skilled stonemason, John H. Jett. A key component would be a presentation area for events. The park would also include trees, seating, and three-globed ornamental light fixtures. An evergreen tree would continue the tradition of a Christmas tree at that location. Adjacent businesses, such as the Front Street Cafe, would be able to set up tables for outdoor dining in the afternoon shade. The park would be accompanied by an interpretive kiosk about the historic district's architecture and city's mining heritage, and the story of "Paint Your Wagon," which was partially filmed at this site in 1968. Information would also be presented on the Sumpter Valley Railroad, the nearby Oregon Trail Regional Museum and current events.

The park would serve as a center for concerts, exhibits, civic events, the Miner's Jubilee, an arts and crafts fair, and a harvest festival. The park's design and central location would create new opportunities for promoting downtown retail sales through many of its events. It would also provide sitting areas, shaded by trees, in which to relax. An appropriate name for the park, possibly John H. Jett, should be chosen. A fund-raising campaign should be held and a detailed design for the park refined by a professional designer. Such a park would greatly enhance the appeal of the downtown and assist in creating a new image for the city, generating a feeling of pride for all of Baker City's citizens.

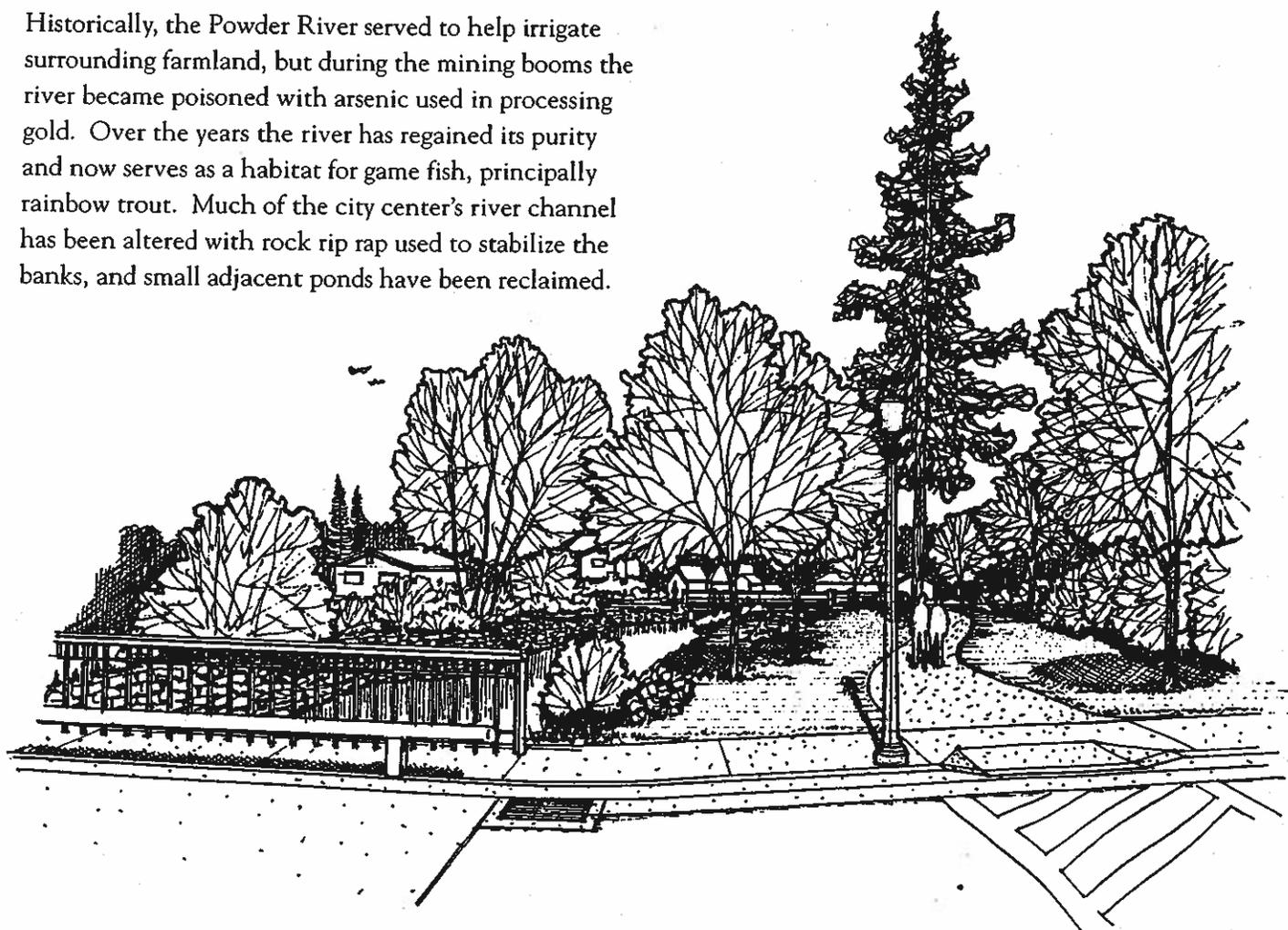
### LEO ADLER PARKWAY

The Powder River provides the downtown with a natural amenity that can contribute significantly to the variety of experiences needed for a stimulating city center. Besides offering relief from the formal character of the downtown, the riverfront invites the visitor to get in touch with the area's natural environment, one of Baker City's finest features.

Historically, the Powder River served to help irrigate surrounding farmland, but during the mining booms the river became poisoned with arsenic used in processing gold. Over the years the river has regained its purity and now serves as a habitat for game fish, principally rainbow trout. Much of the city center's river channel has been altered with rock rip rap used to stabilize the banks, and small adjacent ponds have been reclaimed.

The river flows to the north, and its water flow is controlled by Mason Dam. In 1966, the U.S. Geological Survey designated a flood plain along the river. Currently, the Powder River through much of the downtown seems forgotten, with the exception of the Geiser-Pollman Park and the Federal Building with its small grass strip and picnic benches. Its west riverbank lies barren while its east side is abutted by modest homes. Through the assistance of the Leo Adler Community Fund, the City of Baker City is developing a linear parkway along the Powder River. Portions of the parkway path system have been completed and additional segments are being purchased and wait funding.

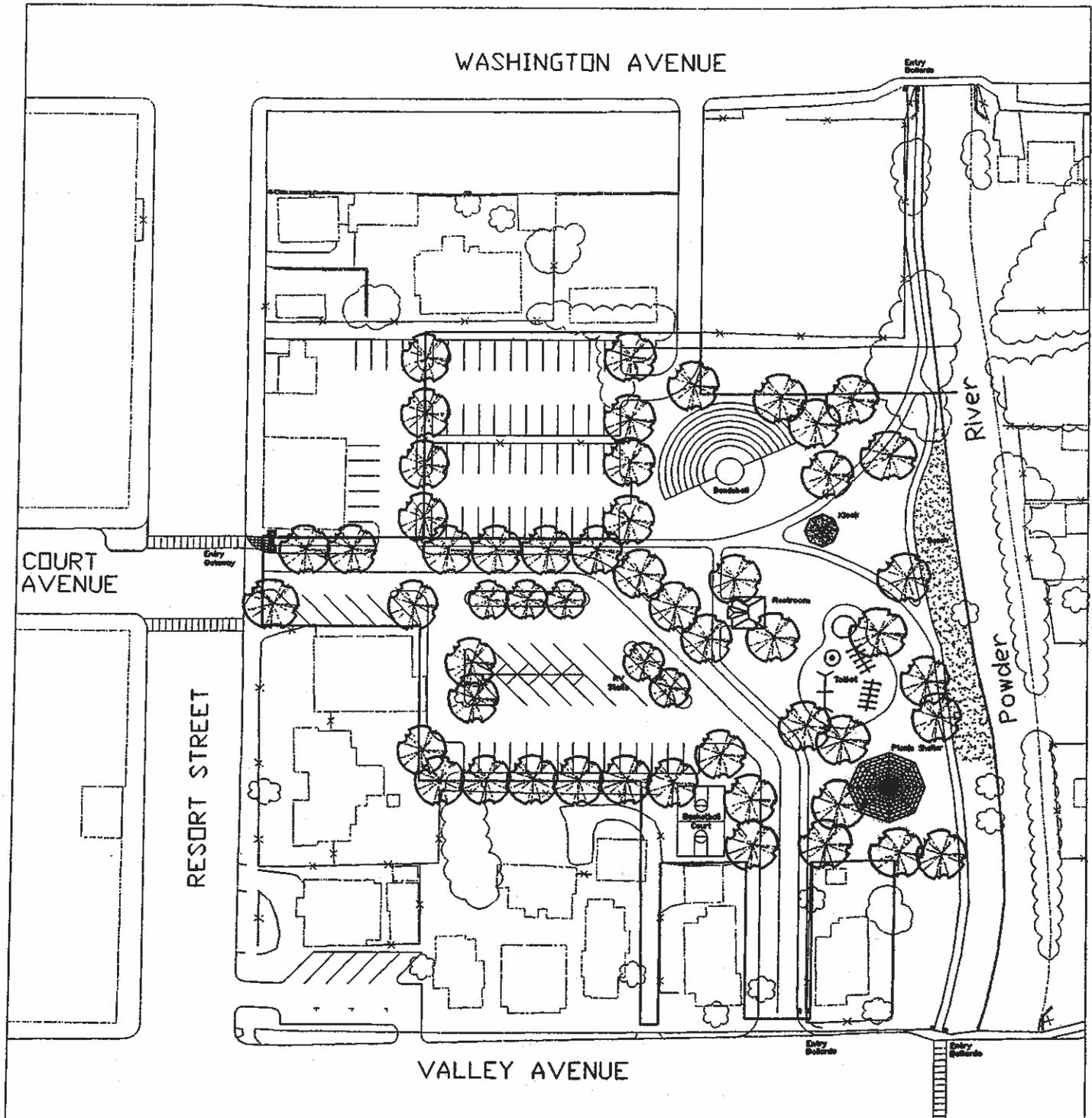
As the Powder River is a major asset to downtown Baker City's revitalization potential, it is recommended that the west riverbank from Estes Street to Campbell Street be developed as a linear pathway. Such a pathway and its natural setting would be a primary stimulus for new development along the river. Currently, the majority of the west river bank is vacant,



Proposed Leo Adler Parkway

which makes the timing ideal for establishing the pathway. The linear pathway would be formed through a variety of methods, including public purchase, private donation, easements, and building setbacks. A 50-foot building setback from the high-water line of the west bank would discourage encroachment on the river and allow for the pathway and adjacent landscaping. Improvements would include a 10-foot wide pedestrian and bicycle pathway with a hard surface, along with

natural low-maintenance landscaping. The pathway would also accommodate maintenance and security vehicles. Difficult access through the narrow riverbank space behind the Albertson's store may require special engineering. An option is to bring the parkway onto the east side of Resort Street between Broadway Avenue and Madison Street. Another option to connect the pathway through this area is to follow existing streets east of the river.



Leo Adler Parkway Concept Plan

THE POWDER RIVER Parkway would serve as a recreational resource for the city, offering opportunities for walking, bicycling, fishing, wading, picnicking, and general relaxation. Access to the pathway would be reached at all east-west streets crossing the river, with a major connection from into the downtown at Court Street, connecting to the proposed Court Street Park.

### **POWDER RIVER PARK-LEO ADLER PARKWAY**

As illustrated, a concept plan for parkway land along the Powder River would provide a key connection to downtown's Court Street Plaza and provide needed open space. Proposed improvements include a path system, parking, rest rooms, beach, tot lot, interpretive kiosk, and picnic shelter. Options include an event plaza or bandshell, once an important community gathering place in Geiser-Pollman Park. Another opportunity is to create a waterfall over a portion of the river's tuffstone walls.

**China Gate:** A wayside shrine is proposed along the parkway just east of the Valley Avenue Bridge. A sculpture is recommended commemorating Baker City's former nearby Joss House and the Chinese people who contributed to the life and economy of Baker City.

Implementation of the Leo Adler Parkway through the downtown area is intended to be over the next ten years. Funds to purchase land and develop the pathway are being sought from individuals, businesses, corporations, foundations, and city, county, state and federal funds.

### **UTILITIES**

The study area is well served through its existing utility network. As a support to downtown revitalization, a strong effort should be made to maintain and upgrade all utility systems serving the city center, including sewer, water, power, communication, and fire systems. Two areas in need of special attention are upgrading the downtown storm system, as street repairs are made and undergrounding overhead utilities. Overhead power lines, especially on Resort and a number of cross streets in the downtown, negatively influence revitalization and are counter-productive to the historic theme of the city center. Wherever possible, it is recommended that utilities be placed underground in the downtown. See Resort Street Revitalization, page 34.

In concert with the downtown revitalization process, the opportunity exists to upgrade the utility systems in those areas where construction will occur. By coordinating the timing and location of the development of these projects, a savings can be realized and the adverse effects of installation can be minimized.

### **PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT**



East side of 1700 Main Block, before and after remodeling

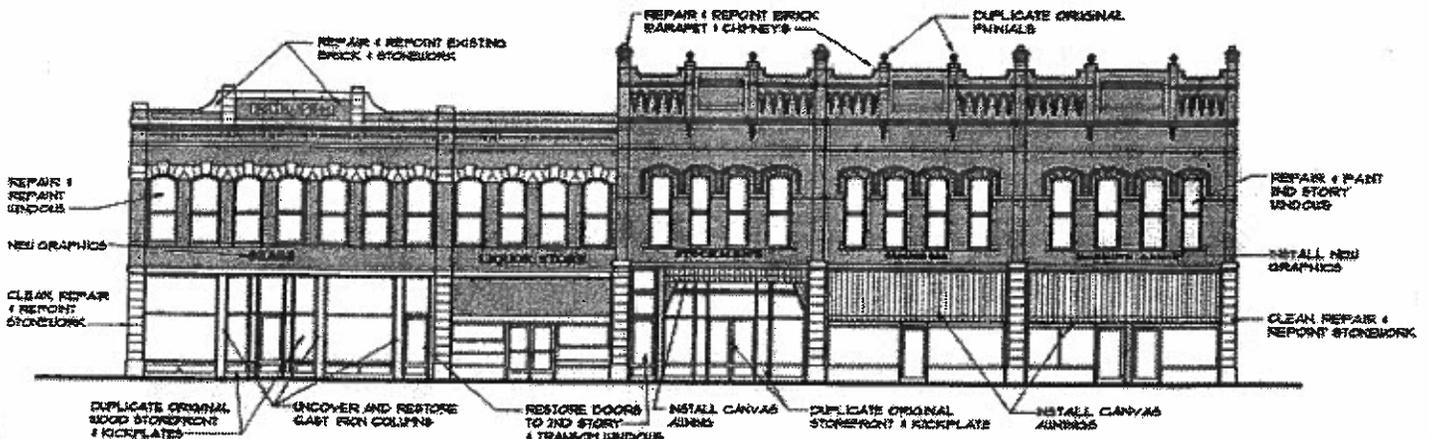
### **THEME**

The central development theme for downtown Baker City should be recapturing the spirit and success of the 1890s through 1910. This was the period when Baker City's gold and silver mining economy flourished and most of the city's substantial architectural heritage was established, creating that rich mixture of architectural style and craftsmanship that is predominant today, and providing a common theme element from which to expand. Baker City's history and architectural assets provide an attractive downtown setting for local citizens and visitors. With its buildings rehabilitated, downtown amenities in place, rich history, and an imaginative promotional program, Baker City has the makings of a priceless tourism draw.

### **REHABILITATION**

Downtown Baker City possesses a tremendous asset in its very expressive architecture, which for the most part, is still intact. A table and location map in the appendix identify 111 historic structures within the study area. The majority of these are located in the Baker Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Through the encouragement and incentives of HBC and Baker City, the 1990s had been a period of successful preservation for downtown historic buildings.



Proposed rehabilitation for Pullman and Lyndale buildings

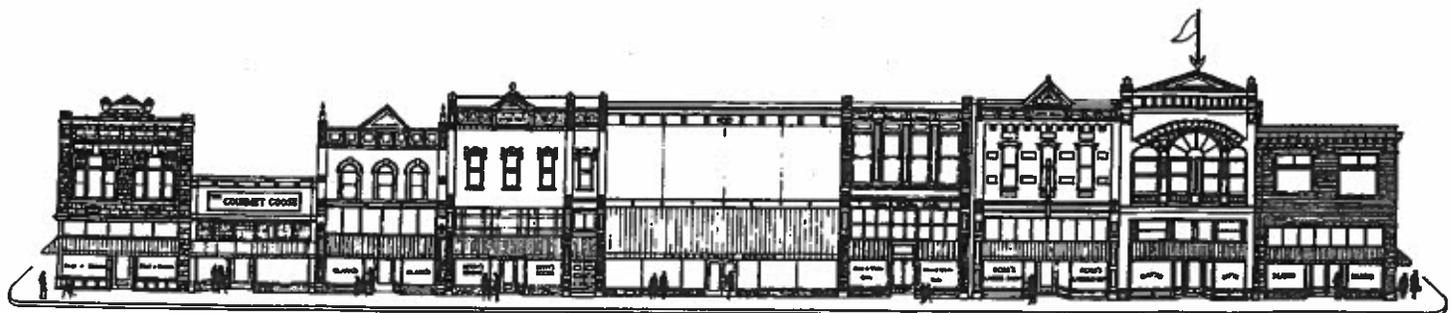
Over 75 historic facade renovations have been undertaken through HBO's Destination Downtown Façade Restoration Program. HBC and the city have continued to apply for grants to match 50 percent of the exterior renovation costs for approved projects. The program is eligible to those who undertake commercial façade improvements that returns the facade to its historic appearance. Building or business owners should apply and submit their plans to HBC. Following approval by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Baker City Design Review Commission, and if the facade work is completed as approved, the applicant can request payment.

Although many historic buildings have been rehabilitated, numerous facades still need work. The visual richness of these structures cannot be duplicated, and thus every effort must be made to maintain Baker City's architectural heritage. Since many of these buildings have been unsympathetically remodeled, it is recommended that they be rehabilitated to recapture the warmth and beauty they once had. Other buildings identified as historic should be rehabilitated in a sympathetic manner to reinforce Baker City's theme. Managers of existing buildings should establish a responsible maintenance program for both interior and exterior

appearance. Making old buildings more functional and enhancing their storefronts and unique details is the first step in revitalizing downtown. The benefits of rehabilitation are many and include a favorable image, more patronage and a better economic return.

To demonstrate Baker City's potential for rehabilitation, this facade elevation illustrates the existing and proposed conditions of the east and west elevations of Main Street's 1800 block. Building rehabilitation includes improved storefronts, sympathetic painting, awnings, and tasteful signing.

Sensitive rehabilitation starts with a review of historic photographs of the building, an understanding of its structural integrity, and knowledge of the structure's alterations over time. By enlisting the services of professionals, decisions can be made on how best to utilize all areas of the building, type of use and desired tenants. Key decisions are also required on access into and through the building, new utility systems and attention to maintaining or recapturing the building's architectural character. Specific treatment, techniques and rehabilitation methods are outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's *Guidelines for Rehabilitation*.



Proposed rehabilitation treatment of west elevation of Main Street's 1800 Block

This is of particular importance since rehabilitation establishes eligibility for tax investment credits, if the work meets specific guidelines and is certified.

Enhancement of the original storefront is one of the most dramatic ways of achieving visible results and improving the building's patronage. Frequently, limited maintenance or modernization of the first floor has reduced the appeal of many of Baker City's downtown buildings. The key to an improved storefront is to respect the entire building facade, not just the shop level.

Three rehabilitation options are presented as follows:

**Minor Improvements:** This approach allows the owners to improve the facade at a minimum cost. The building is cleaned and repainted bringing out the building's architectural details, any unsightly signs are removed, a new fabric awning is installed, and new awning and window graphics are added. In many cases, simply removing an earlier remodeling addition and applying new paint can create a whole new image for the structure.

**Rehabilitation:** This approach requires a professional paint job that highlights the architectural details with contrasting colors. Where architectural details, such as cornices or window caps, have been removed, a three-dimensional paint job can be utilized to give the impression that all the features are in place. If window openings or upper levels have been altered, they can be replaced by duplicates of the original window openings and windows. The shop storefront is returned to its original design, including recessed entry, wood door(s), appropriate window sizes and a wood or tile kickplate. Also, new window and awning graphics are added, as well as a colorful fabric awning. This approach minimizes less attractive features and through paint and wooden storefront infill, it emphasizes the positive features at a modest cost.

**Major Rehabilitation:** This level requires cleaning and painting the building, duplicating the original storefront, including clerestory windows, doors, kickplate, and hardware, and duplicating any removed architectural details such as cornices or window caps. As with the other options, good graphics and awnings are necessary. Such storefront reconstruction demands a high level of craftsmanship and materials, and has the highest cost. The results, however, are a first-class storefront close to its original condition.

With all three options, visually appealing fabric awnings are used because they supply color and texture and serve as a shading devise and sign backdrop. Awnings are historically appropriate, affordable, and easily noticed by customers.

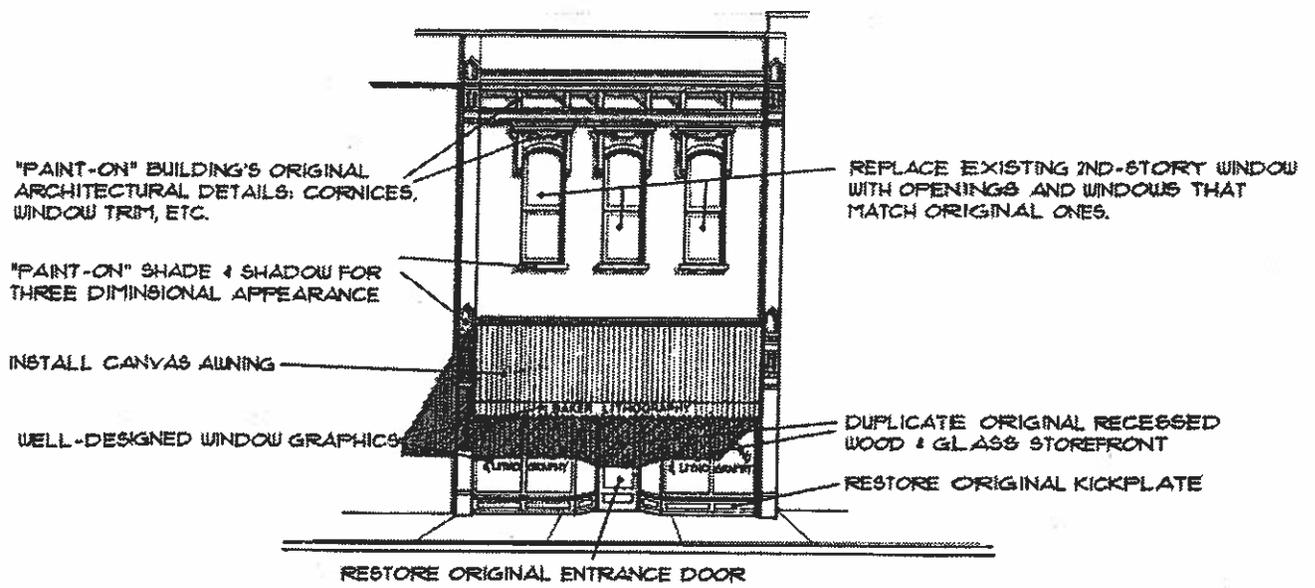
Rehabilitation of Baker City's historic buildings offers a savings, especially when compared with the costs of new construction. The investor would also have a building improved to very good masonry standards with unique features, rather than a new, average quality structure. The use of historic preservation incentives adds an even more attractive return. The Oregon Special Tax Assessment of Historic Properties allows property taxes for historic properties to be frozen for a period of 15 years, while federal tax credits provide a 20 percent tax investment credit for certified rehabilitation projects.

In summary, it makes good business sense to maintain a favorable impression since people naturally prefer to trade at an attractive store. The renovated building, good tenants and patronage will increase revenue and allow for a better economic return. This plan recognizes and respects the historical and architectural heritage of Baker City and encourages the rehabilitation of its historic buildings. Already a number of buildings have been rehabilitated, but many more require work. The following three categories list the remaining historic buildings that can contribute to a viable and attractive downtown.

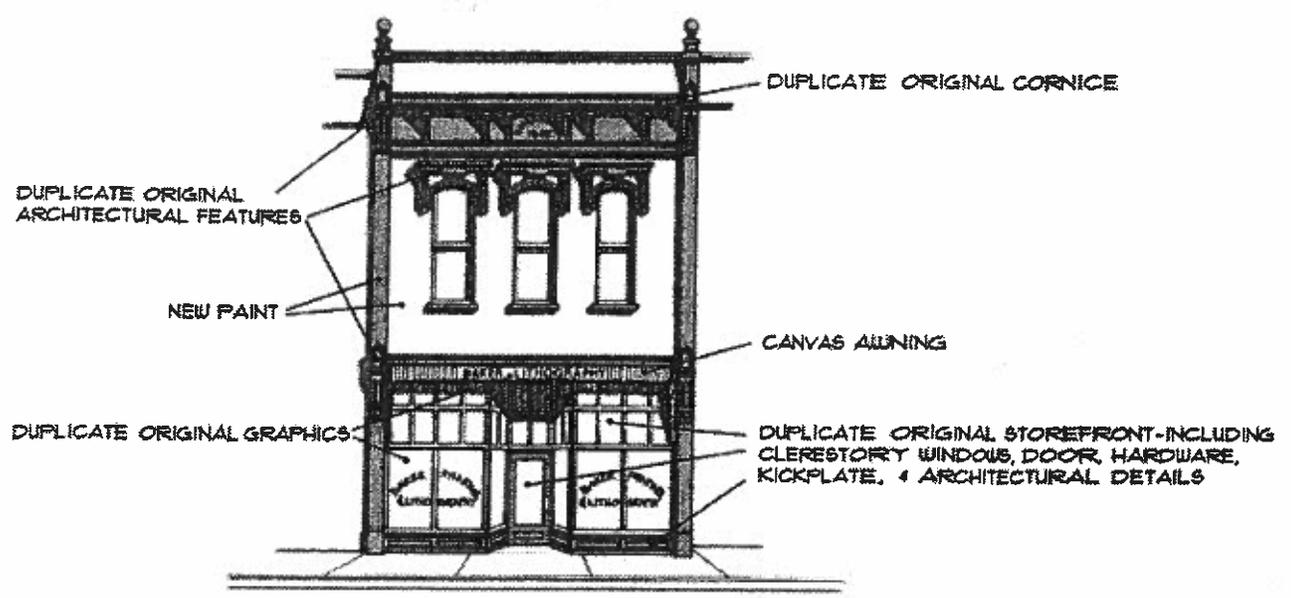


Proposed rehabilitation treatment of east elevation of Main Street's 1800 Block





### C. REHABILITATION



### D. MAJOR REHABILITATION

## BUILDING REHABILITATION PRIORITY LISTING

### FIRST PRIORITY

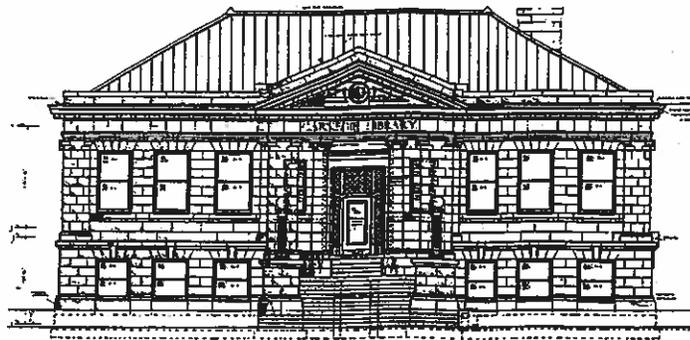
Façade alterations on this group of buildings have been minimal, and they can be inexpensively upgraded through cleaning, sympathetic paint jobs, improved signing and awnings. This treatment is appropriate for the following buildings:

First National Bank (Chinns)	1841 Main St.
Baker Furniture (Crabhill)	1916 Main St.
Artcraft	2270 Main St.
White Apartments	1931 First St.
Ison Building	1913 Court St.
Heilner Grocery	1920 Court St.
Stage Depot	1926-28 Court St.
Clark Auto Electric	1220 Resort St.
Ross House	1810 Resort St.
Resort Street Facades	West side of Resort

### SECOND PRIORITY

This group of buildings has undergone exterior modification and requires the removal of modern elements to return the facade to its original character. Improvements call for facade rehabilitation, general refurbishing, access to and re-use of upper floors, and upgrading utilities.

Hansen & Weis Furniture	1924 Broadway
Stockmen's (Lynndale)	2028 Main St.
J. Tabor Jewelers	1913 Main St.
The Kennedy Building	1900 Main St.
Dilsheimer (Candy) Building	1833 Main St.
Orphium Theater	1821 Main St.
St. Lawrence Hotel Building	1824 Main St.
Elkhorn Western Wear	1812 Main St.
Log Cabin Building	1810 Main St.
Baker Bakery (McCord)	1798 Main St.
2005-09 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	2005-09 1 <sup>st</sup> St.
Heilner Warehouse	1912 First St.
Pythian Castle	2000 Washington
Baker Garage	1760-80 Washington
1928 First Street	1928 First St.
Shoemaker Building	1831 First St.
Crown Cleaners	1935 Valley Ave.
Wisdom House	2035 Second St.
Heilner House	1839 Second St.
Fannie Hall House	120 Bridge St.



Old Carnegie Library

### THIRD PRIORITY

This special category covers major buildings in need of rehabilitation. These large buildings require overall interior and exterior rejuvenation, façade repair, new stairway(s) and/or an elevator, improved utility systems, and sensitive attention to details. A major capital investment will be required for the following buildings:

Antler's Hotel	1945 Washington
Roger's Hotel	1932 First St.
Baker City Hall	1655 First St.
Carnegie Library	2020 Auburn Ave.
Oddfellows Lodge	1988 Valley Ave.
IOOF Lodge	1718 Main St.
Wisdom Building (Memory Ant.)	1720 Main St.
Neuberger-Heilner	1901 Main St.
VFW Hall (YMCA)	2005 Valley Ave.

## UPPER FLOOR

### DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Upper floor development has lagged behind ground-floor commercial improvements. Currently, downtown has a large amount of vacant upper story space. Re-use of these vacant areas will have a dramatic and positive economic impact on the downtown and promote upper story façade improvements. The types of use suited for upper floors include retail, office and apartments. Active retailing on upper floors is often difficult due to customer dislike of climbing stairs, and patronage is often reduced because of the more remote location. On the other hand, many professional tenants (e.g. legal, accounting) or professional services (e.g. travel agents, beauty shops) do not depend upon walk-in-traffic to the

same extent as retail merchants and are well-suited for second floor occupancy. Often an office tenant currently located on the ground floor could function as well on an upper floor. This transfer creates a double payoff: It expands the amount of retailing area available in the downtown and puts formerly vacant space to use.

To make upper areas usable, most buildings require improved access and often a second stairwell to meet fire codes. Most older spaces require new or upgraded heating, cooling, and electrical systems. Though not financially feasible for an individual building, it is recommended that owners work together to provide one elevator per block along with a common hallway and additional stairwells. The elevator and common hallway space would allow improved access to all areas, ensuring rentability and a higher return on the space. Other potential opportunities for upper floors include new interior architectural features such as skylights, lightwells and new access to the improved alleyways.

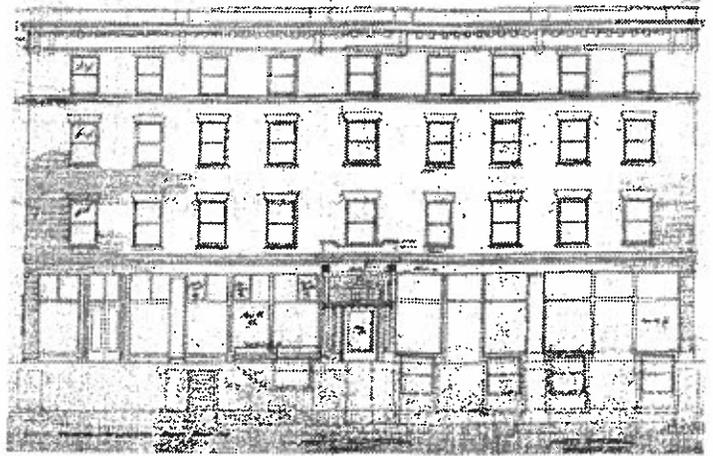
An upper floor development loan fund should be established to renovate vacant second-floor space into offices or apartments. The low interest revolving loan fund would stimulate investment in the downtown. Loans for businesses and property owners within the Economic Improvement District boundaries would be eligible for loans and grants for interior rehabilitation. Projects would be approved based on availability of funds and acceptance of the Design Review Commission.

## **DOWNTOWN HOUSING**

Recent trends indicate that America's downtowns are experiencing an unexpected resurgence in residential living. Housing opportunities exist for adaptive use of second-level space in many of the smaller buildings in Baker City. These spaces often occupied initially by the merchant living above the store would make excellent studio apartments. To accommodate such use, the city needs to revise its current ordinances.

Due to the large amount of vacant upper story space within the downtown, it is recommended that some of the space be adapted to rental apartments. New residential housing in the city center means that people remain downtown all hours, creating new customers for

restaurants, theaters and other attractions. The residents become a built-in commercial market and provide new life and security to the city center. Being at the center of a community's commercial and cultural life not only offers rich, convenient and spontaneous shopping and living experiences; it also minimizes transportation needs and hassles. Older downtown buildings generally offer unique living spaces and features such as skylights, high tin ceilings, beamed ceilings and spectacular woodwork.



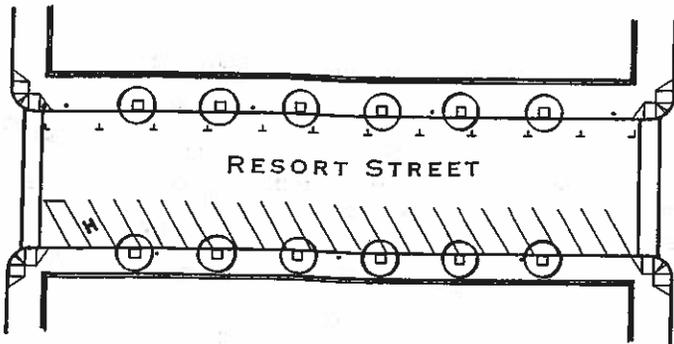
Antler Hotel

Downtown housing for the elderly is also recommended, since living downtown is often convenient, providing easy access to shopping, entertainment, and governmental centers. A major opportunity currently exists to recycle the upper floors of the old Antler's and Roger's hotels located at Washington Avenue and First Street into a 40-unit residential complex for senior citizens. The city should work with the buildings' owners to seek state and federal aid in redeveloping the two buildings.

Emphasis should also be given to encouraging new housing in and adjacent to the downtown. The master plan proposes, for example, new multi-family housing along the Powder River between Washington and Valley avenues. Care should also be taken to protect and improve the existing housing, such as the White Apartments and the housing stock within the downtown and surrounding areas.

# RESORT STREET REVITALIZATION

Resort Street offers downtown Baker City another opportunity to enhance its unique historic character. This eight-block downtown street is only one-half block from Main Street and parallel to the Powder River. The west side of Resort Street takes on the look of an alley with dumpsters and overhead power lines, but with improvements it has the potential to stimulate the vitality and activity of historic downtown Baker City.



Example of streetscape and 60-degree angle parking

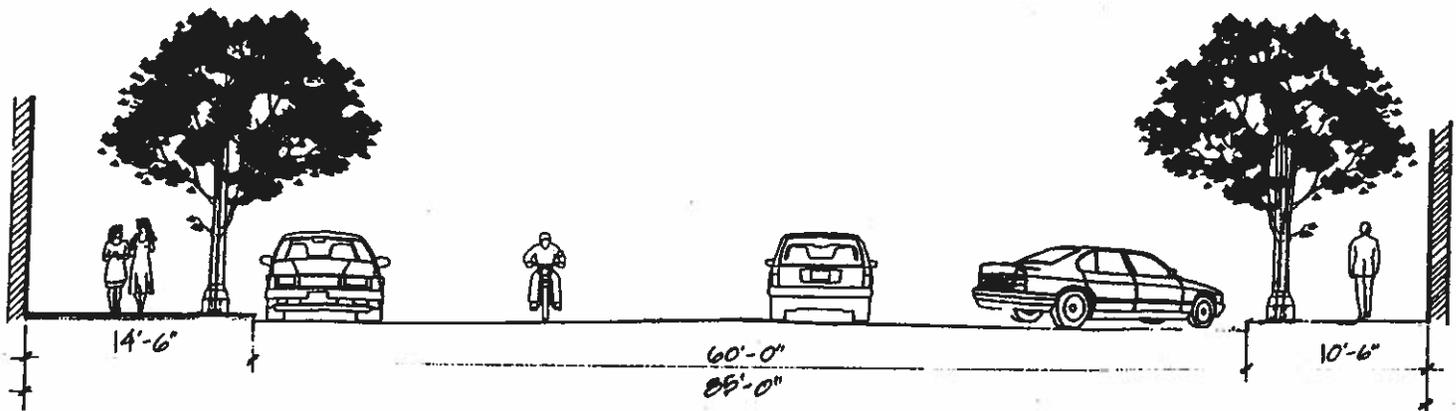
If Resort Street is to attract new customers, it must present the public with a better image, one which is evident in a walkable and attractive environment. Currently, pedestrian amenities are minimal, parking can be a problem and business entrances are unappealing. Investments in the infrastructure of the street will contribute to revitalizing the adjacent historic buildings and better support the entire downtown.

Streetscape improvement opportunities include helping connect the downtown to the Powder River, attracting shoppers to double-fronted businesses, and encouraging new commercial and residential uses through access to basement and upper floors. Other opportunities include

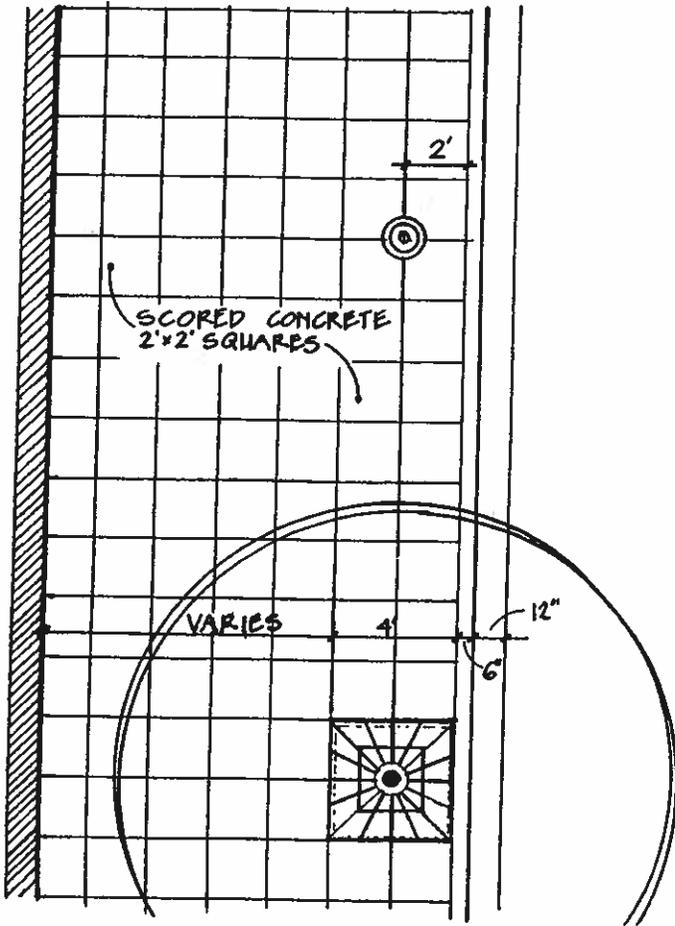
making the street safer for users, improving parking and loading, upgrading lighting, providing access to underutilized parcels along the river, and enhancing the appearance of the street.

In the foreseeable future, the east side of Resort Street has the potential to redevelop as the Leo Adler Parkway evolves. Development on this side of Resort Street should maintain more open space following the area's early development patterns. Mixed use development should be encouraged for the area. New buildings could include meeting facilities, a hotel, retail, and office development as well as a strengthened residential component. Off-street parking needs to be integrated into new development. Occupying the upper floors on the west side will increase the use of Resort Street.

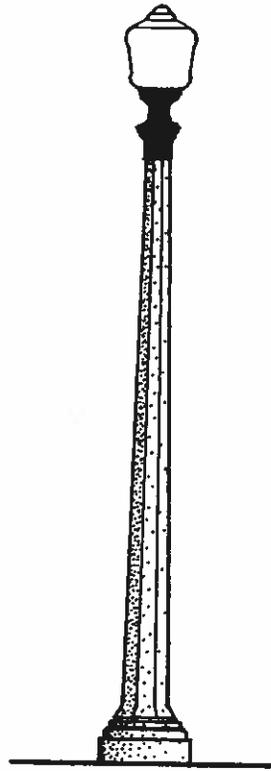
New sidewalk construction along Resort Street is recommended to insure good pedestrian movement, improve safety, and provide an attractive street. The sidewalk design would follow the Main Street prototype with scored concrete, street lights, and street trees. Lights would be located at a staggered pattern with four lights on each side of a block. Street trees are a major component of the streetscape plan, adding a natural amenity to Resort Street and providing a continuous and changing element. The species selected should be a small Class I tree to minimize conflict with the overhead power lines. A decorative tree, such as a flowering cherry, plum or crab apple (*Malus Tschonoski*) is recommended. To ensure healthy trees, an irrigation system is recommended. Plaques and/or street names may be indented into the sidewalk surface as appropriate. Wheel chair ramps should be installed as outlined in the standard specifications.



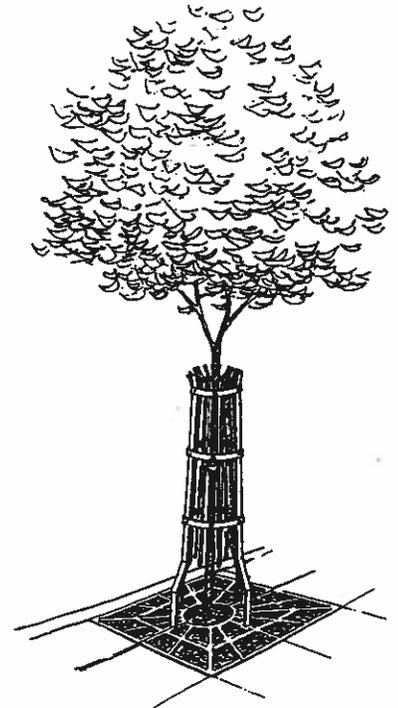
Resort street section



Streetscape with scored concrete, streetlight and street tree



Streetlight



Street tree with grate and guard



Resort Street's 1700 block

Crosswalks are to be maintained on Resort Street and upgraded with full-width crosswalks where pedestrian activity is heaviest. Expanded curb lines for crosswalk connections at Court Street are proposed to connect Court Street Plaza to the Leo Adler Parkway.

Resort Street contains a wealth of historic architecture and future development potential. Property owners and merchants should begin to clean up and rehabilitate the buildings' facades on the west side of Resort. As little change has occurred, most of the facades possess a rich architectural character that can be rehabilitated without major expense. In most cases, cleaning, new paint, repairing windows, new signing, and a few awnings placed over rehabilitated entrances will allow improved building use and an attractive image. An advantage to these buildings is that they have double fronting and can be patronized from both Resort and Main streets. This creates opportunities for improved access to existing commercial spaces or for new tenant spaces opening onto Resort Street. In addition, new entrances to second floor spaces can allow those areas to become functional. Access from the sidewalk to the basement or second floors of building along the west side could be approved on a case-by-case basis.

To overcome the problem of visible garbage storage, a few consolidated screened garbage areas should be built. These areas would serve a number of users and be screened by a wood, brick, or stone partition designed for easy access and garbage removal. Some of these garbage areas could be placed within recessed areas along the west side of Resort Street. Two areas on the west side, where the building does not cover the entire lot, also have the advantage to develop small inviting courtyards.

Historic Baker City and the Baker City Public Works Department are encouraged to provide leadership in working with utility companies to upgrade and consolidate utility lines along Resort Street and in the Historic District. Coordination meetings with the city and utility providers would identify opportunities for utility improvement. Subsequent coordination would

identify pipe zones under sidewalks and streets. Sleeves for communication, electric and irrigation lines would be located within new sidewalks.

Power lines would remain on the west side of Resort Street. Telephone and cable lines would be consolidated on the same power poles. Consideration was given to undergrounding power lines, but the expense of vaults and lines was estimated at more than \$500,000. The best opportunity for consolidating overhead lines is to underground telephone lines over a period of time. The telephone poles on the east side of the street and lines crossing the street can be removed eventually through undergrounding. Improvements could include underground hand holes and conduit to properties.. Cost would be shared or done under replacement of old lead cable. For additional details, see the Resort Street Streetscape Plan prepared by Planmakers in 1997.

## **BAKER CITY ALLEYWAY PROJECT**

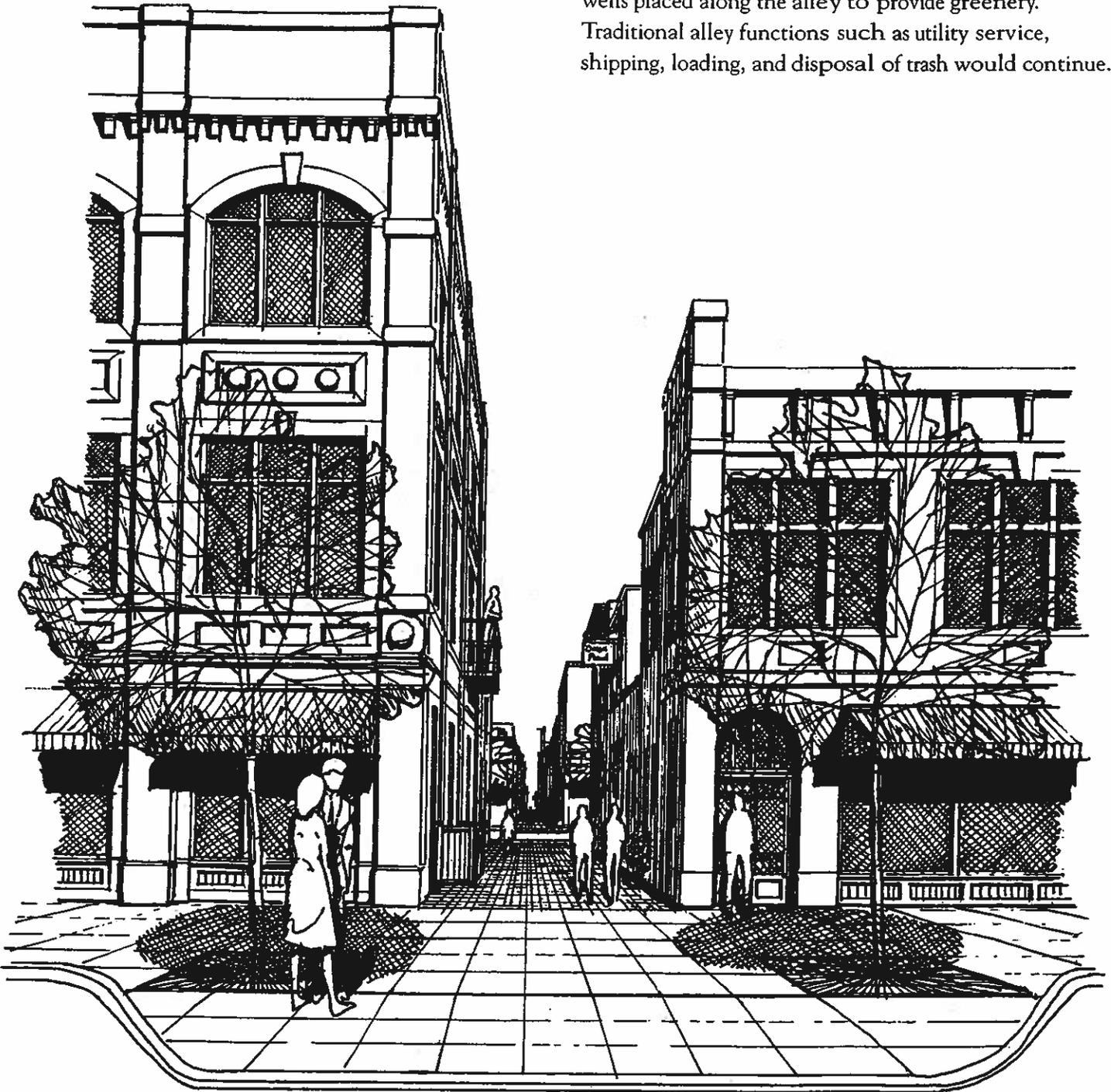
An exciting opportunity exists to improve and better utilize three blocks of alleys which penetrate the blocks bound by Main and 1<sup>st</sup> streets and Washington and Auburn avenues. Currently, this alley appears neglected, but upon further inspection, the areas contain much intrigue and history through their numerous stone and brick buildings, old signs and entryways to various shops. For example, one of the building entrances has a decorative cast-iron threshold inscribed by the Baker Iron Works which manufactured much of the local architectural cast iron and machinery for the surrounding mines.

As illustrated, it is recommended that the sixteen-foot wide alleyway be improved with new pavement surfaces, some landscaping, signing, the undergrounding of utilities, and mid-block crossings at Court Street, Valley, and Auburn avenues. Pavement textures should be removable brick or cobblestone so access to underground utilities can be gained easily. Upgrading the alleys enhances the options for downtown pedestrian movement and allows double-fronting of businesses, thereby attracting customers from the back as well as through the main storefronts on First and Main streets.

Because a few buildings do not occupy the full 100-100-foot long lots, the opportunity also exists for highly individualized courtyard entrances to businesses from the alleyway side. The rear walls of a number of buildings can be cleaned or rehabilitated in a clean, straightforward way, picking up on the architectural character of each building. These improvements will allow the alleyway to contribute to downtown Baker City's commercial opportunities, including the possibility of a promoting special events as well as

permitting an occasional vendor's marketplace in the alley. Additionally, the alleyway plays an important role in providing an attractive access to new stairways which serve upper floor uses along the alley. The alleyways also will contribute to visitor interest and walking tours of the downtown.

Property owners in these blocks should join together to begin improving the alleyways and to establish consolidated locations for collective storage of trash. Trash areas should be screened and a number of vine wells placed along the alley to provide greenery. Traditional alley functions such as utility service, shipping, loading, and disposal of trash would continue.



Baker City Alleyway Project looking north from Valley Avenue

## **DOWNTOWN ARTS INITIATIVE**

It is recommended that HBC and the City of Baker City take a deliberate approach to integrating the arts into the agenda for downtown redevelopment. The vision is to create a renaissance in the arts that will bring cultural richness and economic support to the downtown.

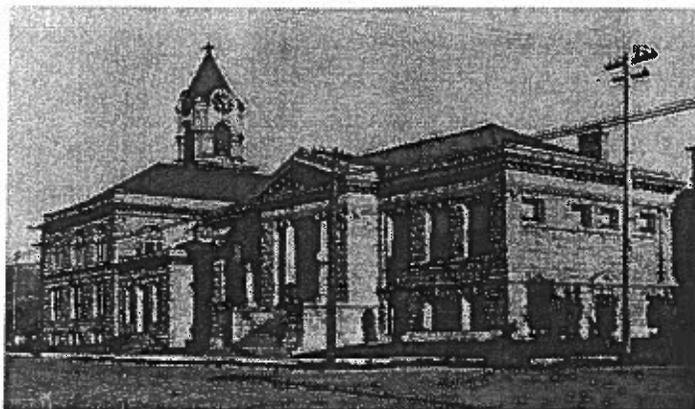
## **CROSSROADS CENTER FOR THE CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Baker City is fortunate to have Crossroads Center, currently located on Main Street. Formed in 1972, the center plans and promotes arts programs and events in Baker County. Activities include First Friday, Crossroad Players, Chautauqua Series, Christmas Fine Arts Fair, Sing Along Messiah, Open Your Senses to the Arts — a children's festival, and the Powder River Music Revue, a summer music series with HBC. Classes cover painting, ceramics, weaving, music, writing, photography, dance, ballet, and theater. Exhibitions of Crossroads 50 regional artists occur throughout the year at the center. The Gallery Shop, provides local art for sale and features an artist of the month. Crossroads Center is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization operated by a board of directors and managed by an administrator, part-time staff, and volunteers. Funding is through membership and grants. The center was formerly located in the Carnegie Library, then relocated near Broadway Avenue, and is now leasing the Newberger Hilner Building.

An ambitious blueprint for investing in the arts in downtown Baker City is proposed. It would be initiated by a Baker City/County Cultural Plan that would develop a strategy to guide and increase investment in the arts, culture, and heritage. The initiative would first heighten public awareness of arts facilities and events occurring in Baker City. As residents and visitors discover venues that are new to them, business will increase for nearby restaurants and retail merchants. Best of all, as the arts strengthen the city's economy, arts-oriented businesses, arts organizations, and artists themselves will be strengthened. They will enjoy greater visibility, higher attendance, more events, and, eventually, new facilities. Tools include a special map and information kiosks at strategic locations.

Putting culture to work to stimulate economic impact relies on goals and resources shared by a variety of artistic, downtown and community development interests. Therefore, it is essential to establish and maintain partnerships. Business partners could include the Geiser Grand Hotel and Eltrym Theater, while the public partner would be Oregon Arts Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, and Oregon Council for the Humanities. Tools include expanded staff at Crossroads Center and regular steering committee meetings

A key component is to identify and secure a reliable, dedicated source of long-term funding for the large number of projects and programs that will contribute to the Crossroads Center success. It will require community involvement, support, and teamwork. With a strong foundation of elected and volunteer leadership, committed partnerships, and solid coordination, Baker City is well positioned to make the most of the outstanding artistic and cultural resources at its disposal.



Former Carnegie Library and Baker City Hall

## **FACILITY NEEDS**

Crossroads Center has a crucial need to provide permanent facilities for performances, exhibits, classrooms, rehearsal space, storage, and office needs. A rehabilitated Carnegie Library would make an ideal home for Crossroads Center. In addition, a 200 to 300 seat "black box" theater is needed for theater, music, and dance organizations. Three hundred seats would require an area approximately 80' x 80'. A variety of seating arrangements could be used, depending upon the needs of the performance. This flexibility would allow for variable amounts of seating, a wide variety of stage sizes and configurations, and would provide

financial and artistic adaptability not currently available in Baker City. Ideally, this facility would also include space for offices, rehearsals, class rooms, and scenic and costume shops. This needed performance space would create opportunities for a variety of professional performance groups and musicians to present their work in an intimate and affordable setting.

Recently Baker City and Crossroads have partnered to conduct a feasibility study of using the vacant Carnegie Library Building as Crossroads' permanent home. The study will consider the historic renovation of the building, the appropriate use as an Art Center, and the associated costs for preparing a funding and implementation program. The Carnegie Library Building, currently on the National Register of Historic Places, will be a handsome addition to the revitalized and restored downtown, as well as provide the community with a permanent home for Crossroads.

## **PUBLIC ART**

The opportunity exists to install public art that will define and enhance the Historic District. Through the coordination of Crossroads Center, HBC, and developers, new public art forms are to be installed in the district's public spaces. The partners would select locations and projects and seek funding from various sources. Streetscape pieces could be showcased at the south end of Resort Street, the Baker County Library, Baker City Hall, Baker Tower site, and Geiser Grand site. Adding one major piece per year, public art would be integrated into the daily lives of all who live, work, and visit the Historic District. The future works are expected to use a variety of materials such as stone, glass, marble, terrazzo, cast bronze, copper, hammered aluminum, painted steel, and porcelain enamel. Public art is to be placed in a way that will not obstruct pedestrians. Streetscape pieces could include new sewer drain covers and an embedded bronze design in sidewalks. Public art creates a more beautiful and distinctive city. It integrates art into the daily lives of those who live, work, and visit Baker City and entertains passers-by.

## **OREGON TRAIL REGIONAL MUSEUM**

A major asset for Baker City is the Oregon Trail Regional Museum. The museum, opened in 1982, and located in the Old Natatorium on Campbell Street, is easily accessible to visitors from Interstate 84 and is important to the people of this region. The building's size and Baker City's rich history provide a tremendous opportunity to develop a major visitor's attraction for the city.

The museum houses a fine collection of rocks and minerals and thousands of public artifacts of the history of this region. Primary exhibits are displays of agriculture, mining, and timber. The museum is operated as 170B government non-profit organization and managed by a board of directors, director, part-time staff, and volunteers. Baker County owns the building. Annual museum attendance is 25,000.

Though good progress has been made in getting a portion of the museum open, a continued effort is needed to make the museum the showplace it could be. The museum lacks resources to keep regular hours, enhance collections, and provide quality exhibits and programs. Funding is needed to help sustain the museum, maintain a staff, secure artifacts, build exhibits, and completely rehabilitate the building. The old ballroom could also serve as an attractive meeting area. Historic District guide signs on Interstate 84 should be modified to add the word Museum. Baker County should provide additional funding to the museum, looking upon its growth as good economic development that will promote the county and encourage tourism. Major funding should also be sought from state and federal funds, foundations, and private citizens. New efforts should be made to encourage public contribution fundraisers through house tours, literature, books, and related events.

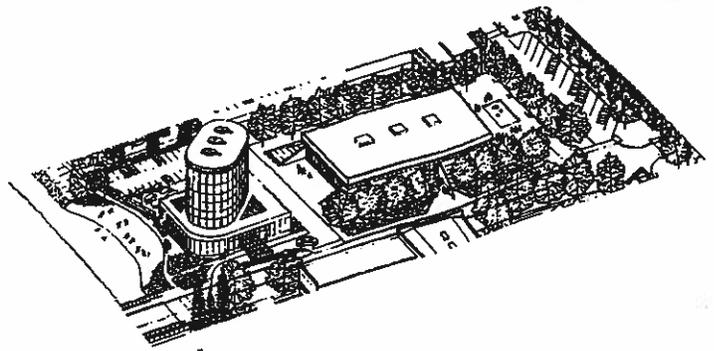
## ARMORY – FAIRGROUNDS

Baker County was notified in 1996 that the Oregon Army National Guard had long range plans to develop a new armory facility in Baker City. At that time, the Baker County Court appointed a seven-member committee to recommend a site for the Oregon Department of the Military for the armory. The committee investigated over 50 sites throughout Baker City, utilizing a site criteria developed to meet both the requirements of the state as well as the community. One of the top criteria for local consideration was proximity to the downtown. After all, the armory would serve a number of community purposes, and proximity to the central business/historic district would reinforce the value of both the new facility as well as the downtown itself.

Ultimately, the committee recommended a site at the southwest corner of the Baker County Fairgrounds on Campbell Street very close to the central business district. The site recommendation received overwhelming support from both the Baker City Council and the Baker County Court. Not only does the site afford great proximity to the central business district, but it is ideally situated for proximity to lodging establishments. The site will be very high profile, located at the highest traffic corridor in the county. The new development will be planned in 2001, constructed in 2002, and open for public use in 2003.

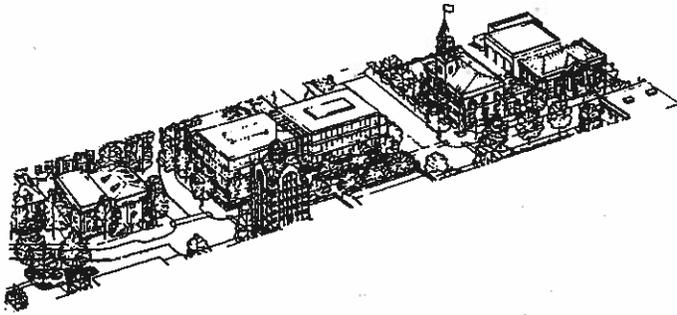
## NEW DEVELOPMENT

The amount of vacant space in the existing downtown buildings will allow considerable short-term growth for the city center without the need for new buildings. Investors using tax credits would also enjoy a better return on the rehabilitation of a historic building than on new construction. Looking at projected future needs for floor space in the downtown, the vacant space inventory could satisfy retail expansion through 2006 and office expansion to 2011. Therefore, it is recommended that development priority over the next five years be in rehabilitating historic structures rather than encouraging new development.



Proposed Meeting-Hotel Complex

In the near future, several vacant or underutilized properties throughout the study area exist for new development. One such area, located between Resort Street, the Powder River, Broadway Street, and Valley Avenue represents the most valuable resource for the city's future development. This area also contains a number of historic buildings and housing along Valley Avenue which should be maintained. The availability of these large parcels of developable land, close to the city center and adjacent to the river, provides new opportunities for construction that can greatly enhance Baker's downtown success. Larger developments should be encouraged for this area, including a convention facility, hotel, department store(s), parking garage, and high-density residential apartments. Small piecemeal development that would prevent future large-scale developments in this area should be discouraged. To illustrate this, the downtown master plan has conceptually portrayed a new convention-meeting facility, high-rise hotel, parking, and an expansion of the Leo Adler Parkway for the site. The convention facility would provide a major draw to the downtown and be supported by a new hotel and the Geiser Grand Hotel. The hotel would take advantage of the river and pathway amenities and is adjacent to a small beach and swimming area. Such a complex is five to ten years away, and thus, the current uses should be maintained along with Leo Adler Parkway improvement and new parking areas for the downtown.



Proposed State of Oregon Office Building

Another future development area includes the block surrounded by Auburn, Dewey, Place, and 1<sup>st</sup> streets. This underutilized block, adjacent to Baker City's government service complex, should be maintained for development of a future governmental facility such as a state office building. As illustrated, the conceptual building, site, and underground parking areas would complement the surrounding City Hall, Federal Building, Old Post Office, and Baker Tower. Existing uses and parking should occupy the site until development of additional government facilities are needed.

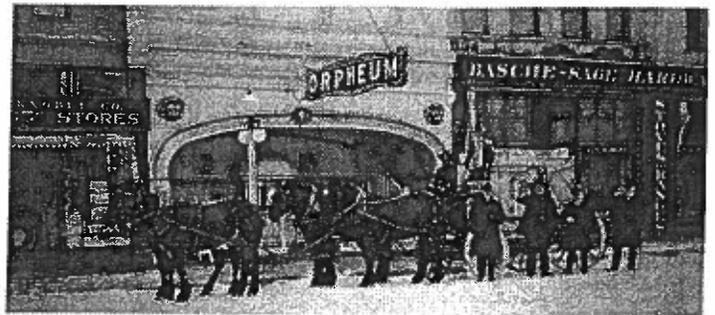
To insure that the two sites discussed above are developed in a manner that will best strengthen the downtown, it is recommended that development guidelines be prepared for these areas. Such guidelines would establish a special zone classification to ensure that development of the two areas be of the highest and best use to support the city center.

Another logical place for future office growth is the general area east of the County Courthouse. Once the vacant space in the existing buildings in the downtown has been occupied and the demand increased, professionals who find it convenient to be near the Courthouse will discover the area appropriate for new office facilities.

New buildings should be designed to best reflect the surrounding physical character. New construction can utilize contemporary design while respecting compatibility in its basic design elements of size, mass, material, and color with surrounding existing structures. Both new and rehabilitation design should be of high quality and complemented by attractive landscaping.

## SIGNING AND GRAPHICS

Sensitive signing can play a significant role in Baker City's downtown revitalization. It can convey a sense of community identity and help unify the city center. Signs also play a role in creating the overall visual character of the business district, enhancing the traveled way for both pedestrians and motorists. A major concern is that large backlit plexiglass signs are often inappropriately placed on the building façade, overwhelming the historic character of Main Street. Other concerns are the proliferation of signs which promote a nationally distributed product rather than the individual business, and that stores often display more signs than are needed.



Business signs should reflect historic character of the historic district

### BUSINESS SIGNS

Signs function to promote individual businesses, enhancing their identity and contributing to the public's perception of each business. Each sign can enhance the image of the entire business district, or detract from it. Good signing expresses a simple, clean message. Flat, fixed signs or individual raised letters should be positioned in logical places, on or above storefronts, and may be complemented by small pedestrian-oriented hanging signs. Adequate signing should be visible to the motorist without overwhelming the pedestrian. Attractive window lettering or window graphics can identify and add character to window displays. Signing can also be effectively located on store awnings.

To encourage appropriate sign location, size, and design, it is recommended that the city of Baker City adopt design guidelines and an ordinance requiring that new signs be in keeping with the character of the historic environment.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

New public information requirements for such matters as traffic direction, speed limits, etc. should follow the "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices" (MUTCD). Other city signs should be uniform in design for such information as parking and handicapped access. Guide signs would also identify available public off-street parking.

## HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

A number of historic interpretive signs or markers are recommended to provide interest, education, and color to the city. Such signs would highlight Baker City's history and provide stepping stones of information, culminating in a visit to the nearby Oregon Trail Regional Museum. These historic footnotes would be displayed in a variety of ways, ranging from a handsome kiosk to engraved plaques. Historic interpretive signs are to be located on historic buildings and at strategic locations such as the Oregon Trail monument, the proposed Court Street Park and along walking tours. Implementation of the sign program should be carried out by HBC, Design Review Commission, and the owners of historic properties. Special Historic District identification could also come through modifying street name signs. These signs would provide geographic orientation to the district as well as enhance its visibility. Other sign options include the potential of plaques in the sidewalk.

## CITY ENTRY SIGNS

One of the best ways of drawing tourists and shoppers into Baker City is to capture their interest through informative and attractive signing that conveys a friendly city, services provided and points of interest. Worth mentioning are visitor services, shopping, recreation — golf, swimming, etc. — and history, such as Sumpter Valley Railroad.

Information guide signs reading Baker City Historic District and Oregon Trail Regional Museum should be placed on Interstate 84. The Campbell Street and Highway 30 entrances from Interstate 84 should be signed at key decision points with information and



Former Baker City Gateway on U.S. 30

direction signs indicating the freeway exits to downtown. The Campbell Street freeway exit should serve as the city center exit and as the primary entrance to the downtown. Furthermore, at the interchange exits leading toward the city, additional signing is called for to escort the visitor into the downtown and to provide supplemental information. Directional signing is especially needed at Campbell and Main streets and at Bridge and Main streets.

Another important improvement is to upgrade the visual image of the highway entrances leading into the downtown. Any new construction or major remodeling on Highway 30, Campbell Street, or Dewey Avenue should be required to enhance the city entrances with good building design, tasteful signing, and attractive landscaping. Special attention should be given to rehabilitating the older housing stock facing U.S. 30 and Dewey Avenue in the south end of the city. These two streets should also undergo a street tree planting program to commemorate their city entrance status.

An attractive stone sign which reads Explore Baker City Historic District is located on the Campbell Street entrance adjacent to the chamber office. Small Welcome to Baker City Historic District signs are located on Main Street, Broadway Avenue, Dewey Avenue, and Bridge Street. Baker City once had a large arched welcome sign located on 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

## DOWNTOWN ENTRY BANNERS

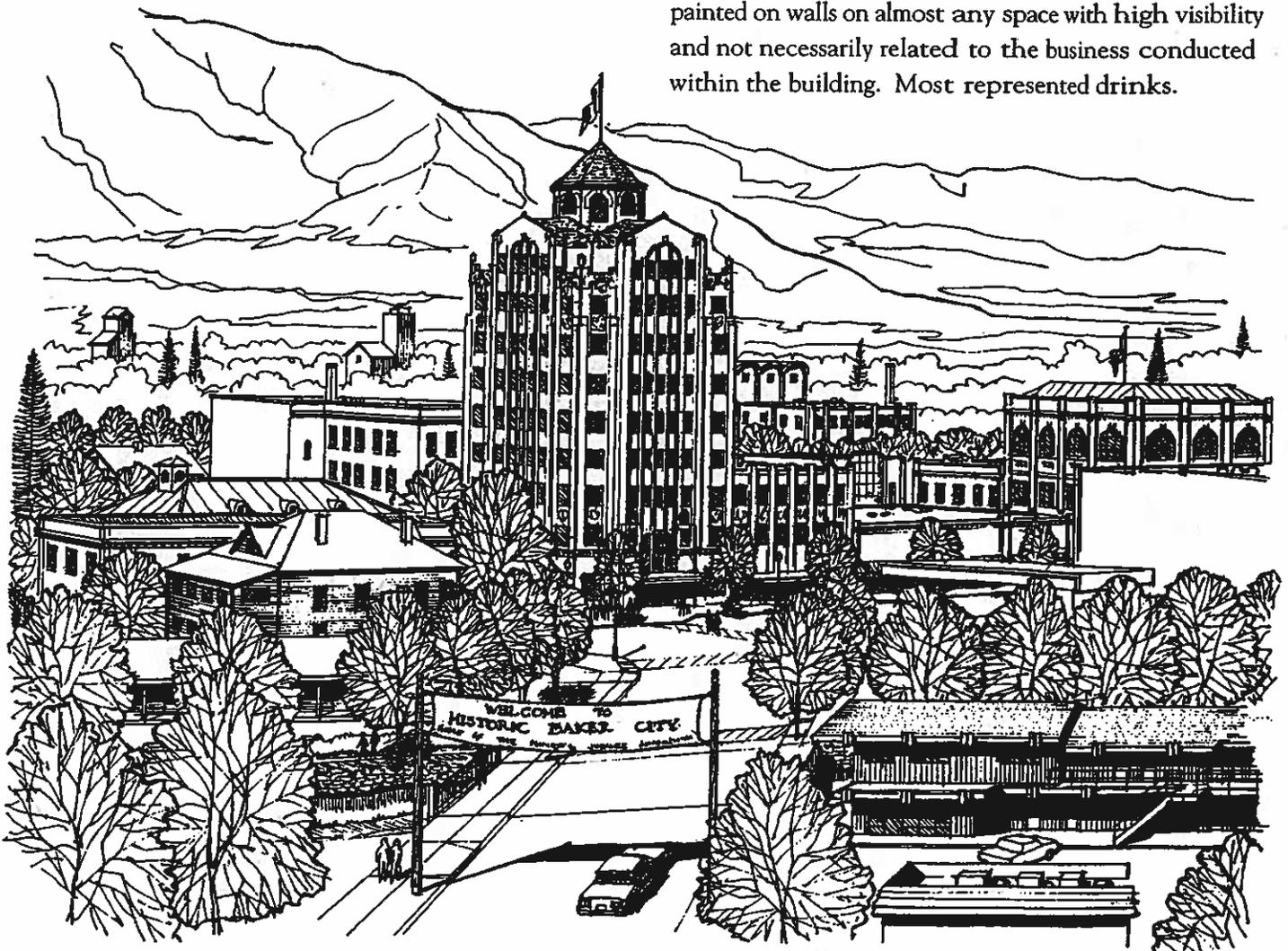
Arrival to the downtown business district should be advertised by entrance banners at four key locations. As visual gateways to the business district, these signs would tell visitors that they are entering a city center that has much to offer. Foremost would be the message Welcome To Baker City — Home Of The Miners' Jubilee. Such banner signs would hang from overhead wires located at entrances to the downtown on Bridge Street, on Campbell and Grove streets, Broadway and 4<sup>th</sup> streets, and Dewey Avenue and Estes Street. The signs would consist of two treated wood poles with a carved decorative top, two overhead guy wires, and colorful canvas or nylon banners. Other overhead wires within the downtown should display banners, flags, and decorations appropriate for the city's many events

## GHOST SIGNS

### PROTECTION AND EDUCATION

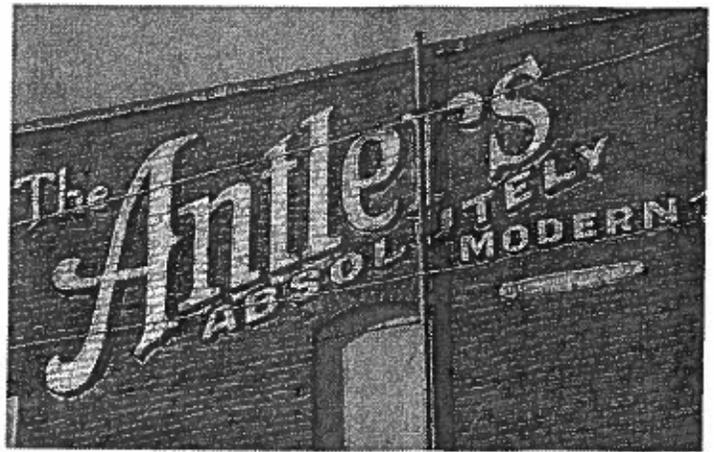
Numerous vintage advertisement signs can be found on the brick and stone walls of Baker City buildings. For many, the sign has become part of the patina of the building. Called ghost signs, these still-legible wall signs have a unique quality that people appreciate and are part of the character of the historic district. Ghost signs are visible under certain light conditions when their painted letters rise from the wall as a reminder of a forgotten product. Rain sometimes highlights the letter, making a sign more readable. Sometimes portions of different signs will appear overlapped, but with patience, one can separate the individual signs.

These signs speak of another time, in the infancy of American advertising, whose heyday was between 1890 and the 1950s. Most wall dogs, as sign painters are called, were employed by the major sign companies of the day and often went on the road. Commissioned signs were painted on walls on almost any space with high visibility and not necessarily related to the business conducted within the building. Most represented drinks.



City Entrance Banners

Typically, the lettering is strong and bold with simple block letters laid out on brick. Copy was usually limited to five words per wall. Wall dogs mixed their own paints, as already-mixed paints were not marketed until the 1930s. Most old signs were done with lead-based paint. The degree of fading that a wall undergoes depends on three variables: the paint formula used, the climate, and the direction the sign faces. West-facing walls take the brunt of the elements. A sign is dated by the year it first appeared.



One of many ghost signs

Table 3 identifies 21 ghost signs and murals in downtown Baker City. It is recommended that these signs be

TABLE 3 BAKER CITY GHOST SIGNS AND MURAL INVENTORY			
Building	Location	Legend	Misc.
Odd Fellows Lodge	1718 Main St.	BAKER CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT	Classic Sign Studio 1993 <sup>1</sup>
Bergman Bldg. <sup>2</sup>	1802 Main St.	RESORT. Gen'l Agent WEINHARD'S LAGER BEER Cyrus Nobel. (facing Resort St.)	red and white black and white
Alfred Block	1806 Main St.	Plymouth Clothing House Good Clothes	facing Resort St.
Log Cabin	1810 Main St.	DRAFT BEER (facing Resort St.)	yellow on black
Howard's	1824 Main St.	M.P.	whole wall—white over one
Bowen Bldg.	1809 Main St.	CALDWELL & DENTON GEN. HARDWARE	white on stone wall
Kennedy Building	1910 Main St.	ROYAL RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE	Classic Sign Studio 1993
Trotters/Powers	1917 Main St.	BAKER CITY PACKING CO.  Spearmint Gum Then you'll be sure the flavor lasts BEIDES & FOXMAN (facing alley) BUTT _____	yellow painted over slightly visible large sign Bill Anderson
Main Event	1929 Main St.	The Smoke Shop AFTER EVERY MEAL WRIGLY'S, ____ O.P.K.	white on black
Travel Inn	1919 Wash. Ave.	PARKING ANTLER'S HOTEL	pointing finger symbol <sup>4</sup>
Antler's Hotel	1945 Wash. Ave.	PARKING ANTLER'S HOTEL The Antler's Absolutely Modern FAMILY PLAN CHILDREN FREE MODERN FIRE PROOF. FREE PARKING (1 <sup>st</sup> St.)	pointing finger symbol alley facing Main St.
AFAM Building	2195 Main St.	OWL CIGAR <sup>4</sup> (south wall)	color, black lettering
Hansen & Weis	1924 Broadway	Welcome to Baker City on the Oregon Trail	wagon drawing (poor) <sup>5</sup>

1 Painted over PAINTS, later I.O. O.R. No. 25 and Coer Cola signs  
 2 Silver Dollar Cigar Store, formerly on Valley Ave. (both repainted 1998)  
 3 Former Coca Cola and Lew Brothers Tires signs facing alley.  
 4 Former E.P. Voniz sign and Genathur Cigar sign facing Church St.  
 5 Former New and Second Hand sign facing 1<sup>st</sup> St.  
 Former DRUGS later 15 on Geiser Grand Hotel (painted over).

photographed, analyzed, recorded, and preserved. The difficulty is deciding how far to go and which layer to stop at or whether to keep going. Some preservationists feel that repainting a ghost sign reduces its historic value, while others support repainting, provided it is done according to the original specifications and the exact paint colors. Wall signs were usually repainted at regular intervals. The Weinhard's Lager Beer and Cyrus Nobel signs facing Resort Street were repainted in 1998. A walking tour brochure is proposed that would highlight Baker City's ghost signs.

## RETAIL PROMOTION PROGRAM

Downtown Baker City must project an image that people want a dynamic, exciting place where things are happening. To accomplish this, downtown retailers and businesses should work together under a HBC's Promotion, Marketing and Events Committee to ambitiously and aggressively promote the city center and its businesses. The first step is to adopt a long-range plan (5 years), then a downtown promotion schedule for the year and establish a budget for special events and advertising. A wide selection of retail promotions should be held and timed to complement seasonal weather and recreational conditions.

Two major promotions should focus on Baker City's theme of history and mining (e.g. Miners' Jubilee) while other promotions would play to a wide variety of merchandise, outlets, seasonal introductions, holiday clearance requirements, and local customs. Four to six yearly events would benefit from city-wide participation, while other promotions would be best tackled by the few stores within a product group. For large city-wide events, umbrella-type advertising would be conducted in the local media. Each type of outlet pursues its sales activities within the overall theme adopted for the event. Other promotional campaigns are assembled for selected store types that fit the concept. These events are usually coordinated by local advertising media, rather than centrally planned by the chamber of commerce committee or HBC.



Attractive window display

The important objective is to have an array of retail activities that keep coming at consumers; something should be scheduled nearly every month so that consumer attention stays on the local merchants. All merchants do not participate in all events, however. On-going events include the following:

<b>Blue Moon Sale</b>	<b>March</b>
Downtown-wide sale to commemorate the blue moon	
<b>Spring Into Summer Festival</b>	<b>June</b>
Earlybird sales, pancake breakfast, plantings	
<b>Miners' Jubilee</b>	<b>July</b>
Sidewalk sales, street dance, parade	
<b>Fall Festival</b>	<b>September</b>
Taste of Baker City, Dutch oven cookoff, sales, street dance	
<b>Twilight Parade/Tree Lighting</b>	<b>December</b>
<b>Historic Homes Tour</b>	<b>December</b>
<b>First Night Celebration</b>	<b>December</b>

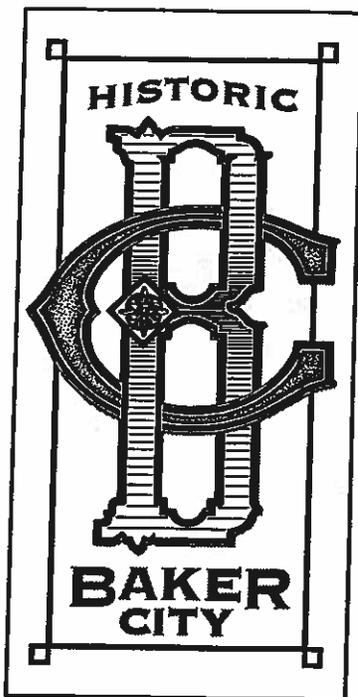
The downtown should continue to foster the concept of First Friday with new talents whose artistry will surprise and captivate the community. First Friday produces tangible results for businesses and restaurants throughout downtown. To further the downtown, new or refined events and activities should be established to increase visibility, attendance, awareness, and public support. Another important contribution in good merchandising includes dressing up store windows as a visual element in successful retailing. A sales window

display competition to encourage browsing should be featured for the Christmas season. The key is to provide entertainment with community-wide impact and excitement to increase the number of people coming into the downtown. The committee should involve government, chamber of commerce, community service groups, clubs, and schools in the city-wide events.

Court Street Plaza, the Baker City Alleyway, and the expanded sidewalk improvements are designed expressly for the purpose of providing a setting for various activities and events. Such promotions will attract customers into the downtown, leading into greater opportunities for shopping and entertainment.

## BUSINESS DIRECTORY

A Discover Downtown Baker City business directory should be prepared and made available to current and future users. Such a brochure would identify parking, points of interest, shopping, entertainment, accommodations, dining, banking, calendar of events, and personal services.



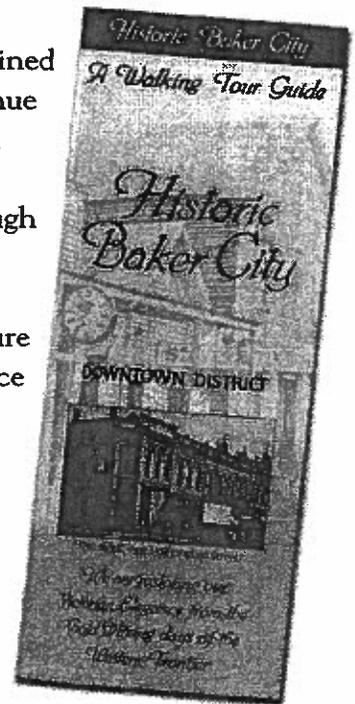
## DOWNTOWN LOGO

To assist in presenting downtown Baker City as an identifiable unit, an effective logo should be designed and utilized to promote the downtown's image as a unified marketplace. The downtown logo would also be used such places as a business directory and on shopping bags.

## TOURISM AND RECREATION

Baker County has emerged as one of the fastest growing areas in Oregon for the visitor industry and has achieved national recognition for an outstanding heritage-based tourism focus. Prior to 1992, much of Baker County's tourism business resulted from the capture of pass-through traffic, primarily from travelers on I-84. The county is becoming known as a visitor destination since the establishment of the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive center, creation of the Sumpter Valley Dredge State Park, improved access to the Hells Canyon National Recreation area, extension and capital improvements to the Historic Sumpter Valley Railroad, over 76 historic facade restoration projects in Baker City's downtown district, and expansion of the area's museum. Heritage tourism continues to be the main theme for product development with the re-opened Geiser Grand Hotel offering an exceptional historic experience of fine dining and upscale lounges.

Baker City, with its clearly defined historical image, should continue its tourism promotion program throughout the region. Baker City should be promoted through major magazine feature stories, state tourism literature, and periodic advertising. A brochure that quickly presents the essence of the community, *A Walking Tour Guide Historic Baker City* has been prepared and is distributed by HBC. Likewise, a walking tour brochure of historic homes has been prepared, but needs updating. Other elements would be guidebooks of Baker City's architecture and history. A pleasant stay in Baker City — one that reaches out and welcomes the visitor — is likely to create a good impression that will be shared with others and lead to an awareness of Baker City as a special place to visit.



## SCENIC BYWAYS AND SCENIC LOOPS

In addition to downtown Baker City being a prime destination for visitors, it is important to take advantage of the surrounding region's scenic, historical, and recreational assets. A number of scenic byways and loops provide half-day or full-day excursions to such places as the Sumpter Dredge State Park, Sumpter Valley Railroad, Anthony Lakes, and Hell's Canyon. Such tours would loop back to Baker City, through scenic waysides, and would be promoted by the chamber and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

## MEETING FACILITIES

To facilitate meetings and special events, greater attention needs to be given to improving and expanding Baker City's meeting facilities. With the city's potential to draw visitors because of its charm, character, history, and scenic locations, the city needs to be able to comfortably accommodate small conventions, cultural programs, and other events that take place in the region. The city does have a number of private and public meeting areas, but few provide the space and comfort needed for visitor patronage.

As the first phase to having an adequate supply of meeting places, it is recommended that a coordinated effort facilitate an inventory of potential spaces, an improvement program, and multiple-use promotion for the many existing facilities in the downtown. Top candidates for a multi-use approach include the Masonic Hall, American Legion Hall, YMCA, and the churches on Church Street. Others include public buildings such as the city, county, and library buildings, and Crossroads Center, along with fraternal clubs, schools, churches, and commercial establishments. Special attention should be given to upgrading these spaces.

The second priority would be in refurbishing a number of potentially attractive spaces that currently exist in Baker City's historic buildings. The most promising of these spaces includes the large old YMCA building (now VFW Hall), the Pythian Castle, the Old Natatorium ballroom, now the Oregon Trail Regional Museum. The Pythian Castle, for example, located at 1<sup>st</sup> and Washington streets, contains a large meeting hall with a vaulted ceiling and stained glass windows,



Baker Tower

yet it is currently vacant and without a future. Other potential spaces include a number of second floor meeting halls located in downtown historic buildings.

A third phase would include the development of a large convention/meeting facility to fully accommodate an expanding program of events that would occur in Baker City. Such a facility and adjacent high-rise hotel has been conceptually designed for the southeast corner of Resort and Washington streets. Initially, this facility would require a revitalized and strong downtown supported by building up a strong convention and events base through its existing facilities. Improved and expanded overnight accommodations also need to keep pace with the growth of Baker City's activities.

To accomplish these phases, it is suggested that the city, county, HBC, Baker County Chamber of Commerce, and Baker County Convention and Visitor's Bureau serve to refine and spearhead the program.

# IMPLEMENTATION

A strong and appealing downtown is of undisputed importance to the well-being of Baker City. Implementing the recommended plan will lead to expanded patronage, increased retail sales, higher property values, and additional private investment for the city. The revitalized downtown will continue to create a fresh image for the city, generate a feeling of pride among residents, and be a natural draw for visitors. This revitalization would occur through the related actions of the public and private sectors, utilizing the plan as a blueprint around which a working partnership can operate.

## REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

The planning effort has served as a catalyst for continued revitalization and momentum needed to allow the downtown to become more viable and attractive. Continued management and action are now called for to implement the recommended plan, which may require up to ten years to accomplish.

### HISTORIC BAKER CITY, INC., AND DOWNTOWN MANAGER

Effective management is the key to successful implementation. HBC will continue to be the driving force of vision and leadership for the downtown. HBC, through its board of directors and downtown manager, has made significant progress in pursuing improvements and securing funding to implement the plan. An Economic Improvement District (EID) was formed and was extended for 5 years in 1998. The EID serves as the funding source for Historic Baker City operation and programs. All businesses within the district are assessed a business license fee, and all participating properties are assessed a property tax valuation. HBC will continue to oversee downtown development and provide direction to the downtown manager. The private non-profit status allows HBC to seek both private and public funding.

The HBC's continued effectiveness will rely on nurturing a sense of teamwork, providing leadership and vision on behalf of the downtown, and promoting its businesses, facilities, and events. A number of steering committees and related subcommittees would support partnerships and provide additional leadership. Committees need to be rearranged periodically, allowing people to redirect their good intentions and energy.

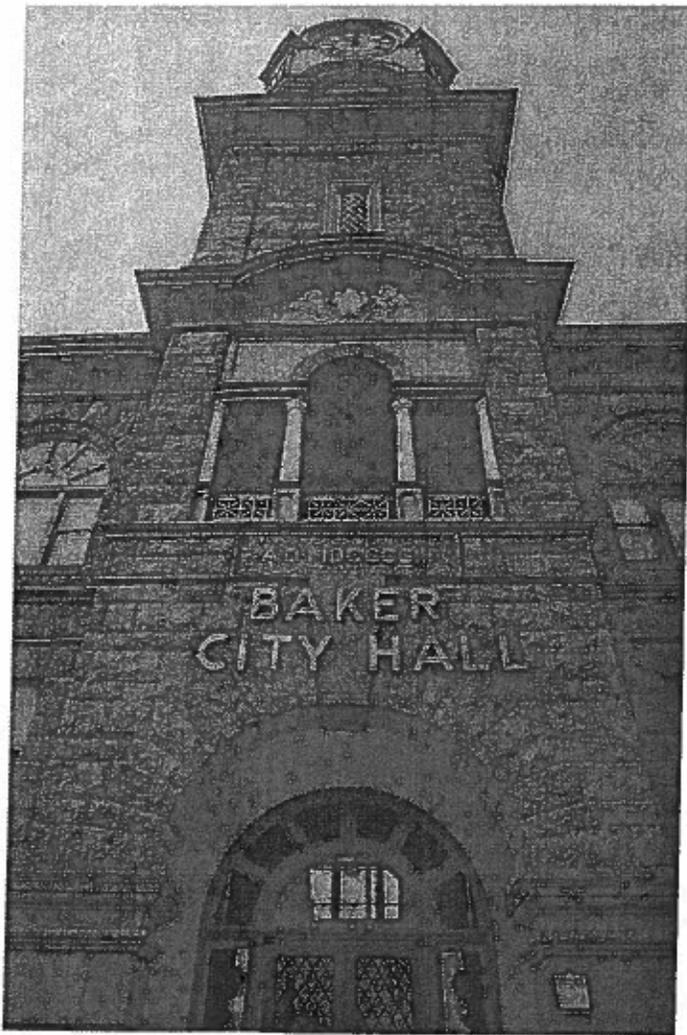
### PUBLIC FUNDS AS A CATALYST

The public sector would be responsible for such public improvements to the downtown as street upgrading, street lights, parking management and enforcement, parks, public signing, sewer, fire and water improvements, overall planning, coordination, and administration.

City funding to accomplish these tasks can be received through community development allocations and funds from the annual city capital improvement fund. The city's capital improvement program and budget would involve scheduling physical improvements for the downtown over a period of time with consideration for priorities and the financial capabilities of the community. Other federal and state funds may be available, depending on project eligibility and the reshaping of public programs.

### OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

The city and HBC should continue to seek new funding sources to implement the plan. Potential sources include Oregon Community Development Block Grants, federal funds, foundations, wealthy individuals, and local fundraising events. One potential is to get local financial institutions to establish an Economic Action Fund which would set up special deposit accounts and allow a portion of the money to be made available for low-interest rehabilitation. Such a pool of private as well as public dollars could be leveraged to create low-interest loan programs. Potential sources of funds include the Oregon State Bike/Pedestrian Fund, TEA-21 transportation funds, and foundations like the Leo Adler Community Fund.



Baker City Hall

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Plan of Historic Baker City 2001 serves as a blueprint for action and requires an on-going evolution of support, city approval, funding, and dedication to bring the plan to fruition.

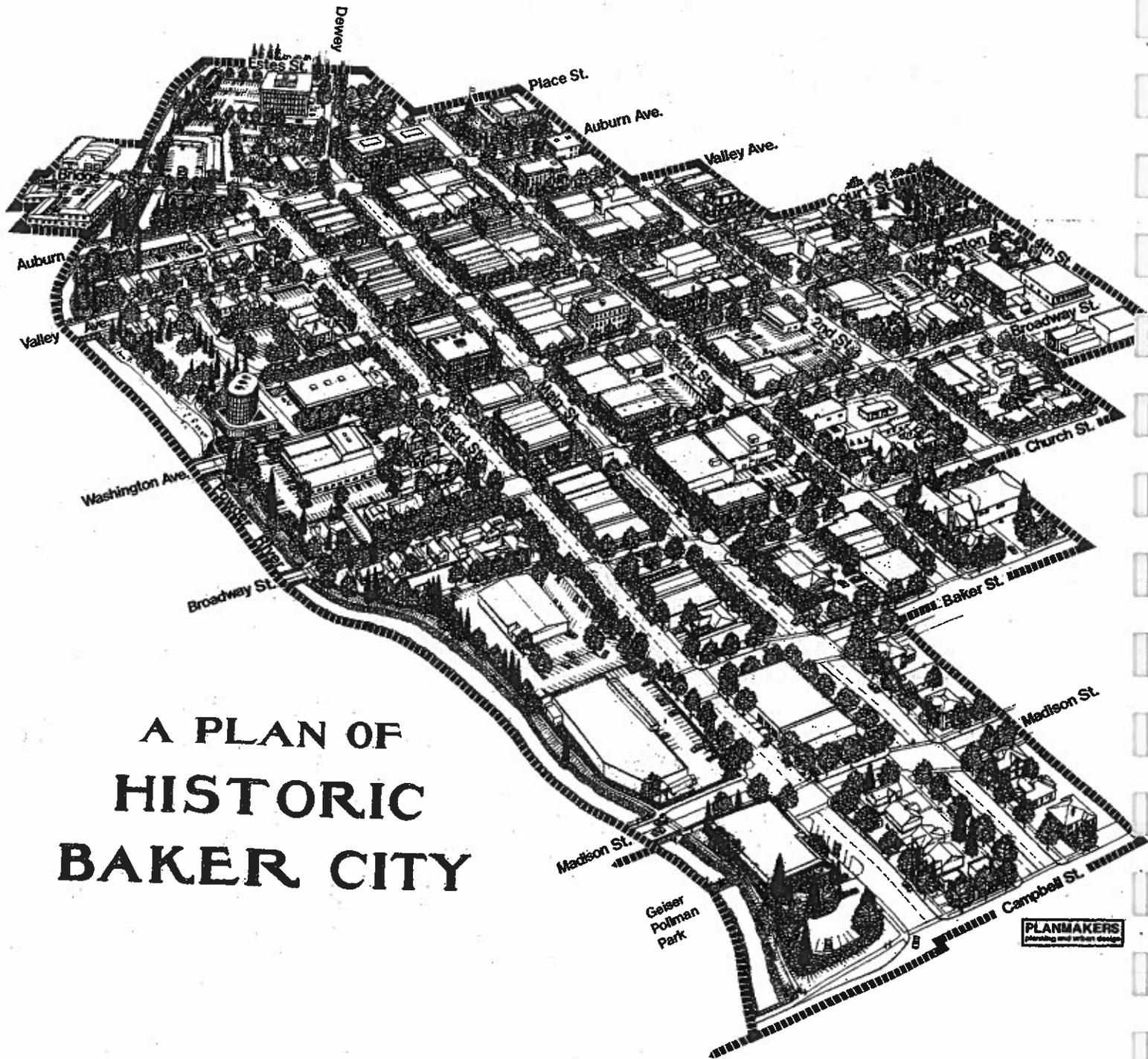
The plan should be aired to numerous public and private groups for acceptance and support. After a full review and public discussion, the plan should be adopted by HBC, the Baker City Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City of Baker City. The plan should then be utilized as a working document for developing policies, determining design details, setting priorities, and guiding development. The plan would serve to encourage and guide property owners, merchants, HBC, city officials, planning commissioners, and staff.

The proposed plan should not be considered a fixed document. Rather, it should be assessed every five years so progress can be noted and changes can be considered in response to apparent successes or failures of elements of the plan.

## PHASING OF IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A coordinated strategy for revitalization is required. Initially, small tasks should be accomplished in order to give the downtown confidence. An incremental self-help approach will be more beneficial and longer lasting than relying on big projects to revitalize the city center. Strong participation by the private sector will sharpen their entrepreneurial skills and foster the self-reliance needed for long-term success.

The plan of downtown improvements has been divided into three phases for implementation. It is recognized that all of the improvements would be exceedingly difficult to accomplish and finance in a short period of time. Phase I emphasizes building rehabilitation. Phase II recommends a number of physical improvements that are highly visible and will service as catalysts for downtown commercial success. Phase III represents special projects such as Downtown Arts Initiative, Baker City Alleyway and new development projects.



# A PLAN OF HISTORIC BAKER CITY

**PLANMAKERS**  
Planning and urban design

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