



## Memorandum

**Date:** October 31, 2014

**To:** John Kovash, Mayor  
Members, West Linn City Council

**From:** Chris Jordan, City Manager *CJ*

**Subject:** November 3 Work Session

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The West Linn City Council is scheduled to meet in a work session at 6:00 on November 3. The agenda for that evening includes:

- **Hearing Procedures.** Staff is requesting guidance from the Council on the procedures for two types of hearings that the Council will be holding in the near future: on the record appeal hearings, and on the record zone and comprehensive plan map hearings. Staff will present some suggestions, but we need Council input so that these hearings can be noticed and we can communicate regarding procedural expectations.
- **Review of the November 10 agenda.** Specifically, staff would like to hear from Council if you have any questions regarding the Planned Unit Development/Infill amendments to the Community Development Code. (The City Council previously held a work session on this topic September 15, 2014.) Also, if the City Council approves the increase to the non-residential street maintenance fee on November 10, the Council will need to consider if it wishes to make the fee effective January 1, 2015 or July 1, 2015.

### Future City Council Item

The City Council is scheduled to review a miscellaneous set of amendments to the Community Development Code on December 8. (The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of this set of amendments.) When it is presented to the Council in a work session on December 1, staff will be proposing a few other additional changes that have come to our attention. One specific item is that the CDC currently delegates to the Planning Commission the authority to be the final decision maker on zone changes that do not include a change to the Comprehensive Plan map. Our attorneys don't believe that this acceptable because the zoning map was originally adopted by ordinance of the City Council and, therefore, should only be amended by ordinance. Since the Council is the only body with the authority to approve ordinances, we believe the CDC needs to be changed so that the Planning Commission recommends zone changes, but the Council must be the final decision maker.

Please let us know if you have any questions.



## Memorandum

**Date:** October 31, 2014

**To:** John Kovash, Mayor  
Members, West Linn City Council

**From:** Chris Jordan, City Manager *CJ*

**Subject:** Miscellaneous Items

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### **Robinwood Station**

Attached is the Operating Business Plan from the Friends of Robinwood Station.

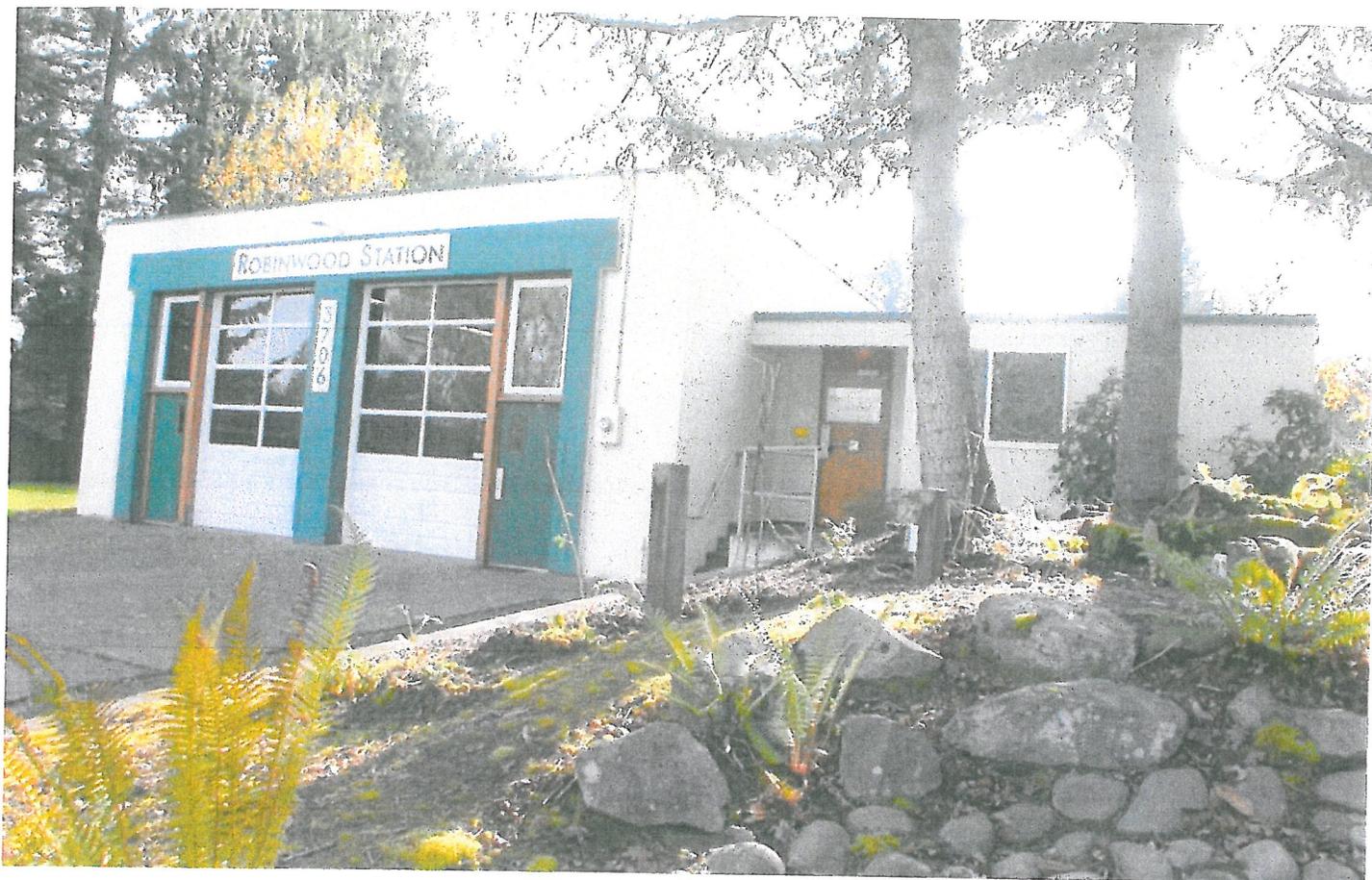
### **Main Street Program**

Attached is an article from Public Management Magazine discussing the Main Street Program and how it works in other cities.

### **Thank you to Council Candidates**

In advance of receiving the election results on November 4, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jody Carson, Mike Jones, Brenda Perry, and Russell Axelrod for running for City Council. I am always impressed by the commitment of individuals who are willing to put their names forth to serve in such a difficult, time-consuming, voluntary position. The City of West Linn is a far better place for having such dedicated citizens!

Attachment



# Friends of Robinwood Station

## Operating Business Plan

July 2014 – June 2017

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## **Overview and Purpose**

The purpose of this Operating Plan for the Robinwood Station (The Station) is to document the use, activity and funding resources of the center as managed and operated by the Friends of Robinwood Station, a local Not for Profit Organization, in cooperation with the City of West Linn.

In 2010, West Linn citizens, with the support of the Robinwood Neighborhood Association, came before the West Linn City Council to request reopening the underutilized meeting room and one-time fire station as a venue for various community activities. On June 23, 2010, the citizens' request was granted by the City Council. An organization of citizen volunteers formed the Friends of Robinwood Station and were granted the authority to improve and manage the facility under conditions of a temporary use permit (2011-13). With funding from the City of West Linn and the Friends of Robinwood Station, the Station was brought to occupancy standards and officially opened in August 2011. With on-going support and guidance from the West Linn Parks and Recreation Department and incredible commitment of community volunteers young, old and tiny, the Station continues to grow and has become a popular meeting place for all walks of life and the community surrounding this center (see users and uses below).

## **History**

In April of 1964, the Robinwood Water District, in unincorporated Clackamas County, received a conditional use approval from the county planning commission for a fire station and meeting room at 3706 Cedar Oak Drive. The Cedaroak Fire Station served Robinwood as the local community center and as home to the volunteer fire department. When Robinwood was annexed to West Linn in 1967, the entire site with a small meeting hall and fire station building became a City facility.

With completion of the new TVF&R Bolton Station 58 in November 2010, TVF&R no longer required the Cedaroak Fire Station to garage their backup and historic engines. The underutilized building and grounds were already in a state of disrepair and were

designated for community center use and beautification in Policy 3.10 of the 2008 Robinwood Neighborhood Plan.

Friends of Robinwood Station (FORS) was founded in 2010, organizing a team of community volunteers to clean, repair, and remodel the fire station building and landscape the grounds. FORS operates the facility with a first come, first served reservation policy.

Today, the Station is used as a neighborhood community center with various multi-cultural activities scheduled and staffed with dedicated volunteers from the neighborhoods across the city of West Linn and beyond.

### **Conditions of Operations**

A Temporary Use Permit is a discretionary permit approved by the City Council for one year. During that time, the facility could operate in the capacity of a community center with minimal changes and improvements.

The first Temporary Use was awarded with the condition that certain minimum accessibility, fire and safety standards were addressed in cooperation with the building department, and were in place prior to issuance of an Occupancy Permit.

While meeting those conditions, FORS registered as an Oregon Non- Profit, forged a Memorandum of Use (MOU) agreement with the City of West Linn outlining the conditions and limitations of operations, and drafted a set of operational documents for facility users. The agreement with the City imposed restrictions similar to other City facilities, including limited hours of operation varying by days of the week, rules for alcohol consumption and compliance with noise ordinances.

Station user fees were adopted to coincide with those at the city operated Sunset Fire Hall.

Upon opening in 2011, community, non-profit and youth groups used the Station rent free. Private events sponsored by West Linn residents are \$20 per hour and by non-residents are charged \$40 per hour.

Since the majority of users fell under the free use category, this fee structure severely restricted the ability of FORS to raise sufficient funds for major renovations.

## **Users and Uses**

In the summer of 2011, the Robinwood Station officially opened and a slow ramp up of use was expected, as the facility was quite rugged (due to so many years of abandonment and neglect) and the market for venues hosting community activities was established.

A steady buildup of users grew during the first year and to date the Station has been used by a variety of community users ranging from non-profit, for profit, community individuals, community groups, adults as well as young members of the community. The users include periodic repeat users as well as one-time users. Between 2011 and 2014 the Station has scheduled over 1000 events by 45 different user groups, in total of 81 use types. An analysis of uses and types of uses are listed here:

Adult Birthday Parties (Multiple)  
Art Camp  
Baby Showers (Multiple)  
Bricks4Kids  
Boy Scout Groups (Multiple)  
Child's Birthday Party (Multiple)  
Campfire Groups  
Children's party (Multiple private)  
Cub Scouts (Multiple Repeat)  
Free Meditation meeting (Repeat)  
Garage Sale (Multiple)

Girl Scout Event  
Girl Scout Troops (Multiple)  
Healthy Living Hour (Repeat)  
Hula Hoops (Repeat)  
Lego Robotics  
Lake Oswego Tigard Water Partnership  
Maple Grove Meeting  
Marylhurst Youth Symphony  
Memorial Service  
Music Jam  
Mrs. Oregon Pageant (Practice Sessions)  
New Year's Parties  
Nurse Board Certification Training  
NW Conecture Youth events (Repeat)  
OMSI Summer Classes (Repeat)  
Organizing for Action  
WLPD Police Training  
Private Adult Get Together (Multiple)  
Relax Yoga (Repeat)  
Resiliency Organization of West Linn (Repeat)  
Robinwood Community Garden (Resident Repeat)  
Robinwood Neighborhood Association (Repeat)  
Robotics (Multiple)  
Society of American Magicians 59  
Soccer team party (Multiple)  
Society of Young Magicians (Resident Repeat)  
Solarize workshops  
Styrofoam/plastic recycle rodeos  
Summer Science  
Sun Garden School parties  
Video Art Installations  
West Linn Rotary Luncheons  
West Linn Community Chorus garage sales(Repeat)

West Linn Sustainability Advisory Board  
West Linn High School Debate team (Repeat)

### **The Robinwood Community Garden**

Robinwood Community Garden (RCG) deserves special mention. The RCG started in early 2012 with the help of a Clackamas County Healthy Eating, Active Living Grant and with donated supplies and labor. The \$7,660 stipend was used to construct 22 raised beds, including 2 that are wheel-chair accessible. In the Spring of 2012, the City of West Linn installed new exterior plumbing for irrigation.

The RCG was designed under the guidance of local garden specialists and built with the help of numerous community volunteers including Confluence AmeriCorps members, students from the Lewis and Clark College, and West Linn High School. Members pay a fee of \$20 per family to participate. Over the last three years, the RCG has held ten children's classes, one children's art camp, twenty-three adult classes, and eight community events including seed exchanges and harvest parties.

Produce is distributed among member families during work party harvest events, with a plan to donate at least 10% by weight to the West Linn Food Pantry for distribution. In 2012, the RCG grew nearly 1000 lbs. of produce. 100 lbs. were donated to the local food pantry and 900 lbs. distributed among volunteers. The RCG had 68 family members in 2012, and 77 additional people attended classes and events. The RCG provides inspiration for many home gardeners and at least one local photographer uses it for her artwork. Volunteers provided 1,901 hours of service. While large groups find it challenging to find sites that can accommodate their desire to perform community service, both the Station and the RCG have been able to accommodate such groups and supervise them to provide meaningful service.

In 2013, the RCG received a new Clackamas County HEAL grant for \$7800 and completed installation of a 100sf greenhouse, enabling starting the new crops from seed and selling vegetable starts as a fundraiser. The grant also funded an educational and functional worm bin, a harvest table, and a deer fence as well as signage and classes. There were 15 registered garden members with 51 family members benefitting from the food produced. Volunteers offered 2,482 hours of service, helping to produce 1,636

pounds of food (152 lbs went to the WL Food Pantry).

The RCG did not seek a grant in 2014, believing that through their membership dues and plant sales they could finance the needs of the garden. So far (Sept.) in 2014, there are 19 registered garden members (46 family members) who, along with other community volunteers, have volunteered 1,841 hours to produce 1,123 pounds of food (110 lbs have been donated to the WL Food Pantry). Several new growing spaces were created this year with the help of Lewis and Clark College volunteers. There are now 34 raised beds (approximately 1,000sf) with additional areas utilized for food production as well (an additional 500sf)

In the summer of 2011, for the first time since annexation to West Linn, the Robinwood Neighborhood restarted using its community center while doors were also opened for the greater West Linn users. A slow ramp up and expanding continued use of the facility grew over time and the market for venues for hosting community activities was established.

## **Historical, To-date Financials and Projections (2011 – 2017)**

### **Financial Summary**

The Friends of the Robinwood Station (FORS) maintain the community center for events for the benefit of the community. The building is owned by the City of West Linn and operated by FORS. FORS was created in 2010 to provide benefit to the neighborhood. FORS manages three funds:

- FORS manages the general operations of the facility, rental of the space for community events, private parties, and makes the space available for not for profit entities. A selection of some users includes Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Resiliency of West Linn (ROWL), Robinwood Neighborhood Association, West Linn Community Chorus, and many others. Additionally, the Station has been reserved for many birthday parties, garage sales, and a memorial service (see detailed list, above). The Robinwood Neighborhood Association has held the annual picnic at the Robinwood Station for the past three years.
- The RCG Funds are used to manage the garden. The RCG received grant funding

from Clackamas County for two years (2012 and 2013) and was able to develop the garden property, build a greenhouse, and generate community garden shares. The RCG has become self-sustaining by plant start sales, garden membership subscriptions to the community and general contributions.

- Bobbin' Robin Club has received grant funding from the City of West Linn to develop a music performance program for the neighborhood. The Bobbin' Robin Club has provided music events for the community and has accepted donations from the attendees to supplement the grant funding. The Bobbin' Robin Club is continuing to provide events and working to become self-sustaining. Local West Linn musicians have donated their performances with all proceeds going to the Station.

FORS has prepared this financial report and forecast based on the following assumptions:

- No more grant funding from City for music or from County for RCG. Going forward these activities are expected to be self sustaining.

- Building rental fees will increase gradually over the next few years. Effective July 1, 2014 fees will be charged to all facility users, including not for profits such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

- FORS will undertake a significant capital contribution campaign to raise sufficient funding for bathroom addition and upgrade of existing bathroom. The money will be spent in the year acquired. FORS plans to raise \$5,000 for the bathroom upgrade.

- The operational volunteer hours will remain fairly consistent. Volunteer hours include time spent on ongoing maintenance of the facility, preparing the facility for events, inspecting the facility after events, and attending Board meetings.

- Volunteer hours are recorded as revenue (contribution to the facility) and charged as expense (in lieu of contracting out services). Volunteer contributions are charged at rates developed by not-for-profit organization. Our rates are determined by the activity performed, not the individual performing the activity. Average rate determined by Not-for-Profit Association for volunteer time in 2013 has been determined to be \$22.14. FORS uses lower rates (\$18.00) for Board meeting attendance, facility maintenance, etc. Higher rates (\$22.50) are charged for highly skilled activities including construction.  
(Rates source: [independantsector.org](http://independantsector.org))

- The first year of operation FORS volunteers contributed over 1,000 hours for capital improvements to the facility. The number of hours has been reduced after the first year when major improvements were completed. In fiscal year 2012 the hours contributed to capital improvements was around 775.

- The volunteer contribution of hours worked for capital improvements is estimated to be roughly twice the dollars raised for materials.

The Robinwood Station is available for community events, private parties, garage sales, music performances, and community gardening. The RCG also provides volunteer opportunities for local college students. Total events since FORS began operating the facility have been as follows:

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| FY 2011 (first year of operation) | 58  |
| FY 2012                           | 186 |
| FY 2013                           | 393 |
| FY 2014                           | 276 |

The number of events was reduced in Fiscal Year 2014 primarily due to uncertainty of the continuing operation of the facility. Continued volunteer contributions and ongoing garden activities and music events have enhanced the facility utilization and FORS anticipates increased activity at the Robinwood Station.

# Historical, To-date Financials (Table-1) & Projections

## Friends of the Robinwood Station

|                             | FY 10-11        | FY 11-12        | FY 12-13        | FY 13-14        | FY 14-15 | Projected<br>FY 15-16 | Projected<br>FY 16-17 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Current Assets</b>       |                 |                 |                 |                 |          |                       |                       |
| Cash in Bank                | 456,91          | 1,230,58        | 2,506,60        | 4,674,70        | -        | -                     | -                     |
| Restricted Cash in Bank     | -               | 3,755,84        | 2,468,94        | -               | -        | -                     | -                     |
| Petty Cash                  | -               | 181,75          | 132,14          | -               | -        | -                     | -                     |
| Savings                     | 675,18          | 45,68           | 1,246,14        | 2,447,08        | -        | -                     | -                     |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b> | <b>1,132,09</b> | <b>5,213,85</b> | <b>6,353,82</b> | <b>7,121,78</b> |          |                       |                       |

## Liabilities

### Equity

### Income Statement

### Revenue

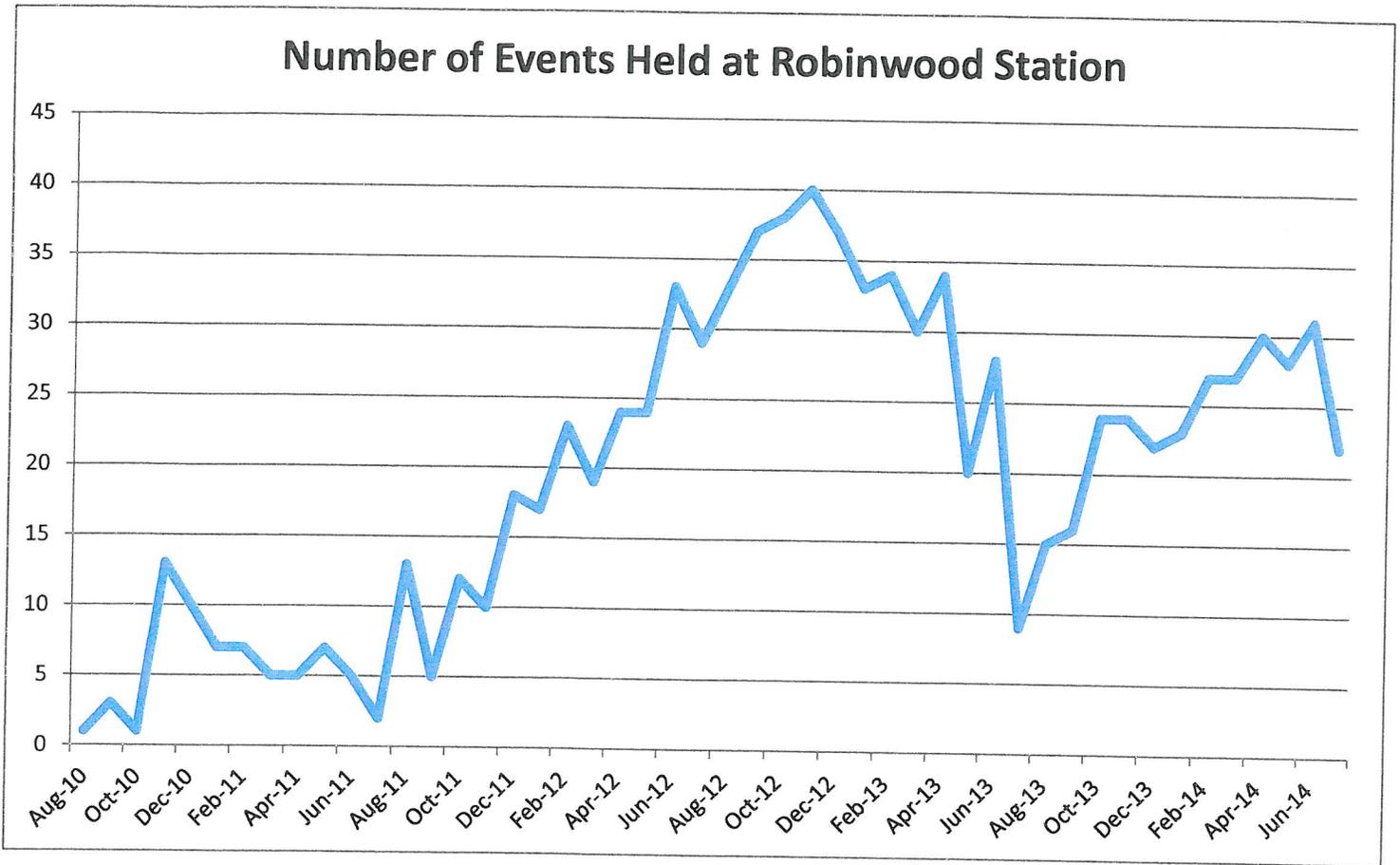
|  | FY 10-11            | FY 11-12            | FY 12-13            | FY 13-14            | Projected<br>FY 14-15 | Projected<br>FY 15-16 | Projected<br>FY 16-17 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Grants   | 1,700.00            | 7,660.00            | 10,000.00           | 2,200.00            | 5,000.00              | 6,750.00              | 9,000.00              |
| Building Rental Fees                                       | 1,558.81            | 3,602.31            | 5,007.00            | 2,365.25            | 500.00                | 500.00                | 500.00                |
| Miscellaneous Revenue                                      | 1,036.70            | 63.75               | 575.00              | 280.00              | 500.00                | 3,000.00              | 3,500.00              |
| Garden Sales/Contributions/Shares                          | -                   | 110.00              | 2,364.00            | 2,669.65            | 2,750.00              | 3,000.00              | 3,500.00              |
| Music proceeds   | -                   | -                   | 945.29              | 692.00              | 750.00                | 750.00                | 1,000.00              |
| Contributions  | -                   | -                   | -                   | 750.00              | 5,000.00              | 5,000.00              | 1,000.00              |
| Direct Contribution from the City of West Linn (utilities) | 6,771.81            | 9,460.99            | 7,009.00            | 1,584.00            | 1,663.20              | 1,746.36              | 1,833.68              |
| Contribution by volunteers                                 | 46,102.50           | 62,760.00           | 71,374.50           | 62,660.00           | 65,000.00             | 65,000.00             | 65,000.00             |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                                       | <b>\$ 57,169.82</b> | <b>\$ 83,657.05</b> | <b>\$ 97,274.79</b> | <b>\$ 73,200.90</b> | <b>\$ 80,663.20</b>   | <b>\$ 82,746.36</b>   | <b>\$ 81,833.68</b>   |

## Expenses

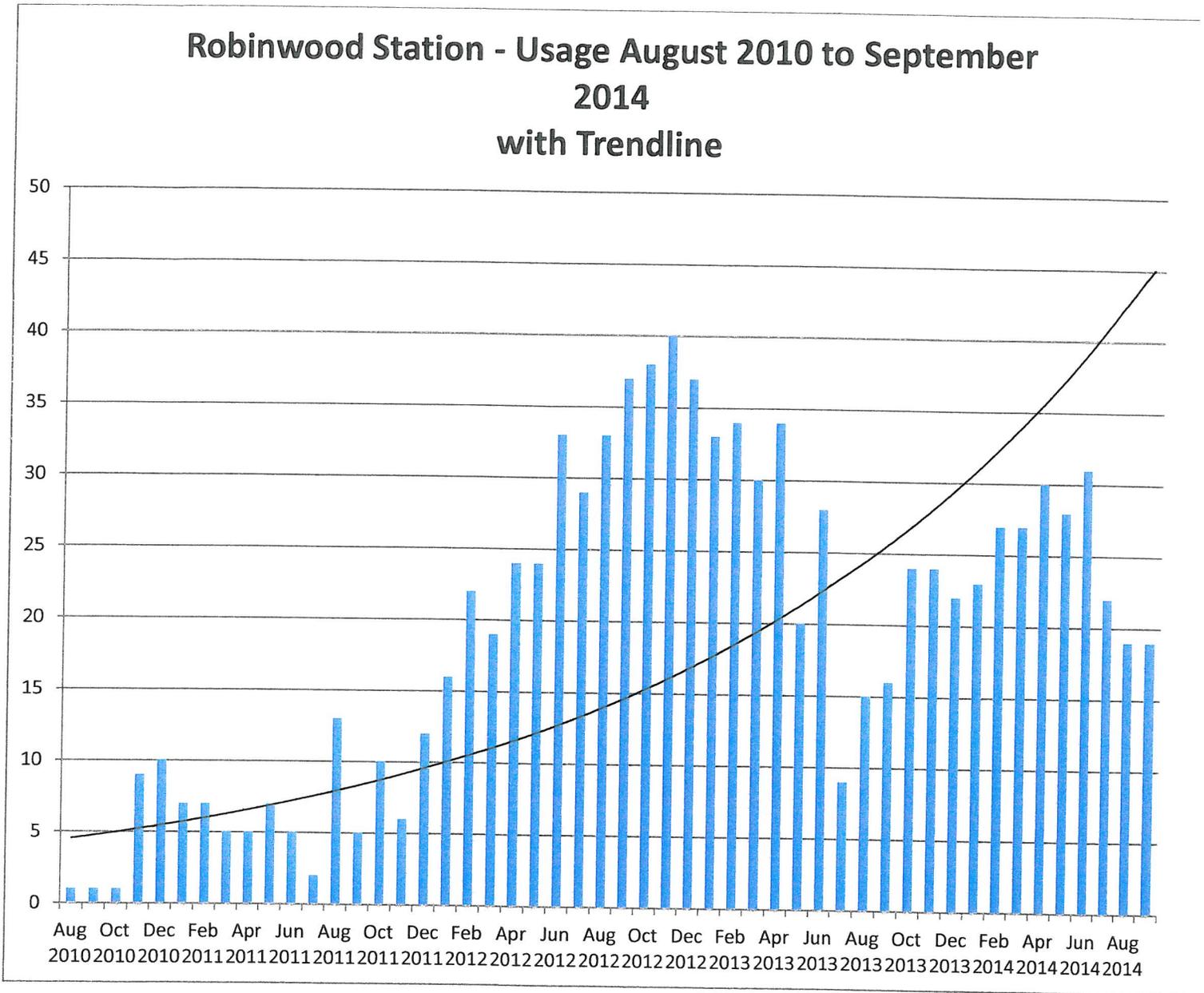
|   | FY 10-11            | FY 11-12            | FY 12-13            | FY 13-14            | Projected<br>FY 14-15 | Projected<br>FY 15-16 | Projected<br>FY 16-17 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Furniture &amp; Fixtures</b>                         | \$ 121.12           | \$ 490.99           | \$ 809.40           | \$ 1,224.09         | \$ 1,000.00           | \$ 1,000.00           | \$ 1,000.00           |
| Garden Expense  | -                   | 3,913.91            | 9,684.08            | 4,152.31            | 2,750.00              | 3,000.00              | 3,500.00              |
| Music Expense   | -                   | -                   | 1,754.86            | 368.05              | 150.00                | 150.00                | 150.00                |
| Miscellaneous   | 162.96              | 589.39              | 178.50              | 46.69               | 100.00                | 150.00                | 150.00                |
| Stipends for Musicians                                  | -                   | -                   | 1,200.00            | 1,200.00            | 1,000.00              | 750.00                | 1,000.00              |
| Maintenance & Repairs                                   | 225.00              | 1,003.31            | 475.00              | -                   | 500.00                | 500.00                | 500.00                |
| Supplies  | 245.00              | 216.66              | 264.34              | 188.12              | 225.00                | 225.00                | 225.00                |
| Utilities   | 1,584.00            | 1,584.00            | 1,584.00            | 1,584.00            | 1,663.20              | 1,746.36              | 1,833.68              |
| Capital Improvements                                    | 7,597.15            | 9,043.85            | 8,579.20            | 878.48              | 5,000.00              | 5,000.00              | 1,000.00              |
| Plus contributed volunteer labor - Operations           | 20,925.00           | 20,790.00           | 27,855.00           | 62,040.00           | 60,000.00             | 60,000.00             | 60,000.00             |
| Plus contributed volunteer labor - Capital Improvements | 25,177.50           | 41,970.00           | 43,519.50           | 620.00              | 10,000.00             | 10,000.00             | 2,000.00              |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                                   | <b>\$ 56,037.73</b> | <b>\$ 79,602.11</b> | <b>\$ 95,903.88</b> | <b>\$ 72,301.74</b> | <b>\$ 82,388.20</b>   | <b>\$ 82,521.36</b>   | <b>\$ 71,358.68</b>   |
| <b>Net Revenue over Expenditures</b>                    | <b>\$ 1,132.09</b>  | <b>\$ 4,054.94</b>  | <b>\$ 1,370.91</b>  | <b>\$ 899.16</b>    | <b>\$ (1,725.00)</b>  | <b>\$ 225.00</b>      | <b>\$ 10,475.00</b>   |

- Assumptions:
- (1) No more grant funding from City for music or from County for Garden. If these activities continue, they will be self sustaining.
  - (2) Building rental fees will increase gradually over the next few years.
  - (3) Garden Sales & Music proceeds will increase gradually and will cover the cost of those programs.
  - (4) FORS will undertake a significant capital contribution campaign to raise sufficient funding for bathroom addition and upgrade of existing bathroom. That money will be spent in the year acquired.
  - (5) The operational volunteer hours will remain fairly consistent.
  - (6) The volunteer contribution for capital improvements will be roughly twice the value raised for materials.

# Trend of Use:



Frequency of Usage August 2010 to September 2014 with Trendline:



## **Operational and structural need**

FORS as operators of the Station have identified a set of desired modifications and renovations ranging from cosmetic to structural as future proposal to the City. FORS intends to carry out the smaller modifications within the near term (one year) and as such started a fundraising campaign to raise \$5,000 to start this project with hopes that the City might be able to provide matching funds towards this effort. These developments are as follows:

Enhanced Amenities to increase functionality and rental revenues (near term, may not require City involvement):

1. Modify Commons floor plan to improve circulation, to enlarge meeting space and to enlarge kitchen space for dishwasher, oven, counter preparation area and storage.
2. Integrate a new energy efficient kitchen appliance suite.
3. Upgrade the current donated, used furnishings.
4. Handicap lift from Bay level to Commons in lieu of ramp structure.

Priority repairs for safety and compliance (Long Term and requires City involvement):

1. Replace both roof systems and insulate to current codes.  
Coordinate replacement with structural reinforcing, providing specified sheathing and seismic ties where required.

Consideration should be given to the total life costs and reduced maintenance hazards of replacing the existing flat /low slope configuration with a more architecturally compatible sloped roof system, incorporating new trusses over the existing parapet structure.

- 2a. Commons restroom remodel with new interior walls, ceiling, tile floors, fixtures, finishes and hardware.
- 2b. Install second ADA accessible restroom in Bay closet space.
3. Upgrade the Heating and Ventilation System for 4 season comfort.

4. Upgrade to an on-demand tank-less water heating system. (Tank-less is more efficient for sporadic, low volume hot water use.)
5. Add telephone / internet service with entry control and alarm.
6. Create replacement secure enclosed storage spaces.
7. Examine options for CMU structural retrofit and interior treatment.
8. Replace both Commons entry doors with modern glazed units.

Expansion Options which may trigger need for Conditional Use Permit and therefore, FORS would seek the City's Parks and Recreation Departments stewardship to bring to reality:

While Building B, referred to as the water company building, is not structurally suitable to be 'opened up' into a single large meeting space, it could be used in the present configuration as an auxiliary building for the RCG, as a workshop, as a community tool lending library and as a "much needed" storage space. As an alternative, a new building could be built within that footprint, or the site converted to additional garden space and / or additional parking.

Additional options have been contemplated as future long term need and development and not being proposed in the near term:

Option A: Additional finished meeting space could be created by expanding over the footprint of the existing Commons into the West parking lot area, leaving a pull through to Kenthorpe at the West edge of the property. This would only result in a net loss of 2 parking spaces.

Option B: Additional finished meeting space could be readily added on the east side of the Bay structure, increasing potential for seismic enhancement without reducing sunny ground areas suitable for the RCG. Additional parking could be created east of the existing Cedaroak driveway.

## **Comparative Rental Fees Structure**

At present, Robinwood Station operates at the lowest threshold of comparative community center rental rates. While this is to be expected for an emerging facility competing for market share, improvements to the building's appearance and functional remediations could yield immediate positive results in the form of increased use and higher rental rates and income.

The Bay does provide the community with a very unique resource, not duplicated in any other public use facility: the open, high ceiling, concrete floored space with roll-up doors offers a rugged utility while still being capable of being enclosed and climate controlled.

The portable stage, stage lighting, overhead projection unit with 12' screen and sound system also offer the community a unique resource for multi-media performances and training events.

Objective observations regarding the condition of the facility are offered here relative to other similar facilities and in order to tender constructive recommendations for systematic improvements.

The main entry is particularly uninviting. The original in-swinging door and sidelight assembly was reversed to comply with fire requirements for an out-swinging panic door. The floor to ceiling, non-tempered glass sidelights were replaced with opaque construction grade plywood.

The existing Commons meeting room is a converted office space which is too small for many community meeting activities.

The kitchen area lacks an oven and dishwasher and does not have sufficient counter area to prep and serve large parties.

With only one restroom, accessed through the dining area, the facility does not functionally accommodate simultaneous discrete events.

An additional restroom in the Bay would render that space ADA accessible and allow the Station to accommodate two events at once, thereby doubling Rental Equivalent Units (REU's)

Despite extensive painting and renovations by the volunteers the building and its spaces are outdated, reflecting a rustic mid-century utilitarian charm. The original exterior colors were retained specifically to maintain harmony with existing conditions, versus challenging the neighbors with a more vibrant palette associated with contemporary community centers.

Both roof areas are not insulated and the wood structure has settled below the elevation of the drain scuppers, resulting in seasonal water ponding and numerous leaks throughout the building. Un-renovated areas, notably the only restroom, are old, with worn surfaces and hardware.

Most interior furnishings were donated second-hand.

Progressive improvements in any or all of these areas will undoubtedly correspond to increasing revenues. It should be acknowledged that work to date has been performed by volunteers who have done a remarkable job of renovation and repair with relatively scant resources.

## **Projects completed to date by FORS volunteers**

Required to open under temporary use:

Reverse entry doors for out-swing and install panic hardware. Remove non-tempered glass sidelights.

Restroom door widened and grab rails installed.

Man-doors installed in bay area. Remove narrow interior doorways.

Safety hand rails extended and repainted.

Pave path to back (south) door. (Boy Scout Eagle Project) Handicapped parking sign and striping.

Other building repairs and upgrades: Listed functionally here:

restroom repairs.

New exterior siding on the Commons.

New vinyl windows on the Commons. Exterior and Interior paint, complete. New interior door and window trim. Re-carpet Commons areas.

New downspouts and drains.

New glazed front roll-up doors and windows. New exterior parking and pedestrian safety lights. Projector, screen and sound system.

Bay acoustic damping installation.

New Bay interior fluorescent lights (95% Fixtures donated by Lions)

Modular stage system.

Medium and low voltage repairs.

Special volunteer efforts needs to be mentioned and recognized for the Landscaping and Garden:

Edible landscaping in sunny areas including fruit trees, shrubs, and canes, herb spiral and perennial flowers.

- Native planting in shady areas
- Terracing of slope to create raised bed growing areas. Weeds controlled with sheet mulching
- Greenhouse and garden shed installed
- Compost systems installed
- Rain garden for low, boggy area.
- Rain barrel collection from Station roof for irrigation.
- Retaining wall at base of rocky slope to control erosion into parking lot
- Installed accessible garden beds and path



Planting Fruit Trees



## Conclusion

Based on the community use and activities at the Station to date, there is clear and strong evidence that the Station as a Robinwood Community Center is serving local needs and the greater West Linn area.

Throughout the process of analyzing the operations of this facility, it has become clear that it is critical the facility serve the broadest range of needs possible. Moreover, the FORS research emphasizes that the greatest potential for success is ensured by an operating organization that is all inclusive.

The process of developing the model Pro Forma confirms these recommendations, for the Station will require sponsors, donors, and volunteers to make the facility sustainable.

FORS has demonstrated its ability to build and maintain sufficient community support to sustain the Robinwood Station Community Center. There is strong community support for the existing facility as the site for the City's newest Community Center. The combined use by the existing organizations and community demographics demonstrate that this community resource is highly appreciated, well sustained and well used.

BY PATRICIA MITCHELL AND  
CHARLES ABERNATHY, ICMA-CM

# MAIN STREET PURSUITS

How to make downtown the place to be

In our opinion, a downtown area is one of the most important impressions for a visitor evaluating a tourism experience or a location decision. A main street and surrounding downtown area can convey the character, economic vibrancy, and the “mood” of a community. The development and implementation of programs to enhance the attractiveness and vitality of a community’s downtown is the responsibility of elected officials and administrators and should receive considerable attention.

The Main Street Program (Main Street®), established in the early 1980s by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and now a subsidiary of that organization, is economic and community development in its best form. It is a place-based program where a community’s assets are analyzed and an economic development program built from those assets. It is more importantly a place-making form of economic development.

The physical environment is created through attention to visual appeal and historic preservation, and with them, a community is created where people want to live in or near. The conception of place-making can create viable economic development with a hometown feel that



The Artwalk in Morganton, North Carolina, transforms a downtown pedestrian alley as a temporary art gallery.

community members enjoy, and which visitors find appealing as a destination place for shopping and vacations.

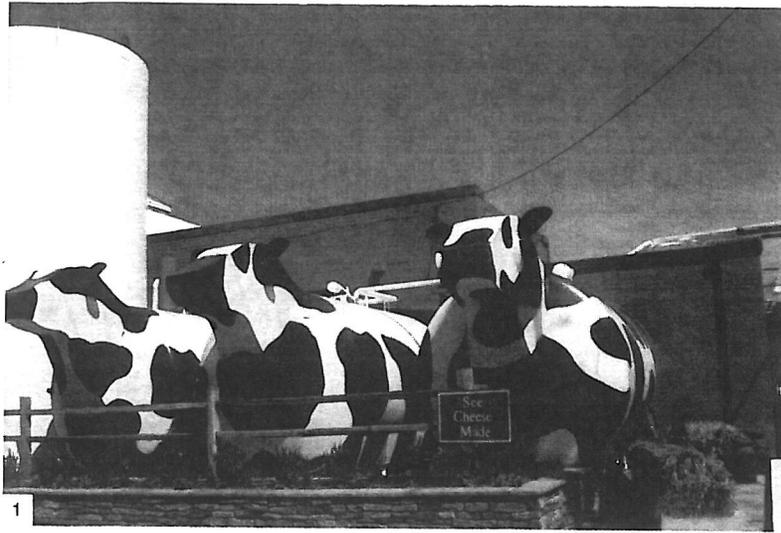
The purpose of this article is to suggest a broader context to downtown development through place-making economic development and specifically through the Main Street Program, a program now found in 46 states. Downtown business districts and downtown development authorities certainly have their place in enhancing commerce or improving the ability of merchants to increase sales.

The Main Street Program broadens the opportunity to create place, to enhance the visual appeal of communities, and to engage in various forms of preservation. We will demonstrate this approach through photos of Main Street® communities, specifically looking at street and sidewalk enhancements (streetscaping), façade treatments, transportation improvements, and historic preservation.

It is our intent that local government managers will be enticed to further explore the potential of a Main Street® or Small Town Main Street Program and

## TAKEAWAYS

- › Find out how supporting Main Street development can build a community’s downtown vitality.
- › Find out that downtown revitalization is incremental change that takes place one block at a time...leading to a community’s future.



1. Visual appeal of painted milk tanks leading into the Ashe County, North Carolina, cheese factory. 2. Streetscape and transportation enhancements create a vibrant downtown in Statesville, North Carolina. 3. Burke County, North Carolina, courthouse located on the city square is an icon for Morganton. 4. Wayfinding signage placed in Marion, North Carolina, directs visitors to amenities and services.

begin to think conceptually about placemaking as an important component of an economic development plan.

Main Street® is three things: 1) a proven approach for the revitalization of downtowns, 2) a network of interrelated communities, and 3) a well-respected national program with support services to membership communities. The program advocates an all-inclusive method of downtown revitalization focusing on organization, design, economic restructuring, and promotion.

### Transportation Enhancements and Streetscaping

Streetscaping is an important factor in revitalization. Through visual appeal, outdoor benches, widened sidewalks, and walkable community improvements, visitors and residents are encouraged to walk the downtown area enjoying a community's amenities and providing merchants with ready-made customers.

Such transportation enhancements as removing stoplights and creating attractive crossings and bump-outs for the planting of flowers and trees can create a slower pace and calmer feel to the main street area and encourage spending time in the comfortable environment.

Departments of transportation (DOTs) and district health departments

are often key partners in revitalization. For example, the North Carolina DOT agreed to the removal of traffic lights in downtown West Jefferson, and the Appalachian District Health Department helped fund such improvements as removing overhead utilities to make the area a more attractive walkable community, thus creating health benefits.

### Local Programs

It's good to be able to report that local programs designed to enhance the appearance and vibrancy of downtown areas are plentiful. Examples include establishing events and festivals to bring people and tourists to the downtown area. Marketing, branding, and promotions to encourage business activity are also typical. Resident advisory committees are critical components of each of these initiatives.

Local governments have established business associations with an economic development office focused solely on promoting the downtown business district. Some places are taking the aggressive and perhaps controversial step of providing incentives for the location of businesses into the downtown area (e.g., rental assistance or utility reduction programs).

Façade renovation programs are often the centerpiece of a downtown renova-

tion program. These programs typically provide matching funds, oftentimes with a community-sponsored program or a Main Street® grant program.

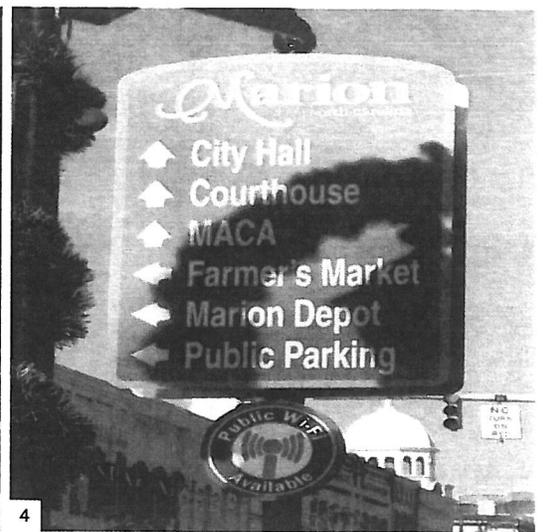
Such improvements as painting, façade replacement, awnings, and window replacement can be eligible for these matching grant funds. Marion, North Carolina, which began implementing a façade program in 2011, has participated in 14 funded projects, where projects received 50 percent of project cost up to \$5,000. Here are some details about Marion's program:

- Matching funds are specifically tied to building improvements involving such structural improvements as windows, façade restoration, painting, and awnings.
- Marion agreed to use its own public works crews to provide limited assistance with debris removal, historical research, and paint-scheme suggestions.
- An application process and review committee were established with the review committee making recommendations regarding color schemes, creating historical accuracy, and maintaining consistency.

Broad participation in the process has occurred in Marion with county and city government, the economic development



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## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

North Carolina Main Street Program:  
[www.nccommerce.com/rd](http://www.nccommerce.com/rd).

Ledbetter, D. (July 8, 2014). Discussion of West Jefferson Streetscape Project.

association, and the Downtown Business Association involved in funding and decision making.

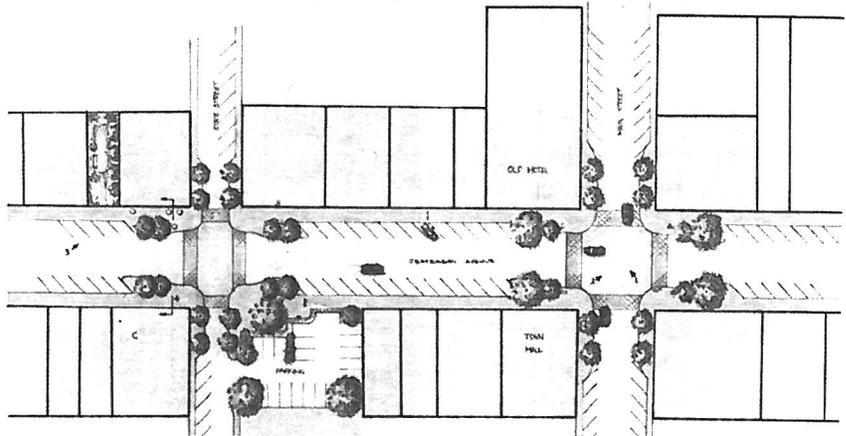
### Historic Preservation: Important Component of Main Street®

The preservation of a community's past is often an emotional commitment for a community. Well-preserved historic buildings are increasingly used as the anchor of local government activities.

As evidence, the Burke County, North Carolina, courthouse in Morganton and an old textile mill are anchors in historic preservation and activity. The courthouse houses a museum for Senator Sam Ervin of Watergate fame, who began his law career in the building.

### Place-Making as a Development Strategy

Using a community's assets for developing an economic strategy provides a logical approach to revitalization activity. Taking the asset-based strategy one step further and thinking about place-making provides a concept to create an environment where we want to work and play,



A drawing illustrating streetscape concepts from North Carolina State University's 2003 West Jefferson Design Charrette.

as well as attract others to our community. Today's busy society is often looking for an attractive and calming atmosphere in which to spend some leisure time.

The revitalization of small towns also makes economic sense. PlaceEconomics, a Washington-based consulting firm analyzing the economic impact of the North Carolina Main Street Program, determined that from its inception in 1980, \$2 billion has been invested by businesses and local communities and 4,700 new businesses created. It is estimated that "each year \$1.6 million in sales taxes are generated just from the net new businesses in Main Street® districts."

The North Carolina program operates a Main Street Solutions Fund, which is a legislatively appropriated grant program established in 2009, with \$1 million being appropriated for FY2015.

Main Street® is a proven strategy of place-making for economic development and quality-of-life activity. **PM**

#### ENDNOTE

1 *Decades of Success: The Economic Impact of Main Street in North Carolina. Executive Summary.* Prepared for the North Carolina Department of Commerce and the North Carolina Main Street Communities by PlaceEconomics, Washington D.C., February 2014



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