



Chapter 1: Foundation For The Downtown Brookings Master Plan

Introduction

"We can chart our future clearly and wisely only when we know the path which has led to the present." - *Adlai E. Stevenson*

This chapter provides a short historical context for Brookings, as well as an overview of the process followed for the Downtown Brookings Master Plan. Most importantly, it presents the key community values developed arising from this rich Brookings history and the community-based planning process. It is these values and community principles that serve as the foundation for the vision plan and recommended improvements.

An Historical Perspective of Brookings

Brookings is blessed with a rich history upon which to build the vision for Downtown, including, among others, its Native American heritage, its tradition of timber and flower industries, and its prominent architectural past.

The first documented inhabitants of the Brookings area were the Checto tribe of Indians, the most numerous of the coastal tribes whose chief craft was woodworking.¹ Although the Oregon Indian wars of the mid-1850's ended the predominant Chetco Indian culture and influence, the history is an important element and a tradition that the Brookings community will continue to keep alive through education, arts, and cultural festivals.

Both the timber industry and the flower bulb industries have been important to the development and growth of the City of Brookings. The town itself was built for the Brookings Timber and Lumber company which intended to take advantage of the location's lush forests, natural harbor, and river.¹ Timber has continued to be a part of the regional economy and culture, although its importance has diminished since the City's beginnings. Soil quality and mild climate, including winters, in the area contributed to the growth of the flower bulb industry that began after the lumber mill closing in 1925. At the height of what is often called the "white gold boom", there were nearly 600 growers of such flower bulbs as lilies and daffodils.¹ Although no longer a major economic market, the flower tradition remains strong in Brookings, the "City of Flowers."

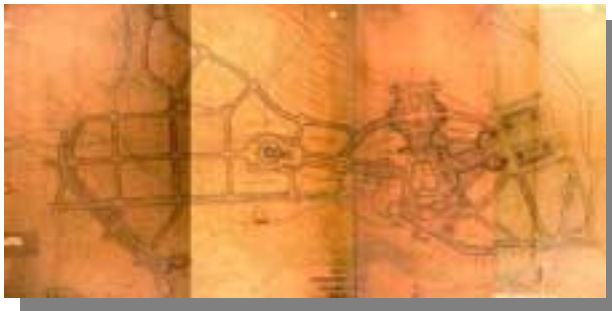


¹ Olsen, Edward G. [Then Til Now in Brookings Harbor - A Social History of the Brookings Harbor Community](#), Rotary Club of Brookings; (1979).

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From its earliest days as a lumber town, Brookings had the foresight to commission renowned architect Bernard Maybeck to design the town plan and its original residential and public buildings. Although never fully realized, the Maybeck plan carefully laid out the town with respect to its hills and contours and its south-facing view of the ocean; it included a civic center and integrated many parks, gardens, and landscaped pedestrian walkways throughout. In the “Arts and Crafts” tradition, Maybeck also designed at least fifteen prototypical residential cottages, a community hall, bank, and a school. Unfortunately, most of his designs were never built, due likely to both the collapse of the timber company and the construction of Highway 101. Nonetheless, the Maybeck architectural and urban design visions are important to the community of Brookings and are a significant link to a unique and authentic style for Downtown.



Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957) was one of the great originals of American architecture . . . who developed an entirely original vocabulary of building from an array of inventive details and varied forms. Long claimed as a hero for the San Francisco Bay Area, for which the majority of his masterworks were designed, Maybeck's role as a visionary architect is unquestioned. . . During his lifetime, Maybeck was regarded even by his fellow architects as something of a crank and a dreamer. In truth, he seems to have enjoyed playing the part of the carefree Bohemian, a reveler in theater and pageantry in both his public and private lives. . . Maybeck's design ideas--for example, the use of native wood, large windows, hand-crafted details, a painterly use of color, and integrated landscaping, elements brought together to create what he termed earth-colored houses that seemed to rise from their hilltops--grew out of this taste for the theatrical and in fact permeated the Bay Area Arts and Crafts movement. Yet his extraordinary individuality kept him from ever being truly a part of any movement.

www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/exhibits/maybeck/architect.html

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The Planning Process

The Downtown Brookings Master Plan was developed to provide all interested persons with the vision and guidance needed to enhance and revitalize the downtown. Toward this end, the Brookings community was integrally involved in the creation of the Plan, the design guidelines, and other Plan components.

Review of Previous Planning Efforts

A number of revitalization planning efforts preceded the Downtown Brookings Master Plan. An Urban Renewal Plan that was developed and approved by the City Council in the early 1990's was defeated by a small number of public votes in a City election. In 1998, the City Council formed an advisory committee to investigate the urban renewal issue. The PROUD (Positive Revitalization Of Urban Downtown) Study that resulted and was adopted in July 2000 included many helpful elements that were reviewed and used in the development of the Downtown Brookings Master Plan. Among the important components were subcommittee reports with findings on the following topics: review of a Town Center Zone Study done by Otak; pedestrian-friendly characteristics for Downtown; infrastructure needs; inventory of Downtown buildings; and financing mechanisms. Additionally, the PROUD Study included a revitalization timeline and an appendix with a 1999 report and analysis of Downtown Brookings by the Oregon Downtown Development Association (ODDA).

Other studies and plans which were reviewed and contributed to the preparation of the Downtown Master Plan include the Brookings/Highway 101 One-Way Couplet Analysis and Implementation Report (January 1998), Draft Report on the Brookings Gateway Project (defeated Urban Renewal Plan), and ACORN Economic Profiles for the City Brookings (2000).

Community Immersion

The Downtown Brookings Master Plan process officially kicked off with a Community Immersion in March 2002. Community Immersion was a week filled with presentations, interviews, focus groups, and workshops designed to get the community involved in the planning process and help the project design team become better acquainted with the City of Brookings and the downtown core. Over 70 people participated in some facet of the week's activities. Immersion culminated in a full-day workshop where the community members participated in a visual survey (TownScan™) to identify preferred streetscape, architecture, and sign designs. Teams also designed circulation, land use, and public art strategies for Downtown. Community Immersion generated a high degree of participation, energy, and creativity, as well as community commitment and consensus to the future of Downtown Brookings.



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- ◆ City Staff Kick-Off Meeting
- ◆ Downtown Walk with Public Officials and Interested Residents
- ◆ Urban Renewal Advisory Committee Kick-Off Meeting
- ◆ One-on-One Interviews with Community Leaders, Property Owners, Business Owners, and Residents
- ◆ Informal “on the street” interviews
- ◆ Focus Group: Economic Development Issues & Opportunities
- ◆ Focus Group: Circulation & Parking Issues & Opportunities
- ◆ Focus Group: Public Spaces, Plazas, Parks, and Public Art Opportunities
- ◆ Focus Group: Land Use and Urban Design Issues & Opportunities
- ◆ “Urban Renewal 101” Presentation
- ◆ Panel Discussion with Urban Renewal Directors from Lincoln City, Roseburg, and Medford: “What is Urban Renewal”?
- ◆ TownScan™ Community Image Survey
- ◆ Hands-On Community Design Workshop
- ◆ Summary Presentation to Urban Renewal Advisory Committee & City Council








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Community Confirmation

The information and main ideas generated during Immersion Process/Week and during previous planning efforts were compiled to create a draft vision for Downtown Brookings. In May 2002, elements of the vision and Draft Master Plan were presented in a variety of formats to receive further feedback and direction, including:

-  Community Open House
-  Joint City Council-Planning Commission Workshop
-  Urban Renewal Advisory Committee Workshop
-  City Staff Meeting
-  ODOT Review of Draft Documents

Community comments and suggestions were then incorporated into a final draft and provided to the City for approval.

Key Community Values

Community input provided during the PROUD Study and through the Master Plan process helped to identify key community values and guiding principles. These values, as defined by the Brookings community, provide the framework within which the economic development, urban design, and preservation strategies were developed. These values were consulted throughout all stages of the Downtown Brookings Master Plan's development and should continue to be consulted in all future development decisions in the downtown. Being consistent with the intent of the following values means being true to the desires of the Brookings community.



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Celebrate the History and Heritage of Brookings

For years, the people living in Brookings have built buildings, become famous, planted trees and flowers, participated in community gatherings, and experienced a variety of historic events. Celebrate the stories of Brookings’ Chetco Indian history, of Bernard Maybeck’s architectural legacy, of Brookings as the “Home of Winter Flowers,” and many others through the public realm. Tell the “Brookings story” to residents and visitors alike as a way of continuing traditions, recognizing important persons, places, and events, promoting the local economy and educating the public.

Protect and Enhance Brookings’ Natural Environment

The beautiful natural environment, the “banana belt” climate, and the many outdoor recreational opportunities of the Brookings area are unsurpassed in the region. Protect, celebrate, and enhance the natural features by continually creating opportunities for flowers, trees, gardens, and lush landscaping throughout the community, by making connections to the ocean, river, harbor, and parks and all that they offer, and by taking advantage of natural features and outdoor recreation opportunities. Celebrate the local weather and the local environment by using locally-derived building materials such as river rock, sandstone, redwood, bamboo, etc.



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Develop an Attractive, Functional and “Real Downtown”

Brookings embodies a friendly, authentic, and relaxed atmosphere valued by residents and visitors alike, and the buildings and structures in Downtown Brookings represent a range of architectural styles that collectively create an attractive and unique visual environment. Develop architectural and design standards to ensure that new development is true to Brookings’ scale, character, lifestyle, built environment, and natural resources. These guidelines and standards will provide decision-makers with guidance and provides project applicants with clear direction and certainty. Create logic, order, and safety Downtown through a balanced and thoughtful transportation system, a convenient parking system, and a directional signage program.



Balance Community Needs, Economic Development and Tourism

Brookings strives to provide for the needs of its many permanent residents, while at the same time supporting a large number of seasonal residents and visitors. Local economic development must continue to balance community needs with tourism opportunities; overdependence on tourism must be minimized through economic diversification. Support small businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit of Brookings and more effectively tap local and regional markets. Increase local access to information, resources, and higher education while also encouraging high-tech and medical employment opportunities.

Incorporate Local Visual and Performing Arts

The influence of the arts on Brookings has been and remains strong. Incorporate art into the public realm whenever possible, using the community itself as a canvas, to celebrate the arts and to tell the story of Brookings. Tap the great talents of the many local Brookings artists in all public art endeavors and support the pursuit of additional arts facilities in the community.

Build Upon Strong Volunteerism and Work Ethic of Brookings People

Underlying Brookings’ unique physical setting and community features are the people who live and work there - people who share a commitment to volunteerism and to making a difference in their

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community. Build upon this strong tradition of volunteerism by integrally involving individuals, youth, seniors, and the many local organizations to implement desired change in Brookings. Utilize and further develop the special talents, unique skills, dedication, energy, leadership, and strong partnerships inherent in the Brookings community to achieve great things.

Foster Community Socialization and Celebration

Downtown Brookings embodies the characteristics of the social “heart” of the community – it is home to the local museum, the post office, the library, local shops, services, and restaurants, and home to a number of community festivals and events. Its compact size and physical character encourage biking, walking, and social interaction. Foster increased socialization by integrating pedestrian and bicycle amenities and handicapped accessible features and by encouraging a broad mix of uses downtown. Further expand Downtown as the civic and social heart by providing public plazas, parks, and other urban gathering spaces and expanding the number of civic-oriented uses, including the addition of City Hall.

