



American Planning Association  
**Washington Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

## Downtown Prosser Community Planning Assistance Program



A report prepared for the City of Prosser summarizing the outcome of the APA Community Planning Assistance Team Workshop of May 7, 2011

## Prosser – Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT)

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## Executive Summary

Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association sponsored a team of professionals for the second of two community planning assistance teams or CPAT workshops on May 7, 2011. This second of two CPAT workshops was focused on the downtown core area shown in Figure 1. and emphasized four priority issues including: community design, connectivity, historic preservation and economic revitalization.

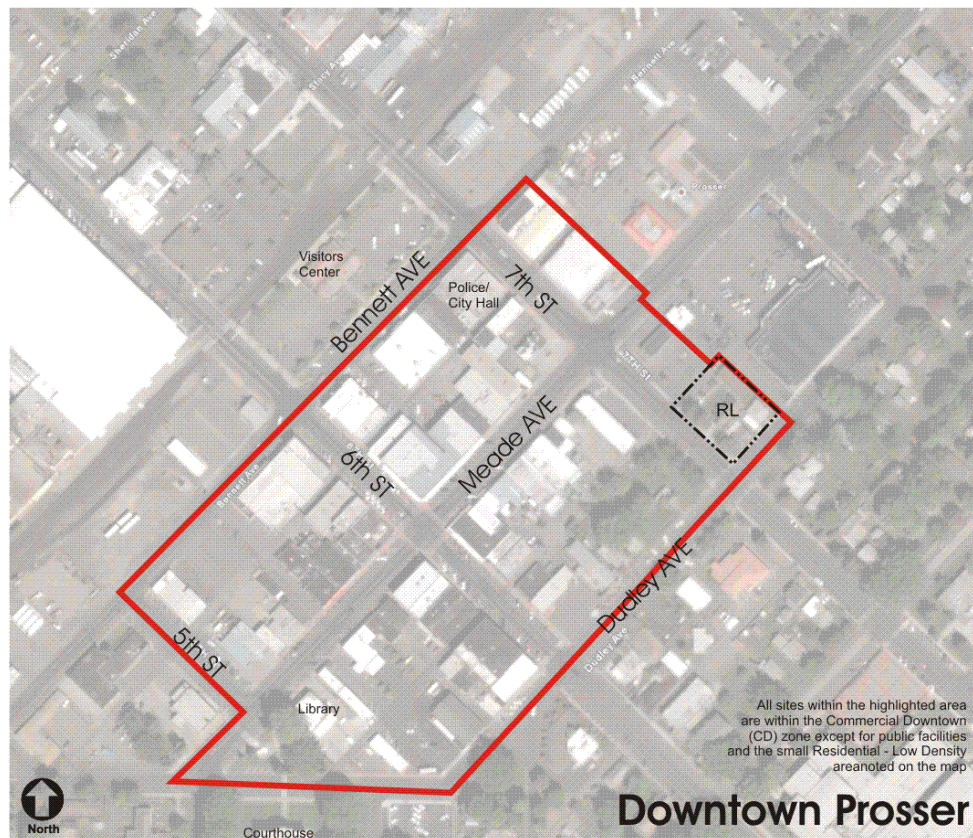


Figure 1. Downtown core area.

### *APA Community Planning Assistance Team*

#### Work Session Objectives:

- *Identify assets that will make the downtown core a more vital business district.*
- *Develop design concepts for connecting the downtown and gateway areas of Prosser and enhancing the streetscape of downtown.*
- *Outline a process and identify resources for completing an inventory of historically significant properties.*
- *Develop a roadmap for implementation of plans and policies to achieve the community's vision for downtown.*

## CPAT Workshop – The Day’s Events

City Administrator, Charlie Bush opened the CPAT workshop by welcoming the team and highlighting the community’s recent success completing subdivision design guidelines.

The CPAT Team started by asking the group to discuss strengths and opportunities for the downtown area of Prosser. Key themes from this discussion included:

- Community Design
- Connectivity
- Historic Preservation, and
- Economic Development

After a walking tour of downtown that focused on urban design, transportation connectivity, economic development and historic preservation the group reconvened to develop overarching vision and action plan . This vision is summarized as follows:

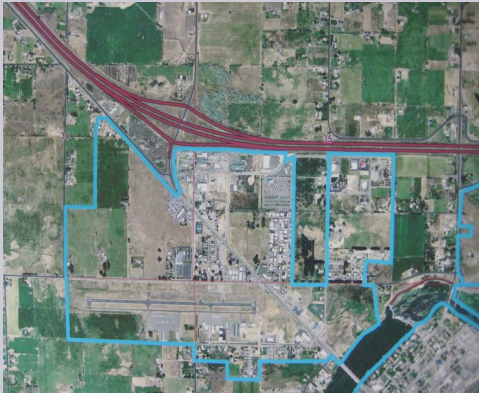
*“Prosser is a forward looking community that sustains a small town quality of life. Prosser values its heritage and builds on its historic and agricultural assets; Local residents and visitors enjoy pedestrian and bicycle connections from downtown’s well designed streets and buildings to the Yakima River. Discover Prosser!”*

That afternoon, the group worked to identify actions for implementing this vision as it related to the four key themes. Following the workshop, Prosser’s newly formed Downtown Committee met to review and prioritize this list of actions. Table 1. provides a “blueprint” or summary of these priority actions along with recommended resources and responsibilities.



**Table 1. Prosser “Blueprint” - Highest Priority Action Steps**

Themes	Highest Priority Actions	Resources	Responsibility
<b>Community Design</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt Design Guidelines &amp; Complete Murals for Alleyways</li> <li>2. Streetscape Improvements &amp; Clean Up Power Lines</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) - \$50K Grants, Growth Management Office (CTED) Grants <a href="http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/64/default.aspx">http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/64/default.aspx</a></li> <li>• Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council (IACC)</li> <li>• Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants: <a href="http://www.eecbg.energy.gov">http://www.eecbg.energy.gov</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council and Downtown Committee</li> <li>• City Public Works and Utility</li> </ul>
<b>Connectivity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use trail connections to connect downtown with Vintner’s Village, Walter Clore Center, &amp; Exit 80 .</li> <li>2. Support Bicycle Economy by Completing Short Term Needs—Recruit a Bike Shop</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation and Conservation Office Grants - <a href="http://www.rco.wa.gov/rcfb/grants.asp">http://www.rco.wa.gov/rcfb/grants.asp</a></li> <li>• RCO Grant workshop held in October 2009: <a href="http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/cr_grants.html">http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/cr_grants.html</a></li> <li>• WSDOT’s Safe Routes to Schools and Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Grants (WSDOT) <a href="http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/SafeRoutes/funding.htm">http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/SafeRoutes/funding.htm</a></li> <li>• National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance <a href="http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/rtca">http://www.nps.gov/nrcr/programs/rtca</a></li> <li>• Washington’s Main Street Program <a href="http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/52/default.aspx">http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/52/default.aspx</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Parks and Public Works</li> <li>• Downtown Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Preservation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attain Certified Local Government (CLG) status from DAHP in order to implement a local historic preservation program</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation - Megan Duvall - <a href="http://www.dahp.wa.gov/localgovernment/overview.htm">http://www.dahp.wa.gov/localgovernment/overview.htm</a></li> <li>• Washington Trust for Historic Preservation – <a href="http://www.wa-trust.org">http://www.wa-trust.org</a></li> <li>• Washington State Heritage Resource Center <a href="http://www.wshs.org/wshs/hrc/grants.htm">http://www.wshs.org/wshs/hrc/grants.htm</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City and Downtown Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a ‘Shop Local’ Program</li> <li>2. Promotional Materials including skycam/webcam for tourism and city website.</li> <li>3. Public Art (using agricultural tools)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) - \$50K Grants, Growth Management Office (CTED) Grants <a href="http://www.infracfunding.wa.gov">http://www.infracfunding.wa.gov</a></li> <li>• Local Improvement Districts – <a href="http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/PubWorks/lidpg.aspx">http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/PubWorks/lidpg.aspx</a></li> <li>• Other financing tools and options available in Washington State (See Appendix C of this report for a detailed summary of options)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotions Committee</li> <li>• Promotions Committee</li> <li>• City Council and Downtown Committee in partnership with high school / vocational school, Yakima Valley Community College</li> </ul>



*Prosser, Washington City Limits*

## Findings and Recommendations

The following pages present the Team's specific findings and recommendations. Prosser leaders and the Action Committee can use this information to implement their priorities. These materials are based on presentations by CPAT members and/or information used by them in their official capacity, with web links or other resources for use by the Action Committee.

### Community Assets

Before the CPAT workshop, the team compiled background information and community assets and opportunities, augmenting these by several pre-workshop surveys and walking tours during the Workshop. This report's recommendations build on these documented assets including:

- Two Downtown Prosser buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places with at least four downtown buildings having been rehabilitated since 2006.
- 30% of Downtown Prosser business is in the retail sector, another 23% is in the restaurant/food service sector and the remaining 47% is a mixture of government, finance, real estate, civic, newspaper and health service organizations.
- Three previous revitalization efforts in 1989, 1991 and 2007 emphasized creating a unified historic identity for the downtown. Recommendations stemming from these efforts included: applying for historic district designation, creating an overlay zone to regulate design, establishing street tree guidelines, as well as, developing new and infill building design guidelines and encouraging pedestrian-oriented redevelopment.
- In 2011 the City of Prosser received the designation as a state Main Street community, which will assist in implementing downtown revitalization.
- Results from the Survey include downtown planning goals including (a) initial planning for a unique commercial identity, (b) identification and enhancement of existing infrastructure and building assets and (c) increasing the viability of the downtown business district and capitalizing on the strength of emerging new developments to the north.

## Maintaining an Action Committee

The CPAT recommends that Prosser capitalize on its extremely active and committed community and establish an Action Committee to help implement the vision and priorities developed during this workshop. Based on the experience of the CPAT team, there are several characteristics of Action Committees that lend to their success. The Action Committee should consist of a maximum of 6 to 12 individuals who can motivate others and should include representatives from affected interest groups. Such a committee can be a very helpful tool in providing overall direction and ongoing energy. An Action Committee typically consists of a variety of local people who have made a commitment to accomplishing these important next steps. It should be limited in size so that the group can hold a conversation around a table. This group should consist of individuals who can be optimistic—yet realistic—and can both think holistically and focus on project details. Lastly, the committee should be a representative mix of the community in terms of gender, race, age, and economic status.

It is helpful to identify a Committee Chair to run the meetings and/or assign a member to communicate logistics and meeting outcomes with rest of the group on a regular basis. Action Committee meetings should occur on a published schedule (i.e., third Monday of the month). Most communities that have had CPAT workshops have chosen to keep these committees independent of local government; however, it is not uncommon for the committee to include elected officials in their membership. This independent membership structure enables the Action Committee to hold the local government accountable. An added benefit of an non-government Action Committee is the incorporation of more residents for tackling community problems, allowing greater efficiency within local government staff – often necessary in smaller communities with constrained resources.



*Implementation depends on an effective Action Committee.*

## Achieving the Community Vision

When new opportunities and additional action items arise, the Action Committee can help keep the focus on reaching the vision developed during the workshop, as follows:

*“Prosser is a forward looking community that sustains a small town quality of life. Prosser values its heritage and builds on its historic and agricultural assets; Local residents and visitors enjoy pedestrian and bicycle connections from downtown’s well designed streets and buildings to the Yakima River. Discover Prosser!”*

The CPAT team further recommends that the Action Committee develop benchmarks and performance measures. These measures should reflect progress made toward implementing your vision. For example, choosing measures that track progress toward making bicycle and pedestrian connections, preserving historic and agricultural assets, and other measures that track quality of life as defined by the community will help the Action Committee ensure progress toward the vision over time.



## Priority One: Community Design

### Background and Workshop Direction

CPAT team member Bob Bengford worked with the City during 2006-2007 crafting sets of design guidelines for both the Wine Country Road Corridor and the Downtown Core (see Figure 1). In August 2007, a draft for Planning Commission review was produced but the guidelines were never officially adopted.

During the CPAT workshop, Bob summarized key elements of the design guidelines to determine if the guidelines still fit the vision and objectives of the community. In the ensuing conversation, participants largely supported the concepts in the design guidelines and agreed that they should be refined and ultimately adopted. Workshop participants noted that the guidelines are currently being used informally as a tool to assist current and prospective building owners in ways to improve their properties consistent with the community's vision.

### Purpose of the Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are a critical tool to help guide private development in a way that can help realize the community's goals and objectives. Ultimately, the proposed design guidelines are intended to:

- Increase awareness of the potential to increase property values through design improvements within Downtown and the City of Prosser.
- Provide clear objectives for those embarking on the planning and design of projects in Prosser's downtown core area.
- Encourage preservation and rehabilitation of Downtown's older buildings.
- Provide guidelines for new construction so that it contributes to Prosser's desired pedestrian-friendly character and is compatible with the existing character and historic buildings.

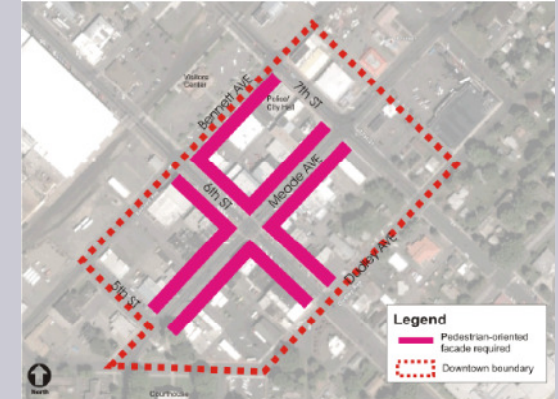


Figure 2. Map identifying building frontages where storefronts or “pedestrian-oriented facades” are required.



Figure 3. Storefront example, with a direct street front entrance and plenty of transparent windows.



Figure 4. Owners are encouraged to base remodels and new buildings on the elements and features of older buildings in historic photographs.

## How the Design Guidelines Can Be Applied

The guidelines can apply to all new development within the planning area. The document may include the following elements:

- **Intent** statements, which are overarching objectives.
- **Guidelines** feature a combination of required and recommended elements depending on their relative importance in the design of projects. A number of guidelines in the 2007 draft employ the “tool box” technique, whereby applicants must pick two or three design techniques from a large list of options to meet a required provision. This technique provides more choices to the applicant, supports architectural variety, and is easy for the City to administer.
- **Departures**, which offer flexibility to select required standards. They allow for alternative approaches for meeting the guidelines provided the applicant can successfully demonstrate how they meet the intent of the guidelines and any specific departure criteria.

## Design Guidelines Elements and Objectives

Listed below is a summary of key design guideline elements and objectives from the 2007 draft. The participants in the May workshop generally supported these for Downtown:

- **Apply the guidelines flexibly.** Refine the current list of permitted uses in the downtown to allow for ground level residential uses on select side streets at or near the perimeter of the Downtown core, such as along Dudley Avenue. This provision will allow extra flexibility to property owners and bring some current uses into conformance with the code.
- **Storefronts.** Define areas where storefronts are required and identify design elements needed to qualify as a storefront. The intention is to reinforce the historic storefront pattern on core block frontages in downtown (see Figure 2). The guidelines refer to

storefronts as “pedestrian-oriented facades” which are built up to the sidewalk edge, feature storefront entries and plenty of transparent window area.

- **Thoughtful service element siting and design.** The Guidelines recommend that service elements such as trash and recycling areas, gas and electrical meters, and mechanical equipment be located and designed and located to minimize impacts on the streetscape.
- **Architectural character guidelines.** Owners of historical buildings are encouraged to restore facades to their original design (based on old photos), where possible. However, the guidelines acknowledge that this is not always possible. Owners in this case are encouraged to utilize designs and materials that are both compatible with the historic character of the building itself and downtown Prosser in general. The guidelines encourage owners to use the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties* to elicit ideas on how to preserve, rehabilitate, restore, and maintain their buildings. For new buildings and remodeling of post-1950s buildings, owners are encouraged to base the design character on building elements and forms compatible with downtown Prosser's existing historic character. Owners may also consider modern interpretations of these building elements and components in a way that complements the surrounding context.
- **Guidelines for building massing.** This includes guidelines for articulating facades in a way that reinforces downtown's pattern of small scale storefront buildings and adds visual interest. The current draft 2007 Design Guidelines include a toolbox of options from which to choose.
- **Building details guidelines.** The guidelines include a list of detailing options which are intended to add to the character of commercial buildings at the pedestrian scale. Options include decorative use of materials, treatment of windows and doors, recessed building entries, permanent weather protection elements, decorative kickplates, or decorative façade-mounted lighting fixtures.

- **Building material and color guidelines.** Brick is identified as the preferred material due to its prevalence in the historic buildings of downtown Prosser. The guidelines also include a list of prohibited façade materials and guiding principles for commonly used materials such as concrete block, stucco, and metal siding.
- **Signage guidelines.** Recommendations for sign guidelines are based on historical photograph. Preferred sign types include well-proportioned wall signs and projecting neon signs (the Beck Co Jewelry sign is a good example). Backlit signs – most notably the back lit box or “can” signs often detract from the historic character of downtown’s buildings dominated by the architecture and design of the 1930’s and 40’s and should be discouraged.

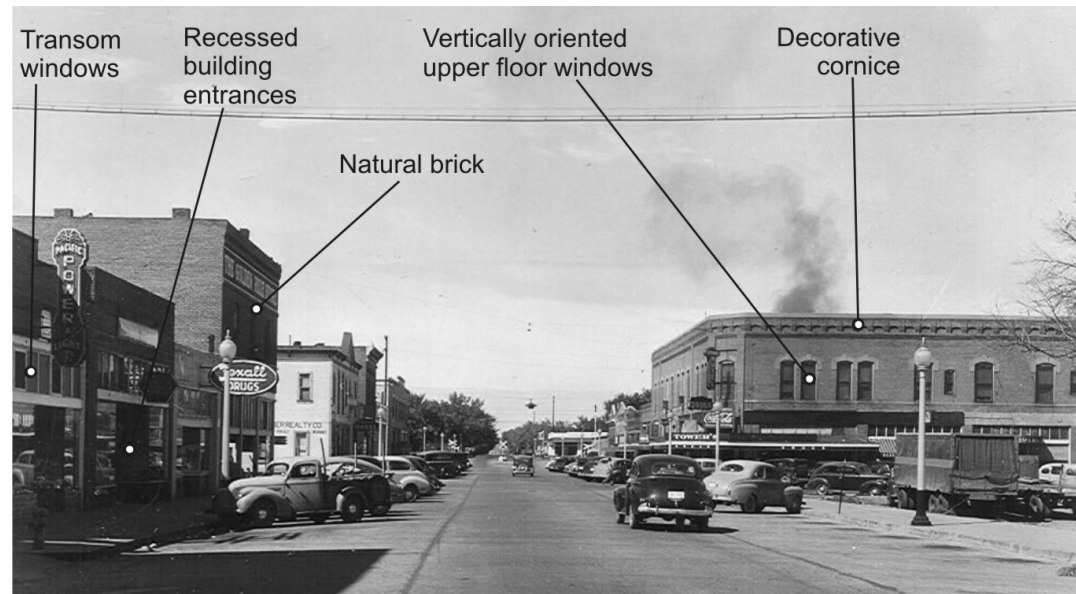


Figure 5. Common building elements of historical Prosser structures.



### Façade Improvements

One of the major objectives of the 2007 Design Guidelines project was to provide guidance to property owners for enhancing the facades of Downtown buildings in order to stay true to the historic character and create more consistency. While the guidelines have not been adopted, there have been some excellent remodels of downtown buildings that can serve as good examples for future work. During the workshop tour, participants had the opportunity to examine facades throughout Downtown and discuss potential improvements. Figure 22 illustrates specific buildings that are high priorities for façade improvements. The draft 2007 Design Guidelines also include specific provisions that address transparency, materials, detailing, and weather protection.



*Figure 6. Workshop participants discuss possible facade improvements on walking tour.*



*Figure 8. Workshop participants discuss possible streetscape improvements on walking tour.*



*Figure 9. Illustrating existing conditions at Dudley and 6<sup>th</sup> and pre-imposing how a curb extension could fit on the corner.*

## Streetscape/Pedestrian Improvements:

Both survey and walking tour participants identified a need for pedestrian and streetscape enhancements in downtown. During the walking tour, workshop participants had the opportunity to review specific problems and opportunities. Notable issues include the lack of greenery (trees and planters), poor pedestrian street crossings, and not nearly enough outdoor pedestrian spaces. Below are some suggested improvements:

- **Create curb extensions at key intersections.** Curb extensions reduce the roadway width by extending the sidewalk or curb line into the existing paved area. Curb extensions can increase pedestrian safety by improving visibility and reducing crossing distances. They also provide a traffic calming effect by visually and physically narrowing the roadway. Furthermore, they provide space for landscaping and can help to function as gateway elements into downtown – most notably at 6<sup>th</sup> Street intersections at Bennett and Dudley Avenues. Current pavement markings prove that corner curb extensions can be completed without removing on-street parking spaces. Curb extensions have been particularly effective in enhancing the character and pedestrian safety of downtown Ellensburg (see Figure 10), for example. Figure 8 identifies priority curb extension locations. Curb extensions are also possible adjacent to alleys and driveways – and provide similar landscaping and traffic calming benefits. Figure 11 shows proposed locations in downtown Prosser for curb extensions.



*Figure 10. Existing curb extensions in downtown Ellensburg.*





Figure 11. Areas proposed for curb extensions currently do not serve a clear function (left image). Curb extensions at 6<sup>th</sup> and Dudley would help to reduce crossing distances and help to serve as a gateway into Downtown from the south.



Figure 12. Curb extensions in downtown Everett also function as informal gathering spaces and places for public art.



*Figure 13. The recently upgraded courtyard is a great example of a usable outdoor space.*

- **Encourage the use of outdoor spaces for dining and gathering.** For much of the year, Prosser's climate provides a great opportunity for outdoor activities. However, there are currently very few spaces being used for outdoor dining and gathering space. Opportunities include sidewalks, internal courtyards, alleyways, parking lots, and the proposed curb extensions. Current sidewalk width ranges from 8 to 12 feet in width, allowing enough space for one row of tables along the building edge while maintaining sufficient space for sidewalk traffic. Figure 12 illustrates some current opportunities for outdoor dining and gathering spaces. Also, as new buildings are constructed in downtown, property owners should be encouraged to integrate small open spaces into the design. Such spaces can be "right-sized" and don't need to be large to attract interest and activity. Figures 14-15 show potential sites in Prosser for incorporating outdoor space.





Figure 15. Downtown Prosser sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate one row of tables for outdoor dining where adjacent to cafés and restaurants. The right image is from Bend, Oregon, which features a similar climate and sidewalk widths.



Figure 16. The small alley like passages (left image) provide opportunities to usable outdoor space. The right two images illustrate improvements to a similar space in Georgetown Texas.



Figures 14. The vacant boarded space near the Princess Theatre provides an excellent opportunity to create a usable outdoor space. In Lone Pine, CA, a vacant lot was used to provide outdoor dining space for the adjacent restaurant (below).





*Figures 17. Encourage the creation of small courtyard spaces such as this (Bend, OR) to be integrated with any new buildings downtown.*

- **Update and expand flower pot/basket program.** While the sidewalk widths and extended awnings make it problematic to create a network of street trees, flower pots and hanging baskets would provide an opportunity to add color and greenery to the streetscape for most of the year. The Historic Downtown Prosser Association and many individual business owners currently maintain a network of potted plants around downtown, but there is no network of hanging flower baskets. While one participant noted that the hot summer climate is challenging for hanging baskets, other Eastern Washington communities have been successful in maintaining a hanging basket programs (see Figures 17-19). While such programs are not without ongoing costs, they certainly add color and character to the streetscape, particularly when they employ a creative and consistent planting and design theme.



*Figures 18-20. The concrete pots and wine barrels are the most prominent planters now in Downtown. The image to the right shows one of the hanging flower baskets that can be found all over Chelan's downtown through summer and fall.*



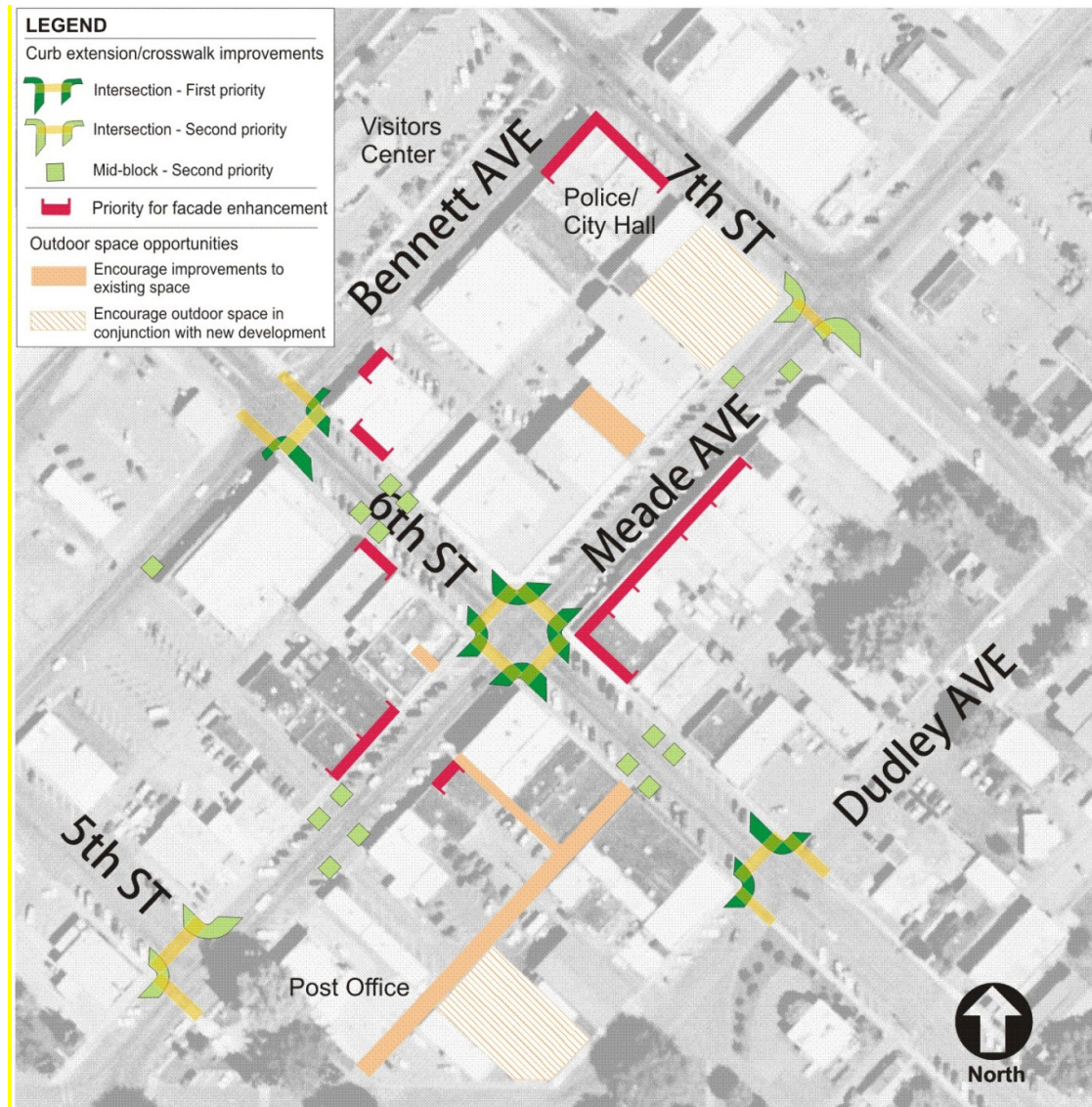


Figure 22. Community design recommendations from workshop.

## Priority Two: Downtown Transportation Connections

Prosser's transportation system is laid out in a grid street pattern with traditional blocks and intersections spaced at every quarter mile or less in the downtown core. This grid street pattern design is very walkable and handles traffic more efficiently than any other transportation system design. Even with an ideal grid street pattern that was originally established in the late 1800s/early 1900s, Prosser has several opportunities to improve connections to downtown. This was discussed during the CPAT work session and is outlined below.

### **Make safety improvement for pedestrians and bicyclist safety - safe routes to schools**

Transportation infrastructure added in recent decades across the state of Washington and across the country has been primarily focused on the movement of larger motor vehicles. Some of the primary arterials within Prosser reflect this trend in transportation design. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility, especially for known risk groups like the young and the aging, could be improved along and between primary arterials. Work session participants agreed that improving the safety and connectivity of the route within a half mile of the elementary school was a priority. See Figure 23 for recommended priority connections near the elementary school from residential areas connecting through the school and park grounds to downtown.

Other important connections recommended by the CPAT Team and highlighted in Figure 23 include connections from residential areas to the high school through to downtown, connections to the river, and enhanced connections between I-82 and downtown to ensure that the Gateway Area and downtown Prosser are mutually supportive rather than operating as two competing commercial centers. These connections in some cases could be separated trails. Improvements like the green bike lanes and bike boxes (Figure 22.) that are now included in the national Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices can improve safety, help strengthen connections, and send a message that biking and walking are an important form of transportation in the community.



*Figures 22. Green bike lanes and bike boxes improve intersection safety and strengthen connections.*



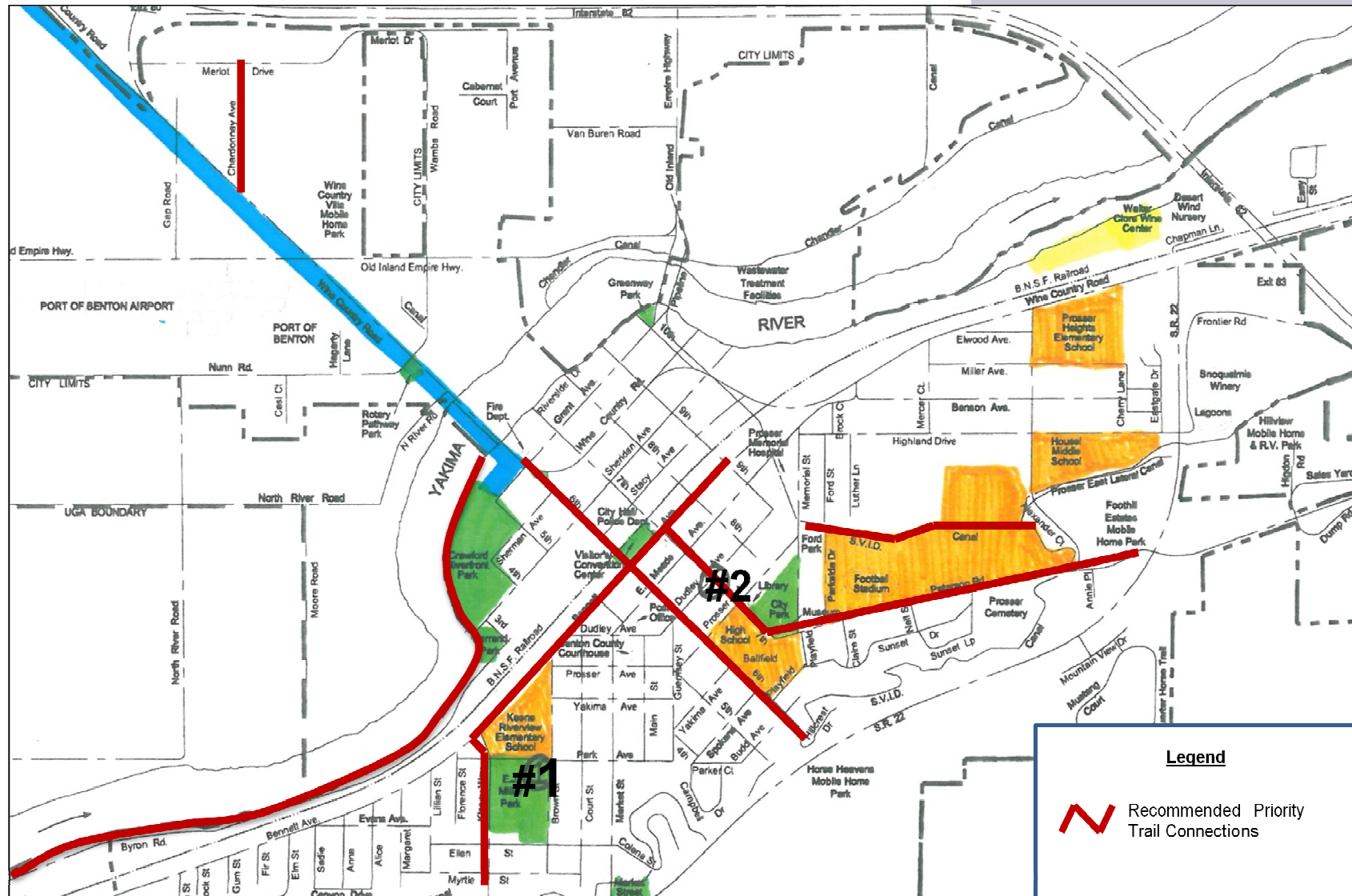


Figure 23. Recommended priority connections for trails and/or sidewalks and bicycle lanes  
Source for Basemap: EDA – Transportation Focus Area for Prosser Gateway



Figures 24-25. Bicycle themed restaurants like Spin Burger Bar in Sacramento, CA pictured here create jobs, and support a broader bicycle economy.



Figures 26. Incorporating bicycle features like parking can make bicycling more convenient and attract more customers to downtown businesses

### Embrace the growing bicycle economy

In addition to building the pedestrian and bicycle connections recommended in Figure 23., the CPAT Team recommends supporting local or cottage industries like bike shops, bike repair, production of bike parts, and even bicycle -themed restaurants like the one pictured in Figures 24-25. and other similar retail. Such businesses can bring jobs to the community, inject revenue back into the local economy that may be been spend in other areas, and attract more bicyclists. The National Alliance for Bicycling and Walking reports that an average of \$95 per year is spent by every resident in the City of Seattle on bicycles and related retail including apparel, parts, and services. Other business in downtown will also benefit from attracting more bicyclists.

### Adopt your Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The CPAT Team recommends finalizing Prosser's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as part of a broader downtown master plan that may also include community design guidance and other elements identified during the May 7<sup>th</sup> workshop. The master plan can address these topics all in the context of the community vision, sustainability, and quality of life. For example goals for the re-use of historic buildings, mixed use, connectivity, economic revitalization and goals for re-development and infill along with performance measures to track progress can all be included in a downtown master plan. Prosser has many of these individual pieces and should consider combining them for a more integrated approach to revitalizing downtown.

### Pursue traffic calming on priority routes

Historically, the primary function of traffic calming has been reducing traffic in residential neighborhoods. Increasingly however cities are considering traffic calming for arterial streets and downtown areas. Since these are frequently neighborhood commercial streets, a goal is often economic revitalization--improving the built environment to increase the attractiveness of the area's shops, cafes, and businesses. Traffic calming features can include vegetated medians, curb extensions, and on-street parking. Other features like traffic circles and chicanes can also be incorporated at intersections. Figure 27. shows a traffic circle that was painted by community volunteers in Seattle, WA.



Figure 27. Seattle, WA – Painted Traffic Circle improves intersection safety.

### Funding and Resources

This list includes some of the primary resources available to Prosser for accomplishing the recommendations for improving transportation connectivity listed in this report. See also Appendix B for a detailed discussion of the tax increment finance type tools available in Washington state.

- Local Improvement Districts, <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/PubWorks/lidpg.aspx>
- WSDOT Funding Programs for Local Agencies – funding opens spring 2010, <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/localprograms/ProgramMgmt/funding.htm>
- Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), Provides assistance with economic development, <http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/64/default.aspx>
- Rural Washington Loan Fund provides loans for projects creating new jobs, [http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias\\_CTED/lang\\_en/tabID\\_87/DesktopDefault.aspx](http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias_CTED/lang_en/tabID_87/DesktopDefault.aspx).
- Improvements Required Prior to Building Permit Issuance and Other Methods of Obtaining Streetscape Improvements <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/PubWorks/subsw.aspx>
- Local Improvement Districts <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/PubWorks/lidpg.aspx>

### Additional Resources

Important publications and other resources for developing transportation design standards as they relate to pedestrian safety and mobility, context sensitive design, modal integration – including freight, and roundabouts include:

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, *Guide for the Planning, Design and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities*, AASHTO 2004.

- Federal Highway Administration, Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access: Best Practices Design Guidance, FHWA 2001.
- Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities*, ITE 2006.
- WSDOT websites for Safe Routes to Schools, Pedestrian Safety, and related grant resources: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/SafeRoutesResources.htm>  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/walk>  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/bike/funding.htm>
- Washington Traffic Safety Commission's School Zone Safety and Pedestrian Safety websites:  
<http://www.wtsc.wa.gov/programs/schlzone.php>  
<http://www.wtsc.wa.gov/programs/walkbike.php>
- Federal Highway Administration's Freight Mobility website:  
<http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight>



## Priority Three: Historic Preservation

### Background

Prosser has a cohesive and pedestrian friendly downtown with a substantial presence of historic buildings. Various historic preservation activities can support the community's interest in preserving its historic resources while stimulating economic development, enhancing quality of life, and meeting a range of broader community goals.

The intent of this section is to outline steps the community can initiate that will lead to the identification of significant historic resources in the downtown area. Once identified, the Prosser community can take steps for long-term preservation of these resources for downtown revitalization, tourism development, and quality of life. The Action Committee should consider the following list of historic preservation activities and resources to achieve the Prosser Vision.

#### 1. Investigate designation of Prosser as a Certified Local Government

The State's Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) administers the Certified Local Government (CLG) program in Washington. Becoming a CLG entails creation by City Council of a local historic preservation commission and a local register of historic places. Similar to a planning commission, the historic preservation commission provides the community with expertise on preservation matters and acts to review and designate properties for listing in the local register of historic places. It is important to note that listing in the local register of historic places allows those property owners access to take advantage of preservation tax incentives; specifically the Special Valuation for Historic Properties program. CLG status also makes the City eligible to apply to DAHP for matching grants to conduct historic preservation activities such as survey/inventory (see below), historic preservation planning, and public education/outreach. Existing CLGs in the region include the Cities of Yakima, Kennewick, as well as Walla Walla. We

recommend that the Action Committee contact the CLG coordinator at DAHP to understand the advantages of becoming a CLG and to determine next steps.

## **2. Survey and Inventory of Historic Properties**

Conducting a survey and preparing inventory forms is a fundamental first step in gathering information about historic properties in a community. In essence, this step results in collection of data about properties (including buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects) that are 40 years in age or more. DAHP's Historic Property Inventory database is used to record data about individual properties. Survey work should to be completed by historic preservation professionals with specified training and education. Volunteers can assist in the survey work when trained and supervised by qualified professionals. Note: a survey project is eligible to be funded by matching grants from DAHP to CLGs (see above). This is another "next step" for members of the Action Committee, especially those with knowledge of Prosser's downtown historic character.

## **3. Evaluation for Historic Significance/Historic Designation**

Once a survey/inventory project has been completed, those identified properties should be "evaluated" to determine significance and eligibility for listing in the local register of historic places (assuming Prosser implements such a program) and/or the National Register of Historic Places, or the Washington Heritage Register. Historic designations can afford property owners access to preservation incentives, particularly the Special Valuation for Historic Properties program, mentioned above.

At this time, it does not appear that a historic district exists in downtown Prosser that would be eligible for National Register listing. As a result of fires and remodeling of historic buildings with new materials, the downtown currently does not retain the level of historic character necessary for a National Register historic district designation. However, an intensive survey/inventory of all the buildings along Main Street might provide additional data that could support National Register or Washington Heritage Register designations for several individual buildings. Another strategy would involve a

local register of historic places designation of a “downtown historic district” or several individual designations. Both options could provide owners of those properties with the ability to take advantage of incentives such as the Special Valuation for Historic Properties program.

#### **4. Concentrate Business and Community Activity Downtown**

Downtown Prosser has great potential for increasing vitality in its retail and community offerings. However, the comfortable building scale and variety of architectural styles and materials hint at the town’s rich heritage and opportunity to become even more of a destination. To realize this potential, the City should work with the Action Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, downtown property and business owners, and other interested stakeholders to focus investment and activity in the downtown area. Recommendations include locating a community center, the library, additional housing, restaurants, and hotel/bed and breakfast lodging in the core area and adjacent blocks. More specific recommendations include:

- Design and develop a park/public space/waterfront access on the vacant parcel behind the Davidson Avenue commercial buildings and the Horseshoe Lake waterfront;
- Provide incentives to encourage business/property owners to create new or secondary entrances opening onto this new space.
- Support and increase activity downtown by retaining school district facilities at or near the existing campus.
- Require infill development in the downtown to be carefully designed so that it is compatible with the historic character of existing buildings.
- Establish a low-interest revolving loan program or matching grant program to help assist property owners to implement façade improvements to formerly historic storefronts and buildings.

## **5. Ongoing Preservation Planning Activities**

Once Prosser has established a local historic preservation program, inventoried historic properties, and evaluated inventoried properties for listing in a local register and/or the National Register/Washington Heritage Register, it is recommended that Prosser sustain this momentum through subsequent preservation planning activities. Such activities should include, but not be limited to:

- Drafting and adopting a historic preservation element or chapter as part of Prosser's comprehensive plan.
- Coordinating local historic preservation efforts with existing efforts or programs such as the HPDA, the Farmers Market, façade improvement projects, and tourism promotion efforts.
- Linking downtown revitalization and historic preservation efforts with interpretation of local heritage. Develop an interpretation plan to identify opportunities and appropriate media to identify and interpret heritage sites for visitors and residents alike.
- Assessing how the review, interpretation, and application of local codes (building, fire, zoning, etc.) mesh with downtown revitalization goals and projects. If potential conflicts or barriers are identified, a task for the Action Committee should be to resolve issues in an expeditious and transparent process.

## **Recommendations**

- Implement a local historic preservation program (CLG).
- Conduct an historic property survey of downtown Prosser with completion of DAHP's Historic Property Inventory forms.
- Evaluate inventoried properties to assess significance and eligibility for historic registers.
- Consider establishing a downtown historic district for listing in a local register of historic places thereby providing property owners with access to rehabilitation tax incentives.
- Coordinate and incorporate historic preservation projects and activities with other local tourism planning, economic development, downtown revitalization, and transportation projects.



- Explore using other preservation tools for long-term historic preservation, land-use planning, and community development projects.
- Identify funding mechanisms/incentives to implement historic preservation and downtown revitalization goals.

### **Incentives/Resources**

- Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation---Visit the website at [www.dahp.wa.gov](http://www.dahp.wa.gov) for information on Certified Local Governments, National Register of Historic Places/Washington Heritage Register, other program descriptions, and staff contact information.
- Transportation Enhancement Grants---Contact the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation Organization (RTPO) for Klickitat County for information about application time frames, processes, and project eligibility.
- County document recording fee grants---Based on HB 1386, \$1.00 of document filing fees go to historic preservation project funding.
- Heritage Capital Grants---Contact the Washington State Historical Society for more information. Grant periods are based on the State's biennial budget and require a 2 for 1 match.
- Save America's Treasures (SAT) Grants---Contact the National Park Service for application time frames, processes, and project eligibility.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development---Contact the regional USDA Rural Development office for information about USDA funding opportunities.
- Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues.
- National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) ---Contact the Western Regional Office of the NTHP for grant funding or low-interest loans for historic preservation planning projects or studies.
- Washington Trust for Historic Preservation (WTHP) ---Contact the WTHP for information about the "Washington Preserves" grant program.

## Priority Four: Economic Revitalization

### Background

While economic revitalization is identified as the fourth priority as a result of the CPAT workshop discussions, the CPAT Team and workshop participants recognize that it is interwoven with the other community priorities. Economic revitalization can be an outcome of the integration of good community design, better transportation connections, and historic preservation efforts to connect to Prosser's authentic heritage.

Economic revitalization occurs at the grassroots level and takes time, typically 10 to 20 years. Throughout this process, community members build their understanding of effective economic development activities and how incremental changes can lead to revitalization and success. Some economic development activities occur at the municipal level while others have to occur at the less formal community level. The CPAT recommends using an Action Committee to pursue and track progress toward priorities.

In general, public investment in support of economic development tends to be limited to infrastructure improvements such as transportation, park, water, and sewer improvements. See **Appendix B** of this report for a detailed discussion of some of the primary tools and programs that can be used by municipalities to support economic revitalization.

Community groups and organizations (i.e., the Chamber of Commerce) have other, often complementary, opportunities to embark on private civic investments, façade improvement programs, farmers markets, organizational activities, and promotions. However, cities can also support private investment by creating parallel programs such as low interest loans, design assistance, and funding for a Main Street Manager who spearheads organizational activities and promotions.

### **Analysis**

Prior to and during the CPAT work session community participants identified specific economic development/revitalization opportunities to pursue. Some of these will need to be incorporated in existing city plans and programs, such as the Comprehensive Plan, but many other opportunities can be “low-hanging fruit” and pursued by the Action Committee in the shorter term.

### **Tools for Understanding Prosser’s Consumer Market**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street program (<http://www.mainstreet.org>), in which Prosser is now fully participating, is the only national economic revitalization program that works everywhere and anywhere. Cities, business associations, Chambers of Commerce, and/or volunteer non-profit organizations anywhere can apply its Four-Point approach (Design, Organization, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring) to revitalization. The Economic Restructuring aspect of this Four-Point approach strongly recommends that revitalization organizations conduct a market analysis frequently. The Main Street program recommends the “Downtown and Business District Market Analysis Guidebook,” as one approach. This document was produced as a collaborative effort between the University of Wisconsin - Extension (UWEX) and the Wisconsin Main Street Program of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and can be found at: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/downtowns/dma/intext.cfmmodel>.

The Wisconsin model is also outlined in a book titled “Step-by-Step Market Analysis: A Workbook for Commercial District Business Development”. The Wisconsin model comes with free database downloads and a demand calculator; these are very useful tools that anyone can use but not everyone can create, which is why the Wisconsin model is the most recommended market analysis process for local communities who choose to conduct their own analysis. Any market analysis needs to be repeated frequently, every 2 to 4 years, by those living, working, playing, and shopping in the area, because the business and consumer markets change.

When conducting a market analysis using the Wisconsin model, the community is creating an in-depth demographic and economic profile of the market area, which could be a business district, city, or region. In a traditional market analysis, the availability (supply, measured in sales within the market area) of a certain product or business type is compared with the demand for the products (the purchasing power of the people living within the market area). Identifying existing conditions (e.g. what is the consumer market, how many businesses exist, where are the major retailers located, how many square feet of commercial space, how much can the consumers buy, how much commercial space zoned, can that commercial district expand as the population expands) helps to define the economic health of the community's commercial district. The Wisconsin model guidebook walks through the process of creating a business district inventory, and how to put together a business recruitment plan.

Comparing information about the local commercial area and the surrounding market (consumer demographic information) to the supply and demand numbers using the demand calculator yields a positive or negative number (what is left over after you subtract the demand from the supply). A negative number means that your community has more supply than the consumers can purchase and the sales for this business category are drawing from a larger market area (possibly the entire county or regionally). For example, it would be expected that a regional farm equipment dealership provides a supply that far exceeds the local community demand for that industry type. However, if the local demand for a grocery store exceeds the local supply, then the community has a market opportunity.

Gaining a true understanding of the local commercial district is central for creating a successful assessment the economic vitality of your local downtown. The Wisconsin model bases the supply and demand results on national trends using population and income demographics. Currently, the City of Spokane is using this model for conducting a neighborhood business district analysis.



Prosser's demographic and retail sales data, and demographic information is readily available through the Census Bureau web site (<http://www.census.gov>), The Economic Census web site (<http://www.census.gov/epcd/www/econ97.html>), and the WA State Department of Revenue web site (<http://dor.wa.gov/content/home>). Evaluating this information at the neighborhood level provides a better picture of how the neighborhood is performing and a better understanding of retail opportunities.

On the one hand communities need to maintain a balance between keeping a compact downtown as an enjoyable space for people of all ages to frequent by not over-zoning – and on the other, providing room for businesses to expand as they grow. Healthy vacancy rates are below 10 percent, but in a smaller downtown with 50 businesses, a 10 percent vacancy rate is five vacant spaces and five holes in a downtown the size of Prosser's would be too many.

Once complete, a market analysis should be used as a marketing tool for your community. It will speak to your assets; it will show that you are proactively planning your future; it will show that you know your commercial and consumer markets; and that you are a city protecting and working with your business community for a stronger economic outlook.

### **Funding Opportunities and Resources**

Prosser should be aware of other potential financing tools and funding sources to help implement economic development programs. **Appendix B** contains a discussion of the primary tax increment financing type tools and programs available to local agencies in Washington State. Reference has been made elsewhere in this report to some of the additional resources for assistance with economic development efforts.

Please note that the contact information provided for these resources is intended only as a starting point in researching and determining an appropriate funding strategy.

- CTED provides loans through the “Rural Washington Loan Fund” for projects creating new jobs.  
([http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias\\_\\_CTED/lang\\_\\_en/tabID\\_\\_87/DesktopDefault.aspx](http://www.cted.wa.gov/portal/alias__CTED/lang__en/tabID__87/DesktopDefault.aspx)).
- Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) (<http://www.dahp.wa.gov>) for the Certified Local Government Program, providing information about this process and its benefits. For example, listed properties may be eligible for various tax incentives.
- Funding may also be available from Heritage Capital Projects Funds through the Washington State Heritage Resource Center ([www.wshs.org/wshs/hrc/grants.htm](http://www.wshs.org/wshs/hrc/grants.htm)).
- CTED's Downtown Revitalization Program, WA's Main Street program  
<http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/52/default.aspx>
- Local Improvement Districts – <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/PubWorks/lidpg.aspx>
- WSDOT Funding Programs for Local Agencies – funding opens spring 2010,  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/localprograms/ProgramMgmt/funding.htm>
- Farmers Markets, Public Markets – Regulation to marketing advice on Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) , <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Econ/ed-farmmarket.aspx>







## Appendix A: Community Priority Action Plan

### *Priority One---Community Design*

1. Combine Adopt Design Guidelines & Continuity—Murals, Color for Alleyways as one action item. (High)
2. Combine Streetscape & Clean Up Power Lines as One Action Item. (High)
3. Add Courthouse Highlight (from Historic Preservation) as part of Community Design--(Streetscape).
4. Add Alleys for Business Access under Community Design—We believe that the Connectivity element of this will be a result of the design focus on the alleys.

### *Priority Two—Connectivity*

1. Tie All Outside Areas (Including Vintner's Village, Walter Clore Center, & Exit 80) to the Downtown through Trail Connections. (High)
2. Support Bicycle Economy by Completing Short Term Needs—Recruit a Bike Shop (High)
3. Interpretive Trails on Canals (Not high priority for downtown action committee—more of city and tourism project)
4. Bed & Breakfast & Bikes (Low Priority—this would be something that would have to happen after we have established the bike economy).

### *Priority Three—Historic Preservation*

1. Create a CLG (Historical Interpretation & Preservation and Inventory Program would be a result of this) (High)
2. Finn Building Renovation (Very Low—This is something that would happen years down the line, after a lot of progress has been made).

### *Priority Four—Economic Development*

1. Develop a shop Local Program—(High—Something the Promotions Committee has on Workplan).
2. Promotional Materials—(High—Promotions Committee has on Workplan).—We also discussed having a skycam/webcam for tourism and city website.
3. Public Art (High—The committee would like to keep this more general—They may not want to concentrate on the Lamb theme, but rather a farm equipment theme).
4. Cottage Industry (Low)—Encourage this industry at farmer's market
5. Finn Building Renovation (Very Low)—Again, we cannot see this happening within the next 10 years—it would have to be an after result of all the other progress in town.
6. Vocation Efforts (Very Low)—This is not a direct action item for the downtown action committee, rather the city and Prosser Economic Development Association.



## Appendix B: Washington Financing Tools

*This appendix briefly summarizes tax increment financing type programs in Washington State. It is intended to provide some basic information to assist persons interested in financing tools for local public infrastructure. It is not intended to be used as an interpretive document on the state laws pertaining to these programs.*

### **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FINANCING (CRF) ACT**

In 2001, the Community Revitalization Financing (CRF) Act was created. It authorized cities, towns, counties, and port districts to create a tax “increment area” and finance public improvements within the area by using increased revenues from local property taxes generated within the area.

- An increment area cannot be created without approval of the local governments imposing at least 75 percent of the regular property taxes within the area.
- The incremental local property taxes under this program are calculated on 75 percent of any increase in assessed value in the increment area.
- Any fire protection district with geographic boundaries in the increment area must agree to participate for the project to proceed.
- CRF increment areas are created and administered at the local government level.
- The CRF Act does not include a state contribution.

There are currently five increment areas located in Spokane County. This program is currently available for local government use. The legal foundation for this tool is founded in Chapter 39.89 of the Revised Code of Washington.

### **LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING TOOL (LIFT) PROGRAM**

In 2006, the Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) program was created and made available to certain local governments for financing local public improvement projects intended to encourage economic development or redevelopment. As part of the LIFT program, a sponsoring jurisdiction (city, town, county, port district, or federally recognized Indian tribe) creates a “revenue development area” from which annual increases in revenues from local sales/use taxes and local property taxes are measured and used. Such increases in revenues and any additional funds from other local public sources are used to pay for public improvements in the revenue development area and are also used to match a limited amount of state contribution.

- A revenue development area and award of a state contribution must be approved by the state's Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB).
- Incremental local property taxes under this program are calculated on 75 percent of increases in assessed value as a result of new construction and improvements to property within the revenue development area.
- Incremental local sales and use taxes are estimated by the sponsoring local government with assistance of the Department of Revenue when requested.
- Participation in the sharing of incremental revenues for this program is voluntary and requires written agreement. (e.g. A city sponsoring a LIFT project may ask a library district to share its incremental property tax revenue and a county to share its incremental sales tax revenue with the city to support the project. The library district and county could sign a written agreement to participate, but they don't have to.)
- To receive the state contribution, the sponsoring local government imposes a local sales and use tax that is credited against the state sales and use tax. This local tax is the mechanism by which the local government will receive the state contribution. The local tax does not increase the rate of tax paid by consumers but instead diverts state sales and use tax revenue to the local government. The local government receives a limited amount of distributions from the local LIFT tax each fiscal year up to the lesser of: (1) the amount of project award approved by CERB; (2) the amount of local matching funds dedicated to the payment of the public improvements or bonds in the previous calendar year; and (3) the highest amount of incremental state sales/use and property tax revenues for any one calendar year as determined by the sponsoring local government and identified in an annual report submitted to the Department of Revenue and CERB.
- The local funds and state contribution are used for payment of bonds issued for financing local public improvements within the revenue development area. The public improvements may be financed on a pay-as-you-go basis but only for the first five years of the state contribution.
- The state contribution ends after 25 years or when the bonds are paid off, whichever is earlier.
- The state can contribute a maximum of \$7.5 million statewide to the LIFT program per state fiscal year.
- The maximum state contribution per project is capped at \$1 million per state fiscal year.

Nine projects have been awarded state contributions under the LIFT program. The projects are located in Bellingham, Bothell, Everett, Federal Way, Mount Vernon, Puyallup, Vancouver, Yakima, and Spokane County. The application process for the LIFT program is closed. Approval of additional projects and awards by CERB would require future legislative action.

The legal foundation for this program can be found in Chapter 39.102 RCW, and RCW 82.14.475. See annual LIFT reports prepared by CERB located on the Department of Commerce's web site. Go to [www.commerce.wa.gov](http://www.commerce.wa.gov) and search for "Local Infrastructure Financing Tool."



### **LOCAL REVITALIZATION FINANCING (LRF) PROGRAM**

In 2009, The Local Revitalization Financing (LRF) Program was created by Second Substitute Senate Bill 5045 (2SSB 5045). The LRF program authorizes cities, towns, counties, and port districts to create a “revitalization area” (RA) and allows certain increases in local sales and use tax revenues and local property tax revenues generated from within the revitalization area, additional funds from other local public sources, and a state contribution to be used for payment of bonds issued for financing local public improvements within the revitalization area. This program is very similar to the LIFT program.

- The Department of Revenue (Department) is responsible for the administration of the program. To seek a state contribution, the local government that creates a revitalization area must apply to the Department.
- The program makes available state contributions for seven demonstration projects and other competitive projects approved on a first-come basis.
- Incremental local property taxes under this program are calculated on 75 percent of increases in assessed value as a result of new construction and improvements to property within the revitalization area.
- Participation in the sharing of incremental revenues for this program is voluntary but requires action to opt out of participation. (e.g. If a library district, or other taxing district, doesn’t want to share its incremental property tax revenue with the city, it must pass an ordinance to remove itself from participation.)

To receive the state contribution, the sponsoring local government imposes a local sales and use tax that is credited against the state sales and use tax. This local tax credit is the mechanism by which the local government will receive the state contribution.

- The local tax credit does not increase the rate of tax paid by consumers but instead diverts the state sales and use tax to the local government. The local government receives a limited amount of distributions from this local tax each state fiscal year up to the lesser of: (1) the amount of project award approved by the Department of Revenue; and (2) the amount of local matching funds dedicated to the payment of the public improvements or bonds in the previous calendar year and identified in an annual report submitted by the local government.
- The state can contribute a maximum \$6.63 million statewide for the LRF program per state fiscal year.
- The maximum amount of state contribution for each demonstration project is specified in the bill and ranges from \$200,000 to \$500,000 per project. The maximum state contribution for each competitive project approved on a first-come basis is \$500,000.
- The local funds and state contribution are used for payment of bonds issued for financing local public improvements within the revitalization area.

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Eighteen projects have been approved for state contributions under LRF. The projects are located in Auburn, Bellevue, Bremerton, Federal Way, Kennewick, Lacey, Mill Creek, Puyallup, Renton (2 projects), Richland, Spokane, Tacoma, University Place, Vancouver, Wenatchee, Clark County, and Whitman County.

Additional approvals for a state contribution would require future legislative action. This program is still available for use at the local level without a state contribution. Legal authority for this program can be found in Chapter 39.104 RCW, RCWs 82.14.505, 82.14.510, 82.14.515, and 82.32.765. For additional information visit the Department of Revenue's Local Government Web Page at [www.dor.wa.gov/localgovernment](http://www.dor.wa.gov/localgovernment) and click on the link for "Local Revitalization Financing."