EXPANDED PIONEER PARK

BUILDING KEY
1. RIVERSTREET COMMUNITY CENTER
2. DAY CARE CENTER
3. VOCATIONAL-AUTOMOTIVE CENTER
Pioneer Park

The key to establishing a social service plan for River Street involves the expansion and upgrading of Pioneer Park. This would establish the park as the physical and social focal point of the entire neighborhood and would connect with other areas of the neighborhood by a network of pedestrian paths. The existing park and tot lot which is centrally located within the neighborhood would be expanded across Ash Street and include the lot on the corner of Miller and Pioneer Streets and its two buildings. The size of this park would be below the size recommended for a neighborhood park, but its activities would be more of a passive or social nature than that of recreation. Ann Morrison Park, which will connect to Pioneer Park by way of Pioneer Walk and Footbridge, provides a wide variety of recreation activities and is so close to the River Street neighborhood that any large neighborhood park in River Street would be a duplication of facilities.

Once expanded, park improvements should include the upgrading of pedestrian walks and amenities for passive relaxation and improvements of the tot lot's play equipment. The existing sand surfacing should be replaced by grass or appropriate substitutes. Shade is extremely important to the park's success and requires the necessity of planting mature trees as well as complete landscaping. Further plans call for the rehabilitation of the three existing buildings which, because of location, cost efficiency and the soundness of the buildings, make them excellent to provide facilities for a wide range of social activities. All of these buildings would be extensions of the park and their uses would be coordinated to make full use of the park.

The Community Center

The Community Center is basic to the solution of neighborhood problems and in achieving neighborhood goals. A definite need for such a center has been expressed and the existence of the building at 12th and Grand offers an excellent opportunity to establish a center at a reasonable cost and at a very visible location. Such a center would be low-keyed, relying on the neighborhood for direction. Its staff would
be minimal, depending primarily on volunteers. Direct services offered from the center would be limited, with most of the direction of the center being on providing information and referrals and social activities especially designed to serve the neighborhood's young, the teenager, and the elderly. The center would be closely coordinated with recreational programs of the Park Department. Meeting space would also be provided. A key responsibility of the center would be in creating an atmosphere that would encourage those living in the proposed subsidized housing units to take advantage of beneficial programs and services that would be available in the total community. Though the center would hope that it would establish itself as a drop-in center for those in need, it would also seek out and have an accountability for those families or individuals who need special care. Information and referrals would be the main response to these individuals, and a close relationship between the neighborhood center and larger multi-service centers would be necessary to allow effective results. The center would also be active in providing space and assistance to neighborhood groups.

The existing building shown in the adjacent plans could be renovated with a minimum of cost and the project could be started before the park is expanded. The building size would also allow for rental space to the area development organization or another public or civic organization. Rents from this would help to lower the center's and park's expenses.
Day Care Center

A definite need has been expressed to establish a local day care center. This would allow mothers to receive education or job training as well as provide child care for working families. The one-story brick building which exists on the expanded park site is well suited to meet the requirements of a day care facility and would require a minimum of cost and renovation to bring it up to a useful facility. The existence of the park would only enhance the center's activities. Though it is believed that the existing and future population of the neighborhood could easily fill the available 35 to 45 slots that the center's building size would allow, mothers from other areas who work downtown would find the center very accessible to them.
Auto-Torium

The concept for an auto-torium, or automobile work area, came out of the lack of any suitable space for auto repair and the number of local residents who wished to do their own auto work. Presently, a number of streets in the project area have the appearance of a local garage. To meet this need, and rather than eliminate a sound building which exists on the expanded park site, the building was retained. This building will require practically no changes as it was designed with two auto bays and is well suited for repair work. It is hoped that this facility could serve as an outpost in attracting people into the vocational programs offered at Boise State College and that some assistance in operating such a facility could be shared with vocational programs at both the local high schools and the college. This facility could also be used to hold any maintenance equipment required for the park or as a temporary home rehabilitation center for those rehabilitating existing homes in the neighborhood.
To provide the physical facilities for the recommended services is relatively simple, but to make them effective requires a great deal of planning and cooperation. This will only be possible if there is first a commitment to support these facilities by the local residents, followed by the assistance of trained social workers and administrators. One particularly unique aspect for the River Street area is its proximity to Boise State College. The college contains a wealth of knowledge and expertise in a number of fields that will be helpful in redeveloping River Street. It also has a limitless amount of manpower in its students who are eager to become involved in the actual day-to-day events of a neighborhood. Such students could be placed in neighborhood centers, day care centers, or vocational programs, and not only apply their knowledge but receive good experience. It is the Design Team's belief that once facilities are made available, a direct link should be established between the neighborhood and Boise State College.

Out of the listed problems and solutions, a number of social service improvements are recommended. If implemented, they will not only assist the River Street neighborhood but will work to strengthen the community services of the entire city.

**Improvements for Educational Services**

Provide low-cost adult education.

Establish a tutoring program between Boise State College students and the children at Campus Elementary.

Expand the curriculum of the Community Schools program to include education that will be beneficial to low-income individuals (adult education, basic nutrition, health care, money management for the family, family planning and parental responsibilities).

Maintain and update existing neighborhood information bulletin board.
Improvements for Health Services

Continue Model Cities Health Center.

Make health services more accessible to user groups, particularly women with children and elderly.

Implement educational programs through Community Schools on nutrition and health care.

Expand low-cost dental programs.

Continue local Health Fairs.

Improvements for Employment

Expand vocational training programs and facilities. Encourage Boise State College to provide outreach in attracting low-income individuals.

Establish job re-training programs for potential jobs.

Provide job listings at the local community center as well as employment referrals.

Improvements for Family and Child Care

Establish a local day care program and facility.

Establish a neighborhood center and youth program.

Coordinate local activities with the Park Department for a youth program.

Improve communication and referral to family counseling and mental health services.
Improvements in Welfare Services

- Involve the citizenry in welfare reform.
- Expand outreach operations.
- Promote participation by welfare recipients in Boise State College and Community Schools programs.
- Increase allocation of resources to critical needs.

Improvements for Public Safety Services

- Remove specific hazards to pedestrian safety and provide lighting and control systems.
- Provide well-lighted pedestrian pathways throughout the neighborhood.

Improvements for Transportation

- Expand public transportation systems through the neighborhood and to all social services throughout the community.
- Increase information on routes and times and provide signing and bus shelters.

Improvements for Social Services

- Establish a local neighborhood center.
- Centralize social services throughout the City to provide one-door services.

The social service findings developed by the Design Team have been incorporated into the physical redevelopment of this report and can be reviewed in the Housing and Circulation sections.
Commercially zoned properties within the project area presently occupy 35 acres, of which one-half have been developed by low-density commercial interests. These activities are scattered throughout the project area, but concentrations have developed along the major north-south arterials, Capitol and Americana Boulevards.

In considering future retail development for the project area, great attention was given to the River Street Land Utilization and Marketability Study produced by Larry Smith and Company. Four major retail conclusions were drawn. They are:

The adjacent Boise Central Business District and proposed Urban Renewal shopping mall have already established themselves as the dominant retail area of the central city. Any major retail development in the project area would experience heavy competition from established trade areas.

Convenience retail appears to be overbuilt in the vicinity of the project area, and no new convenience facilities are justified in the project area in the near future unless such development takes place on either Capitol or Americana Boulevards. At a later date, demand generated by new high-density residential growth will warrant the need for new convenience retail development totaling three to five acres.

There is an opportunity for major retail development in the way of furniture and specialty retail on the Capitol Boulevard side of the project. This is predicated on the availability of tenants and the re-use of a three-block area of old warehouse buildings.

Approximately nine acres of the total project area is suitable for new retail development.
AMERICANA PLAZA

A definite trend of commercial development has established itself in the southwest corner of the project area close to the Americana Boulevard and River Street intersection. This development began in 1965 and 1966 with the establishment of the main branch of the U.S. Post Office and the K-Mart discount store. These were followed by the Health Spa, the Pantry Restaurant, Household Finance, Standard Insurance and an Idaho State liquor store. The Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company and Graybar Electric have also located in this area. All of these establishments draw their clientele from a much larger area than just the River Street neighborhood.

One of the more recent occurrences in the vicinity has been the Greenbelt along the Boise River and Shoreline Drive. A 55-foot strip of land has been acquired between Americana Boulevard and the former Clements Concrete land, and development of a pedestrian and bicycle path and landscaping is in progress. The Greenbelt is also developing the 1.87-acre Clements Concrete land into Shoreline Park. The Boise River, the Greenbelt, and Shoreline Park will provide a strong public focal point to this area as well as enhance the potential for future and improved commercial improvements. Already these attractions have led to the development of two professional office buildings on Shoreline Drive, and plans have been released for two additional office structures in the same locality.

It is unfortunate that the growth that has taken place in this area in the last few years has lacked any overall planning. This has led to the typical auto-oriented scattered-building site arrangement with each store acting as an individual unit rather than a planned shopping area. Presently the exterior areas are predominantly asphalt paving and painted parking stalls. No surface structure has been delineated to provide pedestrian-vehicle separation or to provide pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, landscaping, seating, and shelter or provisions for public transportation.

Future planned traffic improvements of the 15th and 16th Streets couplet will establish the couplet as a major north-south arterial and lead to improved access to the shopping
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN OF AMERICANA PLAZA

- new convenience retail
- identifiable and clustered signing
- proposed office buildings
- greenbelt
- Shoreline Park

establish harmonious commercial area through planned development, pleasant pedestrian paths, landscaping and mutually shared parking
area. Present entry and exit to the area is undefined, with numerous entry-exit points, some impeding the movement of through traffic.

AMERICANA PLAZA RECOMMENDATIONS

Major entry-exit points should be established at the intersections of Americana Boulevard, Shoreline Drive, and River Street.

Existing and future commercial development must pull together in establishing a harmonious commercial area. New structures should face toward the center of the area and parking should be concentrated and mutually shared.

Pedestrian movement between retail and office establishments, as well as close links to the Greenbelt, Shoreline Park, and the residential area, must be established. With an increased number of pedestrian shoppers in the future, the center should provide efficient, pleasant and identifiable pedestrian circulation.

Amenities to the area such as trees, additional sidewalks, bus stops, burrs or landscaping to separate automobile parking from view, and identifiable and clustered signing are required.

Additional convenience retail shops to serve the demands created by the growth of the residential neighborhood will be required.

City involvement is needed in the area to insure that private and public coordination is reached in attaining the potentials of the area. Expenditures of public funds for the completion of the Greenbelt and Shoreline Park, street trees, pedestrian systems and crossings, and public transportation improvements should be used to spark private investments into the area. Zoning changes should also be made to accommodate office demand and residential growth. (See Land Use map, page 15.)
SPECIALTY COMMERCIAL - HISTORIC DISTRICT

A unique resource, consisting of turn-of-the-century warehouse buildings, presently exists in the northeast corner of the project area. These buildings, which have been cited by local historic groups as noteworthy, offer an exciting potential for re-use as a specialty commercial district along the lines of such successful projects as San Francisco's Ghirardelli Square, Denver's Larimer Square, or Seattle's Pioneer Square. The area being considered is bounded by Fulton Street, South 9th Street, Broad Street, and the alley between South 8th Street and Capitol Boulevard, and consists of approximately three blocks, or 4.7 acres.

Presently the warehouse district is in a period of transition, with light industrial, warehousing and wholesaling users finding that the area offers little in the way of growth potential and looking to new areas for expansion. Many users realize that the buildings are now obsolete for their business operations because of the number of floors and limited amount of square footage. Congestion is also a major problem, as few off-street loading areas are available, forcing streets to be temporarily closed while trucks unload. These limitations are forcing old established firms to expand elsewhere, leaving the buildings under-used and available for new uses.
The buildings themselves are predominantly brick structures of two or three stories and were constructed in the early 1900's. They are not particularly architecturally significant when examined individually, though they do have some interesting detail work. Rather, they possess a unique charm and character when viewed together and embody a distinctive harmony for that period of construction and architecture. This is especially true when considering their uniform building heights. The buildings are now in a state of neglect and disrepair, but few buildings in the area have been lost.

The most promising aspect of the warehouse area is its location in proximity to major Boise activity centers. The warehouse district centers on South 8th Street, which historically has been and is likely to remain one of Boise's main north-south streets. Located to the north of the district is the Central Business District where the State's financial center, governmental offices, and a regional shopping area are located. Urban Renewal plans call for a rejuvenation of the retail area and hopes to construct a large enclosed shopping mall two blocks to the north of the warehouse area. To the south lies an expanding educational and cultural center which houses the City Library, art museum, State historical museum, ITT Link's School of Business, and Boise State College. Close by are both of Boise's major parks and the Boise River and its Greenbelt system. The district is well served by existing urban arterials, primarily Capitol Boulevard, South 9th Street, Front Street, and Grove Street. Local streets surrounding the district contain 80-foot right-of-ways and large alleys with rail spurs serve the district. Assessing the warehouse district and its surrounding environment, it appears logical that the high people-generators which surround it would draw people to the area and a specialty commercial area would generally support and complement its surrounding uses.

From an economic standpoint, Larry Smith and Company believes that a growing demand exists for specialty commercial uses from downtown employees, residents from the surrounding trade area, and tourists and conventioneers. Their analysis indicates that in the near future there would be sufficient market potential to justify a limited amount of specialty
commercial. To be successful, though, the project would be dependent upon the rehabilitation of existing warehouse buildings, improved access to the area, tenant availability, and the assumption that the downtown mall will be the focal point of retail activity in Boise. Another factor would be the possibility of combining a specialty commercial center with a furniture center. Such an idea would increase the impact of the total development and make it more feasible. It was concluded that 50,000 square feet of specialty commercial and furniture space would have to be developed in order to create the impact needed for a successful shopping area.

As far as tenants go, two large furniture outlets are already located in the project area. One, Warehouse Furniture, is operating adjacent to the warehouse area and already takes advantage of the area for furniture storage. The other, Mike's Americana, is utilizing a warehouse building located in the Front Street proposed-couplet area and could easily be relocated into the area. In regard to specialty stores, no other area in Boise has established itself for this market, and it appears that little will be left in the Urban Renewal area that would offer the character required to make such an area attractive to specialty stores. Urban Renewal's rejuvenation process has also had to relocate, and will be continuing to relocate, a number of small businesses that would be well suited for a specialty shopping district. The possibilities for types of shops besides furniture and antiques would include restaurants, taverns, book and music shops, art galleries, a bakery, import shops, a flower shop, and gift shops. Future plans could even include a Boise Public Market. The area should also provide the opportunity for seasonal outdoor market type merchandising from flowers, fruit, or handicraft stalls by either individuals and/or part of the commercial services in the shopping area. As most existing buildings are two and three stories, upper floors could accommodate office space and a limited amount of residential space.

Some problems are foreseen for the warehouse development. Of most concern is the present location study underway for a proposed new east-west urban arterial system that would serve the central city. Past plans have shown the arterial
dividing or running immediately adjacent to the warehouse district. Any such plans would seriously conflict with a people-oriented shopping area and in all probability would make any specialty shopping area for the warehouse district unlikely. Therefore, it is essential that the urban arterial system be designed so that it would be compatible with this development. Plans in this report recommend a Front Street Couplet that would achieve this. Good pedestrian access from the Central Business District to the area creates a problem. Major arterials and the Union Pacific Railroad track make the crossing unpleasant and hazardous. A pedestrian overpass from the proposed downtown shopping mall to the specialty area would solve this problem. Available off-street parking is also in shortage to the entire area. Vacant property to both the south and the west could be converted to solve this problem, as well as coordination with renewal plans. As parking space will be at a premium, it is unlikely that new occupants of the area could comply with existing off-street City parking regulations. Therefore, some new parking solutions would have to be developed for the area.

DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the uncertainties of business success in areas of transition and the reluctance of developers to rehabilitate old buildings, it is mandatory that the City of Boise exert itself in establishing an atmosphere that will strengthen and support the warehouse district. To do this an ordinance or zoning classification must be established to create a historic district. The boundaries of such a district would be Fulton Street, South 9th Street, Broad Street, and the alley between South 8th Street and Capitol Boulevard. Such an ordinance or zone would prohibit demolition, construction, restoration, or modifications without the approval of an appropriate body established to oversee the historic district's development. This is necessary in order that a reasonable degree of control may be exercised over the site development and its architecture. It would also insure private developers that their investment into the area would not be jeopardized by poor planning or non-compatible architecture. This provision would allow the area to maintain the historic
ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN OF HISTORIC DISTRICT

- pedestrian skybridge to downtown mall
- old street lights retained
- close alleys for specialty commercial use
- 8th St. tree-lined median strip
- retain part of Forest Service land for future public use
- River St. realignment
- pedestrian crossing to park, museum and art gallery
- old 8th St. footbridge
- create outdoor reading and relaxing area for library users
character that is required to establish a successful specialty commercial district.

A number of public improvements are necessary to stimulate private development in the historic district. These would include improved pedestrian access to the Central Business District by way of a skybridge and the upgrading of South 8th Street as a major pedestrian-bicycle system. Tree planting on existing parking right-of-ways would be called for to provide adequate shade throughout the district, as well as general landscaping and some sidewalk replacement. Pedestrian crossings should be improved by incorporating bricks into the street at appropriate crossing points. A tree-lined median strip running the length of South 8th Street should be constructed to enhance the entire street which will shift its use from primarily vehicle traffic to pedestrian use. Once the historic district is established, a portion of South 8th could be closed and developed into a pedestrian square. Existing original street lights on South 8th Street should be retained and ones of a similar design should be located throughout the district. The alley between South 8th Street and South 9th Street should be closed to all but service vehicles and should be landscaped and designed too, so that it would be an extension of the surrounding businesses. South 8th Street should be closed between Broad Street and the new Front Street Couple to discourage through traffic and provide additional space for private development on the adjacent properties. This closure should not interfere with the proposed skybridge.

Private developers should be encouraged to rehabilitate existing buildings throughout the district for specialty commercial, furniture, office and residential uses. Building exteriors should be preserved and enhanced, while interiors could be completely remodeled to suit the demands.

Once public support and needed public improvements are provided, the historic district should develop on its own. Not only will it serve the City’s needs and provide variety to the Central Business District, but it will strengthen the surrounding area for improved development. In addition, the City’s enhancement of this district and its structures will contribute to the social, cultural, and economic welfare of
Boise by developing an awareness of its historic heritage, returning unproductive structures to useful purposes, and providing attractions for the City's residents and its visitors.

BOISE PUBLIC LIBRARY AREA

The new Boise Public Library will have a significant impact to the southeast corner of the project area because it expands the growing educational and cultural center now centered around Capitol Boulevard and the Boise River into the River Street area. All future development in this area should take cognizance of this expansion and be compatible with it. For example, the U.S. Forest Service land on the Boise River will soon become surplus and be available to the City. The majority of this land should be conserved for future public use that will take advantage of both the library and the natural aesthetics of the Boise River.

The library itself should strengthen its relationship with the Boise River and Greenbelt by closing the small street between Capitol Boulevard and South 8th Street and expanding its outdoor library use into the adjacent park area. Safe pedestrian circulation between the library and the art gallery and historical museum should be established as well as additional parking spaces.
As mentioned previously, major conflict has arisen over the future of residential versus light industrial development for the River Street area. Presently the majority of River Street land is zoned light industrial, but in recent years there has been no significant trend toward industrial development. More important, all recent planning and economic studies of the project area have recommended that light industrial use for the area be de-emphasized. From a planning viewpoint the River Street area, because of its proximity to the Boise River, major parks, and the Central Business District, is a scarce resource to the City and is needed for inner-city residential development. From an economic viewpoint, Larry Smith and Company concluded that the competitive advantages of available industrial land located in outlying areas ruled out any influx of new industrial firms into River Street. The competitive advantages of available outlying areas were listed as:

- The availability of large acreage tracts for development
- Lower land costs
- Lower property taxes
- Control and management of environment
- Accessibility to freeways and airports.

From these outlying advantages, it would appear that any new light industrial development in the project area would face higher development and operating costs. Existing River Street industrial businesses are also aware of these advantages, and a number have relocated or are planning to relocate out of the area. To assume that all industrial uses are contemplating relocation out of the River Street area would be misleading. Rather, a number of industrial businesses have expressed a desire to remain and grow in the area. Many of these businesses rely on the central city location that the project area offers. In responding to this need, there are numerous buildings in the area which were built for light industrial and warehouse use and these structures have many years of use left. It is anticipated
that the space created by relocation will more than cover the needs of expanding existing businesses. It should also be understood that light industrial use modification or growth will have to be of such a nature that it will co-exist with the adjacent residential and specialty commercial development.

BARBER SPUR RAILROAD ANALYSIS

A major factor in analyzing the future of light industry for the area is the existence of the Union Pacific's Barber Spur line and switching area which runs through the north section of the project area. The Barber Spur led to establishment of most of the light industrial development in River Street, and much of this growth parallels the railroad tracks.

Because of the close relationship between the railroad and light industrial uses, a questionnaire was given to all businesses with railroad docks on the line. The study area covered approximately six miles of the Barber Spur from Americana Boulevard to the end of the spur near the Barber Dam on the Boise River. Fifty-five businesses were located with loading docks but only forty-five questionnaires were taken, as the remaining businesses no longer used the rail. Forty-four responses were returned. Analysis of the questionnaires was broken down to two areas, River Street and Myrtle Street, and overall totals (see Appendix for complete results). The results were as follows:

Businesses using the Barber Spur are well-established, with an average of 25 years of use. Myrtle Street businesses are generally newer than River Street businesses.

Railroad usage is increasing by 75% for businesses in the River Street area. Myrtle Street businesses are remaining stable with decreases offsetting increases. Overall, 61% of the businesses are increasing their use. Some of these increases must be adjusted to account for expanding business growth in the Boise area.
Truck transportation is increasing for all but a few businesses.

A strong majority of businesses (84%) indicated that the railroad played a significant role in the operation of their business. But when asked if they would be able to continue operations if railroad service was discontinued, over half (57%) indicated that they would be able to continue. Many felt that the lack of railroad service would create business hardships.

Business rail volumes fluctuated, with a majority of the firms (49%) receiving a minimal 0 to 5 cars a month. Those businesses not using their railroad docks made up 22% of the total. Heavy users using 15 cars a month or more made up 13% of the total.

When asked about future plans, about one-third indicated that they planned to relocate out of the area in the next ten years. Most of these planned to move within the next five years. Twenty-seven per cent were undecided on future plans. Those moving were planning future locations at Boise's industrial park or near the Franklin and I-80 intersection.

Overall, the results appear to indicate that railroad use by existing businesses is increasing but reflecting this with the City's growth and the number of firms that no longer use the rail, total rail volume on the Barber Spur line is declining. Truck transportation on the rail line is definitely increasing. The majority of rail users are only receiving minimal shipments by rail but they are important to the business's success. A slight majority could operate without rail service but at a disadvantage. Most significant is the high number who plan to relocate out of the project area. This relocation indicates a general trend for moving to more suitable and cheaper areas for expansion. This trend indicates that rail volumes will continue to decline along the Barber Spur.