

**La Pine Community Design  
Charrette**  
*26-28 April 2000*



**LaPine  
Community Action Team**

*La Pine Community Design Charrette*  
**26 - 28 April 2000**  
La Pine, Oregon  
Newberry Station Motel

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*Acknowledgements:*



The La Pine Community Action Team (LCAT) initiated the community design charrette that resulted in the designs portrayed in this booklet. A charrette is an intensive workshop, which facilitates effective decision-making and problem solving.

The volunteer LCAT was formed with the participation of twenty local groups and citizens at large, since 1995, has been working with community to develop the La Pine community the way residents envision it. With the support of the LCAT, the community developed a Strategic Plan that serves as a road map for La Pine's future.

Northwest Area Foundation provided funding for La Pine's charrette. The Foundation has been working for a year with a local organization, Central Oregon Partnership to help develop the three-county regional economy in more sustainable ways, emphasizing the alleviation of poverty.

The Foundation offered La Pine this charrette primarily because the LCAT clearly demonstrated its commitment, passion, and hard work toward creating a positive future for its community. La Pine's charrette will serve as a model of problem solving for other regional communities.

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*Charrette subteam locating key community amenities.*

Rocky Mountain Institute organized and facilitated the charrette. RMI's staff included three designers and the charrette team leader. RMI also contracted other consultants with backgrounds in planning and design, real estate financing, and a rural urban planning. An Oregon State Land Conservation and Development Commissioner also participated. RMI staff with the help of LCAT team wrote this charrette summary booklet. It is illustrated by photos taken and by drawings created at the charrette.

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*Table of Contents:*

1) Overview	6
2) Design Principles	7
3) Vision and Strategic Plan Goals	10
4) Prospective projects	11
5) Charrette Process	13
6) Developing designs for:	
• The Greater La Pine Community	16
• Highway 97 Corridor and Gateway	21
• Town Center	25
7) Next Steps	31

## Overview

A community design charrette brings the wisdom and experience of thoughtful local residents together with the technical expertise of outsiders to solve local design problems. In particular, the La Pine charrette supported the community's Strategic Plan by offering greater detail for future decisions. Its results, offered here, suggest the locations for, and relationships among an array of prospective community projects.

Charrette results suggest development nodes, such as a new town center and Wickiup Junction, around which various businesses and civic and community facilities could be clustered. Also they suggest ways to increase community "walk-ability" support local business, increase pedestrian safety on portions of Highway 97, connect the community more directly with its natural surroundings, and strengthen the community's gateways.

The old way to solve community land-use problems was to hire a consultant who gathered information from government and residents, examined local conditions, and developed a plan, on which the community could then comment. There was little real interaction between consultants and communities. Citizens were outside the design process. They could only comment on its results.

In sharp contrast to the old approach, a charrette places community residents inside the design process. They are deeply involved in the creation of the plan or design. Citizens are actually designers who directly and genuinely collaborate with technical experts. They work through design problems alongside the consultants. For example, if one consultant offers an idea that may not fit with local conditions, citizen designers can correct the experts, help them better understand local facts. And when a local comes up with an idea, a consultant can help make it work.

The results of the La Pine charrette are a creation of the citizens of La Pine. The consultants just helped.

The La Pine charrette was an informal exercise in planning and visioning. No one involved has the authority to approve or deny any aspect of the design. As a result, the design will succeed only if the overall community supports its results. Many of the prospective projects located by the charrette may not come to fruition. Further, the locations for those projects indicated in the text and on the various maps are suggestions, not final determinations. It should also be noted, however, that these locations were thoroughly discussed, debated, and carefully determined by charrette participants.

"La Pine is growing at a 5 to 7% growth rate."

...Jill Phillips-McLane, La Pine Community Encourager

(Note: a 7% growth rate doubles the population in about ten years. A 5% rate doubles in about 14 1/2 years. Also, in the absence of mass transit, traffic congestion worsens faster than population increases. )

## Purpose

The primary purpose of La Pine's Community Design Charrette was to identify the best locations for an array of community services and facilities, often called desired projects or prospective projects, that may be needed as the community continues to grow. Though most of the projects have been discussed for years, participants understood that there's no guarantee any will be built. The prospective projects are listed on page 11.

Charrette participants carefully considered how these prospective projects could relate to one another as well as existing businesses and facilities in La Pine. They searched for ways to strengthen the community's quality of life. They located new civic and community facilities to benefit both residents and businesses. They developed designs to support commercial success while thoroughly respecting the values and needs of La Pine residents and the environment.

## Building on Earlier La Pine Planning.

Much planning preceded this charrette. Participants used the following to inform their thinking.

- La Pine 's community vision (page 10)
- The list of prospective La Pine projects (page 11)
- A map of La Pine 's proposed incorporation boundaries
- Creative examples of community design presents by the various design professionals La Pine 's current land-use map and facts (page 8)
- The Regional Problem-Solving Project

## Design Principles

La Pine is at a turning point. Existing patterns of urban and suburban development impair quality of life by creating costly expansion of roads and public services, loss of open space, inequitable distribution of economic benefits, loss of sense of community, and traffic congestion and air pollution resulting from auto dependence. The charrette suggested a better future that successfully serves the needs of those who live and work in La Pine. Such a future is based on principles that draw on the best from the past and the present.

### Successful Communities:

- 1) Contain housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.
- 2) Locate housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities within easy walking distance of each other and transit stops.
- 3) Enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within their boundaries by fostering a diversity of housing types.
- 4) Seek local businesses that provide a range of job types for community residents.
- 5) Contain town centers that combine commercial, civic, cultural and recreational uses.
- 6) Foster an ample supply of specialized open space in the form of squares, greens, and parks whose frequent use is encouraged through placement and design.
- 7) Have such well-defined edges as agricultural greenbelts and wildlife corridors permanently protected from development.
- 8) Develop systems of fully connected and interesting streets, pedestrian paths and bike paths to all destinations. Their design encourages pedestrian and bicycle use by being small and spatially defined by buildings, trees, and lighting; and by discouraging high speed traffic.
- 9) Preserve natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation, especially in parks or greenbelts.
- 10) Conserve resources and minimize waste.
- 11) Encourage efficient use of water, especially by developing natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping, and recycling.
- 12) Foster energy efficiency through street orientation, placement of buildings, and shading.
- 13) Update their general plans to incorporate these principles.



*This new town center in Mashpee, MA emerged out of what was a strip mall.*

- 14) Develop plans through an open process including visual models of planning proposals.
- 15) Take charge of the planning process rather than allowing developer-initiated, piecemeal development. For example, they designate where new growth, infill or redevelopment will occur.
- 16) Expedite development proposals that are consistent with their general plans.

### Successful Regions:

- 1.) Plan land uses to be integrated within a larger transportation network centered on transit rather than highways.
- 2.) Are bounded by and provide a continuous system of greenbelt and wildlife corridors determined by natural conditions.
- 3.) Locate regional institutions and services (government, recreation, etc.) in town and urban cores.
- 4.) Enhance local character and community identity, exhibit historic and cultural continuity, and foster climate compatibility by encouraging the use of regional construction materials and methods.

*Adapted from The Ahwahnee Principles by Peter Calthorpe, Michael Corbett, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Moule, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Stefanos Polyzoides  
Editors: Peter Katz, Judy Corbett, Steve Weissman  
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## Success Stories

To illustrate good design principles and offer ideas for creative solutions that might work in La Pine, the charrette began by exploring innovative and successful development projects around the country. Two examples are included here.

**Environmentally and community responsive development or “Green Development,” typically requires greater up-front investments of time and money, but this need not mean higher overall costs or delayed project schedules. Carefully “front-loaded” planning and design can pay for itself—with interest—in avoided downstream costs such as expensive redesigns, drawn-out approvals, litigation, and stalled construction.**

### **Living Machines: How would you design a sewage plant if you lived downwind?**

One of the technologies that caught the imagination of several La Pine participants was the Living Machines™, a system that turns sewage into clean water. Compact biological wastewater treatment systems, such as Dr. John Todd’s Living Machines are gaining popularity as attractive, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible. These systems channel wastewater through a series of ponds or tanks containing diverse aquatic ecosystems. The tanks are typically located inside a greenhouse to maintain temperatures high enough for optimal biological activity year-round. The systems effectively remove nitrogen, pathogens, and other contaminants from water. Because these treatment systems are odor-free (unlike conventional sewage-treatment plants), they can be located close to community facilities, saving the expense of piping effluent to more remote locations. The facilities are also appealing enough to be significant tourist attractions; thousands of people annually tour the several dozen biological wastewater treatment plants now operating in North America.



*This photo illustrates the lush aquatic ecosystems of a Living Machine™ in Maryland.*

## Village Homes

The satisfaction and pride residents of Village Homes feel in their community more than two decades after completion of the development isn't coincidental. Village Homes thrives today because it was planned, designed, and built with deliberate attention to creating a community.

Completed in 1981, the Davis, California project's success—first as a real estate development, and now as a community—can be traced back to its designers' and developers' whole-systems approach. Over time, Village Homes has become a dearly loved neighborhood, with lower utility and food costs and a strong community fabric. The turnover rate in is very low, with residents often opting to remodel and add-on rather than move to a larger home. When homes do go on the market, they sell at a premium price and faster than homes in nearby subdivisions.

The 240 homes are clustered in groups of eight surrounded by common space and connected by pedestrian walkways. The small, passive solar homes have good solar exposure. The original residents were able to decide how their common areas would be landscaped—whether with grass, gardens, “tot-lots,” or barbecue pits, creating

diversity among shared spaces.

The project's design included such features as natural-drainage swales in place of storm sewers, agricultural areas, and narrower streets. A network of pathways and houses around common areas ensures that residents get to know their neighbors, which has kept the crime rate extremely low (about one-tenth of the surrounding town of Davis). The compact, pedestrian-oriented design encourages residents to walk to meet their daily needs—the average walk to the grocery store is just ten minutes. Village Homes is also located close to the largest employer in the area, the University of California at Davis, so many residents can walk to work.

Residents enjoy much lower energy bills due to homes designed to incorporate passive solar technologies in a wide range of architectural styles. Annual household energy bills range from one-third to one-half of those in surrounding neighborhoods, due to passive heating, natural cooling, solar hot water systems, and reduced pavement (which keeps ambient air temperatures lower during the hot summers).



*The Village Homes neighborhood features many elements of green development.*

### *Selected land-use facts*

- The population of La Pine is 12,000 to 15,000 of which roughly 10,000 are permanent.
- The county population is 106,000, forecast to reach 132,000 in five years.
- In south Deschutes County (south of Sunriver), over 12,000 lots were created in the 1960s and '70s in each of the past five years,
  - 330 homes have sold,
  - 340 land parcels have sold,
  - 300 construction permits have issued.
- Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water, yet septic systems have been developed in the high water table of many of the lots.
- The La Pine “urban unincorporated community” includes 969 acres of which:
  - 16.7% are commercial;
  - 33.2% are residential; &
  - 37.7% are industrial.
- The Wickiup “rural service center” includes 102 commercial and residential acres.
- State law requires that land in the developed area of a community be fully developed before the community spreads out further.

### **La Pine is Unique**

Early in the charrette, Bill Blosser of CH2Mhill and Oregon’s State Land Conservation and Development Commission, noted **“The eyes of the world are on La Pine—the country knows you: US Forest Service, Congress, Bureau of Land Management, Environmental Protection Agency, Northwest Area Foundation, and the state.”**

He said, though there are no perfect solutions, the real solutions are going to come from the community of La Pine. If you consider the success stories mentioned above, those solutions were derived from, and work in, those particular areas. We need to value the uniqueness of what’s special about La Pine, create a quality of life that brings environmental, social, and economic success.



*Little Deschutes River*

### *Vision and Goals for La Pine*

Charrette participants used La Pine’s vision statement as their guide:

La Pine will maintain its rural identity and high quality of life, and preserve its pristine natural environment, while diversifying its economy and developing into a full-service community.

Participants also were guided by La Pine’s Strategic Goals, which affirm that La Pine is:

- a beautiful rural community,
- an affordable and equitable, regional, full-service community,
- self-governed,
- an economically diverse, self-sustained community,
- a technologically advanced community,
- a well planned, sustainable community,
- a conscientious steward of its natural environment, where high quality educational opportunities exist for all, and citizens of all ages are active in all aspects of community, working together for the betterment of La Pine.

## Prospective Projects

Charrette participants sought project locations that would be compatible with the local economy, the community, and its environment, though they knew that some of the prospective projects may not be built.

**Performing Arts Center** could be a roughly 12,000 square foot building with a 400-seat auditorium, dressing rooms, storage, a foyer, and at least two classrooms. Though its parking would best be shared with other nearby facilities, if it accommodated all its parking, it could require five acres.

**Community Health Center** would be a 24-hour emergency facility and rural hospital of 10,000 square feet, with an additional 10,000 square feet set aside for future additional medical services (e.g. pharmacy, public health, health education, and mental health, primary care, specialty care) — all on 10 acres to accommodate expansion, parking, and helipad. It would be best located near the senior center/assisted living facility. It would include hospice, home health care, physical therapy, laboratory, radiology, skilled nursing facility, health education, health screening, and visiting medical specialties.

**Skate Park** for different ability levels would require about 9000 square feet of land with restroom facilities and parking, and would best be located

near the center of town or the proposed community fairgrounds

**Safe House** would be a short-term residence for one to five domestic-violence victims and their children. It would be best located in a neighborhood near schools, medical services, shopping, and law enforcement. The “U” shaped building would be single story, about 5000 sq. ft with a children’s play area and a covered, well-lighted, fenced, 20-car parking lot on at least one acre. Staff of two and five people would be there during the day, five days a week. Classes would be conducted two nights a week.

**Civic Center** would be a 5,000 sq. ft building and small park, with parking on one acre close to downtown that would be used by about 25 future municipal employees, and possibly deputies and other county employees, plus citizens seeking building permits, etc. and for public meetings.

**Senior Center** would be a 9,500 sq. ft., single story building on four acres, with parking for 100 vehicles and a recreational area for tennis courts, horse shoe pits, etc. It would be best located near senior housing and a 24-hour medical facility and within walking distance of library, post office, and shopping. It would include such activities as senior meal program & meals

on wheels, senior exercise, Bingo, support groups, AARP, and Hospice. It would be open seven days a week, 7 AM to as late as 11 PM. It would serve as many as 200 people at some activities.

**Community Park** would be large enough to accommodate many large-scale recreation needs as well specialized activities for most of the community and region — for example, youth organizations, wedding receptions, family reunions, joggers, trail enthusiasts, ice skaters, picnickers, and sports teams (e.g. baseball, soccer, volleyball, archery).

**Community Fairgrounds** would be a multi-use educational and recreational facility requiring 40 to 50 acres for parking, buffers, and structures including indoor and outdoor arenas, stock pens, RV area for vendors, playground and picnic area, community building of 5,600 sq. ft., administrative office, and areas for Frontier Days, Rodeo, 4H, youth programs, agriculture and equestrian center, and pre-vet training. Vocational/educational classes or club activities could take place during the weekdays.

**Airport** on approximately 300 acres could include hangars, light industrial businesses, single story retail businesses, a bike path, campground, small

cottages, RV park, and car rental agency and stables so that people who fly in could rent horses.

### Other prospective projects:

- Central Oregon Community College South Campus
- New schools and school Expansion
- Neighborhood Parks
- Senior housing
- Swimming pool on about one acre
- Information kiosks
- Affordable housing
- City, county, and state public works yard
- Open space
- Trails for equestrians, bikers, snow-mobilers and skiers

**Program of Land Uses**

	<u>Pkg Spaces</u>	<u>Square Feet</u>	<u>Acres</u>
<b>Civic Center</b>			
City Offices		10,000	
Parking	35	10,500	
Landscape @15%		3,075	
State Offices		10,000	
Parking	35	10,500	
Landscape @15%		3,075	
County Offices			
Parking	35	10,500	
Landscape @15%		3,075	
Additional Public Parking	50	15,000	
ParkingLandscape@15%		<u>2,250</u>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>87,975</b>	<b>2.02</b>
<b>Health Center with Helipad</b>		20,000	
Parking	100	30,000	
Helipad		45,000	
Landscape@15%		<u>14,250</u>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>109,250</b>	<b>2.51</b>
<b>Pooland Skate Park</b>			
Pool Building		40,000	
Skate Park		10,000	
Parking	200	60,000	
Landscape@15%		<u>16,500</u>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>126,500</b>	<b>2.90</b>
<b>Senior Center</b>		9,500	
Parking	100	30,000	
Tennis and Other Uses		21,600	
Landscape@15%		9,165	
Park Space		<u>20,000</u>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>90,265</b>	<b>2.07</b>
<b>Performing Arts Center</b>		28,500	
Parking	400	120,000	
Loading		3,000	
Landscape@15%		<u>22,725</u>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>174,225</b>	<b>4.00</b>
<b>TOTAL of USES</b>			<b>13.5 acres</b>

To aid La Pine citizens in planning the size and locations of several prospective projects, Ed Starkie developed this chart. Starkie is a commercial development consultant and landscape architect with LeLand Consulting Group who participated in the Charrette.



*LaPine residents discussing location of possible projects.*

## Retail Success in La Pine

Ed Starkie of LeLand Consulting Group, with extensive experience consulting to commercial developers, spoke about the rules of the development game, development process, and retail trends. He said we must respond to real estate market opportunities. Markets respond to people's needs and ability to pay. Starkie said the market responds well to pedestrian access, concentrated densities, well managed parking, intensive commercial land-use, and residential development near transit and shopping.

Starkie calculated the likely demand for goods and services in the La Pine area and concluded that **La Pine needs dramatically less commercial zoning than it now has**. This overabundance of commercial build-out potential is especially important to La Pine because, he said, smart retail investors are looking for something special, not the standard auto-oriented centers (such as the big box retail area east of Highway 97 in Bend). Instead, they value diverse, pedestrian-oriented, civic and commercial town centers, the kind of place that La Pine could become with smart planning.

Geographic information system data shows 162 acres zoned commercial. If this land was developed at a typical

suburban density of one story at 35 percent lot coverage (.35 FAR [floor-area-ratio]), the result would be 2.3 million square feet of retail space. Under current regulations only 8,000 square feet are allowed per building. There is a basic problem with the 8,000 square foot limitation in that it limits the ability of patrons to walk easily between retail and service uses. The effect of this much commercial development at low density would be to sprawl development even more than it is today. A good Town Center, to be attractive and efficient, requires as much unbroken frontage as possible with parking aggregated in key locations for convenience and accessibility (not necessarily on each lot frontage).

As an alternative, the community could shrink lot sizes or increase capacity per lot to create strong commercial land and produce at least a normal density of 35 percent to 59 percent lot coverage. This would increase land values for commercial owners in prime locations and would result in a coherent and pedestrian accessible commercial district.

## How much retail could La Pine likely support?

Starkie said that current zoning allows a population of 26,000 residents. Assuming 2.25 people per household and an annual income of \$35,000 per household, the community aggregate income would be \$404 million. Of that amount, 40 percent is usually assumed to be available for consumer purchases, meaning that approximately \$162 million could be spent here or in Bend. As the table on the following page demonstrates, under a hypothetical situation with sales of \$300 per square foot annually, La Pine, as zoned, could support around 116,000 square feet of retail and services in addition to the existing grocery stores. This sales rate could drive a retail center of sufficient critical mass to attract customers with a wide variety of items and services.

Starkie further noted other assumptions for retail capture. A 6,000 traffic count is sufficient to support a small store and 20,000 traffic count for a strong street-frontage retail district of 800 to 1,200 linear feet. Bend has a fifty-mile service area that includes La Pine, while La Pine has a service area that extends south but does not include the outer edges of Bend. Bend thus captures the majority of the area population and spending. Highway 97 has the third highest traffic count in the state. Roughly 7,900 vehicles, mainly trucks, go by on 97 each day.

Because residents of Northlake and other communities go through and

shop in La Pine, about 20,000 people are served by La Pine retail. As population expands, these numbers will increase.

From this information, Starkie drew the following conclusions: Zoning in La Pine needs to be reconsidered in order to **separate retail zoning from the more general commercial zone**. The commercial zone now includes a variety of uses that are beneficial to the area because of the employment and wages generated. It is necessary, however, to **restrict the siting of retail to those areas where retail concentration is desirable**. If retail is allowed in a very large area, as it is currently in La Pine, shoppers will find the stores less attractive because they'll be forced to make many trips instead of one or a few. Where this has occurred, high-quality retail-service areas became impossible and retail stores captured less market share.

Starkie made two recommendations regarding retail: First, because the center of population and future housing growth is not on Highway 97, but to the north and west, small commercial nodes could be carefully placed in or near these neighborhoods to provide convenience retail and possibly services.

Second, Starkie suggested that La Pine re-examine its zoning map and develop a strong commercial core and town center of 50,000 to 75,000 square feet as depicted in the Town Center drawing (page 27.) He said this more realistic zoning would be far more attractive to investors.

***Hypothetical Demonstration of Supportable Retail Space***

<b>Potential Residents Under Current Zoning</b>	<b>26,000</b>
<b>Divided by Assumed HouseholdSize</b>	<b><u>2.25</u></b>
<b>Assumed Households</b>	<b>11,556</b>
<b>Times Assumed Average Household Income</b>	<b><u>\$ 35,000</u></b>
<b>Aggregate Income</b>	<b>\$ 404,444,444</b>
<b>Times Proportion Spent on Consumer Spending</b>	<b><u>40%</u></b>
<b>Potential Consumer Spending</b>	<b>\$ 161,777,778</b>
<b>Divided by Annual Sales per Square Foot</b>	<b><u>\$ 300</u></b>
<b>Supportable Square Feet</b>	<b>539,259</b>
<b>Times Assumed Capture Rate for LaPine</b>	<b><u>40%</u></b>
<b>Square Feet Potential</b>	<b>215,704</b>
<b>Less Grocery Square Feet</b>	<b><u>(100,000)</u></b>
<b>Reasonable Potential Retail Estimate</b>	<b>115,704</b>
<b>Land Required at One Third Site Coverage of 40%</b>	<b>289,259</b>
<b>Total Acres Needed</b>	<b>6.64</b>

*This table demonstrates the relative magnitude of the retail market in La Pine and the amount of land necessary to accommodate that use. It is not intended as an exact demonstration of the market for retail space. It does clearly indicate that there is neither short-term nor long-term need for 162 acres of commercial use if normal development densities are used.—Ed Starkie.*

***The Charrette Process***

**Initial Design Work — Locating Prospective Projects**

Charrette participants divided into three design teams, each of which located on a La Pine map, its ideas for placement of all prospective community projects. After extended discussion by these teams, each presented its findings to the whole group. Several projects, for example the airport, were located similarly by all three groups. Other projects generated spirited discussion before a consensus was reached on all project locations. These locations were noted on a consolidated map, which became the basis for more detailed design work, later in the charrette.

**Highlights of the discussion regarding prospective-project locations:**

- There’s plenty of room in the center of town to locate most future businesses plus a civic center and other community facilities. (See tables on pages 12 & 14.)
- Civic center, library, and college campus should be located in close proximity.
- Other areas outside downtown must not be ignored. Parks, schools, small commercial, and trails can be located outside the downtown areas.
- The sewer district should consider such alternative systems as “living machines,” which are the size of a conventional package plant and could be an educational and commercial opportunity. This technology might be particularly appropriate in the “New Neighborhood.”

One lengthy discussion focused on the location of the fairgrounds roughly 40 acre facility including rodeo grounds. Most participants preferred the west side of Huntington Road, being careful to avoid wetlands. However, there may be difficulties with using this site including the process of acquiring if from the BLM and state land-use issues. Also, it may include some endangered species problems. There was some discussion of locating the fairground, without rodeo facilities, in the New Neighborhood, though that has been regarded as primarily a residential area with a little commercial.

The skate park also sparked a long, challenging discussion. The final resolution is that in the short term, it would be located adjacent to the sheriff substation. In the longer term it could be moved to the south end of the fairgrounds.

### *Developing Designs in Three Teams*

By this point in the charrette, the groups’ ideas about appropriate locations for the various prospective projects had been thoroughly discussed and consensus had been reached. But projects had been placed only in general vicinities. Next, the group embarked on analyzing the relationships between the various projects and determining their specific placement. It accomplished this work by breaking into several teams, each of which would tackle a particular design issue. But a crucial question remained: which issues should be tackled?

The day’s discussion had revealed that participants were keenly interested in two ideas: the town center and the Highway 97 corridor. But another issue emerged on the evening of the first day when many citizens who had not been involved came to an open forum to examine the consolidated map drawings and comment on what they saw. They made many excellent suggestions. One was that, though focusing on the highway and the town center is fine, the rest of the community must not be neglected.

As a result, the design group broke into three teams, each consisting of locals plus design experts from outside the community. The teams focused respectively on:

- The Greater La Pine Community, including project locations, traffic and transportation issues, greenbelt, and trails—referred to as “the whole banana,”
- Highway 97 corridor and gateways to the community,
- Town Center, around the intersection of First and Highway 97.

Each team developed specific design ideas and options. From time to time, each boarded a van and drove around its particular area of interest to talk specifics on site. Their findings follow.



*Scene of La Pine along Highway 97.*



*Scene of La Pine along Highway 97.*

## The Greater La Pine Area Design Summary

aka "The Whole Banana"

Developed by Team A, the theme of this larger area plan is "an intimate connection to nature," which would be achieved by:

- Maintaining the rural connection to nature
- Creating public spaces throughout the La Pine area.
- Connecting these areas to make La Pine a community, not just a collection of subdivisions.

This theme compliments the themes of Team B, "Affordable family recreation" and Team C, "A lively, vital, human-scale town center that provides for all the needs of La Pine as a community (civic, education, shopping, etc.) within a walkable area."

Team A seeks this intimate connection to nature through the creation of:

- A greenbelt system that focuses on the Little Deschutes River, the backbone of the natural capital of the region and one of the best view corridors to mountains.
- A system of public open spaces integrated into residential areas where they are currently missing. Some of these public spaces would include such active recreation as children's play equipment, picnic tables, and shelters for cross-country skiers.



Alexis Karolides of RMI presents team concepts for the greater La Pine area design.

### Theme:

"An intimate connection to nature."

- Amenities in the more urban areas, that allow safe travel, for example, bike paths and links between parks.

### Little Deschutes Greenbelt

The primary barrier to development of this greenbelt is that most of the river is bordered by private property. The team brainstormed possible ways to respond to this challenge:

- Implement scenic management
- Purchase access easements
- Create tax incentives
- Preserve the floodway
- Purchase unbuildable flood areas for parks
- Restore riparian areas
- Manage cattle access
- Designate a greenbelt through the farmland west of the Little Deschutes; then when owners apply for development, approval would be contingent on the provision of the greenbelt.

### Amenities included:

- Install sidewalks in new Town Center
- Create access across Little Deschutes from Woodland Estates to the school complex
- Develop a bike path parallel to Day Road (on Ranch Drive) connecting the two possible school sites and the potential bike trail that borders the managed forest.





*The "Whole Banana" Team working diligently.*

**Additional comments** from the team regarding prospective projects and community planning:

- Fairgrounds should be located close to town and include facilities for both frontier days and the rodeo so they don't compete.
- A small convenience store should be located at north end of Day Road and at 6th & Dorance Road to serve neighborhood needs. Its size should be strictly limited.
- Information Kiosks create gateways to La Pine and help make La Pine, "the Gateway to Newberry Crater," and other surrounding natural resources. They could include rest stations and signage.
- Potential new school sites include Tall Pines, across from Rosland Park, Jacobson's Addition across from proposed park site, and the northern part of New Neighborhood.
- To control sprawl, restrict strip commercial to certain areas along the highway and permit no extension of strip commercial along 97. Concentrating it makes it more valuable.
- Pedestrian crossings are needed at Huntington & 97 and First & 97.
- A new fire station should be on the east side of the railroad because there's currently no overpass and station on that side to serve industrial zone & existing subdivisions.

### *Team A: Next Steps*

- 1.) Determine how to acquire BLM lands for such prospective projects as airport, fairgrounds, and industrial park expansion.
- 2.) Determine how to obtain land for greenway.
- 3.) Develop park and trail financing.
- 4.) Develop Little Deschutes management plan that includes such issues as riparian habitat, cattle, pollution and public access.
- 5.) Identify evacuation routes for areas of particular fire danger.



*The team in discussion of various options.*

Theme:

*La Pine*

*Gateway to Family Recreation.*

*Highway 97 Corridor and  
Gateway*

*Design Summary*



*Highway 97 Gateway team deep in discussion.*

Team B explored the characteristics, feel and history of La Pine. Several characteristics became apparent.

- The community is willing to change. La Pine has already remade itself economically more than once.
- The local character will always be rural.
- There is a desire to keep the feeling here authentic. Outdoor experiences are what make it real.

From this discussion, a theme emerged: La Pine as a “gateway to family recreation.”

#### Gateway signs

- When entering La Pine from the south, drivers would see a sign at the edge of town on Midstate Electric Co-op property. It might say something like, “Welcome to La Pine, Gateway to Family Recreation.” The sign’s imagery could refer to logging history and natural beauty. Emblems could include a hawk and Klamath patterns. The hawk is also the school mascot and captures the rural feeling.
- Before entering La Pine proper from the north, a small sign would be placed north of Wickiup Junction that reads, “Entering the outskirts of La Pine.” New speed signs can be placed to warn drivers of the upcoming community.
- When entering La Pine from the North, the entrance sign would be located at the intersection of First and 97. As La Pine expands northward with development of the New Neighborhood the sign could be moved.

#### Information Kiosks

There would be four kiosks built along Highway 97:

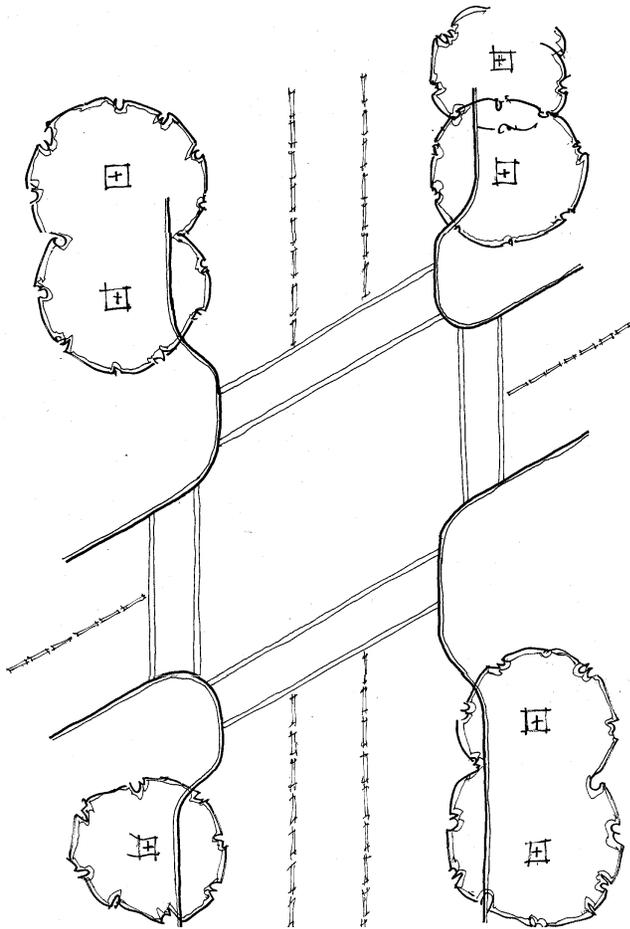
- At the US Forest Service Paulina Information Kiosk
- Next to the gateway sign at First and Hwy 97 and close to the Town Center.
- Next to the gateway sign at the Midstate Electric Co-op property.
- Near the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Information Center.



*Gateway to La Pine Concept A.*



*Gateway to La Pine Concept B.*



One effective traffic-calming device is a pedestrian “ear” where sidewalks are widened at intersections.

### Information Kiosks (continued)

Each kiosk will describe La Pine’s history and present features. They will highlight the La Pine communities’ strength, resilience and spirit, including:

- Rural character
- Open space
- Indian, ranching, logging, and railroad heritage.
- Historic buildings: For example, TJ’s Market and the Highway Center Building.
- Recreational activities: For example, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, the greenbelt, the Little Deschutes River and the trail systems linking the community.
- Affordable, family-oriented recreation, based on the many opportunities offered by the natural surroundings.

### Pedestrian safety

Several parents said that crossing Highway 97 is dangerous, even though the speed limit through La Pine is 35 miles per hour. Team members suggested slowing down the traffic without changing lane width through the use of visual cues that are proven to slow drivers down. One effective traffic-calming device is a pedestrian “ear” where sidewalks are widened at intersections. Ears on 97 would reduce pavement width from 70 feet to 42 feet without reducing lane width. Intersections targeted for these improvements include First, Fourth (the school crossing) and Sixth.

La Pine’s ears would include landscaping and traffic lights, which would slow traffic by creating the appearance of a narrower highway. Additionally, crosswalks at these intersections would be shorter, 43 instead of their current 70 feet. (See accompanying drawing.)

### Commercial In-fill

The area near the intersection of 97 and Huntington works well as a commercial area that compliments the Town Center. The commercial lots bracketed by the “eared” intersections would be targeted for infill development to increase attractiveness and commercial viability. (Infill is the development of empty space within a core area instead of outlying undeveloped land. It’s essential to making communities interesting, walkable, and successful.) As part of the infill design, storefronts could be aligned to create a strong sense of place and enclosure.

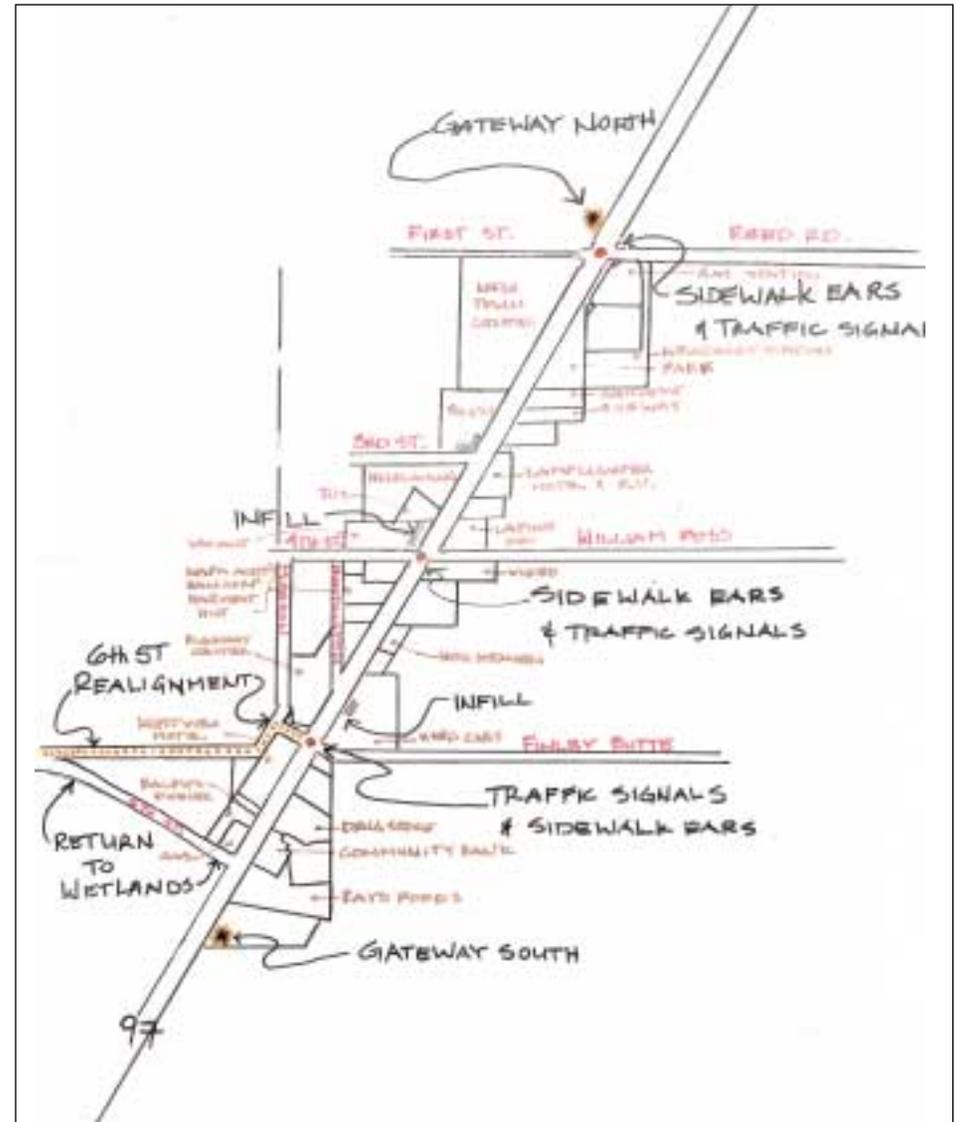
The new walkable aspect of this portion of Highway 97 fits well with Team A's effort to develop an extensive trail system.

**Traffic safety**

Team members suggested realigning Finly Butte Road across the wetlands to match up with the original alignment of Sixth Street. The existing Sixth Street connection to 97 would be abandoned and restored to wetlands. Sixth would cross the wetlands on the original platted alignment as described on the county easement.



*Infill and Pedestrian Crossing 4th Street and Highway 97*



*Highway 97 La Pine concepts.*





Team C and the site map.

## Town Center Design Summary

Team C focused on the design of a Town Center including commercial uses and a civic center. In addition, it located several community facilities, including a combined senior and health campus, the performance center, and the skate park.

The charrette’s local and expert participants agreed that one of La Pine’s most important opportunities is the creation of an identifiable Town Center as a hub of community activity—a place of dignity that includes commercial, civic and other community uses all within walking distance of one another.

Various possible locations for the Town Center were discussed. For example, some suggested the small triangle in the southern part of downtown. But further investigation revealed that this area was not large enough to be commercially viable or was it visible from Highway 97, a crucial commercial consideration.

After a good deal of debate, the group decided on the area just south of the New Neighborhood in the existing commercial zone. Its core would be a civic center on two acres at the intersection of First and Highway 97, near the old Department of Transportation site. This compact site is close to other public buildings and places to eat lunch. When integral to an interesting town center, well designed civic buildings visually invite people off the highway and into retail stores and offices.

The spine of the New Neighborhood is Bluewood Street, which would terminate at the civic center, where a formal forecourt, signs, and landscaping would enhance the site. The team suggested traffic calming on First at Highway 97, and a sign indicating that “you are now entering La Pine.” Traffic calming can be achieved by such design features as narrow streets, tree planting, speed bumps, “ears” and small roundabouts.

### Comments from the technical team regarding the Town Center

If the community commits to the commercial zoning and public investment required for a Town Center, private investment will follow. Community and civic buildings and amenities are magnets for shoppers, and retail and office investment. It’s a practical application of the old idea of public/private partnership.

In contrast, if planning is ignored, commercial and community uses will spread over such a large area that there will be no center of activity. Investors will find La Pine less attractive, residents will have to get in their cars for each and every errand, seniors and kids won’t be able to walk to their various activities, and a great opportunity will be lost.

**A five-minute-walk radius is about 1,000 feet because the average person is comfortable walking about 200 feet per minute.**

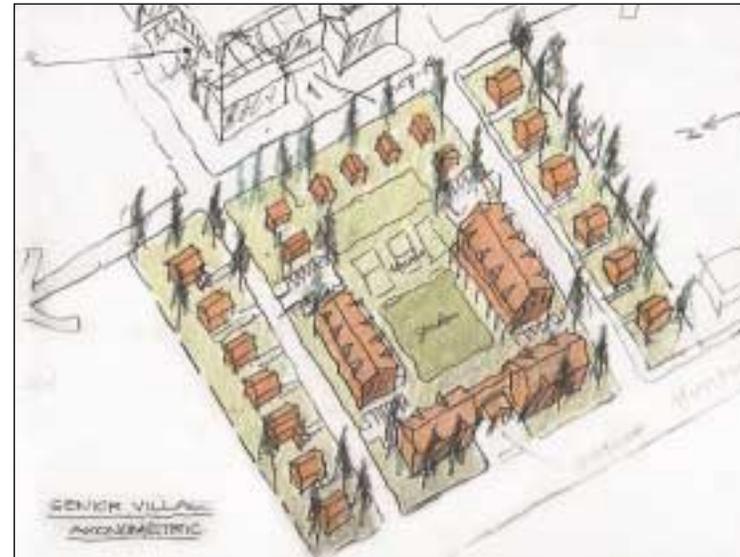
The team located the new **Senior Center** (congregate/assisted living/congregate/ affordable apartments) on the two acre site between west Bluewood and Huntington Road, fronting Huntington. Its design concept is a large main building with arms of small cottages emanating from it. Defining its perimeter would be additional cottages fronting on new roads that divide the senior center and apartments from cottages. There would also be cottages behind the recreation area, backing on Bluewood Rd. Inside the complex ring would be a green space area for garden and recreation. The new perimeter roads would cross Bluewood and pass the health complex providing access to parking, emergency entrance and the helipad. This convenient location is adjacent to the health complex and would place seniors within a ten-minute walk of retail, banking, grocery, swimming, schools, performing arts, and the civic center.

The new **Community Health Center** would be East of Bluewood (between Bluewood and 97).

The **Skate Park** would be on First between the Sheriff's substation and new civic center, near Boys and Girls Club, close to schools, and visible from the street to promote safety.

**Performing Arts Center, South College Campus, and Pool** would be located along Coach Road across from the schools to enhance existing educational opportunities, near the Boys and Girls Club, and near senior housing for easy foot access. Alternate sites include the thin strip of land adjoining the schools off Coach or north of the high school on BLM land.

**Living machine** (alternative sewage technology) is a fine way to treat sewage and it's a community asset that could even attract tourists. It could be located 1,200 feet east of Highway 97 on Reed Road, adjacent to current sewer irrigation area. Another could be placed in the New Neighborhood.



*Senior Village bird's eye view.*



*Civic Center bird's eye view.*



### Creating a Viable Town Center

- If a large area of La Pine remains commercially zoned as it now is, market forces will encourage house owners to sell to commercial buyers, which will spread commercial and lose the opportunity to create a Town Center.
- A significant amount of infill development will be needed to make the town center viable. (Infill is the development of empty space within a core area instead of outlying undeveloped land. It's essential to making a Town Center interesting, walkable, and successful.)



Close-up of proposed La Pine Town Center.

- Because some people think there's not enough room in Town Center, there's a tendency to locate, away from the center, facilities and businesses that would otherwise bring life to the Town Center.
- Town Center must be easily visible from Highway 97.
- Though it's important to develop pedestrian friendly places, trails, etc., currently the only way people can get downtown is by driving. Therefore, the amount of parking can't be reduced. However, instead of having it at each retail location, it could be clustered, which would increase the value of commercial properties and allow people to walk or take some kind of alternative transportation to various shops and civic buildings.

- The community shouldn't allow its planning to be affected by what particular retail stores exists in certain locations today. These uses tend to change roughly every seven years. What's important is creating a fabric of building and spaces into which people will be drawn for generations to come.
- To make Town Center more viable, consider moving community facilities, currently suggested for the Baldwin Property, south to the Town Center.
- Consider removing existing buildings, if they are of no historic value, in order to accommodate the new Town Center. Such a change would benefit the landowner and the community.
- Consider consolidating existing civic buildings.



*Howard Daniel of La Pine and Jen Uncapher of RMI discuss design options.*



**I thoroughly enjoyed this once in a lifetime learning experience. Without the charrette, in 20 years, we would be saying “what happened?”**

**Howard Daniel  
La Pine resident**

## Next Steps

Three crucial considerations regarding the prospective projects are funding, priority, and state and federal considerations.

### Priorities:

The community needs to determine which project needs to be built first and the sequence in which the rest would be built. The community might ask itself, What would we do if we could build only one project, say, every two years?

### State and Federal considerations:

State land use laws may significantly effect the location of some of the projects. Those projects being considered for placement on BLM have important challenges before them.

### Funding:

Roughly \$12.25 million would be required to build all the civic and community facilities under consideration, not including the land. Many, including fairgrounds, will loose money. They can't be funded through tax increment financing because they don't generate taxes. However, if the community has taxing authority, such as that exercised by a municipality, future growth may generate enough tax revenue to build these facilities. A future municipality could seek federal Community Development Block Grants and collaborative efforts to support certain project development.



La Pine is at a turning point. If it turns and faces the hard choices that lead to creative community design, it will strengthen its people, its quality of life, and its businesses. It will be known all over the region as the community that bootstrapped itself to success through hard work and planning. Community leaders around the country will visit La Pine to learn how citizens made it happen. La Pine will be a success and a leader. But success is far from assured. The community could take the other path. The one that requires no hard choices and no planning. It's just a matter of doing tomorrow what you did yesterday. Outmoded ways of thinking about land and people, it's the path of least resistance that leads to declining quality of life. To take the path of Everytown USA can mean increasing sprawl and traffic congestion, increasing business turnover, low wages, poor options for seniors and kids, disappearing open space, and loss of a sense of community.

Fortunately, such forward thinking citizens as the La Pine Community Action Team and the participants in the charrette are doing everything they can to face the hard choices and take the first path, the one to success. But they can't do alone. They need the full support and participation of the community, of each person who reads this report.