

Portland State University

**PDXScholar**

---

Center for Urban Studies Publications and  
Reports

Center for Urban Studies

---

3-1985

# Milwaukie Downtown Revitalization Project: The Milwaukie Storefront (Final Report)

Mark Clemons

*Portland State University*

Tom Harry

*Portland State University*

Sheldon Edner

*Portland State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cus\\_pubs](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cus_pubs)



Part of the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

## Citation Details

Clemons, Mark; Harry, Tom; and Edner, Sheldon, "Milwaukie Downtown Revitalization Project: The Milwaukie Storefront (Final Report)" (1985). *Center for Urban Studies Publications and Reports*. 69. [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cus\\_pubs/69](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cus_pubs/69)

This Report is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Center for Urban Studies Publications and Reports by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: [pdxscholar@pdx.edu](mailto:pdxscholar@pdx.edu).

MILWAUKIE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT:  
THE MILWAUKIE STOREFRONT

Final Report

Mark Clemons  
Thomas Harry  
Sheldon Edner

March, 1985

Center for Urban Studies  
Portland State University

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
Procedures	4
Storefront Goals and Objectives	5
PROMOTION	7
The Milwaukie Auction - Project #83-4	8
Christmas	9
The Milwaukie Main Street Market - Project #84-19	10
PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS AND DESIGN	14
Design Project - #84-20	14
The Downtown Improvement Program Project #84-16	15
Street Scape Additions	17
The Strauss Flower Block - Project #84-12	19
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	21
The Milwaukie Riverfront - Project #83-1	21
Downtown Milwaukie Parking Study - Project #83-5	22
The Economic Study - Project #84-21	23
INFORMATION AND EDUCATION	25
Workshops	25
The Business Opportunity List - Project #84-18	27
Milwaukie History Project - Project #84-11	27
Storefront Display - Project #84-17	28
THE STOREFRONT EFFORT	29
Benefits	29
Problems Encountered	30
Opportunities	32
Meeting Project Goals	34
Benefits	29
Problems Encountered	30
Opportunities	32
Meeting Project Goals	34
A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP	36
Timing	36
Importance of Businesses Support and Involvement	37
The Public Role	40
The Need for a Storefront	41
APPENDIX A - Goals and Objectives of the Milwaukie Storefront	43
APPENDIX B - Storefront Projects	45

## INTRODUCTION .

The Milwaukie Storefront was a one year program intended as a catalyst for the downtown and to focus attention on the potential for improved business activity. The Storefront, initiated in September of 1983, served as a technical resource, and as a coordinator and facilitator of promotional events in downtown Milwaukie.

This report describes the Storefront as an organization, looking at its structure and original purpose. A review of the individual projects is presented to demonstrate the range of Storefront activities. In drawing conclusions, the report looks at whether the Storefront was able to meet its expectations and cites the accomplishments and problems that were experienced. The report finally looks at the Storefront's activities and applies them in a broader perspective to small town or neighborhood commercial revitalization programs.

The potential exists in Milwaukie to create a healthy and

The potential exists in Milwaukie to create a healthy and exciting downtown. It will take a great deal of effort by business, City government, and the surrounding community. The Storefront began a process that now must be continued by these participants. Hopefully, this report will aid in that effort.



The Milwaukie Storefront was a partnership between the City of Milwaukie, the Milwaukie USA Business Association (MUBA), Clackamas County's Community Development Division, and Portland State University's Center for Urban Studies. The Storefront was funded with grants totaling \$50,000 from the County's Community Development Block Grant program. One grant of \$41,500 was made to PSU's Center for Urban Studies for staff salaries, faculty support services, promotions and workshop seed money, and some supplies. An additional grant of \$8,500 was made to the City of Milwaukie and used for operating costs including office rent and supplies. The Storefront was staffed by graduate students from Portland State's Masters of Urban Planning program. Five part-time staff positions provided a total of 60 hours per week for the first 9 months (September - May). Three of these staff positions provided 15 hours per week. The final 15 hours were split between two persons. During the final 3 months of the Storefront, staff was reduced to three 15 hour positions. Most of the individuals working at the Storefront had previous professional experience in community development, urban design, advertising, and promotion.

development, urban design, advertising, and promotion.

A core staff of three maintained continuity from the beginning of the project. After three months of fluctuation in the other two positions, the staff became set with the same five individuals involved throughout the remainder of the project. Due to the limited availability of each staff person, areas of responsibility were

designated based on past experience. Those areas were: office management and promotion, design and promotion, and, economics and special projects. While the three core staff had responsibility for these areas, there was overlap, with work in all areas being done by the entire staff. The contracted hourly times became a minimum number required for effective operation of the Storefront, with each staff person usually committing to more than 15 hours per week.

The Storefront also received supplemental support from, and provided professional experience to, students in Portland State's Masters of Public Administration (MPA) and Urban Studies and Planning program as well as from Clackamas Community College. Two MPA students were involved in office operations and procedures design and review. An MPA class conducted a program evaluation of the Storefront in Spring, 1984. Undergraduates from PSU's Urban Studies program worked on development of an historic walking tour, and building inventories. The Urban Design Workshop in the Planning Masters program spent one term developing drawings and conceptual designs for the downtown area. A student from Clackamas Community College received credit for 9 months of work at the Storefront in a special history project and helped develop a walking tour and display material and reports.

An Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from the City, the Business Association, the County, and the University, guided the activities and development of the Storefront. The committee met monthly and was responsible for the general direction, policies, and program of the Storefront. The Director of Planning and Community Services for Milwaukie was responsible for the City's portion of the Storefront grant, while the Assistant Director of PSU's Center for Urban Studies was the project director for the University.

#### Procedures

A detailed set of office procedures was developed in the first month of the Storefront. The procedures served to standardize operations but were also necessary because of the number of part-time staff and the lack of personal contact the staff had with each other. It was not possible to have the verbal communication between staff that normally occurs in an office environment because there was usually only one person in the office at a time. As a result, it was necessary to create detailed, written forms of communication between staff. The procedures also set office hours, detailed a recordkeeping system, called for weekly staff meetings, and outlined a procedure for individual projects.

The office procedures evolved over time, along with other

aspects of the project. Office hours were adjusted when it became evident that it was necessary to spend more time in direct contact with the businesses. Most of the recordkeeping devices were maintained, although some forms were dropped when they became unnecessary and time consuming. All financial recordkeeping was done by the City and the University. Communication between staff remained difficult, but the difficulty diminished as the project developed.

#### Storefront Goals and Objectives

The three goals of the Storefront, adopted by the Advisory Committee, were: 1) To stimulate economic development in the downtown area; 2) To revitalize the Milwaukie Central Business District; and, 3) To seek development of the Milwaukie riverfront as an integral part of the Downtown Central Business District. A complete listing of the goals and objectives can be found in Appendix A.

The goals and objectives were adapted from the original scope of work detailed in the PSU contract with Clackamas County. The contract spoke of four major Storefront tasks: scope of work detailed in the PSU contract with Clackamas County. The contract spoke of four major Storefront tasks: 1) Operation of an office which would develop a working relationship with the business community and from which economic analyses, design guidelines, and promotional activities would be generated; 2) Development of a financial program for the downtown, which would include sponsorship of a financial workshop and facilitation of discussion on both

private and public financing options for future downtown development; 3) Develop a planning process for development of the riverfront including alternative strategies and a recommended course of action; 4) Provide the City information and policy options on current and future regional transportation plans as they would affect downtown Milwaukie.

It was these goals, objectives, and tasks which guided the projects that the Storefront initiated. The projects fall into four major categories: promotion, physical improvements and design, studies and reports, and information/education. The project numbers in the following section refer to the project files which contain greater detail on individual projects. A chronological listing of the Storefront projects is in Appendix B.

•

•

## PROMOTION

Promotions are a way to create excitement and interest in a downtown. In a situation of heavy competition with other retail centers, merchants must work together to promote themselves as a unit and not simply as individuals. Promotions serve to draw attention to an area and reinforce pleasurable customer shopping experiences, drawing them back again. The Storefront assisted the MUBA with promotions that it had already initiated and also started a new summer activity, the Milwaukie Main Street Market.

Each promotion has its own requirements but some tasks are part of any promotional event. These tasks need to be identified early, a minimum of three months prior to the event. Categories of work, such as publicity, entertainment, site location and logistics, and contacts for donations, need to be assigned, and the tasks in each category specified. Since the individuals who will be doing these tasks are generally volunteers, it is important that enough time be allotted for completion. Recognition and these tasks are generally volunteers, it is important that enough time be allotted for completion. Recognition and rewards for volunteers should also be seen as a necessary component of a promotion plan. Publicity is a key to success and must occur early. Options include posters, fliers, press releases, news conferences, and pre-activity events. The Center for Urban Education publishes the Oregon

Media Guide which can be consulted for formats, deadlines, and various media types in the Portland area.

The Milwaukie Auction-Project #83-4

The Milwaukie Auction was an annual fall promotional event sponsored by MUBA. Originally the Auction was to be held in September, 1983. Scheduling and organizational problems resulted in postponing the event to November. The Storefront was asked by MUBA to provide organizational and promotional assistance in September, the first month that the Storefront opened.

An Auction Committee had been designated by MUBA with which the Storefront worked closely in planning for the event. Storefront assistance included developing a work plan leading up to the event, design of two posters, and weekly update meetings. Press releases, contacting of donors, and taking care of the logistics for the Auction were handled by committee members. The Auction was run by the committee or other members of the business community.

The Storefront served as a point of coordination for the

The Storefront served as a point of coordination for the Auction Committee. Being the first joint project of the Storefront and MUBA, it was necessary to define Storefront, committee, and business responsibilities. The Storefront designed posters and fliers, had them printed, and talked with local merchants about the event. The Storefront also

assumed responsibility for these tasks in future MUBA sponsored promotional activities.

Christmas:    The Open House-Project #83-6  
                  The Giving Tree-Project #83-9  
                  Main Street Decoration-Project #83-7  
                  The Storefront Christmas Card-Project #83-10

The Storefront and the merchants worked together to decorate and enliven downtown for Christmas. An Open House was held by merchants for the third year as a kick-off to the Christmas season. Participating businesses decorated their stores and provided refreshments and entertainment. The Storefront developed a flier for the event. Coordination was handled by a local merchant. Deadlines for merchant involvement were set and planning for the event began about a month before the Open House. The Giving Tree is an annual event sponsored by the business association during the Christmas season. The tree outside City Hall is decorated and lighted at a special ceremony in early December. Barrels for food donations are placed in selected stores in the downtown. The Storefront designed a flier and labels for the food barrels. It also contacted singing groups from the downtown. The Storefront designed a flier and labels for the food barrels. It also contacted singing groups from local schools to carol in the downtown during the month.

The Storefront attempted to organize a coordinated Christmas display package for downtown, but was unsuccessful. There is a strong desire by the merchants to have the downtown decorated for the holidays. The problem with the



Storefront's attempt was lack of time. Planning for Christmas should begin in August or September. The floral businesses in town are a resource for display material and the high schools have expressed an interest in window painting. The necessary decisions need to be made early, with the decorations in place by late November. Christmas is an exciting time and promotion and decoration can be used to enhance that feeling for the entire community.

A Storefront Christmas card was developed to make contact with and in some cases, introduce the Storefront to Milwaukie businesses. Ninety-three cards were hand delivered to individual businesses. An additional eighty were mailed to building owners, public officials, and others.

#### The Milwaukie Main Street Market-Project #84-19

An open-air market was an event that residents, downtown merchants, and city officials had wanted to start for a number of years. The Storefront was able to provide the resources and coordination for the market to become a reality. The market was intended to achieve three goals: resources and coordination for the market to become a reality. The market was intended to achieve three goals: 1) Increased retail activity for downtown merchants; 2) Offer a marketplace for local crafts-people and entrepreneurs; 3) Give the community a focal point.

The Storefront's role in the market was comprehensive. It assumed responsibility for planning, special events scheduling, vendor and merchant contacts and relations, banner design, construction and display, signage construction and placement, and weekly coordination. Some of the special events held in conjunction with the Market included a street dance to celebrate the passage of the Olympic torch runner, a cherry celebration with contests, Kid's Day, and a classic car day with live music.

Eight markets were originally scheduled, one every Saturday from July 7 through August 25, 1984. During the first three weekends, vendor participation grew from approximately 12 the first weekend to 22 the third Saturday. Foot traffic along the street increased dramatically as reflected by merchant comments that they had not seen so many people on the street on a Saturday for years. A number of merchants also noted increased retail activity generated by the Market. Vendor participation began to drop in August, although pedestrian counts still remained relatively high in comparison to Saturday norms before the Market. Vendor participation dropped to the point where the final two scheduled markets were not held.

The major problem experienced, was an inability to recruit sufficient vendors. This resulted in a lack of diversity and product mix necessary for successful retail activity.

The weekly special events were effective in bringing people downtown but this did not translate into sales for those returning vendors. There wasn't a critical mass of retail activity to support those few vendors who were present. This resulted in declining vendor sales which led them to become discouraged and to drop out of the Market.

Most merchants along Main Street participated in the Market with either sidewalk or special in-store displays. The mixture of vendor booths, merchant displays, sidewalk banners, and continuous sunny skies created a sense of activity and excitement on Main Street not seen during previous Saturdays. The drop in vendor participation and cancellation of the final two Saturdays indicated that the Market was not completely successful in fulfilling its initial goals. The following tasks outline what needs to be accomplished to improve on the first, and increase the success of future Markets.

- I. Downtown merchants need to provide actual support.
- II. Entertainment and special events must coincide with the market.
- II. Entertainment and special events must coincide with the market.
- III. Greater lead-time is imperative.
  - A. For vendors, there should be at least six months after their commitment to participate to permit development of sufficient inventory, scheduling of time, preparing a booth and merchandising.

- B. A schedule of events for the entire season should be written with firm commitments, months before the market begins.
  - C. Promotions for each week should be prepared weeks in advance and publicity distributed early.
- V. A full-time market coordinator for the summer months is necessary to complete the above tasks.
- VI. A Committee of vendors, supportive merchants, and City officials should be formed to review the progress and problems of the market and assist in the decisionmaking.
- VII. A budget should be prepared to fund: 1) the coordinator; 2) weekly promotions - posters, advertising, and event items, e.g., prize ribbons, poster paper; 3) vendor supplies such as electricity, brooms and cleaning supplies; and, 4) entertainment. For a self-supporting market, all of these expenditures should be accounted and paid for from vendor participation fees, co-sponsors, and merchant contributions.

There appears to be some interest in holding the market in succeeding years. The work that the Storefront completed during the first year will be immensely helpful to those individuals who assume responsibility for future markets. Banners, signs, a logo, publicity contacts, vendor lists, and entertainment and special events contacts are available and documented.

and entertainment and special events contacts are available and documented.

## PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS AND DESIGN

The Storefront was involved in many different elements of design and physical improvements. Some were conceptual in nature while others were more action oriented. The activities included information gathering on the current building ownership patterns, options and alternatives for future change, contacts and design for specific building improvements, and street scape additions.

### Design Project-#84 - 20

Monthly updates show the transition from an overall design policy approach for the first 6 months, to a more action oriented, on-the-street approach in the latter portion of the project. The initial activities provided a background and conceptual framework for the one-on-one interactions with both property owners and tenants which occurred later. The results of these background activities include an updated base map for downtown Milwaukie, elevations and enlargements of the buildings along Main Street, a map showing current building colors and a building file notebook which has tenant and ownership information on all properties showing current building colors and a building file notebook which has tenant and ownership information on all properties in the downtown.

Two documents were also written as a result of the conceptual/policy oriented work in design. One details policy options for the City that should be considered if and where design guidelines are developed for Milwaukie. The

second provides details for property owners and the City when considering improvements in the areas of color, awnings, signage, and street furniture.

In the area of design, the Storefront had to do more than deal with the issue from a conceptual viewpoint. It also had to facilitate and implement specific downtown improvements and provide direct assistance to individuals contemplating building changes. The Downtown Improvement Program provided the vehicle for person to person interaction and for visible physical improvements to occur.

The Downtown Improvement Program Project # 84-16

The Downtown Improvement Program was funded through an additional grant from the Clackamas County Community Development Block Grant program. Approximately \$55,000 was available over a three year period to assist property owners in facade renovations and repair of interior code violations. The program was structured so that a property owner could receive up to \$5,000 toward the total improvement costs. A portion of the monies were also dedicated to streetscape additions, specifically trees and improvement costs. A portion of the monies were also dedicated to streetscape additions, specifically trees and benches.

The Storefront took the lead role in marketing the improvement program to property owners and tenants. Besides making initial contacts with all property owners and tenants to explain the program, the Storefront also provided

information on what types of improvements would enhance the specific building and fit within the overall downtown design concept. In some cases that assistance included drawings and sketches of changes and options. The improvement program became operational in April, 1984 and the Storefront was actively involved throughout the next five months.

The Downtown Improvement Program was a valuable tool for the Storefront to use in bringing about physical change on the street. Without the program it would have been difficult to achieve any action in the area of design. Conceptual and policy activities were unattractive issues to tenants and property owners. But, by tying conceptual issues to financial assistance, the Storefront was able to achieve an interest in design that had not previously existed. By the close of the Storefront, thirteen property owners had submitted applications for extensive improvements which included painting, addition or replacement of awnings, new signage, structural repair, electrical and plumbing upgrading, and re-roofing. Available funds limited the number of projects which could be included in the program. Upgrading, and re-roofing. Available funds limited the number of projects which could be included in the program. However, a minimum \$100,000 worth of improvements was expected. It was also hoped that this highly visible level of activity would induce other property owners, not included in the program, to proceed with their own building improvements.

Street Scape Additions:

Street Trees-Project # 84-13; Street Flowers-Project # 84-22; Street Furniture-Project # 84-23

These three projects were part of an overall physical improvement package for downtown. As part of the street tree project, an inventory of current tree types and sizes was compiled and priorities determined for new plantings. The decision was made to add 26 new cherry trees to the northern section of Main Street, north of Harrison Street. These new plantings would add to the continuity of Main Street, as cherry trees had previously been planted on the five blocks of Main, south of Harrison.

The businesses where trees were to be planted were contacted to gain their approval and agreement for taking care of the new trees. The bidding process was carried out for the required tasks including concrete cutting, tree guards, and purchase and planting of the trees. These procedures were not completed in time to allow planting to occur during the Spring season. The trees will be planted in the Fall of 1984, with the City using the information compiled by the Storefront.

Storefront.

Street flowers are a way to brighten the environment along Main Street. The Milwaukie USA Business Association, with assistance from the Storefront, accomplished this beautifying touch during the Spring. Five varieties of street flowers were purchased from a local nursery by the Business Association and the City. The Storefront located



the flowers and prepared the beds around the existing street trees and in the planters at the intersections along Main Street. The flowers were distributed to individual merchants who planted and cared for them over the summer. The flowers provided an additional touch of color and a sign that the businesses of Milwaukie cared about the appearance of their town.

Both the City and Main Street businesses agreed that the addition of street benches would provide an aesthetic improvement and a place where customers and community residents could relax and enjoy their town. A portion of the Downtown Improvement Program monies had been set aside for the purchase of street furniture. The Storefront and the City identified places for benches along five blocks of Main. They will take advantage of existing rain and shade covers and will, in some cases, be placed in view corridors to the Willamette River. The Storefront identified companies that could provide the benches. The City, in consultation with the architect who is assisting with the Downtown Improvement Program, chose from among these sources. The benches were bid out in late Summer to be on the street in Fall, 1984.

The element of time, or rather a lack thereof, is a thread running through each project the Storefront undertook in the area of design. Not enough lead time was allowed for the

placement of either the street trees or benches. In the case of facade improvements, problems in the funding of the Downtown Improvement Program, outside Storefront control, postponed the beginning of the program until six months after the Storefront began operation. Because of this time element, most of the actual improvements and physical signs of change did not occur until after the Storefront's contract had expired. In some cases, as in the street trees and furniture, the Storefront needed to begin the process earlier. In other cases, it was a function of how long it really takes to accomplish major renovation projects. In these later cases, the Storefront ran out of time, but downtown Milwaukie will still benefit from the work completed by the staff.

The Strauss Flower Block-Project # 84 - 12

This was a project where the Storefront attempted to integrate the four elements of design: color, awnings, street trees and street furniture. Both the property owner and the five businesses within the building expressed a willingness to work together toward a coordinated result. A meeting sponsored by the Storefront was held in February with the property owners and the businesses to discuss possible improvements. The Storefront developed alternatives that were presented to the individual merchants. The hope was that the Storefront could orchestrate a consensus between all parties that would result in an example of facade and street scape improvements

for the rest of downtown. While the project did not transpire exactly as the Storefront had hoped, both the merchants and the building owner separately undertook improvements, with consultation from the Storefront. Two or three of the businesses have or will be painting their own storefronts. A portion of the building will be painted and a new sign for one business, along with a new roof for the building, will be funded by the Downtown Improvement Program. The building was also the recipient of a bench and street trees in the Fall of 1984.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

One reason for initiating the Storefront was to create a resource of technical expertise to be used by the City and its businesses. During its operation the Storefront addressed two issues identified in the PSU contract, the riverfront and an economic/market analysis, and, parking, which developed during the year. The parking issue resulted in the Downtown Milwaukie Parking report. A document was also produced analyzing the economic/market conditions within and around the downtown area. For the riverfront, the Storefront developed and detailed a process that can be initiated by the City to obtain a public consensus on future riverfront improvements.

### The Milwaukie Riverfront-Project # 83 - 1

The Milwaukie riverfront is seen as a key element in the achievement of downtown revitalization. The area is on the east bank of the Willamette River and is the western most boundary of the City of Milwaukie adjacent to downtown. Totaling approximately six acres, it was under the ownership boundary of the City of Milwaukie adjacent to downtown. Totaling approximately six acres, it was under the ownership of thirteen different individuals in September, 1983. This area provides Milwaukie a development opportunity that few towns in the area are fortunate to have.

The charge to the Storefront was to develop a planning process and to identify, with assistance of the property

owners, businesses, citizens, and City, development options for the riverfront. This task was achieved to the satisfaction of the City, although it did not attain, within the Storefront's one year time frame, all that was anticipated. A planning process was identified that, upon initiation by the City, can result in consensus building within the community as to development objectives. Along with the process, the Storefront and City staff, identified zoning and comprehensive plan changes that would be required to achieve the desired development. Whereas the required process has been outlined and initial contact with property owners made, the City sponsored public involvement process was not initiated. The City plans to conduct this process at a later date using the information developed by the Storefront.

Besides a development opportunity, the riverfront also provides a rallying point around which community support can be achieved. The businesses, community groups, different citizen groups, and the City have all identified the opportunity afforded by the riverfront. A well developed citizen participation process could serve as a way to get opportunity afforded by the riverfront. A well developed citizen participation process could serve as a way to get the varying interest groups within the community to work together to achieve a mutual goal which would benefit the entire area.

Downtown Milwaukie Parking Study-Project # 83 - 5

The Storefront was requested by the City to conduct an

analysis of downtown parking and to suggest solutions to a shortage of customer spaces. The study included recording current downtown usage patterns, analyzing the results, comparing those results to the number of employees downtown, and developing suggestions for those areas where a shortage of spaces existed. This information was presented in the Downtown Milwaukee Parking study which was released in March, 1984.

The findings of the study confirmed the existing belief that the shortage problem was the result of employees taking up 63 percent of street spaces during the day. Additionally, it was found that there were restrictions on some spaces which were no longer necessary, and inappropriate time limits on a few spaces. The Storefront contacted downtown businesses during the data gathering phase of the study and sponsored a community meeting to review findings when the study was completed in March. There was some initial merchant interest in forming a committee to detail solutions and present them to the City and other businesses in town, but this interest waned quickly. The Storefront worked with the City to remove restrictions on spaces which were no longer appropriate and also suggested specific alternative areas for employee parking.

The Economic Study-Project # 84 - 21

The Storefront developed the Milwaukee Economic Profile and

Retail Market Analysis to serve as a resource for the City and the Milwaukie USA Business Association. The study offers: 1) an inventory of commercial activity within a two mile radius of downtown Milwaukie, 2) an analysis of supportable square footage of commercial space in this zone, 3) a demographic description of area residents, 4) a review of the 1982 survey of downtown patrons, and 5) a description of growth potential in the Milwaukie area.

The study found that sufficient consumer dollars are available to support both present commercial uses and most potential uses. The study states there is presently a shortage of convenience type goods in the downtown, especially food stores and dinner trade restaurants, as well as a shortage of comparison type goods such as clothing and variety stores. It also offers information and conclusions which can be used to foster both discussion and future directions for downtown.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

The Storefront role in the areas of information and education was two-fold: a resource of information for both existing businesses and those individuals or businesses either new to the area or interested in coming to Milwaukie, and to sponsor educational workshops for the current businesses in town. The projects in this category were varied and some were more successful than others.

Workshops: Energy-Project # 83-3; Finance-Project # 83-2; Facade Improvements-Project # 84-14

The workshop format was found to be an ineffective way to provide information to existing businesses. The finance workshop generated the highest attendance while the other attempts were not well attended. The reason for this could have been that, except for finance, the Storefront sponsored topics of its own choosing in areas that the staff wanted to provide information. The finance topic, generated from the community, suggested that the best workshops are those responsive to the interests of the community.

The first workshop sponsored by the Storefront was on energy conservation for small businesses. It was coordinated through the Community Energy Project of Portland with a speaker from the State of Oregon Department of Energy. The workshop was held soon after the Storefront



opened its doors and was the first sponsored activity. Publicity was handled with posters and hand delivered fliers to all businesses in town. There was no attendance from the business community.

Reasons for poor attendance included not enough lead time and no direct publicity to building owners. Merchants appeared unwilling to invest in improvements for energy savings as they did not own their buildings. If the Storefront had known more about energy saving techniques, it may have been able to address these feelings with some specific information and an invitation to hear more at the workshop.

The finance workshop was held at the Storefront in early November, 1983, jointly sponsored by the Milwaukie USA Business Association and the City. The topics included public and private financing options for business and public improvements. The resource for the workshop was a local economic consulting firm and attendance was approximately 25 business persons and City officials. The City had hoped to follow-up this forum with community meetings concerning riverfront development and how the mechanisms discussed could be utilized. This did not occur, although the City is still planning on implementing the public planning process as detailed earlier in the Riverfront Project - # 83 - 1.

The facade improvement workshops were part of a larger "Let's Get Physical" Spring campaign for physical improvements in downtown. The Let's Get Physical slogan was the lead-in for the visible design activities which included the Downtown Improvement Program, streetscape improvements and contacts with individual merchants and building owners on design. The kick off to the campaign was held in April with three additional workshops scheduled for April and May. The topics included building maintenance and painting, awnings, and signs. The Storefront arranged for guest speakers from Portland and elsewhere to lead discussions. Attendance at the first two workshops was not sufficient to warrant holding the third.

The Business Opportunity List-Project # 84-18

The Business Opportunity List was a bi-monthly update of available properties in downtown Milwaukie. The list was made available to persons interested in locating a new business in town. It served as a good marketing tool both for the Storefront and for the downtown area. It is something that could be easily updated by the Business Association and provided to local realtors and potential new businesses.

Milwaukie History Project-Project # 84-11

The information gathered for this project resulted in a walking tour and brochure for National Historic Preservation Week, a display on the development of the cherry in

Milwaukie (which was used during the Main Street Market), and the background research and conceptualization for a permanent display on the growth of downtown Milwaukie. The walking tour was held in May, with 15 people participating. The brochure that was developed can be used in the future for self-guided tours and is available at City Hall and the Milwaukie Historical Museum. The cherry display has been provided to the City and can be used again during appropriate events. The Historic Project was an additional way that the Storefront became involved with the community. The History Project was aided by students from PSU's undergraduate Urban Studies program and by a student from Clackamas Community College.

#### Storefront Display-Project #84-17

A display on the purpose and activities of the Storefront was developed as a marketing tool. It was displayed at the Urban Affairs Association conference in Portland in March, 1984 and the American Planning Association, Oregon Chapter, conference in Bend in April, 1984. It was also used in the Storefront booth during the Main Street Market.

conference in Bend in April, 1984. It was also used in the Storefront booth during the Main Street Market.

## THE STOREFRONT EFFORT

### Benefits

The Storefront's year in Milwaukie produced tangible community benefits. The coordination with the MUBA on its Fall and Christmas promotions as well as sponsorship of the summer Main Street Market renewed an interest and excitement in downtown. The physical appearance of downtown was enhanced by the Main Street flower program and will be improved in the long run by facade improvements, new street furniture, and additional street trees. The economic analysis can be used as a tool in new business recruitment and both the parking study and the riverfront process can be used to shape future public policy. The educational workshops provided the opportunity for increased awareness on important issues.

In all of the projects, the Storefront served as a catalyst to begin a process or complete a job. The parking study, the riverfront project, and the economic study are all examples of the Storefront addressing issues and providing information for the community to act upon. The facade improvements, street flowers, and the Main Street Market are examples of the Storefront pulling together existing resources for the entire community's benefit. In its role as a catalyst, the Storefront served both as a resource to be used and as a bridge to tie the community together.

There was also a benefit, although intangible, which may in the long run be the most important. There was a small change in attitude of some community members, who began to look at the possibilities of the downtown, apart from its problems. A spark of excitement, of potential, was started that if kindled, can result in a renewed downtown. The Storefront attempted to create possibilities and focus attention on them, so that the community could develop and enhance itself.

#### Problems Encountered

The Storefront did experience problems, some of which still need to be addressed by the community. The Storefront itself lacked a quick and visible accomplishment. Many of the early months were spent in isolation from the downtown businesses, attempting to organize and define the operation. Goals and plans were both initially high and poorly defined. The Storefront lost valuable time that should have been used to meet the merchants and to talk with them about their hopes and goals. That quick accomplishment was necessary to gain their confidence and to show them that indeed things can get done. Without a confidence builder, the Storefront hopes and goals. That quick accomplishment was necessary to gain their confidence and to show them that indeed things can get done. Without a confidence builder, the Storefront spent many of the succeeding months trying to prove itself in the eyes of the community and its staff.

Milwaukie also lacked a strong business association with which the Storefront could work. There was a core group in MUBA but the support of the majority of businesses was

lacking. The Storefront had planned to work with MUBA to accomplish many of its original objectives. Instead, it was left to work in a vacuum of individual interests or apathy. The business association could have provided a tie to local businesses which the Storefront did not initially have. The Storefront did not react quickly enough to the situation and did not create those ties with the individual businesses that are vital to successful activities.

The office procedures developed in the first month of operation attempted to serve the record keeping functions and also be the vehicle for communication and continuity within the project. The need for the system to serve as a communication mechanism was enhanced because of the part time status of all staff. The system was successful in its role of record keeping, but less so as a communication tool. It could not replace the informal staff communication that is necessary in well functioning offices. There were breakdowns in communication and project continuity among the staff and between the staff and the community.

The part time nature of the staff also lead to problems. The perception of those outside the Storefront, as well as the staff, was that, because of the number and expertise of the individuals, accomplishments should be many and varied. The initial goals reflected this overestimation of available resources. The available person hours of staff

totaled 60, but each person only had 15 hours available and, in two cases, only 7 1/2. The accomplishments that five people can attain in 60 hours most probably do not equal the accomplishments that one or one and a half persons can achieve in the same amount of time. The efficiency costs of the project are increased in proportion to the number of persons involved. The need to formalize communication channels required additional work that subtracts from individual project work. The normal start up and close out time required in a job are also increased by the number of staff, also adding inefficiencies. The problem of continuity between staff and the community also increased because most of the staff were only in the office two days a week.

Many of the successes of downtown revitalization programs come about through personal contact and finesse. The fragmentation of the Storefront staff did not allow for these relationships to develop with many individuals. A more effective program would result from having fewer people involved, each having more time to devote. This issue was also identified in the findings of Storefront evaluation completed by a Portland State Public Administration class. ~~....., .....~~ also identified in the findings of Storefront evaluation completed by a Portland State Public Administration class.

### Opportunities

Milwaukie is a small town which is part of a very dynamic metropolitan area. A question arises therefore as to the purpose of the downtown. In the past, it served as the shopping center for its surrounding residential

neighborhoods. The downtown has now been replaced for those needs by a regional shopping center, Clackamas Town Center, downtown Portland and other competing opportunities elsewhere in the area. Milwaukie needs to find a new niche, one that places it uniquely in the metropolitan region or within a smaller market area. This would best be done by a conscious decision on the part of the existing businesses and City government. If action is not taken, the downtown will stagnate. The consequences of this may be traumatic. The Storefront has provided two tools which could aid in this decisionmaking. The riverfront process for community consensus building provides the vehicle for discussion on what the future of Milwaukie should be. The economic analysis provides the data which can be used to chart the direction for future market placement and business recruitment.

The existing business community needs to see the importance of being involved in this revitalization effort. Revitalization means bringing in new businesses which existing firms may see as competition. Another viewpoint though, is that those new businesses add to a critical mass. Revitalization means bringing in new businesses which existing firms may see as competition. Another viewpoint though, is that those new businesses add to a critical mass necessary for a successful shopping area. The Main Street Market had difficulty because there were not enough vendors to create necessary sales. The same principle holds true for downtown Milwaukie. There needs to exist a number of shopping opportunities which will draw customers to the



downtown. Each of the existing businesses will benefit with the addition of each new business in downtown.

### Meeting Project Goals

The original goals of the Storefront, (stimulate economic development, revitalize downtown Milwaukie and seek development of the riverfront) were lofty and unachievable within a one year time period. These goals are more applicable to the long range future of the City of Milwaukie. Most of the activities detailed in the scope of work by the the County's Community Development Division were achieved. These include:

- The initiation, introduction, and operation of a Storefront office which served as the hub for the projects activities in the downtown;
- Collection of business climate information in the downtown and surrounding area which was used to produce the economic study and market analysis, a first step in the City's development of a marketing and business recruitment program;
- The sponsorship of workshops and seminars to inform downtown merchants on financial options as well as other topics;
- The planning, organizing and carrying out of varied promotional activities to enhance the image of downtown;
- The planning, organizing and carrying out of varied promotional activities to enhance the image of downtown;
- The development of a public planning process to process to achieve consensus on the future of riverfront development.

A few changes and adaptations to the original scope of work also occurred. A pricing survey on the costs of locating in downtown Milwaukie as opposed to other areas was dropped on recommendation from the Advisory Committee. This is an issue which deserves attention and should be investigated by the City as it develops a marketing strategy.

The original intention of the design element of the Storefront was to develop design guidelines for the downtown which would direct and encourage future downtown facade improvements. This task was modified by the City producing a set of policy options on design guidelines which were presented to the City Council. The Storefront work in the design area was less formal than originally intended. Color, materials, street trees, street furniture and appropriate design alternatives were all discussed and taken into consideration in the facade and streetscape improvements that occurred through the Downtown Improvement Program. Through the direct involvement of the Storefront, these elements were integrated into the improvements that occurred.

these elements were integrated into the improvements that occurred.

The transportation element of the work plan was not addressed. Initiation in this area was to come from the city. This did not occur and, therefore, the Storefront did not take any action.

## A PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

### Timing

The long term benefits of the Storefront to Milwaukie will not be fully realized for years to come. But, the Storefront does provide some lessons which can be used in other suburban communities and neighborhood commercial areas. Perhaps the most important of these is that the revitalization process takes time. It takes a long time for an area to get to the point where it needs help and time to turn it around. A year is only a very small period within the life of a commercial area. An intervention strategy for economic development, which is what the Storefront was, requires a commitment of years both by the business community and the city government. The strategy needs to be built around long term goals but must include short term projects and accomplishments. The commitment must also be strong and lasting.

Without this commitment by merchants, property owners, and city government, an intervention strategy on the part of an organization like the Storefront will be at best a limited success. Without this commitment by merchants, property owners, and city government, an intervention strategy on the part of an organization like the Storefront will be at best a limited success. The staff of the organization intervening should not view themselves as being solely responsible for the success or failure of individual projects. It is the businesses and property owners that need to achieve project goals. The staff should facilitate and coordinate

activities. Results, however, will be accomplished within a time frame that is appropriate to the business and property owners.

Goals and action oriented plans for intervention must be well defined. They also need to be developed before a staff is assigned to the project. To be most effective, the project needs to hit the ground running. Plans can be revised and goals will be modified during the process, but it is necessary to have some tangible results within the first few months. These successes will reinforce the commitment and bring new supporters to the program.

#### Importance of Businesses Support and Involvement

The development of goals and action plans must include the business community, as well as the other partners in the development program. If there is a weak link in this partnership, be it business, city, or project staff, it will be difficult to achieve any positive activity. It is vitally important to stay in touch and be aware of and responsive to the business community's interests. The staff be difficult to achieve any positive activity. It is vitally important to stay in touch and be aware of and responsive to the business community's interests. The staff must be visible, accessible, on the street, in the shops, and always talking. When concerns or interests are expressed, the staff must be able to provide some response. The response may not be everything that the merchant desired, but it is necessary to respond. It is through this process that trust and confidence, vital ingredients for

success, will be built between the businesses and the staff.

The poor attendance at Storefront initiated workshops can be seen as an example of the need to be aware of the interests of the local businesses. The hours of the day for a small business person are filled with the work necessary to ensure a successful business. If they are to find the time to be involved in other activities, they must be activities the business person has an interest in and feels will be beneficial. It is necessary, beyond the development of goals and action plans, for businesses to be involved in the planning of individual activities.

Because there is not enough time in the day, week, or month to stay in touch with all of the individual businesses, a need exists for an information exchange forum among the businesses and between businesses and city staff. This is one of the many reasons for a strong business association. A credible business association, which has support within the business community, is a requirement for a successful economic development strategy. It is vital that the A credible business association, which has support within the business community, is a requirement for a successful economic development strategy. It is vital that the association has the financial, organizational, and leadership capabilities to take a lead role in the revitalization process.

The existence of a strong business association brings a cohesiveness to the downtown. The downtown should not be

seen as a mixture of unrelated, individual businesses, but rather as a functioning unit which works together to draw people to it. Successful shopping centers are made up of individual merchants, but in the mind of the customer are perceived as a single destination. To attain this unanimity, the individual merchants work together in promotions, advertising, maintenance, and improvements. Larger downtowns, such as Portland, are also taking this unified approach to marketing and maintenance. This same type of approach will work for smaller areas as well. It is necessary to create in the customers' mind an image that can be capitalized on by the individual businesses. It is the vehicle of the business association that provides this opportunity for a unified image.

As mentioned, the business association can do more than develop joint promotions and advertising. The parking problem in downtown Milwaukie is an example of a situation that can be dealt with through a strong business association. Certain individual businesses are experiencing a problem because other individual businesses are taking advantage of a limited resource. The business association can serve as a forum, and if necessary, a mediator to solve this problem. There needs to be a shared sense of responsibility among the businesses in the downtown and the realization that they must work together for their mutual benefit. Other activities a business association can

involve itself in include maintenance and clean up of buildings and sidewalks, care of street trees and flowers, operation and management of an off-street parking program, initiator of community service programs, and as a voice for the business interests in city politics.

### The Public Role

City government must play a major supportive part in a commercial revitalization program. The level of this support can vary between active involvement to passive support. It is important though, for the business community to feel that the city government is committed to an improved downtown. This commitment must be not only from city employees but also elected officials. The level of support depends on the scale of the revitalization effort. Small neighborhood commercial areas may not need extensive support.

One of the major roles a city can play is to seek funds necessary for a program. Cities have the resources and the abilities that are required to locate and attract funding  
One of the major roles a city can play is to seek funds necessary for a program. Cities have the resources and the abilities that are required to locate and attract funding mechanisms. They also can provide technical assistance to the business community that may be necessary for them to locate sources of support.

## The Need for a Storefront

A successful economic revitalization strategy must also include an individual or staff that serves the role the Storefront did in Milwaukie. There needs to be coordination, facilitation and a point that action can revolve around. No program can be successful without someone being in the position of responsibility. It is that position which a downtown manager, in Milwaukie, the Storefront staff, must and did fill. While each of the partners have their roles to play, it is this position which provides the cohesion, the focal point, for the revitalization efforts.

The most appropriate position for a Storefront type operation is that of a catalyst. It is not possible for a Storefront to do all that is necessary to achieve a revitalization effort, but it is possible to assume the role of getting the different elements of the community to work together to help themselves. Those different elements, businesses, city government, and community at large, each have their tasks to attend to. The business of a Storefront work together to help themselves. Those different elements, businesses, city government, and community at large, each have their tasks to attend to. The business of a Storefront is to bring the resources and talents of each of these elements together for the improvement of the entire community. Economic revitalization needs to be a partnership effort between businesses and the public. It is a difficult effort and one which requires a commitment of time and resources. But, the outcome of this effort can be



commercial areas that are both vital and exciting and which take their place within the fabric of a successful community.

## APPENDIX A

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MILWAUKIE STOREFRONT

The Milwaukie Storefront is dedicated to improving the economic vitality and image of downtown Milwaukie, including the Milwaukie Riverfront.

The goals of the Milwaukie Storefront are:

- To stimulate economic development in the downtown area;
- To revitalize the Milwaukie Central Business District;
- To seek development of the Milwaukie Riverfront as an intergal part of the Downtown Central Business District.

To accomplish these goals the Milwaukie Storefront has adopted the following objectives:

- To assist existing businesses located in downtown Milwaukie;
- To encourage new businesses to locate in downtown Milwaukie;
- To encourage shoppers and clients to come to
- To encourage new businesses to locate in downtown Milwaukie;
- To encourage shoppers and clients to come to downtown Milwaukie for personal services, retail goods and the "social" aspect of "shopping";
- To assess and evaluate the financial and economic base of the Milwaukie Central Business District.
- To develop a proposal for the improvement of the Milwaukie Riverfront;
- To provide assistance for improving the appearance of downtown which would include conserving

buildings of architectural integrity and structural soundness;

- To operate a Storefront office which would serve as the vehicle for initiating these objectives.

APPENDIX B

STOREFRONT PROJECTS

83-1 Riverfront  
83-2 Finance Workshop  
83-3 Energy Workshop  
83-4 Auction  
83-5 Downtown Parking Study  
83-6 Open House  
83-7 Christmas Decorations  
83-8 ABC Kitchens  
83-9 Giving Tree  
83-10 Christmas Card  
83-11 Milwaukie History  
84-12 Strauss Flower Block  
84-13 Street Trees  
84-14 Facade Improvement Workshops  
84-15 Let's Get Physical Campaign  
84-16 Downtown Improvement Program  
84-17 Storefront Display  
84-18 Business Opportunity List  
84-19 Main Street Market  
84-20 Design  
84-21 Economic Study  
84-22 Street Flowers  
84-23 Street Furniture