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# From Vision to Development

Ernest Bonner

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## Memo

To: Neil Goldschmidt

From: Ernie Bonner

Subject: From Vision to Development on the Midtown Park Blocks A Design Charette

The Park Blocks Foundation has proceeded diligently on its course of getting the Midtown Park Blocks into friendly hands, with the long-term vision of making those blocks available to the City for open space, as intended by the early platters of the City of Portland.

At the same time, there appears to be no parallel efforts by the City. There is no visible progress by the City planners on the crafting of a development strategy for the West End. There is no interest or support from the Mayor for the vision of the Park Blocks Foundation. There are no official actions on the docket for the City Council. And because there are no official actions, there is no media interest, and the whole issue seems to have sunk into some kind of a black hole.

How can we re-energize this issue among the citizens and leaders of Portland?

I think we have to create a sense of excitement about the Midtown Park Blocks again; and, much to my disappointment, I don't think we can count on the City to help with that.

To begin with, we need more than the vision of the Midtown Park Blocks as open space; we need support for that vision and some good ideas on how to realize that vision over the long term, given a West End Plan which provides uncertain direction about the area around the Midtown Park Blocks and is silent about the Midtown Park Blocks themselves.

Ernie Munch has a well-reasoned concept and presentation. Bob Thompson has a variation on Ernie's concept. Neither has been analyzed as to implementation over time but both imply a relatively quick implementation schedule.

How can we get further good ideas on the long term implementation of the Foundation's vision?

### A Community Charette

A Community Design Charette would be a voluntary effort by Portland architects, designers, retailers, developers, community leaders and citizens to produce some ideas on how to implement the Park Blocks Foundation vision of open space on the Midtown Park Blocks. Events would last a week, beginning with an introduction and orientation on Monday evening; continuing with two public meetings of participants on Wednesday and Thursday evening to hear the ideas of selected local designers, developers and others on their work to date; and ending with a presentation of the accumulated ideas at an all-day Saturday press conference held by the Foundation. These presentations would be held in a large public space, affording ample space for working and displaying work. A Foundation representative (Dean Macris?) would spend the week in Portland providing advice and counsel to the Teams. A video record of the event and the activities of the various teams will be collected, and copies will be available free to all of the participants.

The Foundation would promote the idea of a community charette. Teams of any number would be established by the members. Any person is eligible to participate. A Charette kit will be provided free to each team, including basic maps and information about the area under study as well as basic drawing materials, t-shirts and buttons. The same objective is

accepted by all: a plan for the development of an open space connection of the North and South Park Blocks, over the next 50 years.

There are no adjudged winners, though there will be prizes for individual team efforts: best team name, most exciting idea, best open space idea, etc. A compilation of the ideas will be made available to the Park Blocks Foundation, the Multnomah County Library and the City of Portland.

## The Charette Pack:

Each team would receive a Charette Pack containing the following information:

What is the urban context for the Design Area?

Mixed downtown commercial housing development  
High Density with Height Limits of 250 feet.  
Transit crossroads  
Cultural Center

What are the geographic limits to the Design Area?

SW Couch, SW Broadway, SW Main, SW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue

What is the Design Program?

Open Space on the Midtown Park Blocks; mixed commercial-residential construction at the edges of the Blocks; First steps in the creation of an open space connection between the north and south park blocks in downtown Portland. Subsequent steps.

Who will 'judge' the options?

There will be open public discussion of options, but no adjudged 'winner.' The Board of the Park Blocks Foundation will receive the Saturday presentations and award prizes for \_\_\_\_\_ .

What is exercise expected to accomplish?

- Publicity and renewed interest in the purpose and potential of the Midtown Park Blocks
- A compilation of good ideas for the implementation of the Foundation vision.

Limited budget.

The budget for this event could be as low as \$10,000 and as high as \$30,000.



- Why not use Block 5 for rink?

- 45,000 projected paying customers for rink.

- \$2.5 mill. endowment will pay \$15,000/year <sup>(and this)</sup> will pay the cost of installing and taking down the rink.  
Pet M. says you need ~~500~~ 5.0 million to get 75<sup>k</sup> annually in interest.

- 10 hrs/day weekdays; 12 hrs/day weekends.

1 skating cycle = 1 hr. 30 mins.

1 ice cycle = 2 hrs.

$$50 + 24 = 74 \text{ cycles/week}$$

74

50

$$\frac{74}{3} = 24 \frac{2}{3}$$

3750 total cycles.

$$\begin{array}{r} 60 \\ 120 \\ 60 \\ \hline 7,200 \end{array} \text{ ft}^2 \quad \underline{\underline{\$ 8,000 \text{ ft}^2}}$$

- Sup. rink in '89 - '90. 45,000 people "used" the rink in 1980.

How long was it installed?

rink covering necessary.

1 1/2 yr. process for review

- budget needs

- funding campaign under way 'quiet phase' [\\$4.1 million now pledged.]

- continued research.

- public process being designed.

- 557,000 visitors 1<sup>st</sup> year of BOVA.

- main flow of park is in danger - needs repair.

Board considering <sup>crossed</sup> ramp surface to park.

- 64,000 bricks need to be replaced.

- Need footings for umbrella roof structures.

- columns 18-24" in diameter - 3 w/hi and 3 40' hi.

"

Hobson Ferrarini Report? (is this available?)

- 254 event days/yr.; 10 event days now scheduled during winter 4 months.

- Revenue neutral

- Goal not \$, but to bring people downtown.

- Don't rely on Parks Bureau budget!!

\$2 million makes necessary repairs to Square.  
 \$10 " to build rink.

## Design Options for the Park Blocks

What is the urban context for the Design Area?

Mixed downtown commercial housing development  
High Density with Height Limits of 250 feet.  
Transit crossroads  
Cultural Center

What are the limits to the Design Area?

SW Couch, SW Broadway, SW Main, SW 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue

What is the Design Program?

Open Space on the Midtown Park Blocks; mixed commercial-residential construction at the edges of the Blocks; Creation of a new place called the West End; 50-year phasing schedule.

Who will prepare the designs for consideration?

Open Competition among interested teams of designers, developers, businessmen and citizens.

Who will 'judge' the options?

Select panel of 5 designers, developers, downtown businessmen or residents, and Portland citizens. Open public discussion of options. Five options will be selected for final public viewing and judging.

Is there a 'winner?'

No requirement that the jury must select one of the five as the 'winner.'

What is exercise expected to accomplish?

- Options for the community to explore for the development of the West End area surrounding the Midtown Park Blocks.
- A sense of involvement of the community in the design of the Midtown Park Blocks.
- Renewed interest in the purpose and potential of the Midtown Park Blocks

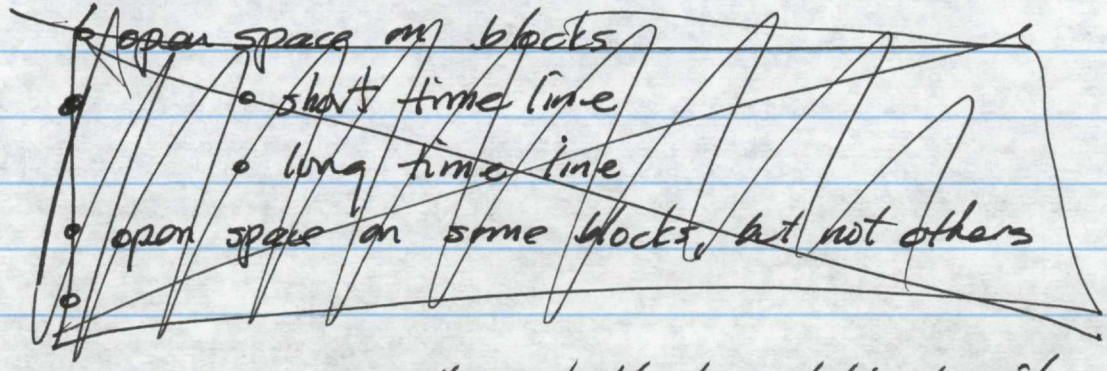
Limited budget.

Geo

916 772-0201 Geo.

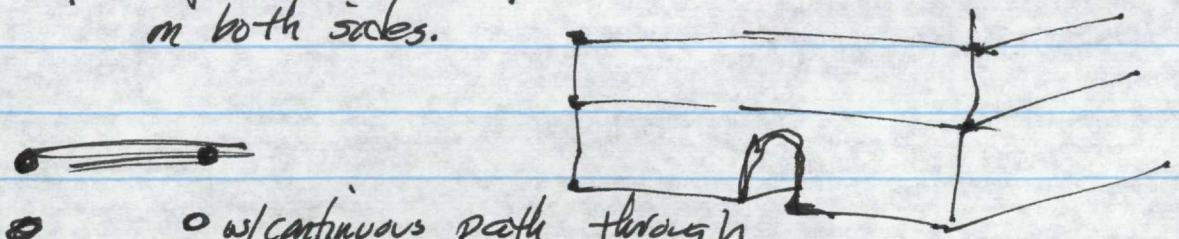
mimclennan@ci.pittcad.or.us

- Talk to Gil Kelley.
- Talk to Rudy Barton.
- " " Don Stastny.
- invitations to local firms and selected others.
- Alternative visions:



on all park blocks, w/ hi-density  
 • open space ~~w/ hi-density~~  
 retail, office : residential development on both sides.

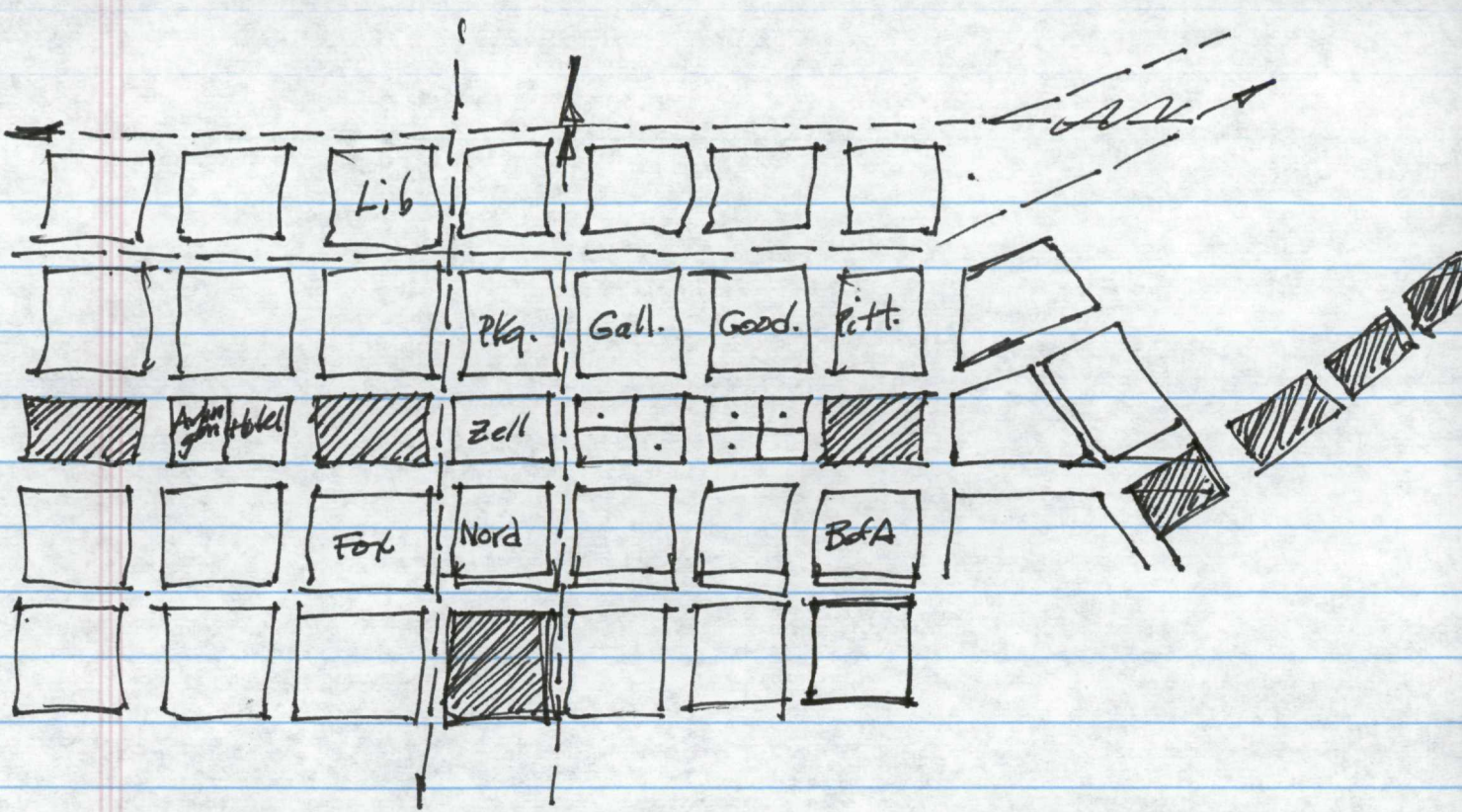
• open space on some park blocks, w/ same as above on both sides.



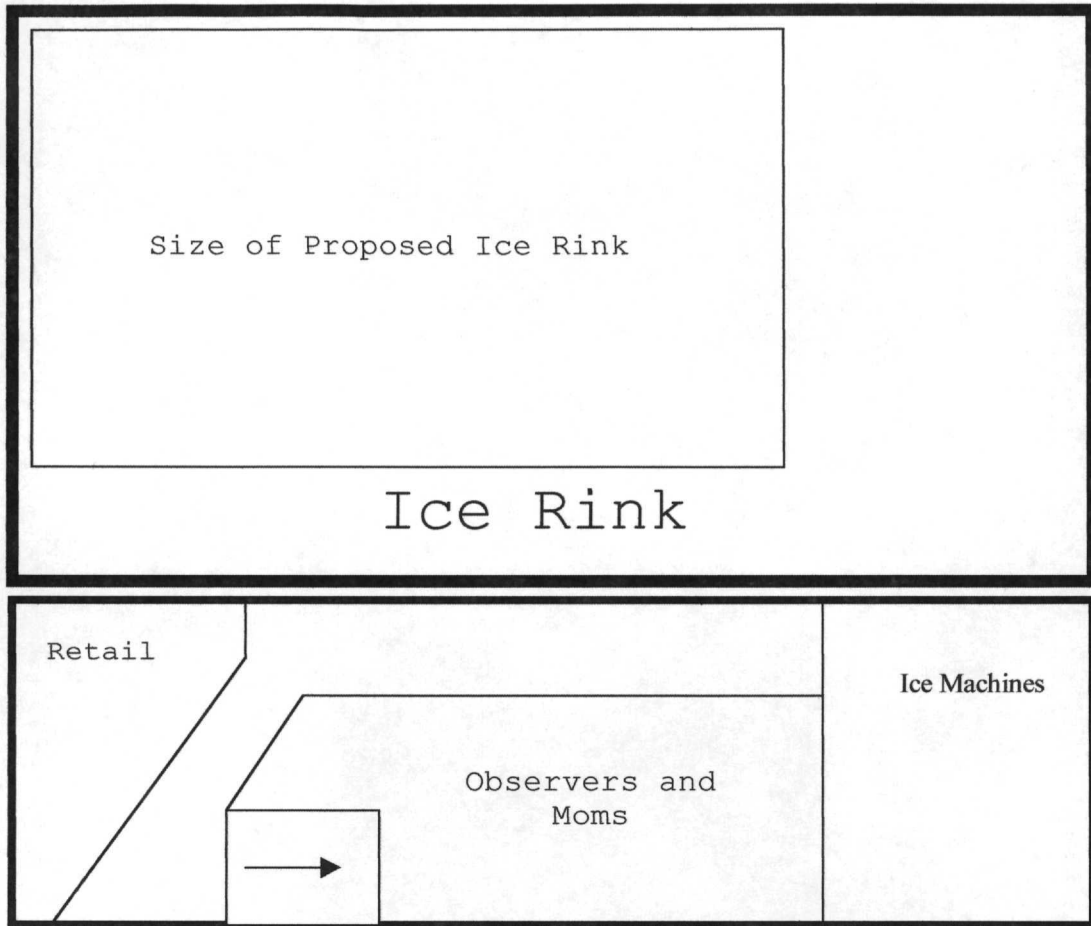
• w/ continuous path through blocks between right-of-way.

• w/ no continuous path ~~through blocks~~ between rights of way.





- Ernie Munch
- Walker Macy
- Rod Ottise (?)
- Notal Kasrawi
- Greg Baldwin
- Doug Obletz, David Knowles
- Rudy Barton & Class.
- Greg Goodman
-



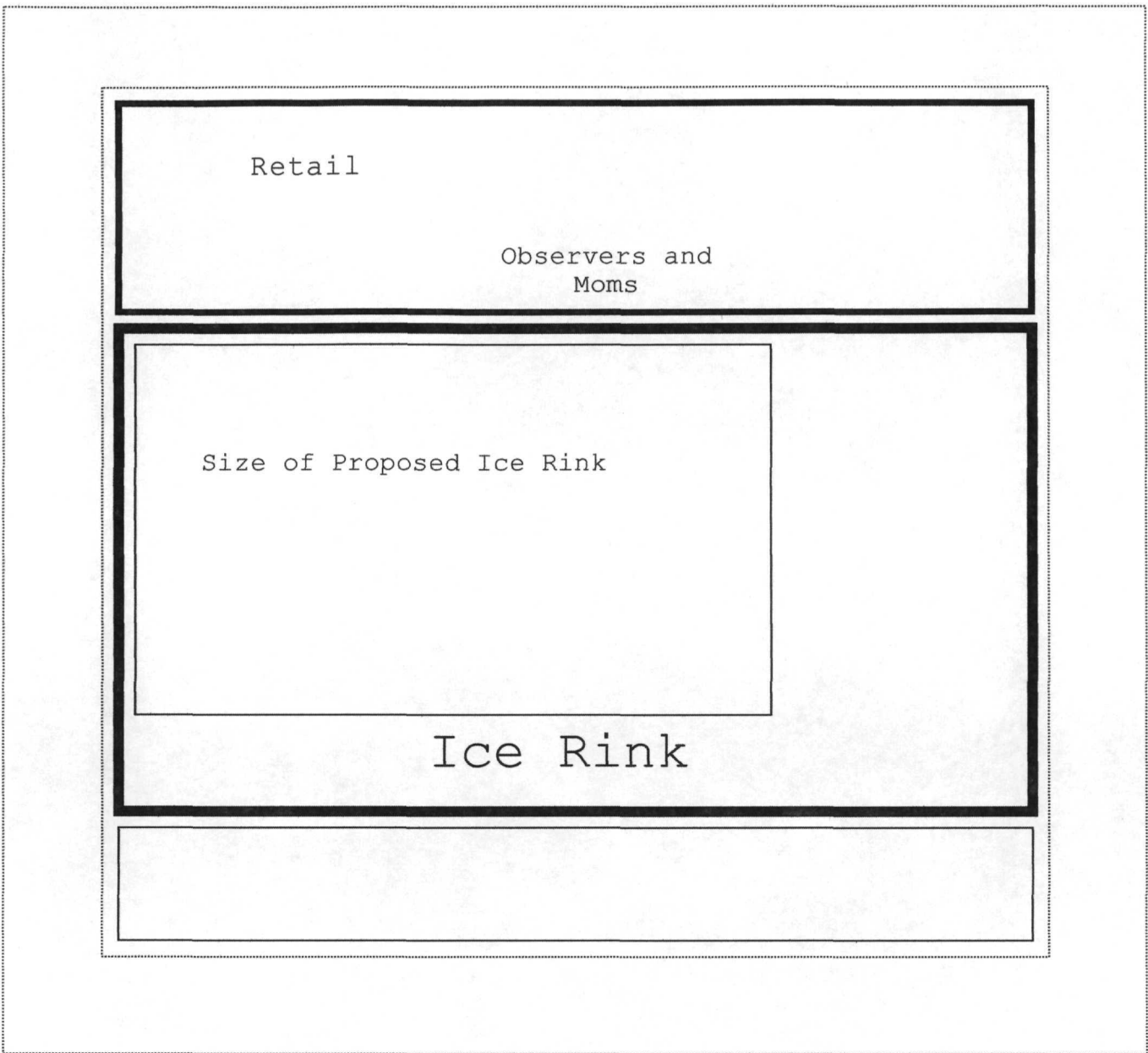
## LLOYD CENTER ICE RINK

The Lloyd Center Ice Rink is 80 feet by 200 feet. An additional 40 feet by 200 feet provides space for retail, tickets, ice machines and other maintenance equipment, tables and chairs for those observing the skaters, mostly moms, and skaters. Rest rooms are in the basement under the raised section for Observers and Moms.

Estimated number of square feet for use: 25,000.

Admission to public sessions is \$5.00 for entry plus \$2.50 for skate rentals. For Monday's special public session \$1 off for mall employees, scouts, military, seniors.

The Monday public session spanned from 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM; and from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM.



## CLACKAMAS TOWN CENTER ICE RINK

The Clackamas Rink (run by Icxe Chalet) is 80 feet by 200 feet, like the Ice Chalet operation at Lloyd Center. An additional 25 feet by 200 feet provides space for retail, tickets, ice machines and for skaters and coaches. A food court surrounds the whole rink at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level. A stair to the second level and a 'mezzanine' level provide added seating for food court patrons or skating observers.

Estimated number of square feet for use: 30,000 plus food court.

Admission to public sessions is \$5.00 for entry plus \$2.50 for skate rentals. For Monday's special public session \$1 off for mall employees, scouts, military, seniors. This is an Ice Chalet operation so it has the same fees and policies as the Chalet operation at Lloyd Center.

The Tuesday public session spanned from 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM; and from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM.

**The Valley Ice Arena SW 92<sup>nd</sup> and Bvtn-Hillsdale Road and the Sherwood Ice Arena in Sherwood (30 minutes from downtown Portland) .**

Both the Valley and Sherwood Ice Arena appear to focus almost entirely on ice hockey. I was not able to see the Sherwood rink as it was closed for film production.

The Valley Ice Arena rink itself appeared to be about the size of the Ice Chalet rinks at Lloyd Center and Clackamas Town Center. Less than 10 kids were on the ice when I was there in the middle afternoon Tuesday.

Admission seemed to be \$7.00 for all days and times. But I only saw specific times, dates and prices for hockey related events: practice or games. In general, open skating seemed reserved for afternoons and evenings only.

## **Some Conclusions and a Limited Proposal**

My quick survey of ice arenas in Portland area cannot substitute for a more scientific assessment of course, but it does permit some conclusions.

The Ice Chalet operations at Lloyd Center and Clackamas Town Center cater to a general population and to figure skating, while the Southwest arenas cater to hockey.

All but the Clackamas Town Center arena appeared to be greatly underused. At Clackamas, there were 40 kids on the ice, at Lloyd Center only 10, and at the Valley there were less than 10. And Sherwood was closed.

The Clackamas Town Center was well set up for viewing figure skating. The Lloyd Center rink was reasonably set up though not as well. The Valley rink was poorly set up for viewing skating.

I would draw at least one conclusion: that the skating was going on because there was something that drew a lot of people to the rink location—not the other way around.

### **Hmmmmmmmm**

Would it be possible to consider figure skating (or a hockey match as far as that goes) as another event at the Square, rather than something that is rather permanently there? I have a hunch that lots of people would like to see skating downtown, but not many would want to do it. How about a 3-night celebration of figure skating on the square, with participants from all of the regional skating classes around New Years Eve? This would not have the objective of making money for the operation of the square (though it should cover all expenses from private contributions), but the longer stay of the skating rink would be a lot more expensive and not make money either.

Another thought: Can we find a place for the rink at another site in downtown. None of our downtown parks gets a lot of use in the winter, so many should be available.

I think a performance of figure skating of less than a week would be a reasonable event to consider for the Square—or even better, for one of the Park Blocks.

**But, mostly, I think we should put the ice rink at the square on the back burner and get to work on the real problem: how to raise money for the operation of the Square.**