

Town Square

October, 2000

TOWN SQUARE

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I. INTRODUCTION

The acquisition and development of a town square in downtown Burien has long been a desire of the citizens of Burien and is a major component of the downtown plan adopted by the Burien City Council.

The City Council established the identification of a town square plan and potential site purchase in the downtown as a priority for the year 2000. On January 10, the City Council authorized establishment of a task force to proceed with a process to identify a site and characteristics for the town square.

The Town Square Task Force included all members of the City Council, Planning Commission, Parks Board, Arts Commission, and Business and Economic Development Partnership.

A series of task force meetings with notices to all property owners and tenants were held to develop a consensus for site evaluation criteria and objectives related to activities, adjacent uses and character of the town square. From information developed initially, the task force evaluated potential site components and configurations and, subsequently, sites were identified for potential acquisition.

TOWN SQUARE TASK FORCE

City Council	Planning Commission	Parks Board	Arts Commission	Business & Economic Development Partnership
Sally Nelson, Mayor	Joan McGilton, Chair	Gloria Gould-Wessen, Chair	Carol Selander, Chair	Bill Kyle, Chair
Rose Clark, Deputy Mayor	Len Boscarine	Kristin Bongiovanni	Coleen Monette	Kristin Bongiovanni
Larry Gilbert	Charles "Mickey" Conlin	Pam Harper	Nancy Wilson	Nancy Damon
Kevin James	Ted Evans	Jack S. Block, Jr.	Ruth Carpenter	David Elliott
Stephen Lamphere	Robert Pierce	Jennifer Falkner	Gordon Leckenby	Tom Gehl
Georgette Valle	Gerald Robison	Jan Noorda	Randi Lacey	Carol J. Hallen
David Wintermute	Gordon Shaw	George Thornton	Guy Harper	Pam Harper
Wing Woo	Robert Simpson-Clark		Milena Soree Dzanmonja	Dan House
	Kristi Weaver			Alfredo Lopez
			Al Reamer	Joel Manes
			Peggy Hunt	Bruce Mennella
			Diana Vilaflo-Camagong	Mark Minium
				Douglas Moreland
				Joe Spencer

II. PROCESS

PREFERENCES and PRIORITIES

The process described in this section was used to guide the city in developing a downtown square intended to complement the city's urban design, economic vitality and sense of place, attracting people to the downtown.

The Town Square Task Force held its first meeting on February 28 to focus on **preferences and priorities** for useful downtown urban open space or spaces for Burien. Lee Springgate, park director when Bellevue's 20-acre downtown park was developed, reviewed historic examples of successful urban open spaces. He used images of Frederick Law Olmstead's design for Central Park in New York City as an example of a concept of linkages for parks throughout the city.

Springgate emphasized that recreational spaces and parks are not one and the same. Recreational spaces are provided for scheduled, organized activities and are needed in every city. However, if recreational spaces dominate in a city, needed park space will be sacrificed for recreational space.

Springgate identified certain images that are universally important for town squares. These images include lighting, water features, interaction of nearby commercial spaces, and facilities for cultural activities including plays, concerts and public art. All of these elements contribute to the vitality of a town square.

The development of parks in a community requires community vision and leadership, Springgate noted. Burien is now in a place historically when it needs to make some critical decisions.

Doug Schmitz, city manager for Lake Oswego, Oregon, described the historic development and recent redevelopment characteristics of that city. This information served as the basis for describing the very recently completed initial development phases of "Millennium Park." The park is near the lake. Prior to park development, public use of the lake consisted of limited visual access. Millennium Park is part of a 15-block redevelopment in the city that is adjacent to an arterial street on the east boundary with traffic counts of 30,000 vehicles per day. The park relates to four downtown city blocks and is a cornerstone of redevelopment efforts.

The goals for Millennium Park are to spur redevelopment in the downtown, to create a gathering place for the community, to provide community access to privately owned Lake Oswego, to bring people into the downtown area, to set the standard of lasting value for private development, and to save the fir trees on the site. Lake Oswego considers itself to be an art colony and, for that reason, public art was incorporated as a focal point of the park.

Springgate noted that parks have been developed for reasons as diverse as alleviating social problems, environmental stewardship, and economic benefit. Attracting tourists and stimulating development ultimately attracting new businesses and retaining existing businesses, accomplish economic benefits.

Springgate indicated that the first phase of any park development is to create a program reflecting community goals for the park. Processes used to select the appropriate site and park design follow the program. It is imperative that city leaders are responsive to the public and that the public is fully involved in the process. Building in phases is acceptable; the project should move ahead with resources in hand. Financing is always a major issue, but there are a variety of options available.

Management decisions for park operation should be made up front. Components of management include safety, use programming, maintenance, and accessibility. Springgate indicated that Burien should consider integrating the downtown square with other public objectives such as transportation, non-motorized facilities and greenways. The space should be flexible enough to allow a variety of activities in the square.

The downtown square is the city's opportunity to create a distinct identity. The city should take great care to seize this opportunity to use design of the square to shape a distinct city identity.

PRINCIPLES, USES, and SIZE

The main task at the second meeting of the Downtown Square Task Force was to reach consensus on principles to be forwarded to the City Council. The council then reviewed the consensus principles and directed staff to use the principles as the basis to proceed with acquisition and, eventually, design and construction of the square. In addition to forming a consensus on principles, the task force, in discussion, considered preferred uses, preferred size, selection criteria and preferred adjacent uses.

Task force comments from the first meeting were summarized and grouped into three major categories: site design, urban design, and site management. The task force confirmed that the summary accurately reflected substance and intent of original comments. Staff developed principles for each of the categories for the task force to review and make comments.

Springgate presented the principles developed in the major categories and asked task force members to comment on refinements or clarification during discussion of each principle. These principles were further discussed and augmented by our City Council and adopted on 07/03/00.

Site Design Principles

- 1) Town Square should provide a sense of place and identity for Burien.
- 2) Town Square should be an aesthetic space that provides a respite for those people living, working and visiting downtown Burien.
- 3) Town Square should be centrally located and become a major community gathering place that accommodates a variety of celebrations, entertainment and special events.
- 4) Town Square should reflect and interpret Burien's historic heritage.
- 5) Town Square should include flexible, passive space that accommodates a wide array of age groups and informal users.
- 6) Town Square should include a mixture of useable hard and soft surfaces that allow for a variety of uses.
- 7) Town Square should serve as an example of quality design, landscaping, graphics, public art and construction.

- 8) Town Square, as part of an integral park and open space system, should be linked to other park sites that provide active, programmed recreation.
- 9) Town Square should include enhancements to 4th and 6th Avenue SW pedestrian corridors to link Town Square with the community center and other public facilities to the north.
- 10) Town Square should be linear in design to link the many assets of the downtown utilizing the "String of Pearls" concept.
- 11) Town Square should contain a Mt. Rainier view corridor.
- 12) Town Square should maximize its access points to SW 152nd St.

Urban Design Principles

- 1) Town Square should serve as a catalyst for the redevelopment and revitalization of downtown Burien.
- 2) Town Square should attract to its perimeter private, public and nonprofit investments such as theaters, restaurants, stores, galleries, residences, museums and public buildings.
- 3) Town Square should be integrated with other community planning efforts, such as the transit center and pedestrian walkways.
- 4) Town Square should, through design and construction, include adjacent streets [such as SW 150th St. and 4th Avenue SW] to allow its expansion for special programming and to fully integrate street landscaping and pedestrian walkways into the overall design.
- 5) Town Square should, through its design, encourage, transition to, and facilitate successful adjacent development.

Management Principles

- 1) Town Square should be a safe and secure space that is accessible, visible, programmed and patrolled.
- 2) Town Square should offset a portion of its management and operating costs through sponsorships, partnerships, concession income, rentals, user fees and other enterprise activities.
- 3) Town Square should be maintained at the highest possible standard to protect the capital investment and assure appropriate use.

- 4) Town Square should identify and accommodate incremental or "phased" development that matches available capital and operating resources as well as adjacent development plans.

There was vigorous discussion by task force members after presentation of each category. There were a variety of comments that addressed numerous relevant subjects.

Springgate noted several events and uses with potential attendance levels that indicated space requirements for each and facility requirements. Springgate indicated instances of multiple use of space by some of the activities discussed. As part of a discussion, he said that special requirements for passive activity are difficult to quantify. Design should make a space feel big enough to be used comfortably for passive activities and that would take one and a half to two acres of land for soft spaces. Hard spaces would require an acre to one and a half. Examples of site sizes of various well-known sites in the downtown were relayed for comparison with anticipated town square needs. This information was presented as background for task force members to consider as a basis for recommendations for Burien's Town Square acquisition and design.

Burien's Community Development director Rob Odle summarized the discussions and presentations of the meeting and confirmed with the task force there was general consensus with respect to the principles. Further discussion is needed to identify the ratio of hard and soft surfaces in the site design, but there was agreement that both should be part of the design and the spaces should be flexible.

SCHEMATIC ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT

The first meeting of the Town Square Task Force established the envisioned character of the town square and the second meeting identified design principles, uses and size criteria for the square.

For the third meeting, staff, along with Seth Harry and KPG, took the ideas discussed in the first two meetings and molded them into a number of site and location design recommendations and ideas for discussion. The task force was reminded that the town square is a key element of the downtown but is only one of many parts that ideally will be part of a successful downtown revitalization. Task force members were advised to take a holistic look at the city with the town square as a part of a much bigger plan for the downtown.

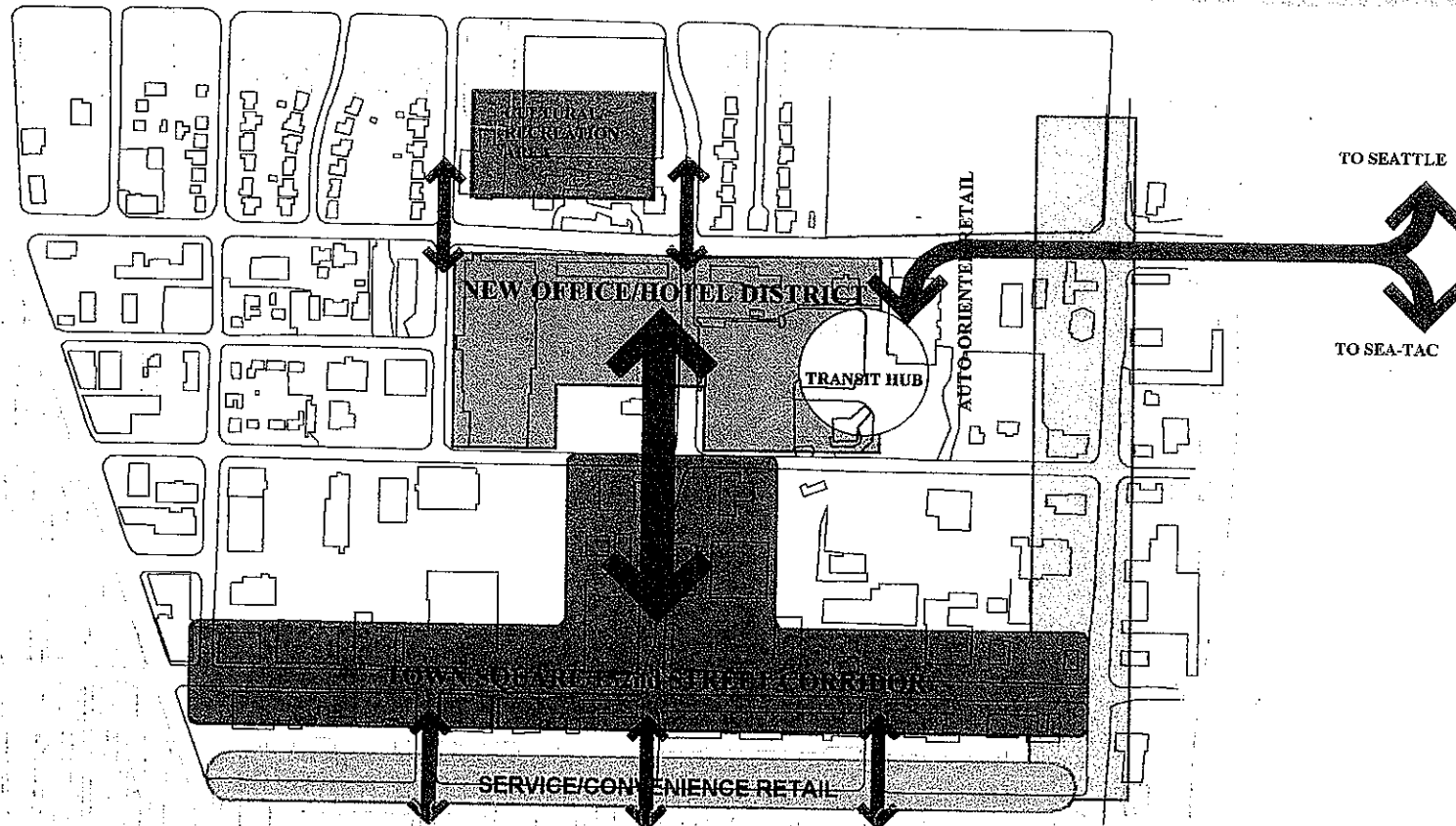
KPG and Seth Harry prepared a series of alternatives for the town square and suggestions for how each would relate to the surrounding area. They also described how the square could become a tool for economic development in the community. Rob Odle stressed that the alternatives are conceptual only and not intended to represent final designs.

Harry developed an underlying strategy, based on his experience, that he used to develop five different schemes for the redevelopment of downtown.

The main elements of this underlying strategy are as follows:

- *A vital issue for developing a town square for Burien is a move to capitalize on the strengths of the community to help position Burien competitively in the Seattle market.*
- *One of Burien's greatest strengths is its proximity and easy access to SeaTac Airport and Seattle.*
- *Redevelopment of the transit hub will be key to the whole downtown.*
- *Well-established neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area are assets of downtown.*
- *Each scheme is predicated on the assumption that redevelopment will begin with Southwest 152nd Street and the town square. (Southwest 152nd Street is easily recognized as the heart of the downtown*

Development Strategy Diagram



commercial area. The town square and Southwest 152nd Street corridor are the focus of redevelopment efforts and catalyst for the downtown revitalization.)

- *Businesses along First Avenue South add greatly to the city's economy but do little to evoke a sense of downtown or a sense of a pedestrian place. (First Avenue South is working well as an auto-oriented corridor and does not warrant spending resources to attempt to transform it to another image.)*
- *The Southwest 150th Street corridor could continue to develop principally as a service and convenience retail area given its proximity to the core retail on Southwest 152nd Street.*
- *An office/hotel district between Southwest 148th and 150th streets would complement Burien's downtown. (Burien is well located for access to Seattle and the employment centers Seattle represents. Burien is in a position to provide quality office space at competitive rents, making Burien very attractive to commercial development assuming redevelopment of Southwest 152nd Street and a town square is developed to improve Burien's image within the metropolitan region. Redevelopment of Southwest 152nd Street will increase land values to the north between Southwest 148th and 150th streets.)*
- *Land area used for the town square for each alternative would be four to five acres regardless of public space configuration(s).*

Harry developed five schematic alternatives for review and consideration by the task force. The alternatives included an array of public space configurations that generated various urban design and development consequences.

See section III RECOMMENDATIONS for graphic examples of the schematic alternatives with written descriptions of each alternative.

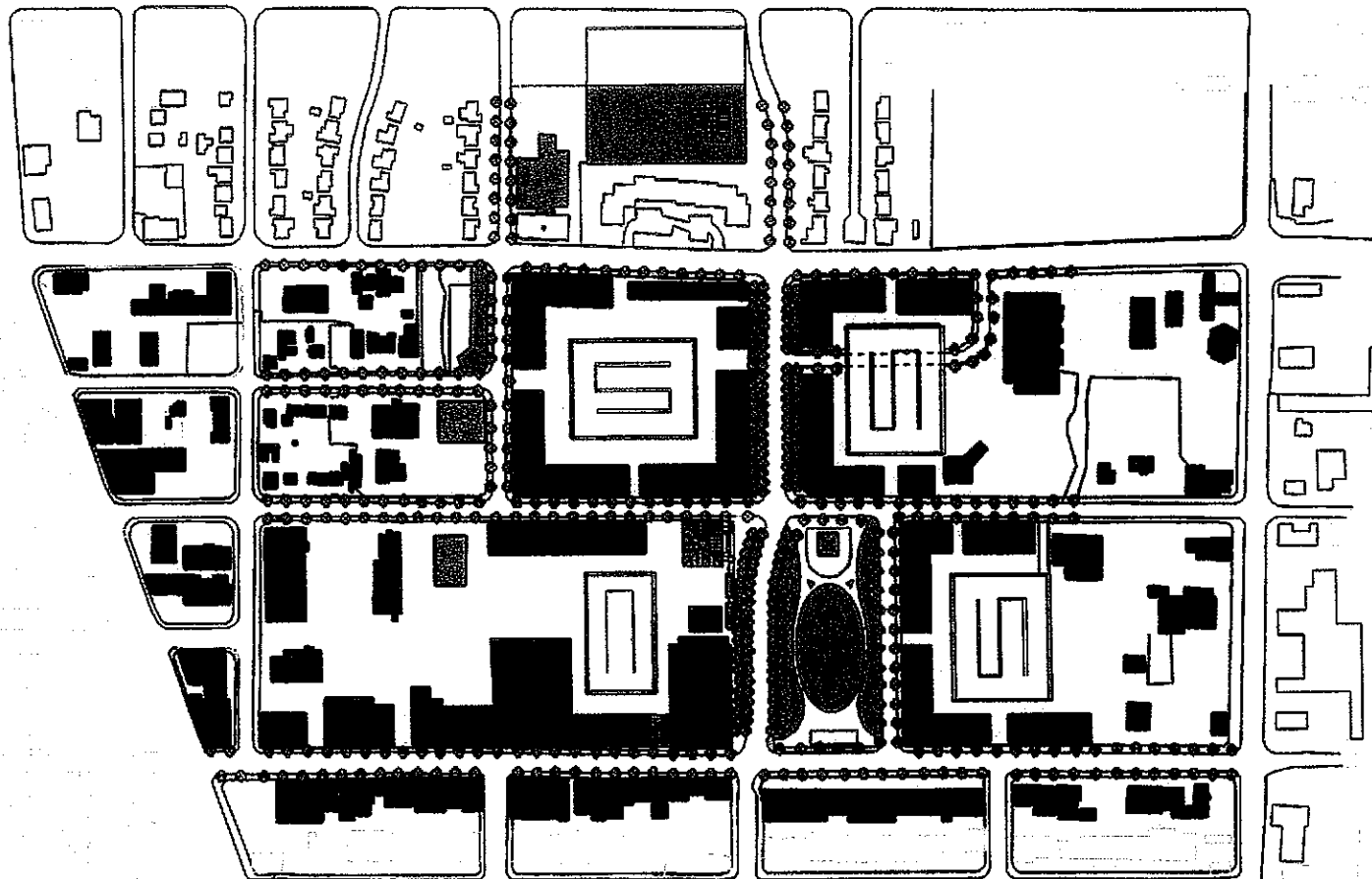
III. RECOMMENDATIONS

SCHEMATIC ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

Seth Harry developed five schematic alternatives for review and consideration by the task force. The alternatives included here are illustrative of an array of public space configurations that generated various urban design and development influences. Potential redevelopment of private sites is also shown to illustrate the economic influences the town square may have.

Five schematic alternative plans with a brief description of each are on the following pages. It is important to note that the schematic alternatives shown do not represent specific development but each alternative is intended to indicate preferred patterns that will attract quality development in the downtown.

Illustrative Schematic Alternative 'A'

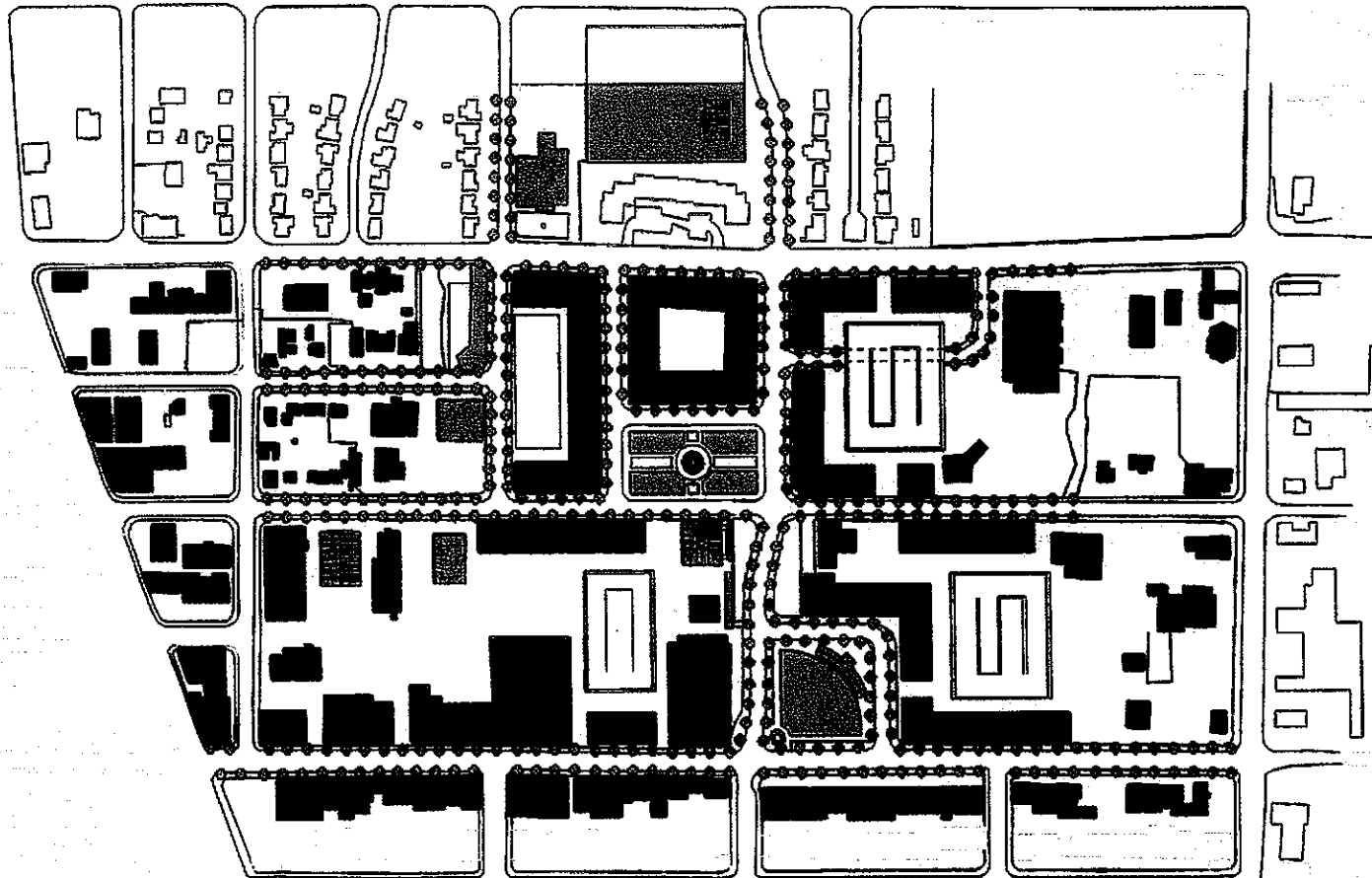


Schematic Alternative 'A'

Schematic Alternative 'A' is a single space downtown square between Southwest 152nd and 150th streets and to the east of and adjacent to 4th Avenue Southwest. Alternative 'A' aggregates all of the downtown square space into a single rectilinear shape. The square, under this alternative, has the potential of increasing useable space by including adjoining rights-of-way. Public facilities such as City Hall, the Puget Sound Educational Service District and a potential public meeting hall are adjacent to the square and would front on the enlarged square when rights-of-way are closed and included in the square for special community celebrations. Enhanced pedestrian connections would connect existing facilities that are away from the square such as the library and community center.

This alternative is not reasonably adaptable to phased development for either acquisition or development. A partially developed site in the downtown would be detrimental to the image Burien is establishing with redevelopment investment in the downtown.

Illustrative Schematic Alternative 'B'

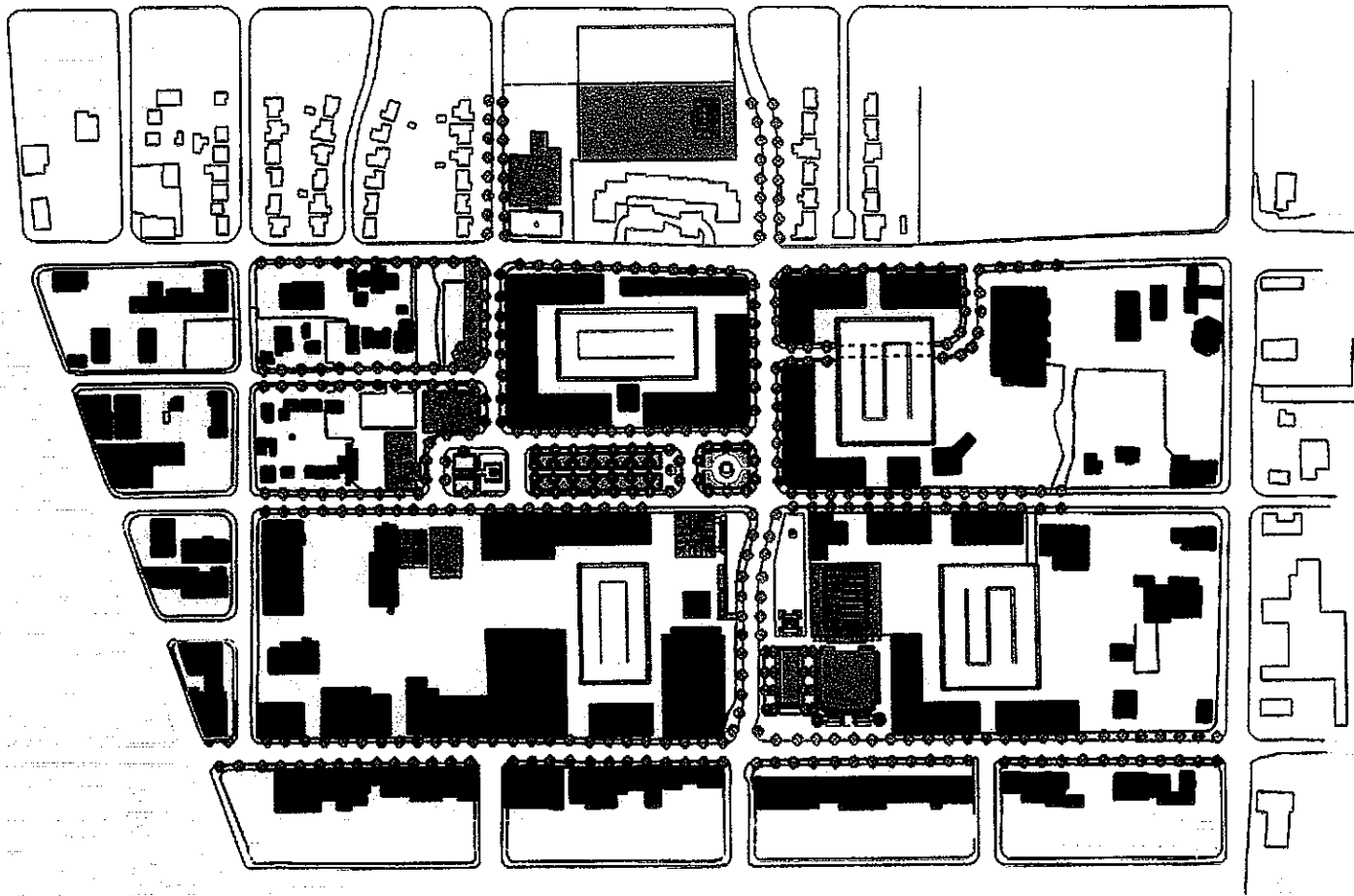


Schematic Alternative 'B'

Schematic Alternative 'B' has a more modest downtown square (compared to Schematic Alternative 'A') at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Southwest 152nd Street and 4th Avenue Southwest and another public space in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Southwest 150th and 4th Avenue Southwest. The square on Southwest 152nd Street would be developed along with the redevelopment of Southwest 152nd Street. This alternative is based on intensive redevelopment north of Southwest 150th Street. This redevelopment occurs in response to the success of improving the image of downtown Burien with improvements to Southwest 152nd Street and development of the square. Another prerequisite to Alternative 'B' is the redevelopment of the transit hub to include major hotels and structured parking. This alternative includes enhanced pedestrian connections to neighborhoods and community facilities.

The public space to the north of Southwest 150th Street would be developed at a subsequent date as a condition of redevelopment of the large block between Southwest 148th Street, Southwest 150th Street, 4th Avenue Southwest and 6th Avenue Southwest.

Illustrative Schematic Alternative 'C'

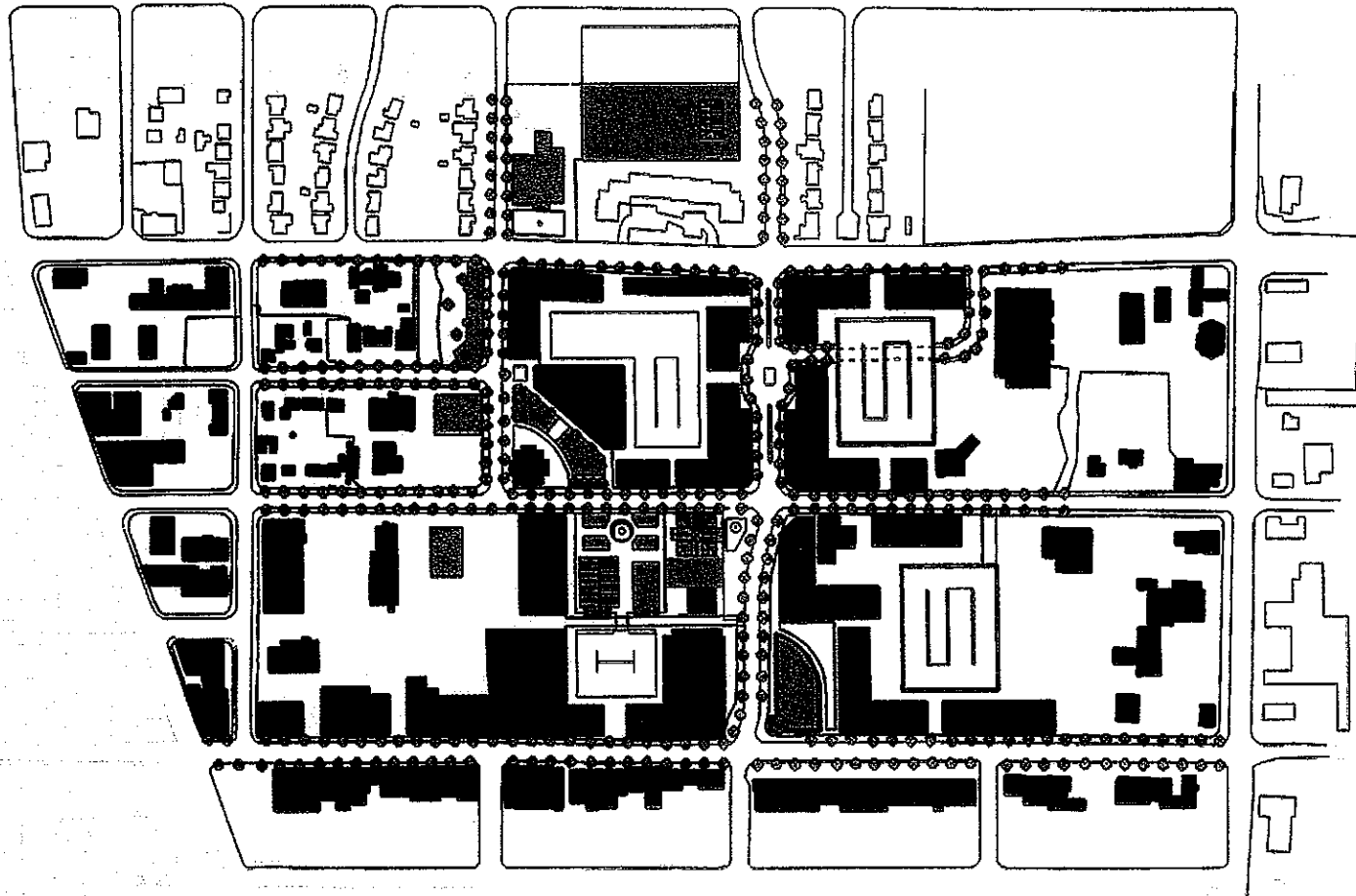


Schematic Alternative 'C'

Schematic Alternative 'C' is similar to Alternative 'B' as it also has an abbreviated town square to be developed adjacent to the rebuilt Southwest 152nd Street. With enhanced retail resulting from improvements of Southwest 152nd Street, the city could consider operating a shuttle service between SeaTac Airport. This alternative would make use of an existing nucleus of civic uses such as the post office, district court, and a church by integrating these uses in the context of a unified urban design. Other facilities may be developed near or adjacent to the town square such as a museum, conference center, and public meeting and performance hall.

This alternative allows for phased development and development of supplementary public spaces in conjunction with and by private development as it occurs.

Illustrative Schematic Alternative 'D'

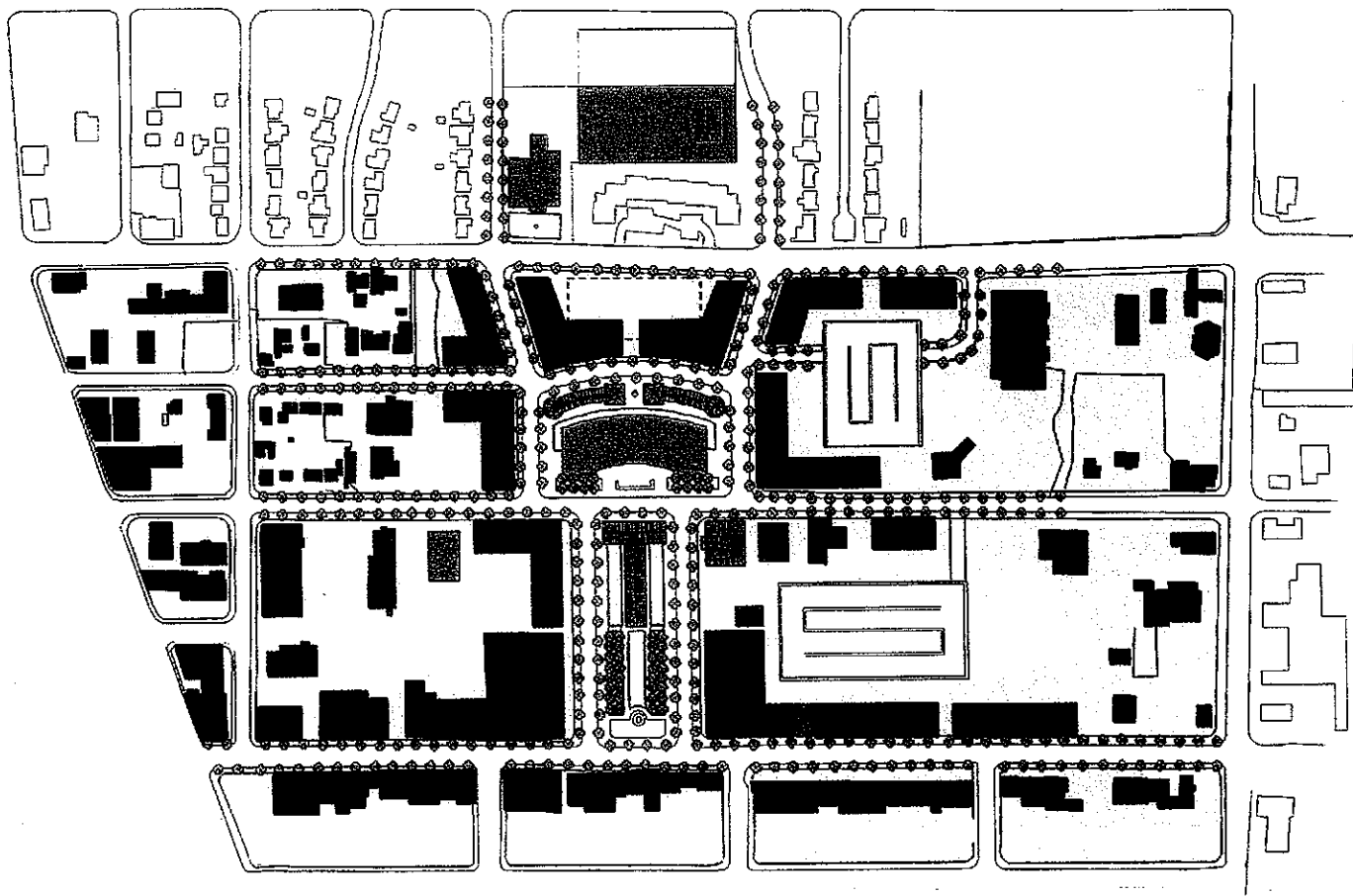


Schematic Alternative 'D'

Schematic Alternative 'D' is a more formal allocation of public space in the downtown that has a Mount Rainier vista orientation. It has a smaller square to initiate the redevelopment of Southwest 152nd Street and the downtown. This alternative also includes connections to other activity centers in and near downtown, such as the library and community center. Development of public spaces under this alternative could be phased and development of the downtown as a whole could move forward even if key properties are not available.

Like some other alternatives, as downtown redevelopment progresses additional properties designated for public spaces would develop as opportunities occur.

Illustrative Schematic Alternative 'E'



Schematic Alternative 'E'

Schematic Alternative 'E' is the most formal and uses a large space. Class A office development surrounds the town square including the Lamonts (now Gottschalks) site. The open space would provide spatial relief allowing for the development of larger scale buildings without changing the fundamental feeling of the downtown. This alternative envisions a much higher level of development while maintaining the basic fundamental principles desired for the town square. The large green could accommodate a farmers market and a performance area.

The public space would be an amenity for the community and also would add value to commercial buildings facing the adjoining streets. Each phase of development would make additional development more attractive.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

EXAMPLE – PHASED DEVELOPMENT of SCHEMATIC ALTERNATIVE 'C'

Schematic Alternative 'C' represents a mid-range of the array of alternatives presented to the task force by Seth Harry. He used this alternative to illustrate and describe a scenario of anticipated phased development of Burien's downtown in four phases. Phased development progresses north from Southwest 152nd Street.

A phasing diagram and phasing illustration are used to describe each development phase.

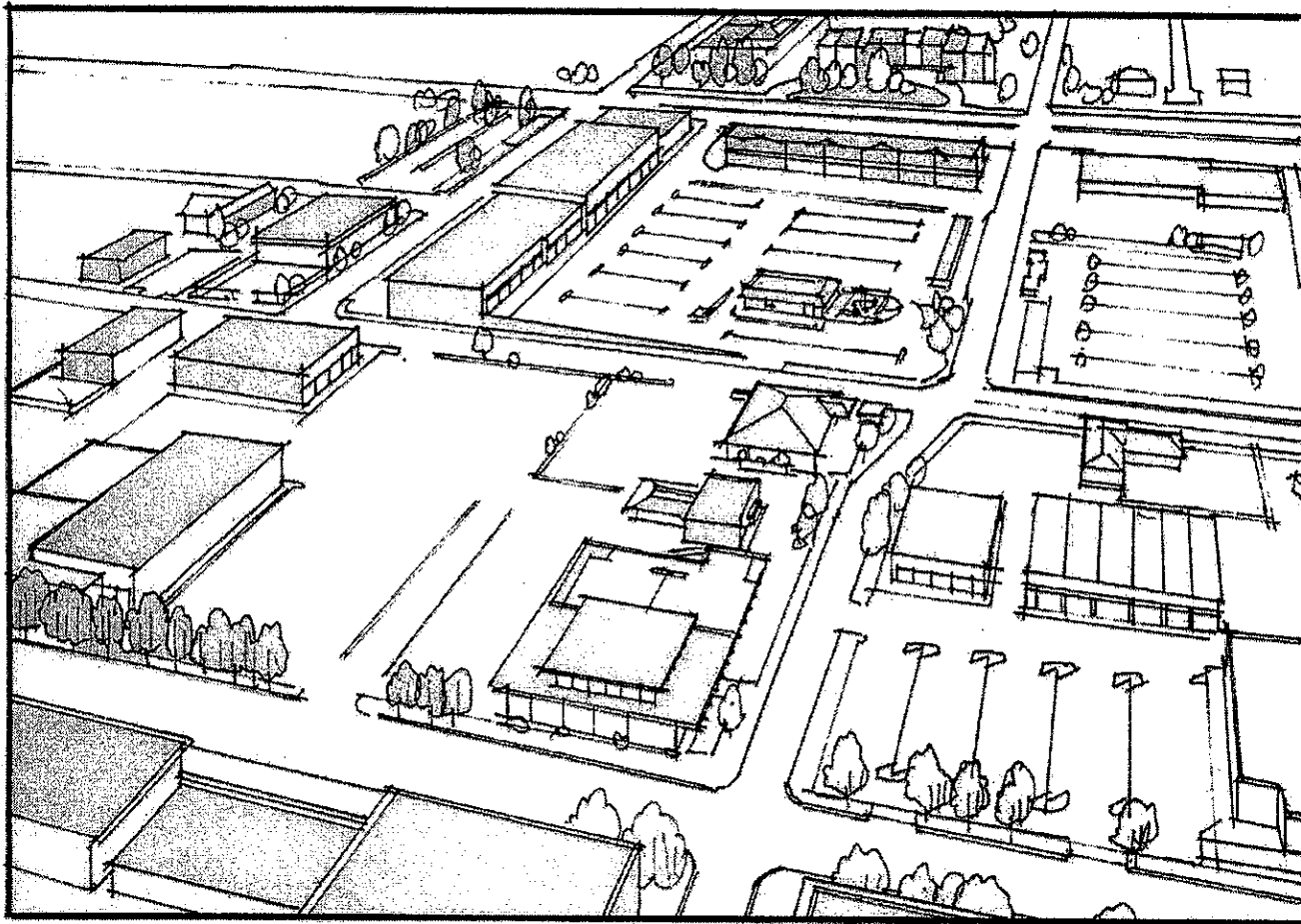
Phasing diagrams use a reduced downtown map as the base, showing new structures of the illustrated phase shaded (along with new structures of previous phases). Existing structures are shown unshaded.

Phasing Illustrations are aerial three-dimensional drawings. Beginning with an illustration of existing conditions, Harry developed illustrations of the four phases of anticipated development from the same vantage point for comparison. Each development phase illustrated is shown unshaded with a bold line to differentiate new development from existing conditions, shown shaded. Development phases are shown progressively; i.e. prior phases are included with the phase illustrated.

On the following pages, each development phase includes comments to further describe the development phase.

Existing Conditions

Phased Development
Schematic Alternative 'C'



Existing Conditions Phased Development Schematic Alternative 'C'

The phased development illustrations of Alternative 'C' are made from an aerial view looking north from the intersection of Southwest 152nd Street and 4th Avenue Southwest. The aerial view includes Southwest 152nd Street running generally left and right in the foreground with Southwest 150th and 148th streets parallel (Southwest 148th Street near the top of the illustration). Fourth Avenue Southwest runs slightly diagonally from bottom to top just right of center.

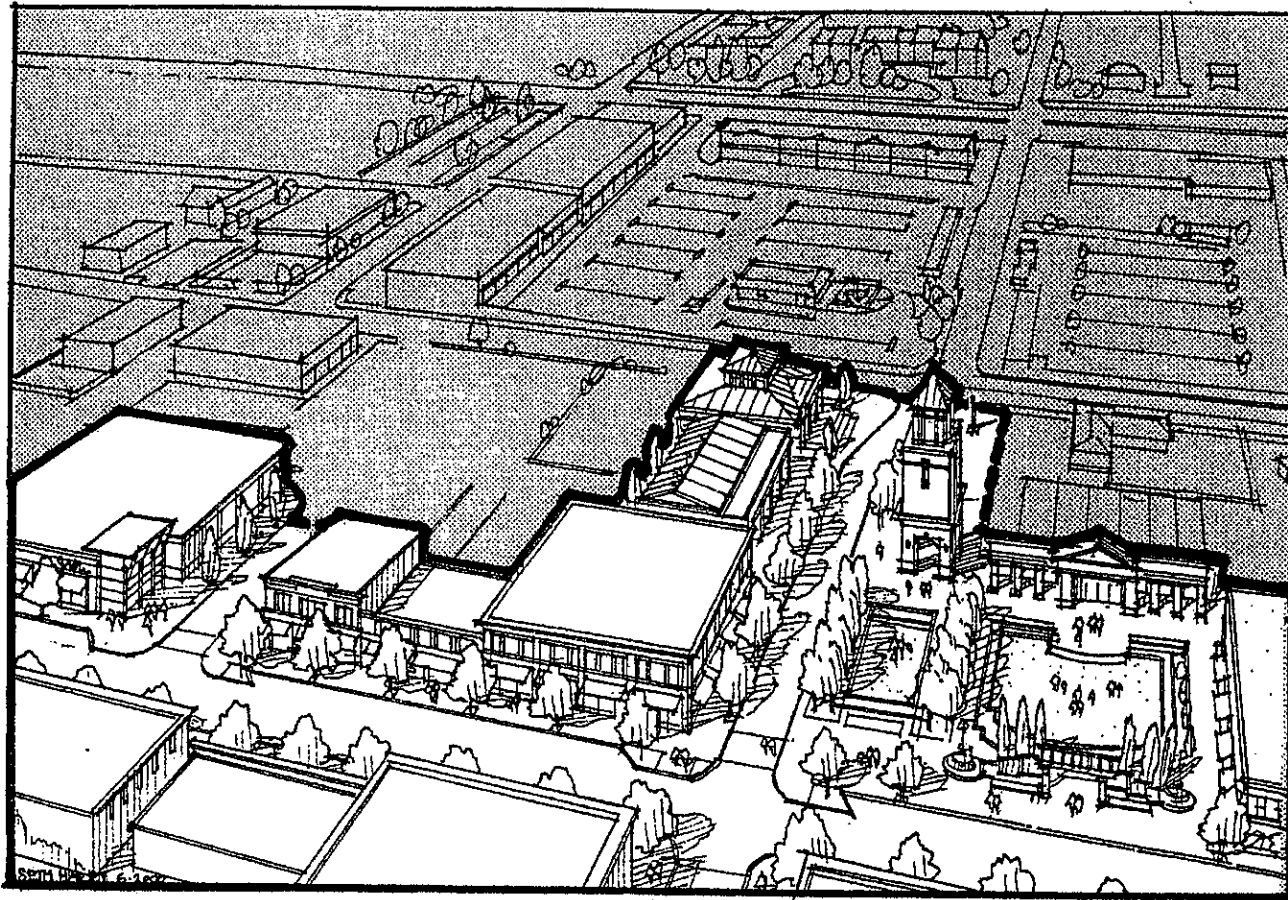
Identifiable existing structures in the illustration include the Puget Sound Educational Service District, City Hall, Gottschalks, Bartell Drugs, and the roofs of some structures along Southwest 152nd Street.

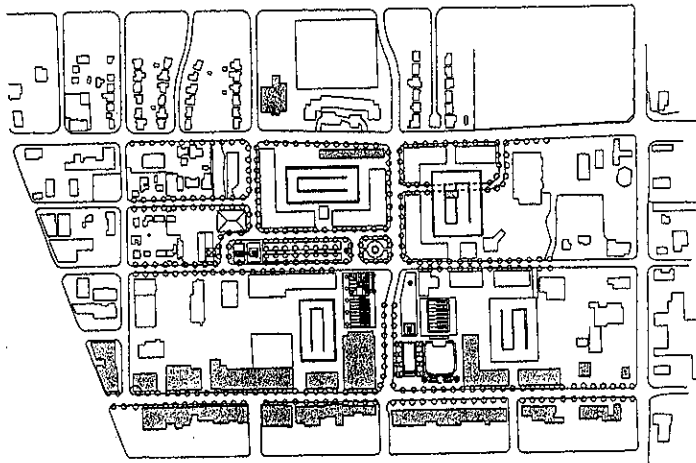
Phased development progresses north initially from Southwest 152nd Street and is shown non-shaded with a bold line delineating the last development phase illustrated. All previous development phases are included with the phase illustrated.

Phasing diagrams use a reduced downtown map to show potential new structures of the phase illustrated shaded along with structures of prior phases. Existing structures are shown unshaded.

Phase III Illustration No. 1

Phased Development
Schematic Alternative 'C'





Phase 1 Phased Development Schematic Alternative 'C'

Phasing Diagram No. 1

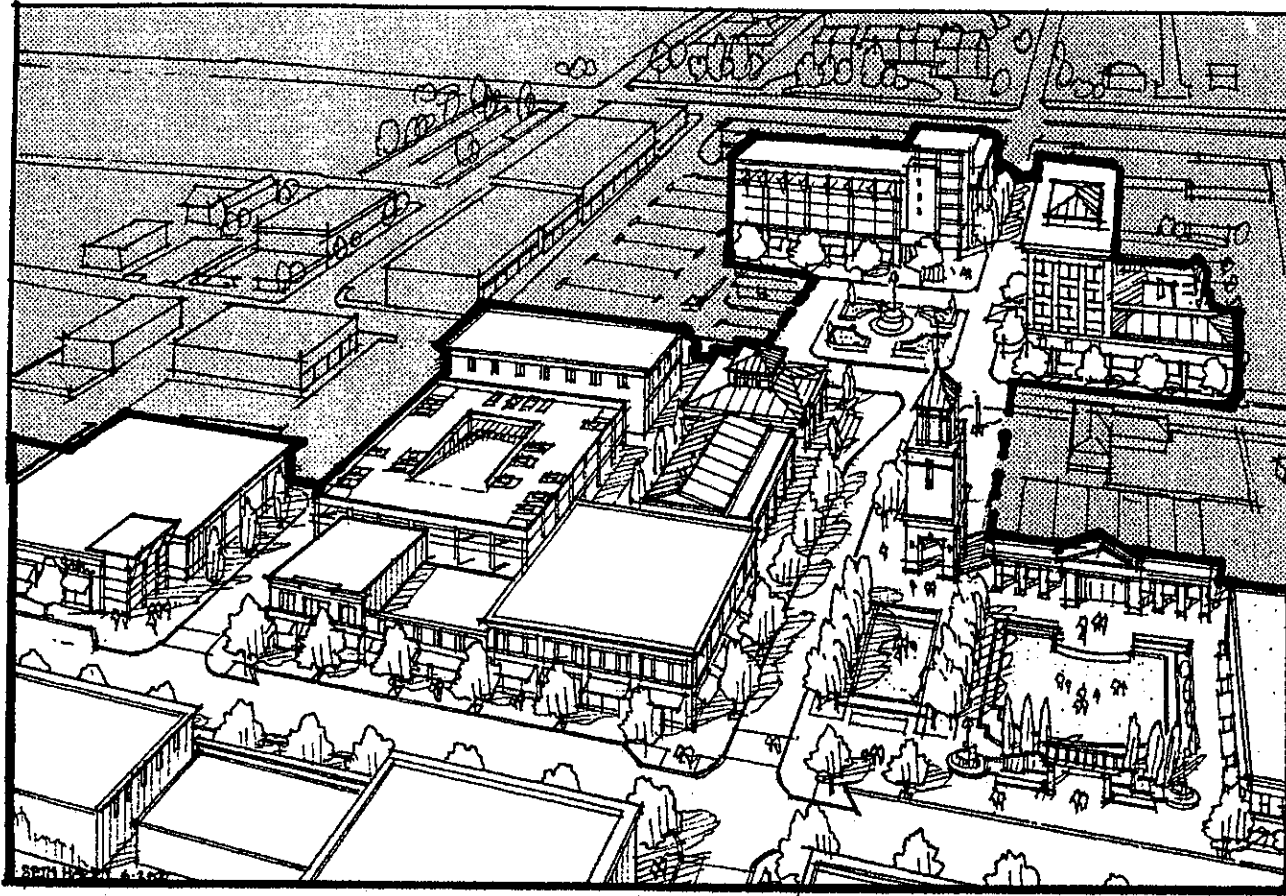
Redevelopment of the Southwest 152nd Street corridor and development of Town Square initiate Phase 1 of Schematic Alternative 'C'. The area to the east of City Hall will be developed into an elongated park area with a carillon / clock tower that visually aligns with 4th Avenue Southwest to the north of Southwest 150th Street. The tower would be a prominent landmark structure that provides a visual object for spatial orientation to Burien's downtown and oriented with the jog in 4th Avenue. The elongated park and streetscape improvements will be developed in conjunction with development of the town square. Reorientation of the park-and-ride facility and pedestrian connections to the library and community center would occur in this first phase.

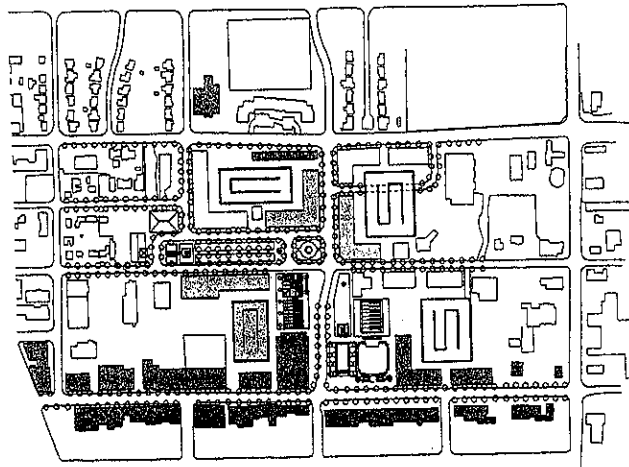
A water feature could be incorporated to provide a portal to the square, with cascading water that would help buffer traffic noise. A freestanding arcade is proposed to accommodate staging of live concerts or events such as lawn movies.

Improvement in Phase 1 would change perceptions so that properties to the north (largely un-landscaped parking lots) would look more like opportunities. These initial improvements will help build value for property to the north.

Phase Illustration No. 2

Phased Development
Schematic Alternative 'C'





Phase 2

Phased Development Schematic Alternative 'C'

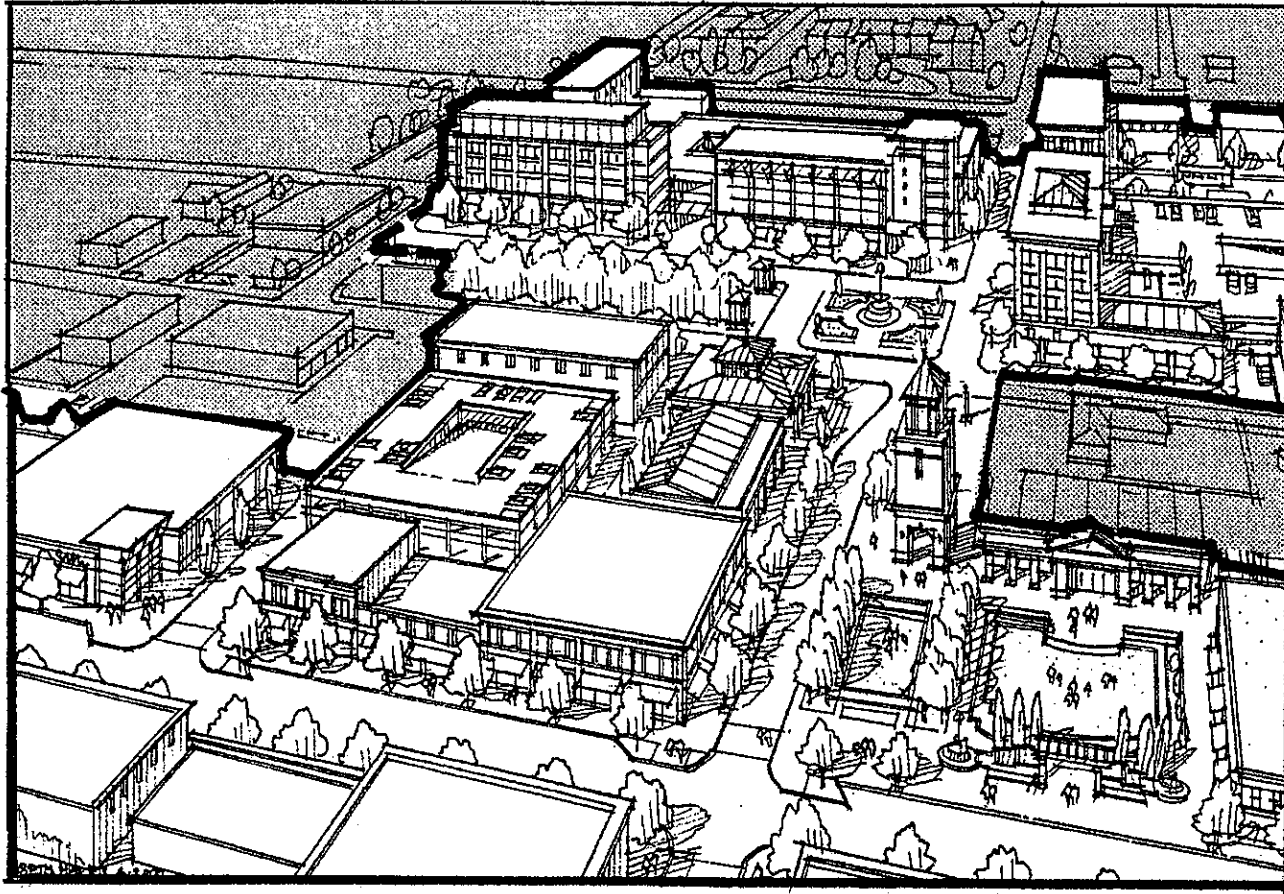
Phasing Diagram No. 2

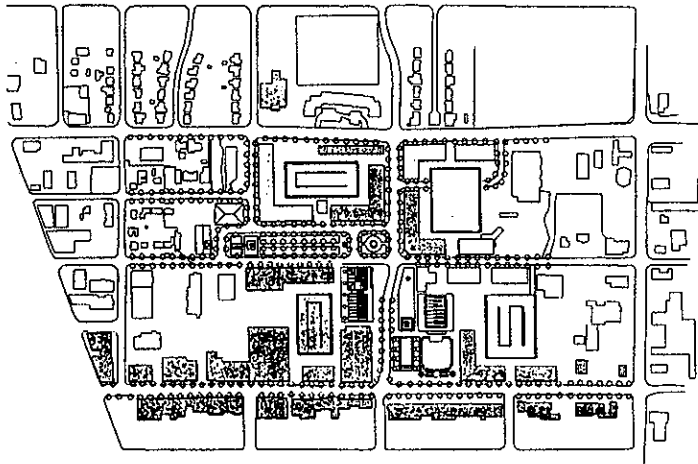
During Phase 2, a major hotel could develop on the existing transit site and quality office development may locate across from City Hall to the north. The developers of that site would construct another public square that continues the "string of pearls" open spaces that unify the downtown. The additional square will provide space for additional events, such as a music festival series.

A parking deck will be built on the existing Gottschalks parking lot site to accommodate increased retail and event parking, contributing to increased spending in nearby shops.

Phase Illustration No. 3

Phased Development
Schematic Alternative 'C'





Phase 3

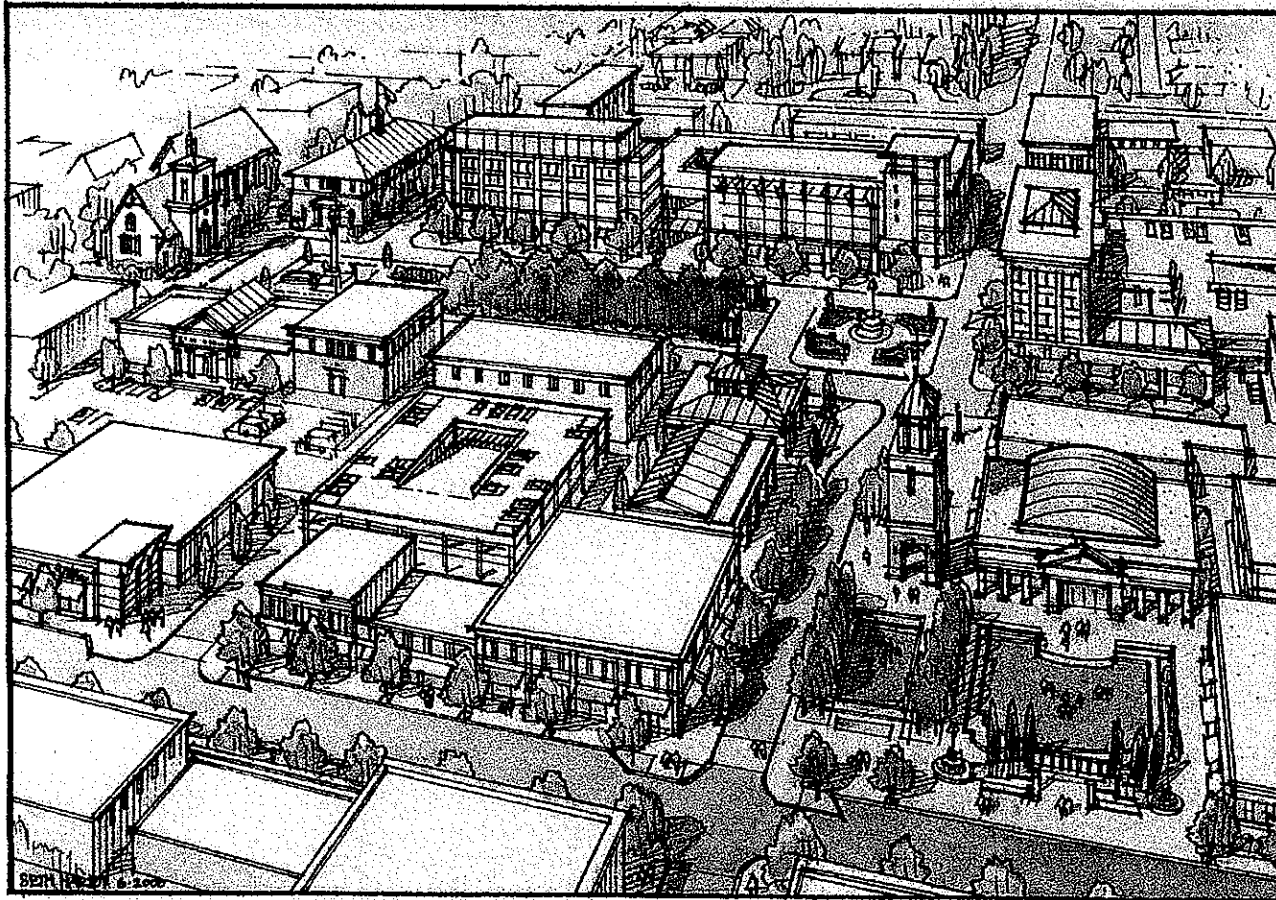
**Phased Development
Schematic Alternative 'C'**

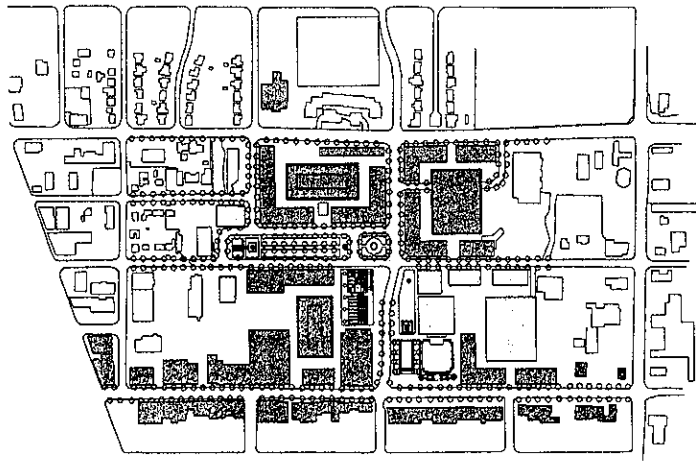
Phasing Diagram No. 3

In Phase 3, another hotel operator will be attracted to the area near the existing transit hub. Shuttles will be running to and from SeaTac Airport bringing out-of-town visitors who will be clientele for restaurants and shops. More parking will be created, along with more office space to the north. The office development will assist in developing the next public square gem of the downtown "string-of-pearls" of useable open spaces.

Phase Illustration No. 4

Phased Development
Schematic Alternative 'C'





Phase 4

Phased Development Schematic Alternative 'C'

Phasing Diagram No. 4

Finally, in Phase 4, local gems that are integral to Burien's downtown character, including the library, post office, and church, will be polished and integrated into the new downtown Burien. A convention center or cinema may be constructed and Southwest 150th Street will be improved. While all of that is progressing, the area along Southwest 152nd Street will become very valuable property and will begin its next phase of redevelopment, which also will influence the redevelopment of Southwest 153rd Street.

City of Burien

Lee Springgate, Urban Parks and Open Spaces Consultant

KPG Inc. Engineering, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design

Seth Harry and Associates Architecture & Urban Design