

How To Fix Downtown

Hey, no more big holes for starters.

I hate shopping, I am not a Eugene native and I have a city planning masters degree I've never used – which of course makes me the perfect person to weigh in on what Eugene's downtown needs.



Besides, since I never get any reader mail by pontificating on politics, I figure why not kick up some dust with this here 10-point plan for fixing downtown, guaranteed to offend everyone (dammit). So here goes:

Point #1: No more holes! Maybe it's just me, but in general it would be good to stop digging huge holes downtown without any actual plans to fill them.

Point #2: Enough parking structures! There's plenty of parking – and ugly parkades – downtown. Really, there are plenty of spaces. I hate to be the bad cop here but bring an umbrella if walking a block or so is a problem.

Point #3: Four lanes are for highways, not downtown streets. Vehicle traffic on parts of 6th, 7th and Oak downtown needs to get seriously *calmed* down, and nothing works better for that than angled, front-end parking like they have up in downtown Salem. By doing this, we'd actually pick up a few parking spaces downtown while making the place seem less, well, drafty.

Point #4: Make the Eugene Hotel a hotel again. If we are going to spend public dollars on anything, why not take this great historic landmark and turn it into the heart of a bustling downtown district?

Point #5: Plug the leaks. I am tired of hearing blabby city employees being quoted in *The Register-Guard* about development "deals" that are still in the conceptual stage. What's with that? How does that help anybody, especially folks trying to make something happen, to have potential projects leaked prematurely? It's unprofessional and perhaps in the *R-G's* case, it's unethical (it's no secret that the *R-G*, a former downtown "resident," is a big landowner out on Chad Drive (what I like to call NewGene) and so they should be very, very careful about how they cover downtown deals that might be in conflict with their own development schemes.

Point #6: So what are we for? I consider myself a "pro-concrete progressive" – I want big stuff happening downtown and think that Mayor Piercy is doing a good job trying to get things going in that can-do direction. But of course the devil is in the details, so check out points 7-8-9 for my take on what we should like – none of which will be perfect, but dammit we need something to fill the holes don't we?

Point #7: Big brands vs. Saturday Market – don't make us choose. I am tired of false choices being made between Paul Nicholson and other folks I respect with great homegrown stores and the notion that I can't also have a Hard Rock Café downtown that's embracing Eugene's hippie music past and serving up a good burger next door to a Border's bookstore with some of the energy that Oakway has on Friday nights? I am sorry – I want both if I can get 'em and I think we need both. Beads alone does not a downtown make.

Point #8: Whole Foods half-baked? Personally, I don't get the Whole Foods market idea: I like the Market of Choice folks and don't think this will be a panacea for downtown, unless (cough, cough) you want more parking at night near a deserted new federal courthouse that is nowhere near the river. On the Connor-Wooley mega-proposal, while I haven't a clue what that really is – thanks, city leakers – I do think that a big development in the core of our downtown makes way more sense than the inevitable congestion near Franklin and the Ferry Street bridge that Whole Foods plus the new courthouse will bring. So I hope some kind of sliding scale could be worked out where existing downtown die-hards like Lazars agree to sell-out at realistic rates *and* taste the upside of this project *if* in fact it's a financial success. That seems fundamentally fair to me. Fingers crossed that our town gets this all right.

Point #9: More on the river. We need more than the Valley River Inn and Roaring Rapids Pizza along the river. Here's hoping that the UO can point the way and finally end the gap between town and gown via some new, eco-friendly developments.

Point #10: Eugene vs. Springfield. Enough already. Out of state companies are playing both of our towns for chumps and getting ridiculous tax breaks. I say it's time to start working together to create a great metropolitan area. So before we plunk down cash on a new City Hall, how about exploring a merger? The only holdup I can see is the name. Eugene has the bigger "brand" of course, as there are like 21 other Springfields nationwide. But clearly a compromise is in order – can you say Glenwood?

Dan Carol of Eugene is a political strategist.

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REJOICING AT LOSS?

It's difficult to begin a response to Nick Urhausen's pyrrhic victory over the students at our elementary school. I read how he was "elated" when informed he had effectively removed our music and P.E. classes.

I can enhance his euphoria.

We'll now be using the money our students and families fundraise to try and retain the facilitating math teachers needed for our blended classes. Prior to Mr. Urhausen's successful campaign against our kids, we were able to use these funds as a means to bring in numerous artists, generally through the Lane Arts Council. What the city levy didn't cover, donations ensured. We could have at least one full day of music instruction and two days of P.E.

Thanks to the tireless efforts bankrolled by outsider Don McIntire, our kids will be denied most, if not all, of this.

In a newscast, Mr. Urhausen grinned as he proclaimed himself the champion of students in Springfield and other neighboring districts whose citizens did not vote for levies similar to the ones in Eugene and Bethel. I'd like to respond to this assertion.

I would tell Mr. Urhausen not to insult our neighbors by assuming they are rejoicing at our loss. The citizens I know from Springfield are made of much finer moral fiber. They would never rejoice at the diminishment of another child's education.

I'd tell him that we'll dust ourselves off, assess the damage, and get back to work. In the end, the hardships inflicted will be turned into a learning experience. A harsh one, but necessary when teaching our young people how to be good, productive citizens.

*Joseph H. Alsup
Principal, Crest Drive*

FATHER KNOWS BEST

When I was a kid my father taught me how to be responsible for my actions. I had broken our neighbor's window hitting

rocks with a baseball bat. My father was pleased that I had confessed my guilt, but made me clean up the glass and replace the window with money out of my piggy bank.

We have heard Bush take full responsibility for taking our nation to war on lies. We have heard Chertoff, the head of the Department of Homeland Security, take responsibility for not reacting to the levees flooding New Orleans. We have heard Dick Cheney take full responsibility for shooting his friend in the face with a shotgun.

What we have not heard is how they plan to take personal responsibility in cleaning up the shattered mess and pay for it. I guess their daddies never taught them how to take responsibility for their actions.

I suggest we take their paychecks while they are still in office and give the money to the victims of their confessed actions.

*Michael T. Hinojosa
Drain*

REPUBLICAN RETORT

I am writing in response to G. Dennis Shine's letter to the editor in the 2/16 *EW*. I am afraid that Mr. Shine is the one who is misinformed when he accuses me of wanting to discontinue federal timber payments. Nothing could be further from the truth and it is completely disingenuous of Mr. Shine to suggest otherwise. If Mr. Shine had actually read my statements, or heard me speak on the subject, he would see that I support the re-authorization of the timber payments.

As a native of Roseburg I am painfully aware that federal timber payments to our counties are vital to their daily operation. Furthermore, I commend our county commissioners for their hard work in seeing that the funding is continued and hope that our congressional delegation is successful in working with their colleagues to increase the funding.

Those of us living in the affected counties must also remember that until we have