

Police Site Options

Advice On Putting the Police In Their Place Downtown

Let's say you wanted to site a new police building downtown, and even though voters had been strongly against the project in two separate elections, you still believed that it was past time to resolve the problem.

Let's say you thought this was a good time to go ahead and build a new building downtown and that you wanted to keep the police operation in the downtown area, even though it meant having to figure out how to include 90-100 cars.

Let's say you had a building reserve of \$26 million and you thought you could build a bare bones beginning of what was needed for \$16 million with enough left over to take care of the earthquake and other basic needs of the present City Hall.

And let's say you were looking for the best site for this new facility, hoping to find that the best or at least a decent fit would be on existing city-owned land such as the triangle east of the new Federal Courthouse or the parking lot across 8th Ave. from City Hall.

I share the first of these views and I think we should fix City Hall. A downtown the size of Eugene's deserves to have an important set of public buildings (and open spaces) – including a new central police station, an art museum, a natural history museum, an indoor farmer's market, a new 300 seat theater and a better DIVA – jewels for the civic crown.

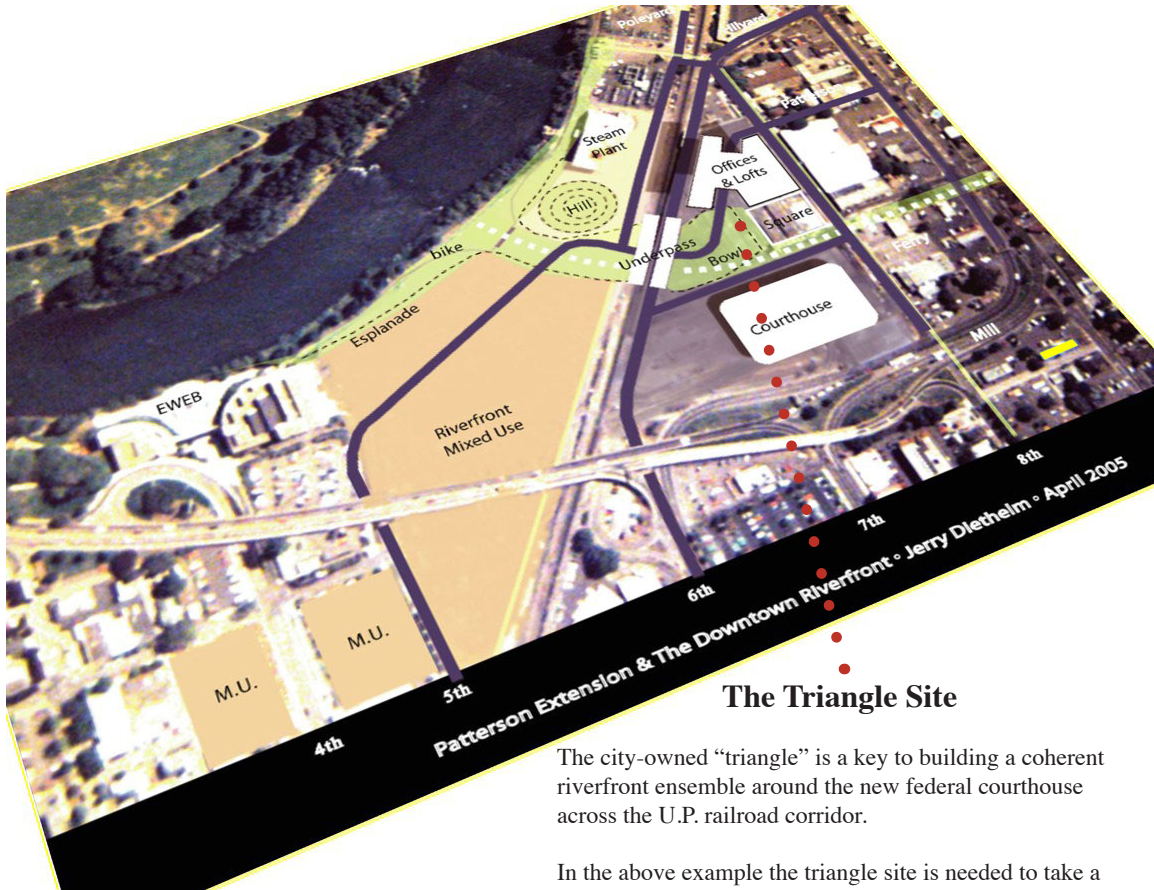
Some of us also believe that we'll need a twenty-first century trolley on Willamette St. that travels down 5th Ave to the new Downtown Riverfront in order to tie it all together.

The point is that each of these public buildings is an opportunity to add centers of lasting quality to Eugene's downtown. We've been able to do just that with the new library, fire station and Hult Center. Do we now have enough of a budget to do justice to a new police station?

And is the time ripe politically? No. I think the leadership of the police association will have to agree to attend charm school before Eugeneans will ever support a new police project.

Economically, the money might be better held in reserve to protect existing jobs and social services during the hard times ahead. Or, how about seriously considering an investment of city money in a new PV plant on the Hynix site? We could walk the PV arrays built there directly over to the new EWEB buildings and save a lot of carbon in the process.

There are serious problems with using both the triangle and 8th Ave. sites. Storing 90 cars with a building on 8th gets in the way of plans for a "Great Street" pedestrian connection to the riverfront. It just creates another dead civic block full of sleeping cars after everyone goes home at 5 p.m.



The Triangle Site

The city-owned “triangle” is a key to building a coherent riverfront ensemble around the new federal courthouse across the U.P. railroad corridor.

In the above example the triangle site is needed to take a Paterson to 5th connection plus people and the Mill-race under the 60’ railroad corridor to a new mixed-use riverfront.

It also provides the opportunity to link the riverfront openspace from the Steam Plant all the way back to the 8th Ave. great street and its intended connection to downtown.

Any building on the City’s triangle site is destined to become an important partner to our new federal courthouse, so we won’t want some cheap police box there (with a yellow or electric blue roof) that Judge Hogan has to cringe at from his corner office. This triangle is also a key to riverfront access and development because of the way the railroad pinches the eastern end of the downtown riverfront. Developing the site in isolation would rob it of its larger potential to play an important role in a courthouse/riverfront plan that unites both sides of the railroad corridor. This is a site that needs to help build a public square and look up and down the river, not house the police. There are less critical sites, such as the Good Times block or the old motor pool site on Mill north of 5th Ave.

My first choice is still the adding of new layers of parking to the county garage on 6th and buying or leasing the state office building next door– the one being remodeled right now - as a temporary Police Station until the time is ripe for creative destruction and rebuilding.

Id also like to see us consider an extra layer of parking on that same county garage in order to free the North Park Block from its “butterfly bondage.”