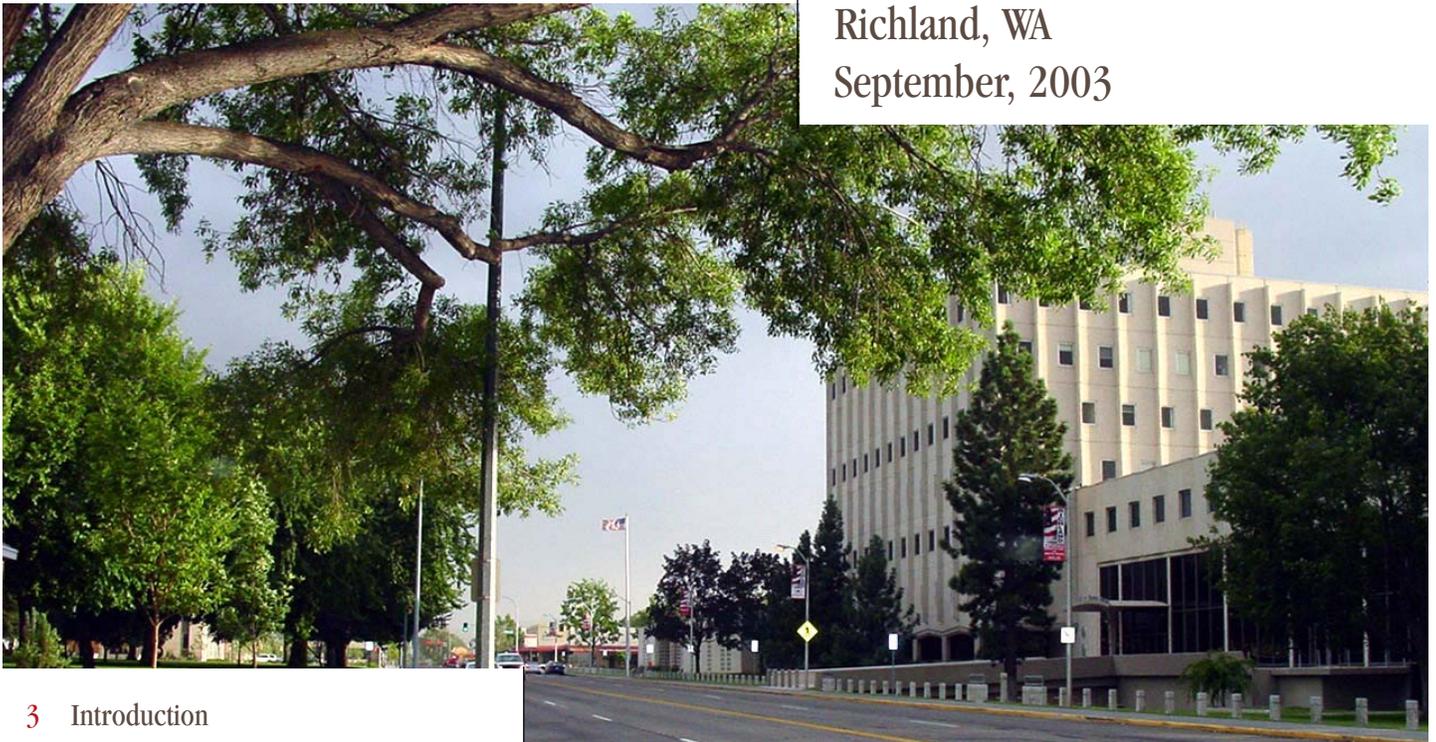


Creating **for Richland, Washington** a Civic Heart

Placemaking Workshop Proceedings
General Services Administration
Richland, WA
September, 2003



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Introduction

On August 6, 2003, the General Services Administration (GSA), the federal government's real estate provider, hosted a placemaking workshop in Richland, Washington in order to engage the community in providing input on integrating the public spaces on and around its properties with the fabric of that city. Conducted by GSA's Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program, this 'hands-on' workshop was a first step in finding ways in which GSA, through current and future facility projects, could support the City's larger economic enhancement strategy and vision. It was also a first step in establishing partnerships among the GSA, its federal agency clients, the City of Richland, and a variety of community and business organizations, who will continue to plan together as GSA develops and expands its facilities over the long term. These partnerships will help GSA to shape its future development in a way that supports Richland's long-term vision.



The workshop also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute ideas for improving the spaces around GSA's existing properties (a courthouse, federal building, and post office) as well as adjacent city and commercial properties in the surrounding neighborhoods, with the goal of building a vibrant, revitalized downtown area that will have lasting positive effects on Richland.

Several people provided background for the workshop. The Honorable Judge Edward Shea described the Courts' plans for possible expansion and their intentions for permanently closing off Mansfield Street. Joe Schiessl, from Richland's Community Development Department, outlined some recent and upcoming projects that the city is undertaking, and GSA Property Manager Lyle Dalby gave an overview of the situation regarding the DOE parking lot and other issues pertaining to the federal buildings.

Afterward, Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS), a New York-based nonprofit that has worked on the design and management of public spaces around the world, facilitated a placemaking workshop, which began with a presentation on successful and not-so-successful public spaces, and on GSA innovations in the public spaces around its buildings throughout the U.S. Participants then conducted a public-space evaluation of four key areas around the federal properties in Richland (see "Site Context" below). The ideas that were put forth, and which are described in this report, will form the basis for a vision for future short- and long-term projects on and around the federal properties. Equally important, they



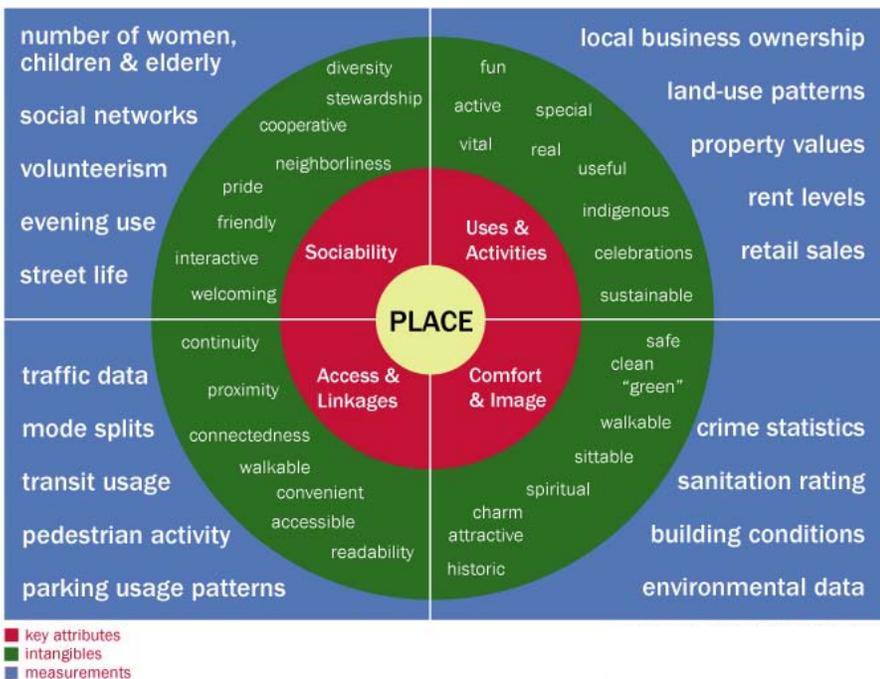
helped to lay the groundwork for establishing partnerships among GSA, federal agencies, the City of Richland, and various local stakeholder organizations.

This report has been produced to highlight short-term actions that can be integrated into the city's existing strategic plan for economic development, as well as other efforts and projects being undertaken by both the public and private sector. It is intended to guide GSA and other partners identified at the workshop in bringing about low-cost yet highly visible and high-impact improvements to the public spaces around Richland's federal buildings and the larger government district - while also outlining longer-term efforts discussed at the placemaking workshop.

By taking at least some of the immediate actions recommended here, GSA and its Richland partners will reap several benefits, such as building on the momentum and energy from the workshop; encouraging the use of public spaces on and around the federal properties; and beginning to establish John Dam Plaza, an attractive but underused amenity at the heart of this district, as a “civic heart” of Richland, with desirable programs and activities that benefit the city as a whole.

Not least, short-term actions and improvements will set the stage for larger projects in the future, and help them to proceed more smoothly once they're underway. Conversations will have already begun; opportunities for continuing them will be generated. For example, one suggestion from the workshop was to put forth the short-term ideas outlined in this report at future public workshops and meetings, in order to generate additional ideas and feedback, as well as identify resources and partnership opportunities. (These findings will also be made available on the websites for the City of Richland and GSA's Good Neighbor Program.)

What Makes a Place Great?



©2002 Project for Public Spaces, Inc.

Project for Public Spaces diagram, used in the GSA placemaking workshop in Richland

Site Context

GSA's properties - a courthouse, federal building, and post office - are situated along the west side of Jadwin Avenue, across from the one-square-block John Dam Plaza. South of the Plaza is the Parkway, a newly renovated business district that features local shops, services, and eateries, with the Richland Players Theater as a focal point at its southern end. To the north of the federal properties, Mansfield Street has been closed to vehicular traffic due to security concerns; north of Mansfield lies a one-block-square parking lot that is currently owned by the Department of Energy, and which may be soon transferred to GSA for redevelopment.



Placemaking Workshop Evaluation Sites



Site 1 - Mansfield St.

Closed to traffic between Jadwin and Northgate. Workshop teams also looked at the DOE parking lot; the site for the future child care center at Northgate and Mansfield; connections between the federal buildings and the DOE parking lot, as well as connections from the police station to western areas of Richland.



Site 2 - Jadwin Ave. between Mansfield and Knight Sts.

This site includes the east side and "front yard" of the federal buildings, as well as John Dam Plaza and connections to it from Jadwin and the federal buildings.



Site 3 - Knight St. between Northgate & Jadwin Ave.

Workshop teams evaluated the south edge of the federal property, the retail buildings, Bank of America building and parking lot on the south side of Knight, the Ben Franklin Transit Center, and the Knight/Jadwin intersection, as well as connections between this area and The Parkway and John Dam Plaza.



**Site 4 - Knight St. between Jadwin Ave.
& George Washington Way**

Workshop teams looked at both intersections; the north end of The Parkway; and connections among the federal buildings, The Parkway, the parking lot south of John Dam Plaza, and John Dam Plaza itself.

Workshop Findings

Overall, workshop participants found a number of positive aspects to the areas that they evaluated. They liked the views of grass and mature trees provided by John Dam Plaza and the "front yards" of the federal buildings, particularly the post office building; some of the city and private landscaping around the Parkway was also viewed favorably. The Parkway itself was seen as a positive new addition to the city, and perceived as a very secure and walkable space, with a good mix of businesses. Participants found that there is much potential for the Plaza and for local vendors, given that there are over 700 employees in the federal buildings alone.

They also noted that a lack of parking is not an issue, given the ample spaces in the DOE lot, those lots west of the federal buildings, the newly developed Parkway, and the lot south of John Dam Plaza. To the contrary, they noted that land (especially that used for the DOE lot) is available for other uses.

On a larger scale, workshop participants had pride in Richland and its local businesses, to the point where they wish to slow down traffic to encourage people to stop, shop and enjoy its special places. In this sense, they recognize traffic congestion as a positive quality ("If people want to get out of town to the big-box stores and malls," one participant said, "let them take the bypass"); and believe that even with signal lights recently installed at the Knight Street intersections with George Washington Way and Jadwin, vehicle speeds on the latter streets are still too high.

Participants also discussed a number of issues and challenges, chief among them being the under-use of John Dam Plaza in general, and the lack of success with several types of programmed events that have been tried there. They also noted that businesses in the new Parkway need support, pointing out that they don't want to see this development become another Uptown (a renovated but somewhat faded strip shopping center). Finally, they are eager to create partnerships with GSA and federal agencies, not only to integrate the federal buildings into Richland more effectively, but also to maximize federal employees' participation in uses and activities in the area.



Ideas for Short-Term Improvements | PUBLIC SPACES

Existing Site



Conduct a survey on the use of John Dam Plaza.

Find out what people would like to do in the Plaza, and what types of issues (traffic, street width, wind, noise?) discourage them from doing so. Survey should include federal agency workers, local business owners and employees, the Red Lion Hotel, and others, and could be conducted by the city.

Lead Agencies: City of Richland, CBD Partners, Red Lion

The following is a compilation of ideas for improvements that came out of the workshop. Unlike the long-term ideas (see page 16), the focus is on quick, easy, "do-able" projects that can be undertaken with minimal cost and within six months to one year. A suggested agency (or agencies) that can take the lead in implementation follows each recommendation.



Existing Site

Establish a "Party in The Parkway" and other events to draw people to new businesses and promote them. Some of these events should be organized to extend across Knight Street into the parking lot and John Dam

Plaza itself, with the goal of building awareness of both the Parkway and the Plaza as complementary public spaces. **Lead Agencies:** Chamber of Commerce, Parkway Businesses of Richland, CBD Partners, Red Lion



Develop successful events in John Dam Plaza. Screening movies was one suggestion from the workshop; other ideas should be elicited from the aforementioned survey on Plaza use (see above), and incorporate the skills, talents, and desires of residents and workers. Examples could include community gardening (through partnerships with the parks department), bocce and other lawn games, health fairs, crafts festivals, farmers market, police and fire department community events and classes, voter registration, rallies and demonstrations, etc. **Lead Agencies:** Parks & Recreation, Police Department, City of Richland, Chamber of Commerce



Set up temporary art displays along the edge of John Dam Plaza to build on similar exhibits used in Richland in transit facilities and with children's art. Along Knight Street, consider art vendors or other types of public displays. **Lead Agencies:** Allied Arts, local schools



Allow food vendors and kiosks along the edges of John Dam Plaza and along the south side of Knight Street moving into The Parkway. In both cases the vendors would serve as "edge uses" to create activity, provide visual cues, and draw people further into the space. Items for sale could include coffee, hot dogs, sandwiches, and more. Experiment with having some vendors available after 5pm, in

order to serve hotel visitors and local workers. Portland, Oregon, which has a renowned vending program, a model city ordinance, and an array of food and product vendors, could be used as a model for Richland. **Lead Agencies:** City Office of Community Development, Chamber of Commerce



Promote John Dam. Explain how he became the namesake for the Plaza, and tell the larger history of this place too - either in the existing kiosk or in a new sign.

Lead Agency: Historical Society or town historian



Ideas for Short-Term Improvements | TRAFFIC & PARKING



Create "green islands" in the DOE parking lot to break up the expanse of asphalt. These could be simple landscaping or more elaborate flower beds or even demonstration gardens or community gardens. Reach out to local gardening clubs and community gardeners to create maintenance partnerships. (Gardens could become an activity for kids at the new child care center.) **Lead Agencies:** DOE, local garden clubs/community gardeners



Existing Site

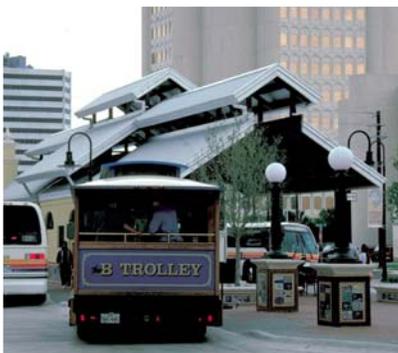
Improve parking lots west of the federal buildings and post office. Create a parking management plan to address confusion about who is allowed to park where, and which institution is in charge of which lots.

All parties with ownership or authority over these spaces should participate and contribute toward creating signage. Signage should note permissions, ownership/management, and any regulations on parking (for example, hours that it's permitted, if needed). In addition, "spruce up" the area with a general clean-up and plantings along street borders; also consider planters within the parking lots, and replacement of deteriorating trees with healthier ones.

Lead Agencies: City, GSA



Build a placemaking component onto the Transit Center improvements - in order to integrate it with other destinations in the area; promote it as a viable means of transportation for federal employees and employees and customers of Parkway businesses. (See additional recommendation under "Information & Signage," page 13) **Lead Agencies:** Ben Franklin Transit



Existing Site (above); memorial signage at Transit Center (left)





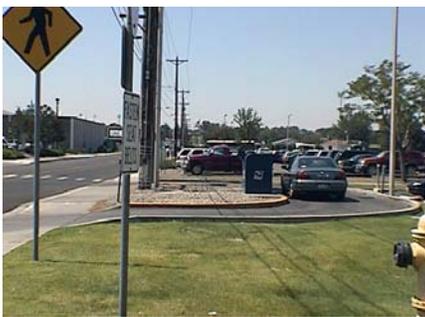
Existing Site

Resurface the parking lot south of John Dam Plaza so that it creates a connection between the Plaza and the Parkway; materials/design guidelines should be the same as those used in The Parkway revitalization project. **Lead Agencies:** City, Public Works Department

Create congestion to encourage local shopping in the Parkway and at other businesses, as an alternative to malls in Kennewick. For example:

- Experiment with enforcing a 25mph speed limit on George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue
- Add on-street parking to George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue during non-rush hours to reduce these streets to two lanes (or possibly one lane) in each direction. This would encourage pedestrian access to the park and to businesses in The Parkway; make using the post office and federal buildings easier; and reduce noise. Congestion in this sense is a good thing.
- Experiment with diagonal parking on one or both sides of the street
- Add light signals to change lanes south- or north-bound at different times, depending on traffic patterns
- Use cones, road striping and other temporary elements to experiment with traffic-calming configurations

Lead Agencies: City, Public Works Department, traffic engineers, GSA



Existing Site

Improve the Knight Street mailbox drop on by replacing the tree that was removed; and adding other plantings; and reducing congestion (perhaps move mailboxes further west so that cars can wait in the circle, not on Knight Street).

Lead Agencies: US Post Office



Plant additional street trees on the north side of Knight Street, along the parking lot; and along Jadwin north of Mansfield, especially on the west side (consider adding benches and creating small "rest stop" type spaces).

Lead Agencies: City, Parks & Recreation, Public Works Departments

Ideas for Short-Term Improvements

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION & SAFETY



Existing Site

Move the UPS box off the Knight Street sidewalk west of Jadwin, where it blocks the existing narrow sidewalk; it could be relocated further west, toward the Bank of America, where the sidewalk is wider.

Lead Agencies: UPS, Bank of America



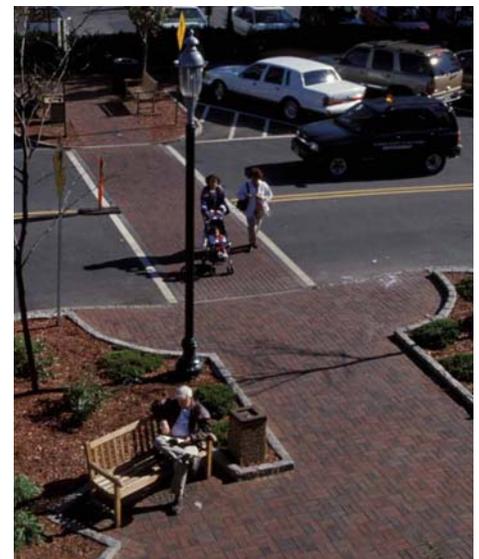
Add options to cross George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue to improve access to John Dam Plaza. On Jadwin, improve the connection from the federal building to the crosswalk and into the Plaza by relocating the crosswalk north to align with paths through the park.

Lead Agencies: GSA, Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments



Improve existing crosswalks to supplement the new light signal at George Washington Way and Knight. Evaluate the effectiveness of strobe-light crosswalks installed recently in the area when considering types of crosswalks to be designed.

Lead Agencies: Public Works Department, City, traffic engineers



Ideas for Short-Term Improvements

INFORMATION & SIGNAGE



Existing Sites

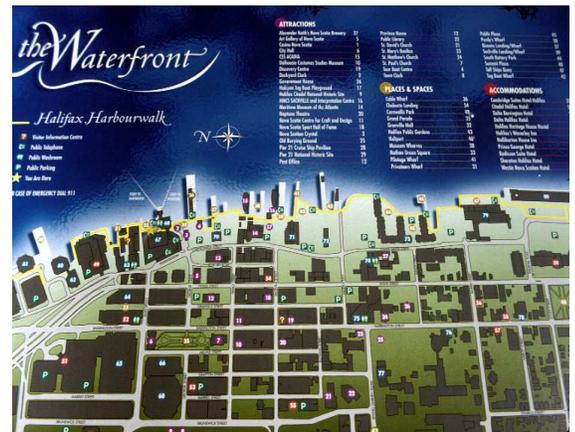
Create quality, temporary, uniform signs for Parkway businesses. Have the businesses and the City work together to create alternatives to the current mix of sawhorse and sandwich board signs. **Lead Agencies:** Parkway businesses, CBD Partners, Chamber of Commerce, City Economic Development Committee

Improve federal building information and identity at entrances and on the north side of the courthouse (which is visible from further north on Jadwin). Consider additional elements that would help to distinguish these buildings from other institutions (such as hospitals, offices, etc.) Signage should clarify the building functions and include ADA building access information. Also consider ways for a First Impressions project to address outdoor areas in addition to interiors.

Lead Agencies: GSA, First Impressions Program



Existing Site



Improve linkages between the Bob Ellis Transit Center and The Parkway. Measures could include promotional signage at the Transit Center to encourage bus passengers to patronize Parkway businesses; encouraging Parkway businesses to give out bus information; and/or including bus and transit center information at an information kiosk in The Parkway (along with measures such as widening sidewalks - see "Ideas for Long-Term Improvements").

Lead Agencies: Parkway businesses, CBD Partners, Ben Franklin Transit

Ideas for Short-Term Improvements

INFORMATION & SIGNAGE

Create information and promotion networks with federal agencies. Promote the local distribution of information through posters, coupons, information kiosks, and events that will show federal employees (and others) what's going on in The Parkway and the rest of Richland.

Lead Agencies: GSA, Chamber of Commerce



Hang street-spanning banners on George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue midway between Knight and Lee to announce the new Parkway and its businesses. In addition, add text to existing gold/orange banners to give the area more identity.

Lead Agencies: Parkway businesses, CBD Partners, Chamber of Commerce

Ideas for Long-Term Improvements | JOHN DAM PLAZA

These ideas can be facilitated by and build on partnerships established during the implementation of short-term improvements suggested by workshop participants.



Establish a focal point in John Dam Plaza: a clock tower, a fountain or water feature, large-scale artwork, or other appealing element that can become an identifier for the space. This feature could be located either centrally (but must be easily visible from the streets and sidewalks), or between the south edge of the Plaza and the parking lot, for more connection to and visibility from The Parkway.

Lead Agencies: City, historical society, residents, contributions from “adopt-a-[brick/flowerbed/bench, etc.]” program



Redesign and extend the Plaza paths.

One path ends before it reaches the south-side parking lot; and east/west paths do not line up with optimal crossing locations on Jadwin and George Washington Way.. Redesign with consideration to both access to and within the Plaza.

Lead Agency: Parks & Recreation Department



Set up noise and wind barriers along edges of John Dam Plaza.

Research options to implement these without creating unattractive or obstructive elements.

Lead Agencies: local artists, Department of Public Works

Add an element for children. A playground or distinctive play element could attract kids from the nearby child care center; increase activity in the park; and become a "destination" in itself. **Lead Agencies:** Childcare center, local artists, GSA



Ideas for Long-Term Improvements

STREETS & SIDEWALKS



Implement permanent traffic-calming measures on George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue after experimenting with temporary measures and evaluating their success.

Lead Agencies: Department of Public Works, traffic engineers

Re-align Mansfield Street to resolve its current closing between Jadwin and Northgate. One option is for Mansfield to shift to the north, aligning with the police department parking entrance off Jadwin. This reconfiguration could allow for a small handicapped parking area near the courthouse, and a mini-plaza or gateway-like space to help give identity to the courthouse and federal building.

Lead Agencies: GSA, Police Department, Department of Public Works

Consider narrowing Jadwin into a one-way street with traffic moving south. This would add to the sense of a government/federal district in that vehicles would enter it from one way; allow for creating a setback in front of the federal building; and help to create a green "transition" space between the buildings and John Dam Plaza.

Lead Agencies: City, Department of Public Works, traffic engineers

Widen sidewalks along the DOE parking lot and consider adding a bus stop; also widen sidewalks on Knight Street west of Jadwin (from their current 4-5-foot width at this location).

Lead Agencies: Department of Public Works, Department of Energy - or GSA, if it takes ownership of DOE lot



Consider building a traffic circle at the Knight/Jadwin intersection. **Lead Agencies:** Department of Public Works, traffic engineers



Build archways to The Parkway at key points along Jadwin, George Washington Way, and Knight Street, as was discussed during initial phases of the CBD revitalization project. **Lead Agencies:** Parkway businesses, local funders, City

Consider minimizing vehicular traffic around the future child care site. There will be significant foot traffic between the federal buildings and the child care center; this issue should be considered in plans to resolve the closure of Mansfield Street, and in developing the site around child care center.

Lead Agencies: GSA, City, Department of Public Works



Existing Site

Resolve the bulb-out and parallel parking on Knight Street alongside the post office. People are not comfortable parking here because the spaces project out into road beyond the sidewalk line.

Lead Agencies: GSA, US Post Office

Bury power lines underground along Knight Street corridor.

Lead Agencies: Department of Public Works

Ideas for Long-Term Improvements

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Existing Sites



The DOE parking lot could become mixed-use buildings that would incorporate parking structures and also include retail, food, or perhaps residential units.

Lead Agencies: DOE/GSA, City Community Development Department, developers



Properties on south side of Knight Street could be modified or redeveloped to increase density, absorb some of the surfeit of parking spaces, and create more active and/or revenue-producing uses.

Lead Agencies: property owners, City Community Development Department, zoning office



Existing Site



Existing Site

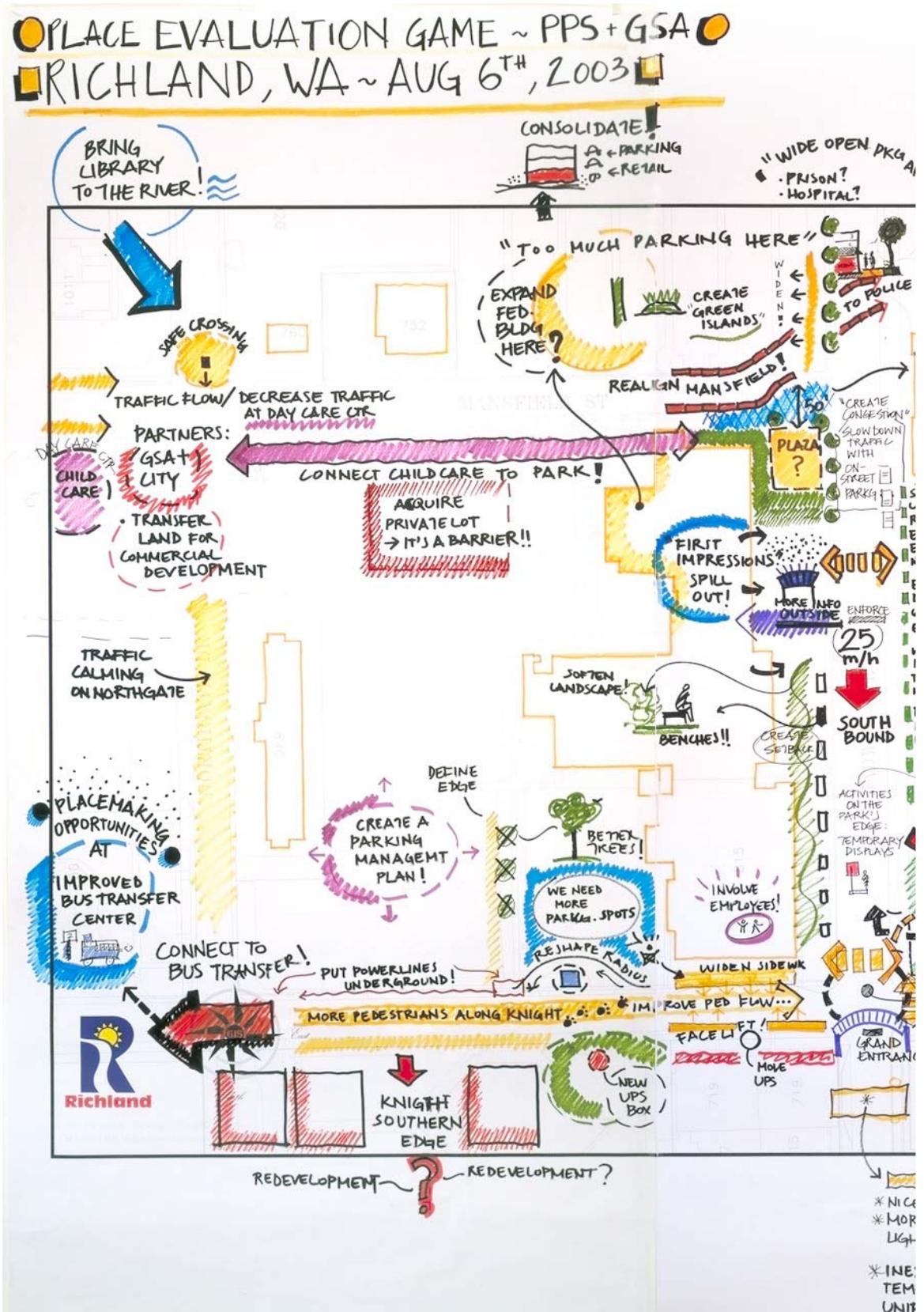
Build UP in The Parkway: add offices, loft-style residences, or restaurants on roofs of existing buildings; or replace buildings with 2- to 4-story mixed-use development. Look at zoning to improve possibilities to add housing to this area.

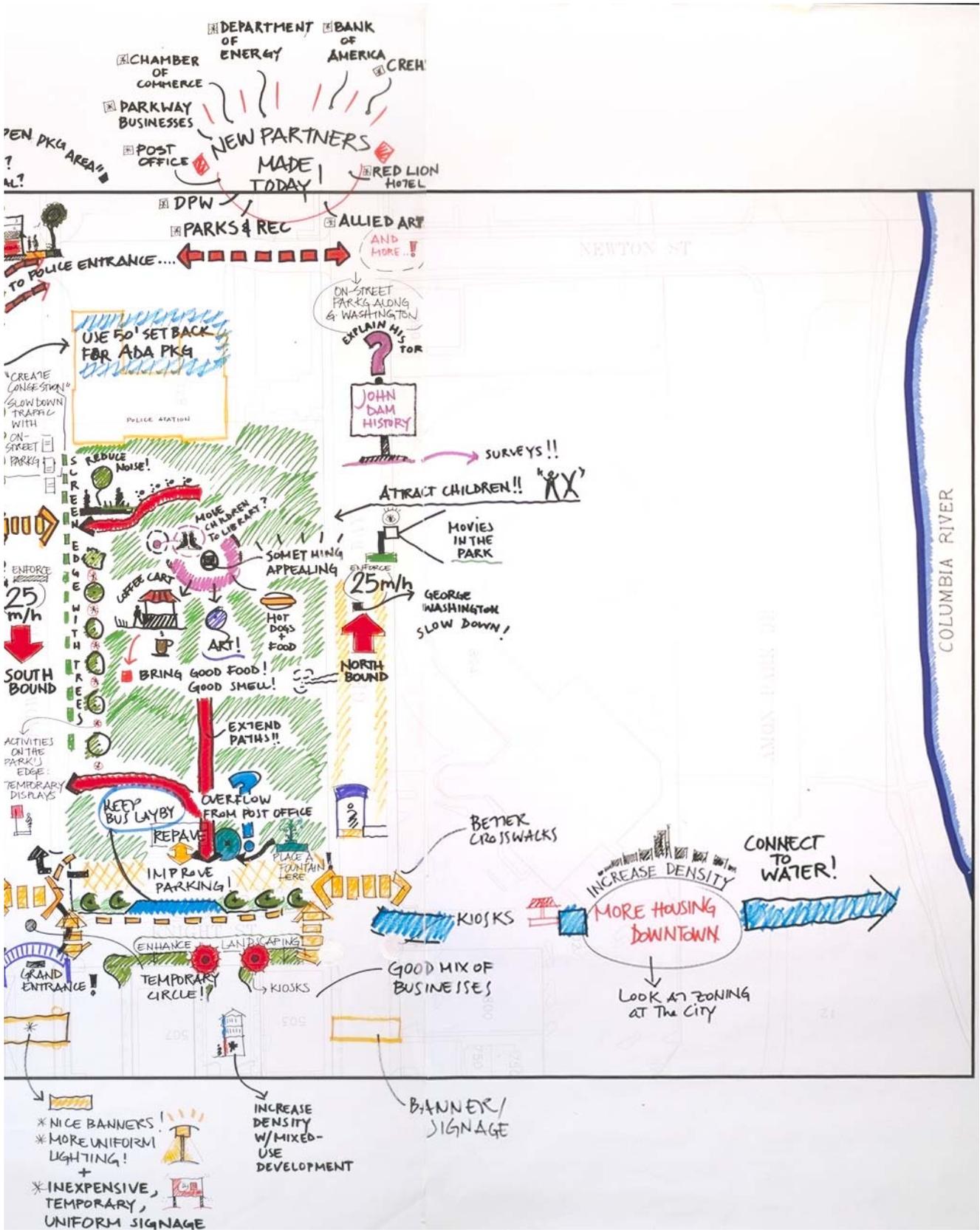
Lead Agencies: City Community Development Department, developers



Conceptual Plan

This plan was generated during the placemaking workshop's "reporting back" phase, when participants reviewed the results of their public space evaluations (see page 5), and proposed various improvements.





Creating a Civic Heart for Richland, Washington 21

Potential Partners

Working together, a variety of organizations and institutions can combine their resources and work together to make the public-space improvements outlined in this report. Each partner has an important role to play in improving the Government District, promoting John Dam Plaza as the civic heart of Richland, and helping this part of the city become a more attractive, welcoming place. They can also bring in additional partners to join the efforts. Suggested roles follow each partner's name.

Parks and Recreation Department - short- and long-term physical improvements to John Dam Plaza; implementing innovative, appropriate events that respond to the community's needs and desires; street trees; path redesign.

Transportation/Public Works Department - improvements to George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue: traffic calming measures (both experimental/temporary and later, permanent); improving access to John Dam Plaza; sidewalk widening; crosswalks; street design near childcare center.

Ben Franklin Transit - mutual promotions (advertising, events, information, announcements) with Government District agencies and employees (federal and local), Bank of America, and Parkway businesses; implementing placemaking improvements to the Transit Center to promote and increase ridership.

Chamber of Commerce - programming, events, and exhibits in John Dam Plaza and the Parkway; fostering mutual promotion among local businesses, the transit center, and government agencies and employees; gateway/archways; banners and signage.

Police Department - building the presence of the police station as a civic institution by making it more open to the public - and John Dam Plaza; making changes to Mansfield Street to re-establish through access to the west; providing input and resources for community and civic events in John Dam Plaza; acting as "public space ambassadors" on the street (giving directions to parking, buildings, businesses, etc.).

Parkway Businesses - promoting connections, via events and activities, to John Dam Plaza; on mutual promotions with Government District agencies and employees (federal and local); short-term improvements (events and physical improvements) to the Parkway.

Red Lion Hotel - promoting the Plaza to guests and workers; improvements to George Washington Way and Jadwin Avenue; survey respondent.

Allied Arts - programming, events, and exhibits in John Dam Plaza and the Parkway, and partnering with other arts groups to do so.

Bank of America - promotional partnerships with the Parkway and the Transit Center; on potential additional development or redevelopment on Knight Street west of Jadwin.

CREHST (Columbia River Exhibit of History, Science and Technology) - programming, events, and exhibits in John Dam Plaza and the Parkway; historical information and markers.

Department of Energy - programming and events in John Dam Plaza; informational/promotional partnerships with local businesses; on short-term (and possibly long-term) improvements to its parking lot.

Post Office - mutual promotional partnerships with the Transit Center and the Parkway; leadership role in improving parking areas west of the federal buildings and creating a parking management plan; facilitating parking and access.

Public Library - programming and events in John Dam Plaza and the Parkway.

Future Child Care Center - the design should maximize access to the Transit Center; implement placemaking principles to create pleasant, attractive public spaces for children, employees, and parents; and create "community-friendly" features that make the Center easily approachable by pedestrians, with an active street presence. Staff at the Center should work with other partners to create tie-ins and activities at John Dam Plaza.

GSA - development opportunities on private land behind the courthouse and on the DOE parking lot; leadership role in establishing and maintaining partnerships among stakeholders, and in client agencies' reconfiguring signage and information.

City of Richland - evaluating zoning for redevelopment opportunities; leadership role on traffic-calming experiments; working with the Chamber of Commerce in fostering involvement of Parkway businesses in improvement efforts and streetscape improvements, and with Parks & Recreation on improvements for John Dam Plaza.

Workshop Participants

City of Richland

John Fox, *City Council Member*

Trish Markham, *Marketing*

Joe Schiessl, *Community Development Department*

City Businesses / Organizations

Richard Ciccone, *Ben Franklin Transit*

Jon Erlandson, *Parks & Recreation Commission*

Moe Frix, Executive Dir., *Chamber of Commerce*

Gary Karnofski, *Chair, Planning Commission*

Judith Loomis, *Allied Arts Gallery*

Gus Sako, *Chair, Richland Business Alliance*

Jerry Schneider, *Chairman, Economic Development Committee*

Steve Stairs, *Staff Liason, Transportation Committee*

Stephanie Tesch, *Americans with Disabilities Act Review Committee*

Craig Walker, *Chair, Central Business District Partners*

GSA and Federal Agencies

Debbie Brasel, *US District Court*

Stan Catchpole, *Asset Management*

Lyle Dalby, *Property Manager*

Frank Giblin, *Urban Development/Good Neighbor Program*

Boyd Hathaway, *Department of Energy*

Dee Jump, *Special Projects*

Ellen Liefeld, *US Postmaster*

Trina Mendoza, *Portfolio Assistant*

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Rick Scott, *Portfolio Manager*

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