

Downtown Gets a Face Lifting*

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“Operation Foresight,” Grand Junction’s version of the downtown shopping mall, recently received the enthusiastic endorsement of local merchants and property owners who will foot 72% of the bill. Project designers feel that the city-center face lifting will overcome two key disadvantages of mall installations – a great loss of on-street parking and little or no room for emergency cars.

The Grand Junction treatment features a Shopping Park along four blocks of Main Street. Now a straight four-lane thoroughfare 66 feet wide, the downtown artery will be transformed into a series of gentle S-curves. Pedestrian safety, angle parking, trees, shrubbery and benches will keynote the new look.

The Shopping Park places primary emphasis on five important safety and convenience factors:

- Jaywalking will no longer exist since the raised shrubbery planters will bar pedestrian movement from the street-except at the mid-block crosswalk and at intersections.
- A ten-foot maneuvering lane behind angle-parked cars will provide ample visibility and minimize parking accidents.
- The 24-foot mid-block crosswalk, approached by two peninsulas, will replace the present 48-foot travelway, protecting the pedestrian and increasing his visibility.
- A passenger loading zone will provide space for vehicles to pull out of the traffic lanes in order to load and unload passengers, eliminating double parking.

In the Beginning

Faced with a deteriorating city core in which no major public improvements had been undertaken for 21 years, the City Council appointed a seven-man committee to outline a renewal plan. Working with the city and regional planners, the committee publicized its initial proposal to property owners, businessmen and the general public through slide presentations with taped narrations.

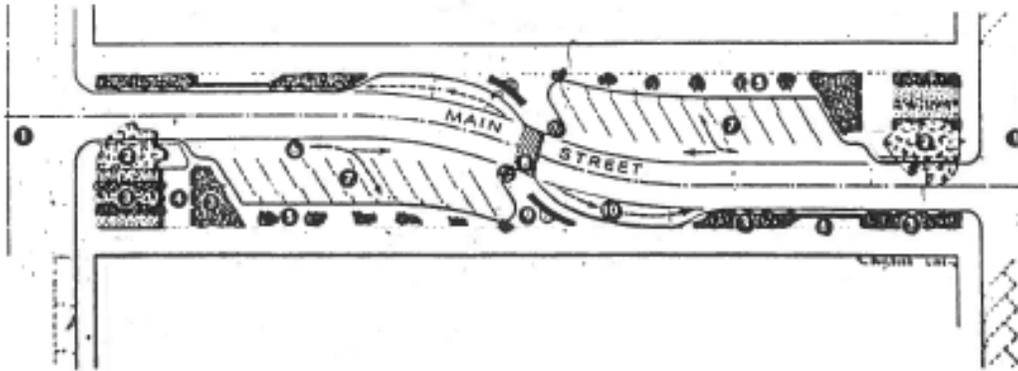
Phase-by-Phase

- Phase 1 - \$150,000 storm sewer construction, funded by 1.87-mill property tax on downtown properties.
- Phase 2 – Shopping Park and widening of 27 blocks of street, street lights, traffic signals, blacktopping and concrete work, funded by footage assessments, 28% funded by City
- Phase 3 – Off-street parking free to customers through a parking validation/token plan.
- Phases 4 & 5 – Store modernization. Arcade walkways, lighted display windows, parcel-check facilities, attended public restrooms and numerous other customer conveniences.

Signs Get Results

Even before the public improvements had started, a downtown businessman suggested posting project signs that tie-in with each remodeling job. He felt that the signs would help encourage other retailers to proceed with their remodeling. His assumption proved correct. Five small firms currently have remodeling jobs in various stages. Two major renovations, one for \$100,000 and another totaling \$250,000, are scheduled for completion in the near future.

Further indication of community support for the program came on April 27th at the city-wide storm-sewer bond election. The voters approved the bond issue by a 13 to 1 ratio; the bonds subsequently sold at an interest rate of 2.6%.



- Planters are barriers to jaywalking except at mid-blocks
- Areas of large shade trees, grass, shrubs and flowers
- Seats for shoppers, covered benches and telephones
- Some metered parking. Parking spaces 9' x 20'
- Pedestrians cross 22 feet instead of original 48 feet of traveled street. Pedestrian crosswalks at mid block also.
- A 10-foot maneuvering lane behind parked cars allow pullout for visibility without conflict of on-coming cars
- Half of the block on each side has no parking – reduce number of parking/maneuvering accidents
- Passenger-loading pullouts eliminate need for double-parking for customer pick-up

*An Excerpt from The American City. November, 1962.



Operation Foresight: Fun Facts to Know & Tell

- 1962 Expenditures: \$ 651,149
- 1984-1986 Expenditures:
 - Parking Lot \$ 222,674
 - Underground Utilities \$ 183,500
 - Pedestrian Amenities \$ 300,450
- TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS \$1,357,773

- Reduced traffic accidents along Main Street from 80 in 1961 to 6 in 1964
- Increased sales volume from 14% to 68% - successfully staving off the suburban shopping mall for 18 years
- Accomplishment of the Operation Foresight project entirely with local resources was the primary reason Grand Junction was named and “All American City” in 1962 along with other winners: Allentown, Pennsylvania; Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Boston, Massachusetts; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Dade County, Florida; Grafton, West Virginia; High Point, North Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; Quincy, Illinois; San Diego, California
Runners up: Boulder, Colorado; Columbia, South Carolina; Dayton, Ohio; Florissant, Missouri; Ft Lauderdale, Florida; Medford, Massachusetts; Muncie, Indiana; Pocatello, Idaho; Pomona, California; Salisbury, Maryland; Utica, New York
- Project received other national attention – visited by representatives of more than 100 other cities
- Transformed not only the street but public attitudes – became a source of pride for residents. The Main Street Shopping Park continues to be a major attraction for visitors to the Grand Valley
- Some merchants complained that an excess of trees blocked their storefronts, and later caused removal of some of the greenery. Most remained intact until 1985, when further renovations took place.

