BISHOP VISION STATEMENT

The greater Bishop Area, strategically located at the foot of the Sierra Nevada along the Owens River, is a historic and rural town that thrives on its viewscapes and friendly, small town atmosphere where people can relax, enjoy the open spaces and play or recreate. In an effort to* Preserve, Protect, and Promote *its natural environment, Bishop is a dynamic, well planned, and compact community. It* Provides *for its residents and maintains its rural surroundings and ambiance while encouraging orderly commercial development.

In order to achieve this vision, the **ABC/2000** group encourages the community and its leaders to:

PRESERVE

Focus on pro-active land use planning which maintains open space, viewscapes and rural quality of life.
Establish well defined and enforceable city ordinances that address architectural guidelines, a comprehensive sign ordinance, and historical preservation.
Recycle vacant commercial sites as they become available.

PROTECT

Maintain, protect and enhance the physical and natural environment.
Assert leadership to guide Bishop into the 21st Century to manage impacts the growth in California will have on the greater Bishop area.

PROMOTE

Encourage both city and county governments to continue to fund the marketing of our attractions and services in order to promote the Bishop area as a desirable destination for extended stays.
Encourage collaboration among land managing agencies: City, County, Federal, DWP, State and Tribal.
Continue to promote the revitalization of the downtown area so it is an attractive, pedestrian oriented town.
Expand and maintain the system of bicycle transportation routes and trails across open lands and throughout the greater Bishop area.
Encourage the County to consolidate services at the south end of Bishop with an associated Heritage Park.
Implement a "Long Term Master Plan" for relocating all conspicuous utility lines underground.
Support an upgraded Bishop Airport which will serve the growing needs of local and surrounding communities.
Encourage fill-in development vs expansion; i.e.: build on vacant lots rather than expanding boundries.
Foster City Council cooperation to work with the Fairground Board to meet and expand convention needs.

PROVIDE

Encourage all responsible entities to act to improve health care, social services and education.
Continue support for more quality mural art work in the downtown area.
Create a historic district within the city limits, where appropriate, to include a mix of small shops, homes, and professional offices.
Address and act to provide housing for the future housing needs of the greater Bishop area.
Include side streets and alleys on either side of Main Street into the "business core".
Provide a community center that meets the needs of residents of the greater Bishop area.

ABC/2000: July 26, 1999

ABC/2000

The purpose of **ABC/2000** (About the Bishop Community) is to prepare a new **Vision Statement** for the greater Bishop Community. The intention is to provide a useful planning tool and an easily understood description of what this community will become by the year 2020.

ABC/2000

Interim Report

On July 29, 1998 the first of two meetings was held by members of various business and civic groups to discuss recent business closures in the Bishop downtown area. The meetings were originally suggested by Mayor Bob Kimball as a way to explore possible remedies for the apparent decline in retail activity on Main Street. As a result of those meetings, a steering committee was formed to investigate causes, gather information, and make recommendations to the larger group on a new vision statement for the city of Bishop. The steering committee has found it advisable to enlarge the study both in scope and geographic area in order to provide a more comprehensive view of the problems of the area. The purpose of this report is to update the ABC/2000 group and the general community on our progress so far, and to offer suggestions and alternatives for public review.

The steering committee was originally composed as follows:

David Miller	Bishop Planning Commission
Lois Fisher	Sierra Business Council
James Wilson	Wilson's Eastside Sports
Allan Pietrasanta	ABCom
Jeff Irons	Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Bureau
Seth Baker	Bishop Student
Dave Patterson	Whiskey Creek Restaurant
Dori Leyen, secretary	Pacifica Development (Rovana)

Two additional individuals have attended most meetings and are now considered to be part of the steering committee:

Rex Allen	Bishop Land and Water Advisory Committee
Dan Wells	Sierra Office Supplies

The initial guidelines for the committee were as follows:

1. Meetings would be held on the first and third wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM.
2. All meetings are open to the public, and input is encouraged.
3. The name of the group would be ABC/2000 (About the Bishop Community).
4. The area under study would be from Wilkerson to Rovana, from the proposed college to the airport.

5. The committee considers itself to be a planning vehicle. Tasks recommended by the committee could be carried out by various civic groups and government. In some cases work was already under way and only needed coordination with new proposals.

On July 27, 1998 the Grand Jury published its 1997-1998 report which raised numerous planning issues for both the City and the County. Some of those issues are referenced here because they are pertinent to this discussion.

Closed Businesses

One of the factors which led to the formation of ABC/2000 was an initial survey which showed that twenty businesses in the downtown area had closed in the preceding year or so. A number of the merchants felt that the banning of parking on Main Street was the direct cause of their failures. On further study, the committee believes that other factors may be more significant. ABC/2000 prepared a "short list" of five recommendations to improve parking, truck traffic, signage and other matters (see attachments) which was subsequently endorsed by both the Planning Commission and City Council of Bishop.

Many changes have occurred in the retailing industry in the past four decades, not just in Inyo County, but all over the nation. According to National Main Street Center (National Trust for Historic Preservation): "...changes which are the result of changes in transportation and land-use patterns and of commercial overbuilding on an unprecedented scale. Fueled by the passage of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, by development-friendly tax policies, by municipal hunger for new revenue-generating commercial property, and by the leveraged buyouts and takeovers of department store conglomerates, construction of commercial real estate development has soared. The amount of commercial space in the United States has more than quadrupled since 1960." Since the majority of visitors to the Eastern Sierra are from major population centers to the south, they enjoy far more retail opportunities than are available in the Bishop community. Furthermore, the local merchants lack the buying power of the national chains and cannot prevent local customers from leaving town to obtain more competitive prices. With the advent of Thrifty-Payless-RiteAid and Kmart, a steady erosion has occurred in small locally owned shops. Apparel, drug stores, liquor stores, shoe stores, toy shops, and children's shops have been hit particularly hard. Catalogue sales are another strong source of competition, particularly for rural communities located a long drive from cities.

About two months after the initial survey of business closures, a second survey was performed.

This survey found that twenty five new businesses had opened, moved to larger quarters, or made substantial investments in their existing facilities. In other words, a recycling of commercial properties was occurring as a more or less natural occurrence, even in the absence of government programs or low cost loans to promote that type of growth. Of course the new businesses were not always the same as the ones that had closed. Niche retailers that do not directly compete with "big box" stores can do well. Services are usually provided by small business, and Bishop is the service center of the Eastern Sierra for 150 miles in any direction. As a result of this information, the committee began to widen its inquiry into deeper causes for business decline.

Main Street

Many factors are affecting the retail climate of Main Street:

1. Traffic is now a significant feature in downtown Bishop. In the past twenty years the number of traffic signals has almost tripled. Vehicle trips per day are now at 16,000 or 6 million per year on Main Street alone. This puts Bishop on the national chain store watch list (for example - Kragin's auto supply). The elimination of parking on Main Street has located traffic (including very large trucks) within a few feet of pedestrians and cyclists.

2. With observable parking now eliminated, off street parking has become indispensable. The "core" area is exempt from onsite parking requirements and depends on city supplied parking. Unfortunately, directional signs for parking blend in with all the other Caltrans signs (white on green background). If tourists cannot easily find parking, their tendency is to drive on.

3. Downtown Bishop contains a lot of signs. Too many signs produce a kind of visual pollution that causes motorists to "tune out" the information and drive on. Other successful tourist communities almost always control the use of signs because it has such a significant effect on the appearance of the town.

4. With many places of business closed, Main Street can quickly begin to look shabby and abandoned. Two gas stations have been demolished and are surrounded by unsightly fencing. The former Green Motors site has been vacant and full of weeds for years. Plans for Kmart to relocate and the possibility that Vons might consolidate its stores represent additional areas of concern. Both the Post Office and the Forest Service have indicated plans to move in the near future and may leave more vacancies.

5. The town of Mammoth Lakes has been aggressively promoting its facilities to tour group operators and tourists for a number of years and has increased available "service center" business in direct competition to Bishop's ability to provide services and light industry. Buses that used to stop in Bishop for lodging and shopping are now going directly to Mammoth Lakes for their upscale condominiums, recreation facilities, and varied shopping. Skiers and campers on their way to Mammoth Lakes may not feel the need to stop if similar services are available at their destination.

6. Bishop is notorious for "closing up" at night. Tourists have little to do after dinner; this is typically when impulse buying occurs. Whisky Creek reports 20% growth in gift items annually with 40% of that generated at night. Lack of "action" on the street and vacant store fronts are deadly for retailing. Combined with closed shops and inconvenient parking, lack of action tells motorists to drive on by.

7. If one looks at successful small tourist towns, certain factors are almost always present. These include: pedestrian scale (A pleasant place to walk), interesting buildings and store fronts, goods and services that are in demand and are displayed attractively, use of landscaping, and unique products (often produced locally, see attached list). Bishop has some very successful businesses that have utilized most of these techniques and are doing quite well. Others who were not financially able or knowledgeable about these requirements have paid a high price.

8. The committee has not been able to determine whether the competition described above or a lack of financial and information resources is more to blame for recent business failures. Classes in business skills and mentoring programs might help if they were available and well publicized.

9. The south end of Main Street has been particularly affected by the factors listed above. A kind of industrialization has occurred in this area. Industrialization is not necessarily a bad thing, except when it displaces prime retail frontage. Tourists will not generally be inclined to stroll around lumber yards, plumbing supplies, and auto dismantlers. Additionally, no border or welcome feature announces that the visitor has arrived at a major destination. Many travelers pass through unaware that the Bishop area has scenic lakes, fishing, climbing, and mountain recreation areas.

A more pervasive effect in the downtown area is its dedication to the motorist. This is exemplified by three main types of businesses - motels, gas stations, and fast food establishments. All of these are necessary services required by motorists, and are major contributors to the tax revenue

required by the city to balance its budget. The question raised is one of balance. The pedestrian retail area has now probably been reduced down to three blocks. If the community is interested in having tourists stop for goods other than gas and food, then retail space must be conserved and promoted. If the recent trends continue, Bishop will tend to be more of a place that tourists just pass through on their way someplace else, and less of a tourist destination (see attached letters).

Public Facilities

Bishop is blessed with a combination of natural assets that are perhaps unique in California. At a recent advanced planning seminar held by the Sierra Business Council, representatives from all eleven Sierra Nevada counties were intent on learning about efforts at preserving and protecting open space. Bishop is surrounded by almost 6,500,000 acres of open space in Inyo County, plus the southern half of Mono County and western portions of Nevada. Most of this open space is owned by various branches of government and is open to public use and enjoyment. Bishop itself is surrounded by watershed lands owned by the City of Los Angeles. This land is generally not available for private commercial development and provides (with other government owned land) fixed limits to both the geographic extent of development anywhere in the Owens Valley, and to the growth of population in Inyo County. The Sierra Nevada and White Mountain ranges offer superb recreational opportunities, as well as the chance to gather information on geologic, historic, and other scientific interests. Inyo County contains the highest and lowest points in the contiguous states and all manner of environments in between. (see attached list of assets)

Within the city a little more attention is required. Bishop has a wonderful city park that is currently receiving some upgrades in landscaping and parking improvements. The city has approved installing a new skate park, and is currently seeking funding. The city is hard pressed to keep up with the demand for recreation since the entire community looks to Bishop to provide programs for its families. This is recognized in the Inyo County-Los Angeles water agreement, and extra funds are allocated to Bishop for park maintenance. Never-the-less, requests for year round swimming facilities (see attached letter), a community center, and other public gathering places have not been fulfilled. A market for convention business definitely exists, but Bishop lacks convention facilities (other than the Fairgrounds) and sufficient upscale lodging and restaurants to entice all but the smallest of conventions. Currently there is only one banquet facility in the Bishop area. (see attached list of promotions).

A recently published book: Image of the City, contains some useful information.

- 350,000 people attended the Gilroy garlic festival last year.

- Ashland, Oregon is completely sold out from February to October due to its Shakespeare festival.
- Quality of life is a strategy, not a luxury. (Quality of life is the number one reason businesses and individuals locate in the Sierras).
- Vision work should not take more than six months.
- Action speaks louder than planning.
- There must be results within a year or credibility will be lost.
- Better utilization of existing resources (or promotion of assets) is essential since each city is unique.
- There needs to be a safe place for kids between 3:30 and 7:30 PM.
- Libraries need to be improved. Combine uses in user friendly ways.
- Children who are "at risk" or suffer from boredom need special attention.

Bishop lacks a distinct image. ABC/2000's informal survey found a general lack of support for the western theme and criticism of a lack of cohesion in the overall appearance of the commercial district. A different sort of potential problem is the current regulation exempting the "core area" from normal parking requirements. If a property owner wants to build up to the property line in this "core area" without parking, the City would not have any way to prevent it under existing codes..

One of the problems cited in the Grand Jury report was the lack of communication between the various branches of government. The County of Inyo is now involved in a two year, $200,000 update to its general plan. The City of Bishop will be updating its general plan by 2003. The Native-American community is actively pursuing development and possible expansion of its reservation. The time couldn't be more appropriate to open lines of communication between these entities. Coordination of plans rather than competition should be the goal.

Quality of Life

While ABC/2000 began as a response to numerous business closings, the committee is now of the opinion that the future may hold the opposite result. According to the University of California, Los Angeles, Anderson School of Management, the population of California will grow from a present 33.7 million to 49.4 million in 2020. Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Los Angeles counties will all grow quickly due to their high tech economies. Los Angeles county alone is projected to reach 11.91 million by 2020. The Eastern Sierra is the primary recreational opportunity for much of this population. As has been noted above, vehicle counts for highway 395 now exceed 6 million per year through Bishop. While population growth will be limited by

land ownership patterns in Inyo County (from 18,550 in 1995 to 27,100 by 2020), the pressure from the south for residential and commercial development in our area will most certainly be higher than in past years. Because developable land is so scarce in the Bishop community, conservation and careful planning are essential if the current quality of life is to be preserved.

Quality of life, as noted above, is the primary reason people come to the Eastern Sierra. While economic reasons are often given for the approval of development that is not consistent with maintaining the small town atmosphere so prized by residents, achieving a balance is essential to protect the way of life. Mammoth Lakes was a small village in the woods before development began to displace the woods. With the current explosion in development, very little will be left of the original environment, which has now been replaced with a sprawling town.

Currently under construction are expansion of Northern Inyo Hospital and the new skilled nursing facilities, a substantial improvement in services. Unfortunately, Bishop still lacks a cardiologist, an arthritis specialist, and a neurologist; among other specialties. The concentration of government offices would suggest a need for more lawyers and engineers. A community college now looks like a reality in early 2000 which could be the source of both new jobs and trained workers for future employers.

.Business Climate

The following table sets forth a summary of Inyo County employment during 1995.

Industry	Number	Percent
Total Farm	50	.7
Total Goods Producing	550	7.7
Wholesale Trade	300	4.2
Food Stores	300	4.2
Eating and Drinking Places	700	9.8
Other Retail Trade	710	9.9
Lodging Services	650	9.1
Health Services	330	4.6
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	140	1.9
Transportation & Public Utility	280	3.9
Other Services	680	9.5

Government Services	2440	34.2
Total Service Producing	6530	91.5
Total Employment	7130	100.0
(see attached graphs)		

Wages and Salaries from employment comprise only 53.3% of personal income received by Inyo County residents during 1995. Dividends, interest, and rent accounted for 22.8%; and transfer payments (social security, welfare, unemployment insurance, and retirement) were the remaining 23.9%. Government, utility and mining employment has declined since 1995.

The follwing table sets forth a summary of Inyo County taxable sales during 1995.

Type of Business	Amount	Percent
	in thousands	
Eating and Drinking Places	21,695	11.2
Building Materials & Farm Implements	10,970	5.6
Auto Dealers & Auto Supplies	17,720	9.1
Service Stations	28,793	14.8
Other Retail Stores	50,902	26.4
Other Outlets	63,832	32.9
Total Taxable Sales	193,912	100.0

Taxable sales do not include sales of food, prescription drugs, lodging rents, and "services".

According to the city of Bishop's general plan, "62.6% of all retail sales in Bishop are generated by population residing outside the Greater Bishop area". This statistic clearly demonstrates the importance of non-residents and travelers to the local economy. Bishop has become a service center for a vast trading area, encompassing 400 miles of a heavily traveled highway and most of Mono and Inyo Counties, and western Nevada....about 15,000 square miles.

Businesses located in the Greater Bishop area serve a relatively small resident population (approximately 10,000) and a significant quantity of travelers (in excess of 6 million annually). During peak seasons most travelers are enroute to various recreational destinations in the Eastern Sierra. Businesses that primarily serve the resident population are challenged by a small market for their goods and services. Businesses that primarily serve travelers are challenged by feast and famine seasonal swings in business.

Businesses serving the resident population would benefit from more "residents" in their marketing area. This may be achieved by an increase in population in the Greater Bishop area or by expanding the market by promoting their business to residents of outlying areas.

Businesses serving travelers would benefit from more tourists visiting the Eastern Sierra during traditionally slow seasons, and choosing to stay and recreate in the Bishop area. This may be achieved by tourism promotion and marketing.

Of course, both resident and traveler-serving businesses must provide the goods and services that their potential customers expect and desire at prices they are willing to pay, and in attractive surroundings.

The City of Bishop imposes a Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) on the rental of lodging facilities. When originally passed, the ordinance contained a stipulation that 25% of TOT collected would be used for tourism promotion. For a number of years, the city did in fact contribute at least 25% of TOT collected to the Bishop Chamber of Commerce for promotional activities. A few years ago, however, the 25% promotional spending requirement was eliminated. Since that time the City's promotional contribution has reduced to approximately 15% of TOT collected and the Chamber's tourism promotion and marketing activities have been significantly curtailed as a result.

While travelers are clearly the primary source of the sales revenue today, other sources should be developed. Among opportunities that have been identified are:

- Encourage existing consumer and business service enterprises to aggressively promote their businesses to the entire region (Inyo, Mono, and western Nevada). (Fendon's Furniture delivers free to Mammoth Lakes...every Thursday.)

- Develop new consumer and business service enterprises focused on providing services to the entire region. The construction boom in Mammoth Lakes presents many opportunities.

- Develop new consumer and business serving enterprises focused on providing goods and services to consumers outside the region. The existence of the Internet allows firms to sell goods and services worldwide....from virtually anywhere.

- Promote "commuter" employment in the area. Persons can work in the area, often from their homes, for employers located outside the region. Often referred to as "telecommuting", this form of employment has become a major factor in the economies

of Western Sierra communities.

The availability of fast telecommunications connections and air service to metropolitan areas will facilitate this end.

Assets

Bishop possesses an impressive list of both natural and social assets (see attached list). Often overlooked is the compact nature of the City. Within easy walking distance are most of the services that residents seek. Paradoxically, this is the new trend for shopping centers and city planning. Mixed use already exists in Bishop because of its compact nature. Even Bishop's flatness adds to this feeling that everything is close. Future development should recognize all the unique features of this area and capitalize on them, rather than try to copy other towns.

Transportation

As noted above, traffic has now become a significant element in future planning. The committee believes that a bypass around the City of Bishop is inevitable. In the past, resistance to a bypass has been rooted in the fear that new commercial development would inevitably follow the new route, causing the downtown to decline. That fear is unfounded in this case because the entire alignment for the bypass is upon property owned by the City of Los Angeles for watershed purposes. Los Angeles does not normally sell property to private individuals for commercial purposes unless the property is within acknowledged town limits and there are no water issues involved. In any event, they are prohibited from transferring water rights by their city charter. Land without water would be of little commercial value.

If the City of Bishop chose to promote the idea of a bypass, the time required for planning and construction could be shortened to perhaps ten years. If the City made that choice, then it would be reasonable to make capital improvements on Main Street in anticipation of the change. Major work would have to be delayed until the bypass was available. The other alternative - leaving the route where it is - would probably preclude much in the way of major changes.

While Greater Bishop has an excellent airport, no scheduled airline presently utilizes that facility. The County is attempting to enlarge the airport lease with Los Angeles to allow some industrial use and improvements to the terminal. Mammoth Lakes would like a cooperative agreement with the Bishop airport to accommodate their anticipated growth (since Bishop is an all weather

airport). While the Mammoth Lakes airport is waiting to finalize an agreement with an airline, facilities will be used as a kind of upgraded bus terminal, with shuttle service to the town. Their airport master plan has a very ambitious program of development which is already underway.

The new fixed route bus service has now gone into effect. This service could be of enormous benefit to locals. The demand for transportation beyond the city will still require further measures. Transportation between other cities, to the proposed college, to the airport, and to and from outlying areas will all still need to be addressed.

Redevelopment

The City of Bishop has a redevelopment agency. The agency and the County were criticized by the Grand Jury which recommended: "Proactive, aggressive planning is vital to Bishop and the County's economic, social and cultural health, and to preserve and enhance their most vital economic assets - their natural resource assets. Bishop and the County could research, adopt and implement more proactive and aggressive strategic land use planning to manage and plan for prosperity in a changing world dominated by world-wide business enterprises, high technology, and powerful government entities." The Redevelopment Agency has not yet adopted a specific plan or established boundaries.

An Economic Development Corporation has also been established in Bishop. This nonprofit public benefit corporation could provide a grant and planning vehicle for the promotion of small business, education, and assistance in arranging financing. This organization has been under-utilized in the past, but holds out much promise for future participation.

When the Bishop Land and Water Advisory committee ran a poll in the Bishop community asking which land should be released for sale to the public by DWP, the largest segment - 41% - responded that no additional land should be released for sale. This represents a polarization in the community. On the one hand are people who want everything to stay as it is (or was), and on the other hand are those who want the services that are available in other larger communities. Of course, while this seeming dispute continues, the community has already changed and will continue to change regardless of whether any action is taken by government. What proactive planning can do is influence the nature and scope of the growth that is sure to come. Balancing budgets is a requirement that must be met. Balancing a community's needs is a much more difficult task.

Housing

From 1970 to 1990 the population of the City of Bishop actually fell from 3498 to 3475 (1990 census figures). Meanwhile the housing stock of the City grew from 1450 dwelling units to 1779. Of these, 47% are owner occupied and 53% are renter occupied. 867 units are single family, 307 are multiple (2 - 4 units), 237 are are apartments (5 or more), and 368 are mobile homes. In the 5 years since the publication of the General Plan, a total of only 6 new houses have been constructed. However, in the same period 3 houses were demolished and 3 were converted to commercial use. In 1991, a 4 unit apartment building was built. At present, 95% of the houses in Bishop are twenty or more years old; 41% are fifty or more years old.

The most obvious constraint on new residential construction is the lack of availability of land due to ownership by the City of Los Angeles. Recent events at the Department of Water and Power in Los Angeles may make possible the release of land for sale. Generally, if Los Angeles owned land is within recognized town limits, and no water issues are involved (no surface water and water service available from some other source like a community water system), that land may become the subject of discussion with DWP. Land identified by the Bishop Land and Water Advisory Committee has already been approved for sale under the water agreement once it has been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

With a lack of supply within the City of Bishop, newcomers to the area are more likely to select newer houses in the area outside of Bishop. In fact the unincorporated county area surrounding Bishop is where 60% of the County's growth has occurred in the last ten years. These people will typically shop and find services in Bishop, causing somewhat of an imbalance in how sales tax revenue is collected and disbursed. On the other hand, the lion's share of available property tax goes to the County. In any event, state law requires each jurisdiction to meet its housing needs with a variety of housing types to satisfy the community demand. If relatively low wage workers required by the motorist-demand (motels, gas stations, and fast food places) cannot find affordable housing, they are likely to simply move on. Mammoth Lakes is already having a serious problem in affordable housing due to the demands of its tourism industry.

A new project by Pacifica Development proposed for Rovana will have effects not yet fully understood. 360 units of various types are proposed. The project is currently in the EIR preparation stage. New housing typically causes a certain amount of relocation. The Meadowcreek development is a good example of that effect. The housing vacated often becomes the affordable housing of tomorrow, but if the the existing (or declining) housing stock is not continuously updated and supplemented by new housing, serious demographic effects may be noticed.

Recommendations

- A "short list" of items to benefit the business district has already been submitted to the City that may have beneficial effect in the near future if carried out (see attached).
- Improving educational opportunities will provide both jobs in the educational establishment and better trained workers.
- Business training and help in arranging financing is essential for a more capable retail environment.
- Finding ways to build on the assets and natural resources of our area is at the core of making this community more pleasant and prosperous.
- Tourism promotion and marketing is vital to the traveler-serving businesses in the community, particularly off-season promotions.
- The City of Bishop should resume funding community promotion at a level equal to 25% of Transit Occupancy Tax collected.
- Both the City and the County can take advantage of the opportunity to update their General Plans and come up with a more cohesive approach to cooperative development plans.
- A dialogue should begin between both the City and County and the Paiute/Shoshone Tribal council to share information and coordinate development plans.
- The County's plan to consolidate scattered offices in the Bishop area is another opportunity for joint planning.
- A southern anchor for the City is a key factor in revitalizing Main Street.
- Solving or easing the traffic problem is essential.
- Main Street and its side streets need to be studied for revitalization and enhancement.
- The City should consider establishing design guidelines for all future commercial development or remodeling.
- The City General Plan assumes the construction of a community center and convention facility, which would have substantial benefits for the area.
- An interim program could be put into effect to improve the appearance of Main Street. This could include: limiting signs, adding landscaping, relocating or under grounding utility lines on north Main Street, re-instituteing the storefront program, installing a lightpost banner program (similar to Lone Pine), recognizing superior building design, adding upgraded paving in key locations, and cooperating with the County on a location for a County services building at the south end of Main Street.
- A concerted effort should be made to establish passenger airline service to the Bishop area.
- A year-round swimming pool should be considered for competition, recreation, and aquatic exercise.

- The library is in need of modernization, as are the schools.
- The Image of the City needs to be clarified.
- Vacant store fronts could be made to look more attractive with temporary murals or displays.

Conclusions

The Greater Bishop Community is now at a crossroads. Continued resistance to a traffic bypass will limit improvement options on Main Street. If the community truly wants a pedestrian friendly retail downtown, then new motorist oriented businesses will have to be curtailed or the downtown will have to be located somewhere else. Achieving a balance between development growth and quality of life is a very tricky endeavor. Regardless of which alternative is ultimately chosen, the one goal that all can agree upon is that Main Street must be saved, even if portions need to be relocated to adjacent side streets or malls.

The next step in this process is to gather points of view from all the stakeholders (see attached list) and interested citizens. There are a variety of ways to do this. The City could consider hiring a consultant to assist in this process or could solicit proposals to carry out the surveys. The work to formulate specific plans based on public attitudes and preferences is probably beyond the scope of ABC/2000. The committee would be willing to participate in this process if professional direction is provided, and encourages the City and the County to build on the work that has already been accomplished. All of us want a prosperous economy and a nice place to live. The only question is how best to accomplish that goal.

1-15-99

ABC 2000

ASSETS

Cultural / Arts / History

LAWS
world famous bakery
rich history
cultural and historical attractions
native American history and
historical dev of the West
equestrian opportunities
arts
antique auto collectors
culture
eastern sierra orchestra
murals
artisans

City / Business / Family

city parks / mill pond
tree lined neighbor hoods
distance from major pop areas
friendly people
defined city edge
diversity of people
pedestrian friendly
well maintained properties
location
volunteerism
numerous churches
small town atmosphere
events
Route 395
low crime
diversification of small businesses
quiet
transportation, freight and
shipping companies
health services
senior citizen resources
casino

Natural

view scape
Bristlecone Pines
Mammoth Ski Area
easy access to alpine and desert
visitor services
abundance of rec. act.
petroglyphs
open space
weather / climate
fishing (all year)
all weather airport
access to public lands
DWP
hot springs
limited private land
air quality
vacant lots
seasons
wildlife
streams, rivers
abundant campgrounds
pastoral scenery
geological features
access to wilderness
recreational reputation

ABC 2000

PROBLEMS

limited tax base
on-coming, unmanaged growth
changing business environment
condition of schools
lack of affordable housing
limited highend lodging
lack of self contained conference facility
lack of community awareness
no community center
no performing arts center
condition of hot springs
siphoning of funds
lack of evening retail
no industrial park
poor performance of Laws Museum
inadequate library
inadequate public transportation
victim mentality
DWP
lack of appreciation of landscape
lack of cooperation between city, county and tribal community
non-local land ownership
lack of non-service jobs
parking
aging housing stock
lack of land to develop
limited cultural opportunities
limited specialty goods, services
limited educational opportunities
presence of chain stores
poor service
lack of specialized services
poor city PR
no planning
lack of pedestrian friendly sidewalks
lack of gathering places
polarization within community
sign pollution
main st traffic
no alternate routes
lack of city image
lack of critical mass and population
purchasing power deficit
medium income below average
seasonality of tourist business
poor achitechtural design
Bishop out promoted
Tourism promotion funding inadequate
declining govt. jobs
lack of applicants
very limited air service
commercial, urban sprawl
multiple jurisdiction overlap
traffic circulation
strip commercial development

ABC 2000

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Adventure Travel Booking Agency
Specialty Food
Gift Shop
Electronic Data Storage Facility
Craft Co-op
Clothing Stores
Sewing Manufacturer
Wood Working / furniture
Niche Retailers
Restaurants
Upscale Lodging
Local Products
HMO
Outdoor Clothing / Equipment
Wagon Ride - Bishop to Laws
Dude Ranch
Nature Education Toys
Japanese Restaurant
Ethnic Foods
Natural Foods
Trader Joe's

Decorating and Furnishings
Ice and Roller Skating
Kitchen and Bath Remodelers
Medical Specialists
Specialty Building Materials
Aircargo Warehouse
Appliances
Home Health Care
Bridal Shop / Formal Wear
Sharpening Services
Indian Goods
Miniture Golf Course
Airplane Maintenance
Comedy Club
Industrial Park w/ incentives
Support for Mammoth Services
Air Service
RV Rentals
Jeep Rentals
Bike Rentals
Tours

ABC 2000

STAKEHOLDERS

City Of Bishop
County of Inyo
Young People
Elderly
Native Americans
Imaca
Imaaa
DWP
BLM
Forest Service
Mammoth Lakes
Mono County
Caltrans
Schools
Historical Preserves
Downtown Merchants
Chamber of Commerce
Trades

Northern Inyo Hospital
Real Estate Co
Law Enforcement
Inyo Council of the Arts
Fishing Community
Media
Health and Social Service Providers
Religious Leaders
Ranchers
Environmental Groups
Service Groups
Hospitality
Lending Institutions
Automotive
Wholesale
Manufacturing
Recreational Operators (packers, RV Parks)
Advocacy Group
Construction Community

ABC/2000

ABC/2000 is pleased to offer to the city of Bishop a "short list" of suggestions that can be undertaken to improve the business climate in the Bishop area. The criteria used in selecting the items were:

1. The list would be no more than a half dozen items.
2. Each suggestion would be relatively simple and non-controversial.
3. All suggestions would be relatively inexpensive.

Most of these suggestions grow out of information supplied by business owners in the downtown area. The "red-curbing" of Main Street has speeded up traffic and made parking less visible. This has had serious effects for some businesses; in some cases the closing of stores.

1. Move all truck through traffic to the center two lanes. This is to provide a greater margin of safety to pedestrians and reduce the apprehension of both cyclists and pedestrians caused by a massive truck rushing past so closely.

2. Replace and, where necessary, relocate all off street parking signs. We recommend all parking signs have the same color, size, and design. The color should not be white letters on a medium green background, as this causes the signs to blend in with all the other Caltrans signs. The recommended wording is any of the following: (a) Public Parking (b) Free Parking (c) Free Public Parking; plus a directional arrow. A field survey should be done to establish locations that provide improved visibility. A few signs are missing and should be re-established.

3. Provide new entry signs at all three entrances to the city. This program has already been started by Jeff Irons and Tina Cochrell. A new design (similar to the Whiskey Creek sign) has already been created. The signs will be two sided, sandblasted redwood, painted, and where possible lighted. Tina already has pledges of contributions for most of the cost for the first sign at the south end of the golf course. Funds will be needed for the other two signs.

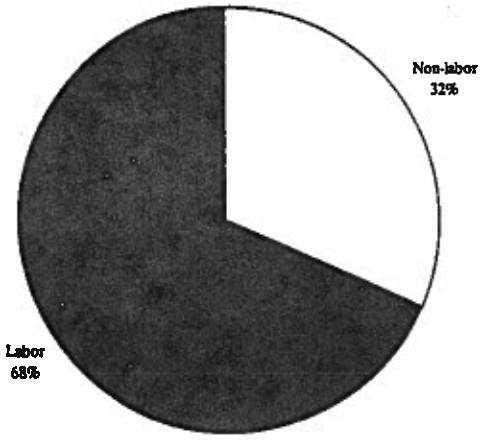
4. A central calendar should be prepared. This calendar should cover the Eastern Sierra, be updatable, be kept on the visitor center computer, be printed at least twice a year, and be readily available to the public (inexpensive printing on tear-off pads). The main purposes are to avoid booking major events on the same weekends and to provide information to the public for planning their activities and vacations. If the Eastern Sierra is featured, funding may be available through C.U.R.E.S.

5. The fountain in front of the visitor center is in need of attention. The fountain is no longer operable. Jim Barnes has a design to replace the fountain with a planter similar to one which will be constructed as part of the kiosk development. This plan involves reducing the size of the fountain to allow better pedestrian circulation in front of the visitor center.

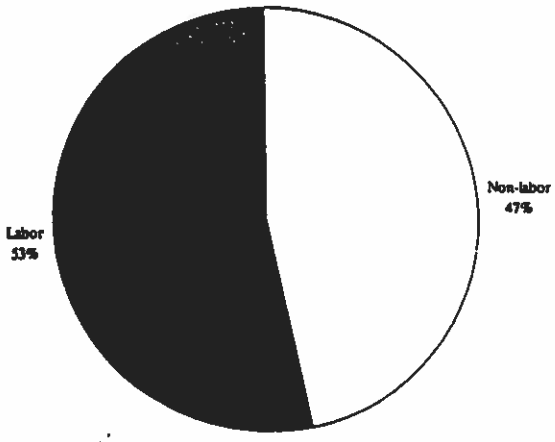
These suggestions, some of which are already underway, will not cure all the problems downtown. However, they are a needed first step to demonstrate the City is serious about facing the problem of downtown revitalization.

ABC/2000
9-22-98

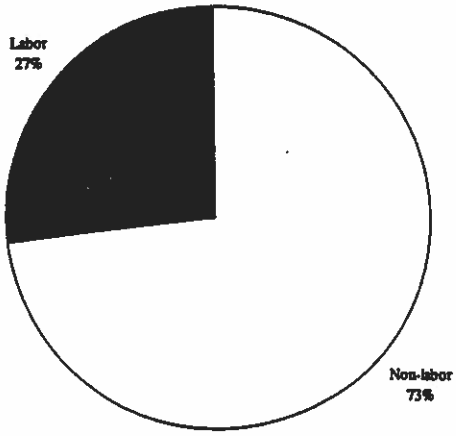
Labor and Non-Labor Income, 1970.



Labor and Non-Labor Income, 1995.



New Income by Type, 1970 to 1995.



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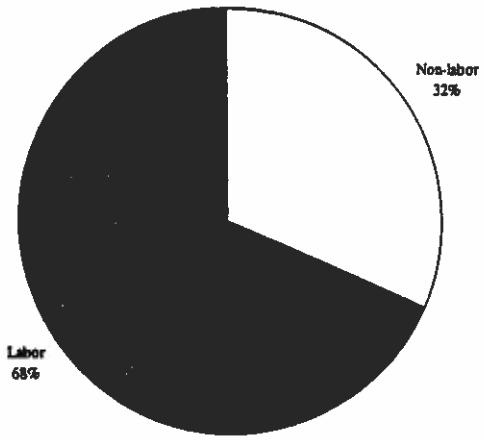

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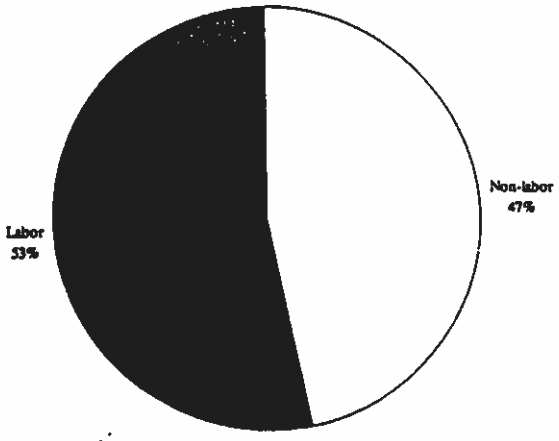

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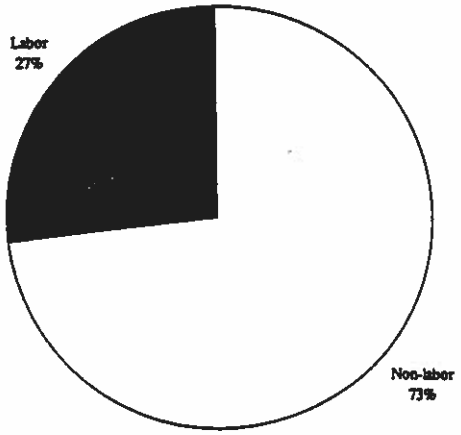


Intrawest Announces Successful Sales of the Timbers

Two-hour sales event nets $10 million in townhome sales

Intrawest took another important step forward last week in Los Angeles with its resort revitalization program for Mammoth Lakes. Aimed squarely at transforming Mammoth into the number one mountain resort community in North America, Intrawest is pleased to announce the successful start of its sales program for the Timbers at Sierra Star. An exclusive residential neighborhood featuring 32 townhomes of the highest quality, the architecturally distinctive homes at the Timbers are located adjacent to the 17 and 18 fairways of the stunning new Sierra Star golf course.

In anticipation of receiving state approval in early October, an exclusive sales event was held on Sept. 24 at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles. There, reservations were taken on 50% of the available fairway homes that were initially released at the Timbers. According to Larry McKee, Intrawest's director of sales, "We are most pleased with the response to our resort revitalization initiatives, given that sale prices for the Timbers far exceeded those ever paid for townhomes in Mammoth." Prices ranged from $750,000-$950,000 at the Timbers. "Our friends in the local brokerage community tell us that in 1998 only four properties sold here in Mammoth at prices north of $600,000, and they were all single-family residences," continued McKee. In two hours, Intrawest sold more homes in this price category than the 1998 year-to-date total.

"Prices at the Timbers compare favorably with those values established at more mature destination-resort communities, such as Vail, Deer Valley, and Beaver Creek. This fact speaks to the vision of Mammoth's true potential as shared by us and the marketplace," commented Intrawest Vice President Dana Severy. "Coupled with our $100 million on-mountain improvement program, construction of the Juniper Springs Lodge, completion of the 18-hole championship golf course, and other village building efforts, the Timbers represents another important step in the transformation of Mammoth. The renaissance continues," added Severy. *MT*

Letter to the Editor WST 9-2-98

An Environment for Sale

Ever since the 1969 Union Oil platform blowout in the Pacific Ocean off of Santa Barbara, that community has been considered at the forefront of the environmental movement.

Your Aug. 12 article "Ruling Gives Governments the Power to Use 'Slapp'" gives the impression that such is still the case. The unfortunate truth is that the environment is for sale in Santa Barbara County. The beneficiary of the proceeds from this '90s style free market is the county bureaucracy.

The Mission Oaks affair is one of a few showcase roadblocks to the "desecration" of treasured sylvan ranch lands and the ambiance they provide.

Ostensibly, the county does everything in its power to preserve remaining agricultural acreage. In actuality, if a proposed land use does not result in substantial booty for the coffers of the bureaucracy, that use meets resistance that is virtually insurmountable.

However, if a project will nurture the burgeoning civil service, obstacles magically transform into support and assistance.

This is especially the situation along the fragile coastal zone. While all local politicians cite the agricultural lands of Santa Barbara County as something to be preserved, massive, highly taxed petroleum-facility eyesores that pollute the air and land are found to be compatible in the agricultural setting. Additionally, an enormous landfill that was scheduled to be closed is located virtually adjacent to the sandy beaches of the scenic and rural Gaviota Coast. Regardless of the poisoning of the ground water and of the nearby waters of the Pacific Ocean, the income for the county bureaucracy is enough to justify not only an extension of the life of the dump but an enlargement as well.

On the other hand, in an effort to enhance the economic viability of their ranches, the agriculturists recently requested a single residence on their property in addition to the now permitted principal home. In an assault on the agriculturist "for the sake of agriculture," the bureaucrats cited growth and density as reasons for denial.

It matters not that the affected ranches are at least 40 acres, and more often than not 100 acres and larger. Nor does it seem to make any difference that similar additional residences were recently permitted on other county properties as small as one acre. Neighboring San Luis Obispo County permits such additional residences, but they sincerely wish to preserve and encourage agriculture.

As for the Mission Oaks property, absent another income source from the land, growing range grass and grazing cattle results in a money-losing enterprise.

Instead of development that may have preserved some semblance of a rural environment, something else will take its place. If that "something" is anything similar to the tax-revenue-producing projects that have found approval recently, perhaps we'll see a development of several thousand small-home sites; perhaps a state-of-the-art oil facility; perhaps a brand new landfill.

JEFF KRUTHERS

Gaviota

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL/CALIFORNIA welcomes your comments—by mail, electronic mail, phone or fax. Letters should be addressed to Rick Wartzman, Editor, 6500 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1500, Los Angeles, Calif. 90048. The phone number is 323-658-6464; the fax number is 323-651-9305; the E-mail address is wsjca@news.wsj.com

Is this the image the town wants?

This past weekend we enjoyed staying at the Matlick House Bed & Breakfast of U.S. 395 at Rowan Lane. However, we were appalled to see a Kragen's Auto Parts store right smack in front of this beautiful house. One of the reasons we chose to stay here was the fact that we saw this quaint house many times while driving by on our frequent trips from Orange to the hiking and skiing areas around Bishop and Mammoth Lakes. Now it is hidden behind a commercial building that could have been located anywhere.

We are led to believe from this decision that the image desired by the city and/or county is for Bishop to be a huge pit stop for those traveling between Los Angeles and Mammoth Lakes/June Lake. Is this what you really want? We have always liked Bishop for its quaintness and its beautiful mountain scenery. If you continue to spoil this by covering up historical charm with ugly buildings, you may find that people will choose to spend their time and money somewhere else.

Take a closer look at what you have in Bishop, and don't ruin it.

Paula and Richard Clement,
Orange

tive activities to our youth. While educational classes are an important element in communicating basic information, how many kids really listen to the repetitive presentations made in our schools? Obviously, not many — or not enough — based on the findings presented to the county supervisors.

I suggest that we stir up our city and county offices. Ask for accountability. These officials are paid 365 days a year. We should expect to see our park facilities open and functioning 365 days a year. There should be youth-oriented activities offered every week. Field trips, swimming, ice-skating, tennis lessons, cooking classes, computer classes. Why *don't* we offer these opportunities to our kids? Our tax dollars deserve a better return on the investment. And it is possible. Just look at communities such as Minden, South Lake Tahoe or Fort Collins, Colo. You would be amazed at what the children and young adults are offered in communities of similar size and make-up to Inyo County. What would it take to turn Inyo County into a youth-oriented community instead of a one that turns its back on the smoking and drinking issues that endanger their futures?

Our children are our greatest asset. Do we really have an option, but to offer them an alternative to smoking and drinking?

Katherine Kamei,
Bishop

9-10-98

Letters to the

We must not give up on our youth

Do we really want to give up on our kids

I must say, Mr. Dorame's response to th recent presentation of the County Healt Department's anti-smoking campaign b Gail Zwier to the Inyo County Supervisor echoes of truth .... "you are going to fight t the death." Those in today's health care env ronment know just how accurate this predic tion is. Smokers suffer and they die horribl deaths. But I, for one, am not content to giv up this important battle so easily.

I have witnessed numerous incidences c teens and pre-teens purchasing cigarettes i Inyo County businesses. Think about it Where else would he be buying them? It i obvious that these *children* are not travelin out of the *county* to make their purchases While in some instances it may be teen clerk allowing this practice, in most cases observed an older adult at the register. I wil refrain from listing the businesses, bu believe me, it is tempting to point my finge at the guilty parties. I wonder if the count sheriff or local police department would b willing to arrest these business operators fo breaking the law? It seems to me that the rea problem exists with the *adults* in our com munity. And I take equal responsibility fo this. After all, why didn't I pick up the phon and report them?

I do not have a magic answer to bringing home the message that smoking and drinking kill, but I do believe that this type of educa tion must begin and be re-enforced at home in our own community. Perhaps some county dollars could be used to offer teens and pre-teens opportunities to participate in positive group activities. Perhaps the local Parks Department could broaden its community role and offer outings and activities *all year* rather than the short, three months of summer.

For example, Bishop is the home of a beautiful swimming complex — that is closed for nine months of the year. Other colder, northern communities offer year-round swimming. Believe me, kids that work out daily and swim competitively *do not smoke*. They are happy, healthy kids and set a wonderful example for their peers. Parents participate in the activities and the family unit strengthens. Bishop Swim Team is growing in size every year because of the positive nature of healthy, athletic competition. But it is limited to the summer months because the pool is closed nine months out of the year. A pool complex should offer year-round opportunities to young and old alike, including the seniors. The Bishop pool is under-utilized.

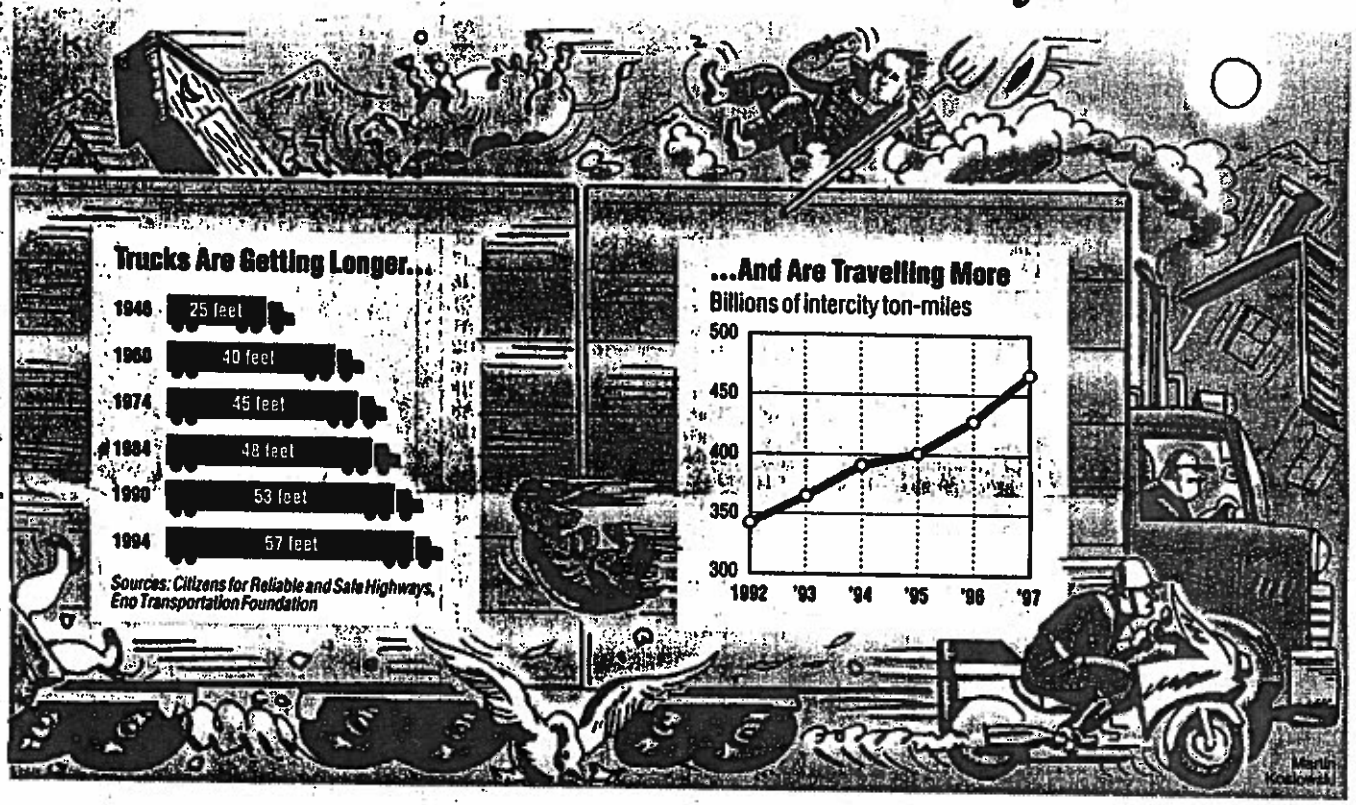
War Is Declared as Giant Trucks Invade Tiny Towns

By Daniel Machalaba
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

WOODSTOCK, Vt.—Patrolman Rob Ellis sits behind the wheel of his Chevy Blazer and waits for the violator. Lights flashing and horn blaring, his police cruiser catches up to the suspect a couple of miles outside of town. But instead of drawing his gun, Patrolman Ellis pulls out his measuring tape.

The culprit: a tractor-trailer truck. Patrolman Ellis determines that the truck's trailer is five feet over the 48-foot maximum length allowed for this stretch of road. He hands the driver a $300 ticket.

Welcome to Woodstock, rich in history, replete with charming attractions (village green and covered bridge among them) and now at the forefront of an escalating road war. Facing an onslaught of ever-larger and more frequent trucks that are clogging roads and disrupting village life, Woodstock is fighting back.



The road war is spreading throughout small-town America. Not only has the number of trucks ballooned to an all-time high in this booming economy, but the rigs have gotten longer, heavier and faster. More important to places like Woodstock, truckers are increasingly taking alternate small-town routes to shorten their trips and avoid tolls and inspection stations on main highways. The truck invasion couldn't come at a worse time for many villages, which are trying to spruce up their main streets and don't want the noise, dirt and danger big trucks bring.

Woodstock has been able to strike back because the Vermont Transportation Department considers very long trucks a safety hazard on narrow, curvy Route 4, where the rigs frequently cross the center line and threaten oncoming traffic. Last spring, state legislators boosted fines and allotted $25,000 to towns for enforcement.

The crackdown infuriates truckers, who worry they will be cut off from the most direct routes or have to give up the larger, more modern trucking rigs. Already they are getting on their CB radios to warn other truckers or are riding through some towns at night to avoid detection.

"It's a crock, but what can you do about it? It's all part of the game," said Robert Bradley, a driver for Ward Trucking, Altoona, Pa., after he was ticketed for driving a 53-foot trailer through Woodstock. Patrolman Ellis, who issued the ticket, says he sees more trucks traveling in groups lately, allowing some to slip through when police pull over others.

In Sterling, Va., residents called police to ticket trucks that speed on back roads through settled areas when main roads get clogged with traffic. California's truck-speeding citations have increased 33% in the past two years, and New Jersey is trying to pass laws to keep most truck traffic on major divided highways.

Residents of some towns are pleading with truckers to take different routes. So many big trucks are using the road through Skaneateles, N.Y., a lakeside resort town, as a short cut that resident Mac McCarthy now spends hours on the CB radio talking to the drivers: "Hey, good buddy, what brings you to Skaneateles? Why aren't you on the big road?"

Mr. McCarthy and other residents also are meeting with local companies that use trucks. During one lunch meeting at the Sherwood Inn in Skaneateles, passing trucks repeatedly drowned out their pleas. Residents persuaded state and local officials to start inspecting and detaining trucks for safety violations. So far, the jawboning and extra enforcement have cut truck traffic by a third, Mr. McCarthy says.

Townspeople elsewhere are sometimes taking matters into their own hands. In southeastern Arizona, trucks keep speeding on two-lane Route 82, even though state

Please Turn to Page B4, Column 6

for establishing programs, strategies and actions that will be required to accomplish the City's overall objectives. Each element will focus on the key current issues relating to economic development and Bishop's community character.

This General Plan is intended to become a more usable/readable document that the City can use to help guide development and establish essential planning programs. Many components of the document will offer implementation actions that can be accomplished throughout the 20 year planning horizon. Although the document is comprehensive in scope, containing all required elements, it is essentially a streamlined general plan, focusing on the essential information that the City needs in order to respond to current and emerging issues in the most cost effective way possible.

I. VISION STATEMENT

"The City of Bishop is composed of the people who reside here, their homes, places of employment, community institutions and places to spend their leisure time. The Bishop area is blessed with many important natural resources and assets worthy of protection, including the unpolluted waters of the Owens River, Bishop Creek, and various canals; the relatively clear and unpolluted air; abundant trees; productive soils and magnificent views of the Sierra Nevada and White Mountains. Together, these things make Bishop one of the most unique and desirable communities in California. Through time, the people, uses of land and the environment have evolved a harmonious relationship, giving the community its present pattern and form. Maintenance of a harmonious relationship between the people, use of land and environment, while accommodating change, is a goal of the Bishop General Plan. Future growth is to be accommodated by development of vacant land areas, modest expansion of the developed area of the City, and an emphasis on strategically important revitalization while maintaining the general pattern of activities and land uses. The City of Bishop should remain the primary commercial, service, and employment center of the area and region. As such, the City expects to continue as a quality living environment for its attractiveness to the vacationing public as well." (Updated from the 1984 General Plan Amendment.)

The above Vision Statement has been adapted from the preceding General Plan and is relevant for this update as well. It is the intent of this General Plan Update to maintain the overriding vision by addressing critical City issues. These issues are related to achieving a satisfactory level of economic prosperity and to expand the market potential of the City.

Key Issues of Concern to the City of Bishop

The key issues that dominate this update of the General Plan are:

- **Maintaining the rural integrity of Bishop** — It is essential that the overall integrity of the City of Bishop is maintained throughout the planning period while accommodating new economic opportunities. A delicate balance must be achieved between growth and the quality of life.

- **Stimulating and capitalizing on the tourist/recreation/convention industry recognizing the natural environment as the greatest asset the City has to offer** — The preservation and enhancement of the natural environment remains a high priority and the General Plan will identify key tourist/recreational activities that can be employed to diversify the industry. In addition, emphasis will be placed on providing a multi-purpose Community Center.

- **Maintaining the character and enhancing the economic strength of the downtown commercial corridor is critical** — Circulation in Bishop is centered around U.S. 395, which is the major business corridor of the City. As traffic volumes increase, it is essential to plan for solutions to increasing congestion. A Corridor Study is proposed to be prepared in order to assure the long term success of the downtown core.

- **The City needs to provide for the State mandated housing programs and help initiate new and/or revitalized housing opportunities** — The City needs to provide additional housing opportunities, with an emphasis on "affordable" housing. Cooperation with the LADWP is essential for the development of land within Bishop, as much of the land in the City is owned by the agency.

- **The City needs to create new jobs and increase the opportunity for industrial/institutional development. Educational opportunities are seen as a high priority** — Diversification of the local economy is essential to assure the long term stability of the economic climate in Bishop and the area. Many educational opportunities in which the local environment lends unique opportunities may be incorporated into the City, including geology, soils, recreation, archeology, etc.

- **The City needs to establish a comprehensive funding mechanism for capital improvements and city-wide revitalization** — The City Redevelopment Agency could provide for an additional mechanism for implementation of needed facilities and public improvement projects, as well as funding for needed physical cosmetic improvements (streetscapes, architectural, etc.) if a Redevelopment Plan and Project Area are developed and implemented.

Each element of the General Plan will focus on these overriding concerns and identify specific programs, strategies, and actions that may be employed to assure the realization of these goals.

READ FOR YOUR LAUGH OF THE DAY

Down town Bishop is A HAS BEEN

If your ORGANIZATION wants to do some-thing usefull, forget the MURALS, AND Concentrate on getting A BY-PASS AROUND Bishop for the 80% of Traffic that does NO Stop in Town (Estimate), but only use MAIN Street to reach there distination A head. Those who wish or need to stop will come into Town!

Put PARKING BACK on MAIN Street from one End to the other. Locals Hate to come up town because of the Congestion

Let the People PARK, Shop, WALK, TALK, And Enjoy our MAIN Street with out ANY "Trucks" And the Steady flow of Traffic that Jams our Town.

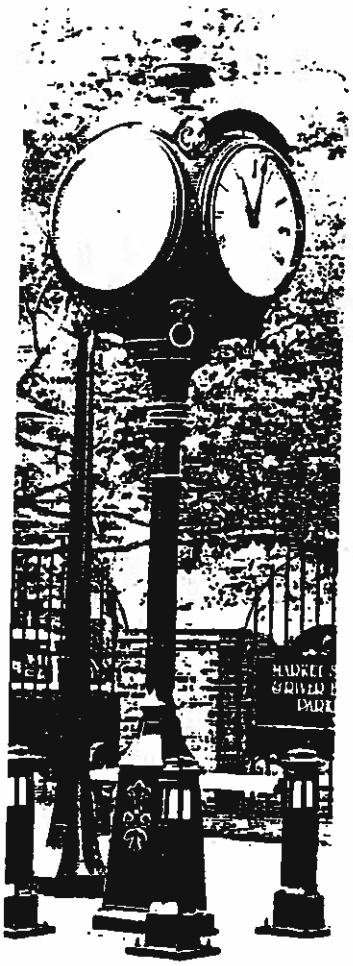
"FOOD FOR THOUGHT"

REMEMBER the Good old DAYS people WALKed MAIN Street Moments let there CHILDREN off in front of Theatre, etc. And

P.S. THE PLANNING COMMISSION HAS TUNNEL VISION, OR they would try And do Something to Revive our OLD TIME MAIN Street. (I've HAD my SAY BISHOP) THE NEXT THING BISHOP will try to do is Annex THE is messed that HAVE HAD to forsight to move Away from BECAUSE they ARE Loosing out on the mighty Dollar (WANNA BET) SR.

AS TIME GOES BY

Whether used as a dramatic focal point, or to create a new community gathering place, a Verdin streetclock enhances cherished traditions and withstands the test of time.



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SINCE 1842

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444 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Builder of fine clocks, bells, and carillons

What is the Main Street program, anyway?

THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM is a comprehensive, incremental, self-help process for revitalizing historic and traditional commercial buildings. It works in communities of all sizes and economic conditions and in all parts of the country. The program is based on principles of self-determination and direct, inclusive community participation in the revitalization process. Communities can participate in the program through a formal selection process, or they can adopt the Main Street approach independently.

The program began in the mid-1970s as a three-year, three-town demonstration project of the National Trust's Midwest Regional Office. Concerned about the deterioration of historic commercial buildings, the National Trust launched the Main Street Project to explore the reasons downtowns were declining and to examine what sorts of remedies worked—and didn't. The Trust put full-time managers in each of the three towns to serve as downtown advocates and to coordinate the process of rehabilitating buildings, identifying economic oppor-

WHAT HAPPENED TO MAIN STREET?

WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, Main Street's problems are the byproducts of profound changes in the retailing industry over the past four decades—changes which are, in turn, the result of changes in transportation and land-use patterns and of commercial overbuilding on an unprecedented scale. Fueled by the passage of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, by development-friendly tax policies, by municipal hunger for new revenue-generating commercial property, and by the leveraged buyouts and takeovers of department store conglomerates, construction of commercial real estate development has soared. The amount of commercial space in the United States has more than quadrupled since 1960.

But consumer buying power didn't increase at anything close to that rate. Between 1980 and 1990, in fact, retail sales inched up 8 percent while total retail space soared by 40 percent. The new commercial space, which arrived in the form of both shopping centers and discount superstores, simply displaced sales—and jobs—from one place (Main Street) to another (the strip).

Main Street merchants had never needed to organize against such a threat. Throughout the nation, they were caught off-guard by the merchandising muscle of the chain stores that populated the malls—and Main Street's cycle of disinvestment began. As sales leeched away from downtown to the strip, Main Street businesses folded. With fewer businesses, downtown property owners had less rental income with which to maintain their buildings, and Main Street started looking shabby. With Main Street looking shabby, the tenants it attracted were too often undercapitalized and poorly managed. Main Street's economic base gradually eroded—and many people doubted it could ever recover.

Changes in transportation—from horses to streetcars to automobiles—have had a profound effect on retail patterns and on the economic health of America's historic commercial districts.

Dear Bishop Revitalization Committee: ABC 2000

I was pleased to hear of the special group looking into ways to revitalize the Bishop community. Having grown up in this Valley & spending part of every year here I care deeply about its future. I am glad too that you welcome feedback and would like to share my thoughts from my own professional experiences as well as from being a Bishopite for so long.

I'm delighted to see the recent efforts to improve the look of the town. The western storefronts, the little gardens, the planters along Main St. are all welcome additions! The murals are great-I hope we see more (the library wall would be a natural for a Native American heritage mural). We're moving in the right direction but have a ways to go. Regarding decrease in business since the parking was eliminated from Main St. I think we can't look back-it was a good decision but change always takes getting used to. The real problem runs much deeper than that. There is no longer the loyalty to local business owners that was present when I grew up here. So that must be re--cultivated. Through more stories in the local paper on local owned shops. Through more outreach activities & listening to what people want. I've observed in successful downtowns there is a lot of activity going on. Some things to consider: frequent sidewalk sales that draw attention perhaps on a Saturday, outdoor tables from some of the cafe's (Pyrenees, Joseph's Deli) to get life back on the street, & maybe a couple of vendor carts (in the City many offer Italian sodas, perhaps a flower cart sponsored by Zee's). I feel the move to have numerous fast food places was the turning point for Bishop. They are for the most part unattractive, gaudy & look like every other American drive though town. Now I think we have to counteract that through more scenic & attractive displays. Mammoth requires a certain look of even their fast food places-Bishop needs to do this as well. These franchises make a tidy profit off locals & travelers. So many of the local activities are held way out at the fairgrounds. A number of them could be brought back downtown, including the farmers market., & the fish derby. You are sending a message--downtown is not where the hub of activity is-that needed to be changed! The Street between Joseph's & Zee's was the site of street dances & bar-b-ques. for years. It should be again. Parking is plentiful nearby. It'd be a great locale for a Saturday open market for crafts, Indian jewelry, artists. Too often we hold events & ask big booth fees. Our community groups & struggling craftspeople can't participate because of this. Let's make the fees more reasonable or have a work option-you set up tables, put out signs & no fee. We have a wealth of talented folks here with worthwhile wares. Believe me. I've talked to thousands of people who've gone through Bishop & don't even remember the town, except maybe for Schat's bakery. That's sad!

We have a great thing in Laws but it's out of the way so we need to do more to entice folks to go out there. We need to set up a dynamite display that intrigues people to go visit. Something prominent in a store window, & a teaser at the Chamber building. A lot of energies go into Mule Days & there is a lot of resentment about that in the town folk. We are a lot more than one event. The history here, the Native American culture, the pioneer heritage is rich not to mention the unbelievable scenic & natural treasures. There has begin to be a separateness between the Native American cultural activities & the rest of the town. We need to find ways to come together for the good of the whole community. A mural would be a good first step. More signage for the Indian museum a 2nd.

We need more open dialogue between the community & the Chamber. Everyday I'm on the Street there's a wealth of ideas. We can't lock ourselves away in business meetings. Have suggestion boxes everywhere-the library, stores. The people here care deeply about their town. That is such a plus.

Regarding trucks barreling through town-that's an easy one. Reduce the speed & enforce it. Or make one lane the truck lane(perhaps the middle lane away from sidewalks & children riding bikes).

In Santa Fe,New Mexico a popular program is to have businesses & civic groups adopt an island or part of the downtown roadways that they keep up, plant flowers,etc. We could use our civic groups much more to our full advantage. Old time streets lights are becoming a welcome fixture in most rennovated downtowns. They add style & character to the towns. Another successful idea that Bishop has done a little of is to advertise & promote donation projects. As our old--timers are diminishing many of us would like to remember them not just with flowers but with something tangible to say their life here meant something. We should have a whole array of offerings people could donate towards to remember loved ones. Such as $100. for a planter with a plaque or $200. for a wooden or wrought iron bench with a little nameplate. Some towns do brick paths with inscriptions. Each brick noting the person the donation was commemorating. The local garden clubs could offer suggestionsof places needing a lift (such as the Von's parking lot area--badly in need of trees & planters) We need to be very aware of eyesores--the empty rock pond in front of the Chamber makes it looks deserted & closed up. There should always be plants or other decoration there! We have talented artists that could be commissioned to create sculptures around the town. There has been in the past some resistance to artistic endeavors such as this but this is often because we tried to be something we are not. We are a town of pioneer & native American History. Sculptures should depict that. Not reflect ultra-modern Los Angeles.

Volunteerism is alive & well in the Inyo Valley & one of our best resources but we could build an even stronger force. We need to have more outlets for our young people to contribute to the town's well--being. Seeking out their input & talents. We should ask the local papers to have continuing volunteer columns--for both short & long term projects. New people to the area or recent retirees have to dig around to find outlets for their talents. Lets make it easy! And volunteer recognition is very important-we should have displays around town honoring volunteers for their hard work.

In Santa Fe during the summer every night something is going on in the main plaza--on the entertainment stage. We need to take advantage of all the talent we have in town to provide interesting entertainment. From church choirs who could do a night of gospel to young band members & barbershop quartets. We could add onto the summer concerts. Make the park stage a gathering place. Perhaps have some small fee donated to the groups to offset their expenses. We put toomany of our eggs in one basket & make a frenzy of activity for say Mule Days & not enough the rest of the year(most local people say they don't go near downtown that week-end).We could have garden tours of the Valley's best gardens with a donation to go to a local Charity. Building on the little history tour brochure, we could add more support to this effort. People are not interested in a town of fast food places-they are interested in that old time actor "Cookie" ate in the Bishop Grill, that Humphrey Bogart fished here,etc. We have so much to be boasting about.

We are in crisis in so many local businesses going under. It will reach the point where no one will be brave enough to venture to go into business. To change this we must re-educate people about how supporting local businesses in turn supports the town. The local t.v. station and newspaper are two outlets for this. But it must be done in the right way. We must acknowledge--yes the local businesses have to charge a little more than the chain stores but here's why(shipping,handling). The younger generations especially don't even realize why its important to support the local businesses over the big franchises. We must also help the locals give the best product. A few of the smaller markets have neglected some of their departments. They need to be encouraged to have suggestion boxes, to repond to customers.

Focusing on our locals re--investing in their community we need to revive Homecoming week--end. It was a sacred celebration for the townspeople & should be again , not the neglected step--sister of Mule Days(it also is great for visitors who don't want the crowds of Mule Days but like folksy events. During one Labor Day week--end a poem was sentto the Inyo Register honoring the old time cowboys & it was returned with a note-"we don't print poetry". This is not what we need from our local newspaper. There is seldom a story on some of the old timers here & their contrib--ution to the Valley's history-now it's too late for many of them. The alblum did a great job but that's not enough. We need to ask our newspapers to be a partner in revitalizing our community. Some of the obituaries barely mention the folks who have spent 50--60 years of their life here. We are missing their stories, their legacy. Our Indian elders have wonderful stories to tell-they should be in these town newspapers before they too are gone.

This has been lengthy but I do hope some of the ideas can be util-ized. I am saddened to hear how so many locals are losing pride & faith in their town but it's not too late to turn it around. Some good strides have been made. For instance our library has tried to update its outreach programs(such as tax assistance & storytime)-it could be utilized even more for historical displays,volunteer boards,etc.

I wish you great success! We have so much to offer here in this wonderful Valley!

Sincerely,

J.L. Butler
(873-4719)

P.S. Another area that really needs to be addressed is coming into the modern age in our attitude towards re-cycling & re--use of materials. Visitors pay attention to whether an effort is made to re-cycle at special events & cafe's,etc. We have the most to lose if we stay behind in this area. We need a place where locals can drop off old doors,bricks, etc. & they can be put to use by others & non--profit groups.All the empty semi's that leave Bishop could get a tax break by hauling news-paper & cardboard re=cycles(the monies donated to non--profits or if not proceeds kept by truck companies) (cont'd) →

My Historic Vision for the Owens Valley - Northern Inyo County

To stay pace with the next century, the Owens Valley needs to fill two voids that exist today. It needs to have a series of bike paths or trails that connect various recreation and historic sites. Today we have neither historic landmarks that are identified and interpreted to the visiting public nor a system of bike trails that take advantage of the green, open spaces that surround Bishop and showcase the museums and historic spots that make this valley so special. These bike paths could be used by both local residents to access the main part of town and be enjoyed by visitors for a unique, special activity that tells them the story of northern Inyo County while they experience the grandeur and peace that are implicit in our community's scenery.

Specifically, both at the south entrance to Bishop, on the east side of the Highway 395 and to the north of Bishop on the west side of Highway 6, we need to set aside acreage, at least 10 acres at each spot, for a visitor center, at the south, and a Heritage Square type of historic park at the north end of town.

A possible site at the north end of town along Highway 6 would complement the Laws Railroad Museum. It could be sited at what locals know as the Williams Ranch on DWP land just east of the highway. The bungalow ranch house that sites abandonned there today could be interepreted to show how ranching and self-sustained living occured in this valley 100 years ago. An old barn still stands next to a silo, all three buildings could be renovated and used for agriculture as practiced in the early 1900s.

At the south end of town, a visitor center and train station would greet the visitor from the south land. A train station could be built there. Visitors could board a narrow gauge railroad that would take them to the Laws Railroad Museum. The track still exists that leads to Laws.

Also, a bike trail that winds along the canal at the east of Bishop could lead to Laws, and then cross the highway to pass the Williams Ranch site and then lead westerly to reach Mill Pond. It could then circle back to town along West Line Street and pass by the Piaute-Shoshone Cultural Center. Somewhere it would cross Bishop Creek, where cyclists getting hot could plunge quickly into the creek before stopping at the Izack Walton Park for a break.

Would people remember/cherish and repeat that experience? Tourists would love this. Thinking and planning ahead, let us earmark lands in the general plan update for such treats.

Emily Martin