

For Immediate Release

Contacts: Jennifer Northam, Downtown Walla Walla Foundation – 529-8755

Dick Fondahn, Valley Transit – 525-9140

Barbara Clark, Jury Chair – 522-0399

Blake Bural, Winning Designer, Spokane – (509) 499-6992

Walla Walla Market Station Design Competition Finalist Announced

Valley Transit and the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation are pleased to announce the submission by Blake Bural of Spokane as the winning entrant in the Walla Walla Market Station Design Competition.

The competition Jury found this design had the most appropriate building design and orientation for downtown.

“The design has a strong urban edge, continuing the urban enclosure on three streets with functional buildings, and includes possibilities for retail activity and upper level residential development, which provide the opportunity for public-private development partnerships,” notes from the jury read.

Members of the Design Competition Jury included representatives from Valley Transit, the Walla Walla Valley Farmers Market Association, the City, and the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, plus a local property owner/architect/designer, a Whitman & Walla Walla Community College art professor, a Washington State University architecture professor, and a Portland-area urban designer.

The design competition was a partnership between the City, the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, Walla Walla Valley Farmers Market Association, and Valley Transit in an effort to solicit creative, extraordinary design ideas to replace the existing transit facility at 4th & Main. Entrants were urged to consider all current and possible uses of the location, especially the Farmers Market.

Over 30 architects and urban designers initially registered for the competition; 16 entries were received. Three semi-finalists and four honorable mention recipients were selected from these entries, and were invited to resubmit designs based on comments from the jury. Three entrants chose to submit updated designs.

The rules of the design competition make it clear that the partners are not required to use the winning design for the eventual Market Station. If this design is pursued, the jury suggests elimination of the easternmost module of the Main Street building and the ramp in order to provide a more visible, inviting, and less cluttered entrance to the interior market site/parking lot and inclusion of landscaping for the parking/market plaza area.

All of the submitted designs are now the property of Valley Transit and the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, and the final design that is actually built could use parts and pieces of each of the designs, if the community so chooses. “This space will serve Walla Walla,” said Dick Fondahn, Valley Transit General Manager. “The elements most attractive to the community are the elements we will work the hardest to incorporate.”

The design competition was funded by a grant from the Washington State Rural Mobility program. No funding currently exists for new construction at the site. Hopefully that will come from a combination of federal and state grants, with possible contributions by the City and the taxpayers of Walla Walla.

Downtown Walla Walla Foundation President Larry Nelson expresses his satisfaction with the competition: “This competition has been a new kind of undertaking for the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation. We are pleased with design competitions as a way to explore many possibilities for our Downtown. The Foundation is ready to be a partner with Valley Transit, the Walla Walla Valley Farmers Market and the City of Walla Walla to move this project to bricks and mortar.”

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