

Program Narrative

Downtown Camas is recognized as the cultural anchor of a well- balanced, thriving community. It is the central gathering place and heart of Camas. A mix of small town charm, community activities and big city economics has established downtown as a “first choice” destination. Vibrant community events bring thousands of citizens and visitors to the downtown core where there is persistent interest in the history that makes Camas so appealing.

The Downtown Camas Association (DCA) proposes to work with the Clark County Historic Society, Two Rivers Heritage Museum, the City of Camas and others to design and install 4 interpretive panels to meet this curiosity. The DCA has been discussing the need for easily accessible historic information on downtown panels for many years and is excited for what this would bring to our town and East County.

As Camas’s population grows, the DCA is actively working to connect long time, generational families with new residents. Building a sense of place and communicating why our heritage helps define the culture of Camas is primary to our mission.

The mission of the Downtown Camas Association is to develop and promote historic Downtown Camas by creating a vibrant social, cultural and economic center of the community while emphasizing preservation of our city’s historic features.

The four panel topics are:

1. **Our Founders:** Generations of Chinookan and Klickitat people lived in the area, thriving on abundant salmon, elk and Camas lily bulbs from which the original name of LaCamas was derived. Henry Pittock’s 1883 purchase of 2600 acres to build a paper mill serving his needs for the Oregonian newspaper, fathered the development of a surrounding town, now called Camas.
2. **Early Merchants:** The growing population, mostly employed by the mill operations, were a fertile customer base for entrepreneurs such as Charles and Rose Farrell, Anna Roffler Eddy, Emerson Runyan and others. Their influence extended beyond business, into community service and strong civic leadership for generations.
3. **Visionaries:** Camas has been fortunate to have citizens that possessed dreams of the future for our city and executed planning activities at critical points in its growth. 1960’s “Operation 4-Sight”, led by Hal Zimmerman and Glenn Farrell created the charming downtown core of today’s Camas; Mayor Nan Henriksen led the growth of the city limits and recruitment of important new industries; Architect John Roffler’s 200 + homes, some of which are iconic landmarks today.
4. **The Culture of Camas:** A long tradition of appreciating education and community pride began, in part, with the paper mill’s need for educated employees who in turn valued the same for their children. The Women’s Civic Improvement Club of the tight knit town supported investment in an early library that begat today’s library, one of the best in the state. Other examples of community service and notable citizens will be featured.

The DCA will develop the content and layout through contractors, staff and DCA Design Committee members. The City of Camas will provide installation services.

We are grateful for the opportunity to apply for this grant and would be thrilled to be able to execute this project for our community. If you have any questions, please call Carrie Schulstad at 360-904-0218.

Thank you!