

THE CO-OP BAKERY CAFÉ- 405 E Holly St.



The Co-op Bakery Café is recognized for the Mayor's City Center Awards for its adaptive reuse of an existing building, expanding an existing downtown business and bringing vitality and activity to the streetscape.

The Bellingham Community Food Co-op took on a difficult task in renovating the building that now houses their Co-op Bakery Café. Formerly Hawley's Auto Parts Store, the building posed a renovation challenge as it had been constructed incrementally between the 1930's and the 1970's as four different buildings - on three different levels.

Jim Ashby, Co-op General Manager, said it took creative thinking to configure the layout of the Co-op Bakery Café, which includes a bakery, café, offices, an outdoor patio, meeting room and classroom.

Ashby said that because the Co-op is a destination store, people come from a long way to shop there. Co-op members wanted to keep the store downtown, but still wanted to be able to compete

with similar stores, and to do so meant that parking would need to be accommodated. Co-op leaders prefer to reuse buildings rather than

tear them down, and began looking for a location near their existing store. When the owners of the Hawley's building were willing to sell, the Co-op jumped at the opportunity and after consulting with Pearson Construction and RMC Architects, decided to purchase the building to expand their business.

The Co-op Bakery Café opened in July 2015, and since that time has brought new life to what was previously a neglected corner with an outdoor patio, beautiful landscaping, and classes in the Community Connections section of the building.

The new location provided more space for the production bakery, as the previous location was overcrowded. Relocating the classroom provided the opportunity to expand the parking lot at the Cordata Co-op and moving the

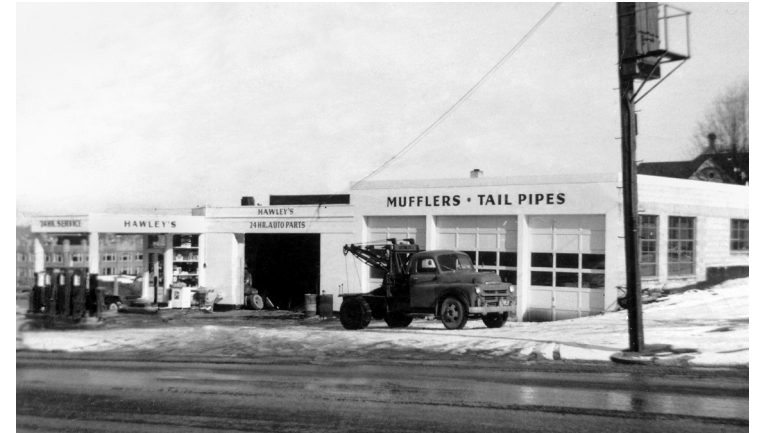


Photo courtesy of the Whatcom Museum

offices to this location also allowed the Cordata Co-op to have better seating for their deli.

"After the board deliberated and we did some outreach to our members," Jim Ashby said. "The idea was that we were going to be doing something that would create activity on this corner as opposed to just having a production facility."

