

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Des Plaines, Illinois

Prepared for the **City of Des Plaines**

by:

THE LAKOTA GROUP
LAURIE MARSTON, AICP

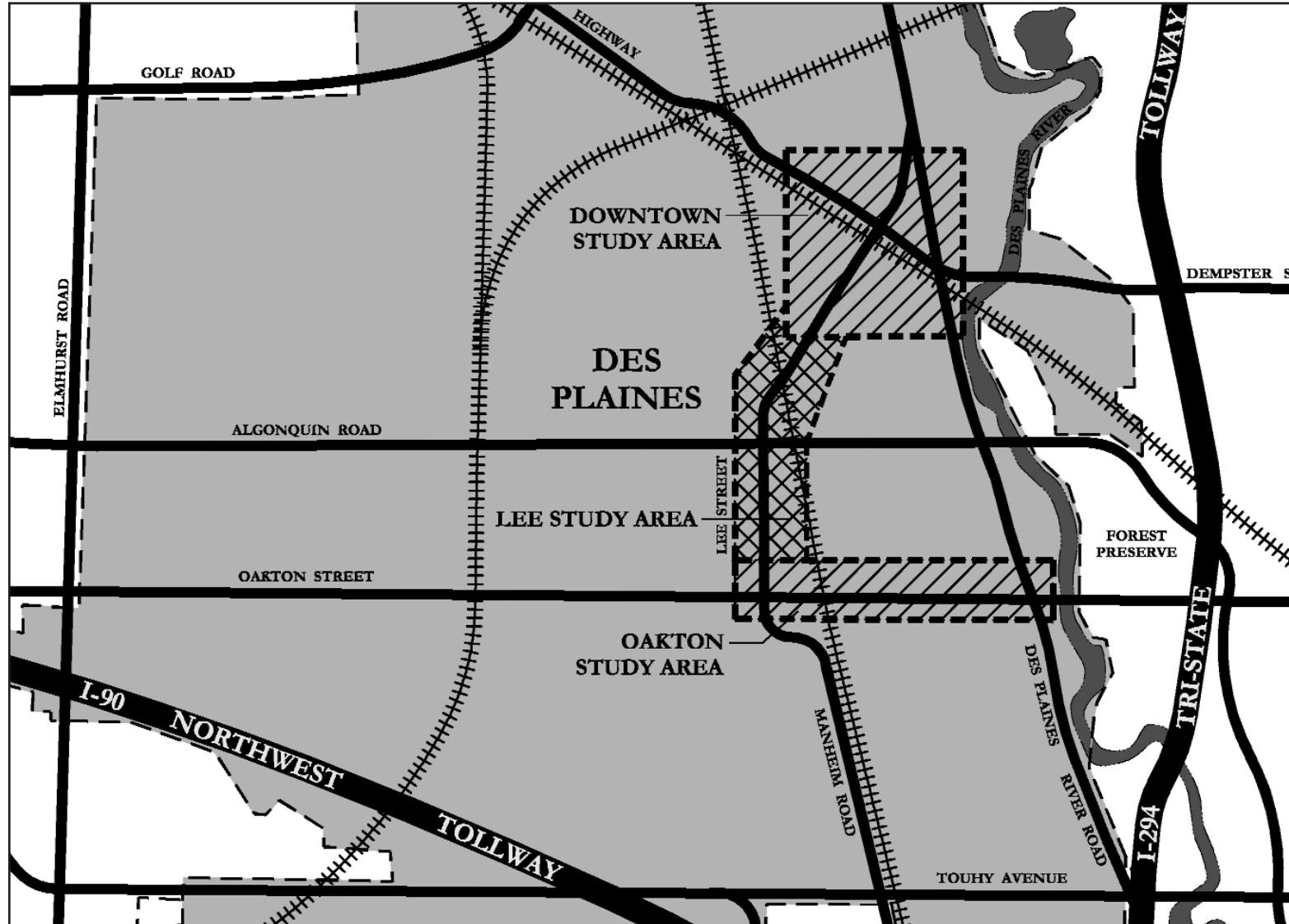
March 2005

Section 1: Introduction

Business District Design Guidelines

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BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES



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The design guidelines were prepared by The Lakota Group with assistance from Laurie Marston, AICP.

INTRODUCTION

The following set of design guidelines has been prepared for the City of Des Plaines to facilitate the revitalization and enhancement of its Downtown area and Oakton Street and Lee Street commercial corridors.

The guidelines focus on both the short-term improvement and long-range redevelopment needs of these business districts. For the short term, they provide ideas for improving existing buildings and streetscape. For future development, they provide a framework for quality building and site design. Many existing buildings do not currently meet these guidelines nor will they be required to undertake any improvements as a result of the adoption of these guidelines. However, when property owners apply for a building permit for any addition, expansion, or exterior change to their property, these guidelines will be used to review their project.

The guidelines are presented in summary format. They are conceptual and intended as recommendations for improving the quality of the built environment in Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets. They do not represent a master plan for any immediate development project. They are standards only and are intended to supplement the City's Codes and Ordinances regarding development. Landowners, business owners, and developers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Buildings Codes when they consider making physical improvements to their property.

The City's intent is that the guidelines will assist developers, architects, planners, landscape architects, and property and business owners with development or redevelopment projects beyond basic zoning and subdivision requirements. The overall goal is to physically enhance the business districts through higher quality building and site design.



Downtown Des Plaines



Downtown Train Station



Oakton Street Commercial Corridor



Oaks Shopping Center on Oakton Street

Introduction

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design Goals

The design guidelines are intended to establish standards which enhance the appearance of the Downtown, Oakton Street, and Lee Street Business Districts. The standards are not intended to restrict design creativity, but rather to provide guidance on design principles for these districts.

The guidelines require that building and site design consider contextual relationships with existing properties. They address architectural style and building materials, scale, massing, articulation, and setbacks, as well as landscaping and signage. More specifically, the guidelines seek to achieve the following goals:

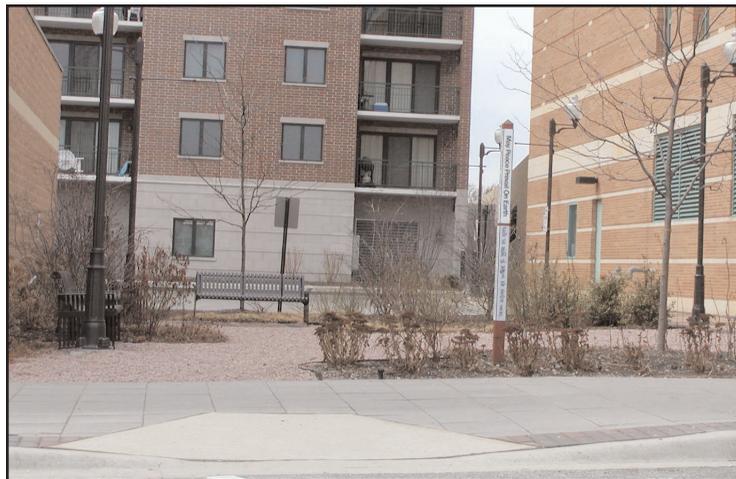
- *Establish a comprehensive design approach for enhancing the Downtown, Oakton Street, and Lee Street Business Districts.*
- *Provide a guide for property/business owners and developers for direction that positively affects their development and redevelopment actions.*
- *Provide a guide for architects and landscape architects to facilitate excellence in the built and natural environment.*
- *Emphasize the need to “clean and green” existing properties in Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets and instill a “pride of place” with business and property owners.*
- *Provide an easily maintained, attractive streetscape that provides a safe pedestrian environment.*



Historic Building and Museum in Downtown



Small Pocket Park in Downtown



Library Plaza



Library Plaza Clock Tower

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Section 2: Business District Overview

Business District Design Guidelines

DOWNTOWN

The Des Plaines Downtown contains many elements typical of an active environment. Varied architecture, a mix of uses and the train station all contribute to a vibrant downtown. Residential development has increased activity and provided “in-town” living opportunities. Some historic buildings exist that contribute to the overall design quality and character of the area.

While Downtown continues to be developed, its physical environment needs to be improved. Several buildings have a tired or faded appearance and are beginning to show signs of deterioration. Unattractive building, business signage and streetscape conditions also affect the appearance and viability of the area. As it develops with larger, more modern buildings, it’s important that the scale, appearance and placement of structures are carefully considered to achieve the “right fit” within Downtown.



Downtown “Main Street” character along Lee Street.

OAKTON STREET

Oakton Street between River Road and Lee Street is an auto oriented commercial corridor. Large retail businesses exist at its east and west ends. These buildings have large setbacks and parking fields that dominate their respective sites. The buildings themselves are adequately designed, although they contain no striking or prominent features.

Auto service uses are predominant along the street. Some residential buildings, restaurants and strip shopping malls also exist. Curb cuts are numerous along the street and some sites contain large parking lots along the street.

Signage along Oakton Street needs to be improved and regulated. The variety of styles, sizes and locations of signs creates confusion and visual clutter. Additionally, the street does not contain landscaping, streetscape amenities or other elements typical of pleasant shopping environment.

Creating a cohesive streetscape/signage design will significantly improve the overall character of the corridor. The Design Guidelines will be especially important as older, more obsolete commercial and residential uses are redeveloped.

LEE STREET

Lee Street between Downtown and Oakton Street, from Lincoln Avenue to Walnut Avenue, is also an auto-oriented commercial corridor. Some commercial buildings have large setbacks and parking fields. Like the Oakton Street corridor, the Lee Street corridor needs better signage and cohesive streetscape/signage design.



Oakton Street contains many different uses including strip shopping centers.



Auto uses are prevalent along Oakton Street.

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Section 3: Building Design

Business District Design Guidelines

BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

Building design and architectural style create and enhance a district's character for pedestrians and motorists. A specific architectural style, character or building type is not predominant in Downtown Des Plaines or along Oakton and Lee Streets. Rather there are many designs that contain various elements and a range of styles. Diversity in building design should be encouraged, but designs should be consistent with the area's overall character. Older buildings that display historic features, such as the former Des Plaines State Bank and Theater, should be preserved if feasible.

In Downtown, for example, building design should reflect the mixed-use pedestrian orientation of a "walkable" central business district. Oakton and Lee Streets are auto-oriented commercial thoroughfares with some single- and multi-family residential uses. Retail and service uses, primarily auto service and repair, are the most prevalent uses combined with some restaurants. Buildings along Oakton Street and Lee Street should reflect a typical auto-oriented commercial corridor, yet be more attractive in appearance and efficient in layout.

Building Style

- A range of architectural styles is encouraged in all districts. Architectural style is not restricted. Evaluation of appearance should be based on quality of design and relationship to surroundings.
- Harsh, plain, incompatible and/or bizarre building designs are discouraged.
- Unarticulated, flat front, all glass, or metal, futuristic style buildings are discouraged.

- All buildings should be designed with common architectural elements, including: open glass storefronts; clearly defined entrances to ground and upper floors; sign bands and awnings incorporated into the design and scale of the building; upper floor windows placed in proportion to building width and height; and, cornices and parapets.
- Adjacent buildings should have component parts in good proportion with one another. Similar design linkages should include placing window lines, belt courses, and other horizontal elements in a pattern that is harmonious and reflects the same elements on neighboring buildings.



Never designs with varying roof lines, awnings and other decorative features should be encouraged.

- Large structures should be designed to reduce perceived height and bulk by dividing the building mass into smaller scale components (i.e. height of a wall, cornice, or parapet line should match that of adjacent buildings).
- Buildings with ground-level retail and office space should, whenever possible, include open, clear glass windows to allow views into building interiors and to reinforce a positive, active shopping environment.
- Tinted or reflective glass is discouraged.
- Architectural design should articulate and enhance buildings, especially those located at street corners due to their prominence and visibility. Where appropriate, features such as cupolas, atriums, clock towers, and/or varying rooflines should be considered to add visual interest to the street.
- Monotony of design in multiple building projects by repetition of units should be avoided. Variation of detail, form and siting should be employed to provide interest. Buildings of the same design or exterior elevation are discouraged on adjacent lots.
- Buildings that attempt to use the building itself as "advertising" are discouraged, particularly where the proposed architecture is a "corporate" or franchise style.
- Historic buildings and buildings that display distinct design styles and elements of the past should be preserved if feasible.

- All exposed/visible walls on freestanding parking structures, as well as on parking structures within buildings, should be screened and articulated with architectural treatment.
- Building projections or appurtenances that obscure or conceal important architectural features are discouraged.
- Brick masonry is encouraged within the Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets to enhance and match the current character of the Districts.



Multi-story buildings should include first floor windows.

Building Facades & Articulation

Downtown retail building facades are varied and generally reflect good design qualities with low knee walls and open display windows. However, several buildings, including some residential structures, are not designed and articulated to provide visual interest along the street. Some building facades are not designed to easily allow redesign or retrofit for new tenants.

- Seventy-five percent of the façade area on commercial buildings between two feet and eight feet above grade should be clear windows to allow views into the building from street level. A low knee wall, approximately two feet, should also be incorporated.



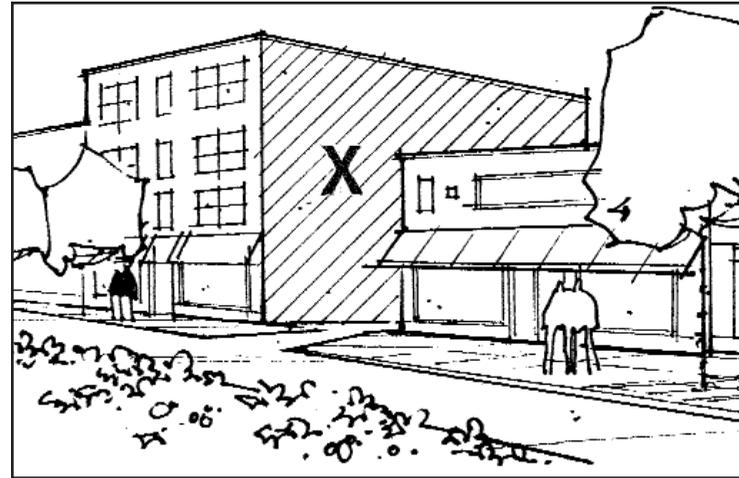
Display windows that showcase products and activity within a business are encouraged.

- Residential buildings should include windows on the first floor where possible. Where windows are not possible, such as along first floor garage areas, detailed wall articulation and foundation landscaping should be incorporated to screen solid building bases and maintain an attractive pedestrian environment.
- Building projections, such as awnings, window bays and terraces, should be pedestrian-scale, proportional to the building facade, and proportional to adjacent structures.
- Building designs should allow subsequent tenants to easily rehabilitate the façade and visible walls in a cost-effective manner.

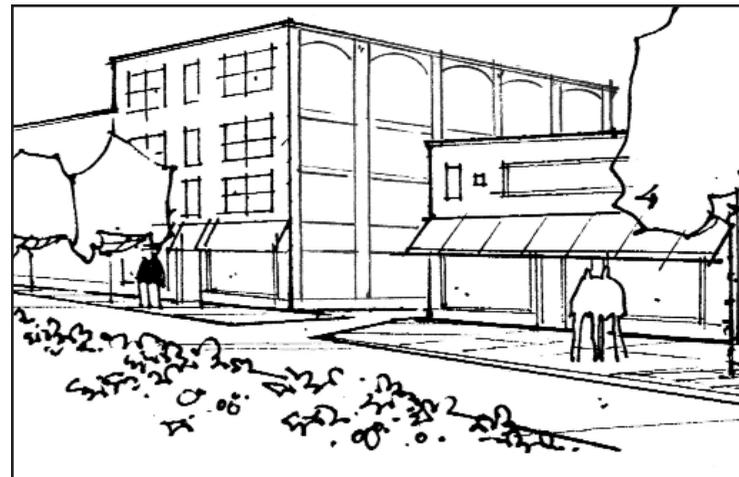


First floors of residential buildings should include interesting architectural details and/or landscaping to screen the building base.

- Solid windowless walls should be avoided. If such walls are necessary to the function of the building, they should incorporate arches, piers, columns, murals, high quality graphics, landscaping and other elements that reduce building scale and add visual interest.
- At a minimum, exposed sides of buildings should be cleaned, tuckpointed, painted and/or treated with high quality graphics to add visual interest. Direct advertising of a property or business should be limited.
- Where possible, display windows should be installed on the sides of buildings adjacent to pedestrian paths, plazas, outdoor cafes, and parking lots.
- Exposed sides and rears of buildings should be improved with steam cleaning, power washing, tuck pointing, accent painting, and limited graphics.
- All graphics on blank, exposed side and rear walls should be limited to 10% or 200 square feet, whichever is less, of the blank exposed wall area.
- New buildings should incorporate interesting architectural details or features to provide layers of interest and variety.
- Eccentric and protruding façade designs that do not relate to the street or limit future tenant changes are discouraged.



Solid walls with little or no architectural interest are strongly discouraged.



Arches, piers, columns, murals/graphics, planters and decorative lights are encouraged to add visual interest to large walls.



Existing blank wall in Downtown.



Attractive murals and decorative lighting provide visual interest on a blank wall.

DOWNTOWN FACADE CONCEPT

- A. Consider blade/projecting signs to add interest to pedestrians and motorists.
- B. Add architectural lighting.
- C. Improve sign graphics.
- D. Add moveable planters for seasonal interest.
- E. Provide benches for pedestrians.
- F. Add windows/awnings to break up building wall.
- G. Steam clean and tuck point brick where needed.
- H. Add trellis or architectural feature on blank wall.
- I. Add fencing/landscaping to screen parking and service areas.



Existing building side facades with little articulation and no streetscape amenities.



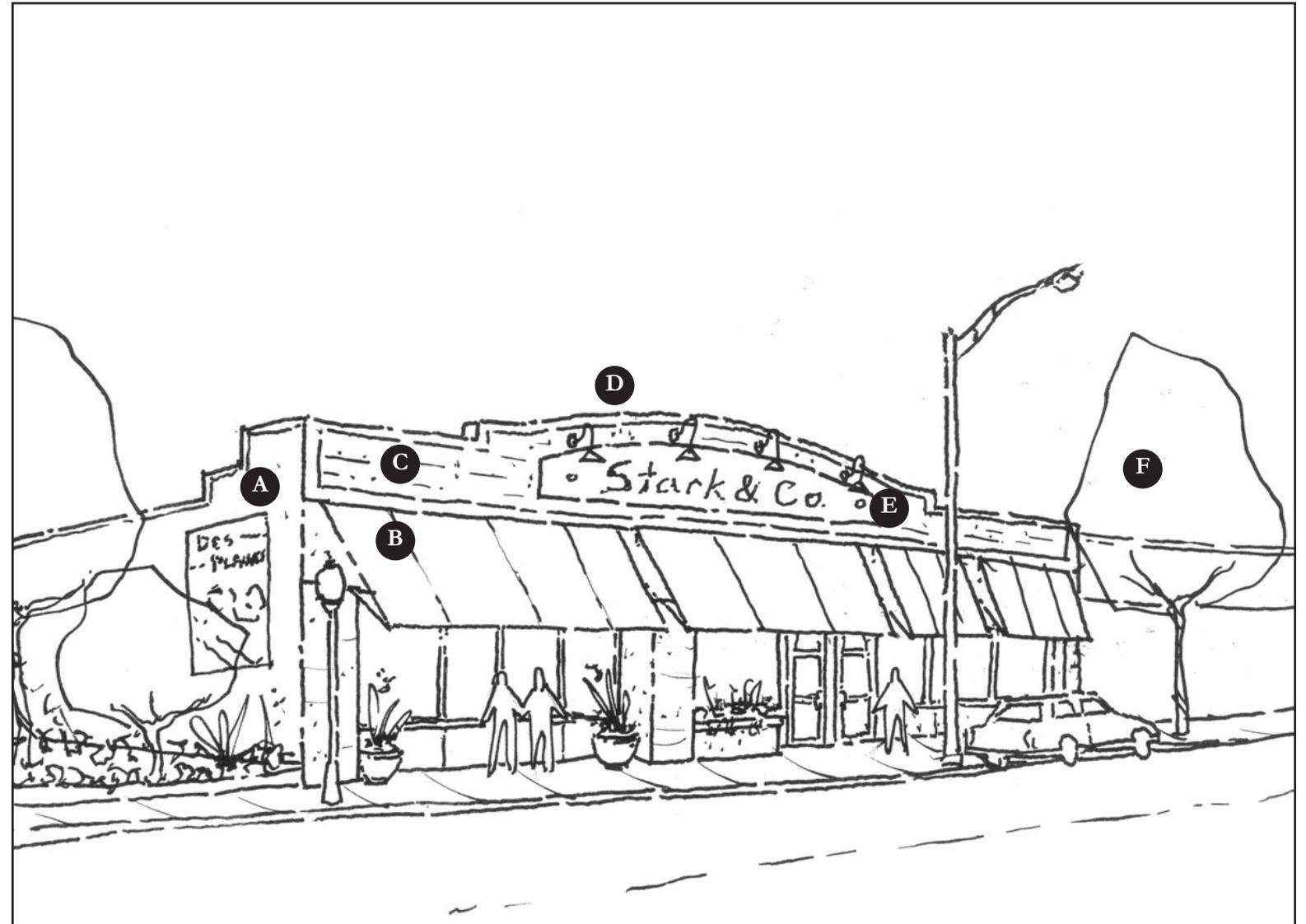
Building Enhancement Concept

DOWNTOWN FACADE CONCEPT

- A. Add murals/graphics to blank walls.
- B. Add awnings to create visual interest and break up large storefront wall.
- C. Add new material to break up large storefront wall.
- D. Consider new cornice/wall shape and architectural details.
- E. Incorporate sign board, new graphics and architectural lighting into building design.
- F. Add landscaping and street trees to soften the street wall and screen parking areas.



Existing facade with “dated” appearance.



Building Enhancement Concept

Building Design

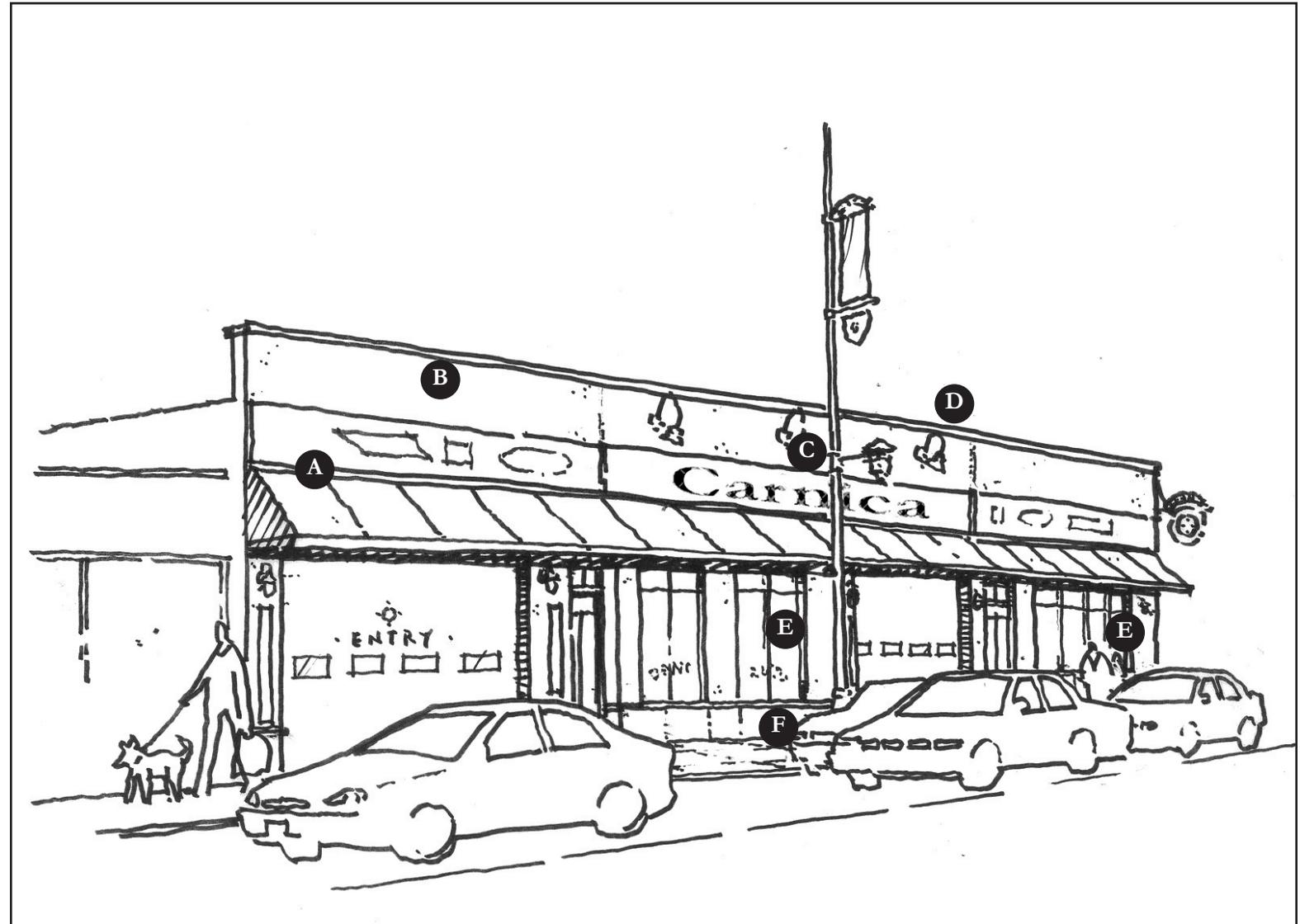
BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

OAKTON FACADE CONCEPT

- A. Create consistent horizontal architectural elements such as sign bands and awnings across the building.
- B. Remove shingle materials and install new materials across facade.
- C. Coordinate and simplify signage by integrating into overall design.
- D. Add architectural lighting over signage.
- E. Add larger windows to open up blank walls and create visual interest.
- F. Establish traditional storefront kneewall



Existing service business facade along Oakton Street.



Building Enhancement Concept

Building Entrances & Windows

Building entrances and windows should be oriented to the street and designed to be easily accessible. If a building has a parking lot in the rear, clearly defined rear entrances are needed to provide access. Safety and security issues, as well as aesthetic and visibility considerations should be addressed regarding the use of rear building entrances.

- Primary store entrances should be located along the street, with secondary entrances located behind the building or along a secondary street.
- Building windows and doors should be clear glass oriented to the street and proportionate to the building scale.



Clearly defined rear building entrances.

- All building entrances should be designed so that doorways and vestibules are easily seen by shoppers and visitors, easily distinguished by tenants and use, and open and visible from the sidewalk.
- All rear and side walls that have entrances adjacent to parking lots should be improved with graphics/murals.
- Tinted and/or reflective glass is discouraged.
- Mill finish (non-colored) aluminum metal window and door frames are discouraged.



Entrances oriented to the street and proportional windows are encouraged.

Building Awnings

Some building awnings are garish in color, inconsistent in style or color and do not relate to adjacent buildings. Unattractive and oversized awnings detract from the attractiveness of a building, as well as the streetscape.

- Building awnings should be consistent and complementary in color and style with the building facade and awnings of adjacent buildings.
- Excessively bright and brilliant awning colors should be avoided.
- Letter style on awnings for multi-tenant buildings should be consistent.



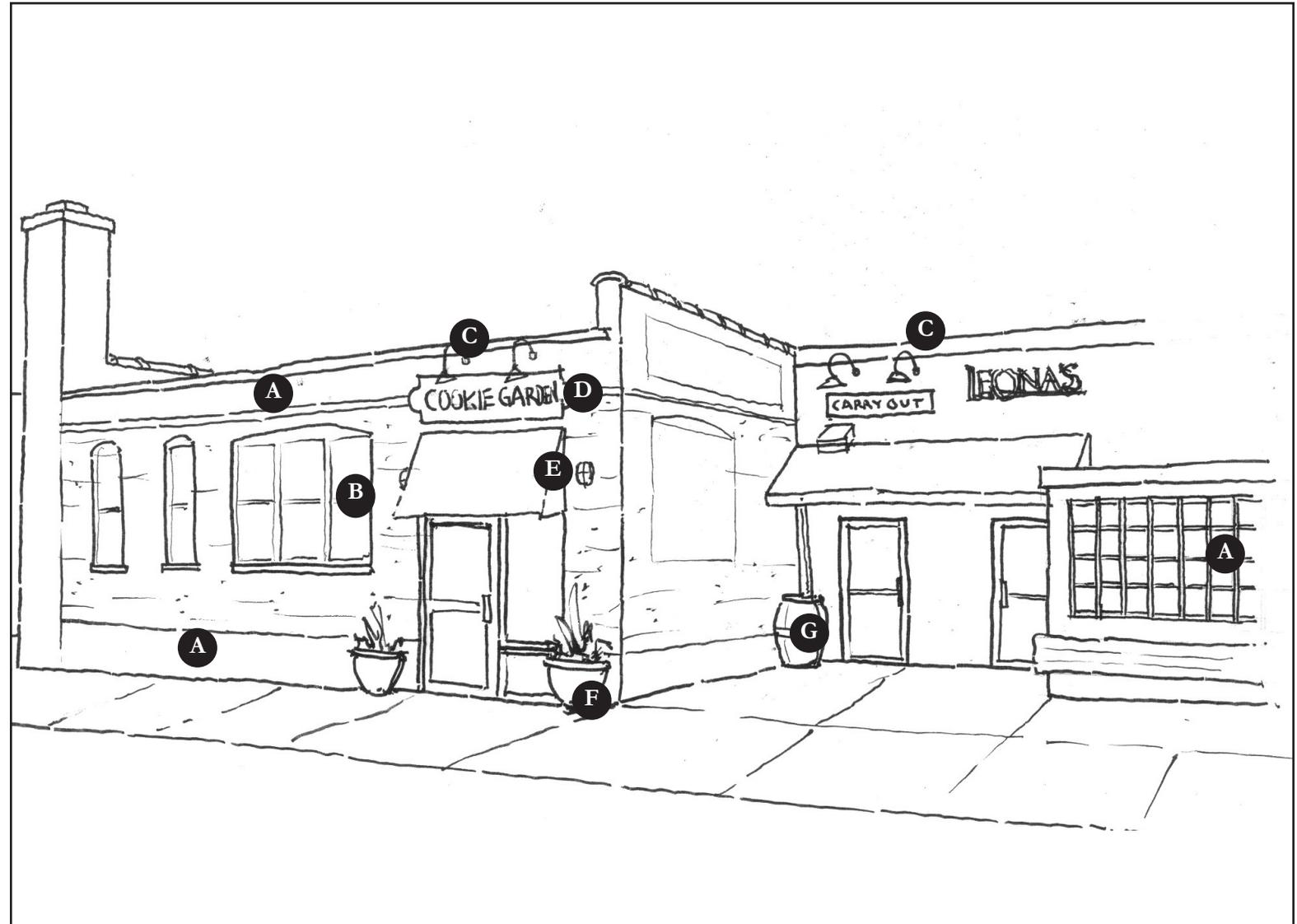
Building awnings should be consistent with the building style.

REAR WALL/ENTRANCE CONCEPT

- A. Add murals/graphics, faux windows, details or color bands to break up blank walls.
- B. Remove bars from windows.
- C. Integrate architectural lighting over rear entrances.
- D. Limit signage to small, simple signs integrated into overall architectural design.
- E. Add awning over doorway.
- F. Add moveable planters to add seasonal color.
- G. Reduce long, exposed down spouts by using barrel cisterns linked to underground pipes.



Existing rear wall and entrances.



Rear Wall/Entrance Concept

Building Lighting

Few buildings in Downtown or along Oakton and Lee Streets have special lighting that highlights architectural features. The majority of lighting comes from streetlights and internally lit building signage.

- Special building lighting should be encouraged to add visual interest and increase nighttime visibility and safety.
- Building lighting should be carefully planned and integrated into the design/style of the building and streetscape.
- Electrical conduit and mechanical equipment for building or signage lighting should be hidden from view or carefully integrated into building design.



Building lighting should be carefully planned into building design and electrical conduit hidden from view.

Building Materials

Numerous buildings in the business districts are designed using one material and do not incorporate alternative or secondary materials. Although many buildings contain high-quality masonry, others have lower quality materials, such as smooth plaster, wood, and aggregate brick/stone.

- High-quality, durable materials, which do not require frequent maintenance (brick, stone, and glass) should be used for all facades as well as the sides and/or rears of buildings that are visible from streets and parking lots.
- Decorative block, smooth/textured synthetic plaster, and wood trim should be used only for decorative accent purposes and limited in their use on building facades and visible walls.



The use of low quality materials, such as aggregate stone, is strongly discouraged.

- Cinder/concrete block, stucco, metal, plywood, vinyl siding, unfinished pre-cast concrete, unfinished poured-in-place concrete, aggregate stone/rock and glass block windows should not be used on building facades or on walls that are visible from streets, sidewalks, and parking lots.
- Wall materials should be the same for all elevations or if more than one is used, they should be harmonious. Facade treatment with face brick at the front elevation and common brick at the other elevations is not acceptable. Exterior exposed walls constructed of untextured, unpatterned concrete or cement block in common bond is not permitted.



The use of glass block windows on the front facade is strongly discouraged.

Building Colors

Building colors within the Districts generally relate to other buildings and to a specific palette of colors within one building. Most buildings constructed of masonry/brick use light to medium colors and are compatible with one another. However, some building colors are garish and do not relate to adjacent buildings.

- In Downtown, building colors should be generally compatible with the area's context. In all three districts, primary colors such as blue, yellow, and red are discouraged unless used sparingly for subtle trim accents. Earth tones, red/brown masonry and colors complementary to the primary building color are preferred.

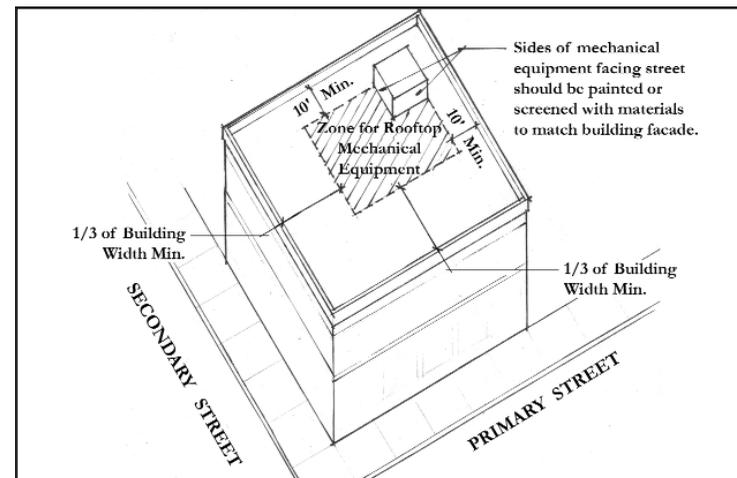


Rooftop mechanical equipment should be screened.

- Compatible, consistent color schemes for future developments and/or redevelopments are encouraged.
- Colors shall be harmonious with adjacent buildings and brilliant colors used only for accent.

Mechanical Equipment

- Mechanical or utility equipment on the ground or on roofs or other parts of a building that cannot be located out of view should be screened by walls constructed of materials similar to those of the primary facade. Screening should be effective in all seasons.



Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located in the rear corner of the building.

- Mechanical equipment along the front or visible side facade is discouraged. Corner buildings are also discouraged from locating mechanical equipment on the secondary street frontage.
- All vents, gutters, downspouts, flashing, electrical conduit and similar appurtenances should be hidden, screened or at the least painted to match the adjacent surface.
- Rooftop mechanical equipment should be located in the center or a rear corner of a building away from the street elevation and screened from public view or located as not to be conspicuously visible.

Building Signage

In Downtown, business signage is generally controlled in regards to size and placement, and appropriate to the pedestrian scale. However, in Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets some building/business signage is redundant, excessive, oversized and/or difficult to view and read. The size, placement and number of signs should be better controlled and enforced. Unattractive business signs and temporary signs clutter storefronts, buildings and sidewalks. On some properties, business and temporary signs are deteriorating. Poorly designed business signs and/or signs made from low quality materials send customers a negative message.

- Sign colors and materials should be consistent with the colors and materials of the building and awnings.
- Business signage should be simple and incorporated into a building's architecture. Such signs should serve to identify a business while contributing to the attractiveness and pedestrian friendly orientation of the street. The quality, size, placement and look of signs should all be considered in the overall design of the building.
- Sign materials, size, color, lettering, lighting, location, and arrangement, should be harmonious with building design and should be compatible with signs on adjoining buildings. Signs should have good proportions. Materials used in signs should be weather retardant.



Window lettering and displays are encouraged to provide interest.

- Window lettering, either vinyl applied or painted, is encouraged to add interest to storefronts. Temporary pin-ups, flyers and signs should be avoided.
- Business signs should not obstruct or obscure architectural details or significant architectural elements.
- Decorative overhanging or blade signs are encouraged along the street with the size controlled and coordinated with a building's façade design. Decorative "icon" signs such as coffee cups, barber poles, toothbrushes, and ice cream cones provide visual interest. Sign brackets, hardware, and lighting systems should be kept to a minimum and screened wherever possible.



Small projecting "blade" signs are an interesting alternative to conventional signs.

- Decorative overhanging or blade signs must not exceed six square feet in size with a maximum height of three feet and placed at a minimum ten feet above the sidewalk. They should extend no more than four feet from the face of the building.
- Business signs should be placed on a building so they are oriented for viewing by pedestrians.
- Text on business signs should be simple and easy to read.
- Billboards should not be placed on top of buildings, or on blank sidewalls, in vacant lots, or parking areas.
- To avoid visual clutter along the street, redundant signage or multiple external signs should not be used.

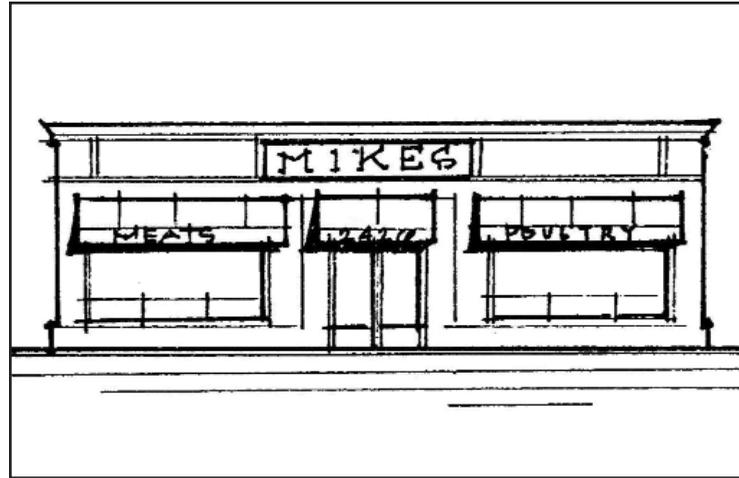


Some business signage is excessive, oversized and redundant.

Building Design

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Business signs should not be placed at or above the cornice or roof lines of buildings.
- Signs should be constructed of high-quality durable materials. Sign colors should be used harmoniously and with restraint.
- Business signs should be placed on the front of buildings only, unless the building is located on a corner or has rear or side entrances.
- Overhanging signs should be limited to one sign per business, including "icon" signs unless the business is located on a corner.
- Sign lighting should be carefully considered in the building design. If direct lighting is used, glare, brightness, visible hardware and maintenance issues should be addressed. Strategically placed lamp fixtures that are compatible with the sign design and building architecture are encouraged for illuminating signs. When external spot or flood lighting is used, it should be arranged so that the light source is shielded from view.
- Neon signage and lighting should be limited to one sign per business. Neon lighting and signage that outlines the entire window is strongly discouraged.



Typical Sign Band Location on Building.



Signs identifying rear entry and access should be clearly displayed.



Multiple window signs, particularly temporary pin-ups and flyers, are discouraged.



Multiple signs and neon lighting are discouraged.

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Section 4: Site Planning

Business District Design Guidelines

SITE PLANNING GUIDELINES

Building location, scale, height and massing are varied in Downtown with buildings ranging in height from one to ten stories. Several streets have consistent “streetwalls” where buildings are placed at or near the property line. In some Downtown blocks and along much of Oakton and Lee Streets, building placement and location is inconsistent.

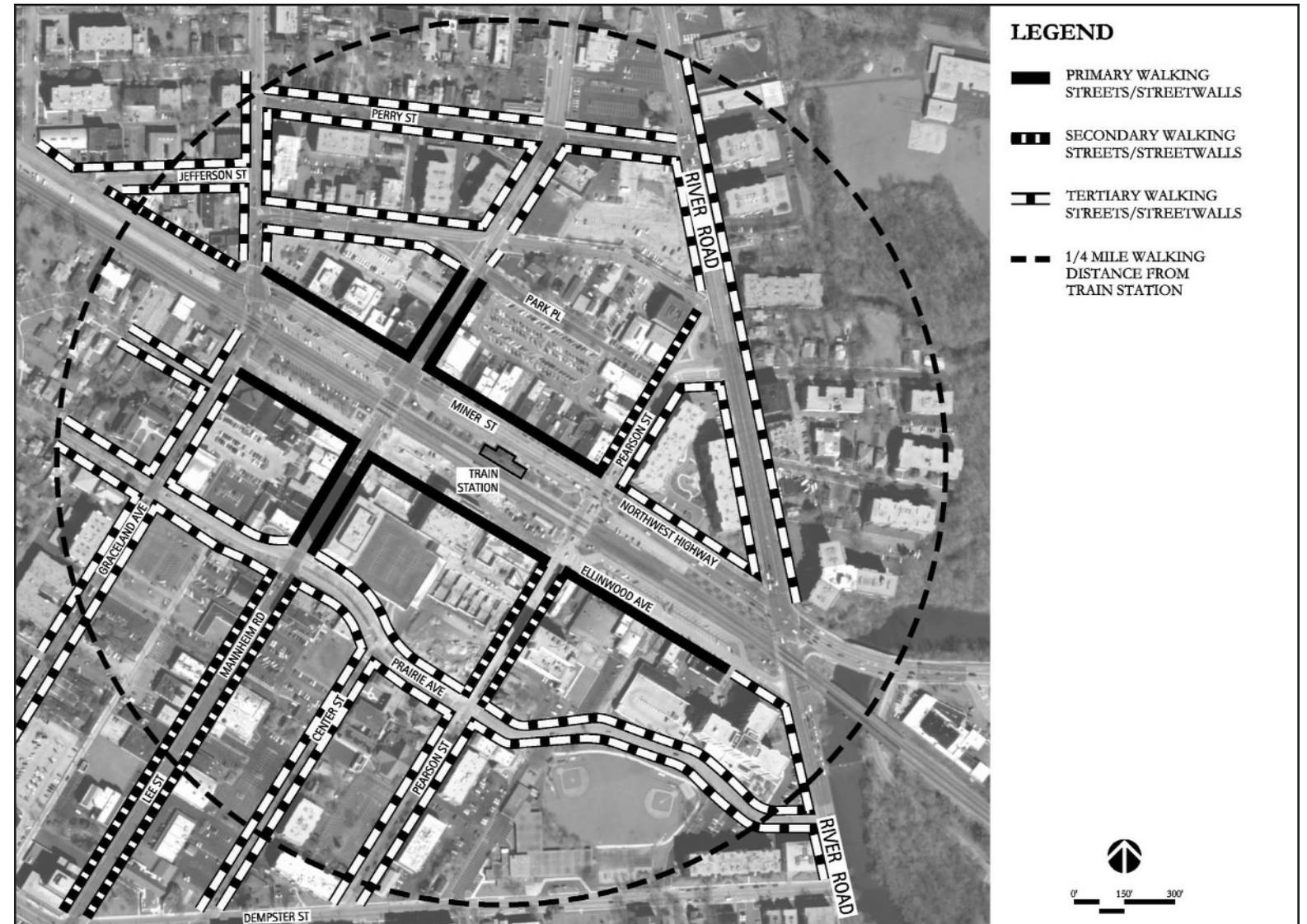
Downtown

There are approximately seven streets that run through Downtown. Several of these streets, mostly in the central core, have consistent “streetwalls” whereby buildings are placed at or near sidewalks with minimal disruptions from driveways and parking lots. The following streets should be considered key Downtown walking and shopping streets:

- Miner Street between Pearson St. and Graceland Ave.
- Lee Street between Prairie Ave. and Park Place.
- Ellinwood Avenue between River Road and Graceland Ave.

Oakton and Lee Streets

Building location is varied along Oakton and Lee Streets. Some buildings are sited along the street with little or no setback while others are setback further with parking in front. Some stand-alone buildings surrounded by parking also exist. Varied building locations create an inconsistent street wall and reinforce the auto oriented character of Oakton and Lee Streets. In some cases, it also makes it difficult to see and/or access buildings.



Site Planning

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Building Scale & Massing

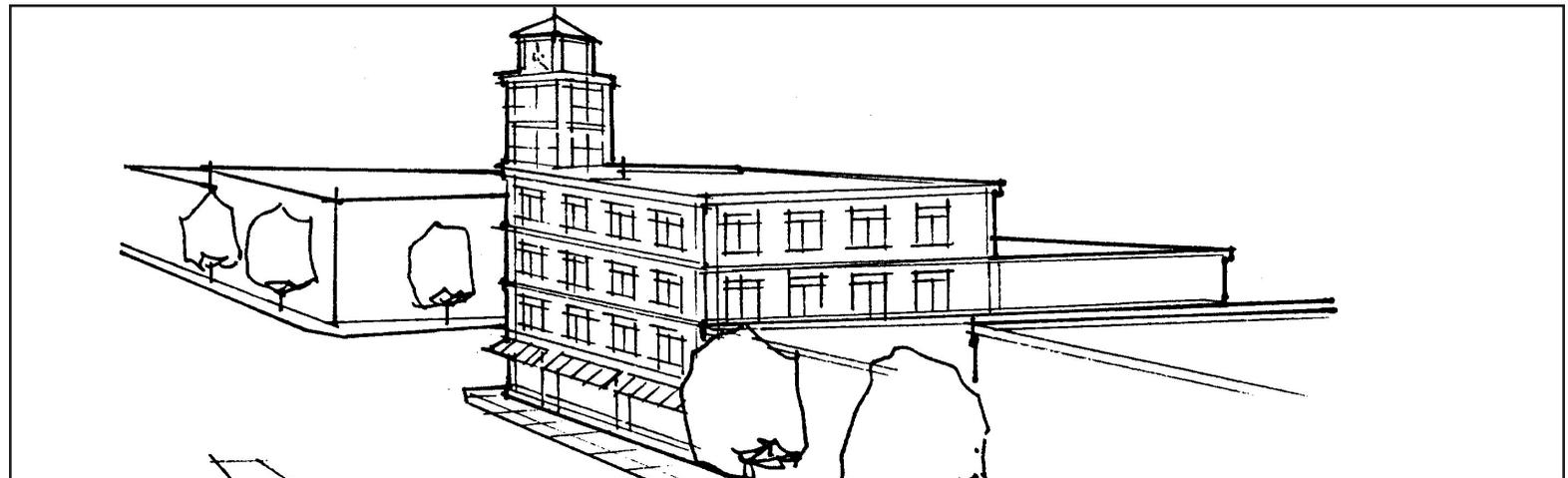
Building scale is generally consistent along Oakton and Lee Streets. Most buildings are one story and front the street with little or no setback. Buildings along some portions of the streets are massed appropriately with a mix of single-story and two-story buildings. However, along other portions buildings are set back from the street with parking in front, strip shopping centers, large freestanding restaurants, no street walls and parking in between buildings.

Parts of Oakton and Lee Streets contain large-scale commercial uses. Oakton's west end near Mannheim Road contains the Oaks Shopping Center with big-box and other accessory retail uses. Oakton near River Road contains a Walgreen's, gas stations, and other uses. These uses have large setbacks with parking in front.



Typical Downtown Streetwall.

- Buildings should be set back no farther than ten feet along Oakton and Lee to maintain the streetwall.
- In Downtown, new construction along primary walking streets should have a zero setback from the front property line whenever possible to reinforce the streetwall. Existing buildings set back from the sidewalk should include landscaping and fencing to maintain the streetwall and enhance the pedestrian experience as much as possible.
- Multi-story buildings should be constructed to respect adjacent buildings in terms of height, scale and proportion.
- Spatial gaps created in the streetwall by parking or other non-pedestrian areas should be minimized.
- In Downtown, gangways and narrow alleys between buildings should be avoided.
- Where gangways and narrow alleys exist between buildings for pedestrian access, they should be gated with decorative fencing and/or arches, lit with decorative fixtures, and clearly signed for visibility and security.
- Corner buildings should especially be placed at property lines to hold or frame the site along both street frontages.



Conceptual corner building framing site corners.

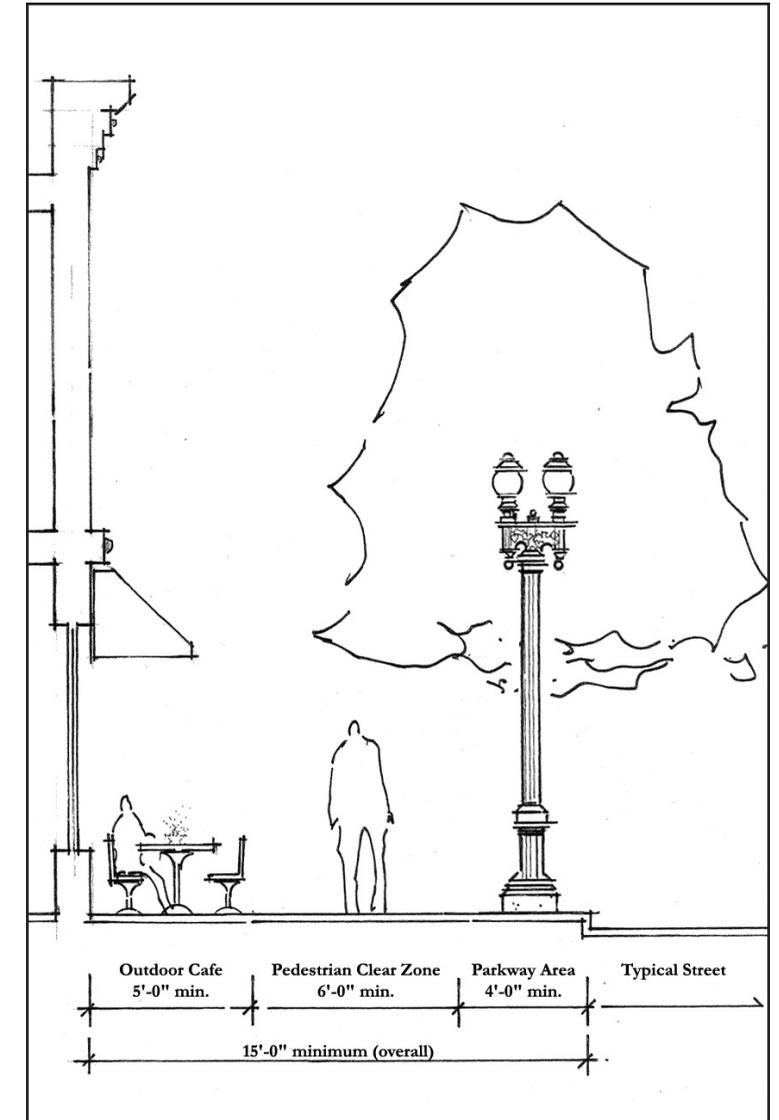
- Outdoor seating areas for cafes and restaurants should allow at least five feet of sidewalk clear space to maintain proper pedestrian circulation. Six feet is recommended. Seating areas should be framed with decorative fencing, walls and/or planters that incorporate landscaping.
- Large scale buildings should be massed appropriately to their surroundings. Landscaping, consistent setbacks and other design elements should be incorporated into the building and site design to provide relief to building scale and parking lots.
- Landscaping and decorative fences should be used to extend the appearance of the streetwall on sites with large building setbacks.
- When a building is setback five feet or more, landscaping should be encouraged to provide a buffer.
- Building sites should be planned to provide adequate planting including planting in and around parking areas.
- Where natural or existing topographic patterns contribute to the attractiveness and utility of a development, they should be preserved and enhanced. Modification to topography will be permitted where it contributes to good appearance, but in all cases care should be taken to avoid drainage or grade problems on adjoining sites.



Gangways and narrow alleys between buildings are unattractive and can create safety issues.



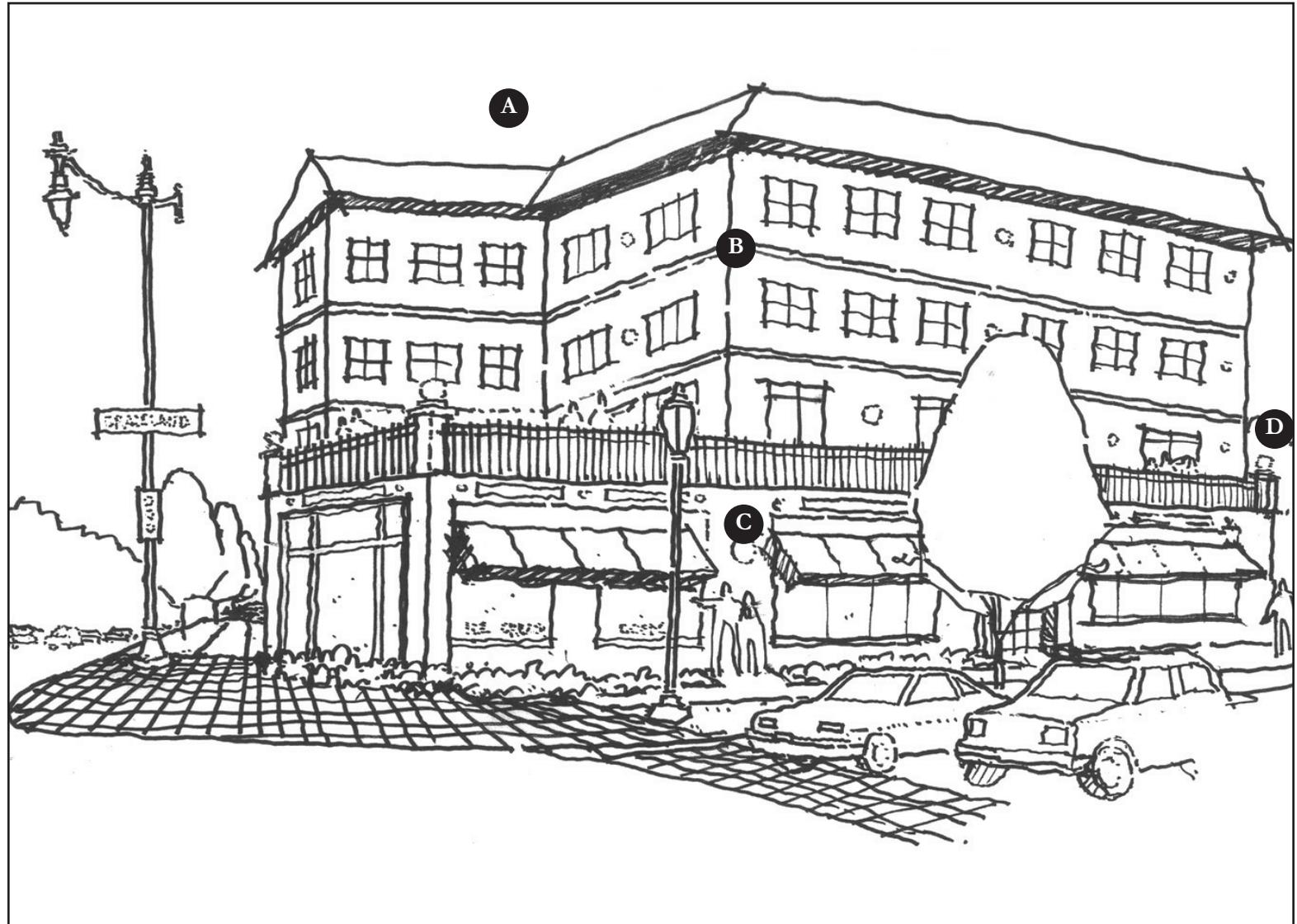
If needed for pedestrian access, gangways and narrow alleys between buildings should be clearly defined.



Typical outdoor cafe and sidewalk cross-section.

DOWNTOWN CORNER DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

- A. Mixed-use development “holding corner” with zero setbacks on both streets.
- B. Upper floor residential with terrace.
- C. First floor has active commercial use with traditional storefront architecture, including sign bands, awnings, large windows and low kneewalls.
- D. Parking and service located on non-primary commercial street.



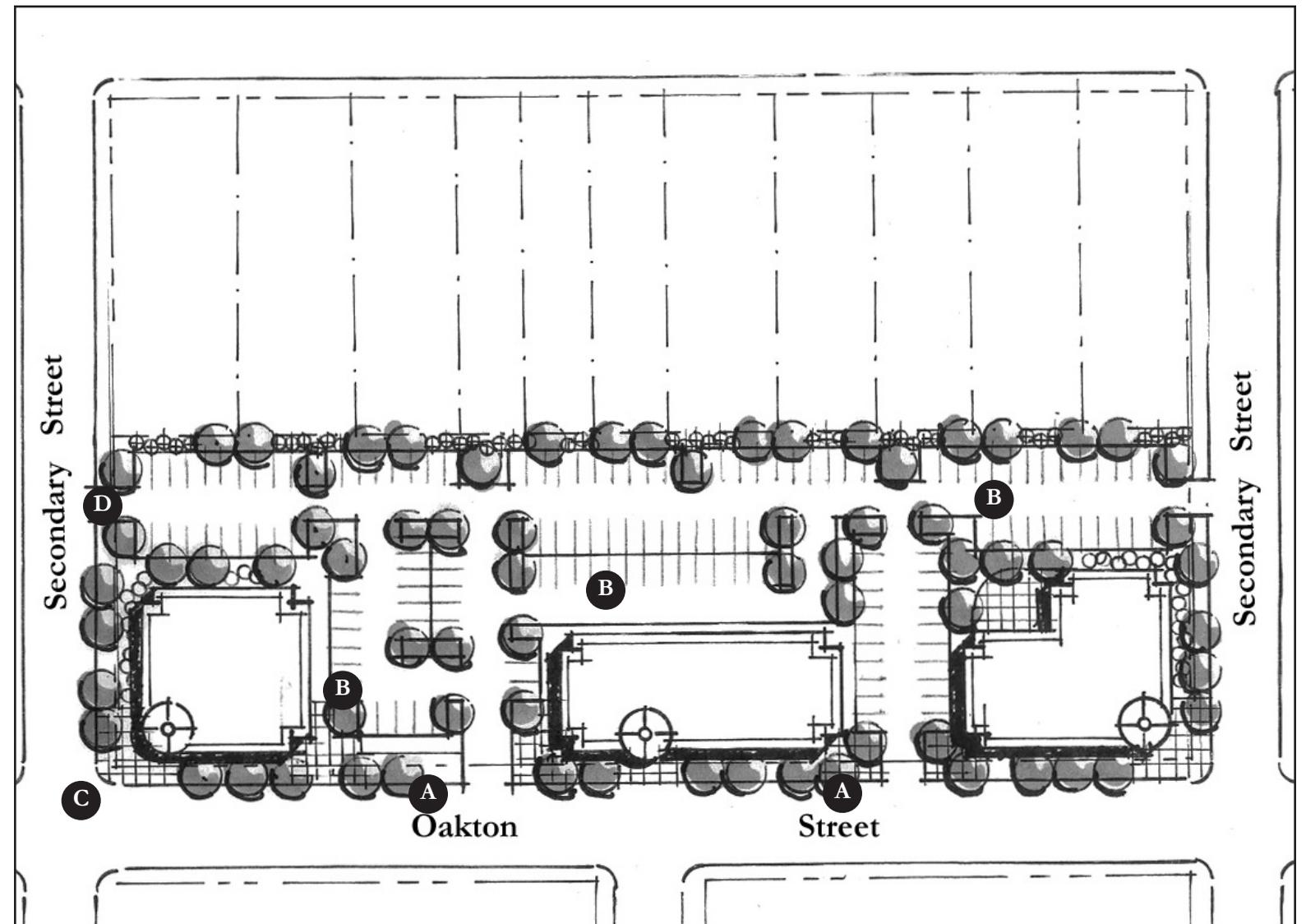
Downtown Development Concept

OAKTON DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

- A. Consolidated and shared driveways minimize curb cuts.
- B. Parking placed behind and to side of buildings.
- C. Buildings reinforce streetwall and hold corners.
- D. Access also on secondary street to reduce turning movements on/off of Oakton Street and to allow neighborhood traffic to directly access site without traveling onto Oakton Street.



Multiple curb cuts on Oakton should be consolidated.



Oakton Street - Full Block Development Concept

Site Planning

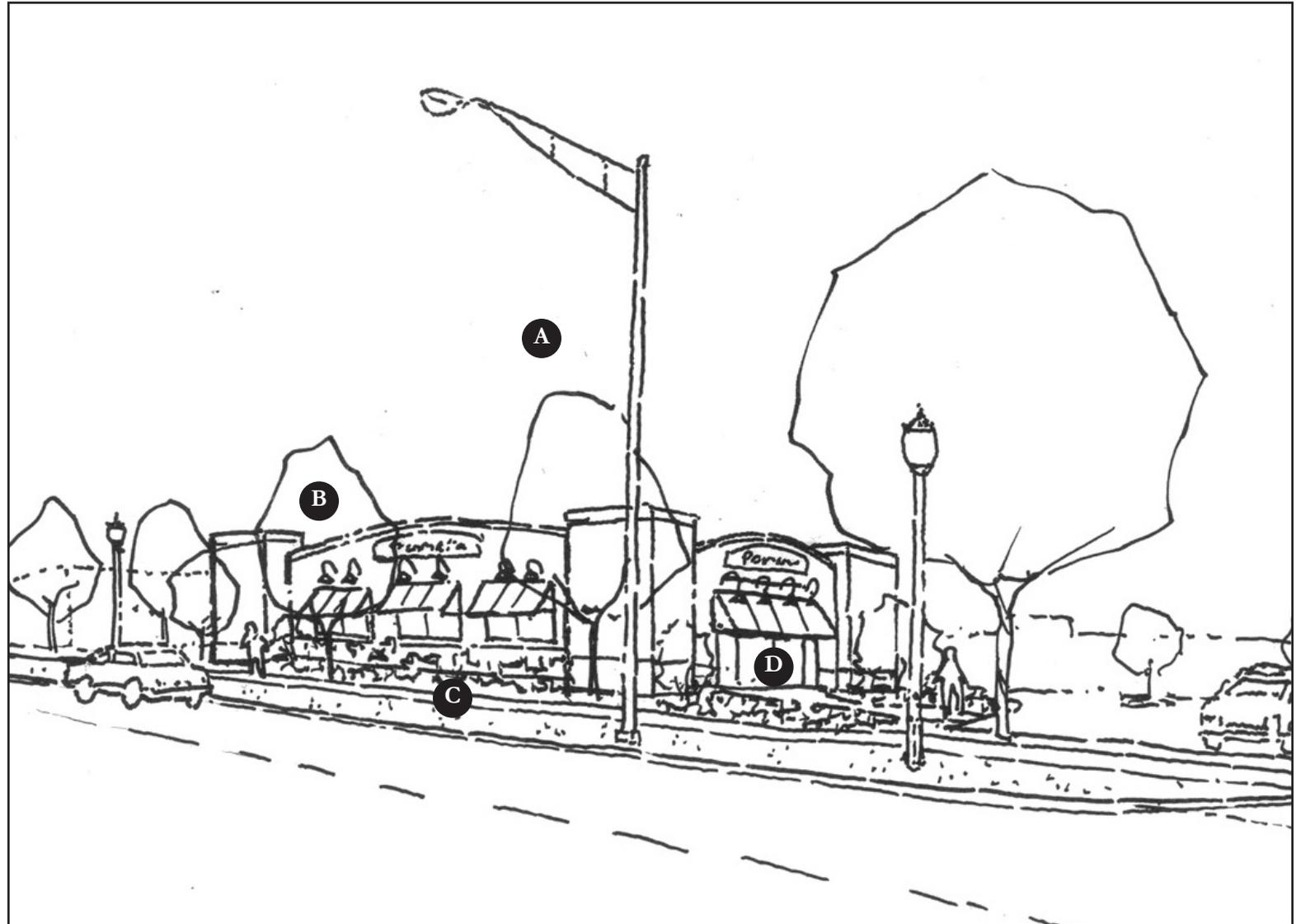
BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

OAKTON DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

- A. Outlot parcel developed within existing large parking lot.
- B. Existing street trees supplemented with new large caliper trees. New trees placed not to obscure storefronts.
- C. Frontage landscaping added along sidewalks.
- D. Visually interesting commercial building design with traditional awnings and decorative lights.



Vacant site within Oaks Shopping Center parking lot.



Oakton Street - Shopping Center - Infill Development Concept

OAKTON IMPROVEMENT CONCEPT

- A. Architectural detail and interest added to building, possibly with sign board or trim.
- B. Outdoor seating area with tables, umbrellas and landscaping.
- C. Landscaping added to overall site to soften harsh appearance.
- D. Pole sign replaced with attractive monument sign at ground level.



Oaks Shopping Center



Oakton Street - Site Improvement Concept

Site Planning

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Parking Lots

In Downtown, parking lots are generally located in optimal locations behind or to the side of buildings with adequate access. Some parking lots that front on key streets or along the railroad tracks need to be screened with fencing and landscaping.

- In Downtown and along Oakton Street, parking spaces and lots should be located at the rear of a building when possible. Parking lots that front the street are discouraged. Shared parking between businesses and uses is encouraged wherever possible.

- Parking curb cuts along Downtown streets and Oakton and Lee Streets should be minimized. Individual businesses are encouraged to share access points.
- Parking and site lighting should minimize glare on surrounding properties and should be coordinated in style and color with adjacent properties and the City's decorative street lighting fixtures.
- Parking areas should be treated with elements to screen the areas from public view where feasible, such as wall extensions, plantings, berms or other means. Parking lots screened with landscaping should meet or exceed Des Plaines Landscape Ordinance requirements.



Parking lot needs landscaping and fencing.



Parking lots located behind buildings.



Parking lots should be easily accessible when located behind buildings.



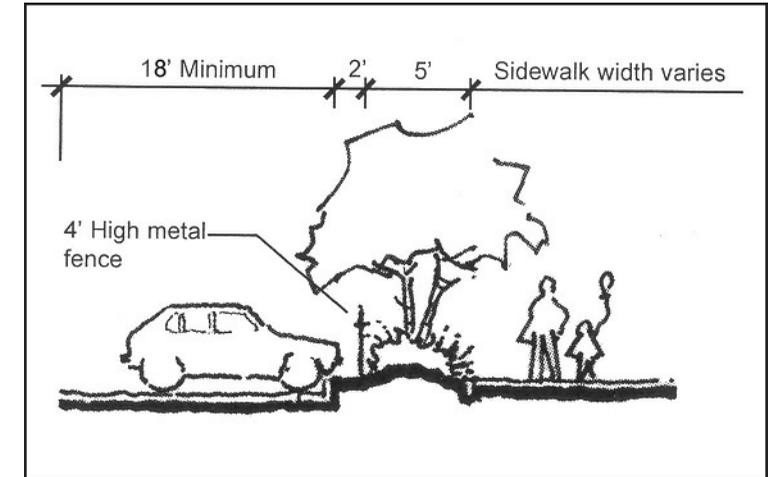
Parking areas along Oakton Street should be screened with decorative fencing and landscaping.

- Decorative and seasonal plantings, evergreens, trees and standard decorative fencing should be considered when improving or installing parking lots. Consideration should be taken so sight lines are not obscured.
- Minimum planting areas should be as follows: Every parking lot in every zoning district shall have 5% of its area devoted to planting areas. Areas required for side yards, front yards, or rear yards, should not be counted as planting areas.

Every parking lot with 8 or more parking spaces in a row, should have a barrier type poured concrete curbed planter island at each end of each row of parking spaces. Such planter island should be a minimum of 100 square feet. The maximum number of cars in a row should not exceed 25 without a fire break or cross drive.



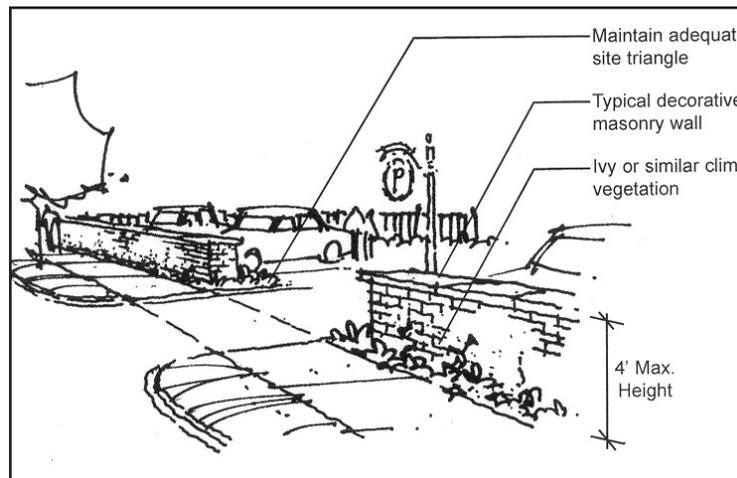
Parking lot lacking fencing and landscaping along the street.



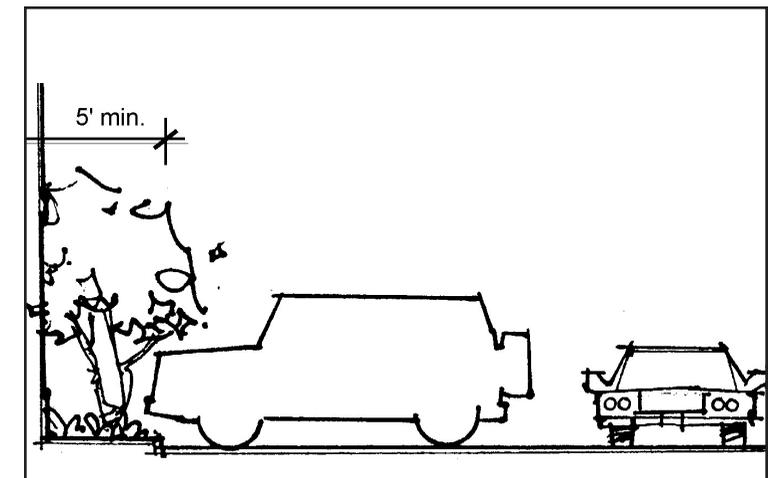
Parking lot screening/ landscaping concept with decorative fence.

Site Lighting

- Exterior lighting should enhance the building design and the adjoining landscape. Lighting standards and fixtures should be of a design and size compatible with the building and adjacent areas. Lighting should be restrained in design, and excessive brightness and brilliant colors avoided.



Parking lot screening concept with masonry wall.



Parking lot landscape screening concept adjacent to building.

Site Planning

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

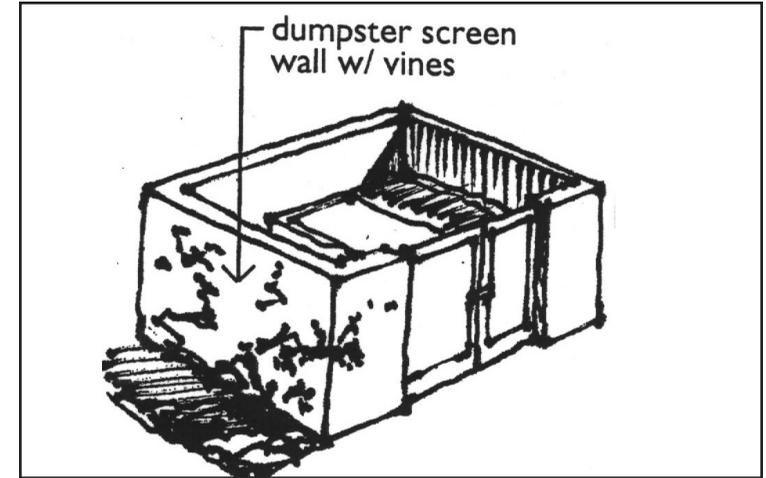
Service Areas

Service areas behind buildings are not always designed in a manner consistent with the fronts or sides of a structure. Trash, utility and storage areas are visible from streets and parking lots in some locations within Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets. Trash areas/dumpsters behind buildings are randomly located and not screened, are unattractive and create potential conflicts with pedestrians and automobiles. Utility areas also need to be screened.

- Service areas and storage yards should be screened from public view.
- Service areas should be designed to fit within a site and screened from views with walls, fencing, landscaping or other materials that complement adjacent buildings and provide screening in all seasons.
- Single loading, service, and utility areas for businesses are discouraged. Shared service areas should be considered for ease of maintenance and improved aesthetics as well as the potential to create new site area for landscaping and/or parking spaces.
- Utility lines should be installed underground where feasible.



Dumpsters without screening behind buildings.



Dumpster screening concept.



Service areas should be screened where feasible.



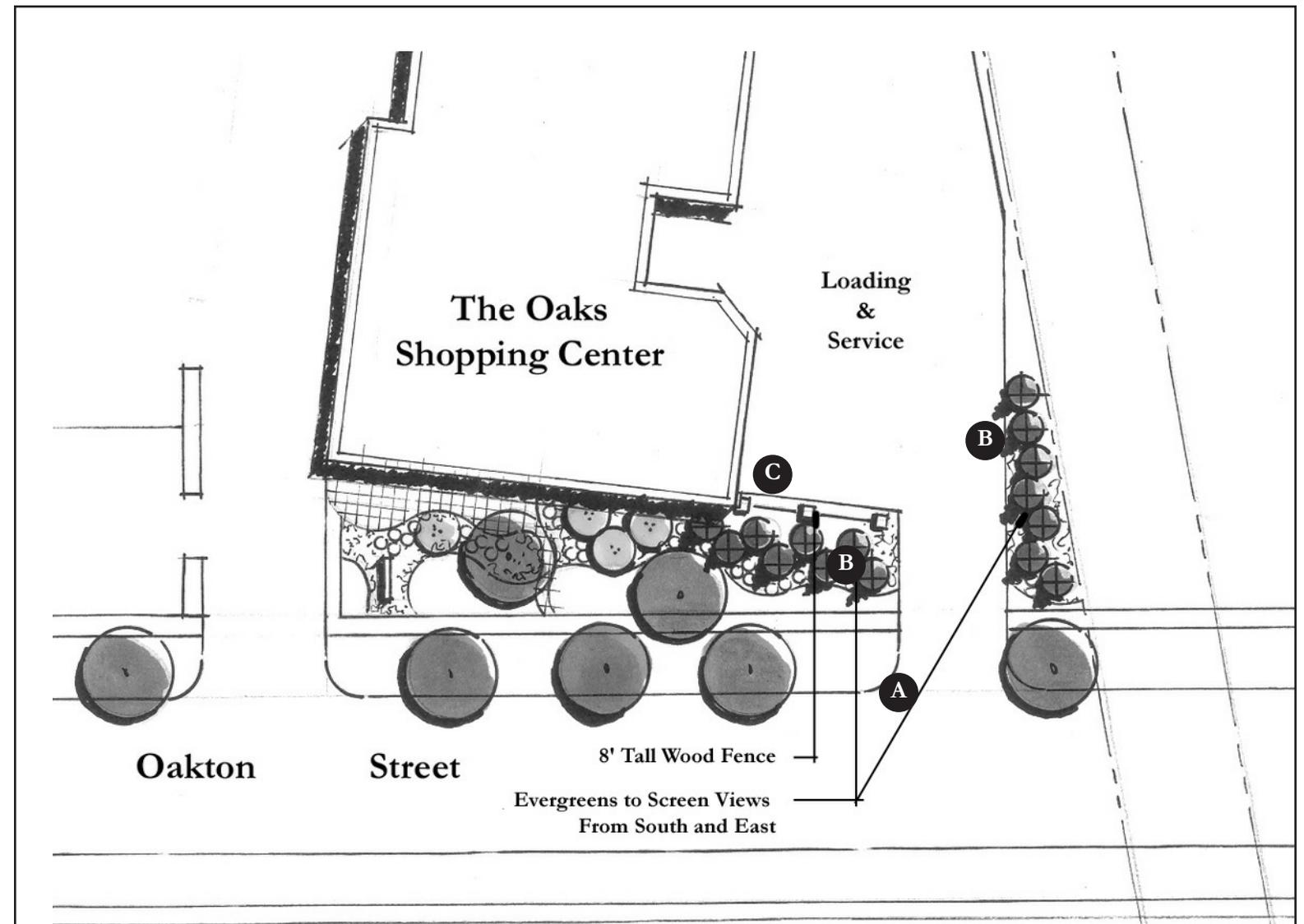
Utilities for new development should be installed underground where feasible..

OAKTON IMPROVEMENT CONCEPT

- A. Entrance drive configured to screen loading and service areas.
- B. Landscaping added to provide interest and screen rear of site.
- C. Fencing added to screen area from sidewalk.



Dumpsters clutter the site and are visible from the street.



Oakton Street - Site Improvement Concept

Site Planning

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Site Signage

Some site signage within Downtown is oversized and hard to read. Site signage along Oakton and Lee Streets is generally garish, excessive, and hard to read. Some sites along Oakton and Lee Streets have large signs that display numerous business names/information and have potential for consolidation. There is no consistent placement of signage along Oakton and Lee Streets or consistent design theme.

- Site signage in Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets should be minimal and designed to reduce visual clutter and make it easy for both pedestrians and motorists to see.
- As businesses replace existing signs and as new businesses open, site signage should consist of monument signs. Sign height should be restricted to five to eight feet above grade, dependent on lot size, to reduce visual clutter.
- Site signage should be limited to the business name and logo. Text regarding advertising, sales and services should be limited.
- Changing text signs, electronic moving signs, and temporary moveable signs are prohibited.



Unattractive signage, including temporary signs with low quality materials.



Site signage along Oakton.



Unattractive, hard to read site signage along Oakton.



Site signage along Oakton.

DOWNTOWN SIGNAGE CONCEPT

- A. Sign placed perpendicular to roadway for easier viewing by passing pedestrians and motorists.
- B. Overall height and size reduced to open up views to building and sidewalk.
- C. Hierarchy of text heights created with site name larger than individual businesses.
- C. More contrast between text and background created to improve readability.
- C. Amount of information is limited on the sign.



Library Plaza sign.



New Sign Concept

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Des Plaines, Illinois

Prepared for the **City of Des Plaines**

by:

THE LAKOTA GROUP
LAURIE MARSTON, AICP

March 2005

Section 5: Streetscape Elements

Business District Design Guidelines

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Streetscape amenities such as decorative lighting, special pavers, bollards, trash cans and benches can enhance an area's pedestrian environment and commercial viability. These streetscape elements can identify an area as a special and distinct place for shoppers, visitors, residents, and employees. Streetscape elements to consider include: benches, trash receptacles, tree grates, planters, bicycle racks, decorative fencing, street lighting, bollards, paving materials, newspaper stands, decorative arches, public art, banners, water features and clocks.

There is a need to expand, as well as enhance the Downtown streetscape to make it more convenient, safe and visually attractive. Some trash cans, benches and other street furniture are deteriorated and in poor condition. Some appear to be too small for the wide sidewalks along Miner Street. There are few streetscape amenities along Oakton and Lee Streets, which lack a distinct, attractive, pedestrian-friendly image.

Ongoing maintenance of streetscape furniture and amenities is an important consideration when developing a streetscape program. Continual maintenance is critical to providing an organized, inviting streetscape appearance.

Street Furniture & Amenities

- Coordinated streetscape designs should be initiated to update and improve pedestrian amenities throughout Downtown, and to create a new physical character for Oakton and Lee Streets.
- After the streetscape designs are established, all new developments and building renovations should use consistent streetscape elements that follow the City's streetscape theme for each area.
- Street furniture and amenities located in public ways and other public property should be harmonious with the design of adjacent buildings and other structures.
- New benches, trash cans, and other elements should be clustered in high traffic areas and located to maintain a proper path of travel for pedestrians.
- New sidewalks should be designed to allow ample space for outdoor dining, landscaping, and other elements.
- Site amenities provided within a site should also match established streetscape character regarding lights, benches, and trash cans.



Some Downtown streetscape elements are too small, deteriorating and inconsistent.



Streetscape amenities, such as public art, should be incorporated where feasible into the Downtown streetscape.

Streetscape Elements

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Benches

Pedestrian seating should be incorporated into existing and future developments, but should not inhibit or impede pedestrian circulation along the sidewalks.

- Benches should be placed along streets in unobtrusive locations and considered in private open spaces such as front setback areas and plazas.



Bench Example.

Trash Cans

Trash cans should be placed on each street corner and mid-block at high-traffic pedestrian areas throughout Downtown and along the Oakton and Lee Street corridors. Open spaces should also include trash cans. Installation of recycling containers should also be considered.

- Trash cans should be placed along streets in unobtrusive locations and considered in private open spaces such as front setback areas and plazas.



Trash and Recycling Can Example.

Bicycle Racks

Bicycle racks should be located in high-traffic areas throughout Downtown and along the Oakton and Lee Street corridors. Bike racks should not impede the flow of pedestrian traffic along sidewalks. Bicycle racks should also be provided in open spaces.

- Bicycle racks should be placed along streets in unobtrusive locations and considered in public open spaces.



Bike Rack Example.

Bollards & Drinking Fountains

Decorative, metal, non-lit bollards should be considered at key locations to create a separation between pedestrians and vehicles and add to the streetscapes's visual interest. Drinking fountains are a desirable element in active downtowns.

- Bollards should be placed where appropriate along the edges of open spaces and pedestrian paths.
- Drinking fountains should be placed where appropriate along sidewalks and in plazas.



Bollard and Drinking Fountain Examples.

Decorative Fencing

Decorative metal fencing should be used where appropriate to enhance and define open spaces, landscaped areas, parking lots and setback areas. Fencing around parking lots should be in accordance with the City's Zoning Ordinance.

- Decorative iron or aluminum fencing, three to four feet in height is encouraged.
- Solid fencing should be limited to service areas.
- Chain link fencing and barbed wire is prohibited anywhere in Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets.



Decorative Fence Example.

Paving Materials

Special paving materials can provide variety and appeal to hardscape surfaces while defining different areas of activity.

- Sidewalks, parking lots, terraces, and other areas that have special pavers should provide an inviting appearance and be adequately sized and drained for the intended use.
- Decorative paving materials, "brick pavers" should be used in plazas and pedestrian paths where feasible.
- Paving patterns should be simple and only one or two pre-approved styles should be used for Downtown and the Oakton and Lee Street corridors.



Special Paver Examples.

Streetscape Elements

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Newspaper Stands

Newspaper boxes/machines are prevalent in Downtown. However, they clutter the sidewalks and detract from the pedestrian environment and overall streetscape. Decorative newspaper stands would remove clutter by consolidating newspaper machines. They should be located at high-traffic pedestrian locations.

- Decorative newspaper stands should be located throughout Downtown and near the train station to consolidate numerous newspaper boxes.



Random newspaper boxes clutter sidewalks.

Street Lighting

Cobra style light fixtures and acorn style decorative fixtures are the predominant type of streetlight along the streets of Downtown. Decorative streetlights should be maintained and provided throughout Downtown to create consistent pedestrian scaled lighting.

- New developments should provide decorative light fixtures consistent with the standard Downtown “acorn” style light fixtures. Within parking lots, lighting standards should complement the design of the acorn fixtures in look and color.
- After a standard lighting fixture is determined for Oakton and Lee Streets, new developments should provide fixtures that are consistent in style and color within parking lots and pedestrian areas.



Decorative newspaper stands reduce clutter while enhancing the streetscape.



Standard “Cobra” style light fixtures are predominant along Oakton Street.



Decorative streetlights should be expanded throughout Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets.

DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE CONCEPT

- A. Decorative acorn style street lights.
- B. Planting beds installed where feasible to separate pedestrian and motor traffic, reduce concrete width and add visual interest to the street.
- C. Special paving added in plazas and along primary sidewalks to provide variety.
- D. Decorative moveable planters added along storefronts to add color and break up the look of large paved areas.
- E. Benches placed where feasible.
- F. Architectural lighting added to complement decorative street lighting.



Existing Downtown Streetscape.



Downtown Streetscape Enhancement Concept

Streetscape Elements

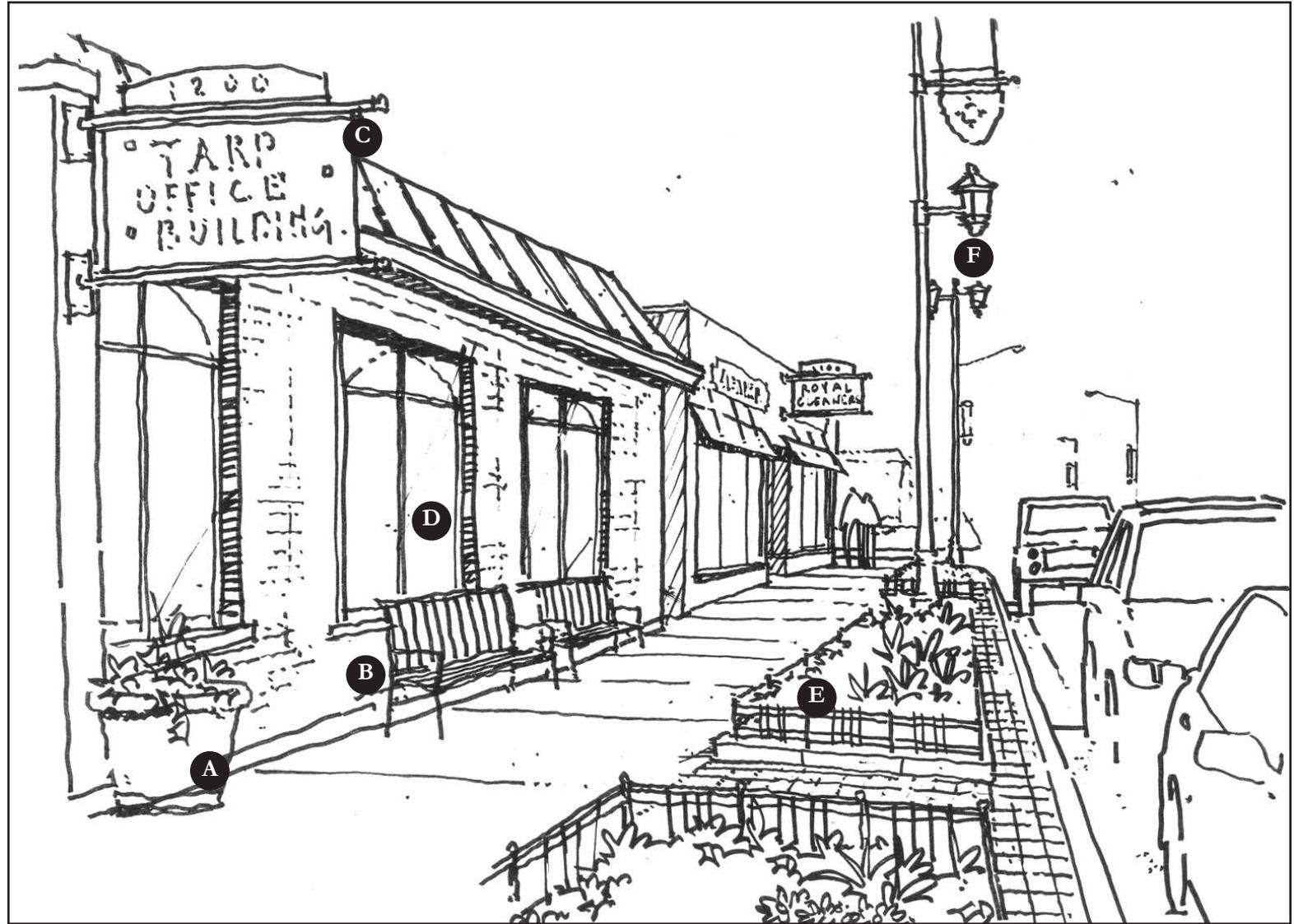
BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

OAKTON STREETSCAPE CONCEPT

- A. Decorative planters added to provide color along the street.
- B. Benches placed along street to provide resting and stopping areas.
- C. Projecting blade signs added on blocks with narrow setbacks to improve sign visibility for pedestrians and motorists.
- D. Large windows installed on blank facades where feasible.
- E. Where space permits, low planting beds installed to help separate pedestrian and motor traffic, as well as reduce concrete width and add color to the street.
- F. New decorative street lighting added based on overall Oakton Street design theme.



Existing Oakton Streetscape.



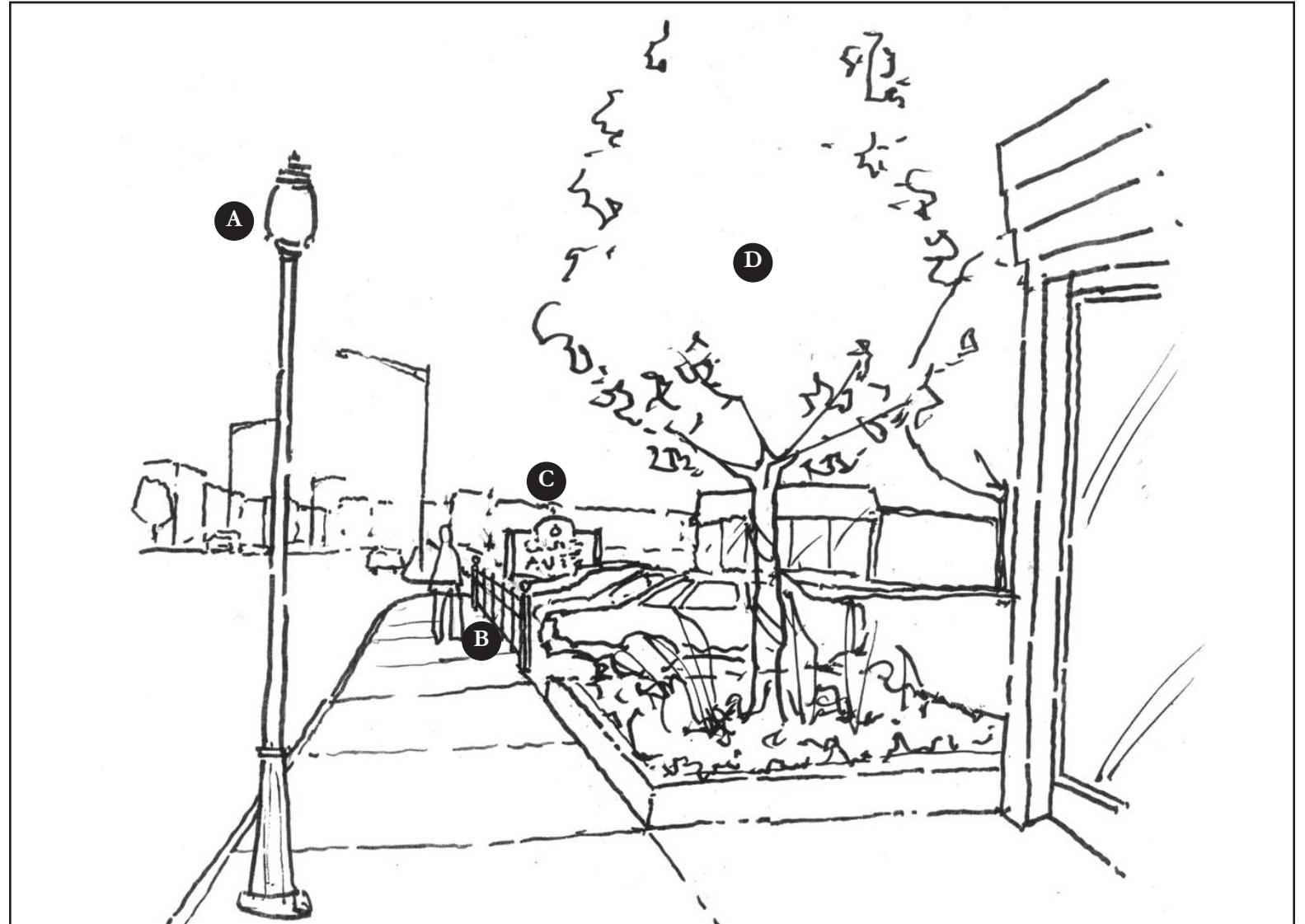
Oakton Streetscape Enhancement Concept

OAKTON STREETSCAPE CONCEPT

- A. Pedestrian scaled lighting added in between new street lighting.
- B. Low decorative fencing placed to screen parking lots.
- C. Site signage consolidated into low monument signs.
- D. Low planters installed with street trees where space permits.



Existing Oakton Streetscape.



Oakton Streetscape Enhancement Concept

Streetscape Elements

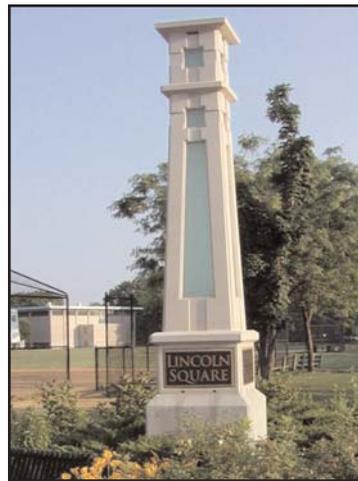
BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Signage

Identity Signage

Downtown Des Plaines and the Oakton and Lee Street corridors lack identity signage and gateways. An overall signage design theme with consistent colors, logos, and message does not exist. Decorative identity signage would provide residents, shoppers and visitors with a sense of arrival into these special areas within the City. Such signage would reinforce each District's character.

Decorative gateway signs should be considered for the River Road, Lee Street/Mannheim Road, and Miner Street entrances to Downtown, as well as the Lee Street/Mannheim Road and River Road entrances to the Oakton corridor. Identity signage should be considered at key locations throughout Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets.



Gateway sign examples.

Directional Signage

Directional signage leading to parking and activity generators is lacking throughout Downtown.

Specially designed directional signs should be placed in and near Downtown to direct residents, shoppers and visitors to parking and key destinations.



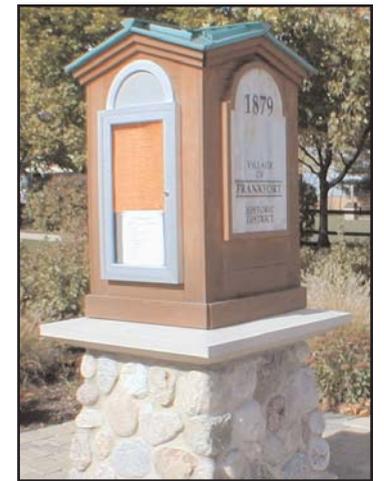
Existing directional signs in Downtown.



Informational Signage

Downtown Des Plaines lacks informational signs that guide pedestrians to areas of interest. Special informational signs and kiosks should be designed for pedestrian use and placed near Downtown activity generators.

Informational signage could include area maps, business, parking and plaza locations, event listings, historical information and local information.



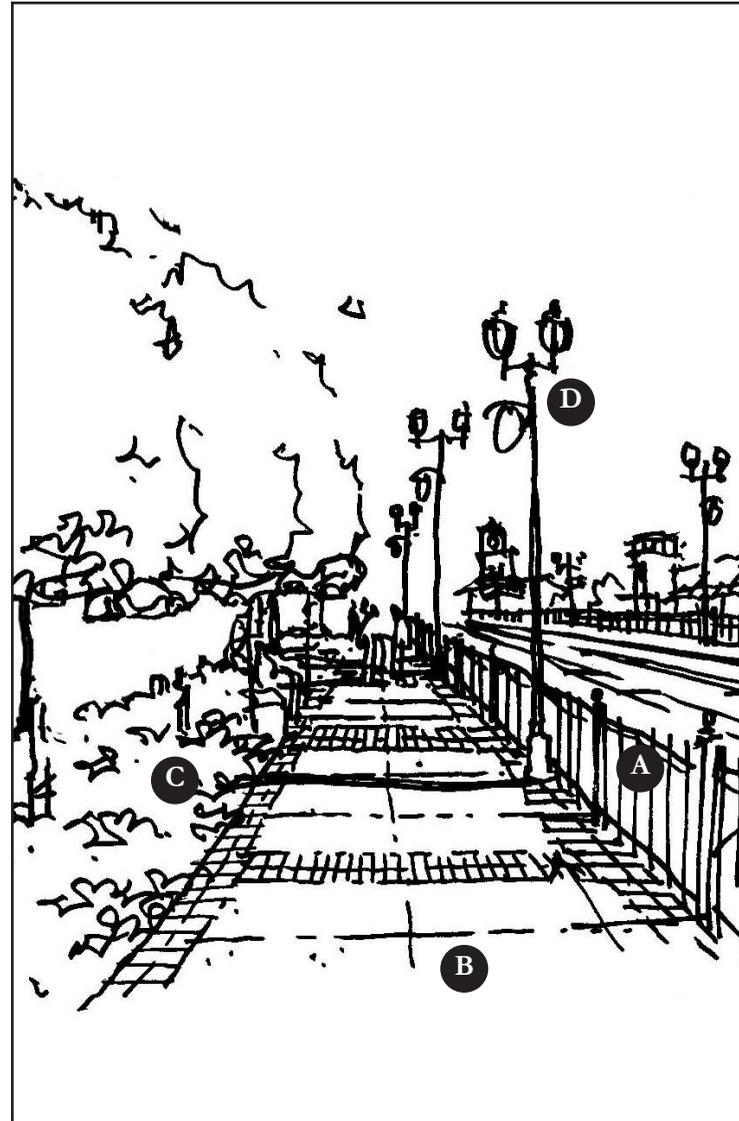
Informational sign/kiosk examples.

RAILROAD ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT

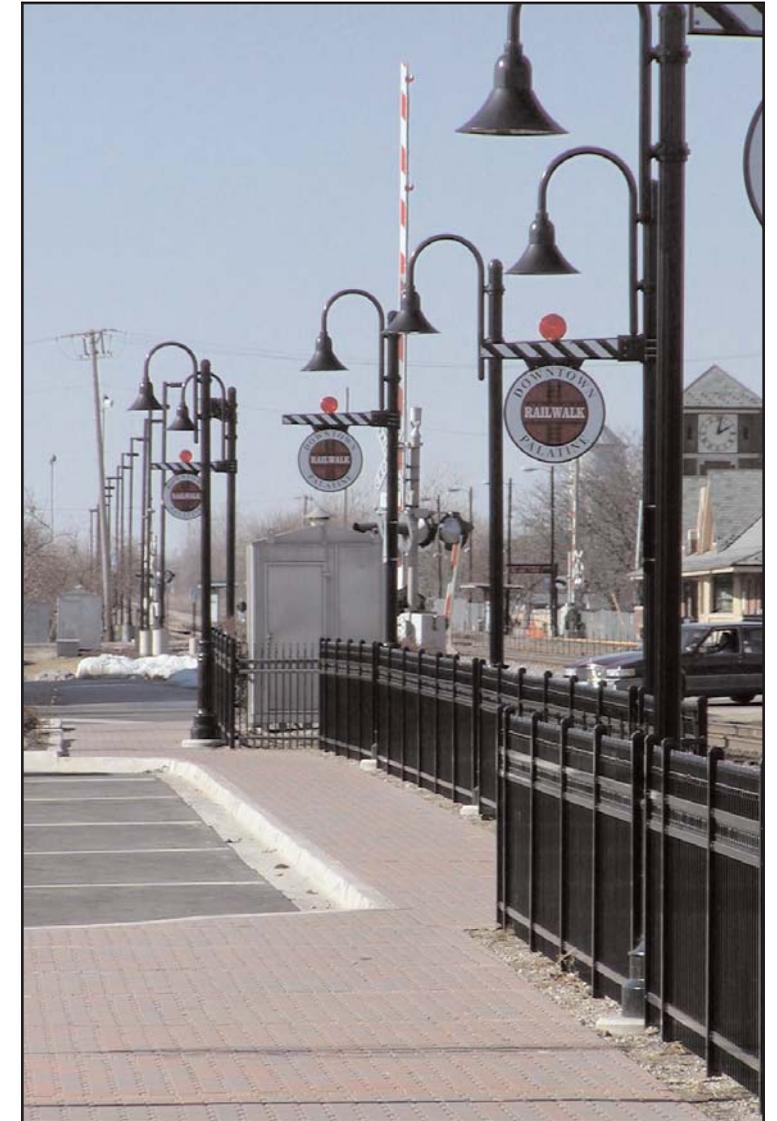
- A. Decorative fencing added to create a buffer along railroad tracks.
- B. Special pavers along the fence to create a pathway as a special amenity through Downtown.
- C. Low shrubs and decorative planters to further enhance the pathway and screen parking.
- D. Special lighting and signage added to improve safety and appearance.



Existing Railroad through Downtown.



Railroad Enhancement Concept



Railroad Enhancement Example.

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Des Plaines, Illinois

Prepared for the **City of Des Plaines**

by:

THE LAKOTA GROUP
LAURIE MARSTON, AICP

March 2005

Section 6: Landscaping

Business District Design Guidelines

LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

The following landscaping guidelines supplement the City's Landscape Ordinance, which defines the necessary landscape requirements that property owners must meet or exceed on all new developments and rehabilitations.

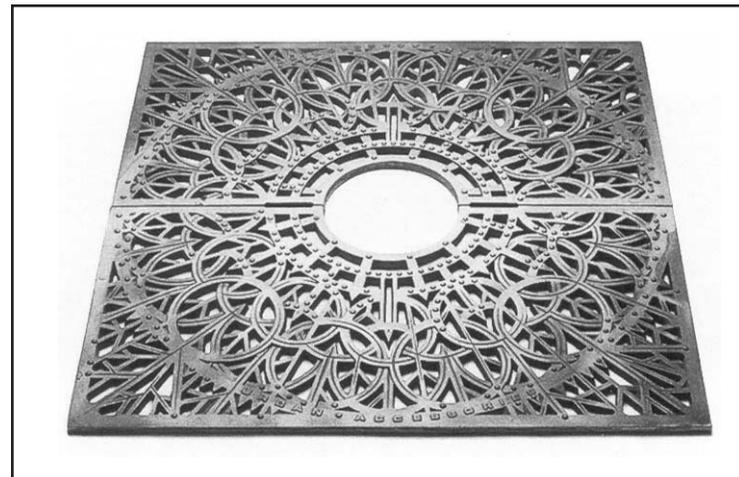
The Landscape Ordinance also provides a general plant palette for a variety of landscape conditions including tree plantings, hedge plantings, shrub plantings, and groundcover plantings. In addition to the recommended species, the Landscape Ordinance sets standards for material quality, digging and handling, inspection, planting details, and maintenance.

- Landscape treatment should be provided to enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas and provide shade.
- Unity of design should be achieved by repetition of certain plant varieties and other materials, and by correlation with adjacent developments.
- Plant material should be selected for structure, texture, color and for its ultimate growth potential. Plants that are indigenous to the area and that will be hardy, harmonious to the design, and attractive should be used.
- In locations where plants will be susceptible to injury by pedestrian or motor traffic, they should be protected by appropriate curbs, tree guards, or other device.

Street Trees

Street trees in the Downtown are numerous, appear in good condition and are adequately spaced. Landscaping is sparse along Oakton and Lee Streets. Most of the Oakton and Lee Street Corridors has narrow sidewalks, as well as few parkways or street trees.

- New trees and plantings should be installed in parkways and paved areas where needed.
- Parkway trees should be installed consistently along the street, but not in a manner to detract from building signage or illumination.
- Deteriorating tree grates should be replaced with a decorative grates.



Decorative tree grate example.

Seasonal Flowers & Shrubs

Beyond street trees, there is minimal landscaping within properties, i.e. planters, hanging baskets, flower boxes or planting pockets. There is a need for additional landscaping in open pockets along streets and sidewalks within Downtown and along Oakton and Lee Streets.

- Moveable decorative planters should be placed in plazas and along pedestrian paths and sidewalks where they will not impede safe flow of pedestrians. They should be sized and scaled to the open space and sidewalks, and follow the streetscape theme for each area.



The Oakton Corridor lacks landscaping.

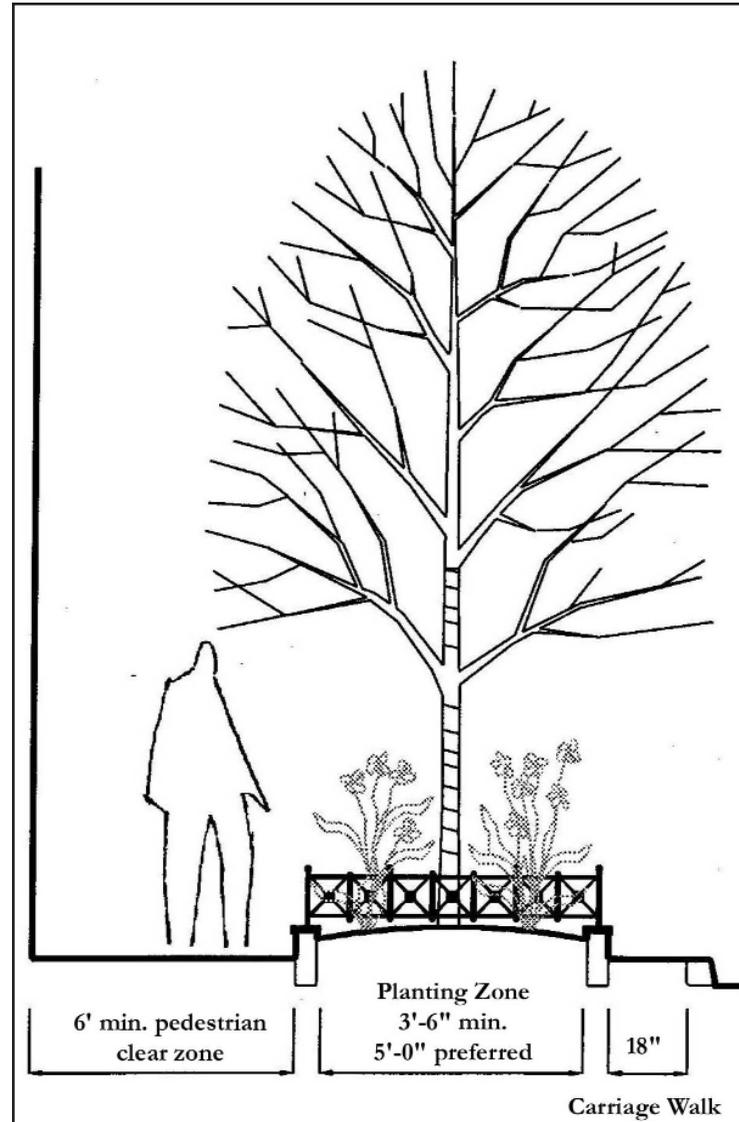
Landscaping

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

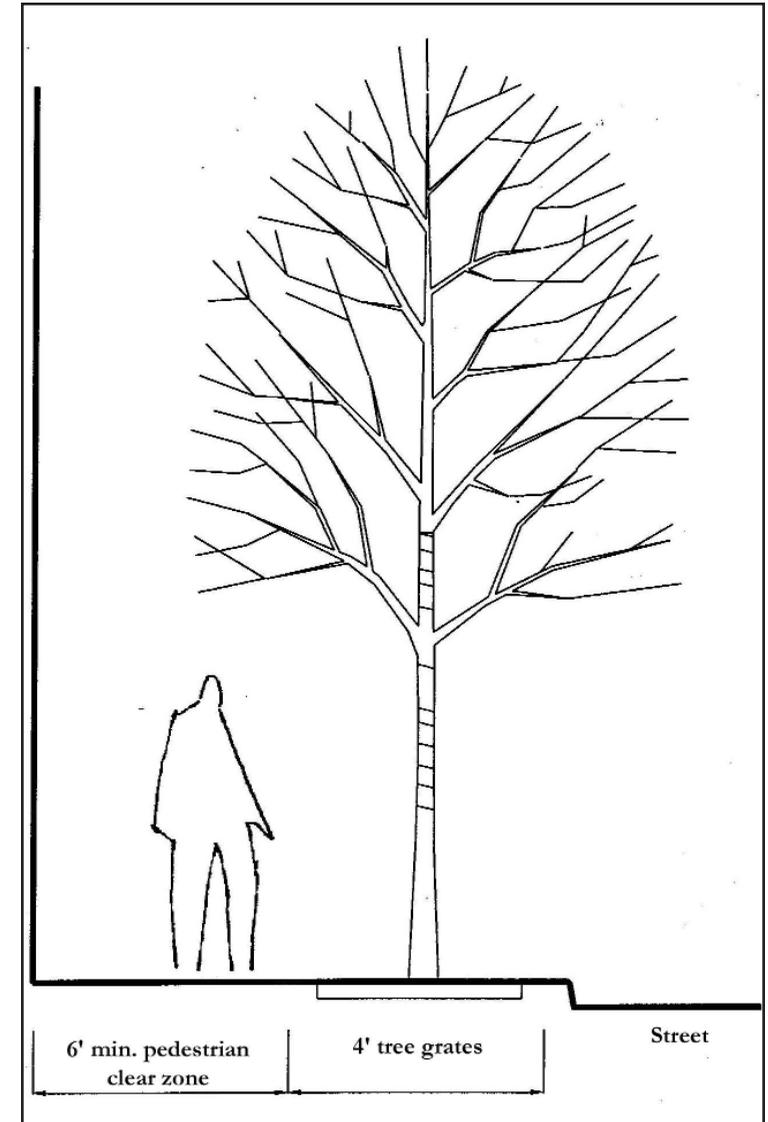
- New plantings and color pockets should be added along the street where space allows and in plazas. Raised beds, moveable planters, flower boxes, and hanging baskets provide seasonal interest, enhance the pedestrian experience, and reinforce the area's character. The City and Chamber of Commerce should work jointly to educate business owners about maintaining planters, boxes and baskets.
- Along wider sidewalks, raised landscape planters can be used to break up large paved areas, add visual interest to the street, and separate pedestrians from traffic.
- Vacant lots should be maintained with sod and low level plantings until developed with new buildings.



The Downtown streetscape lacks seasonal plants and other landscape features.



Conceptual sidewalk landscaping with raised landscape planter.

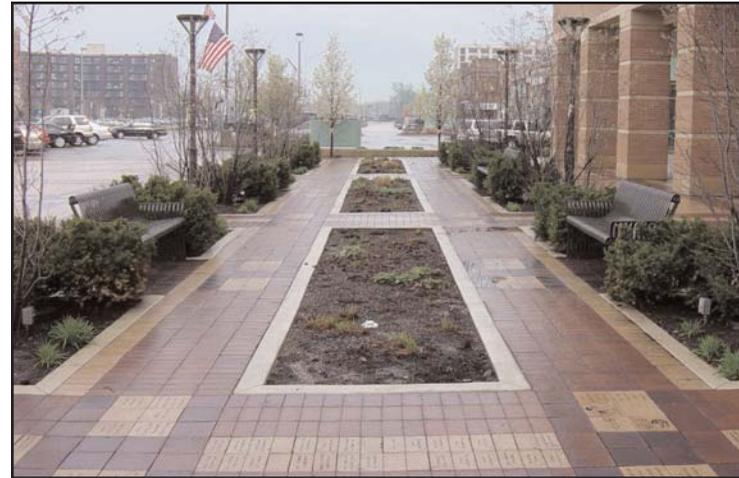


Conceptual sidewalk landscaping with trees grates.

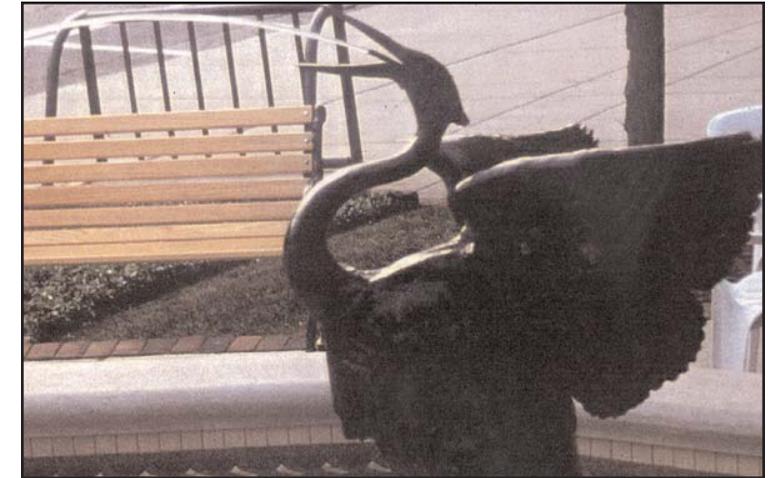
Plazas

Plazas exist in various locations throughout Downtown. These plazas provide seating and landscaping, and are generally in good condition. There are no plazas or open space along Oakton and Lee Streets.

- Existing and future open spaces and plazas should incorporate special features such as fountains, artwork, plantings, and other elements.
- Plazas should provide a variety of seating areas through benches and seatwalls.
- Moveable decorative planters should be placed in plazas and along pedestrian paths leading to plazas. They should be placed where they will not impede the safe flow of pedestrians. They should be sized and scaled to meet the size of the open space and/or paths.
- All plazas must be designed to meet ADA requirements.
- Plazas should include a variety of landscape materials to provide shade, create seasonal interest and soften building edges.
- In areas where general planting will not prosper, other materials, such as fences, walls and pavers should be used. Carefully selected plants should be combined with such materials where possible.



Downtown's Library Plaza.



Fountain example



Plaza example



Riverwalk/Plaza example.

Landscaping

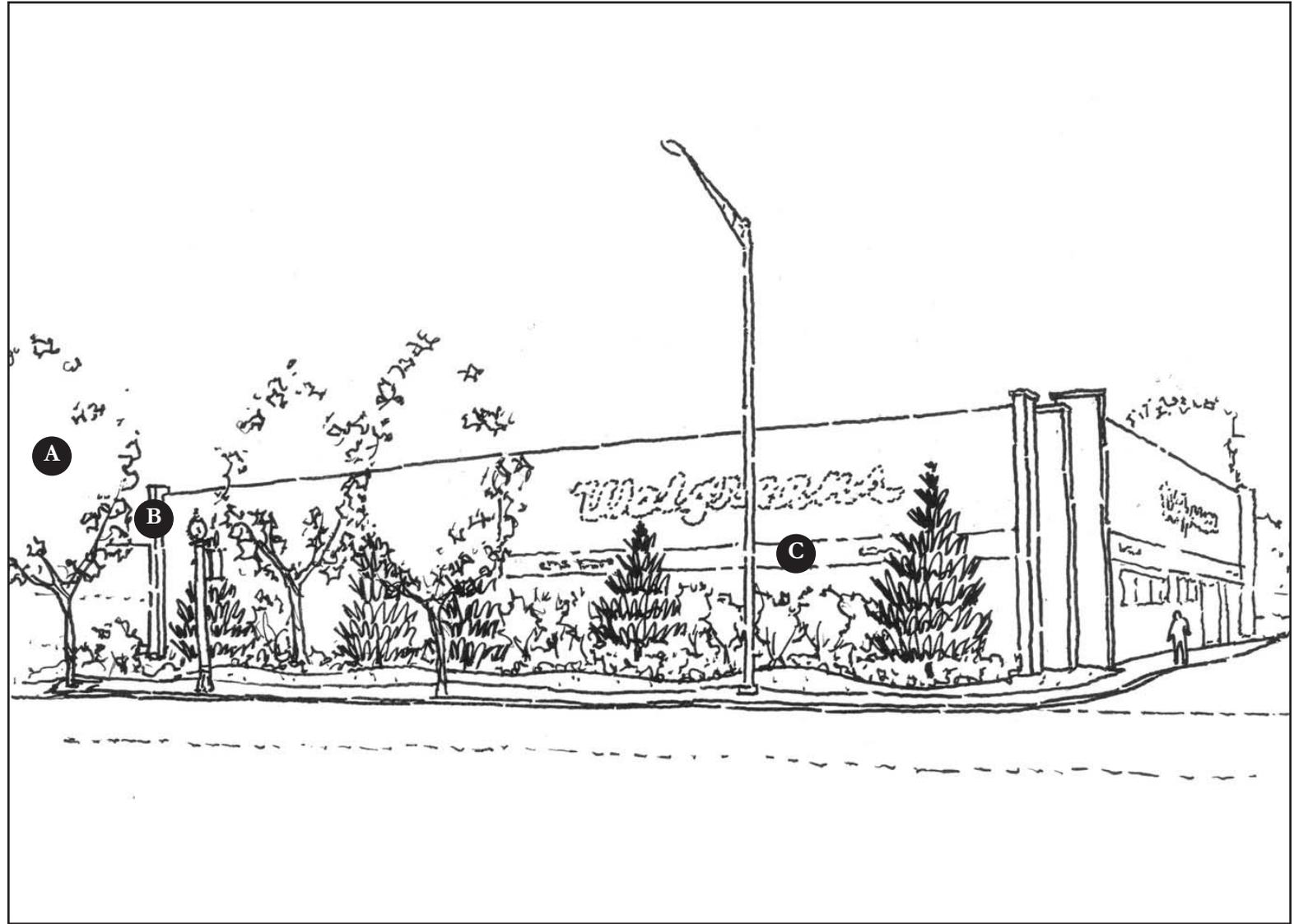
BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

OAKTON STREET LANDSCAPING

- A. Street trees added to parkway.
- B. Pedestrian scaled lighting added to supplement street lighting.
- C. Additional shrubs and evergreens used to screen blank walls where space allows.



Solid building wall with minimal landscaping on Oakton Street.



Oakton Street Site Landscaping Concept

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Des Plaines, Illinois

Prepared for the **City of Des Plaines**

by:

THE LAKOTA GROUP
LAURIE MARSTON, AICP

March 2005

Section 7: Appendix

Business District Design Guidelines

Definitions

Air Rights - The right to use space above ground level.

Arcade - A series of arches supported by columns or piers; a building or part of a building with a series of arches.

Atrium - A skylit central court in a building.

Bay - One unit of a building that consists of a series of similar units, commonly defined by the number of window and door openings per floor or by the space between columns or piers.

Belt Course - A narrow, horizontal band projecting from the exterior walls of a building, usually defining the interior floor levels.

Bollard - A short post constructed of metal, wood or stone used to limit an area and restrict vehicles.

Brace - A diagonal stabilizing member of a building frame.

Bracket - A support element under eaves, shelves or other overhangs; often more decorative than functional.

Buildable Area - The area of a lot that can be built upon.

Building Mass - The height, width and depth of a structure.

Building Scale - The relationship of a particular building, in terms of building mass, to other nearby and adjacent buildings.

Building Setback - The distance between a building and any lot line.

Caliper - The diameter of a tree trunk.

Cantilever - A projecting beam or part of a structure supported only at one end.

Casement - A window with sash hung vertically and opening inward or outward.

Clapboard - A long, narrow board with one edge thicker than the other, overlapped to cover the outer walls of frame structures; also known as weatherboard.

Cornice - Projecting ornamental molding along the top of a building or wall.

Cupola - A dome shaped roof on a circular base, often set on the ridge of a roof.

Dedication - The transfer of property by the owner to another party.

Density - The number of dwelling units per unit of land.

Dormer - A vertically set window on a sloping roof; the roofed structure housing such a window.

Easement - A grant of one or more property rights by the owner to and/or for use by the public, or other person or entity.

Eaves - The projecting overhang at the lower edge of a roof.

Egress - An exit.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) - The gross floor area of all buildings or structures on a lot divided by the total lot area.

Fenestration - The arrangement of windows in a wall.

Gable - A triangular wall segment at the end of a double pitched or gabled roof.

Gambrel - A ridged roof with two slopes on each side, the lower slope having the steeper pitch.

Hipped Roof - A roof with four uniformly pitched sides.

Ingress - An access or entry point.

Mansard Roof - A roof that has two slopes on all four sides.

Masonry - Wall construction of materials such as stone, brick and adobe.

Appendix

BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Micellaneous Structures - Miscellaneous structures include any structures, other than buildings, visible from any public way. Street hardware includes all objects not commonly referred to as structures and located in streets and public ways and outside of buildings.

Molding - A continuous decorative band that is either carved into or applied to a surface.

Mullion - A vertical member separating, and often supporting, windows, doors or panels set in a series.

Obelisk - A tall, four sided shaft that is tapered and crowned with a pyramidal point.

Parapet - A low, solid, protective wall or railing along the edge of a roof or balcony.

Pavers - Preformed paving blocks that are installed on the ground to form patterns while at the same time facilitate pedestrian and vehicular travel.

Pedestrian Scale - The proportional relationship between an individual and his or her environment.

Plaza - An open space that may be improved and landscaped, usually surrounded by streets and buildings.

Portico - A major porch or overhang supported by columns.

Quoin - Units of stone or brick used to accentuate the corners of a buildings.

Reveal - The vertical slide of a door or window opening between the frame and the wall surface.

Rosette - A stylized floral decoration.

Sash - A frame in which the panes of a window are set.

Setback - The distance a building is set back from the lot line.

Sign Area - The entire face of a sign, including the advertising surface and any framing, trim, or molding but not including the supporting structure.

Sign Band - The horizontal area on a building facade used for the sign.

Sign Face - The area or display surface used for the message.

Spindle - A turned wooden element, often used in screens stair railings and porch trim.

Stepback - An architectural element in which the upper stories of a tall building are stepped back from the lower stories.

Streetscape - All elements that constitute the physical makeup of a street and define its character.

Streetwall - The continuation of zero lot line building facades along a street.

Turret - A small, slender tower usually at the corner of a building, often containing a circular stair.

Vault - An arched ceiling of masonry.

Veranda - A roofed open gallery or porch.

Zero Lot Line - The location of a building on a lot in such a manner that one or more of the building's sides rest directly on a lot line.

Zoning - The delineation of districts and the establishment of regulations governing the use, height and bulk of buildings.

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Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1995.



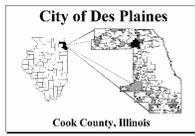
Lee Street Business District Site Context Map

Legend

- Central Business District
- Lee Business District
- Oakton Business District
- Parcel
- Road Surface
- Buildings
- Des Plaines River
- Rail Road

TIF Districts

- TIF 1



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Downtown Business District FEMA Map

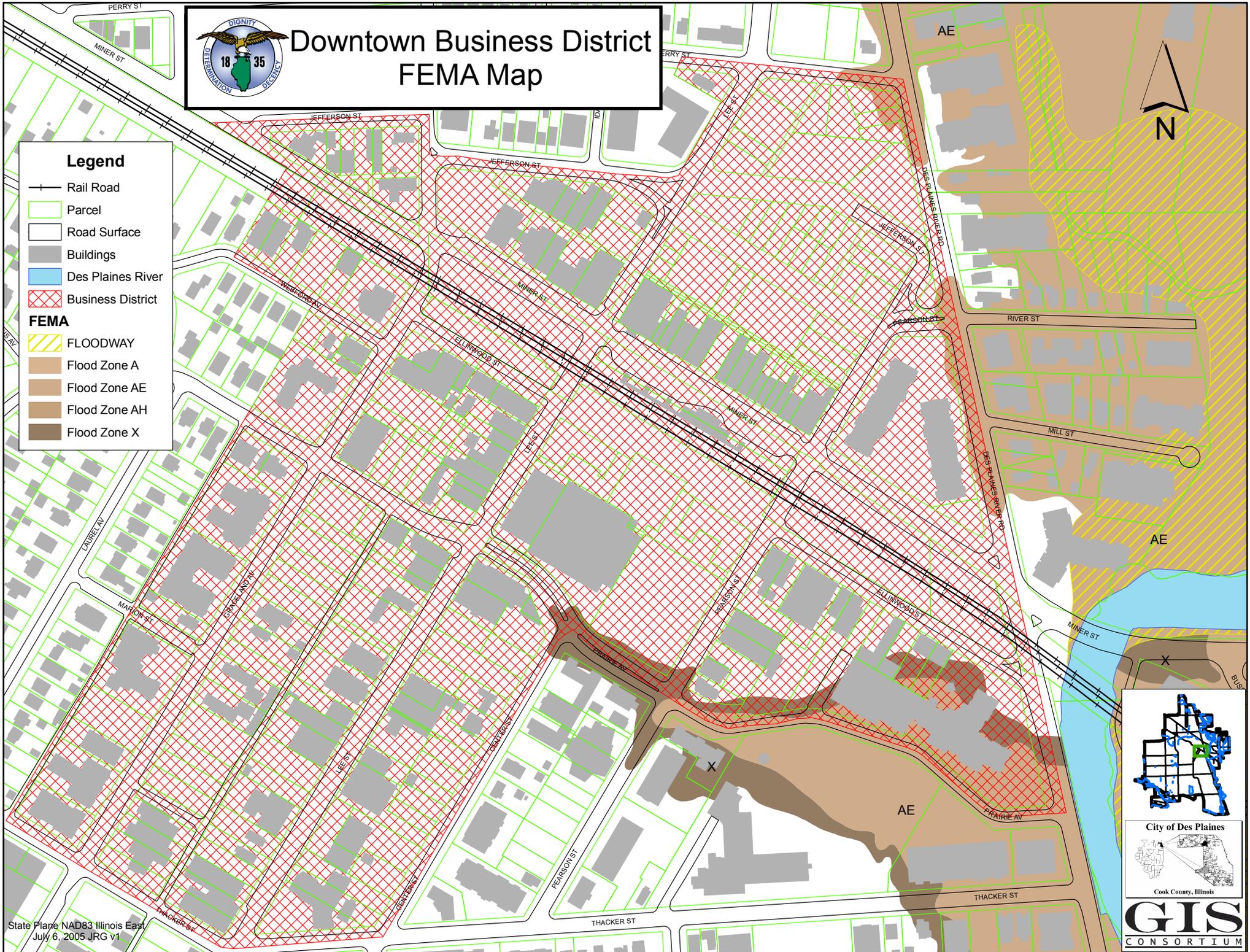


Legend

- Rail Road
- Parcel
- Road Surface
- Buildings
- Des Plaines River
- Business District

FEMA

- FLOODWAY
- Flood Zone A
- Flood Zone AE
- Flood Zone AH
- Flood Zone X

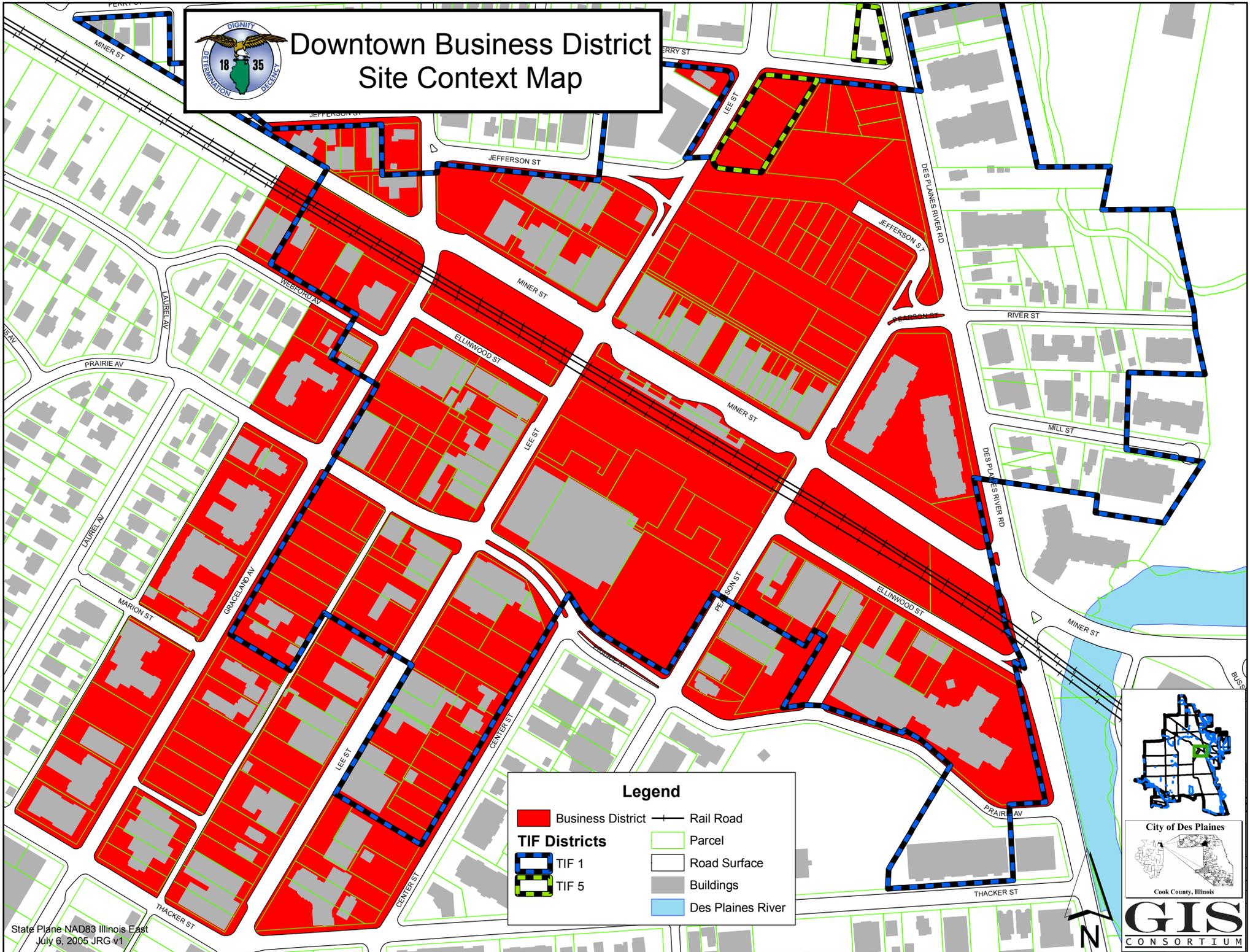


City of Des Plaines
Cook County, Illinois

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Downtown Business District Site Context Map



Legend

Business District	Rail Road
TIF Districts	Parcel
TIF 1	Road Surface
TIF 5	Buildings
	Des Plaines River



City of Des Plaines
Cook County, Illinois





Oakton Street Business District Site Context Map

Legend

Lee Business District	Rail Road
Oakton Business District	Parcel
	Road Surface
	Buildings
	Des Plaines River

City of Des Plaines
Cook County, Illinois

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