

# BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Des Plaines, Illinois

Prepared for the **City of Des Plaines**

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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.*