

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

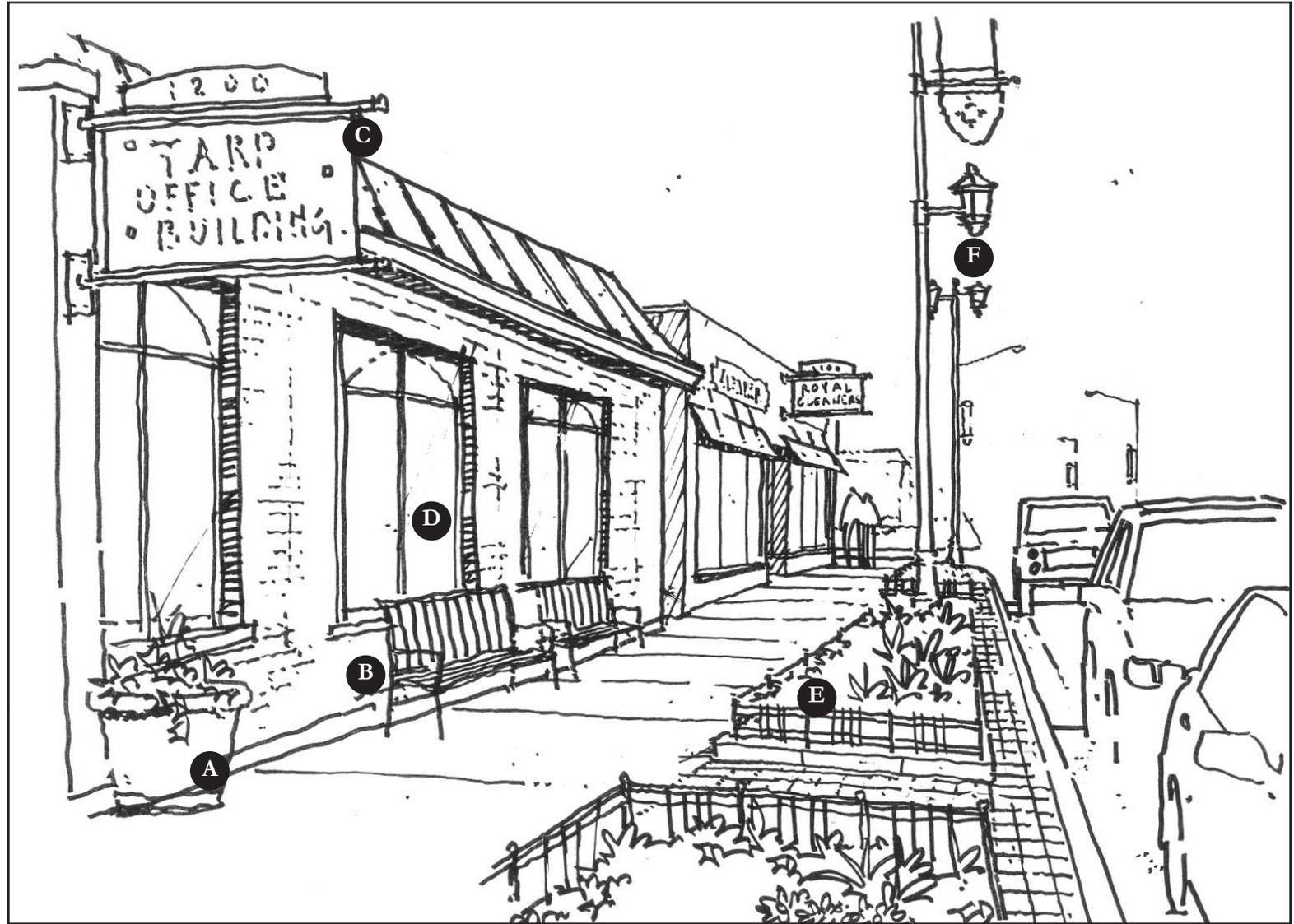
BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

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.



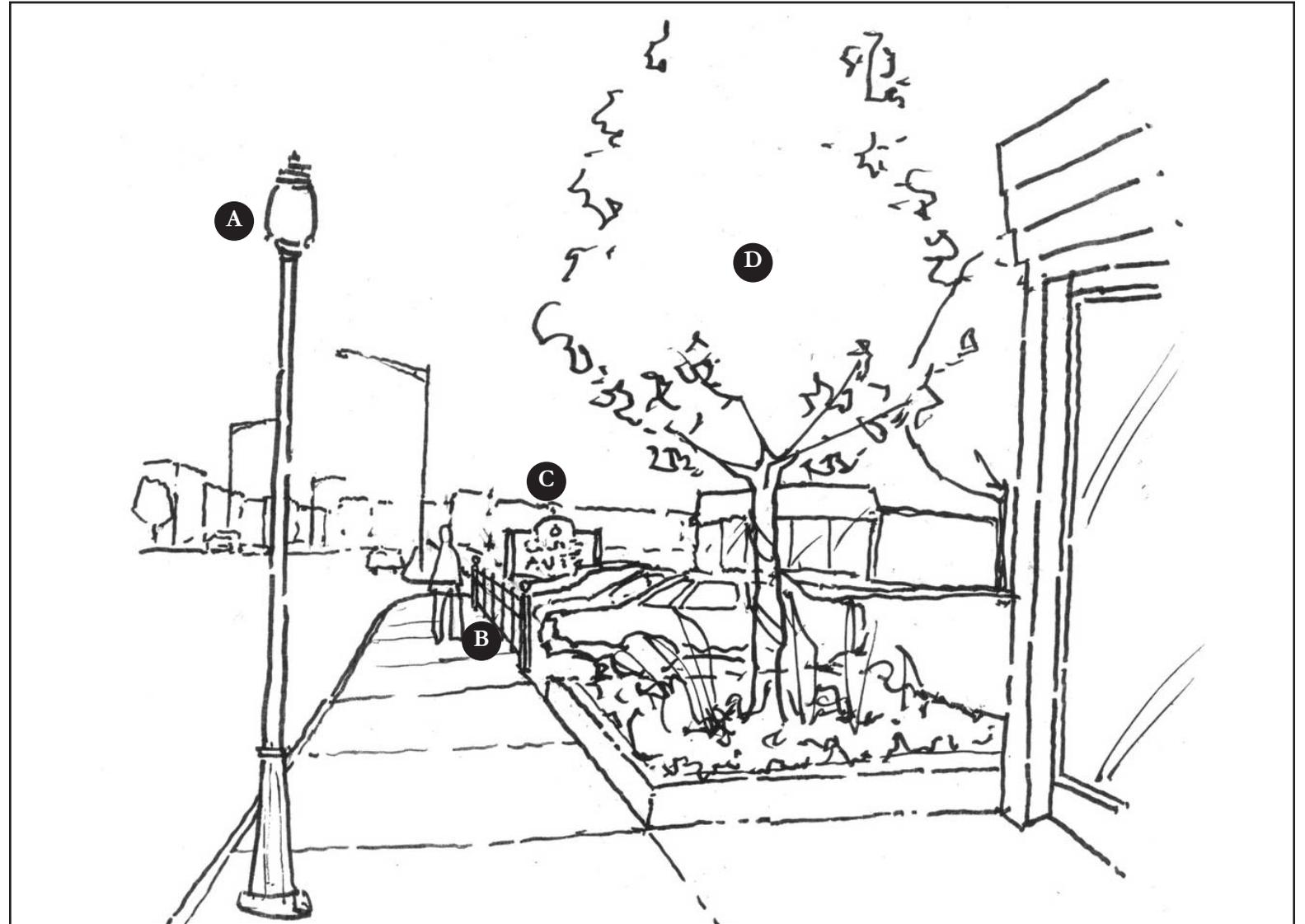
Oakton Streetscape Enhancement Concept

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.



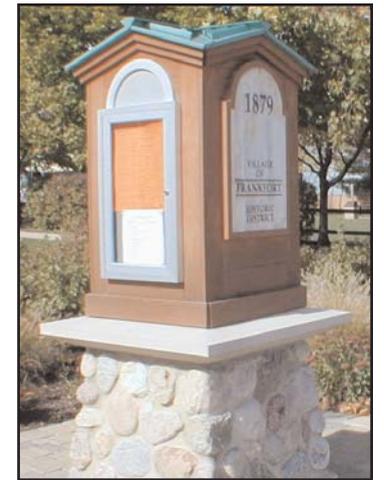
Existing directional signs in Downtown.



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.



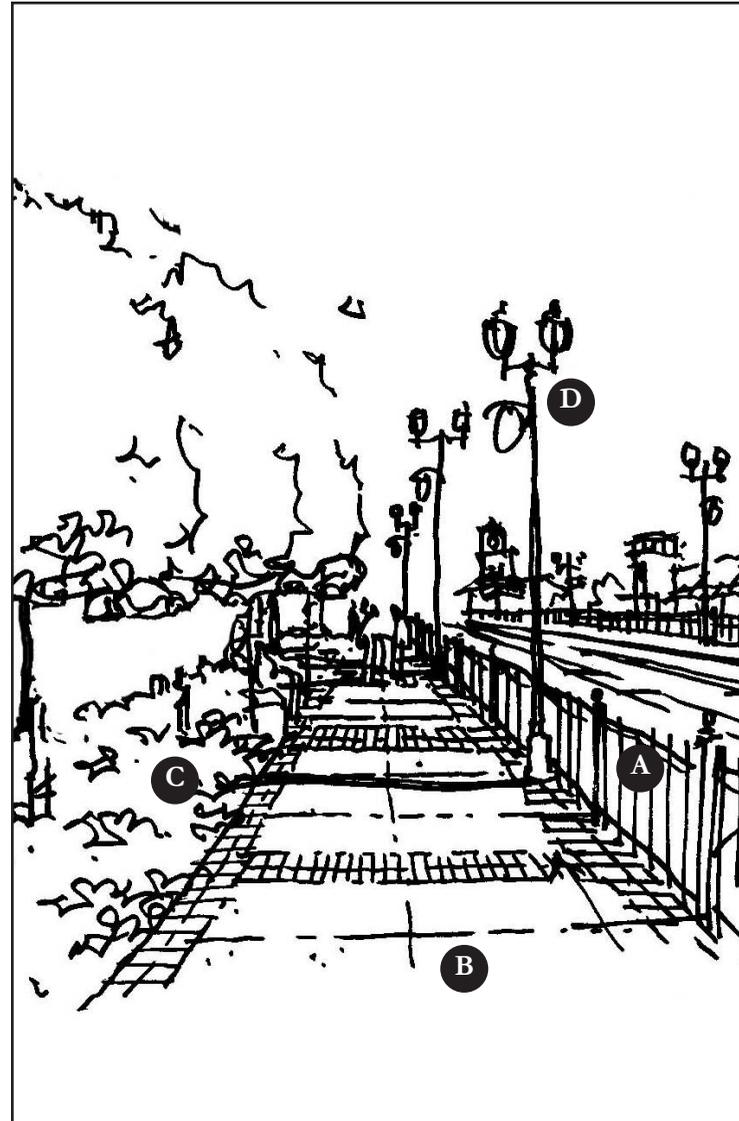
Informational sign/ kiosk examples.

RAILROAD ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT

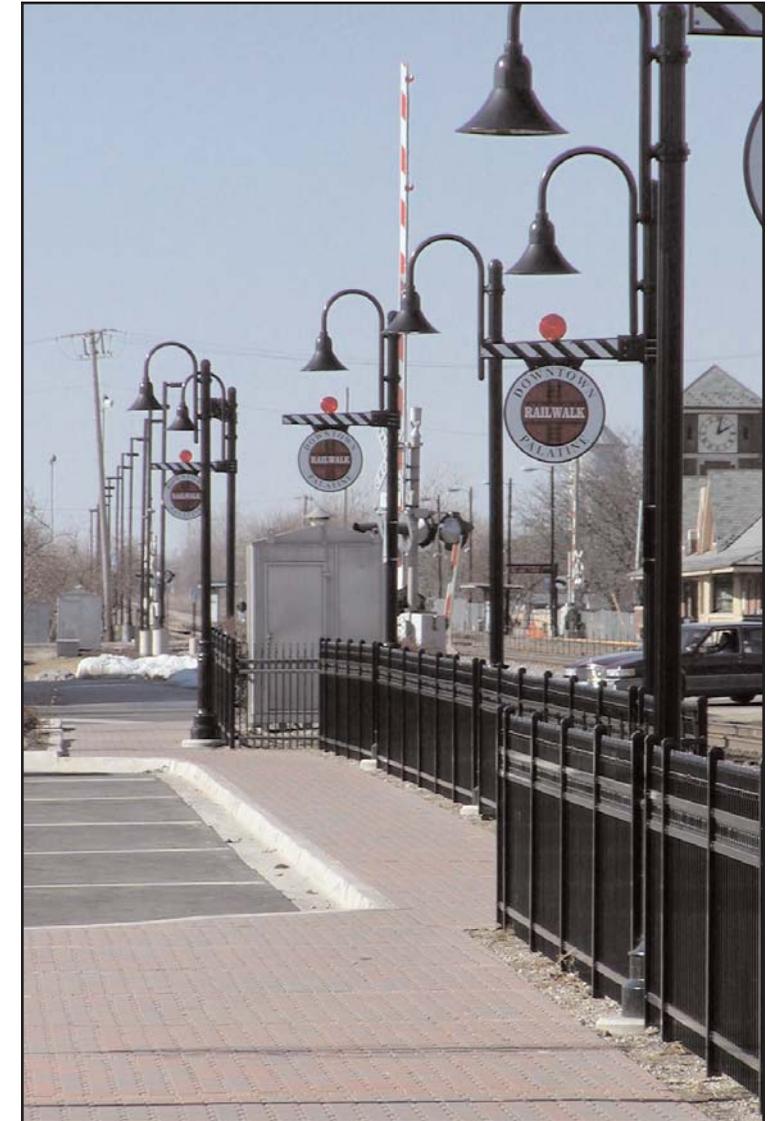
- A. Decorative fencing added to create a buffer along railroad tracks.
- B. Special pavers along the fence to create a pathway as a special amenity through Downtown.
- C. Low shrubs and decorative planters to further enhance the pathway and screen parking.
- D. Special lighting and signage added to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



Existing Railroad through Downtown.



Railroad Enhancement Concept



Railroad Enhancement Example.