

# **Streetscape Guidelines for Downtown Bismarck** **Bismarck, North Dakota**

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# **I. SUMMARY**

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# I. SUMMARY

## A. INTRODUCTION

The streets within Downtown Bismarck play a vital role in shaping the identity and open space framework of the City. The streets serve as entries and gateways to the Downtown, provide linkages between the various districts within the City, and establish the urban development pattern within the Downtown. The streets, particularly in Chancellor Square, also serve as the cultural heart of the City by providing open space for public gatherings and festivals.

### What Are Streetscapes?

The term "streetscape" in the context of Downtown Bismarck refers to the physical setting shaped by the relationships and design of buildings, parking lots, streets, sidewalks, landscaping and other elements.

In addition to buildings, streets and parking lots, other streetscape elements include: trees, lighting, street furniture such as benches, planters, kiosks, bus shelters and public art. The relationships between all of these elements and the quality of their design are what shape the image and scale of the City.

Urban environments are characterized by compact streetscapes that are enclosed by densely spaced buildings and lively street and sidewalk activity. The sense of enclosure created by the compact building pattern forms a comfortable scale for human beings.

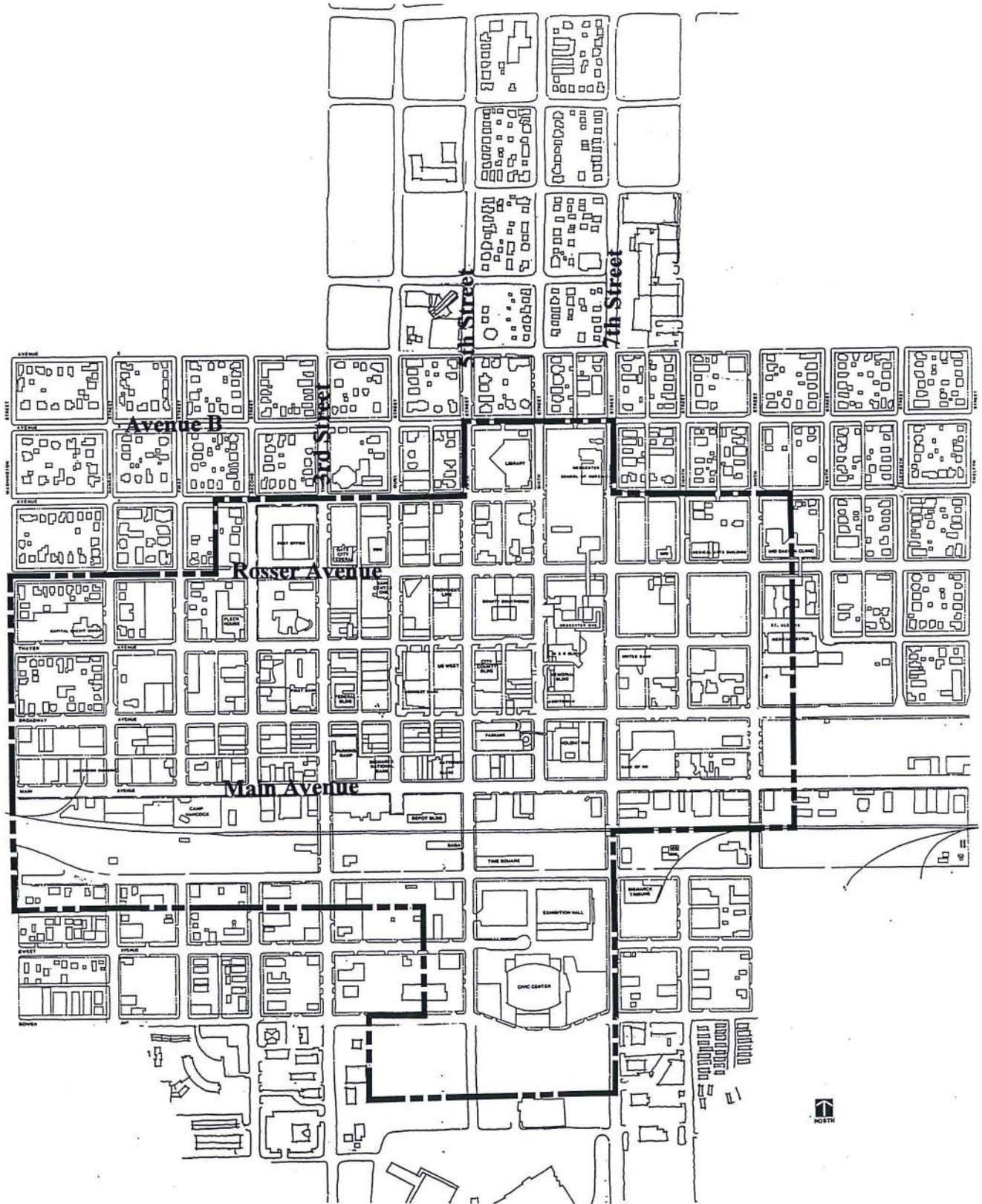
The challenge of this project is to integrate the various districts within the Downtown, the functional need to move and park vehicles, and the streetscape design considerations of creating a sense of continuity, human scale, and a fresh identity for Downtown Bismarck.

## B. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The main objective of this project is to create streetscape guidelines and a design framework manual to guide future decisions regarding redevelopment of Bismarck's Downtown Streets. The creation of streetscape design guidelines is one of the short term priority projects outlined in the 1993 Central Business District Plan.

## C. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the Central Business District (CBD) are illustrated in **Figure I-1**. This is a unique district within the City of Bismarck to which the various elements and design guidelines established within this plan will apply.



**Figure I-1**  
**Central Business District Boundaries**

## **D. PROJECT APPROACH AND ORGANIZATION**

The approach to this project begins where the Central Business District Plan left off. The intent is to expand, refine and implement the design objectives established through the planning and design process for the CBD Plan and to create streetscape guidelines that will result in an environment that reflects the vision and character desired by the community.

The Center City Partnership was formed to oversee this project and consists of participants on the CBD Plan Committee, City staff, property owners, and others. The Partnership provides continuity between the prior work on the CBD Plan and the development of streetscape guidelines.

The process was designed to encourage public participation and ownership of the plan, and to create a design that reflects the values, spirit and vision of the community.

The process entailed the following three phases:

**Phase I: Exploring Alternatives**

**Phase II: Alternative Refinement**

**Phase III: Final Streetscape Design Guideline Document**

This document is organized into the following key components:

- **Background**
- **Principles, Goals and Objectives**
- **Streetscape Hierarchy**
  - **Primary Downtown Streets**
  - **Secondary Downtown Streets**
  - **Special Streets**
- **Streetscape Elements**
- **Design Guidelines**
- **Implementation Strategy**

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## **E. HOW TO USE THIS DESIGN GUIDELINE MANUAL**

This manual is a guide for both public and private streetscape improvements. The manual's purpose is to ensure that a coordinated design results from individual efforts as the streets and sidewalks are rejuvenated over the next 15 to 20 years.

### **■ Public Sector:**

- The site planning, landscaping and architectural guidelines recommended in this document should be codified and incorporated into an overlay zone for the Central Business District.
- City departments should refer to the implementation strategy in this manual to coordinate, design, and budget for capital improvements.
- The Planning and Inspections Departments, as well as the proposed Design Review Committee should refer to the guidelines when reviewing individual development proposals within the Central Business District Boundaries. Each proposed development should comply with the guidelines and contribute to creating a cohesive, pedestrian friendly, and economically viable Downtown.
- The prototype designs in the manual should be referred to when selecting specific lights, kiosks, benches, or other streetscape elements.

### **■ Private Sector:**

- Developers should refer to the manual prior to generating design concepts for sites within the CBD to understand the overall goals of the community and how their property fits into the context of the streetscape plan for the Central Business District.
- Developers should refer to the Streetscape Hierarchy Plan in order to understand the expectations the community has for their site and the streetscape treatment fronting the property they are developing.
- Developers should refer to the site planning and architectural guidelines to understand the minimum standards for quality that the City will be expecting and reviewing for compliance through the site plan review process.
- The options for parking lot edge treatments and guidelines for landscaping parking lots should be referred to during the site

design phase of a project. Developers should discuss the options for their particular site with the City staff to determine if the parking lot edge treatments will be constructed as part of the site redevelopment or a larger public street improvement project.

## **F. SUMMARY OF THIS PLAN**

### **CHAPTER II -- BACKGROUND**

The background section of this document contains a summary of the key elements from the Central Business District Plan that establish the foundation for the Streetscape Design guidelines. Also included is an outline of forces and issues that were defined as a part of this planning effort which influence the streetscape design.

### **CHAPTER III -- PRINCIPLES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Design principles, goals and objectives are outlined in this section which will drive the qualitative and functional aspects of the streetscape guidelines. The goals and objectives are based on those established in the CBD Plan, input by public participants, safety and maintenance considerations, and sound urban design principles.

#### **Goals:**

- Create a downtown framework that establishes urban, architectural, site design guidelines that reinforce the unique, positive aspects of Bismarck's history and architecture.
- Modify the City ordinances to reinforce design objectives and guidelines.
- Preserve the integrity of City's architectural and open space landmarks such as the courthouse, train depot, auditorium and Patterson Hotel.
- Establish a cohesive system of streetscape treatments that reinforce a sense of human scale and balance between pedestrian and automobile space.
- Encourage public art in the downtown Streetscape and public spaces that contributes to Bismarck's unique character and sense of place.

#### **Objectives:**

Following are specific objectives pertaining to the design of streetscape elements recommended by the Center City Partnership.

#### **Streetscape Elements**

- Create an understated design for the elements that evokes a traditional and sophisticated image.

- Use color on temporary elements such as banners, sculpture, and other promotional accent elements.

#### **East Main Avenue Entry**

- Continue clustered tree pattern for visibility of businesses and the vitality of the plants.
- Buffer parking lots with railings, low brick or concrete walls, or landscaping.

#### **Third and Main Gateway**

- Provide directional signs to parking areas and downtown.
- Intensify the use of streetscape elements.
- Delineate the pedestrian crosswalks.
- Incorporate more festive, colorful elements and landscaping, particularly around the parking ramp.

#### **Depot Plaza**

- Incorporate tall vertical elements such as banner poles, sculpture, and/or a clock tower to signify an entrance and major focus to the Downtown.
- Incorporate a fountain, seating, sculpture, trees and other elements to create a pedestrian gathering area and festival plaza.

#### **Front Avenue Parkway**

- Incorporate bicycle, skating, and pedestrian trails
- Include interpretive markers or artwork that describes the cultural history, or natural systems of the area.
- Continue use of street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, directional signs, and other elements to create a parkway connection from the river to downtown.
- Form a gateway to downtown at 5th Street by placing a sculpture, banner poles, and/or a directional monument sign, and landscaping at the intersection.

#### **Fifth Street Spine**

- Create a connection to Kirkwood Mall by intensifying the use of streetscape elements, including directional signs and banners at Main Avenue.
- Continue street tree plantings south to the Mall.
- Incorporate evergreen massings where space will allow south of Main Avenue.
- Shape the corridor by placing future buildings within 20 feet of the right-of-way south of the parkway and at the right-of-way north of the railway line and by incorporating a railing, wall, and/or landscaping along the parking lot edges.
- Incorporate special art elements between Thayer and Main Avenues.

### **Chancellor Square**

- Modify the sign gates to be less intrusive and to accommodate more colorful elements that will relate to the rest of the streetscape.
- Add flowers to existing corner planters and flower pots on 5th St. at Thayer and Broadway Avenues.
- Add banner poles at key intersections
- Introduce 12 to 15 ft. pedestrian scale lighting that are vandal proof and provide opportunities to hang banners and or flower pots.
- Consider removing some or all of the bollard lights to minimize maintenance problems
- Add kiosks and/or sculpture on the sidewalks at the main intersections on Broadway and on Thayer Avenues.

### **Belle Mehus Performing Arts Plaza**

- Design a plaza that acts as a flexible space for both performing arts and as a passive pedestrian gathering area. Incorporate a stage area, fountain, sculpture, seating, trees, arbor and/or other elements to create a focus to the downtown.

## **CHAPTER IV – STREETScape HIERARCHY**

As recommended in the CBD Plan, a hierarchy of streetscape treatments is established to emphasize and respond to the different districts and street functions within the Downtown. The hierarchy streetscape treatments is as follows: Primary Downtown Streets, Secondary Downtown Streets, and Special Streets.

**Primary Downtown Streets** -- These streets are within the core retail, business and cultural heart of the City and will receive the most intense streetscape treatment. The streetscape design of the primary downtown streets is dependent on whether the streets remain two-way or are converted to one-ways. Four alternates have been evaluated for redesigning the primary streets.

Our recommendation is to plan for converting the downtown core streets to one-ways as illustrated in Alternate Two because the long term benefits are greater than found with the existing condition. More parking will be provided, the traffic circulation patterns will be easier to understand, the traffic calming effects should be greater, and the overall continuity of the core streetscape design will be strongest.

**Secondary Downtown Streets** -- This category includes streets outside of the Downtown core that are within the Central Business District boundary. These streets are in the fringe business areas, provide linkages between the residential areas and the downtown, and will be treated with a moderate use of streetscape elements.

The secondary streets are characterized by a number of different site conditions. Many automobile sales lots front the sidewalks and visibility to the cars is important. However many parking lots also

front the sidewalks and contribute to a negative image. One of the objectives of the streetscape is to provide solutions for the treatment of parking lot edges that are flexible and may adapt to a variety of site conditions and budget constraints.

Three alternative streetscape treatments for secondary streets are presented to illustrate various combinations of materials:

- **Alternate A** -- This is the most cost effective solution and includes street trees and lights along the curb with dry land concrete pavers at the base and a hedge as a parking lot buffer.
- **Alternate B** -- This solution recommends the use of bollards with low evergreen ground covers or other plants to provide an edge to the sidewalks and a buffer to the parking lots. The bollards provide a picket fence effect that essentially filters the line at sight in perspective to the automobile from sidewalks, yet allows for a clear view of vehicles when viewed from the streets. This solution is recommended for automobile sales lots or areas that may be redeveloped in the near future.
- **Alternate C** -- This is the most permanent, durable and costly solution. A steel railing with cast concrete or brick piers is illustrated as a semi transparent parking lot buffer. This solution is also recommended for parking lots fronting Main Avenue or other primary streets, particularly in areas where redevelopment has recently occurred or will not change in the near future.

**Special Streets** -- This category includes streets that serve a special function including the approach route on Main Avenue, the 5th Street linkage to the Kirkwood Mall, and Front Avenue Parkway.

- **Main Avenue** -- The main objectives for the streetscape design along Main Avenue are to create a sense of entry and provide directional information for the Downtown. This may be accomplished by intensifying the use of lights, trees, and other streetscape elements as you advance toward 3rd Street from the west and 7th Street to the east. Directional signs or monuments, and/or banner poles should be placed on Main Avenue at 3rd, 5th and 7th Streets to direct visitors to the parking areas and Downtown core. Parking areas along Main Avenue should also be buffered to provide a more positive image and define the edge of the street.
- **5th Street Spine** -- Fifth Street is the link between the capital downtown, the Depot building, BAGA Building, the Civic Center and Kirkwood Mall. To reinforce this connection, the main design objectives are as follows:

- Intensify the use of streetscape elements, directional signs and banners at Main Avenue.
  - Treat the portion of 5th Street south of the railroad tracks similar to Main Avenue, treat the portion north of Main Avenue to Rosser Avenue as recommended for a primary Downtown street.
  - Incorporate evergreen massings along the Civic Center parking lot to buffer the parking lot, define the street corridor, provide an effective winter landscape and to create a more comfortable walking environment.
  - Incorporate landscaped buffers along all other parking lots.
  - Enclose the corridor by placing future buildings close to the street right-of-way line. Building setback should be 0 feet to a maximum of 20 feet south of the railroad tracks and 0 feet north of the tracks.
- **5th Street: North of the Railroad Tracks to Broadway Avenue**  
The segment of 5th Street between Main Avenue and Broadway is an important link to the Chancellor Square area and an active pedestrian corridor. The design recommendation is to treat this section as a primary Downtown street with parking areas and turn lanes defined by sidewalk bump outs and raised concrete planters, clustered plantings of trees with benches beneath.

Space should also be provided for outdoor cafes, particularly by the Patterson Hotel/Peacock Alley. Special elements such as sculpture, colorful banners, and arbors should be incorporated to draw people's interests from Main Avenue and lead them toward the retail core.

- **Front Avenue Parkway** -- Front Avenue is planned to be a parkway connection between Downtown and the parks, Dakota Zoo and Missouri River to the west. The site conditions vary significantly from the urban character to the east to the open suburban character to the west. Each segment also has a variety of constraints including extreme slopes, power poles and limited right-of-way.

***Prototypical Treatment: 3rd to 5th Street***

Within this segment the right-of-way is limited to 70 feet, power lines parallel the north side, and the street has two through lanes with parallel parking on both sides. The proposed design recommends:

- Narrowing the through lanes to 13 feet wide and the parking lanes to 8 feet to provide more space for walkways and a bikeway.
- Defining parallel parking bays with curb bump outs and 8 foot wide tree lined boulevards.

- Maintaining left turn lanes at intersections.
- Incorporating an 8 foot wide bicycle/skating trail on the north side of the street between the curb and the power line poles.
- Incorporating a 6 foot wide walkway to service the businesses on the south side.
- Incorporating 13 to 15 foot pedestrian scale lighting approximately 120 feet apart in the boulevards.

#### **CHAPTER V – STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS**

This section of the document focuses on the more detailed design of the individual elements to be used within the streetscape including lighting, entry monuments, planters and other components. The combination of these elements will help shape a genuine, positive image and identity for the Downtown.

**Design Concept** -- The Center City Partnership discussed several possibilities for design concepts to guide the design of streetscape elements. The recommended concept for the design of the streetscape elements is to incorporate icons of Bismarck's rich cultural heritage with new elements to create a fresh and progressive identity. The elements will be composed primarily of metals to recognize the important role Blacksmithing played in Bismarck's agricultural economy as well as a unique regional folk art.

The following quote was excerpted from the book IRON SPIRITS published by the North Dakota Council on the Arts:

*Blacksmithing is an epic occupation, fundamental to the development of our agricultural economy. The religious experience which these crosses symbolize is equally fundamental to our civilization. These two factors combine to form a body of art, a beautiful balance of the sacred and the secular, an achievement worthy of praise. The work that the iron crosses represent and the meaning they hold are an integral part of the foundation upon which North Dakota society is established.*

ALLEN I. OLSON  
Governor

**Iconography** -- Symbols of Bismarck could be incorporated into the design of the streetscape elements. Icons representing elements of Bismarck's history could be fabricated out of metal and incorporated into the design of lights, benches, railings, kiosks, and other streetscape elements. Examples of these icons include:

- Wheat -- the state's highest cash crop and symbol of the agricultural economy
- Sunflowers -- the state's second largest cash crop

- Wild Prairie Rose -- the state flower
- Western Meadowlark -- the state bird
- Railroad -- instrumental in the settlement of Bismarck
- The paddle wheeler "Rose Bud" -- Symbol of the role the Missouri River played in the City's heritage.
- The Capitol City -- art deco styling and materials from the Capitol Building
- The State Motto -- "Liberty and union now and forever one and inseparable."

**Design Criteria** -- This section sets forth design criteria and outline specifications as a basis for selection of specific streetscape elements. Alternatives are also presented for each of the elements that illustrate the intent of the design concept and criteria.

#### **CHAPTER VI -- DESIGN GUIDELINES**

This section establishes design guidelines for site planning, architecture, historic preservation, and landscaping to reinforce the urban development pattern of Downtown Bismarck. These guidelines pertain to public and private projects outside the right-of-way of the primary, secondary and special streets.

#### **CHAPTER VII -- IMPLEMENTATION**

**Implementation Strategy** -- An implementation strategy has been formulated that outlines alternative methods of administering design guidelines. The strategy also outlines short, mid, and long term projects, as well as elements that could be built as part of public improvement projects and those that could be implemented by associations such as the Downtowners.

The recommended method for administering design guidelines includes a combination of incorporating design standards into an overlay district or new zoning district for the Central Business District, establishing a design review committee, incorporating design review as a standard step in the development review process, and exploring utilizing low interest loans, tax breaks and/or public financing as incentives for developers to include higher grade building materials, artwork and landscaping as a part of their project.

**Mission of Design Review Committee** -- The mission of the Design Review Committee is to review each public and private redevelopment proposal within the CBD boundary for compliance with the intent of the streetscape design objectives and the site design, architectural, landscape and streetscape design guidelines established in this manual.

The Design Review Committee should be appointed by the City Commission to become an administrative arm of the elected body. The

appointed committee will then have the authority and decision making capability to review and/or approve projects.

**Public vs. Private Streetscape Elements** -- Implementation of the streetscape elements will require cooperative efforts of both the public and private sector. The majority of the streetscape elements will most likely be constructed as part of a public street reconstruction project such as Main Avenue or the Front Avenue Parkway.

Elements that could be included in either a public improvement project or as part a large private redevelopment project include: parking lot railings and other buffer treatments, street trees, sidewalk paving, benches, sculpture, and other street furniture.

Smaller scale elements that could be implemented by associations such as the Downtowners include kiosks, flower plantings, sculpture, banners, and possibly the entry monuments. Many of these elements could foster community involvement through design competitions and fund raising efforts.

**Costs** -- The next step in the streetscape design process is to identify specific projects to construct. Once a project has been identified, actual costs can be determined. Very general construction costs were examined during the process of developing the guidelines.

However, it should be noted that this is a manual of *guidelines* that contains a number of examples for each streetscape element. Actual construction costs will be determined once these elements have been selected and combined into a definitive project design.

**Methods of Financing** -- A summary of current resources that may have application and may be available for streetscape improvement in Downtown Bismarck is included in this section.. The programs, resources, and techniques discussed within are representative of the types of mechanisms and financing tools available for a variety of projects. This list is intended to highlight sources which are most applicable to the issues developed as a part of this overall report. It is not intended to be an all inclusive compilation of every program available, nor is it intended to prescribe a particular funding package for prospective projects. Due to the changing nature of programs, eligibility factors, and existence of loan and grant programs, each potential project should be researched thoroughly in order to fully consider the specifics of the project in relationship to possible funding sources.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

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## II. BACKGROUND

### A. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT PLAN

The 1993 Central Business District Plan established the foundation for this Streetscape Design Guideline Study. The concept of the Central Business District Plan is to utilize a streetscape and open space network to integrate the retail, medical, commercial, civic center, and government districts within the Downtown and to focus redevelopment on the 5th Street corridor to strengthen the link between the north and south parts of the City. The elements of the CBD plan that pertain to development of the streetscape guidelines include:

- **Approach Routes:** Improved approach routes on 7th, 3rd, 4th, and Washington Streets from the north; Rosser and Main Avenues from the east and west; and Washington, 3rd and 9th from the south will be enhanced with streetscape elements, coordinated directional signage, lighting and trees.
- **Gateways:** The inner core of the CBD is defined by gateways at the crossroads of the main approach routes.
- **Front Avenue Parkway:** Front Avenue is proposed as a parkway connection between Downtown and the Missouri River, the Dakota Zoo and parks to the west. The parkway will include bicycle and walking trails, boulevard trees, and open spaces. See **Figure II-1**.
- **5th Street Spine:** The focus of the streetscape system and future hotel and convention facilities will be on 5th Street to reinforce a link between Downtown and the convention/retail district to the south.
- **Plazas:** Urban parks are proposed at the Depot site and in front of Belle Mehus Auditorium. These gathering areas will become the focus of cultural events and provide space for festivals, farmer's markets, art fairs, and restful areas for Downtown workers and residents. See **Figures II-1 and II-2**.

Belle Mehus Auditorium and the Memorial Building are proposed to be redeveloped as a performing arts complex. The combination of the arts complex and the proposed performing arts plaza across 6th Street will create a positive cultural addition to the Downtown.

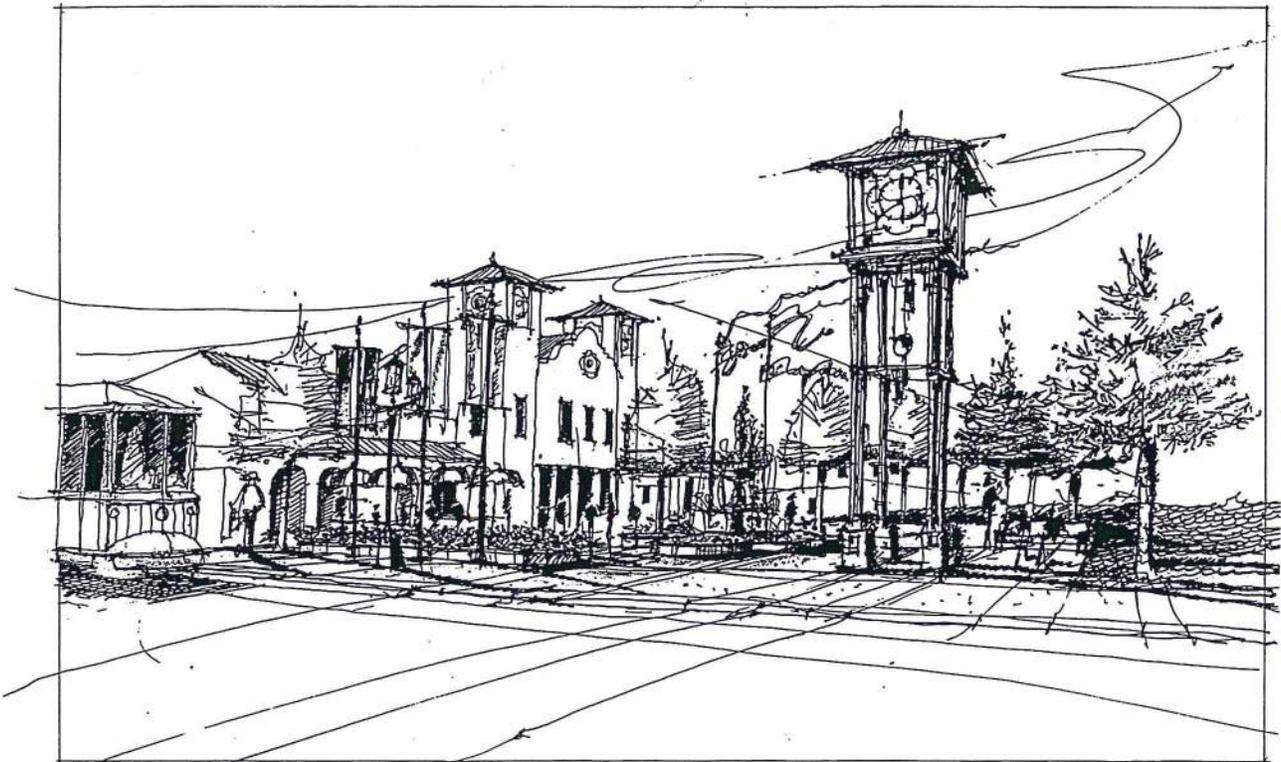
Two concepts have been prepared for the Belle Mehus Performing Art Plaza. Concept A utilizes the existing undeveloped space at the northwest corner of 6th Street and Broadway Avenue. Concept B illustrates an expanded version of the plaza that could be built in conjunction with a redevelopment project of the entire east half of the block. See **Figure II-2**.

In order to enhance the winter environment, ice skating facilities should be considered in one of the downtown plazas or on the Court House lawn.

- **Projected Development:** Hotel and convention facilities are positioned along 5th Street south of Front Avenue to reinforce this corridor as a hospitality and entertainment district. Potential office sites are illustrated at the south side of Main Avenue between 5th and 6th Streets, the northwest corner of 5th and Main, and at the southwest corner of Thayer Avenue and 6th Street.
  
- **Structured Parking:** Parking structures are proposed in areas that will serve all four quadrants of the CBD core. If the development that is projected in the market study occurs over the next 15 years, 500 to 900 more parking spaces will have to be provided in the Downtown.

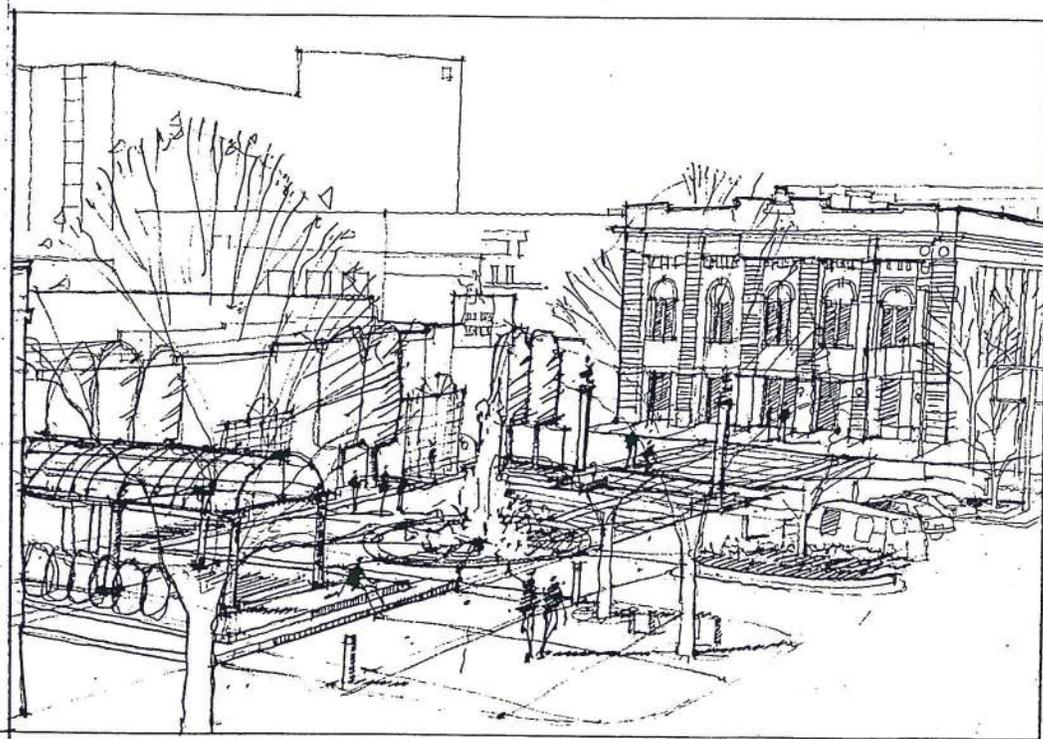


Front Avenue Parkway

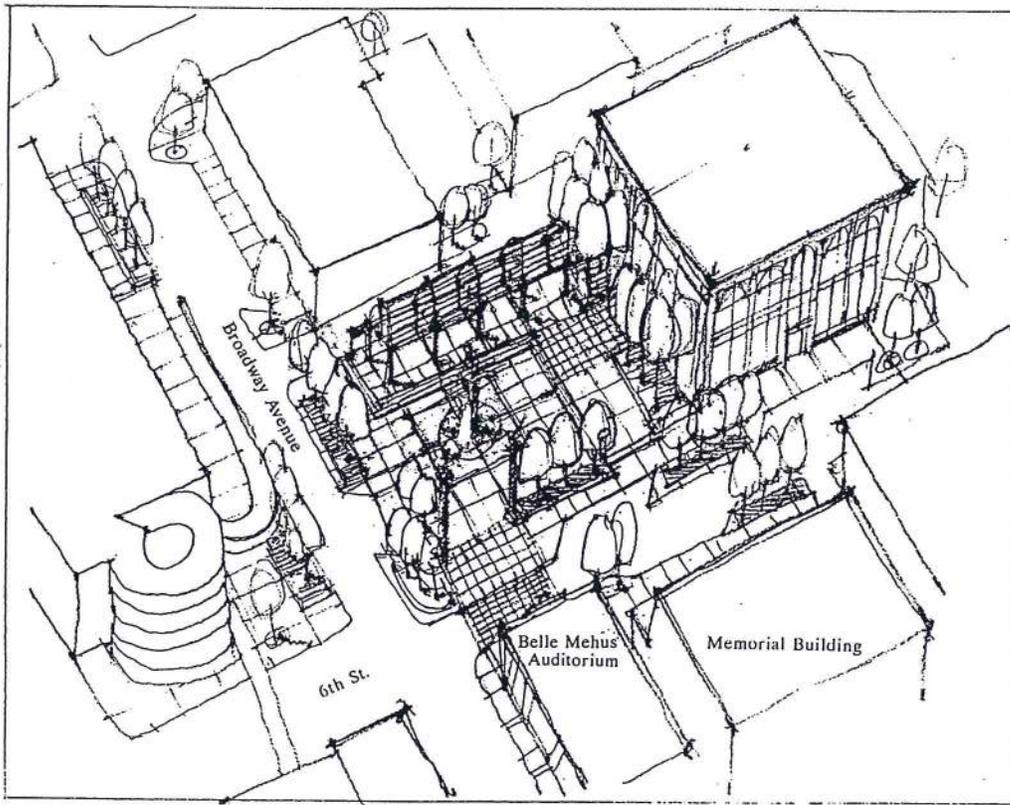


Central Plaza and Depot at Main Avenue and Fifth Street

**Figure II-1**  
**Front Avenue Parkway and Depot Plaza**



Concept A



Concept B

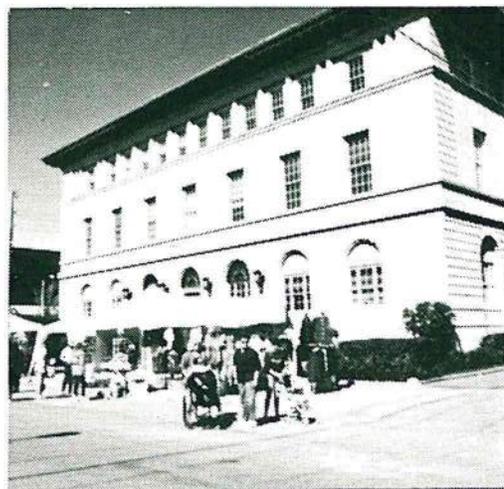
Figure II-2  
Belle Mehus Performing Arts Plaza

## B. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

This assessment of the forces and issues that influence the streetscape design is intended to augment the analysis that was conducted as part of the Central Business District Plan. The observations, issues and recommendations outlined below are summarized in **Figure II-3**.

- **Folkfest and Street Fair:** Following are observations pertaining to the existing streetscape and how it functions for large events such as Folkfest and Street Fair:

- For the most part, Chancellor Square functions very well for a street fair. The raised planters and groupings of trees create a very pleasant and humanly scaled environment.
- The wide sidewalks provide adequate space for vendors and patrons to browse.
- The amount of area the events cover is easily walkable. Vendors concentrate along Broadway and some of the side streets off of Chancellor Square, creating a concentrated festive environment.
- The raised planters and benches provided comfortable shaded seating.
- The vacant lot at the northwest corner of 6th and Broadway provides a nicely scaled space for a pedestrian gathering area and a stage for special events.
- More colorful elements are needed at both Main and Rosser Avenues at 5th Street to draw people into the central area along Broadway.

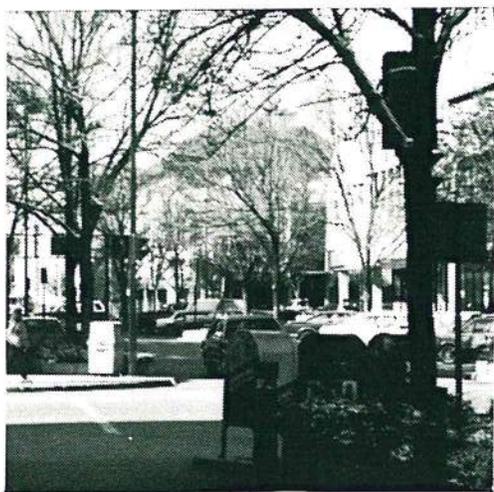


- **Existing Streetscape Elements:** Chancellor Square contains many elements that influence the image of the Downtown area. The existing streetscape design uses modest, simple design elements very effectively to create an uncluttered humanly scaled environment. The main ingredients that create the ambiance include:
  - Raised concrete planters with massings of spreading junipers and clusters of green ash trees.
  - One-way streets with sidewalk bump-outs that define angled parking bays.

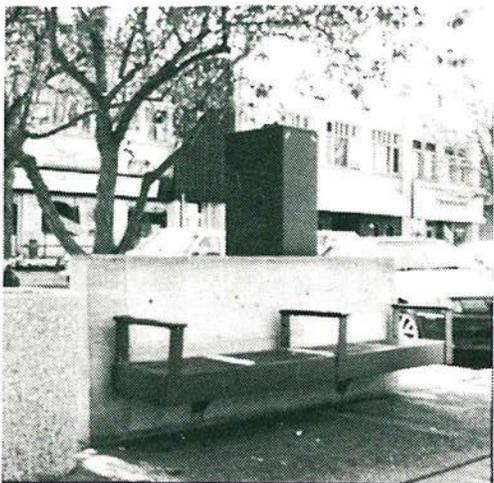
- Wide sidewalks with overstory trees combine with narrow traffic lanes to create a balance between pedestrian and vehicular space.
- Low bollard lights contribute to a sense of human scale<sup>1</sup>.

■ **Other Observations of Chancellor Square and Downtown Streets**

- Chancellor Square and the majority of the Downtown streetscape lacks colorful elements, information on the community, and expression of local history and culture.
- The Downtown lacks a central gathering area and focus.
- The Downtown lacks a cohesive system of streetscape elements.



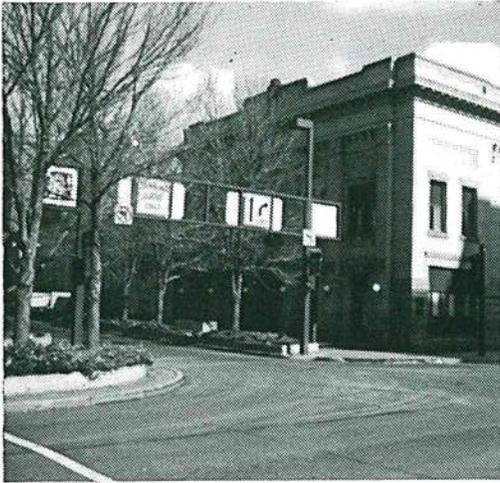
Currently, there are several areas such as in front of the Holiday Inn, the Patterson Hotel, the Logan Building, and other buildings where trees, decorative lighting and other streetscape treatments have been incorporated. Individually these treatments look very good. However, several different styles of lights, tree grates, paving materials, and planting patterns have been used. Variety is good to a certain point to create interest and change within the Downtown and to distinguish one building from another. However, at some point too much variety will cause confusion and become a maintenance problem if these areas are maintained by the city.



- **Parking Lots:** With the exception of the medical facilities, the parking lots downtown do not have any edge treatment or buffers. The lack of visual buffers to the parking areas contributes to a negative image along Main Avenue and within the western fringe areas of the Downtown.
- **Gateways and Views:** As pointed out in the CBD Plan, the significant gateways to the Downtown are along Main Avenue and Rosser Avenue at Third and Seventh Streets as well as at Front Avenue and Fifth Street.

Entry monuments for the Downtown should also be located further out on Main and Rosser Avenue at Washington Street and at 5th or 7th Street at the Boulevard.

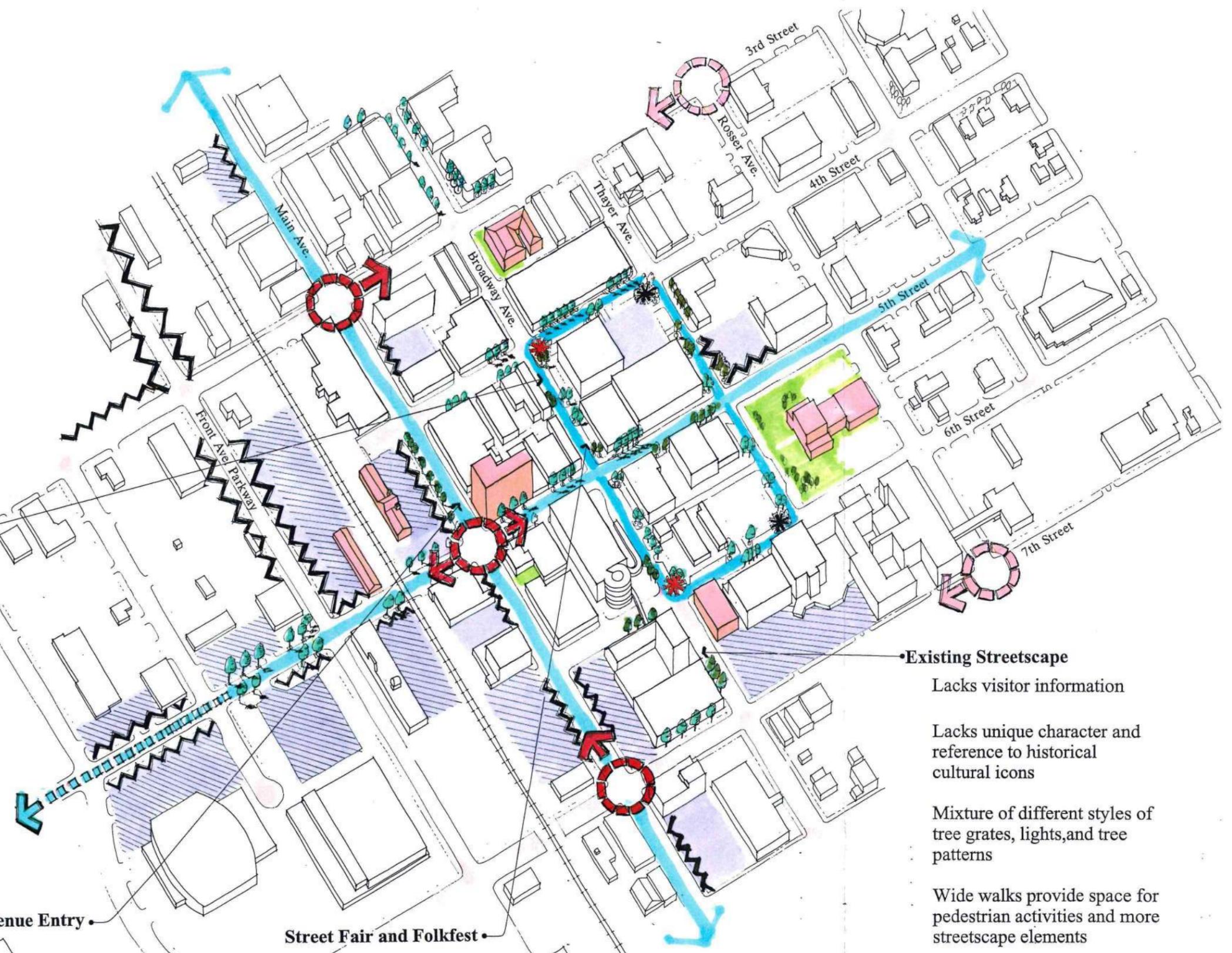
<sup>1</sup> According to the public works department the bollard lights are very difficult to maintain and inhibit snow removal. The recommendation from the Partnership is to remove some or all of the bollard lights in Chancellor Square and replace them with a different type of light fixture.



The most significant views are typically to landmark buildings such as the Federal Building and the Belle Mehus Auditorium along Broadway Avenue, the Patterson Hotel from Fifth Street and Main Avenue, and to the Court House from Fifth Street. These views are generally within a block of the buildings. The trees along 6th Street obscure the view to the facade of the Belle Mahus Auditorium.

- **Character Districts:** In addition to the districts defined in the CBD Plan, the western area of the Downtown is an automobile service and sales district. This area is characterized by a number of dealerships and service garages with large open parking lots fronting the sidewalks. The building pattern is also more open than the CBD core.

- Legend**
-  Entry Feature/Directional Signs
  -  Potential Kiosk Location
  -  Existing Street Trees
  -  Landmark Building
  -  Parking Lot
  -  Parking Buffer Needed
  -  Sculpture



**Chancellor Square**

Simple clustered use of ash and junipers in raised planters establishes image for streetscape

Existing vacant lot large enough for performing arts plaza

Trees obscure Auditorium

Bollard lights are maintenance problem

**Main Avenue Entry**

Views to parking lots form negative impression

Building pattern is more open than central core

Lacks directional signs to city landmarks and Districts

**Street Fair and Folkfest**

Needs visual draw from Main Ave. and City entries

Needs expansion space for entertainment

Needs color and festive elements

**Existing Streetscape**

Lacks visitor information

Lacks unique character and reference to historical cultural icons

Mixture of different styles of tree grates, lights, and tree patterns

Wide walks provide space for pedestrian activities and more streetscape elements

**Figure II-3**  
**Analysis Summary**

### **III. PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

### **III. PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

A set of design principles, goals and objectives follows that will drive the qualitative and functional aspects of the streetscape design. These goals and objectives are based on those established in the CBD Plan, input by public participants, safety and maintenance needs, and sound urban design principles.

#### **A. DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

##### **1. Reinforce a Positive Genuine Character**

- Create a spirited, progressive identity based on indigenous architecture, character, and values.
- Incorporate artwork and streetscape elements that reference local history, icons, people, or spirit of place.

##### **2. Hierarchy of Streetscapes and Open Spaces**

- Design an open space system that provides an organizational framework to Downtown.
- Create primary and secondary treatments to emphasize the function of different streets.
- Define approach routes and gateways.
- Create functional linkages between districts, landmarks, and open spaces.
- Create centrally located gathering areas to provide a focus to the City and set the stage for cultural activities.
- Design streetscape treatments that highlight and protect the integrity of City landmarks.

##### **3. Flexible Palette of Elements**

- Provide continuity, yet foster variety and interest within the Downtown.
- Elements should be adaptable to different site conditions.
- Coordinate design of streetscape elements with promotional tools and special events for Downtown.
- Utilize indigenous building and plant materials.

- Recognize Bismarck as a "Winter City" in the creation of design guidelines, public artwork and cultural events.

**4. Integrate the Functional Need to Move Traffic with Safety and Aesthetic Needs**

- Create a comfortable pedestrian environment
- Utilize vertical elements such as lighting, trees, and other street furniture to create a sense of human scale.
- Streetscape elements should form buffers between pedestrian and vehicular space.

**B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Central Business District Plan for Downtown Bismarck outlined the following goals and supporting objectives for the improvement of the City's physical setting. The goals and objectives establish the purpose and framework for the streetscape guidelines and design.

■ **GOALS:**

- Create a Downtown framework that establishes urban, architectural, site design and signage guidelines that reinforce the unique, positive aspects of Bismarck's history and architecture.
- Modify the City ordinances to reinforce design objectives and guidelines.
- Utilize the CBD Plan as the framework on which to base redevelopment decisions.
- Preserve the integrity of existing architectural and open space landmarks such as the Courthouse, old train depot, auditorium and Patterson Hotel.
- Establish a cohesive system of streetscape treatments that reinforce a sense of human scale and balance between pedestrian and automobile space.
- Encourage public art in the downtown streetscape and public spaces that contributes to Bismarck's unique character and sense of place.

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■ **OBJECTIVES:**

Following are specific objectives pertaining to the design of streetscape elements recommended by the Center City Partnership. The objectives are illustrated in **Figure III-1**.

**Streetscape Elements**

- Create an understated design for the elements that will evoke a traditional and sophisticated image.
- Use color on temporary elements such as banners, sculpture, and other promotional accent elements.

**East Main Avenue Entry**

- Continue clustered tree pattern for visibility of businesses and the vitality of the plants.
- Buffer parking lots with railings, low brick or concrete, or landscaping.

**Third and Main Gateway**

- Provide directional signs to parking areas and the Downtown.
- Intensify the use of streetscape elements.
- Delineate the pedestrian crosswalks.
- Incorporate more festive, colorful elements and landscaping, particularly around the parking ramp.

**Depot Plaza**

- Incorporate tall vertical elements such as banner poles, sculpture, and/or a clock tower to signify an entrance and major focus to the Downtown.
- Incorporate a fountain, seating, sculpture, trees and other elements to create a pedestrian gathering area and festival plaza.

**Front Avenue Parkway**

- Incorporate bicycle, skating, and pedestrian trails
- Include interpretive markers or artwork that describes the cultural history or natural systems of the area.
- Continue use of street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, directional signs, and other elements to create a parkway connection from the river to Downtown.
- Form a gateway to Downtown at 5th Street by placing a sculpture, banner poles, and/or a directional monument sign, and landscaping at the intersection.

**Fifth Street Spine**

- Create a connection to Kirkwood Mall by intensifying the use of streetscape elements, including directional signs and banners at Main Avenue.
- Continue street tree plantings south to the Mall.

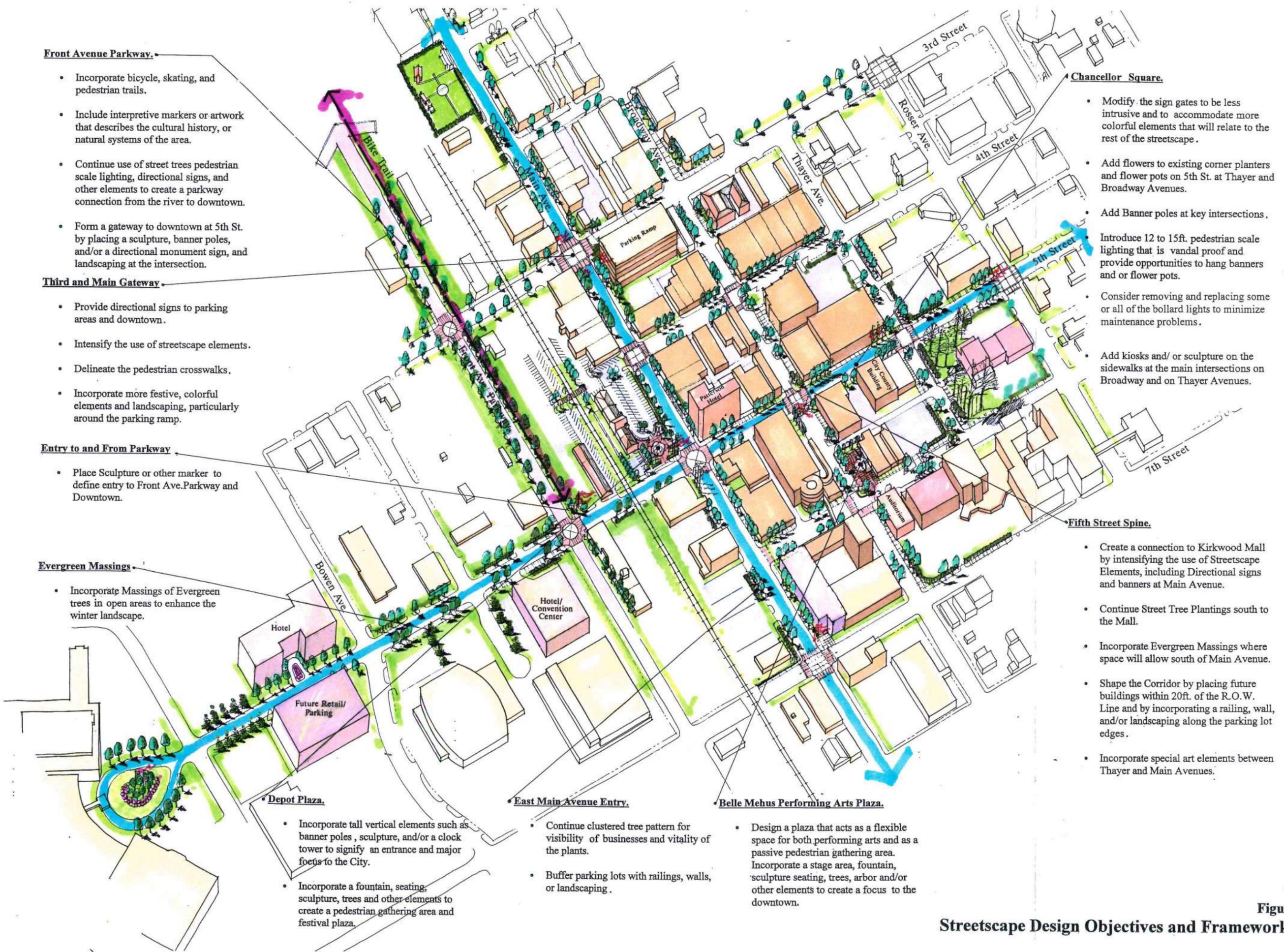
- Incorporate evergreen massings where space will allow south of Main Avenue.
- Shape the corridor by placing future buildings within 20 feet of the right-of-way south of the parkway and at the right-of-way north of the railway line; and by incorporating a railing, wall, and/or landscaping along the parking lot edges.
- Incorporate special art elements between Thayer and Main Avenues.

#### **Chancellor Square**

- Modify the sign gates to be less intrusive and to accommodate more colorful elements that will relate to the rest of the streetscape. **See Figure III-2.**
- Add flowers to existing corner planters and flower pots on 5th Street at Thayer and Broadway Avenues.
- Add banner poles at key intersections
- Introduce 12 to 15 foot pedestrian scale lighting that are vandal proof and provide opportunities to hang banners and or flower pots.
- Consider removing some or all of the bollard lights to minimize maintenance problems
- Add kiosks and/or sculpture on the sidewalks at the main intersections on Broadway and on Thayer Avenues.

#### **Belle Mehus Performing Arts Plaza**

- Design a plaza that acts as a flexible space for both performing arts and as a passive pedestrian gathering area. Incorporate a stage area, fountain, sculpture, seating, trees, arbor and/or other elements to create a focus to the Downtown.



**Front Avenue Parkway.**

- Incorporate bicycle, skating, and pedestrian trails.
- Include interpretive markers or artwork that describes the cultural history, or natural systems of the area.
- Continue use of street trees pedestrian scale lighting, directional signs, and other elements to create a parkway connection from the river to downtown.
- Form a gateway to downtown at 5th St. by placing a sculpture, banner poles, and/or a directional monument sign, and landscaping at the intersection.

**Third and Main Gateway**

- Provide directional signs to parking areas and downtown.
- Intensify the use of streetscape elements.
- Delineate the pedestrian crosswalks.
- Incorporate more festive, colorful elements and landscaping, particularly around the parking ramp.

**Entry to and From Parkway**

- Place Sculpture or other marker to define entry to Front Ave.Parkway and Downtown.

**Evergreen Massings**

- Incorporate Massings of Evergreen trees in open areas to enhance the winter landscape.

**Chancellor Square.**

- Modify the sign gates to be less intrusive and to accommodate more colorful elements that will relate to the rest of the streetscape .
- Add flowers to existing corner planters and flower pots on 5th St. at Thayer and Broadway Avenues.
- Add Banner poles at key intersections .
- Introduce 12 to 15ft. pedestrian scale lighting that is vandal proof and provide opportunities to hang banners and or flower pots.
- Consider removing and replacing some or all of the bollard lights to minimize maintenance problems .
- Add kiosks and/ or sculpture on the sidewalks at the main intersections on Broadway and on Thayer Avenues.

**Fifth Street Spine.**

- Create a connection to Kirkwood Mall by intensifying the use of Streetscape Elements, including Directional signs and banners at Main Avenue.
- Continue Street Tree Plantings south to the Mall.
- Incorporate Evergreen Massings where space will allow south of Main Avenue.
- Shape the Corridor by placing future buildings within 20ft. of the R.O.W. Line and by incorporating a railing, wall, and/or landscaping along the parking lot edges .
- Incorporate special art elements between Thayer and Main Avenues.

**Depot Plaza.**

- Incorporate tall vertical elements such as banner poles , sculpture, and/or a clock tower to signify an entrance and major focus to the City.
- Incorporate a fountain, seating, sculpture, trees and other elements to create a pedestrian gathering area and festival plaza.

**East Main Avenue Entry.**

- Continue clustered tree pattern for visibility of businesses and vitality of the plants.
- Buffer parking lots with railings, walls, or landscaping .

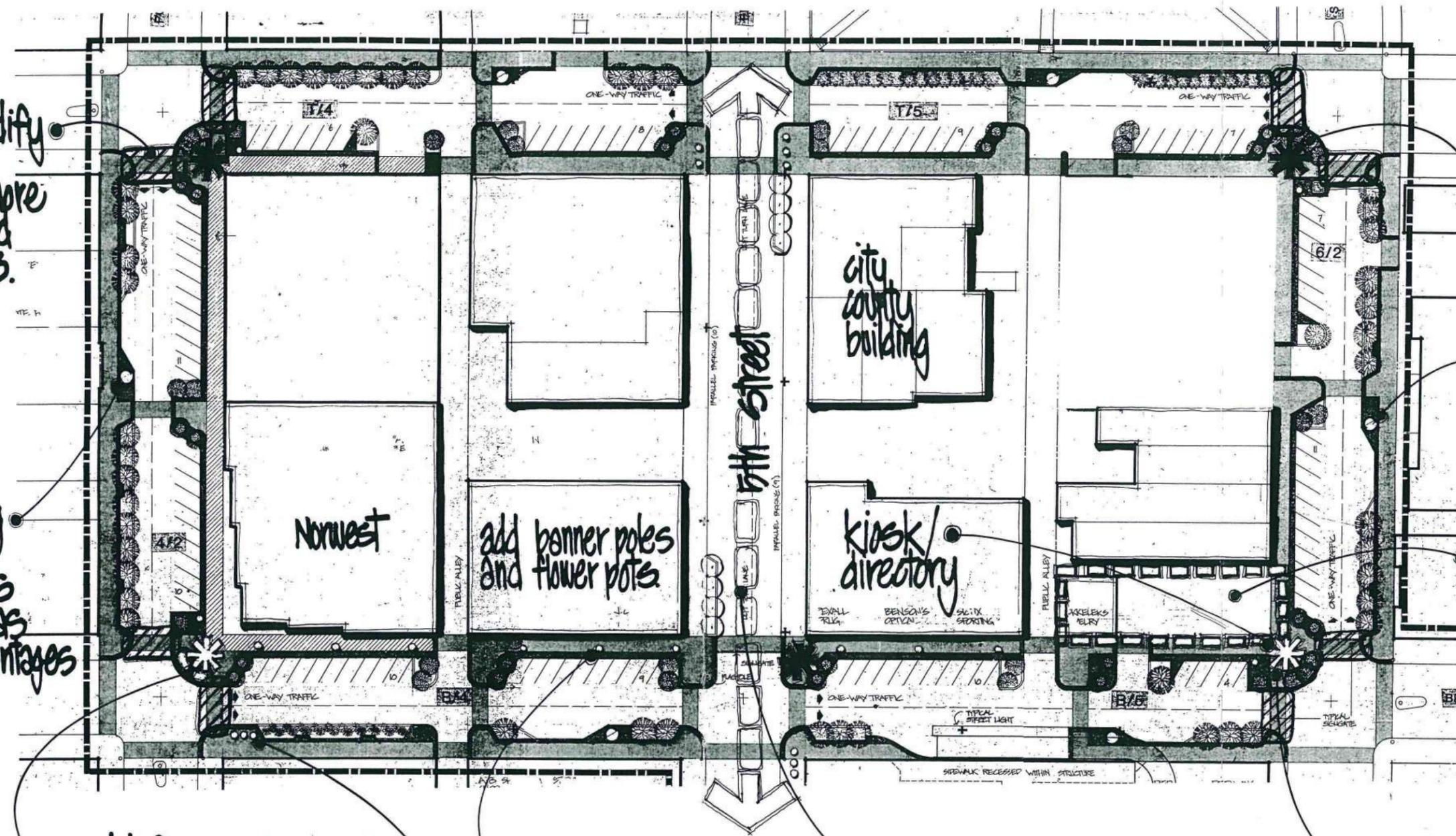
**Belle Mehus Performing Arts Plaza.**

- Design a plaza that acts as a flexible space for both performing arts and as a passive pedestrian gathering area. Incorporate a stage area, fountain, sculpture seating, trees, arbor and/or other elements to create a focus to the downtown.

**Figure III-1  
Streetscape Design Objectives and Framework Plan**

redesign or modify sign gates to accommodate more colorful, updated design elements.

relocate seating areas to make intimate settings near planting areas and building frontages



add entry feature at intersection.

relocate seating area.

create multi-purpose plaza w/ stage, seating area, sculpture, murals, and water feature.

add flowers to existing corner planters  
add banner poles at key intersections

replace bollard lights w/ 12 ft. - 14 ft. pedestrian scale lights in high traffic areas.

highlight 5th street w/ more streetscape elements.

add. entry feature at intersection.



Figure III-2  
Chancellor Square Improvements

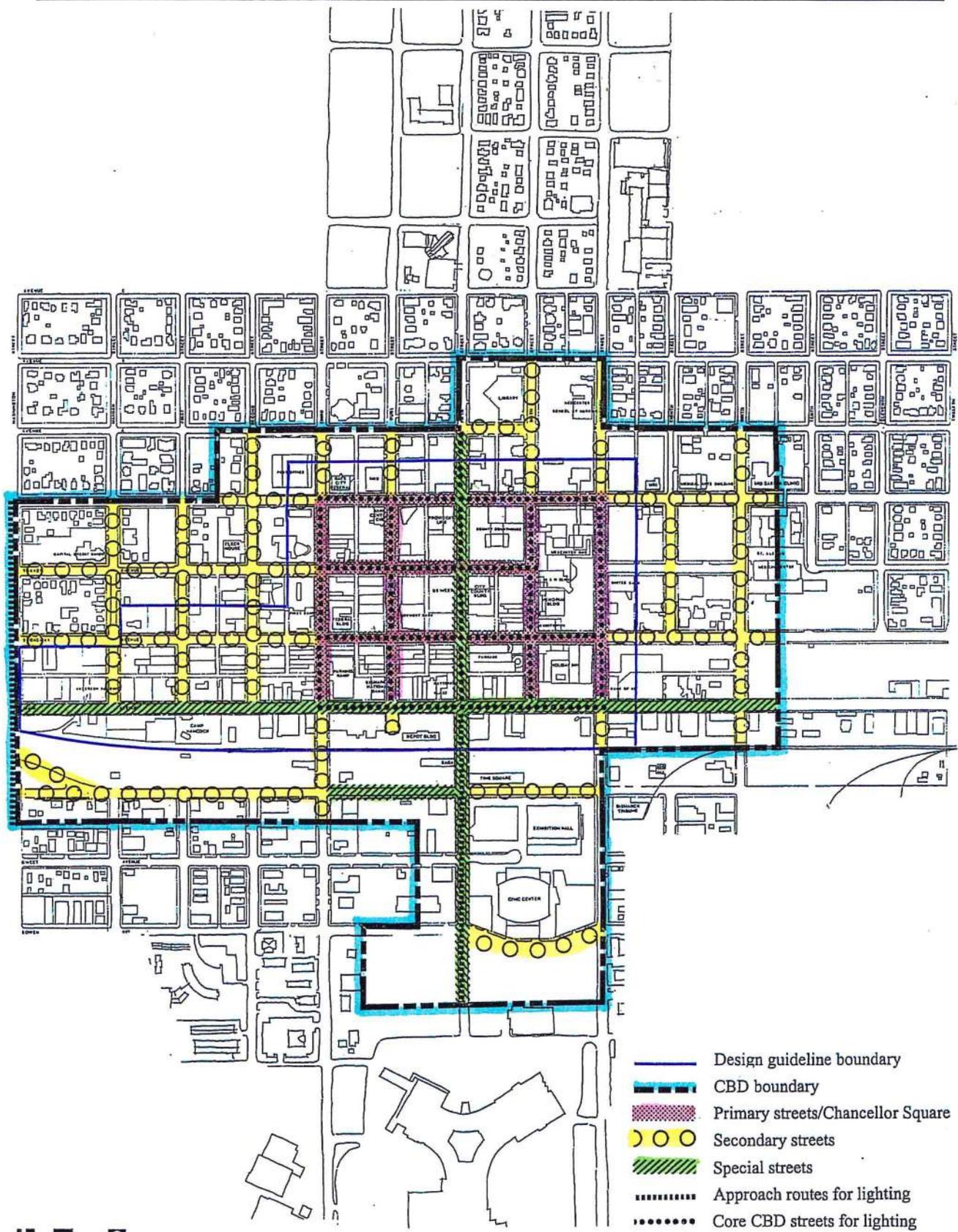
## **IV. STREETScape HIERARCHY**

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## IV. STREETScape HIERARCHY

A hierarchy of streetscape treatments has been established to emphasize and respond to the different districts and street functions within the Downtown. The hierarchy of streets is illustrated in **Figure IV-1**, and is defined as follows:

- **Primary Downtown Streets:** This category includes the core 12 blocks defined by **3rd Street, Rosser Avenue, 7th Street, and Main Avenue**. These streets are within the core retail, business and cultural heart of the City and will receive the most intense streetscape treatment.
- **Secondary Downtown Streets:** This category includes streets outside of the Downtown core that are within the central business district boundary. These streets are in the fringe business areas and provide linkages between the residential areas and the Downtown. These streets will be treated with a moderate use of streetscape elements.
- **Special Streets:** This category includes streets that serve a special function including the approach route on Main Avenue, the 5th Street linkage to the Kirkwood Mall, and Front Avenue Parkway.



**Figure IV-1**  
**Streetscape Hierarchy Plan**

## A. PRIMARY DOWNTOWN STREETS

The streetscape design of the primary downtown streets is dependent on whether the streets remain two-way or are converted to one-way pairs. Four alternates have been evaluated for redesigning the primary streets. Downtown businesses, property owners and tenants were surveyed by the Downtowners to determine their preferred alternative. A summary of the results is included in Appendix 1.

### Alternate 1: Existing Condition

This alternate treats Chancellor Square as a separate and distinct district within Downtown Bismarck (and leaves the existing one-way streets in place). With this approach, the streetscape elements would be designed to contrast with the lighting, signage and other elements currently found in Chancellor Square so the area remains distinct. The one-way streets would be maintained in Chancellor Square and would not be extended to other streets within the core Downtown. See **Figure IV-2**.

**Figure IV-3** illustrates how the sidewalks, curbs, parking lanes, planters, and trees could be arranged if the streets other than Chancellor Square remain two-way. Essentially, the circulation and parallel parking, sidewalks and lane width will remain as they are today. The greatest change is in how the intersections are designed. The sidewalks are proposed to be widened 30 to 40 feet back of the intersections. These widened sidewalks are referred to as sidewalk "nodes" or "bump outs" and have several advantages:

- The bump outs create safe pedestrian crosswalks by narrowing the distance pedestrians need to cross at the intersections from 48 feet down to 24 feet.
- The bump outs provide space for streetscape amenities such as planters, seating, trees, kiosks, etc.
- Traffic calming: creating a narrow throat at the intersections provides a visual cue to motorists that they are entering a pedestrian oriented area and they should slow down.

This alternate also illustrates how the elevated planters and street trees in grates used in Chancellor Square may be incorporated into the sidewalk nodes to extend the same treatment and cohesive character throughout the Downtown.

Traffic volumes on some primary streets may require right turn lanes. In this case, the nodes and elevated planters may be eliminated.

*Advantages:*

- Parallel parking remains on both sides of the street.
- Existing traffic patterns remain as they are. For some, this will be less confusing.
- Increased space for streetscape elements at corner sidewalks.
- Lane width and sidewalk width remain as they are.
- A traffic calming effect will be created by narrowing the throat at the crosswalks.
- The character of Chancellor Square may be extended to other streets with minimal reconstruction with the exception of bump out areas. The majority of the existing street curbing and paving may remain in place.

*Disadvantages:*

- To some, the existing traffic pattern of one-way streets just around Chancellor Square is confusing. This alternative will not change the pattern.
- Depending on the particular block, 1 to 2 parking spaces may be lost per block side for a total range of 14 to 28 spaces lost in the Downtown. A more accurate assessment should be done on a block by block basis.

**Alternate 2: Extend One-Way Streets**

This alternate treats Chancellor Square as the foundation upon which to base the rest of the downtown streetscape design. With this approach, the main elements that define the character of Chancellor Square would be utilized throughout the Downtown core. These elements include: narrow one-way streets, raised concrete planters with clustered rows of trees, large masses of single varieties of shrubs, simple modest detailing and materials. The one-way streets would be extended one block to the north, west, and south as recommended in the 1973 Plan for Downtown. See **Figures IV-3 and IV-4**.

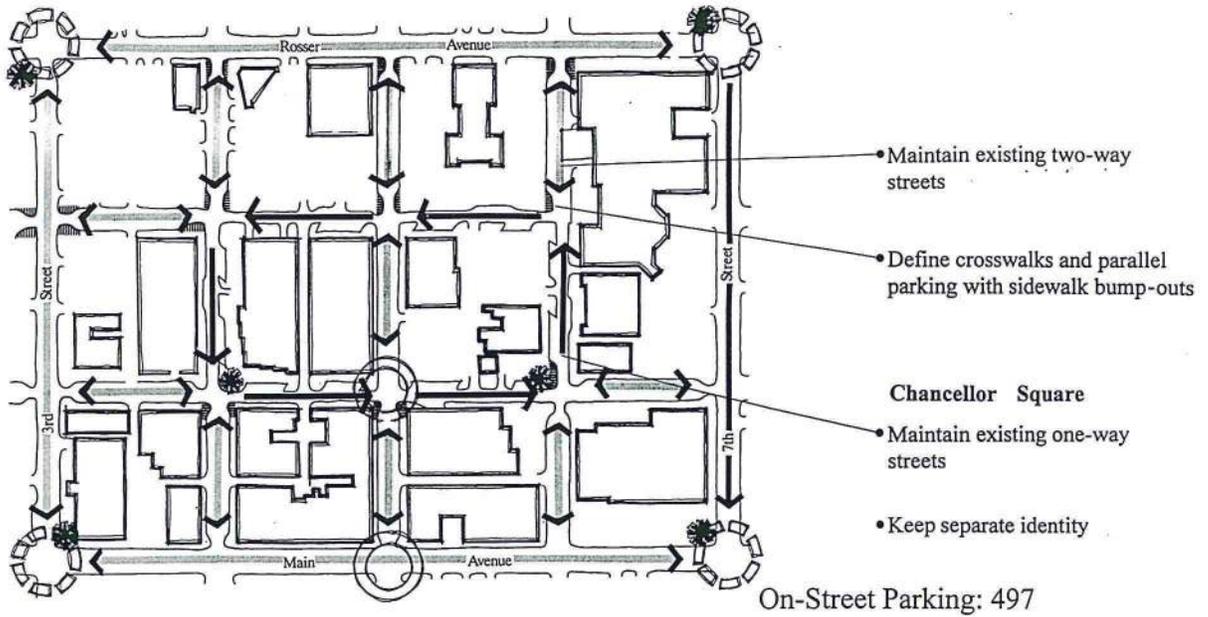
The figures illustrate how the character and design of Chancellor Square can be extended to the rest of the Downtown streets and how sidewalks, curbs, parking lanes, planters, trees, and other amenities could be arranged if the core Downtown streets are converted to one-ways. The design illustrates a 22 foot through lane with an 8 foot parallel parking lane, an 18 foot deep angled parking isle and 16 foot wide sidewalks. The parking bays are defined by sidewalk bump outs with raised concrete planters.

*Advantages:*

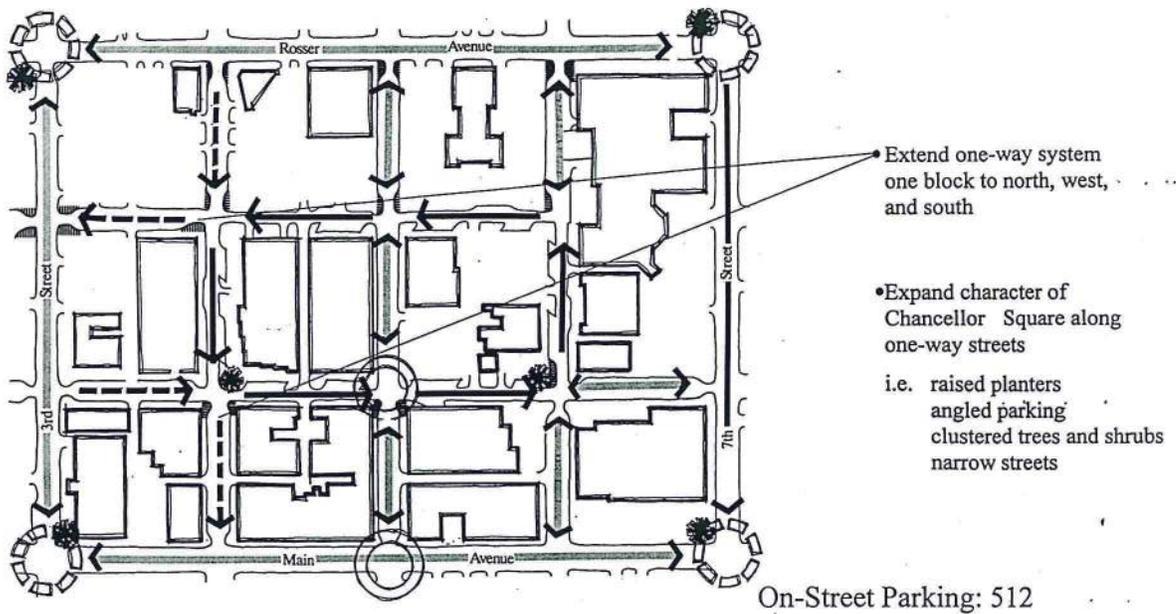
- The existing confusion regarding the one-way system would be alleviated by extending the one-way system to the main collector streets, i.e., 3rd Street, Main Avenue and Rosser Avenue. This should result in a simpler, more understandable Downtown circulation system.
- Parking spaces will increase from approximately 20 to 22 per block to approximately 25 per block. This is a gain of 9 spaces per block over Alternate 1.
- Increased space for streetscape elements at bump outs.
- The traffic calming effects should be greater than in Alternate 1 because the throat at the crosswalks is narrower and motorists will have to be more cautious in observing others pulling out of angled parking spaces.
- The character of Chancellor Square may be extended to other streets with minimal reconstruction. With the exception of the bump out areas, the majority of street curbing and paving may remain in place.
- A stronger, more comprehensive and unique image for the Downtown.

*Disadvantages:*

- A commitment must be made to convert all the existing two-way streets as noted in Alternate 2 at one time to make the system work.
- The change will be confusing to some visitors initially. However, the confusion should subside as motorists become more familiar with the system.

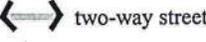
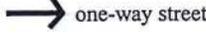
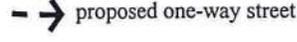


Alternate:1  
Existing System



On-Street Parking: 512

Legend

-  entry monument
-  crosswalk treatment
-  gateway treatment
-  sidewalk bumpouts
-  two-way street
-  one-way street
-  proposed one-way street

Alternate 2:  
Expand One-way System

**Figure IV-2**  
**Primary Downtown Streets: Alternates 1 & 2**

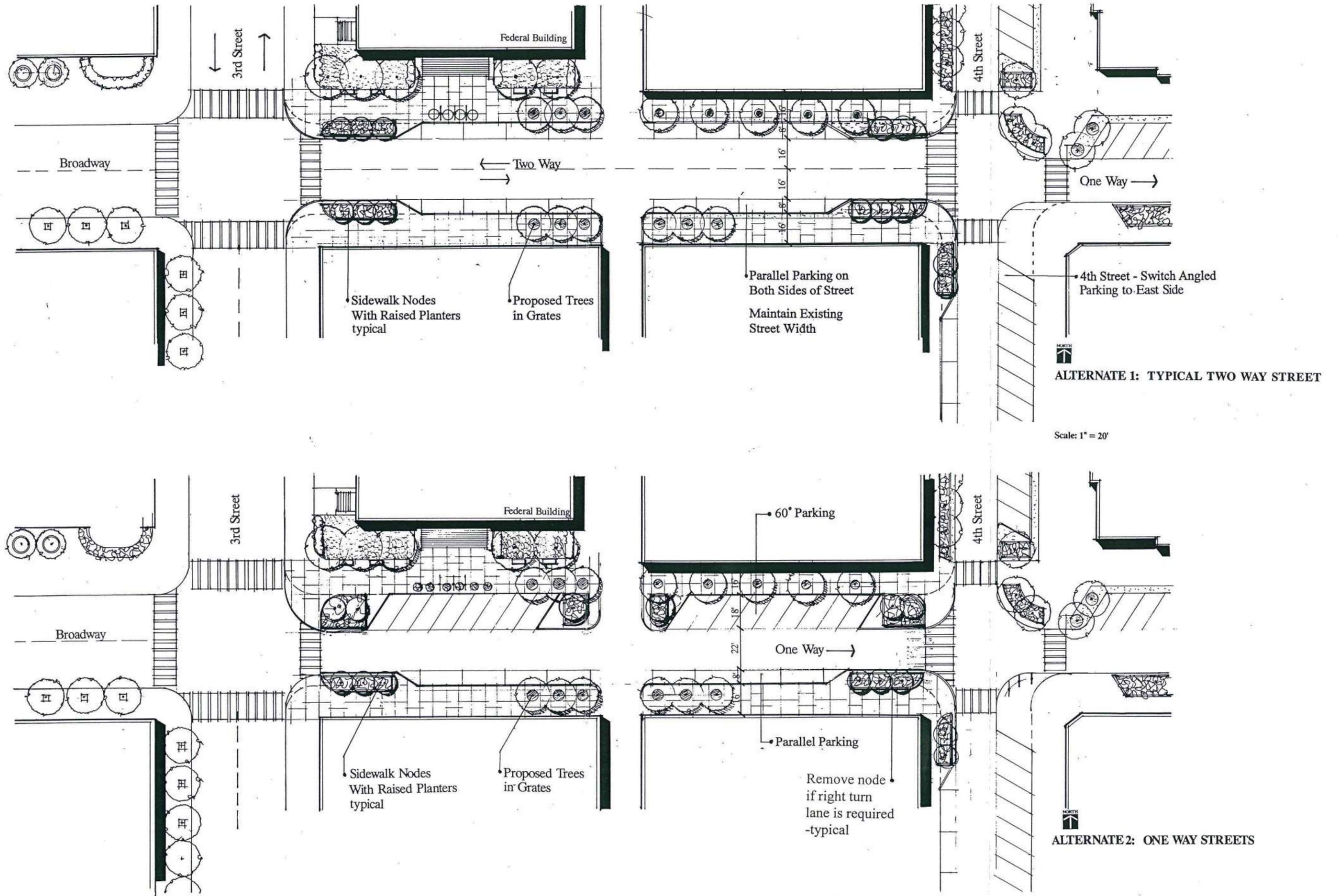


Figure IV-3  
 Primary Downtown Streets: Typical Blocks

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**Alternate 3: Replace One-Way System With Two Way Streets**

This alternate replaces the existing one-way system with two-way streets. See **Figure IV-4**.

*Advantages:*

- Easier to understand the traffic flow.
- Simplifies traffic movements.

*Disadvantages:*

- Loss of on-street parking.
- Less pedestrian friendly.
- Higher traffic congestion.
- Potential increase in traffic speeds.
- Loss of some green spaces and landscaping.
- Associated costs related to changing directional signage, planters, parking buffers, and striping.
- Going from diagonal parking to parallel parking.

**Alternate 4: East West One-Way Streets Only**

This alternate eliminates the one block north/south one-way streets and extends the east/west one-way streets to the west one block to 3rd Street. See **Figure IV-4**.

*Advantages:*

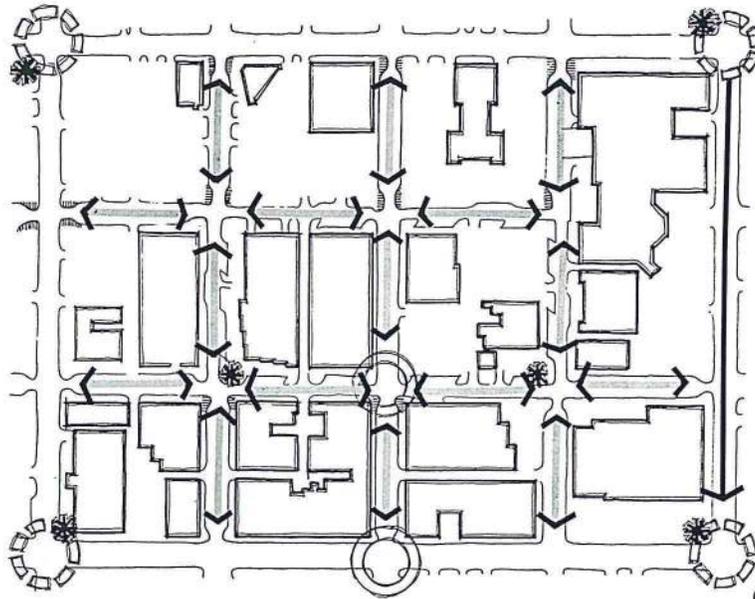
- Increased parking on Thayer and Broadway.
- Improved access on 4th and 6th Streets.

*Disadvantages:*

- Lose some parking on 6th and 4th Streets.
- Expense in changing.
- Re-education.
- More congestion on 4th Street.

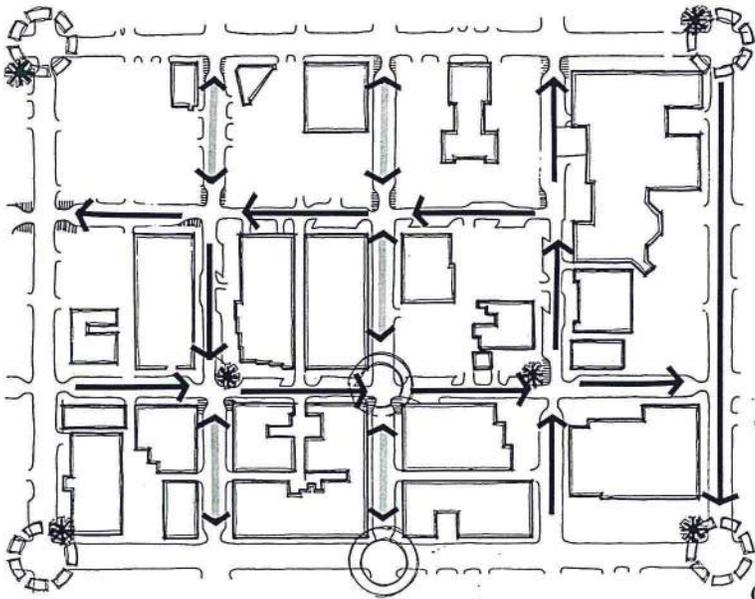
■ **RECOMMENDATION:**

Our recommendation is to plan for Alternate 2 because long term benefits are greater than Alternate 1. More parking will be provided, the traffic circulation patterns will be easier to understand, the traffic calming effects should be greater, and the overall continuity of the core streetscape design will be strongest.



On-Street Parking: 486

Alternate 3:  
Replace One-way System with Two-way



On-Street Parking: 498

Legend

-  entry monument
-  crosswalk treatment
-  gateway treatment
-  sidewalk bumpouts
-  two-way street
-  one-way street

Alternate 4:  
East/West One-ways Only

**Figure IV-4**  
**Primary Downtown Streets: Alternates 3 & 4**

## B. SECONDARY DOWNTOWN STREETS

Streets within the Central Business District, but outside of the core 12 blocks are proposed to be treated as secondary streets. See **Figure IV-1**. The main objectives for these streets are:

- Create comfortable pedestrian scaled linkages between Downtown and the residential and outlying commercial areas.
- Provide continuity though the streetscape design with the core primary streets in a less costly and intense fashion.
- Incorporate parking lot buffers, street trees, pedestrian scaled lighting, coordinated signage, and street furniture in selected areas.
- Future development should have a zero building setback.

**Figure IV-5** illustrates in plan view the proposed treatment for secondary streets, including the following elements:

- Sidewalk bump-outs at intersections
- Clustered tree patterns
- Unified lighting standards, paving, and street furniture
- Parking lot buffers



The secondary streets are characterized by a number of different site conditions. Many automobile sales lots front the sidewalks and visibility to the cars is important. However many unbuffered parking lots also front the sidewalks and contribute to a negative image. One of the objectives of the streetscape is to provide solutions for the treatment of parking lot edges that are flexible and may adapt to a variety of site conditions and budget constraints.

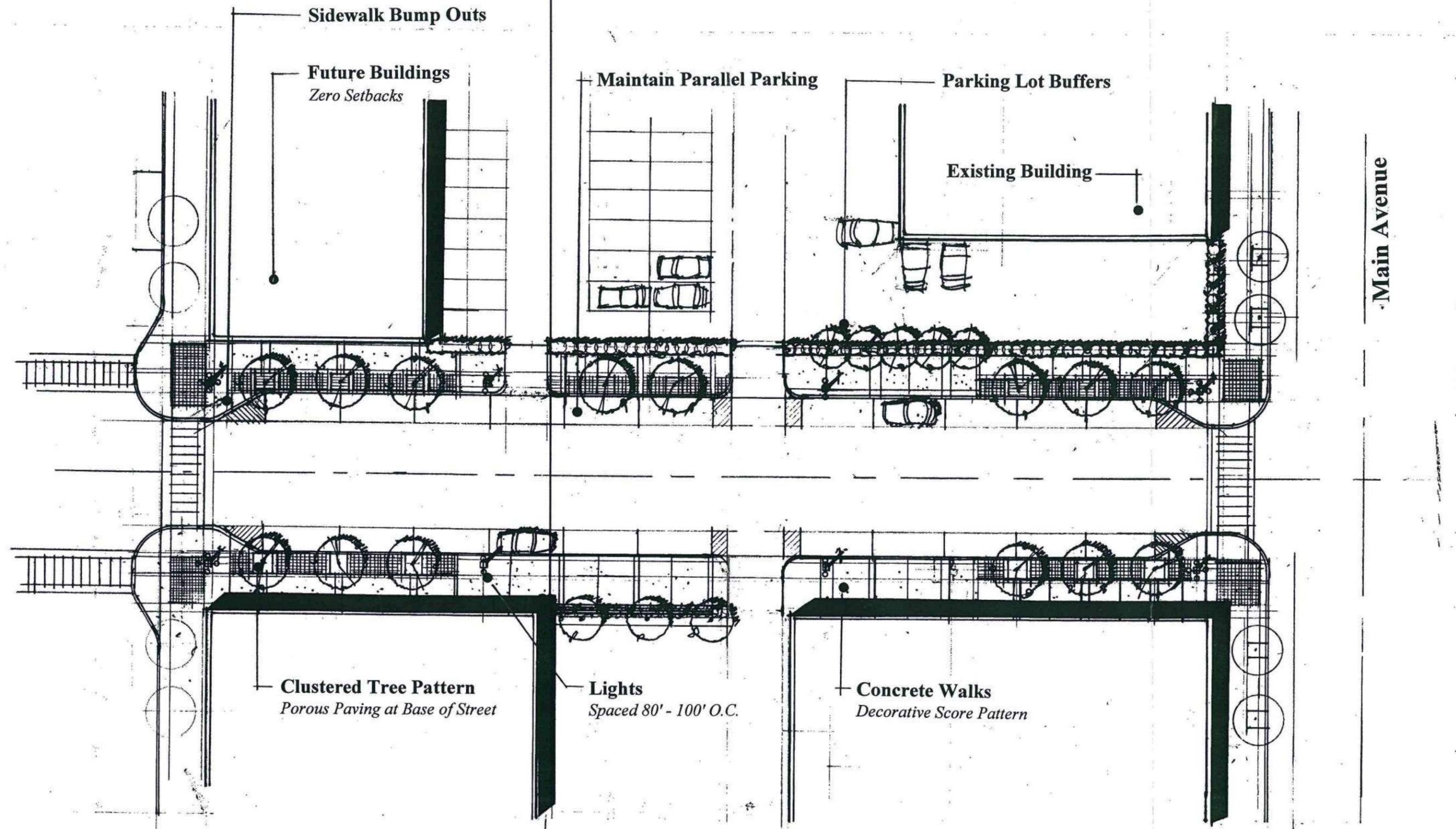


Figure IV-5  
 Secondary Streets: Typical Block

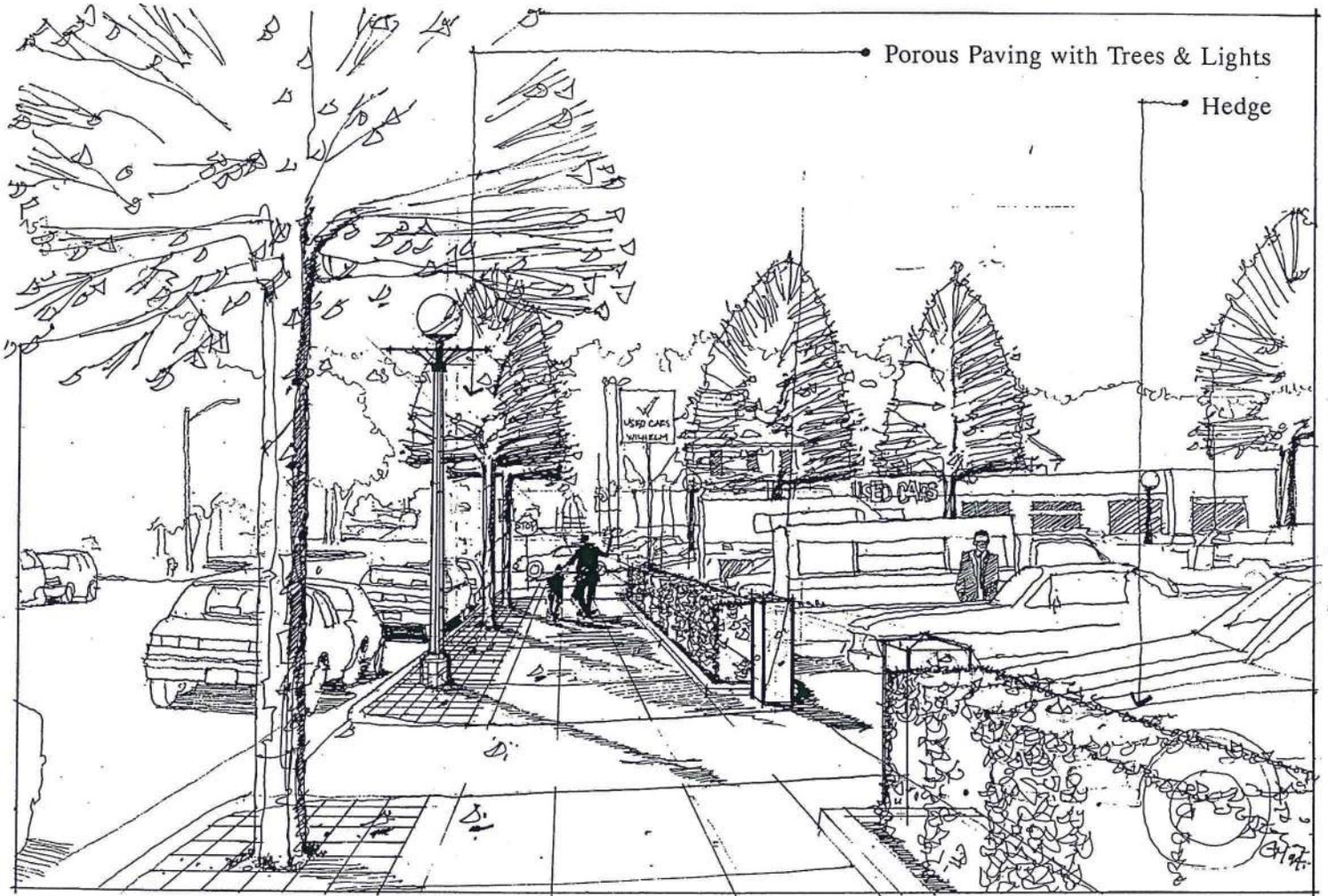
Following are alternate streetscape treatments for secondary streets. The intent of these alternatives is to illustrate various combinations of materials that meet the design objectives and that may be interchanged to respond to a variety of site conditions and budgets.

**Alternate A:** This is the most cost effective solution and includes street trees and lights along the curb with dry laid concrete pavers at the base and a hedge as a parking lot buffer (**Figure IV-6**). The pavers provide a greater area for moisture to penetrate for the trees than other solutions, while at the same time providing a walking surface. The hedge will provide an opaque buffer to parked cars for an initial low installation cost. However, the hedge will require pruning and more maintenance over time than other solutions.

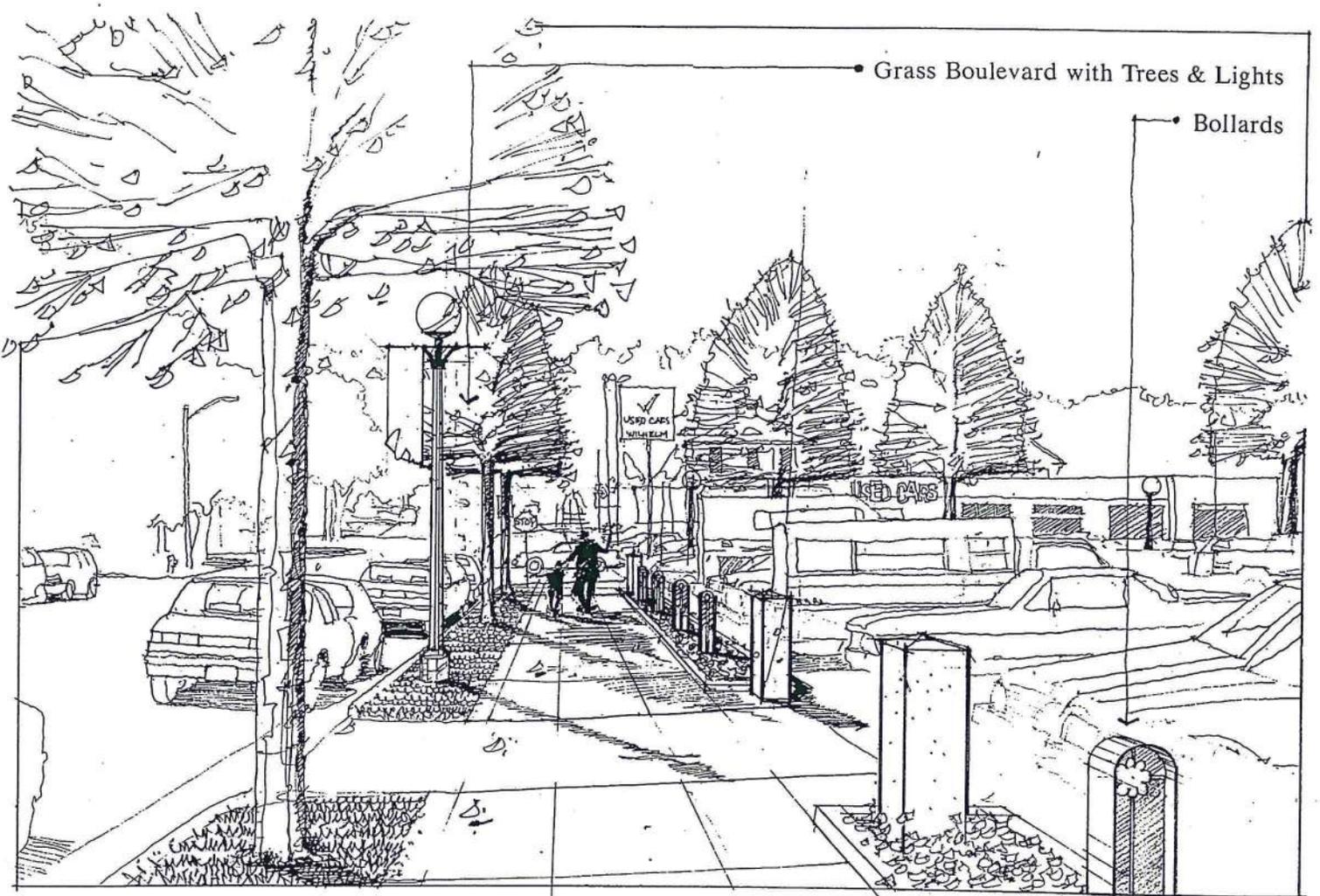
**Alternate B:** This solution recommends the use of bollards with low evergreen ground covers or other plants to provide an edge to the sidewalks and a buffer to the parking lots (**Figure IV-7**). The bollards create a picket fence effect that essentially filters the line of sight in perspective from sidewalks, yet allows a clear view of vehicles from the streets. This solution is recommended for automobile sales lots or areas that may be redeveloped in the near future. A grass boulevard under the street trees is also suggested, however, a drought tolerant variety of grass would have to be utilized.

**Alternate C:** This is the most permanent, durable and costly solution. A steel railing with cast concrete or brick piers is illustrated as a semi transparent parking lot buffer (**Figure IV-8**). Decorative paving and tree grates are also proposed around the base of the trees. The railings could be designed to recall the traditional ironwork detailing of the region. This solution is recommended for parking lots fronting Main Avenue or other primary streets, particularly in areas where redevelopment has recently occurred or will not change in the near future.

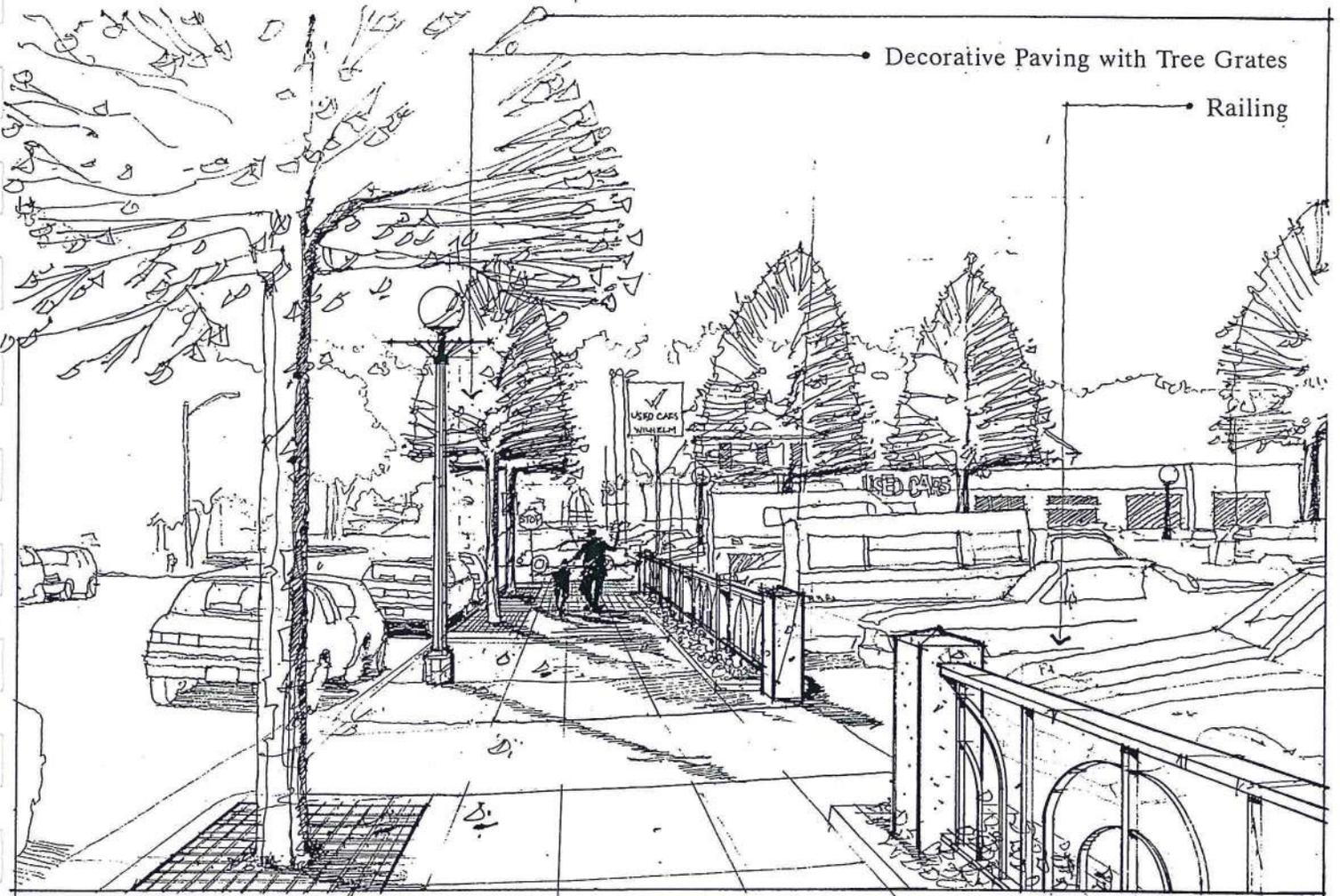
In all of these options, trees could also be incorporated as part of the parking lot buffer.



**Figure IV-6**  
**Edge Treatment: Alternate A**



**Figure IV-7**  
**Edge Treatment: Alternate B**

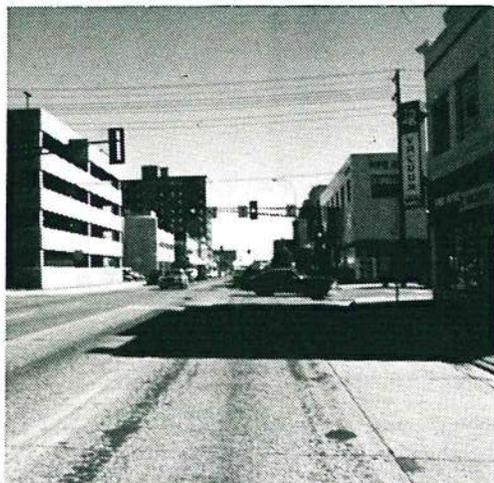


**Figure IV-8**  
**Edge Treatment: Alternate C**

## C. SPECIAL STREETS

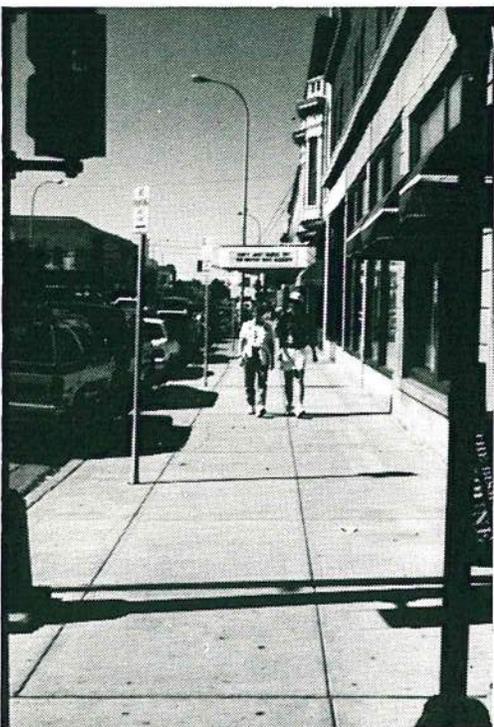
### 1. MAIN AVENUE

Main Avenue is the primary access and collector street for the Downtown. Traffic capacity improvements are proposed which will include two through lanes in each direction and a center left turn lane. Parallel parking will remain during off peak hours on both sides of the street.



Two primary objectives for the streetscape design along Main Avenue are to create a sense of entry and provide directional information for the Downtown. This may be accomplished by intensifying the use of lights, trees, and other streetscape elements as you advance toward 3rd Street from the west and 7th Street to the east. Directional signs or monuments, and/or banner poles should be placed on Main Avenue at 3rd, 5th and 7th Streets to direct visitors to the parking areas and Downtown core. Parking areas along Main Avenue should also be buffered to provide a more positive image and define the edge of the street.

The existing 8 to 10 foot sidewalk width along Main Avenue is too narrow to incorporate raised concrete planters. Other elements such as lights, trees in tree grates, banner poles, and bollards are recommended to define streetscape character.



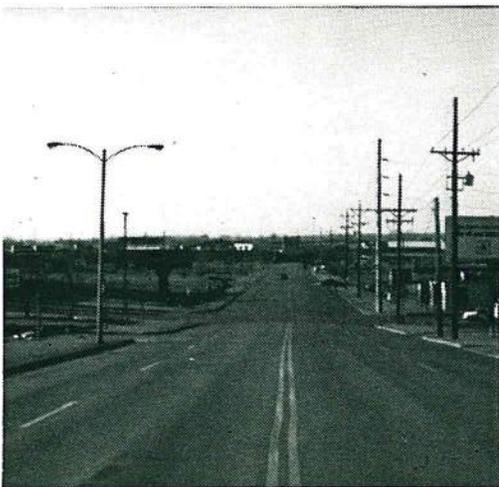
Sidewalk bump outs cannot be incorporated on Main Avenue due to the proposed use of the parking lane as a through lane during peak hours.

- **Recommended Design:** The proposed design recommends continuing the clustered tree pattern to maintain visibility to shops, and to reflect the pattern within Chancellor Square. See **Figures IV-9 and IV-10**. Other proposed elements include:

**Light Poles, Banners, and Lighting** -- The light poles and fixtures will be the primary element that shapes the image and scale of Main Avenue. The lighting should be larger in scale than on the core retail streets and spaced 120 to 150 feet apart through the mid portions of the blocks. Lower level lighting could be incorporated to define the entry points at 3rd, 5th and 7th Streets. Banner poles, bollards, and flower pots should also be incorporated at these points of entry. Benches should also be placed in front of buildings where desired. Evergreen trees are recommended along the west face of the 3rd Street ramp and along parking lot edges where space allows. These will provide more winter interest and variety to the streetscape.

**Entry Monuments** -- Entry monuments are proposed at the northeast corner of 3rd and Main and the northwest corner of 7th and Main. The settings for the monuments should include decorative paving and a landscaped backdrop.

## 2. 5TH STREET SPINE SOUTH OF RAILROAD TRACKS



Fifth Street is the link between the Capitol, Downtown, the Depot building, BAGA Building, the Civic Center and Kirkwood Mall. See **Figure IV-9**. To reinforce this connection, the main design objectives are as follows:

- Intensify the use of streetscape elements, directional signs and banners at Main Avenue.
- Treat the portion of 5th Street south of the railroad tracks similar to Main Avenue, treat the portion north of Main Avenue to Rosser Avenue as recommended for a primary Downtown street.
- Incorporate evergreen massings along the Civic Center parking lot to buffer the parking lot, define the street corridor, provide an effective winter landscape and to create a more comfortable walking environment.
- Incorporate landscaped buffers along all other parking lots.
- Enclose the corridor by placing future buildings close to the street right-of-way line. Building setback should be 0 feet to a maximum of 20 feet south of the railroad tracks and 0 feet north of the tracks. **Figure IV-9** illustrates the proposed treatment of 5th Street from Broadway Avenue to Sweet Avenue.

## 3. 5TH STREET: NORTH OF THE RAILROAD TRACKS TO BROADWAY AVENUE

The segment of 5th Street between Main Avenue and Broadway is an important link to the Chancellor Square area and an active pedestrian corridor. The design recommendation is to treat this section as a primary Downtown street with parking areas and turn lanes defined by sidewalk bump outs, raised concrete planters, and clustered plantings of trees with benches beneath. See **Figure IV-10**.

Space should also be provided for outdoor cafes. Special elements such as sculpture, colorful banners, and arbors should be incorporated to draw people's interest from Main Avenue and lead them toward the retail core.

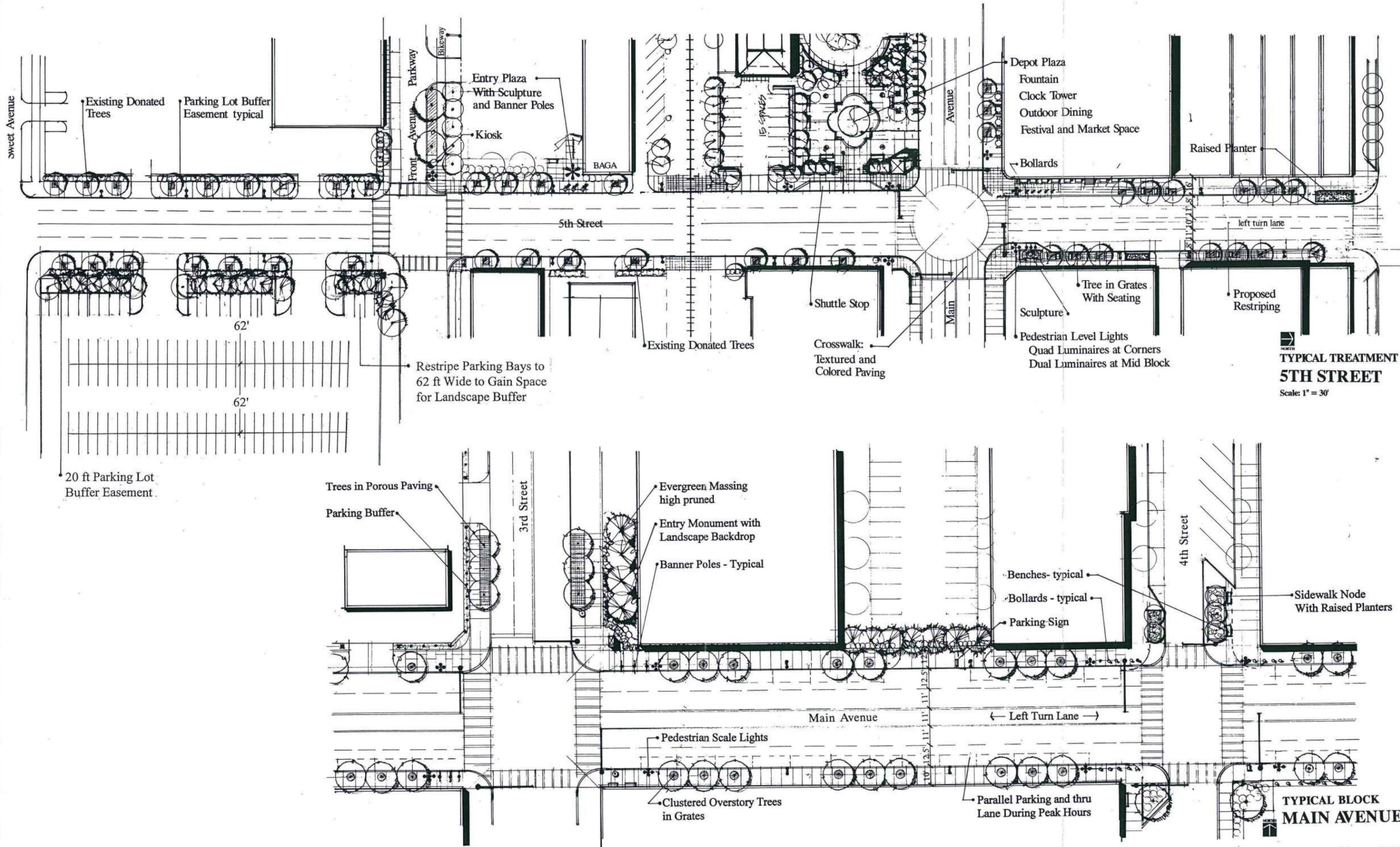
#### 4. FRONT AVENUE PARKWAY

Front Avenue is planned to be a parkway connection between Downtown and the parks, Dakota Zoo and Missouri River to the west. The site conditions vary significantly from the urban character to the east to the open suburban character to the west. Each segment also has a variety of constraints including extreme slopes, power poles and limited right-of-way.

**Typical Treatment 3rd to 5th Street:** Figure IV-11 illustrates the proposed parkway treatment between 3rd Street and 5th Street. Within this segment, the right-of-way is limited to 70 feet, power lines parallel the north side, and the street has two through lanes with parallel parking on both sides.

The proposed design recommends:

- Narrowing the through lanes to 13 feet wide and the parking lanes to 8 feet to provide more space for walkways and a bikeway.
- Define parallel parking bays with curb bump outs and 8 foot wide tree lined boulevards.
- Maintain left and right turn lanes at intersections.
- Incorporate an 8 foot wide bicycle/skating trail on the north side of the street between the curb and the power line poles.
- Landscape the area under the poles with low-growing trees and shrubs to provide a buffer between the trail and the parking lot. The buffer and street trees will enhance the entry into the City as well as create the parkway character.
- Incorporate a 6 foot wide walkway to service the businesses on the south side.
- Where private parking lots front the parkway, incorporate a 6 foot landscaped easement.
- Place directional signs and interpretive markers at the intersections.
- Incorporate 13 to 15 foot pedestrian scale lighting approximately 120 feet apart in the boulevards.



**TYPICAL TREATMENT  
5TH STREET**  
Scale: 1" = 30'

**TYPICAL BLOCK  
MAIN AVENUE**

Figure IV-9  
Main Avenue and Fifth Street: Typical Blocks

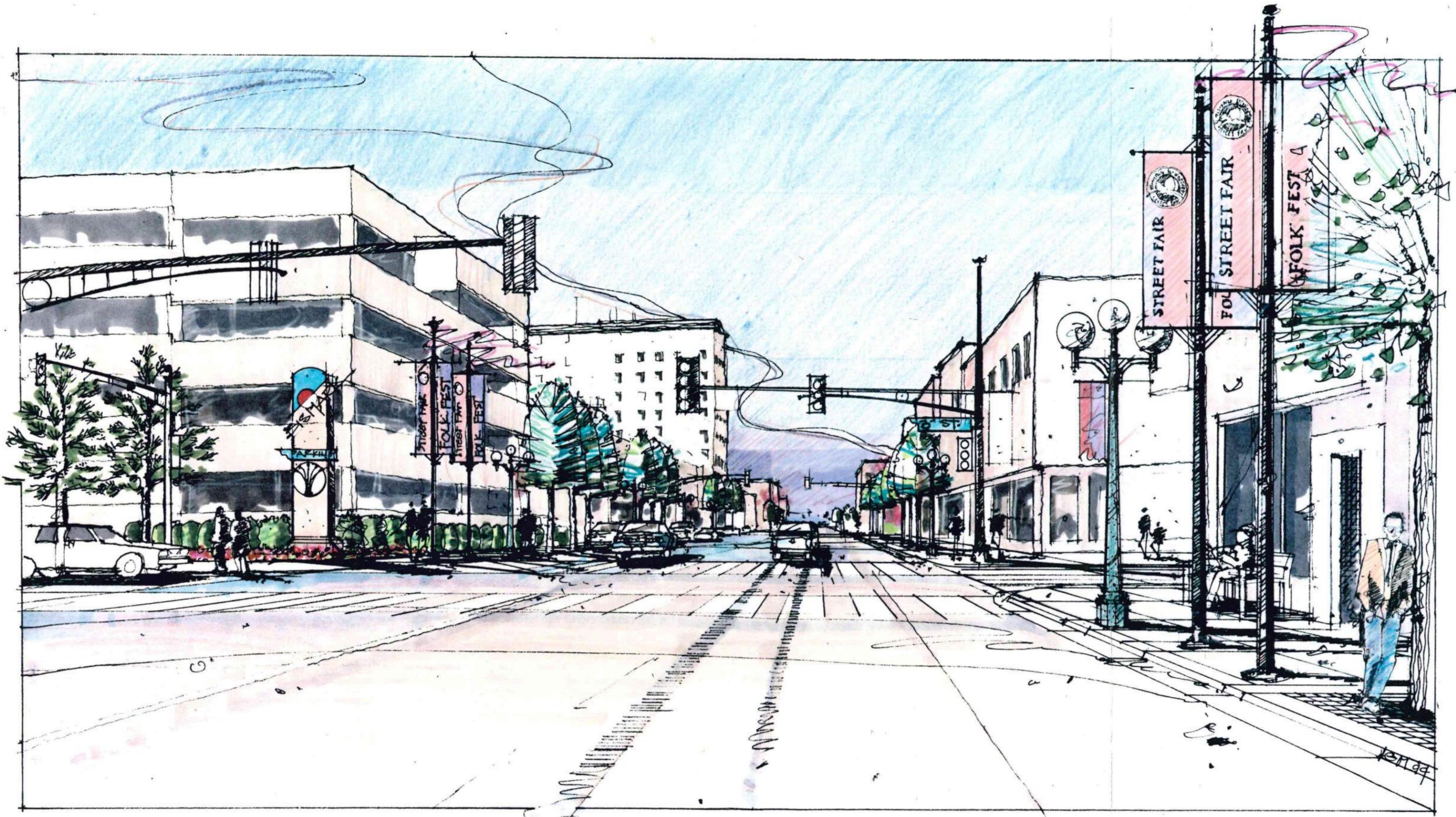


Figure IV-10  
Entry at 3rd Street and Main Avenue

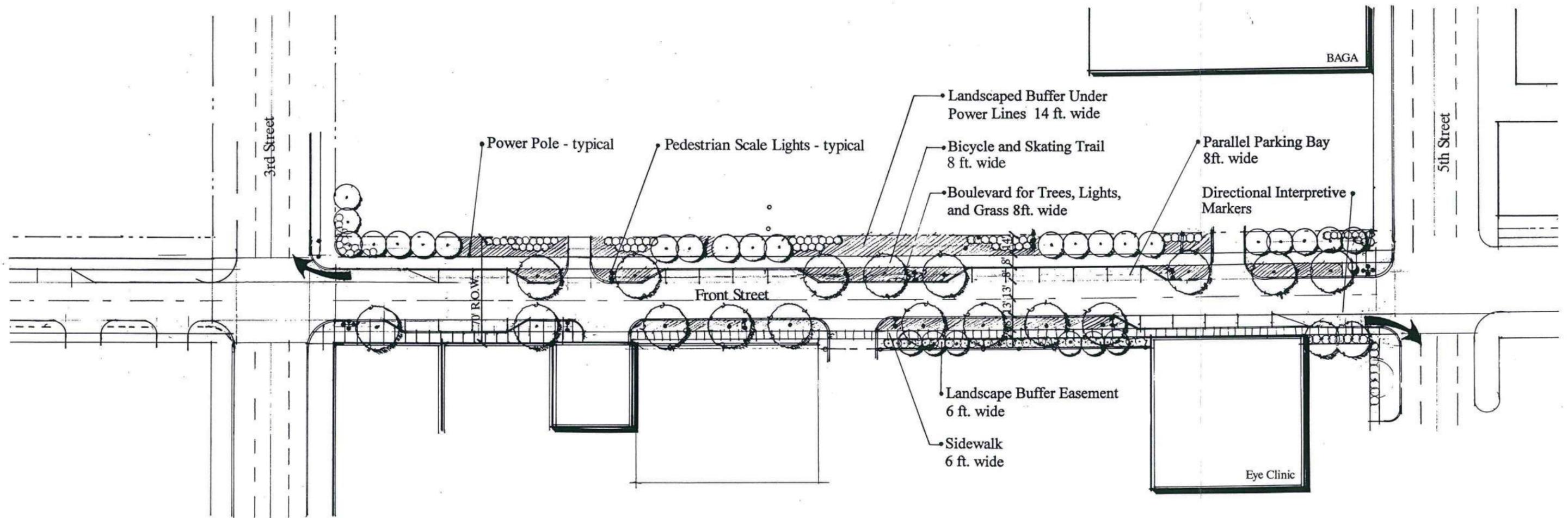


Figure IV-11  
 Front Avenue Parkway: Typical Treatment

## **V. STREETScape ELEMENTS**

## V. STREETScape ELEMENTS

This section of the document focuses on the more detailed design of the individual elements to be used within the streetscape, including lighting, entry monuments, planters and other components. The combination of these elements will help shape a genuine, positive image and identity for the Downtown. The first step in designing the streetscape elements is deriving a design concept that is related to the history, architecture, spirit, and culture of Bismarck.

### Palette of Streetscape Amenities

A flexible palette of streetscape elements should be created that can be adapted to the many changing site conditions -- one which reinforces the positive elements that currently exist in Chancellor Square and other areas, and fosters a unique and positive identity for Downtown Bismarck.

### A. DESIGN CONCEPTS

The Center City Partnership discussed several possibilities for design concepts to guide the design of streetscape elements including:

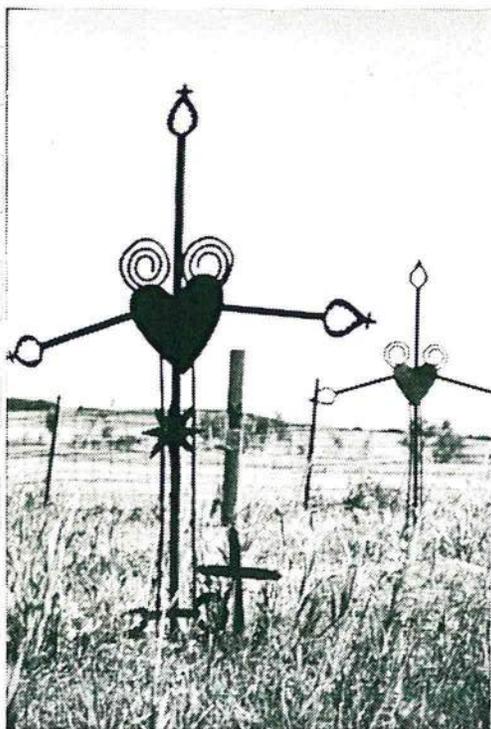
- Incorporate ethnic associations such as the iron work of the German/Russians.
- Use prairie or plains images such as grasses, badlands colors (scoria) or other elements drawn from the state flag.
- Use water elements to celebrate Bismarck's river heritage.
- Incorporate state capital images such as the art deco styling and building materials used.
- Other themes to consider are railroad, agriculture (wheat and sunflowers are the main cash crops), energy, and Native American.

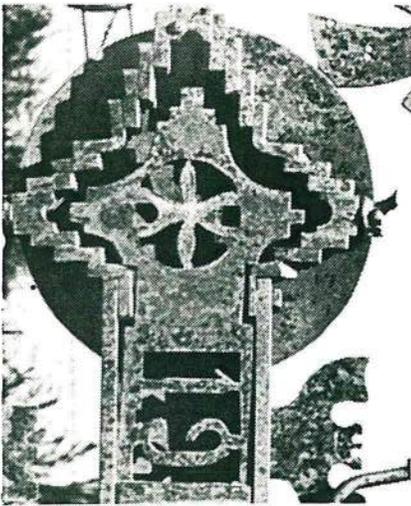
#### Blacksmithing Heritage

Blacksmithing is an integral part of the history and settlement of the Bismarck area. The profession flourished from the 1880s to the 1930s with the settlement of the area by European immigrants. Blacksmiths were a vital part of the agricultural community and were responsible for fabricating and repairing farm implements, tools, carts, and wagons.

During the winter months, many blacksmiths built and sold iron crosses for grave markers. The iron crosses were a tradition that migrated with them from Europe.

The immigrants preferred the vastness of the prairie landscape. The open design of the iron crosses accentuated the vastness of the landscape by





maintaining an unobstructed view across the prairie. Clusters of iron crosses with the prairie as a backdrop formed dramatic scenes throughout the area. The crosses varied in height from three to seven feet and generally were designed in ten different styles. Each blacksmith developed their own signature style and typically included symbols metaphorical of their love of life and never ending spirit. Rooster tails and sunrise designs were used to represent resurrection and the dawn of a new day and life. Unbroken circles and hearts were incorporated to signify an exuberant, vibrant spirit.

The tradition faded in the 1930s, along with the demise of blacksmithing as a profession. Many of the remaining crosses are on the national register of historic sites and continue to represent symbols of a particular place, time and people.

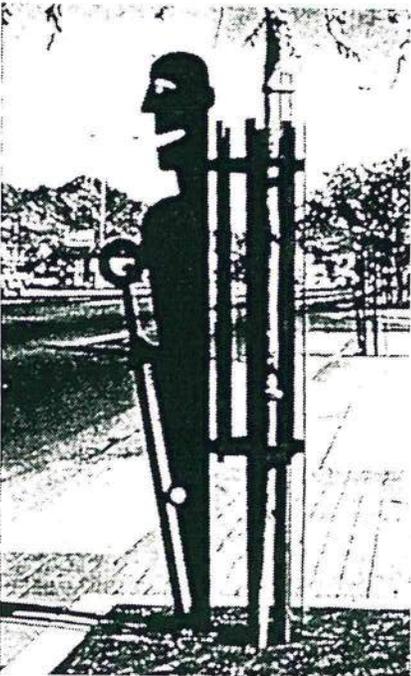
The following quote was excerpted from the book IRON SPIRITS published by the North Dakota Council on the Arts:

Blacksmithing is an epic occupation, fundamental to the development of our agricultural economy. The religious experience which these crosses symbolize is equally fundamental to our civilization. These two factors combine to form a body of art, a beautiful balance of the sacred and the secular; an achievement worthy of praise. The work that the iron crosses represent and the meaning they hold are an integral part of the foundation upon which North Dakota society is established.

ALLEN I. OLSON  
Governor

### Recommended Design Concept

The proposed concept for the design of the streetscape elements will incorporate icons of Bismarck's rich cultural heritage with new elements to create a fresh and progressive identity. The elements will be composed primarily of metals to recognize the important role blacksmithing played in Bismarck's agricultural economy and as unique regional folk art.



## B. ICONOGRAPHY

Symbols of Bismarck could be incorporated into the design of the streetscape elements. Icons representing elements of Bismarck's history could be fabricated out of metal and incorporated into the design of lights, benches, railings, kiosks, and other streetscape elements. Examples of these icons are outlined below and are stylized in **Figure V-1**.

- Wheat -- the state's highest cash crop and symbol of the agricultural economy
- Sunflowers -- the state's second largest cash crop
- Wild Prairie Rose -- the state flower
- Western Meadowlark -- the state bird
- Railroad -- instrumental in the settlement of Bismarck
- The paddle wheeler "Rose Bud" -- symbol of the role the Missouri River played in the City's heritage
- The Capitol City -- art deco styling and materials from the Capitol Building
- The State Motto -- "Liberty and union now and forever one and inseparable."



Figure V-1  
Bismarck Iconography

## C. DESIGN CRITERIA

This section sets forth design criteria and outline specifications as a basis for selection of specific streetscape elements. Examples are also presented for each of the elements that illustrate the intent of the design concept and criteria:

### UPPER LEVEL LIGHTS

#### Location:

- Upper level lighting will be used to define approach routes on Washington Street, Main Avenue, Fifth Street south of Main, Rosser Avenue, and 7th Street.
- Upper level lights will also be placed to illuminate the intersections of both primary and secondary streets.

#### Criteria:

- Lights will shape the corridors, define the entrances to the Downtown and assist with forming the connection between Downtown and the Kirkwood Mall.
- Height -- 30 to 35 foot poles should be used to relate to the auto oriented scale of the streets and assist in forming a grand boulevard character on Main Avenue and 5th Street.
- Detailing and colors should complement lower scale lights.
- Detachable double banner arms should be included.
- Lamps -- metal halide 150 to 400 watt should be used for areas where good color rendition is required.
- Poles -- currently, concrete and steel poles are used throughout the downtown. The City Engineering Department expressed a preference for concrete poles because they are durable and maintenance free.
- Pole Color -- color should be a green or red/brown aggregate. Each pole should be sealed with a graffiti guard.
- Illumination Levels and Uniformity -- lighting levels and uniformity must meet American Association of State Highway Officials and Illuminating Engineering Society Standards.

## LOWER LEVEL LIGHTS

### Location:

- Lower level lights should be located along the primary and secondary streets and used to emphasize the pedestrian scale of the core Downtown streets.

### Criteria:

- Detailing that recalls the traditional ironwork of the region should be used in the design of the cross arms, tenons, and luminaires.
- Pole color should be sophisticated, dark tones of green or red/brown to reinforce a high quality image appropriate for the Capital City and to match the upper level light poles.
- Festive colors should be added through elements that may change such as banners, flowers, hanging metal or fabric artwork.
- Multiple luminaires should be used to emphasize intersections and points of interest.
- Single luminaires should be used in the mid-block areas.
- Average illumination levels should not exceed 1.5 foot candles along walkways.
- Poles:
  - Spun Concrete
  - Ameron Model: Style IV or equal
  - Pole finish -- color to match upper level lights
  - Luminaire -- cast aluminum cross arms
  - Lamp -- 70 watt metal halide to 100 watt maximum
  - Finish -- aliphatic urethane or powder coating
  - Seal with graffiti guard

### Lighting Examples:

Figures V-2 to V-4 illustrate different combinations of lower and upper level lights. The designs illustrate the concept of incorporating symbols of the City through metal fabrications. Concepts A through G utilize the same concrete pole. The lights differ in the design of the metal cross arms, and tenon. Simple globe fixtures are suggested because they convey a timeless quality and reflect existing fixtures used throughout downtown.

- Concepts A through D are stylized versions of wheat.
- Concept E is an adaptation of the wild prairie rose.
- Concept F is stylized rising sun.
- Concept G illustrates a prefabricated modular design that could accomplish the design objectives.

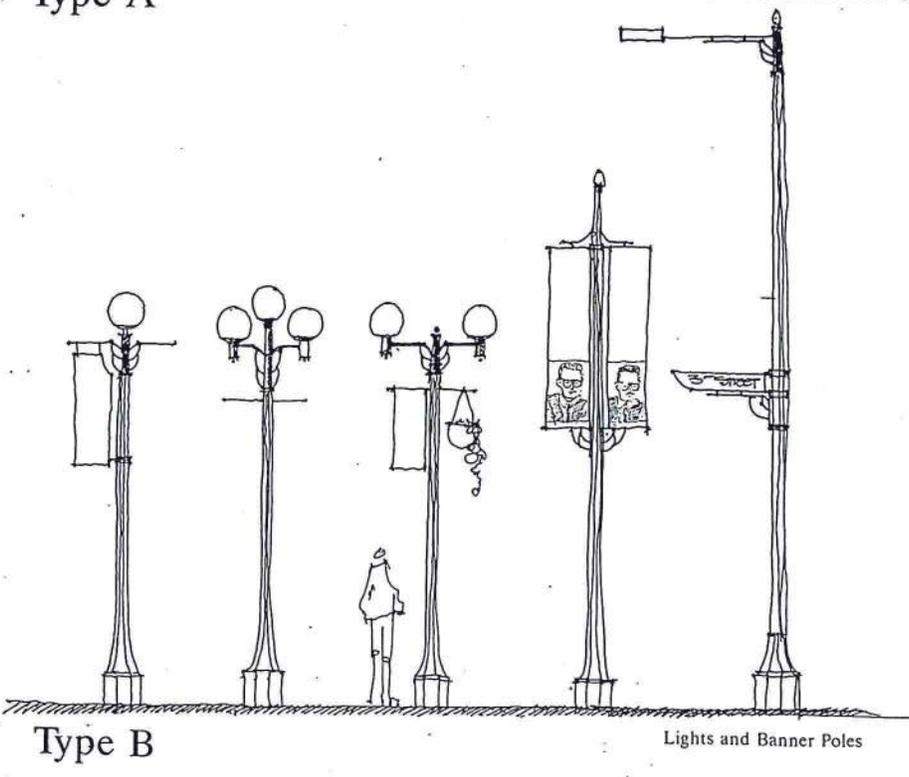
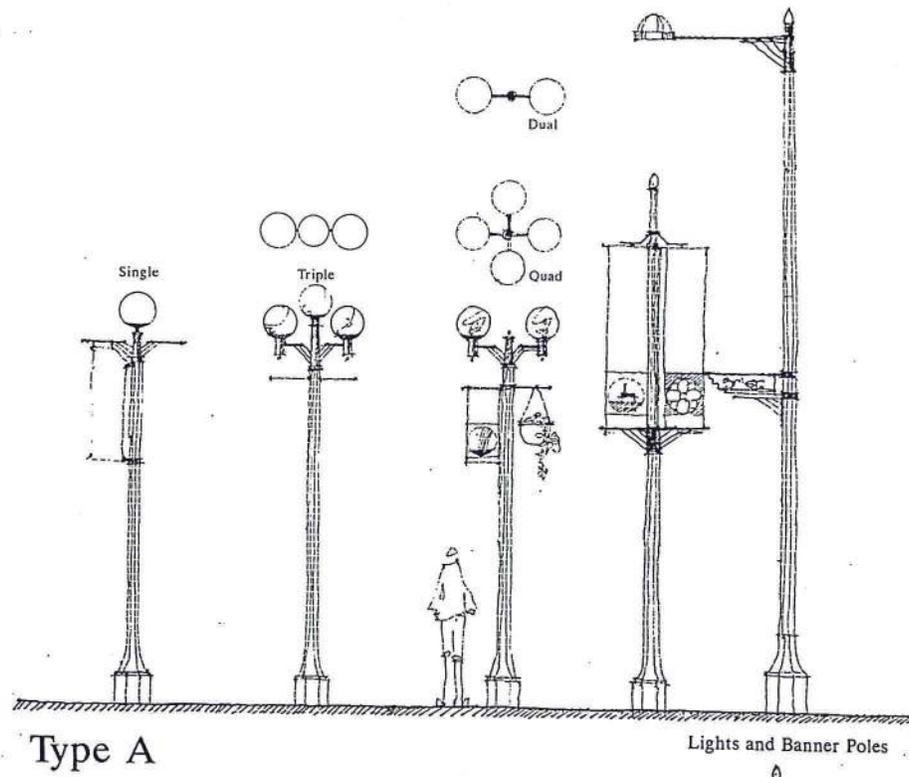
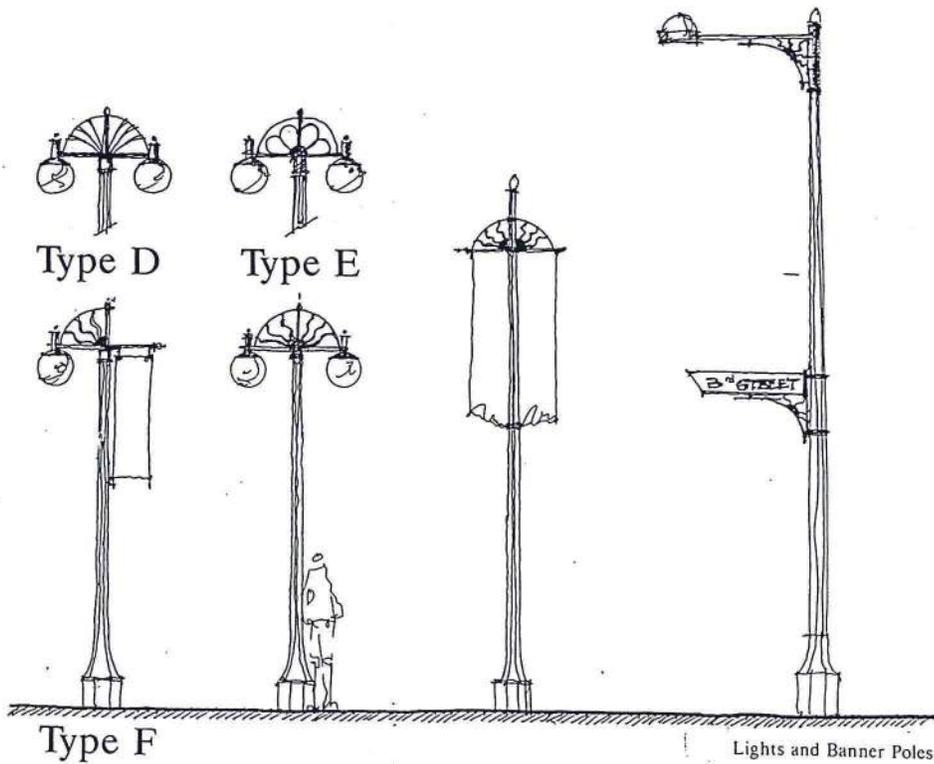
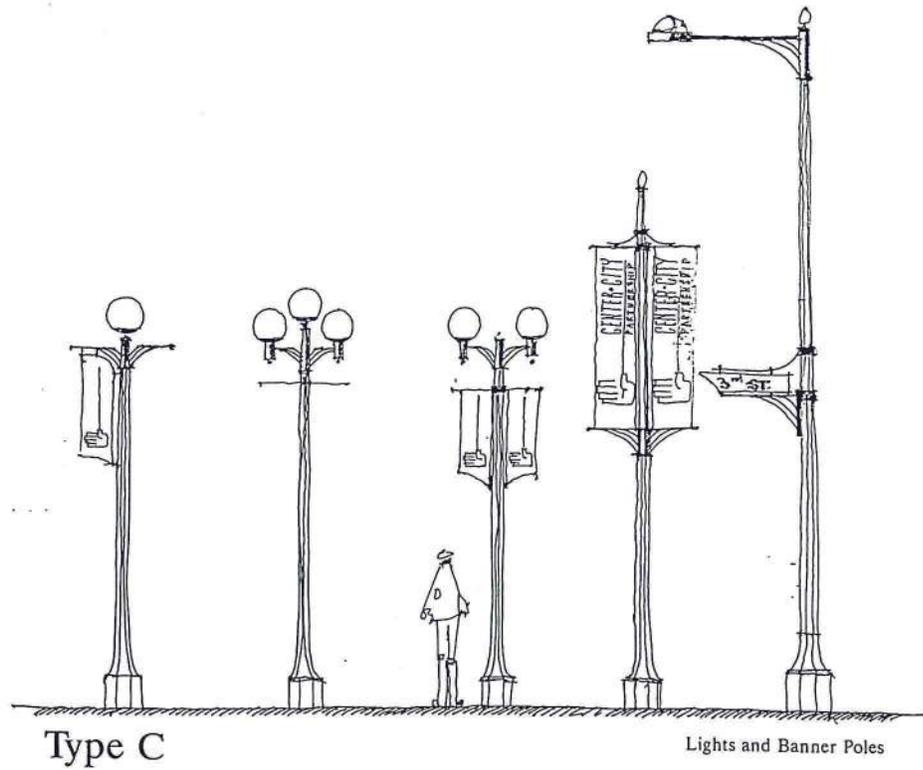


Figure V-2  
Lighting Alternatives A & B



**Figure V-3**  
**Lighting Alternatives C, D, E & F**

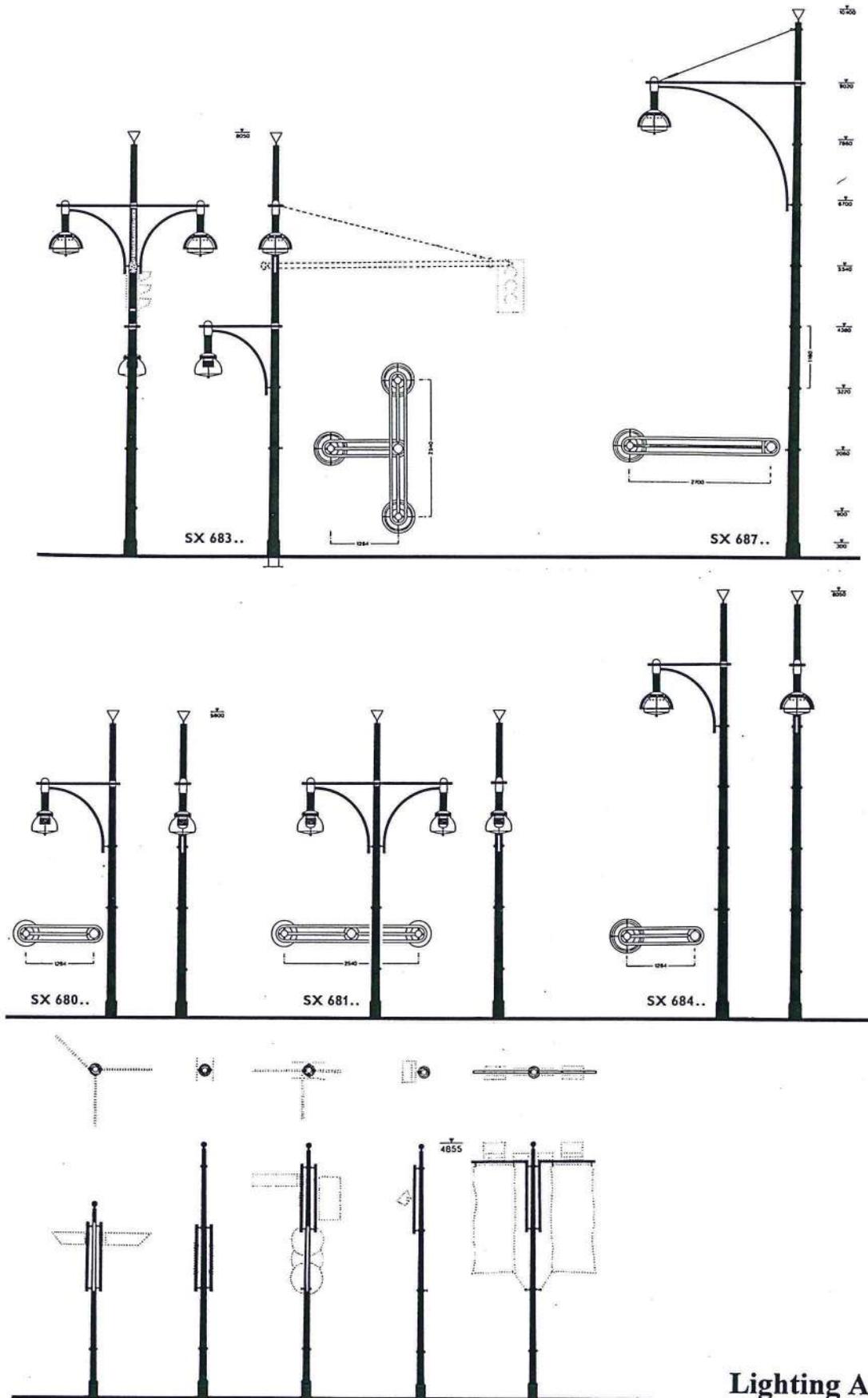


Figure V-4  
Lighting Alternative G

## KIOSKS

### Location:

Kiosks are proposed to be located in the areas with the most pedestrian traffic, such as Belle Mehus and Depot Plaza, and at the intersections of Broadway, 4th and 6th Streets and Thayer at 4th Street and 6th Streets.

### Criteria:

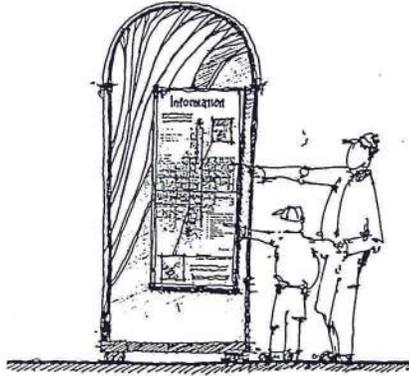
- The design should emulate the regional ironwork with a contemporary adaption.
- The design could change for each location -- treating the kiosks as a piece of artwork.
- Color, form and graphics should attract attention. Metal work should be compatible with other streetscape elements, placing the most emphasis on color in the changeable graphics.
- The design should be adaptable for two, three, and four sided kiosks.
- Kiosk legs should include leveling devices where needed.

### Materials:

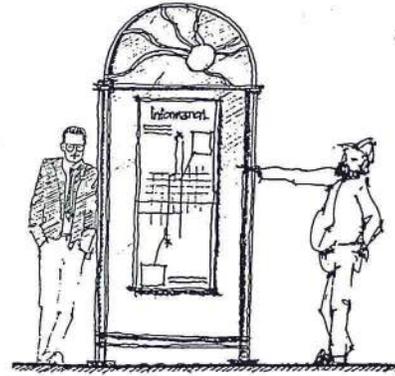
- Aluminum or steel with copper moving components.
- Mounting -- surface mounting on existing walks.
- Electrical service for lighting.

### Kiosk Examples:

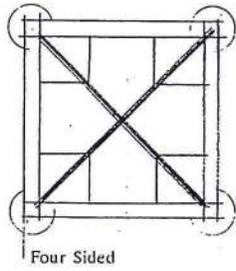
Three alternatives for the kiosks are illustrated in **Figure V-5**. The design of Concept A represents a stylized version of wheat. Concept B is a silhouette of a sun rise, and Concept C includes a series of spinning city icons fabricated out of copper. The icons are the meadowlark and sunflower. The spinning icons take advantage of the windy conditions in Bismarck to create kiosks that act as kinetic sculpture.



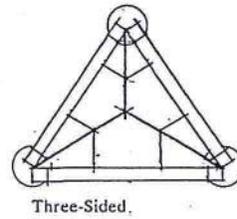
Kiosk: Concept A



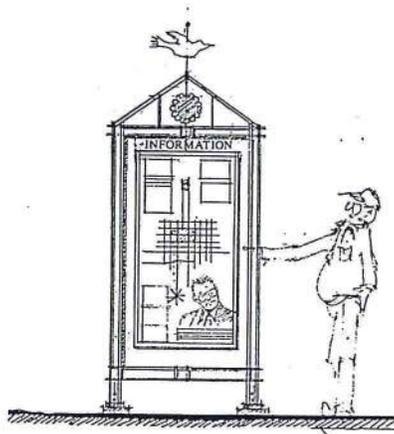
Kiosk: Concept B



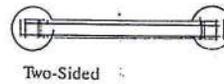
Four Sided



Three-Sided



Kiosk: Concept C



Two-Sided

**Figure V-5**  
**Kiosk Alternatives**

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## RAISED CONCRETE PLANTERS

### Location:

- Core Downtown streets on widened sidewalks at intersections. See Figure V-6.

### Criteria:

- Planters should reinforce the existing character of Chancellor Square.
- The height of planters should be suitable for sitting (14 to 18 inches in height).
- Planter wall width should be a minimum of 8 inches to a maximum of 12 inches to accommodate informal seating.

### Materials:

- Concrete finish should be a light sandblasted texture.
- Sealer -- matte finish siloxane based graffiti guard.
- Width to outside of walls should be 6'-0" minimum.
- Soil -- a good quality planting soil mix should be incorporated to a depth of 2'6" for planters with trees and 1'6" for planters with shrubs alone.
- All walls shall be insulated with 1" polystyrene board to a depth of 2'6".
- Place weep holes on street side.

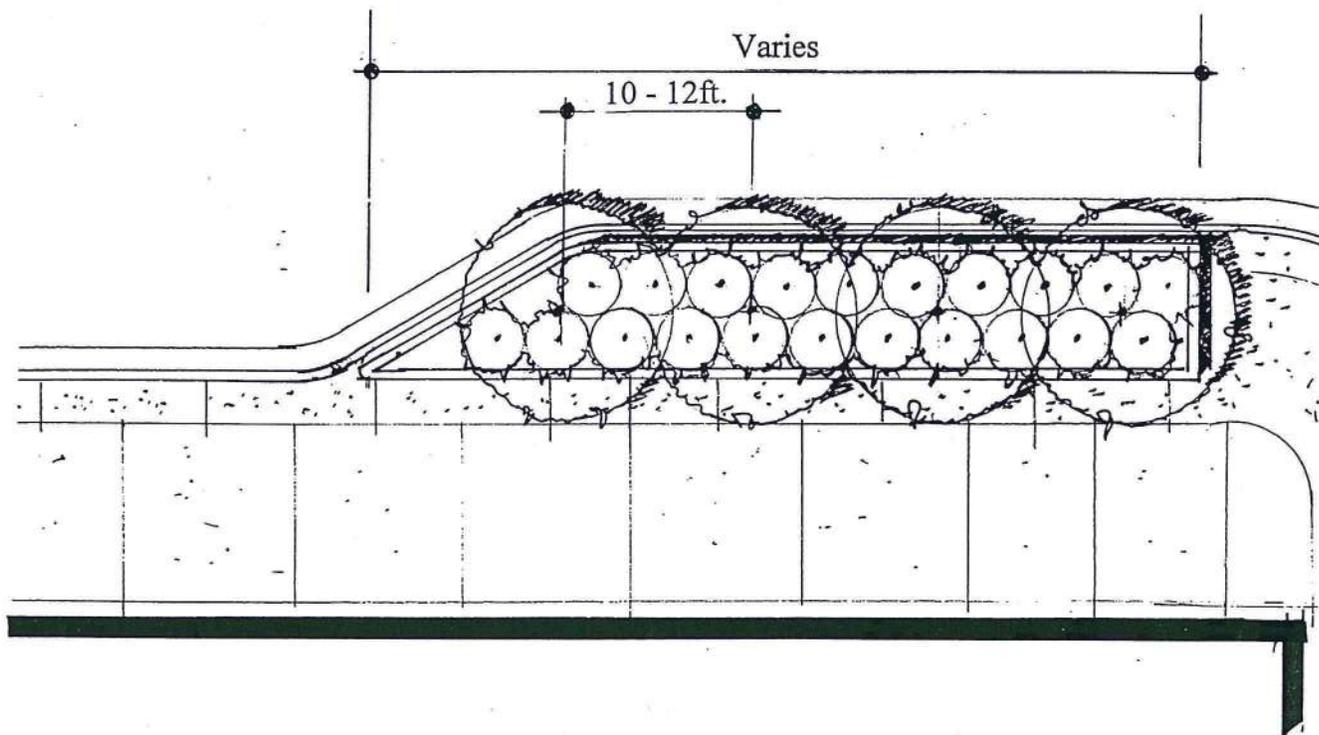
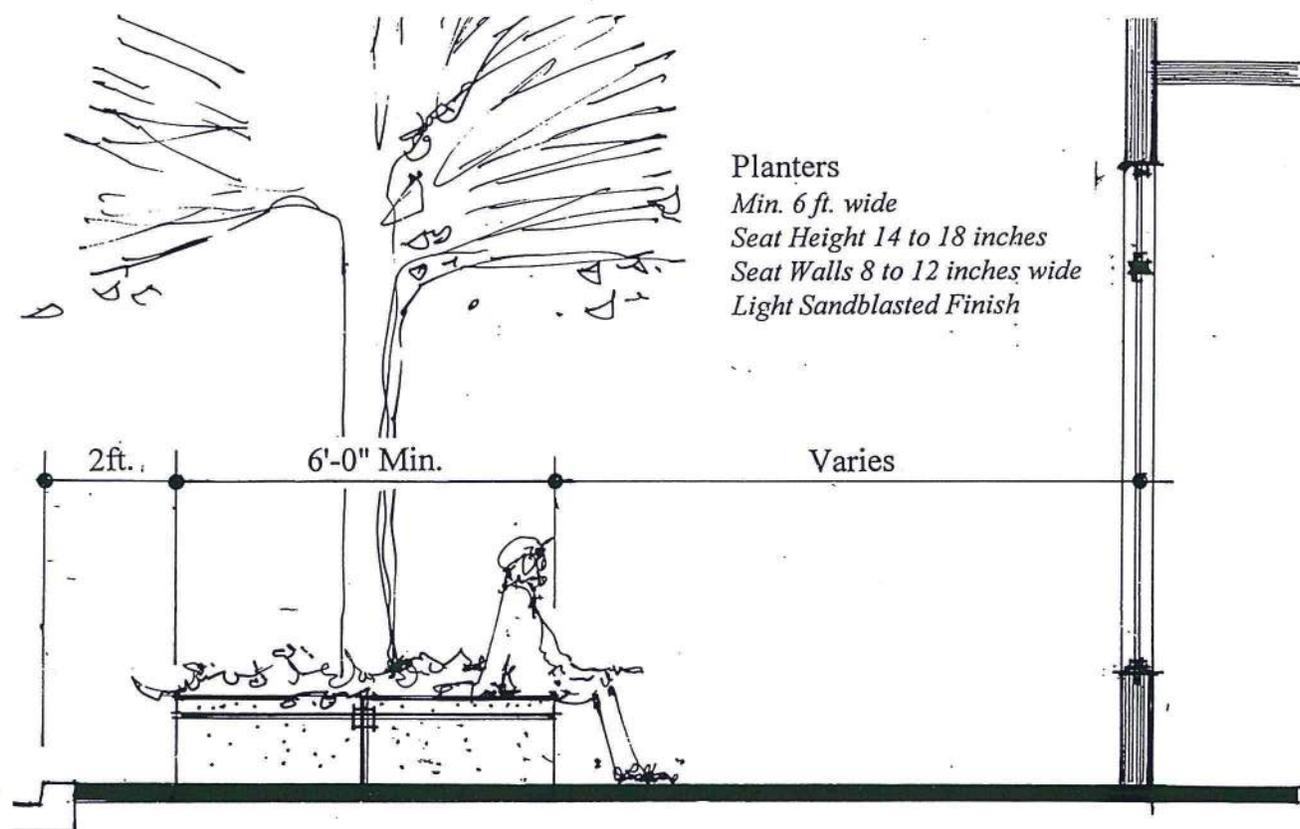


Figure V-6  
Raised Concrete Planters

## PARKING LOT BUFFER RAILINGS

**Location:** Place as an optional parking lot buffer between primary sidewalks and parking areas on primary and secondary streets.

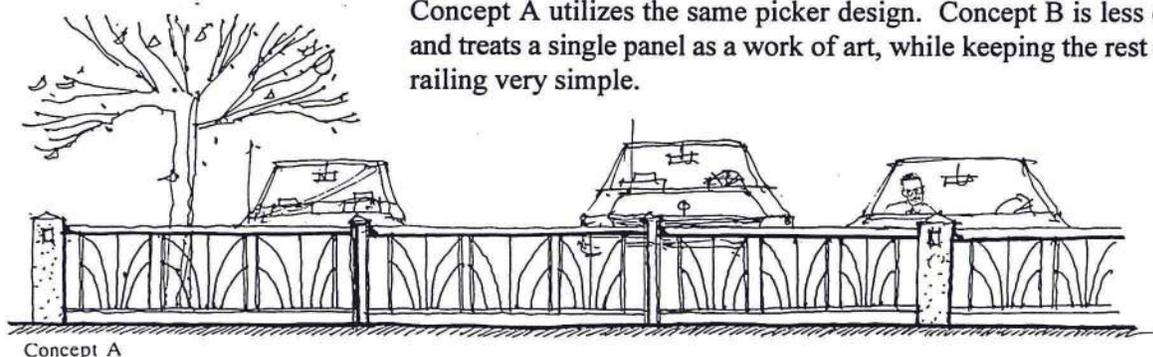
**Criteria:**

- Height should buffer view to the hood of cars (approximately 36").
- Design should recall the detailing of the traditional ironwork in the region in a contemporary adaption.
- Railings along 5th Street, Main Avenue, or in the Chancellor Square area should be treated as artwork. The designs should recall regional icons.

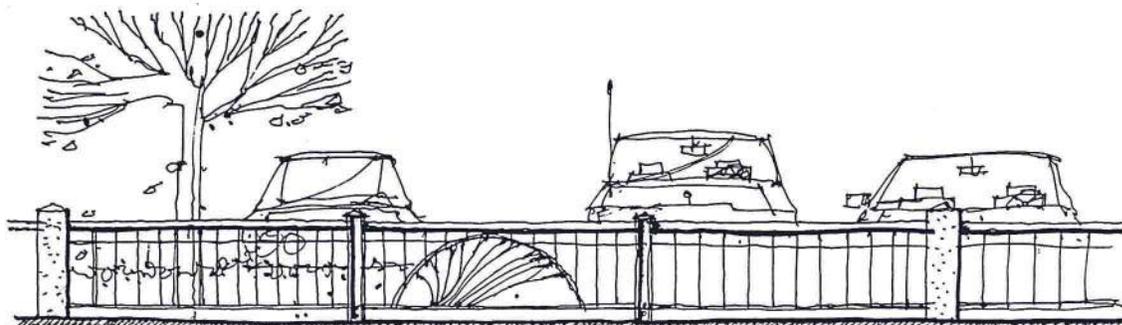
**Materials:**

- Steel pickets and rail posts should be galvanized and treated with an acid wash, "galva prep" or equal prior to painting.
- Color -- greens, bronze, or black.
- Finish to be an aliphatic urethane.
- Railing piers should be cast-in-place or pre-cast concrete with a light sand blasted or wood trowel finish.
- Brick or stone could also be used for piers. Colored concrete should also be considered for blending with building finishes.

**Railing Examples:** Two concepts for the railings are illustrated in Figure V-7. Both designs symbolize wheat shafts. Each panel in Concept A utilizes the same picket design. Concept B is less costly and treats a single panel as a work of art, while keeping the rest of the railing very simple.



Concept A



Concept B

**Figure V-7**  
**Parking Lot Buffer Railings**

## SIDEWALK PAVING

Sidewalk paving should be kept simple and designed to complement the existing treatment in Chancellor Square which includes exposed aggregate with broom finished concrete. A more detailed scoring pattern may be used to improve the appearance of the walks over that of the existing Chancellor Square. If costs become excessive, then most of the streetscape expense should be dedicated to vertical elements that will have the most impact.

Decorative paving such as brick, granite, concrete pavers, or other stone should be used in special gathering areas. These areas include Belle Mehus, Depot Plaza, and other special seating areas.

### **Porous-Planting Strips:**

One of the optional secondary streetscape treatments illustrates large areas of dry-laid brick or other porous types of paving around the base of street trees. This type of treatment will benefit street trees by permitting a greater amount of moisture to permeate the paving surface than would otherwise be possible with concrete paving. See **previous Figure IV-8**.

## CROSSWALK PAVING

One of the primary objectives of the streetscape design is to create safe and comfortable pedestrian environments. The plan recommends paving pedestrian crosswalks with a material that contrasts in both color and texture with the street pavement. The objective is to create a visually cue to motorists that they are entering a pedestrian zone and caution is necessary. Following are three alternative construction methods that will achieve this objective.

### ■ **Colored concrete with a decorative jointing pattern.**

#### *Advantages:*

- This method is simple to construct, durable, and cost effective.

#### *Disadvantages:*

- This system is difficult to patch and match if any underground utility work is necessary.
- Snow plow blades may catch and chip corners and edges.
- Traffic lanes may have to be closed down for three days during installation.
- A tight jointing pattern may promote excessive cracking in the concrete.

### ■ **Concrete Interlocking Pavers**

This system utilizes concrete interlocking pavers to define the crosswalks. The pavers may be drylaid over a heavy duty aggregate base or placed over a rigid concrete slab.

*Advantages:*

- This method creates a very attractive cost effective crosswalk.
- Pavers withstand salt better than poured in place concrete.
- If utility or road repairs are required, the pavers may be lifted and reused.

*Disadvantages:*

- May be slightly more expensive than colored concrete to install. However, the long-term maintenance and replacement costs should be less.
- If the drylaid method is utilized, settlement and rutting may occur in the drive lanes.

■ **Contrasting Pea Rock Seal Coating**

This method is the least expensive and involves defining the crosswalks by applying a red pea rock seal coat over the bituminous or concrete street surface.

*Advantages:*

- Cost effective and easy to construct.

*Disadvantages:*

- May appear temporary.
- The surface will wear away and will need to be resurfaced every three to four years.

## **V. STREETScape ELEMENTS**

## V. STREETScape ELEMENTS

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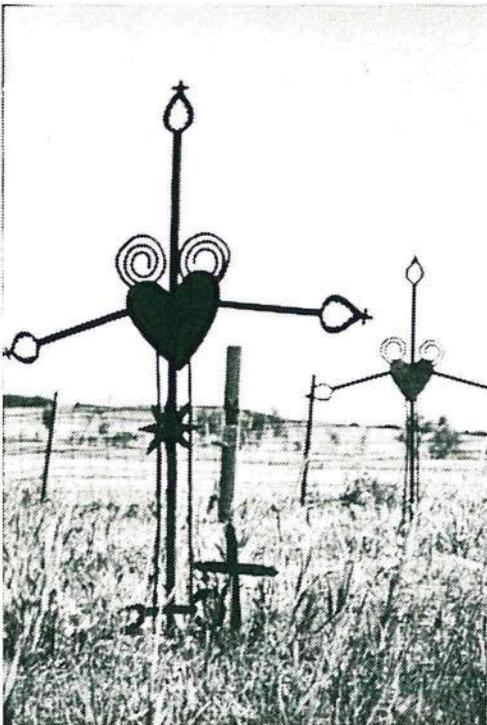
- Incorporate ethnic associations such as the iron work of the German/Russians.
- Use prairie or plains images such as grasses, badlands colors (scoria) or other elements drawn from the state flag.
- Use water elements to celebrate Bismarck's river heritage.
- Incorporate state capital images such as the art deco styling and building materials used.
- Other themes to consider are railroad, agriculture (wheat and sunflowers are the main cash crops), energy, and Native American.

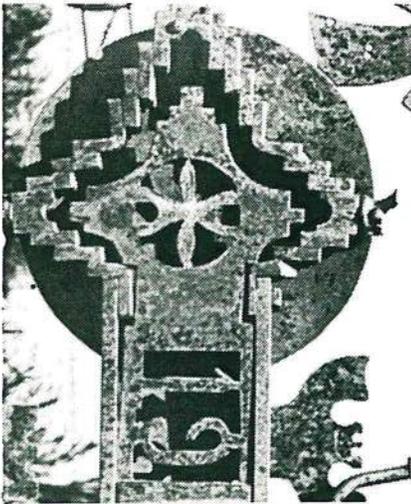
### Blacksmithing Heritage

Blacksmithing is an integral part of the history and settlement of the Bismarck area. The profession flourished from the 1880s to the 1930s with the settlement of the area by European immigrants. Blacksmiths were a vital part of the agricultural community and were responsible for fabricating and repairing farm implements, tools, carts, and wagons.

During the winter months, many blacksmiths built and sold iron crosses for grave markers. The iron crosses were a tradition that migrated with them from Europe.

The immigrants preferred the vastness of the prairie landscape. The open design of the iron crosses accentuated the vastness of the landscape by





maintaining an unobstructed view across the prairie. Clusters of iron crosses with the prairie as a backdrop formed dramatic scenes throughout the area. The crosses varied in height from three to seven feet and generally were designed in ten different styles. Each blacksmith developed their own signature style and typically included symbols metaphorical of their love of life and never ending spirit. Rooster tails and sunrise designs were used to represent resurrection and the dawn of a new day and life. Unbroken circles and hearts were incorporated to signify an exuberant, vibrant spirit.

The tradition faded in the 1930s, along with the demise of blacksmithing as a profession. Many of the remaining crosses are on the national register of historic sites and continue to represent symbols of a particular place, time and people.

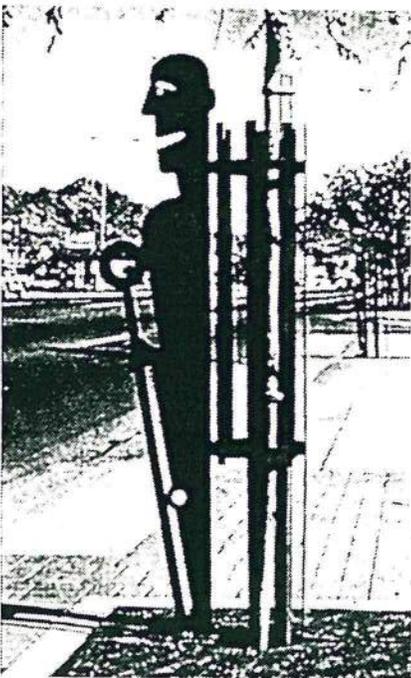
The following quote was excerpted from the book IRON SPIRITS published by the North Dakota Council on the Arts:

Blacksmithing is an epic occupation, fundamental to the development of our agricultural economy. The religious experience which these crosses symbolize is equally fundamental to our civilization. These two factors combine to form a body of art, a beautiful balance of the sacred and the secular; an achievement worthy of praise. The work that the iron crosses represent and the meaning they hold are an integral part of the foundation upon which North Dakota society is established.

ALLEN I. OLSON  
Governor

### **Recommended Design Concept**

The proposed concept for the design of the streetscape elements will incorporate icons of Bismarck's rich cultural heritage with new elements to create a fresh and progressive identity. The elements will be composed primarily of metals to recognize the important role blacksmithing played in Bismarck's agricultural economy and as unique regional folk art.



## **B. ICONOGRAPHY**

Symbols of Bismarck could be incorporated into the design of the streetscape elements. Icons representing elements of Bismarck's history could be fabricated out of metal and incorporated into the design of lights, benches, railings, kiosks, and other streetscape elements. Examples of these icons are outlined below and are stylized in **Figure V-1**.

- Wheat -- the state's highest cash crop and symbol of the agricultural economy
- Sunflowers -- the state's second largest cash crop
- Wild Prairie Rose -- the state flower
- Western Meadowlark -- the state bird
- Railroad -- instrumental in the settlement of Bismarck
- The paddle wheeler "Rose Bud" -- symbol of the role the Missouri River played in the City's heritage
- The Capitol City -- art deco styling and materials from the Capitol Building
- The State Motto -- "Liberty and union now and forever one and inseparable."

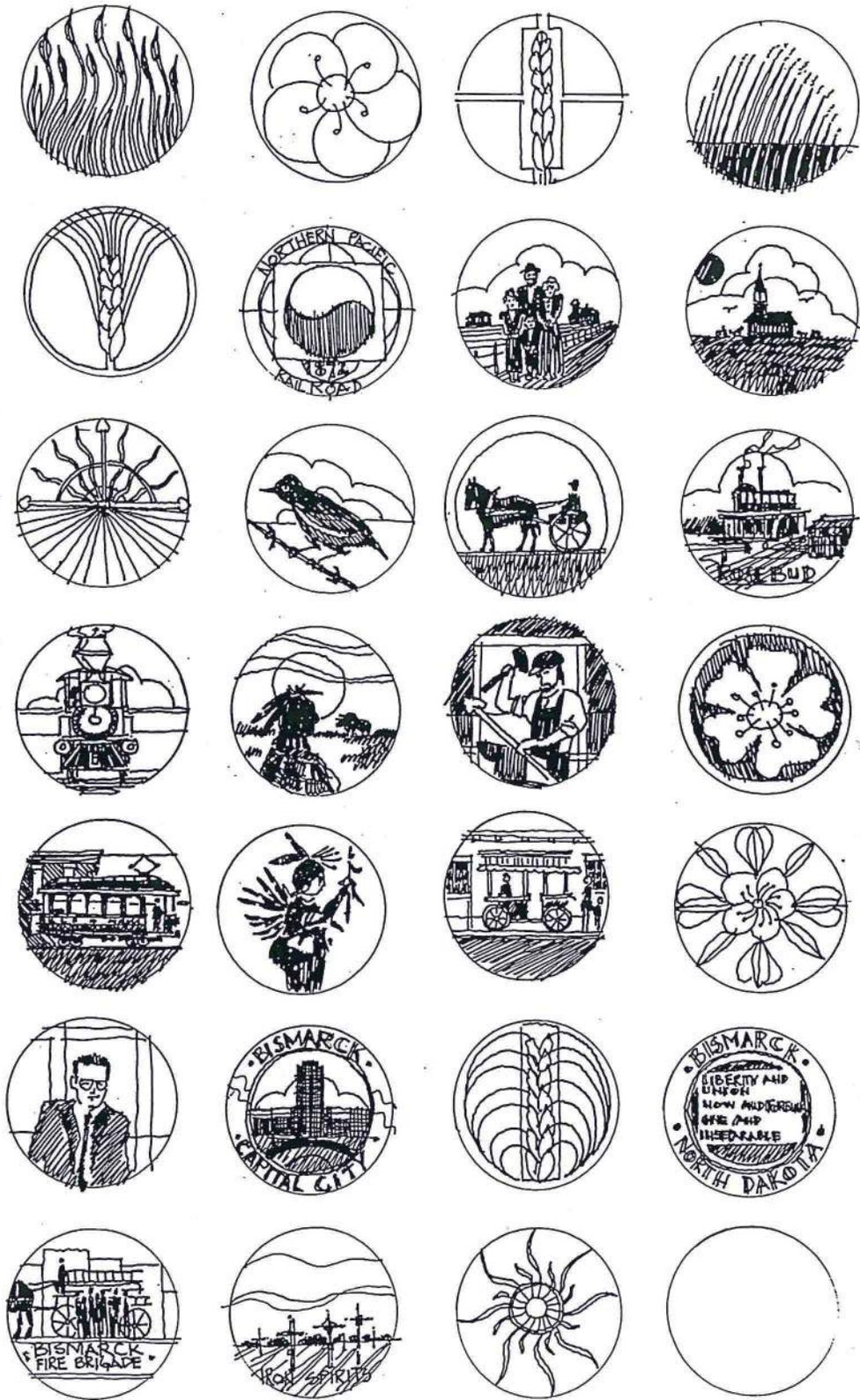


Figure V-1  
Bismarck Iconography

## C. DESIGN CRITERIA

This section sets forth design criteria and outline specifications as a basis for selection of specific streetscape elements. Examples are also presented for each of the elements that illustrate the intent of the design concept and criteria:

### UPPER LEVEL LIGHTS

#### Location:

- Upper level lighting will be used to define approach routes on Washington Street, Main Avenue, Fifth Street south of Main, Rosser Avenue, and 7th Street.
- Upper level lights will also be placed to illuminate the intersections of both primary and secondary streets.

#### Criteria:

- Lights will shape the corridors, define the entrances to the Downtown and assist with forming the connection between Downtown and the Kirkwood Mall.
- Height -- 30 to 35 foot poles should be used to relate to the auto oriented scale of the streets and assist in forming a grand boulevard character on Main Avenue and 5th Street.
- Detailing and colors should complement lower scale lights.
- Detachable double banner arms should be included.
- Lamps -- metal halide 150 to 400 watt should be used for areas where good color rendition is required.
- Poles -- currently, concrete and steel poles are used throughout the downtown. The City Engineering Department expressed a preference for concrete poles because they are durable and maintenance free.
- Pole Color -- color should be a green or red/brown aggregate. Each pole should be sealed with a graffiti guard.
- Illumination Levels and Uniformity -- lighting levels and uniformity must meet American Association of State Highway Officials and Illuminating Engineering Society Standards.

## LOWER LEVEL LIGHTS

### Location:

- Lower level lights should be located along the primary and secondary streets and used to emphasize the pedestrian scale of the core Downtown streets.

### Criteria:

- Detailing that recalls the traditional ironwork of the region should be used in the design of the cross arms, tenons, and luminaires.
- Pole color should be sophisticated, dark tones of green or red/brown to reinforce a high quality image appropriate for the Capital City and to match the upper level light poles.
- Festive colors should be added through elements that may change such as banners, flowers, hanging metal or fabric artwork.
- Multiple luminaires should be used to emphasize intersections and points of interest.
- Single luminaires should be used in the mid-block areas.
- Average illumination levels should not exceed 1.5 foot candles along walkways.
- Poles:
  - Spun Concrete
  - Ameron Model: Style IV or equal
  - Pole finish -- color to match upper level lights
  - Luminaire -- cast aluminum cross arms
  - Lamp -- 70 watt metal halide to 100 watt maximum
  - Finish -- aliphatic urethane or powder coating
  - Seal with graffiti guard

### Lighting Examples:

Figures V-2 to V-4 illustrate different combinations of lower and upper level lights. The designs illustrate the concept of incorporating symbols of the City through metal fabrications. Concepts A through G utilize the same concrete pole. The lights differ in the design of the metal cross arms, and tenon. Simple globe fixtures are suggested because they convey a timeless quality and reflect existing fixtures used throughout downtown.

- Concepts A through D are stylized versions of wheat.
- Concept E is an adaptation of the wild prairie rose.
- Concept F is stylized rising sun.
- Concept G illustrates a prefabricated modular design that could accomplish the design objectives.

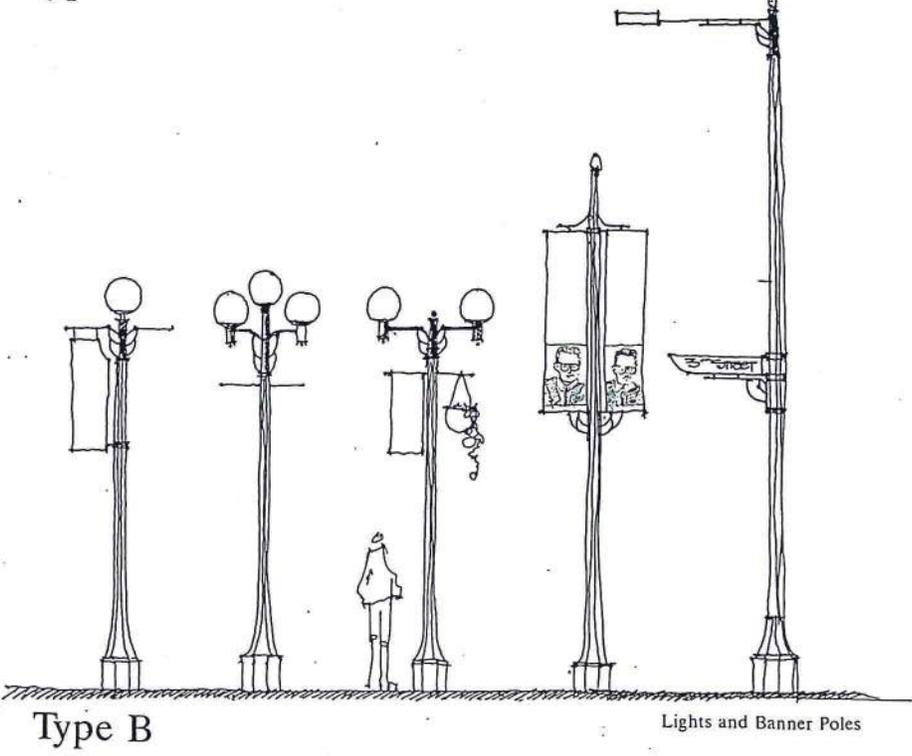
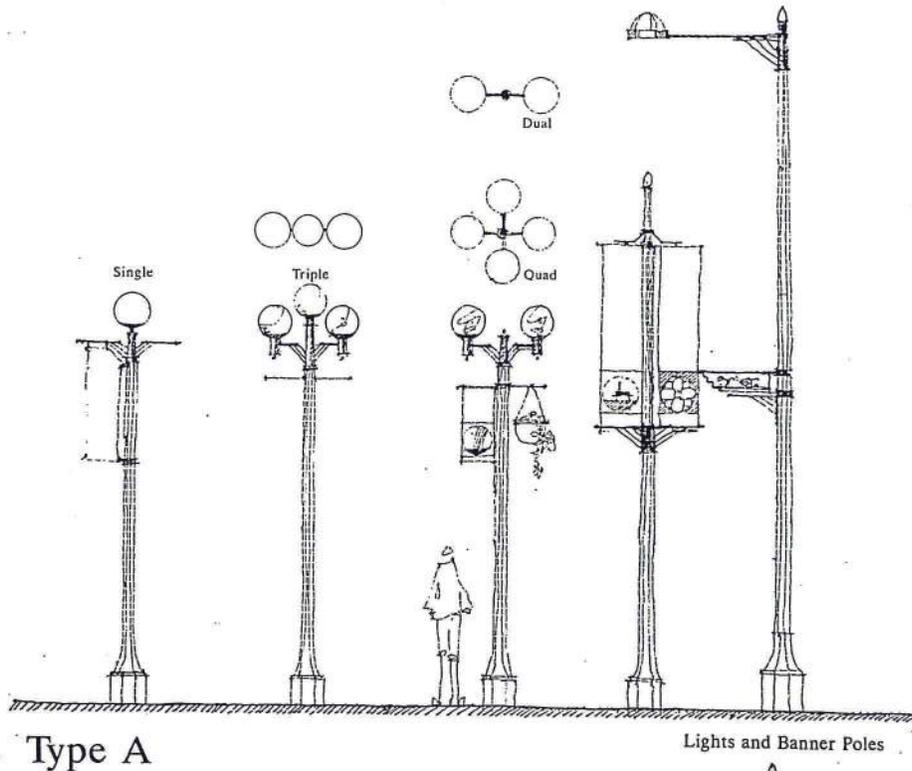
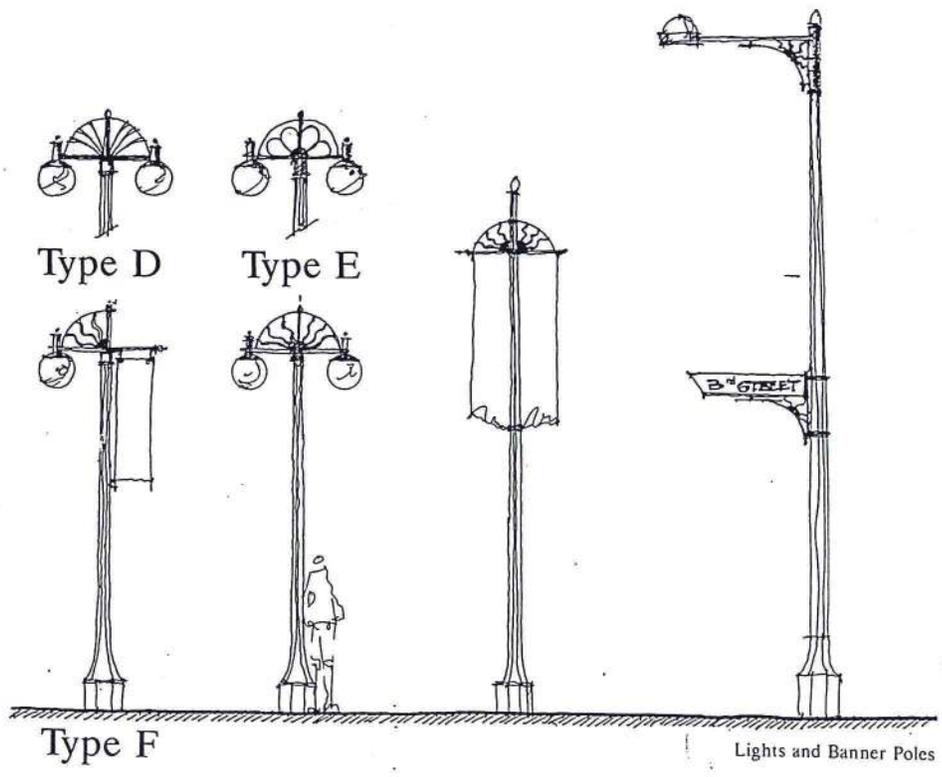
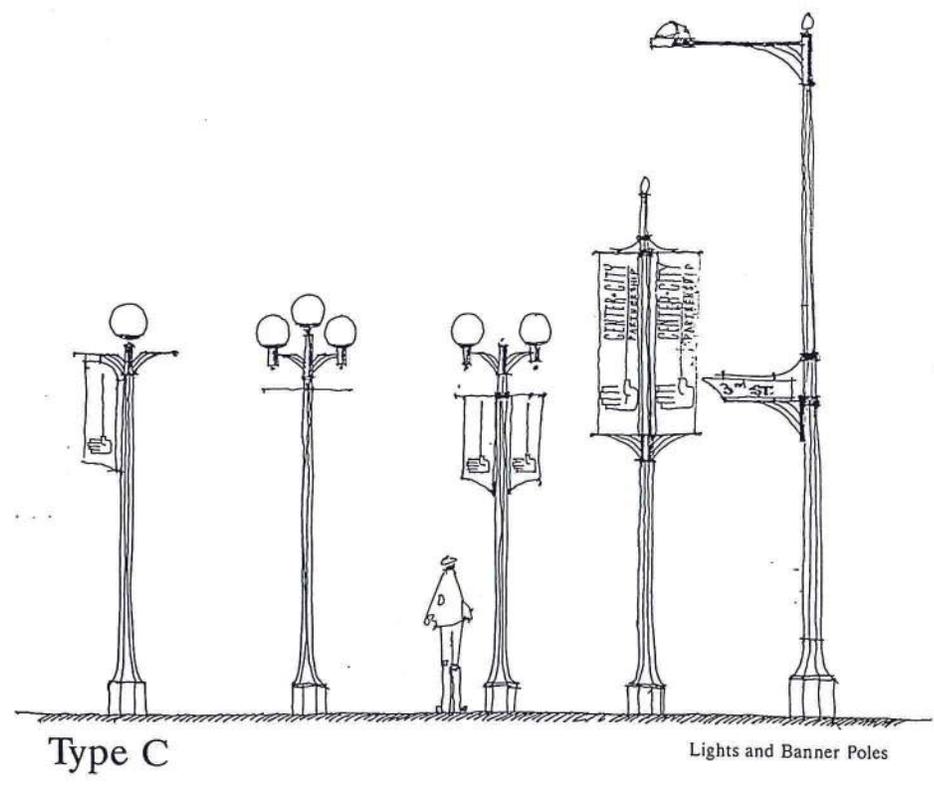


Figure V-2  
Lighting Alternatives A & B



**Figure V-3**  
**Lighting Alternatives C, D, E & F**

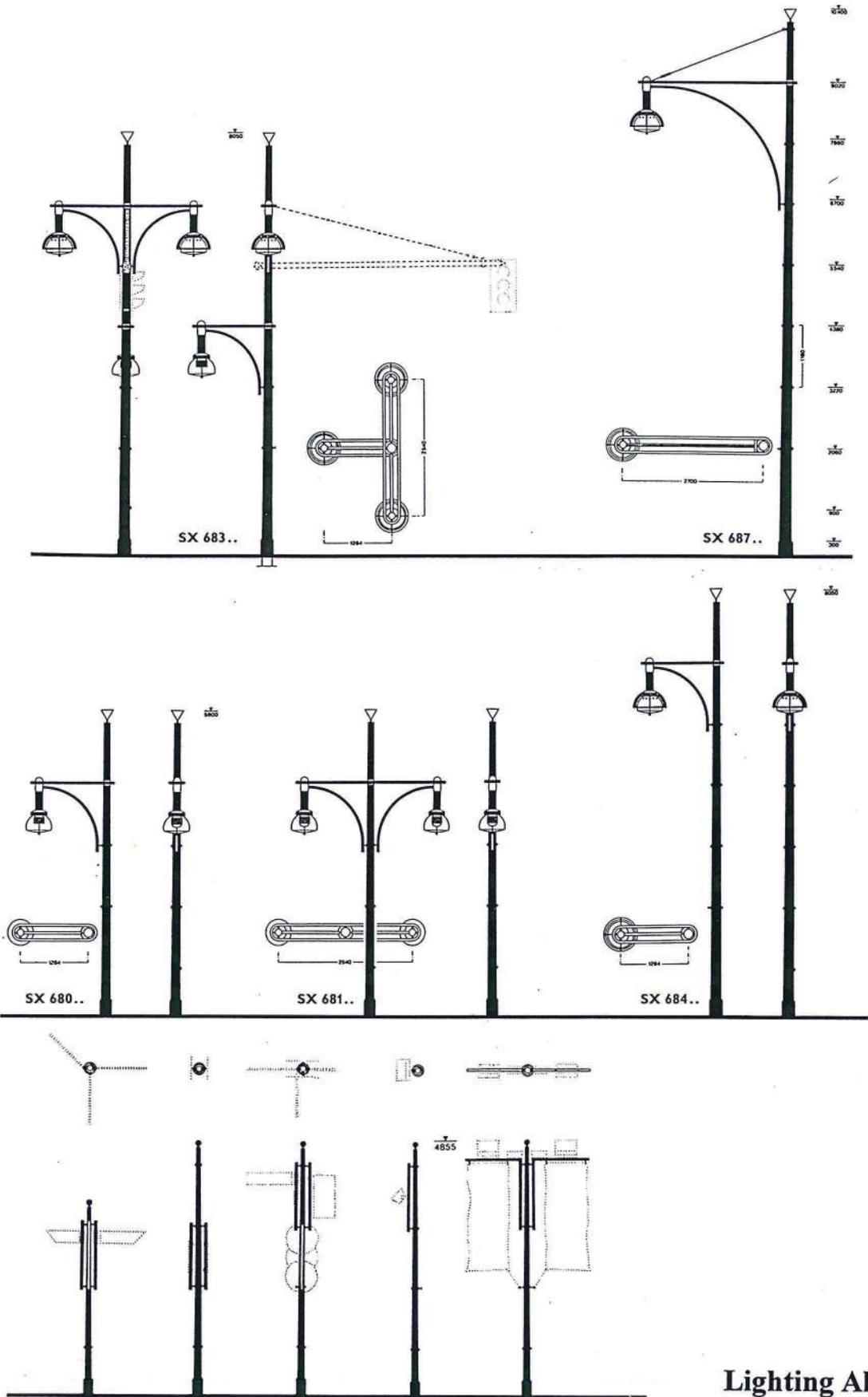


Figure V-4  
Lighting Alternative G

## KIOSKS

### Location:

Kiosks are proposed to be located in the areas with the most pedestrian traffic, such as Belle Mehus and Depot Plaza, and at the intersections of Broadway, 4th and 6th Streets and Thayer at 4th Street and 6th Streets.

### Criteria:

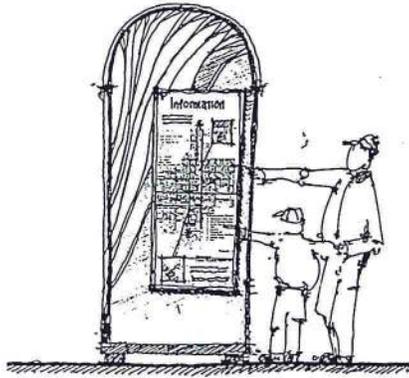
- The design should emulate the regional ironwork with a contemporary adaption.
- The design could change for each location -- treating the kiosks as a piece of artwork.
- Color, form and graphics should attract attention. Metal work should be compatible with other streetscape elements, placing the most emphasis on color in the changeable graphics.
- The design should be adaptable for two, three, and four sided kiosks.
- Kiosk legs should include leveling devices where needed.

### Materials:

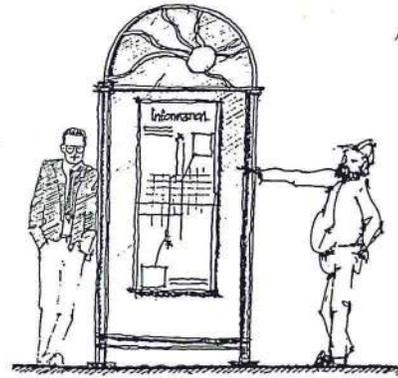
- Aluminum or steel with copper moving components.
- Mounting -- surface mounting on existing walks.
- Electrical service for lighting.

### Kiosk Examples:

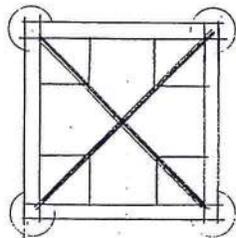
Three alternatives for the kiosks are illustrated in **Figure V-5**. The design of Concept A represents a stylized version of wheat. Concept B is a silhouette of a sun rise, and Concept C includes a series of spinning city icons fabricated out of copper. The icons are the meadowlark and sunflower. The spinning icons take advantage of the windy conditions in Bismarck to create kiosks that act as kinetic sculpture.



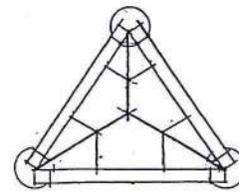
Kiosk: Concept A



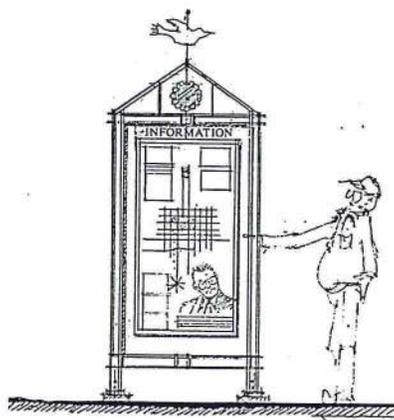
Kiosk: Concept B



Four Sided



Three-Sided



Kiosk: Concept C



Two-Sided

**Figure V-5**  
**Kiosk Alternatives**

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## RAISED CONCRETE PLANTERS

### Location:

- Core Downtown streets on widened sidewalks at intersections. See Figure V-6.

### Criteria:

- Planters should reinforce the existing character of Chancellor Square.
- The height of planters should be suitable for sitting (14 to 18 inches in height).
- Planter wall width should be a minimum of 8 inches to a maximum of 12 inches to accommodate informal seating.

### Materials:

- Concrete finish should be a light sandblasted texture.
- Sealer -- matte finish siloxane based graffiti guard.
- Width to outside of walls should be 6'-0" minimum.
- Soil -- a good quality planting soil mix should be incorporated to a depth of 2'6" for planters with trees and 1'6" for planters with shrubs alone.
- All walls shall be insulated with 1" polystyrene board to a depth of 2'6".
- Place weep holes on street side.

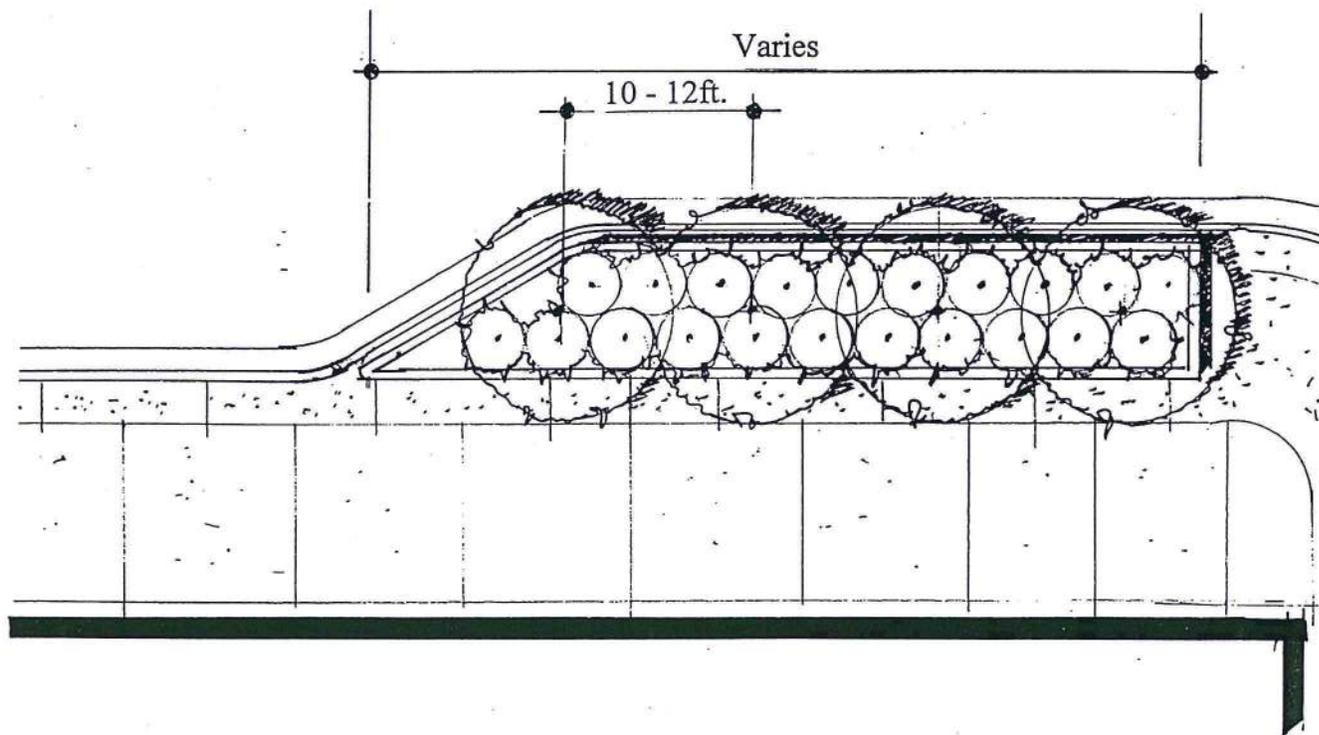
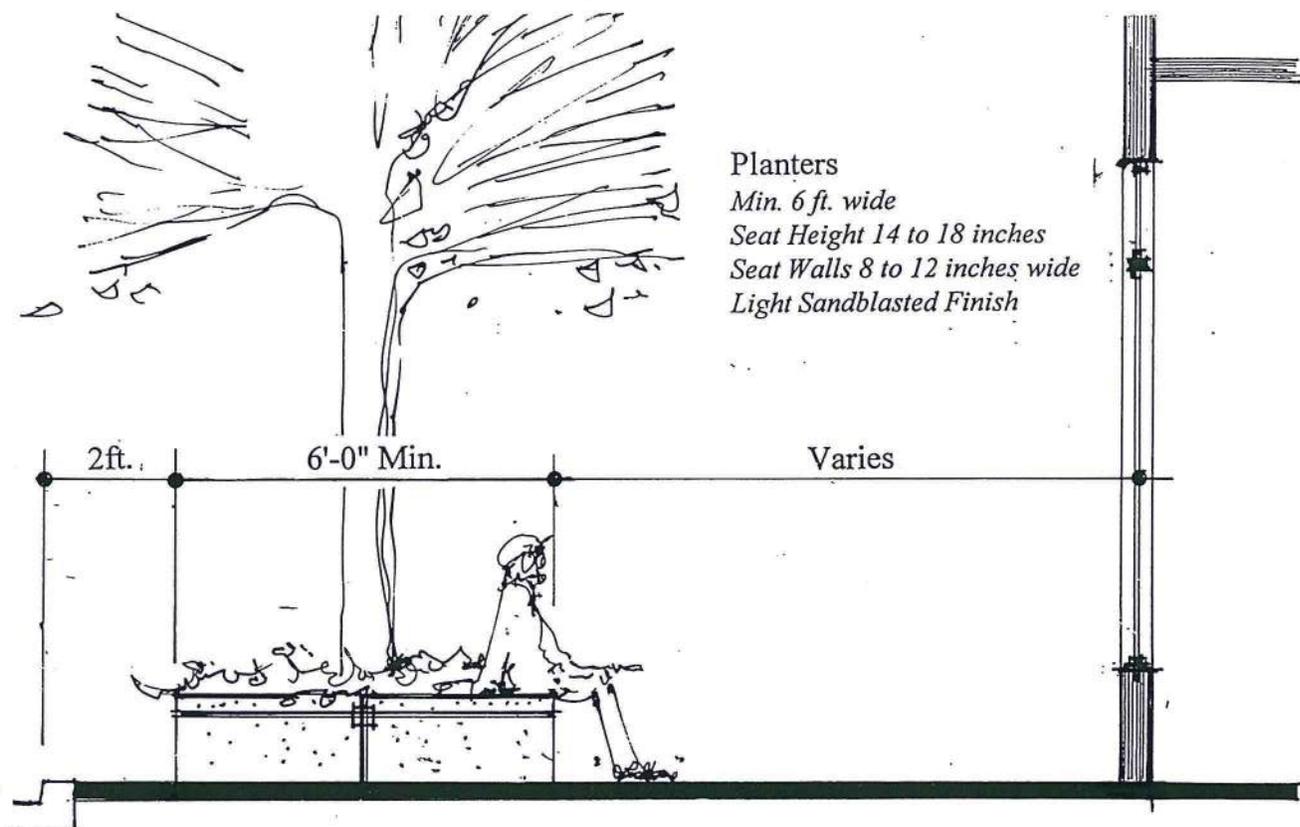


Figure V-6  
Raised Concrete Planters

## PARKING LOT BUFFER RAILINGS

**Location:** Place as an optional parking lot buffer between primary sidewalks and parking areas on primary and secondary streets.

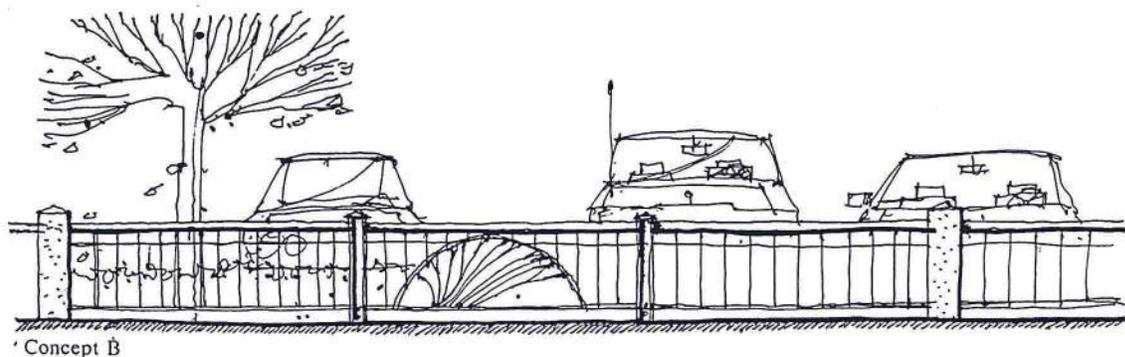
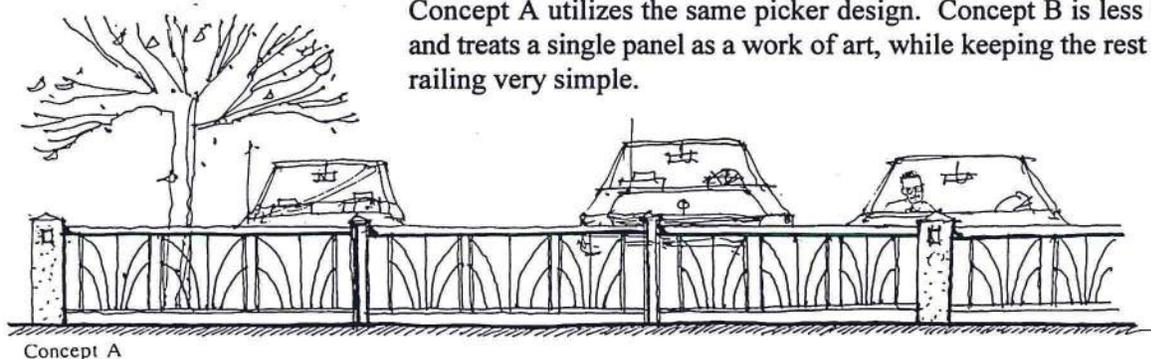
**Criteria:**

- Height should buffer view to the hood of cars (approximately 36").
- Design should recall the detailing of the traditional ironwork in the region in a contemporary adaption.
- Railings along 5th Street, Main Avenue, or in the Chancellor Square area should be treated as artwork. The designs should recall regional icons.

**Materials:**

- Steel pickets and rail posts should be galvanized and treated with an acid wash, "galva prep" or equal prior to painting.
- Color -- greens, bronze, or black.
- Finish to be an aliphatic urethane.
- Railing piers should be cast-in-place or pre-cast concrete with a light sand blasted or wood trowel finish.
- Brick or stone could also be used for piers. Colored concrete should also be considered for blending with building finishes.

**Railing Examples:** Two concepts for the railings are illustrated in Figure V-7. Both designs symbolize wheat shafts. Each panel in Concept A utilizes the same picket design. Concept B is less costly and treats a single panel as a work of art, while keeping the rest of the railing very simple.



**Figure V-7**  
**Parking Lot Buffer Railings**

## SIDEWALK PAVING

Sidewalk paving should be kept simple and designed to complement the existing treatment in Chancellor Square which includes exposed aggregate with broom finished concrete. A more detailed scoring pattern may be used to improve the appearance of the walks over that of the existing Chancellor Square. If costs become excessive, then most of the streetscape expense should be dedicated to vertical elements that will have the most impact.

Decorative paving such as brick, granite, concrete pavers, or other stone should be used in special gathering areas. These areas include Belle Mehus, Depot Plaza, and other special seating areas.

### **Porous-Planting Strips:**

One of the optional secondary streetscape treatments illustrates large areas of dry-laid brick or other porous types of paving around the base of street trees. This type of treatment will benefit street trees by permitting a greater amount of moisture to permeate the paving surface than would otherwise be possible with concrete paving. See previous Figure IV-8.

## CROSSWALK PAVING

One of the primary objectives of the streetscape design is to create safe and comfortable pedestrian environments. The plan recommends paving pedestrian crosswalks with a material that contrasts in both color and texture with the street pavement. The objective is to create a visually cue to motorists that they are entering a pedestrian zone and caution is necessary. Following are three alternative construction methods that will achieve this objective.

### ■ **Colored concrete with a decorative jointing pattern.**

#### *Advantages:*

- This method is simple to construct, durable, and cost effective.

#### *Disadvantages:*

- This system is difficult to patch and match if any underground utility work is necessary.
- Snow plow blades may catch and chip corners and edges.
- Traffic lanes may have to be closed down for three days during installation.
- A tight jointing pattern may promote excessive cracking in the concrete.

### ■ **Concrete Interlocking Pavers**

This system utilizes concrete interlocking pavers to define the crosswalks. The pavers may be drylaid over a heavy duty aggregate base or placed over a rigid concrete slab.

*Advantages:*

- This method creates a very attractive cost effective crosswalk.
- Pavers withstand salt better than poured in place concrete.
- If utility or road repairs are required, the pavers may be lifted and reused.

*Disadvantages:*

- May be slightly more expensive than colored concrete to install. However, the long-term maintenance and replacement costs should be less.
- If the drylaid method is utilized, settlement and rutting may occur in the drive lanes.

■ **Contrasting Pea Rock Seal Coating**

This method is the least expensive and involves defining the crosswalks by applying a red pea rock seal coat over the bituminous or concrete street surface.

*Advantages:*

- Cost effective and easy to construct.

*Disadvantages:*

- May appear temporary.
- The surface will wear away and will need to be resurfaced every three to four years.

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## ENTRY MONUMENTS

### Location:

- The streetscape plan recommends placing entry monuments at primary entry points to the downtown. These locations include the northeast corner of 3rd Street and Main Avenue, and the northwest corner of 7th Street and Main Avenue, the southwest corner of 3rd Street and Rosser Avenue, and at the southwest corner of 7th Street and Rosser Avenue.

### Criteria:

- The design should include a symbol of the City to compliment other elements of the streetscape. Components fabricated out of metal should also be included to express the regional ironwork.
- The design should present a progressive and positive image.
- Due to limited space, the monument should be tall and narrow rather than low and long.
- The lettering should be illuminated by spot lights or neon back lighting.

### Entry Monument Examples:

**Figure V-8** illustrates three different designs for the entry monument. Three concepts use "wheat" as the basis for the design, however, this symbol of the City is expressed differently in each alternative.

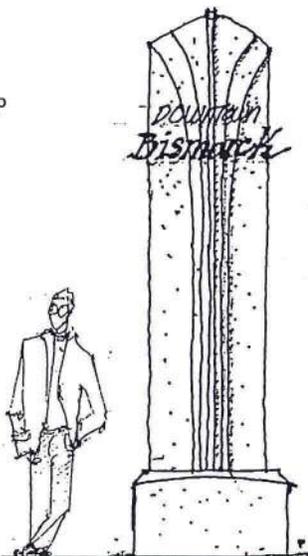
**Alternative A:** This design is fabricated out of pre-cast concrete and incorporates back lit metal lettering and logos. The logo is fabricated out of cut steel, bronze or copper and expresses stalks of wheat.

**Alternative B:** The precast concrete column expresses a formal strand of wheat. Simple back lit metal or neon lettering could be attached to the concrete.

**Alternative C:** This design is fabricated out of steel and includes spinning metal icons of the City and backlit metal lettering.



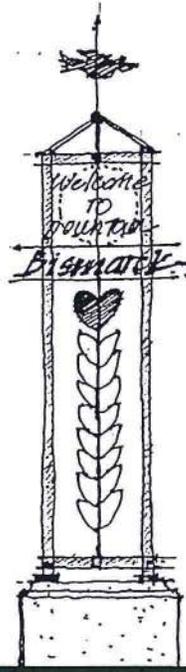
- Cast Concrete, Colored & Sandblasted  
Backlit Metal Lettering & Logo



- Cast Concrete, Colored & Sandblasted  
Backlit Metal Lettering

Alternate A

Alternate B



- Steel Framework with Spinning Metal Icons & Backlit Metal Lettering

Alternate C

Figure V-8  
Entry Monuments

## BENCHES AND TRASH RECEPTACLES

### Location:

Generally, benches and trash receptacles should be located in the gathering areas such as Belle Mehus and The Depot Plaza and at sidewalk bump-out areas in the core downtown. Benches should also be located along building fronts where desired by the property owners. The specific locations for benches and receptacles will be determined during the detail design stage of each portion of the streetscape.

### Criteria:

- The design of the benches and receptacles should reinforce the concept and be compatible with the other streetscape elements.
- Simple metal detailing should be utilized to create a timeless rather than a nostalgic appearance.
- A modular system should be used that will include benches with or without backs and armrests, and a variety of mounting options.
- Steel or aluminum components should be powder coated.
- Consideration should be given to including receptacles that have separate bins for glass, cans, and trash.

### Bench and Trash Receptacle Examples:

**Example A:** Figure V-9 illustrates a modular system of benches and receptacles that is unique, and will reinforce the traditional metal work theme. The bench slats in this alternative are fabricated out recycled plastic and resemble weathered cedar or redwood.

The trash receptacle is fabricated out of steel slats and is available in several different sizes.

#### *Bench:*

Manufacturer: Eagle Brook Products - Recycle Design  
 Model: Infinity Series 9810 with arms  
 Base: Cast aluminum x-base surface mount  
 Color: Dark bronze  
 Length: 60 inches in length  
 Durawood Color: Grey

#### *Trash Receptacle:*

Manufacturer: Victor Stanley  
 Model: Bethesda Series; S-35 trash receptacles  
 options S0-1 spun steel dome

**Example B:** The bench in Alternative B is fabricated completely out of steel and is available in several different pewter coated colors. The trash receptacle is a more contemporary design than Alternate A and conveys a more progressive image to the downtown. See Figure V-10.

*Bench:*

Manufacturer: Victor Stanley  
Model: CR-42

*Trash Receptacle:*

Manufacturer: Columbia Cascade  
Model: Colonade tilt out litter container number 2651

**TREE GRATES**

**Location:**

- Tree grates will be located around trees in the primary walk areas, Belle Mehus and Depot Plaza.

**Criteria:**

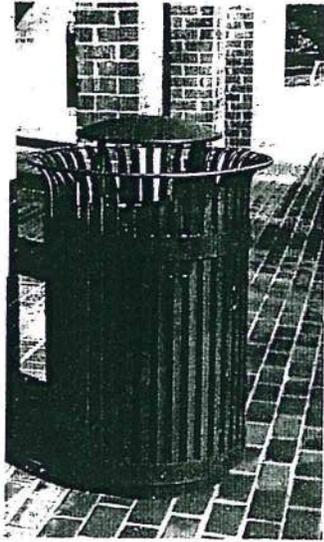
- The proposed tree grates should be compatible with the existing gates in Chancellor Square.
- The grates should meet ADA requirements.
- The grates should be cast iron with a minimum 5' width.
- Tree openings should be expandable.

**Example A:** This model is square with 1/2 inch square openings and meets ADA requirements.

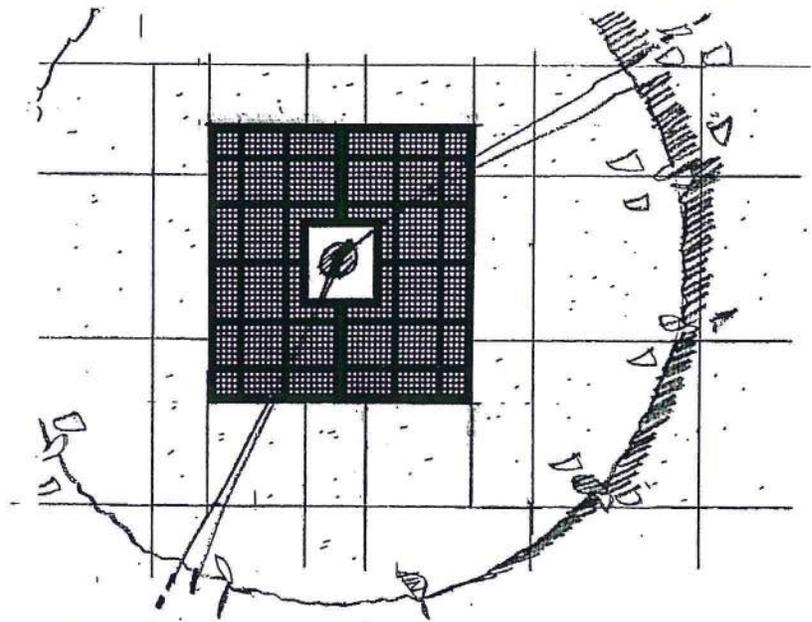
Manufacturer: Ironsmith  
Model: Market Street

**Example B:** This model is round with 1/4 inch openings and meets ADA requirements.

Manufacturer: Ironsmith  
Model: Camelia



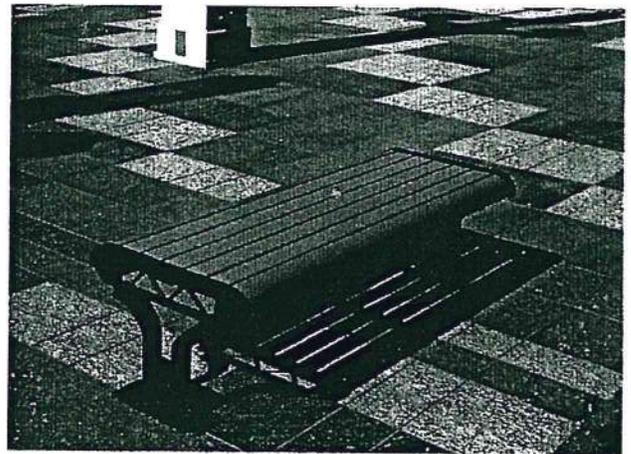
Trash Receptacle



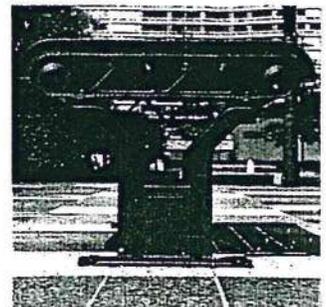
Tree Grate



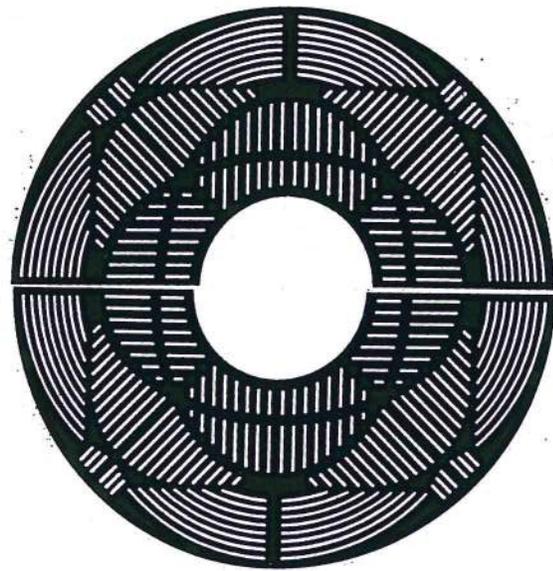
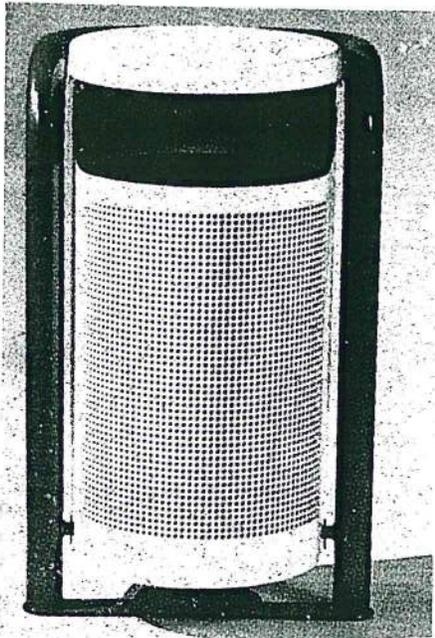
Bench with back



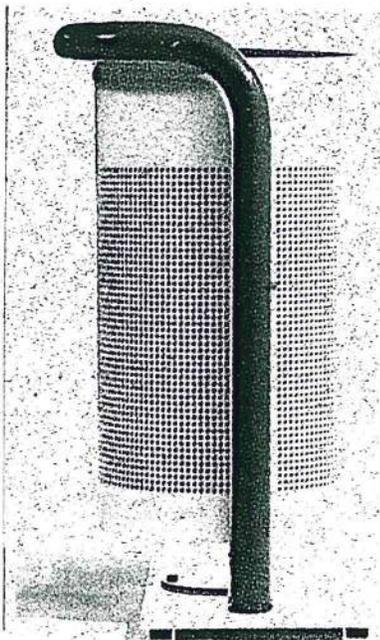
Bench without back



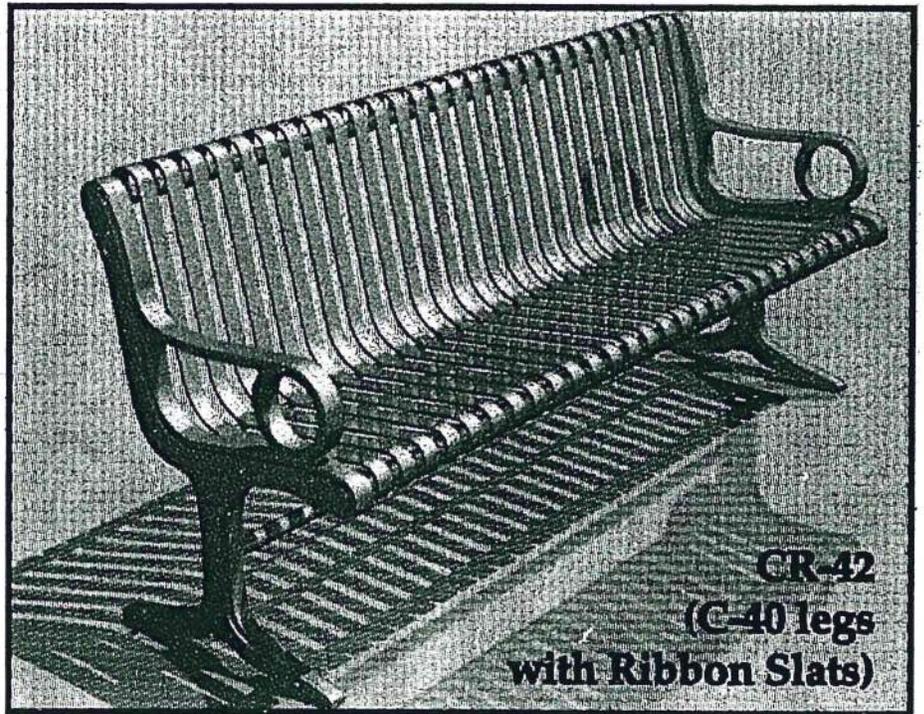
**Figure V-9  
Benches, Trash Receptacles and  
Tree Grates: Alternate A**



Tree Grate



Trash Receptacle



**CR-42**  
**(C-40 legs**  
**with Ribbon Slats)**

Bench With Back

**Figure V-10**  
**Benches, Trash Receptacles and**  
**Tree Grates: Alternate B**

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## BOLLARDS

### Location:

- Bollards may be located along parking lot edges as an option for buffering views.
- Bollards may also be located along the street curb in areas where conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles may occur. The bollards will force a psychological barrier between the sidewalk and the street.

### Criteria:

- Bollards should be designed out of steel or iron to reflect the elements of the traditional iron work on the region.
- The bollard finish could be left in a raw metal condition, or painted black, bronze, green or other colors to add interest to the area where they are used.
- Pre-manufactured cast iron or pre-cast concrete bollards may also be considered.

### Examples:

**Figure V-11** illustrates several examples of steel bollards custom designed to include symbols of Bismarck.

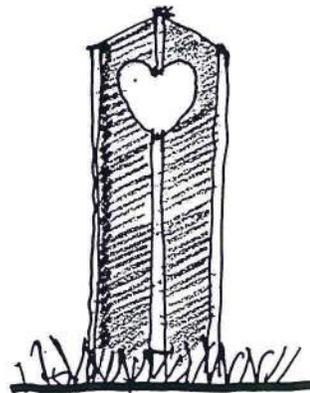
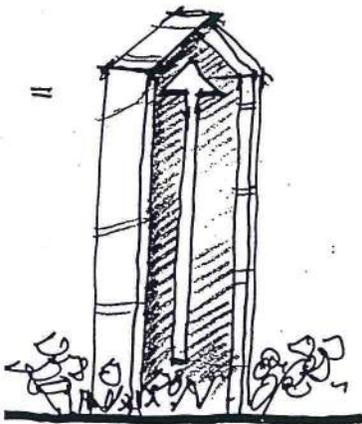
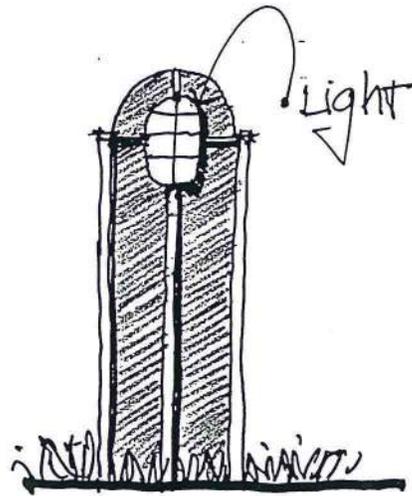
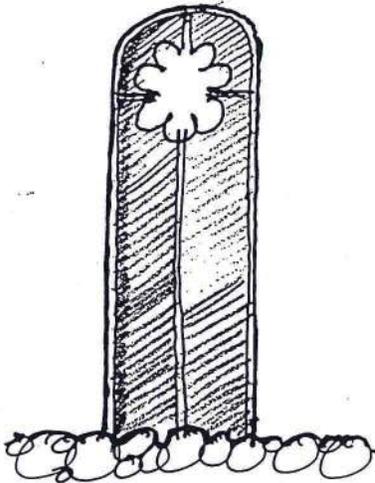
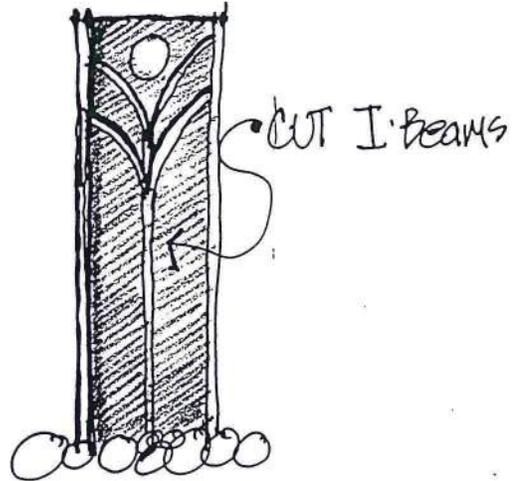
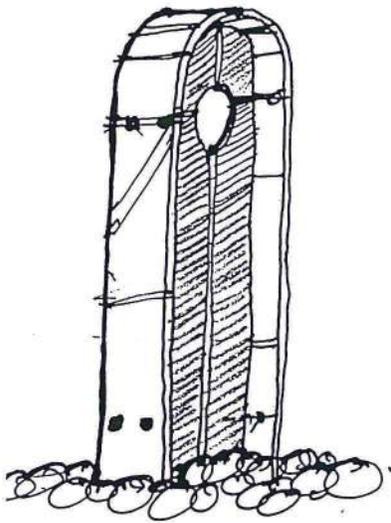


Figure V-11  
Bollard Alternatives

## **VI. DESIGN GUIDELINES**

## VI. DESIGN GUIDELINES

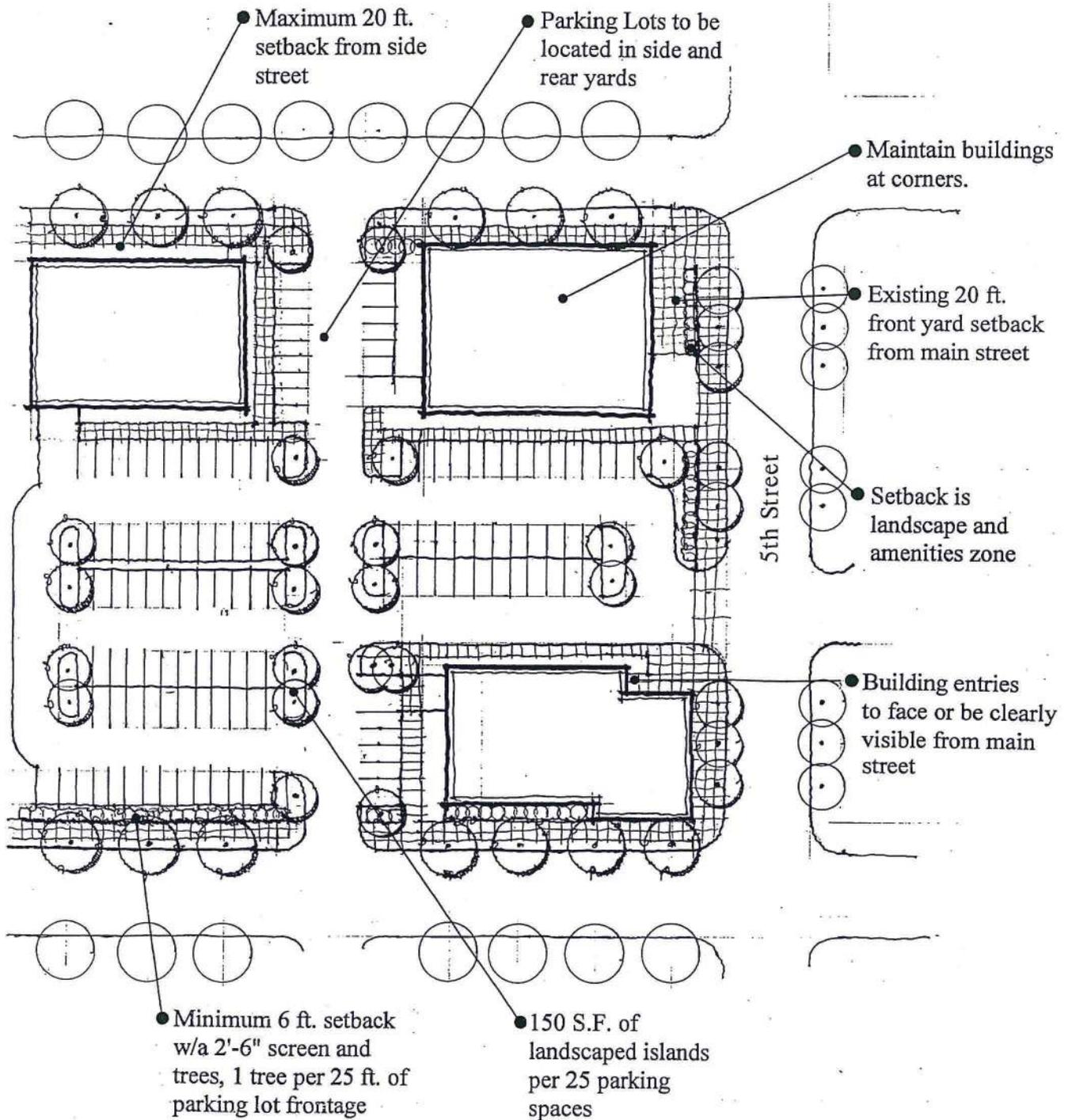
The streetscape is shaped primarily by the placement of buildings and parking lots within the urban setting. The location of a building on a site is the key distinction between compact human-scaled urban environments versus open auto-oriented suburban environments. This section establishes design guidelines for site planning, building massing, and landscaping to reinforce the urban development pattern of Downtown Bismarck. These guidelines apply to both public and private redevelopment projects within the Central Business District as defined previously in **Figure I-1**.

### A. SITE PLANNING

- **Downtown Primary and Secondary Streets:** Placement of buildings on primary and secondary streets should follow the existing building pattern with the structures placed at the sidewalk or right-of-way line. As new infill development in the fringe areas of Downtown progresses, the following site planning guidelines should be enforced to create a compact Downtown:
- **5th Street South of the Railroad:** The existing development pattern along the southern portion of 5th Street has evolved with a suburban style of site planning where parking lots are placed between the buildings and sidewalks. This is resulting in a corridor that is out of scale with the remainder of the CBD and uncomfortable for pedestrian activity.

One of the primary design objectives for 5th Street is to reinforce the connection between the Kirkwood Mall and Downtown. To achieve this objective, the following guidelines (see **Figure VI-1**) should be adhered to:

- Place new buildings at the right-of-way line with no setback.
- Existing buildings with a 20 foot setback or more should incorporate landscaping in the setback area to define the edge of the corridor.
- On corner lots, buildings should be placed at the right-of-way line on both sides facing the streets.
- Place parking lots in side and rear yards. Parking should not be allowed between buildings and the sidewalks.



**Figure VI-1**  
**5th Street: Site Planning Guidelines & Landscaping**

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## B. LANDSCAPING

### ■ Parking Lot Buffers

The treatment of the setback area between parking lots and sidewalks is more important than how deep the setback is. In an urban context, the street wall formed by building edges should continue across the street frontage of parking lots with the use of overstory trees, hedges, and/or structural screens. A narrow setback that includes overstory trees and a low screen made of wood, concrete, brick, or ornamental iron railings can be very effective at screening views and maintaining the street wall.

For large parking lots (approximately 150 cars or more) the front yard setback should be increased to a minimum of 8 feet. This would allow enough space for overstory trees, a low screen hedge, and room for some snow storage.

### ■ Landscaping Parking Lot Interiors

Landscaping the interior of parking areas is important to improve the appearance of large commercial parking lots. Landscaped islands visually break up large expanses of asphalt and cars. Shade trees add the third dimension to parking lots that is often needed to keep lots in scale with neighboring development.

If properly designed, parking lot islands can be landscaped inexpensively and effectively. They should incorporate drought and salt tolerant trees. The ground layer should include materials that will not be destroyed by the weight of snow piles, such as decorative mulch and shrubs and perennials that may be sheared to the ground in the late fall. Islands should also be large enough to provide adequate growing conditions for trees and other plant materials.

The developers should be given the option to decide how required landscaped areas should be organized. They could choose landscaped islands at the end of parking bays or consolidate them into fewer but larger islands.

### ■ Landscape Quantities

Landscape materials should be quantified by requiring either a certain number of trees based on the size of the lot or a percentage of building costs for landscaping. Requiring one tree per "x" square feet of lot area allows the City to have more control over the type of landscape treatment. The percent of building costs alternative does not provide the same level of control. In the latter case, a developer could put all the landscape funds into expensive, ineffective ground covers and rocks, rather than overstory trees.

Several cities require a certain ratio of deciduous and evergreen trees. For example, the number of trees required should be the greater of 1 tree per 50 lineal feet of site perimeter or 1 per 1,000 square feet of building area. Twenty-five percent must be evergreens with a minimum height of 6 feet. Fifty percent must be deciduous trees with a minimum size of 2.5 caliper inches.

These types of formulas will work for commercial areas with a suburban character in Bismarck. However, in urban areas, there is often not enough area to locate 1 tree per 50 lineal feet of site perimeter. A ratio based on lineal feet of parking lot frontage or square feet of parking may be more appropriate.

### **Recommendation**

The current ordinance calls for a 6 foot buffer between sidewalks and parking lots, 3 feet of which can be used for parking and 3 feet of which must be "landscaped." The word "landscaped" has been interpreted to include such treatments as exposed aggregate concrete.

The City should modify the zoning ordinance to clearly define what is acceptable as landscape material for buffering parking lots as well as for landscaping the interior of parking lots. Following is an example of the proposed text (see **Figure VI-1**):

*Parking lots fronting on primary or secondary streets in the Downtown shall have a 6 foot setback and a 30" high landscape buffer. Acceptable materials include:*

- a. A hedge that is 80% opaque in the winter month;*
- b. A steel or ornamental iron picket railing designed to recall the traditional ironwork of the region;*
- c. Steel or concrete bollards spaced at a maximum of 6 feet apart with a ground cover of flowers, or low growing evergreen or deciduous shrubs;*
- d. Overstory or ornamental trees spaced a maximum of 30 feet apart with a hedge, railing, or bollards in between; or*
- e. Any combination of the above that accomplishes the intent of the ordinance.*

*Parking lot interiors shall have 150 square feet of landscape islands per 25 parking spaces. The islands shall include at a minimum one overstory tree with a minimum of 2-1/2" caliper at time of planting.*

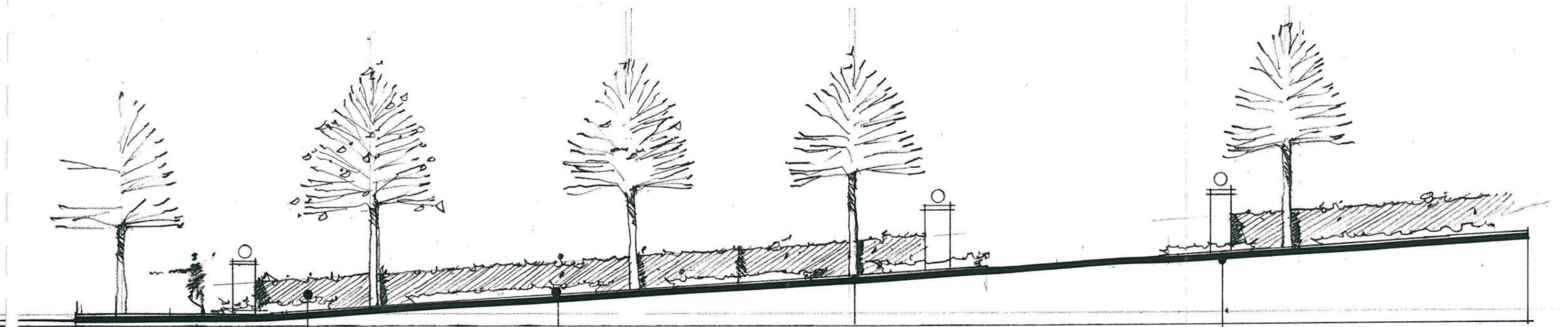
*One tree per 25 feet of parking lot frontage shall be included in the perimeter landscape area.*

■ **Parking Buffer Prototype: Eye Clinic**

At the time of this writing, the eye clinic on 5th Street has completed a new parking lot which fronts on Fifth Street. It is our understanding, the owners are planning to landscape the perimeter of the parking lot this spring. **Figure VI-2** illustrates a potential design for the parking lot buffer landscaping. The existing site includes an arborvitae hedge along a parking lot to the north, and lindens with a base of concrete pavers along Fifth Street.

The proposed design suggests:

- Extending the arborvitae hedge to the south around the new lot.
- Maintaining the existing lindens and pavers and planting low spreading evergreens and ground covers between the trees.
- Planting flowers or low ornamental shrubs at the entry to the site.
- Providing a snow storage lane and bumper overhang area around the perimeter. This area should include a decorative rock mulch.
- Entry lights could also be located at the access point.



Elevation: 1in. = 10ft.

Ground Cover, Low Shrubs, Flowers or Pavers

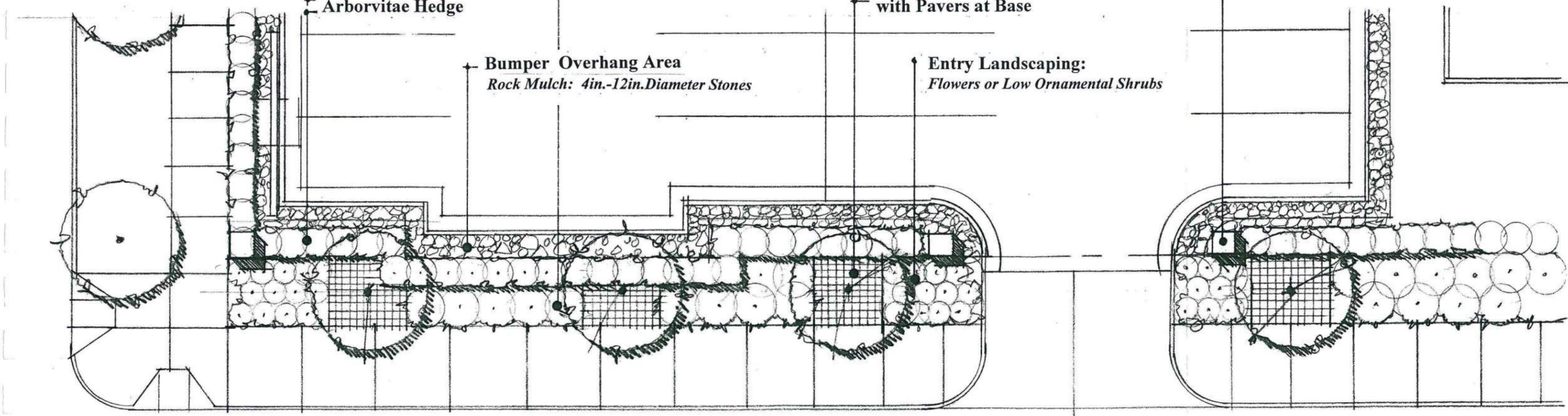
Existing Street Trees  
with Pavers at Base

Entry Lights/Monuments

Arborvitae Hedge

Bumper Overhang Area  
Rock Mulch: 4in.-12in. Diameter Stones

Entry Landscaping:  
Flowers or Low Ornamental Shrubs



Plan: 1in. = 10ft.

Fifth

Street

Figure VI-2  
Parking Lot Buffer Prototypes: Eye Clinic

## C. ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

The focus of this study is primarily on streetscape guidelines, but it would not be complete without a discussion of architectural guidelines. Buildings shape the streetscape corridors and also contribute to the unique qualities of Bismarck.

This section is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of architectural styles and details of Downtown Bismarck, but rather an initial step in defining a minimum standard of compatibility between new redevelopment projects and the existing character of Downtown Bismarck. The intent is also to define the most objective rather than subjective components that are easily enforced on a project-by-project basis, such as building height, width, and setbacks. The proposed guidelines are illustrated in **Figures VI-3 and VI-4**.

A common problem with infill buildings is that they do not fit into the architectural context of the area in which they are located. Their scale and character may not be complementary to surrounding structures. Without standards for building materials, siting, fenestration, access points, and other elements, the cumulative effect of small, poorly designed projects is a visually and spatially cluttered, incohesive environment.

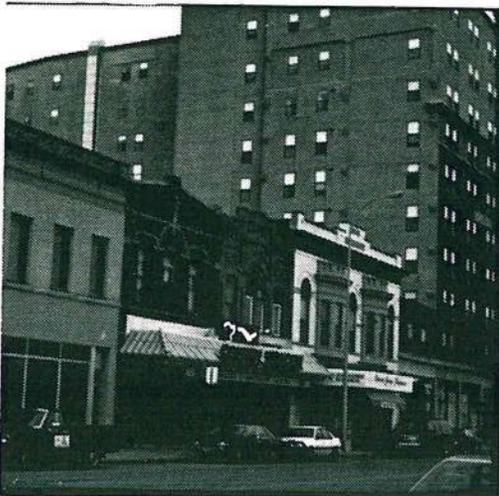
- **Building Materials:** Downtown Bismarck is characterized by a mixture of architectural styles and materials from brick on the older buildings to stone, pre-cast concrete, and stucco on newer buildings. Following is an example of how the zoning ordinance could address minimum standards for building materials and still provide for flexibility in use of materials.

*All buildings erected in the Central Business District shall be of masonry construction. No building shall be constructed of sheet aluminum or constructed with a wooden frame. Exterior surfaces of all buildings shall be faced with face brick, stone, architectural concrete or pre-cast concrete, or an equivalent or better.*

*For renovations, reuse and repair of the original facade, similar materials and detailing are encouraged.*

- **Height:** The heights of buildings in Downtown Bismarck vary significantly. In order to promote more compatibility between neighboring buildings and avoid buildings that are out of scale with their neighbors, the following guidelines should be considered:

*The height of a new building should be within one story of any adjacent building. If a proposed development is between two existing buildings that vary more than three*



*stories in height, the new building should be within one story in height of either the taller or shorter building.*

- **Alignment:** In order to maintain the "Streetwall" that defines the edges of street corridors and provides a comfortable human scaled environment, the following guidelines should be considered.

*New infill development in the Central Business District should maintain the zero setback and the alignment of facades at the property line.*

- **Width:** The rhythm established by a consistent building width is a component of Downtown Bismarck that defines the architectural character of Downtown Bismarck and the following guideline should be considered:

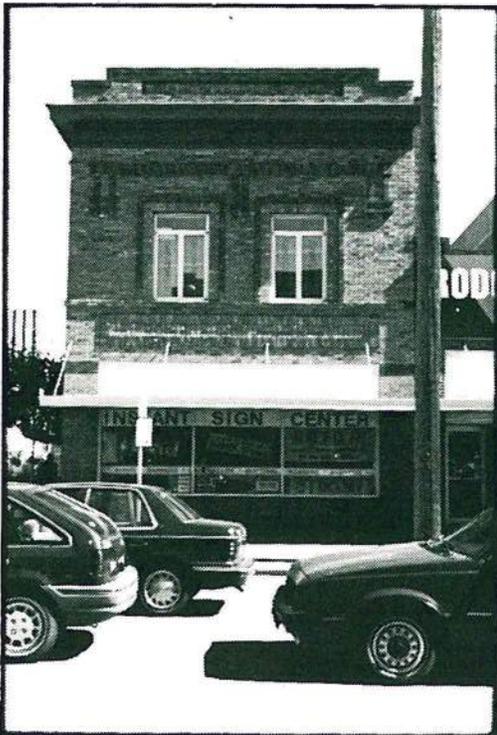
*New buildings should reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street. New construction, including parking ramps that require two or more lots, should respect this pattern by designing the pattern of adjacent facade widths into the new facades.*

- **Horizontal Rhythms:** The alignment of building roofs, cornices, and windows is often consistent on older mainstreets and in portions of Downtown Bismarck. New development should respect these components and the following guidelines should be considered:

*New development should maintain the alignment of building windows, cornices, and rooflines that dominate the block on which it will be constructed. Character and scale should be compatible with surrounding structures through the use of materials, detailing and window placement. A clear visual division between the street level and upper floors should also be maintained. Canopies and awnings are encouraged to accentuate the street level relationship between the building and streetscape and to provide protection for pedestrians.*

- **Entrances:** The main entrances to buildings are often recessed to articulate, add interest, and to create more retail window space. The following guideline should apply to new construction:

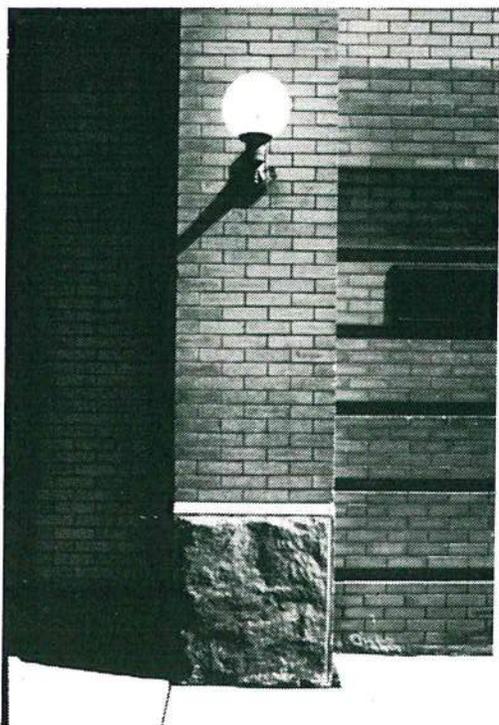
*Entrances to buildings should face and be clearly visible from the main street, and be recessed to maintain a coherent pattern along the sidewalk, and to define the entry point.*



- **Historic Preservation:** Every effort should be made to encourage preservation of existing historically significant buildings. The older buildings in Bismarck are unique to the setting and are a historical record of the City's evolution.

Following are the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation." These are generic and should be considered minimum standards upon which to base historic preservation efforts in Bismarck.

1. *Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.*
2. *The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.*
3. *All buildings, structures, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.*
4. *Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.*
5. *Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.*
6. *Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.*
7. *The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other leaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.*



8. *Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.*
9. *Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.*
10. *Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.*

- **Display Windows:** Retail stores typically have large display windows on the first floor to show merchandise. This component adds life and interest to the streetscape as well and should be encouraged in new infill construction.

During renovation of existing buildings or in new development, the following guidelines should be considered:

*The original size and shape of the display windows on existing buildings should be preserved. A minimum of 50% of first floor facades fronting main streets should be windows and entries.*

- **Vacant Buildings:** Building occupancy is an indication of prosperity or decline. If store windows are full of merchandise and offices bustling with people, then the Downtown looks prosperous. If building windows are vacant or in the worst case, boarded up, that sends a message to visitors that the Downtown is in a state of decline. The appearance of abandoned and/or vacant buildings can also deter potential tenants and reinvestment in the Downtown.

Vacant and abandoned buildings should be made to appear "alive" and inhabited. Design guidelines should consider the following requirements for vacant and/or abandoned buildings:

1. *Boarding up windows in vacant or abandoned buildings shall be prohibited.*
2. *The City shall encourage first floor vacant spaces to be used for temporary display space for local arts groups, school arts programs, and/or community organizations.*
3. *The City shall encourage the use of vacant buildings for community meeting spaces.*

4. *The City shall encourage an inhabited feeling in vacant buildings through retention of furniture, lights, blinds, and merchandise in the retail windows of vacant buildings.*

- **Common Walls:** If common walls are exposed due to the demolition of adjacent buildings, the wall should be treated to ensure that the walls do not become a visual eyesore.

If the common wall is built out of concrete block, poured concrete or other materials that are not intended to be exposed to view, then the wall should be treated to improve the appearance. The treatments may be temporary or permanent depending on the potential for redevelopment of the adjacent parcels.

Alternate treatments include:

**Masonry Paint** -- a temporary solution for concrete block brick walls in poor or patched conditions.

**Murals** -- if the wall is in a highly visible area and the surface is smooth, a mural should be considered.

**Vines** -- Boston or Englemans ivy can be planted to cover walls that may be exposed for at least 3 years.

**Stucco** -- this is an option for concrete block walls that are in poor condition and may be exposed for several years.

### Rooftop Utilities

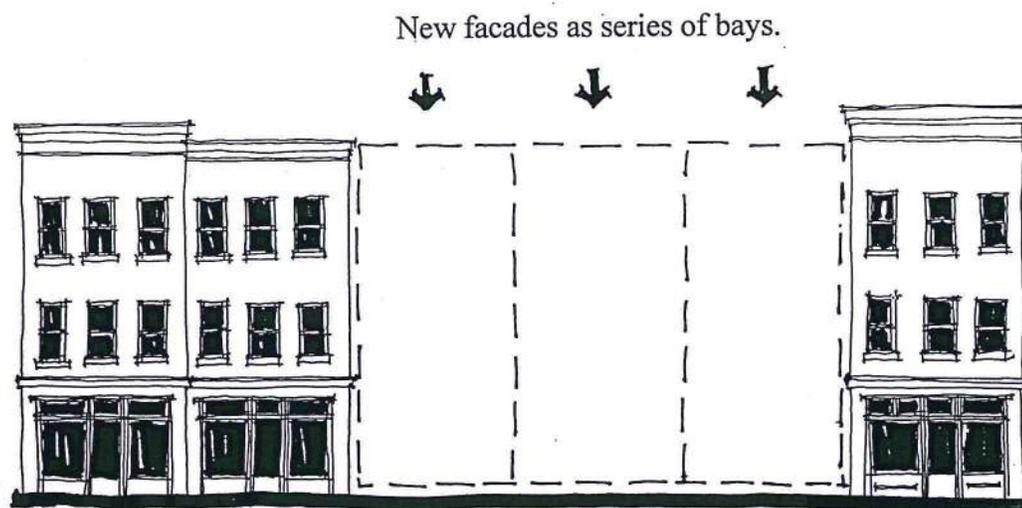
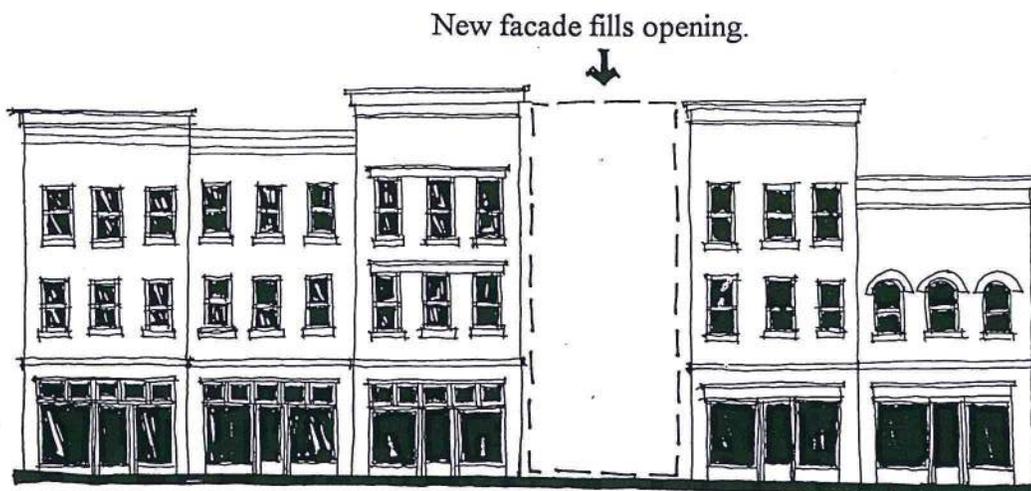
- Screen Rooftop utilities from ground level views with parapet walls or enclosures similar in form, material, and detail to the primary structure.



### Facade Composition

- A minimum of 50% of first floor facades fronting the main street and side streets should be windows and entries.
- Character and scale to be compatible with surrounding structures through use of materials, detailing, window placements.
- Main building entries to face or be clearly visible from the main street.
- Encourage reuse, repair and restoration of original facade
- Class A materials such as pre-cast concrete, brick, and stone should be utilized on all sides facing the street.

**Figure VI-3**  
**Architectural Guidelines**



- **Height:** The height of new buildings should be within one story of the surrounding buildings.
- **Alignment:** Maintain the alignment of facades at the property line
- **Entrances:** The entrances to the buildings are recessed, creating a coherent pattern along the side walk. This pattern of recessed entrances should be maintained.
- **Width:** The new buildings should reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street.
- Maintain the alignment of building windows, cornices, and roof lines.
- Maintain a clear visual division between street level and upper floors.

Figure VI-4  
Architectural Guidelines

## **VII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION

An implementation strategy has been formulated that outlines alternative methods of administering design guidelines. The strategy also outlines short, mid and long term projects, as well as elements that could be built as part of public improvement projects and those that could be implemented by associations such as the Downtowners. The Table at the end of this Chapter allows comparison of the various elements of the strategy.

### A. Alternative Methods for Implementing Design Guidelines

There are basically six different ways to relate design standards to zoning ordinances.

- 1. Incorporate in Zoning Ordinance:** This method is the most effective and legally sound. If design objectives can be defined in quantifiable terms, then they can be incorporated into an ordinance. From our experience and research, definitive standards developed in response to reasonable goals and objectives are both less likely to be legally challenged and more defensible in the event of legal challenges. This approach would be easiest to administer by the planning staff and would not require the formation of a design review committee.
- 2. Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning:** This approach essentially involves the judicious use of Planned Unit Development (PUD). With each PUD project, specific and unique design standards would be developed. This could result in an even less cohesive environment and could become an administrative nightmare when one considers all the potential individual developments in a city such as Bismarck.
- 3. Standards Related to Thresholds:** This approach entails the creation of design review standards with triggering mechanisms. For example, if a proposed building is above a certain height threshold, then vertical setback regulations would be in effect and the structure would be subject to architectural design review. Other triggering mechanisms might be land use, location, and size.
- 4. Standards Related to Special Districts:** This approach incorporates special district guidelines or overlay districts which supersede the underlying zoning. This method can be very effective if the special district regulations are adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code.
- 5. Advisory Groups:** A design review process that involves the formation of an advisory design review board can be a very effective approach if the design objectives of the board are supported by zoning standards.

6. **Incentive Zoning "Carrots and Sticks":** This method utilizes a bonus system to provide incentives for developers to include extra amenities. This system can work well in central business districts where land values are high and it is economically feasible to bargain with developers for higher floor area ratios. Other incentives may include tax breaks or low interest loans, and/or public financing.

This method is less successful in central business districts where land values are low and bargaining chips may be tough to find. Typical commercial areas on the fringe of the Central Business District may not have high enough property values to make it feasible to build beyond two or three stories. Also, typical fringe commercial areas do not generate enough revenue to warrant building parking structures. For these reasons, higher floor area ratios as a bargaining tool to entice developers to include more pedestrian amenities are not feasible outside of the central business district.

In addition, incentive zoning could result in haphazard distribution of landscaping or pedestrian amenities. One developer may be able to afford to build more amenities while another may not. A bonus system used for all the small parcel development, infill, and remodeling projects would also be an administrative headache. A system of consistent landscaping, site planning, and architectural standards based on guidelines generated with the involvement from the business and development community would be easier to administer and result in more cohesive development.

## **B. RECOMMENDED STRATEGY**

The recommended method for administering design guidelines includes a combination of incorporating design standards into an overlay district for the central business district, establishing a design review committee, incorporating design review as a standard step in the development review process, and exploring the use of low interest loans, tax breaks and/or public financing as incentives for developers to include higher grade building materials, artwork and landscaping as a part of their project.

The current zoning code should be modified to include building massing, landscape guidelines and site design guidelines as quantifiable standards within the proposed overlay district. This will provide the staff with the legal authority to enforce the design guidelines consistently throughout the CBD District.

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## C. DESIGN REVIEW

### ■ **Mission of the Design Review Committee**

The mission of the Design Review Committee is to review each public and private redevelopment proposal within the CBD boundary for compliance with the intent of the streetscape design objectives and the site design, architectural, landscape and streetscape design guidelines established in this manual.

The Design Review Committee should be appointed by the City Commission to become an administrative arm of the elected body. The appointed committee will then have the authority and decision making capability to review and /or approve projects.

The Design Review Committee should include 7 to 9 members of the community that represent a cross section of architects, landscape architects, business owners, residents and representatives of the city planning and inspections departments. Initially, members of the Center City Partnership should be included to provide continuity between the planning process and implementation of the plan.

### ■ **The Design Review Process**

To ensure that the design guidelines are administered in a fair and consistent manner, the review process should be administered in a step by step process. The design review process should emphasize collaboration and avoid adversarial relationships between the applicant and the city.

The design review process should be adopted as a standard step in the review of all public and private development proposals within the CBD boundaries. There are many ways that the design review process could be tailored to fit within the City's development review procedures. However, the process should involve the following basic steps:

#### **1. Publish a Summary Users Guide and Check List**

The design review criteria and procedures should be summarized in a brochure and made available to the general public to facilitate understanding of the process. A check list of submission requirements should also be created and included in the summary brochure.

#### **2. Informal Review**

An informal review of the proposed project should be conducted between the Design Review Committee and the developer during the preliminary design stage. This preapplication meeting is an opportunity for all parties to

communicate the expectations, attributes, and issues involved with the project before a great deal of design time and dollars are invested.

**3. Staff Analysis**

Refined site, building and landscaping plans should be submitted to the city staff for review to ensure they meet the zoning, building code, and design guideline criteria. A brief staff report should be produced that describe how the proposal does or does not meet the criteria. The check list should be used at this point to ensure continuity in the review procedures.

**4. Formal Review Process**

At this point the proposal should be scheduled for a public meeting in front of the Design Review Committee. This meeting should be a formal review step that is integrated into the existing public hearing schedule with the City Commission. Since this will be a public meeting, citizens may attend and voice support or objections to the proposal.

**5. Issuing of Building Permit**

Building permits may be issued subject to any special conditions that may be attached to the approval of the project.

**6. Enforcement**

Procedures for ensuring the approved design is actually built are critical to the success of the design review process. The design review efforts are of little value if elements of the approved design are not built.

To ensure compliance, the City could use such measures as issuing financial penalties for failure to conform to the approved design and field inspections during construction.

**D. PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE STREETScape ELEMENTS**

Implementation of the streetscape elements will involve the cooperative effort of both the public and private sector. The majority of the streetscape elements will most likely be constructed as part of a public street reconstruction project such as Main Avenue, the Front Avenue Parkway, or the potential reconstruction of the downtown streets as one-way pairs. These major reconstruction efforts will most likely include full or partial state or federal funding for new lighting, street trees, and sidewalk paving. Additional elements that are considered heavy construction (such as entry monuments, raised concrete planters, and parking lot railings) should be included in the reconstruction projects, however, they will most likely be at the City's expense.

Elements that could be included in either a public improvement project or as part a large private redevelopment project include: parking lot railings and other buffer treatments, street trees, sidewalk paving, benches, sculpture, and other street furniture.

Smaller scale elements that could be implemented by associations such as the Downtowners, Bismarck Mandan Development Association, the Dakota West Arts Council or others include kiosks, flower plantings, sculpture, banners, and possibly the entry monuments. Many of these elements could foster community involvement through design competitions and fund raising efforts.

## **E. COSTS**

The next step in the streetscape design process is to identify specific projects to construct. Once a project has been identified, actual costs can be determined. Very general construction costs were examined during the process of developing these guidelines. For example, it is estimated that a typical downtown streetscape complete with all the amenities such as arbors, banner poles, banners, tree grates, trash receptacles, benches, ornamental lighting, shade trees, shrubs and artwork, can be expected to cost between \$180,000 to \$250,000 per block.

However, it should be noted that this is a manual of *guidelines* that contains a number of examples for each streetscape element. Actual construction costs will be determined once these elements have been selected and combined into a definitive project design. With these guidelines in hand, the Center City Partnership and the City of Bismarck should be able to move forward with high-quality downtown development projects that uphold Bismarck's heritage and enhance the City's role as the center of business, government and cultural opportunity for the region.

## **F. METHODS OF FINANCING**

The following is a summary of current resources that may have application and may be available for streetscape improvement in Downtown Bismarck. The programs, resources, and techniques discussed are representative of the types of mechanisms and financing tools available for a variety of projects. This list is intended to highlight sources which are most applicable to the issues developed as a part of this overall report. It is not intended to be an all inclusive compilation of every program available, nor is it intended to prescribe a particular funding package for prospective projects. Due to the changing nature of programs, eligibility factors, and existence of loan and grant programs, each potential project should be researched thoroughly in order to fully consider the specifics of the project in relationship to possible funding sources.

**General Purpose Revenues:** Communities have a number of standard sources of revenue that can be applied to any corporate purpose, such as corridor improvements to benefit the community. The largest of these revenues is normally the general purpose property tax. Others may include state income tax rebates, public utility taxes, retailer occupation tax, plus various fees, fines and other receipts. These can be of key benefit to Downtown Bismarck as development and redevelopment tools.

**General Obligation Bonds:** General Obligation Bonds are secured by the general tax resources of the issuing municipality, with an unconditional pledge by the unit of government to repay the obligation. The municipality agrees to take such steps as may be necessary to raise money for debt service, which in normal practice means levying additional property taxes.

**Special Assessment Bonds:** Special Assessment Bonds are issued to finance improvements that are to be paid for by special assessments against benefitted properties. Bond obligations are payable only from the special assessment receipts and are not backed by the municipality, and therefore usually carry higher interest rates.

**Special Service Area Financing:** This is a taxing mechanism that can be used by municipalities to finance special services, facilities, or improvements for certain geographic parts of jurisdictions. The technique involves the levying of a tax on only a particular area within a municipality (the special service area) so that improvements and/or services can be provided.

Special service area financing bonds differ significantly from special assessment financing. In special service areas, all real estate is taxed at the same rate. The rate is based upon the qualified assessed value, as are other local property taxes. In special assessment financing, each property is assessed a payment based on expected benefits to each property owner. Determining the amount of benefit can be lengthy, complicated, and an expensive procedure.

The advantage of using special service areas as opposed to special assessment financing are:

- It is quicker, easier, and less expensive to establish.
- The bonds are marketable at lower interest rates.
- The tax payment is deductible for federal income tax purposes.

The major disadvantage is that the special service area bond indebtedness is included in the maximum allowable municipal debt, unlike special assessments.

**Tax Increment Finance Bonds:** Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a technique that permits cities to finance public front end capital costs in a redevelopment project by pledging the anticipated increase in tax revenues resulting from the new development in that project.

The City of Bismarck has already established two TIF Districts in the downtown area.

**Federal Urban Highway Improvement Funds:** Some projects, assuming they meet the eligibility criteria, qualify to receive Federal Urban Highway Improvement Funds. These funds come from the Federal Government to the State Department of Transportation, and are then made available to qualifying municipalities for specific projects. A match requirement with a ratio of 80/20 (generally) is in place for the Federal Urban Highway Improvement Funds. Various types of street improvements are among those types of projects considered to be eligible.

**Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991: ISTEA** is a program which provides funds to eligible projects that are part of the national highway system. It encourages states and cities to incorporate alternative modes of transportation and community enhancement considerations into transportation planning and projects. Eligible types of projects include transit, surface transportation, bikeways and trails, highway safety, motor carrier, research, intermodal transportation, air transportation, and extension of taxes/trust funds.

**BISMARCK: STREETSCAPE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

March 19, 1995

Page 1

SHORT TERM (0-5 Years)	CITY PLANNING	PUBLIC WORKS	PARKS	FORESTRY	ENGINEERING	CENTER CITY PARTNERSHIP	PROPERTY OWNERS	OTHER
1. Adopt Standards for Parking Lot Buffers	X			X		X		• City Inspections
2. Adopt Guidelines for Building Facade Renovations, and Site Design	X					X		• City Inspections
3. Appoint Urban Design Review Committee	X					X		
4. Front Avenue Parkway: Refine Phase One Design	X	X	X	X	X	X		
5. Demonstration Project: Eye Clinic and Parking Lot Buffer	X					X	X	• City Inspections
6. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiosks: Refine and Fabricate</li> <li>• Flowers: Chancellors Square</li> <li>• Banners for Existing Lights</li> </ul>	X	X				X		• Downtowners
7. Incorporate Streetscape Improvements into Capital Improvements Program and City	X	X	X		X			
8. Establish Program to Finance and Promote More Public Art Downtown	X					X		• BAGA, ND Arts Council, Dakota West Arts Council
9. Refine Strategies for Financing Improvements	X	X	X	X	X	X		• City Administrator
10. Main Avenue: Coordinate Design and Implementation	X	X		X	X	X		• NDDOT
11. Depot Plaza: Refine Design and Construction	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Arts Organizations
12. Demonstration Projects: Civic Center Parking Lot Buffer	X	X		X		X	X	

**BISMARCK: STREETSCAPE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

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SHORT TERM (5-10 Years)	CITY PLANNING	PUBLIC WORKS	PARKS	FORESTRY	ENGINEERING	CENTER CITY PARTNERSHIP	PROPERTY OWNERS	OTHER
1. Core Downtown Streets: Refine Designs and Implementation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Downtowners
2. Belle Mehus Plaza: Refine Design	X	X	X	X	X	X		• Downtowners • Arts Organizations
3. Coordinate Arts Competitions for Selected Areas	X	X				X		• Downtowners • Arts Organizations
4. Front Avenue Parkway: Refine Designs for Remaining Phases	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
5. Monitor and Modify Actions and Progress	X	X	X	X	X	X		
6. 5th Street South: Refine and Implement Design	X	X		X	X	X	X	• Arts Organizations

LONG TERM (10-15 Years)	CITY PLANNING	PUBLIC WORKS	PARKS	FORESTRY	ENGINEERING	CENTER CITY PARTNERSHIP	PROPERTY OWNERS	OTHER
1. Refine and Implement Streetscape for Remaining Streets	X	X		X	X	X	X	
2. Implement Remaining Front Avenue Phases	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
3. Belle Mehus Implement Plaza Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X		• Arts Organizations

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

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## VIII. CONCLUSION

This planning process actually began with the 1993 Central Business District Plan in which the design guidelines were recommended as one of the initial implementation steps to establish the planning tools to assist in forging a shared vision for Downtown Bismarck. This document represents the completion of that task and several months of proactive collaboration and energy committed by the participants toward refining the common vision.

The adoption of these guidelines is very timely for Downtown Bismarck. Several recent private redevelopment projects are under construction and many public improvements are planned to be completed in the near future. These include, the reconstruction Main Avenue and the potential construction of the Front Avenue Parkway from 5th Street to Washington Street. This document will serve as a tool to evaluate future public and private redevelopment efforts within the Downtown.

Each project, whether it is a parking lot or a super - block of mixed uses, should contribute toward reaching the goals set forth in this document. If these guidelines are followed and re-inforced with each public and private development the whole will be much greater than the sum of its parts.

Implementation of the opportunities outlined in this document is dependent on the leadership of the community. The physical improvements will act as a catalyst for reinvestment, however, alone they will not ensure a vital business climate for the downtown. In order to be successful, the community must be unified in their efforts and embark on this revitalization strategy, one step at a time.

# **APPENDIX**

**CHANCELLOR SQUARE SURVEY RESULTS**  
AS OF 3/21/95

Below is a compilation of the survey that we conducted in February. We surveyed 197 downtown businesses, property owners, and tenants in the range of Main to Rosser and 3rd to 6th. To date we have received 101 survey back or 51%.

**RESULTS: (78 of the 101 surveys)**

**ADD'L 19 SURVEYS**

**Alternative #1 - Existing one-ways**

1st Choice:	32	*	10 pts =	320		
2nd Choice:	34	*	8 pts =	272	6 * 10 pts = 60	380
3rd Choice:	10	*	6 pts =	60		272
4th Choice:	2	*	4 pts =	<u>8</u>		60
						<u>8</u>
Total Points				660		720

**Alternative #2 - Expanding the one-ways**

1st Choice:	27	*	10 pts =	270	5 * 10 pts = 50	320
2nd Choice:	20	*	8 pts =	160		160
3rd Choice:	13	*	6 pts =	78		78
4th Choice:	18	*	4 pts =	<u>72</u>		<u>72</u>
Total Points				580		630

**Alternative #3 - Removal of the one-way streets**

1st Choice:	9	*	10 pts =	90	11 * 10 pts = 110	200
2nd Choice:	8	*	8 pts =	64		64
3rd Choice:	12	*	6 pts =	72		72
4th Choice:	49	*	4 pts =	<u>196</u>		<u>196</u>
Total Points				422		532

**Alternative #4 - East/West one-ways**

1st Choice:	10	*	10 pts =	100	1 * 10 pts = 10	110
2nd Choice:	16	*	8 pts =	128		128
3rd Choice:	43	*	6 pts =	258		258
4th Choice:	9	*	4 pts =	<u>36</u>		<u>36</u>
Total Points				522		532

**RESULTS BY CHOICE:**

**ADD'L SURVEYS**

1st Place	Existing one-ways	320 pts	380 pts
2nd Place	Existing one-ways	272 pts	272 pts
3rd Place	East/West one-ways	258 pts	258 pts
4th Place	Removal of one-ways	196 pts	196 pts

**RESULTS BY TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS PER ALTERNATIVE:**

1st Place	Existing one-ways	660 pts	720 pts
2nd Place	Expanding one-ways	580 pts	630 pts
3rd Place	East/West one-ways	522 pts	532 pts (tied)
	Removal of one-ways	422 pts	532 pts (tied)

CITY OF BISMARCK - FORESTRY DEPARTMENT  
Boulevard Tree Planting Species List

(Revised December, 1992)

(1) LARGE TREES (50'+)

American Linden.....Tilia americana  
Pyramidal American Linden.....Tilia americana 'Fastigiata'  
Black Walnut.....Juglans nigra  
Bur Oak.....Quercus macrocarpa  
Green Ash.....Fraxinus pennsylvanica  
    Bergeson.....Fraxinus pennsylvanica 'Bergeson'  
    Kindred.....Fraxinus pennsylvanica 'Kindred'  
    Patmore.....Fraxinus pennsylvanica 'Patmore'  
    Summit.....Fraxinus pennsylvanica 'Summit'  
Autumn Blaze White Ash.....Fraxinus americana 'Autum Blaze'  
Hackberry.....Celtis occidentalis  
Kentucky Coffee Tree.....Gymnocladus dioicus  
Silver Maple.....Acer saccharinum  
Ponderosa Pine.....Pinus ponderosa  
Scotch Pine.....Pinus sylvestris

(2) MEDIUM TREES (30'-50')

Black Ash.....Fraxinus nigra  
    Fall Gold Black Ash.....Fraxinus nigra 'Fall Gold'  
Black Locust.....Robinia pseudoacacia  
European Mountain Ash.....Sorbus aucuparia  
Honeylocust.....Gleditsia triacanthos 'Inermis'  
    Imperial Honeylocust.....Gleditsia triacanthos 'Imperial'  
    Skyline Honeylocust.....Gleditsia triacanthos 'Skyline'  
Little Leaf Linden.....Tilia cordata  
    Greenspire L.L. Linden....Tilia cordata 'Greenspire'  
Dropmore Linden.....Tilia x flavescens 'Dropmore'  
Redmond Linden.....Tilia x euchlora 'Redmond'  
Manchurian Ash.....Fraxinus mandshurica  
    Mancana Manchurian Ash....Fraxinus mandshurica 'Mancan'  
Ohio Buckeye.....Aesculus glabra  
Sugar Maple.....Acer saccharum  
    Green Mt. Sugar Maple.....Acer saccharum 'Green Mountain'  
Emerald Lustre Norway Maple.....Acer platanoides 'Emerald Lustre'  
Swedish Columnar Aspen.....Populus tremula 'Erecta'

(3) SMALL TREES (less than 30')

Amur Maple (tree form).....Acer ginnala  
Amur Chokecherry.....Prunus maackii

Crabapples:

Pink Flowers:

Pink Spire Crabapple.....Malus sp. 'Pink Spire'  
Radiant Crabapple.....Malus sp. 'Radiant'  
Thunderchild Crabapple....Malus sp. 'Thunderchild'

Red Flowers:

Centurion Crabapple.....Malus sp. 'Centurion'  
Hopa Crabapple.....Malus sp. 'Hopa'

White Flowers: (Crabapples cont'd.)  
 Flame Crabapple.....Malus sp. 'Flame'  
 Snowdrift Crabapple.....Malus sp. 'Snowdrift'  
 Spring Snow Crabapple.....Malus sp. 'Spring Snow'

Japanese Tree Lilac.....Syringa reticulata

Laurel Leaf Willow.....Salix pentandra

Prairie Gem Flowering Pear.....Pyrus ussuriensis 'MorDak'

Princess Kay Plum.....Prunus nigra 'Princess Kay'

Showy Mountain Ash.....Sorbus decora

Snowbird Hawthorn.....Crataegis sp. 'Snowbird'  
 Toba Hawthorn.....Crataegus sp. 'Toba'

(C) Location and Spacing

#### MINIMUM BOULEVARD WIDTH FOR ACCEPTED SPECIES

(a) Large Trees (50+)	BOULEVARD WIDTH
American Linden	7' or larger
Black Walnut	7' or larger
Bur Oak	7' or larger
Green Ash	7' or larger
Bergeson Green Ash	7' or larger
Kindred Green Ash	7' or larger
Patmore Green Ash	7' or larger
Summit Green Ash	7' or larger
Autumn Blaze White Ash	7' or larger
Hackberry	7' or larger
Kentucky Coffee Tree	7' or larger
Silver Maple	9.5' or larger
Scotch Pine	11.5' or larger
Ponderosa Pine	11.5' or larger
(b) Medium Trees (30'-50')	
Black Ash	5.5' or larger
Fall Gold Black Ash	5.5' or larger
Black Locust	5.5' or larger
European Mountain Ash	5.5' or larger
Honeylocust	5.5' or larger
Imperial Honeylocust	5.5' or larger
Skyline Honeylocust	5.5' or larger
Little Leaf Linden	5.5' or larger
Greenspire Little Leaf Linden	5.5' or larger
Dropmore Linden	5.5' or larger
Redmond Linden	5.5' or larger
Manchurian Ash	5.5' or larger
Mancana Manchurian Ash	5.5' or larger
Ohio Buckeye	5.5' or larger
Sugar Maple	5.5' or larger
Green Mountain Sugar Maple	5.5' or larger
Emerald Lustre Norway Maple	5.5' or larger
Swedish Columnar Aspen	5.5' or larger
(c) Small Trees (less than 30')	
Amur Maple	5.5' or larger
Amur Chokecherry	4' or larger
Crabapples:	
Centurion Crabapple	5.5' or larger
Hopa Crabapple	7' or larger
Pink Spire Crabapple	5.5' or larger
Radiant Crabapple	7' or larger
Thunderchild Crabapple	7' or larger
Flame Crabapple	7' or larger
Snowdrift Crabapple	7' or larger
Spring Snow Crabapple	7' or larger
Japanese Tree Lilac	4' or larger
Laurel Leaf Willow	4' or larger
Prairie Gem Flowering Pear	4' or larger
Princess Kay Plum	4' or larger
Showy Mountain Ash	4' or larger
Snowbird Hawthorn	4' or larger
Toba Hawthorn	4' or larger