



DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION &
ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI



BUILDING
AND
STREETScape
DESIGN
GUIDELINES

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PLANNING CONSULTANT



DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION &
ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI

BUILDING AND
STREETSCAPE
DESIGN GUIDELINES

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INTRODUCTION

Background

West Plains' rich history began when Josiah Howell settled at the town spring in 1839. In 1850 the town was laid out and named for being on the "plains west" side of Thomasville. West Plains was organized in 1857 and became incorporated and the county seat in 1861. The Civil War was devastating to West Plains. The town was burned by raiders in 1864, resettled in 1865, and had an 1870 population of 300 citizens. When the railroad arrived in 1883 the town began growing in earnest and is now home to over 11,000 people and is the largest city in Howell County and the region. The Courthouse Square of West Plains Missouri came into being throughout the late 19th and early 20th century. The layout of the square is unusual in that the approaching streets enter in the middle of the block, not at the corners. Development on the Square and environs consisted of traditional street front commercial facades surrounding the Howell County Courthouse and occur mainly in the 40 years following the expansion of the railroads. The facades of these commercial buildings had a unity of materials, scale, and style. The similarities in design resulted in the appearance of rhythm and order on the square. Complementary patterns and elements were repeated giving each facade a visual connection with its neighbors. This backdrop of buildings created a harmonious public space that was filled with activity and remained intact for generations.

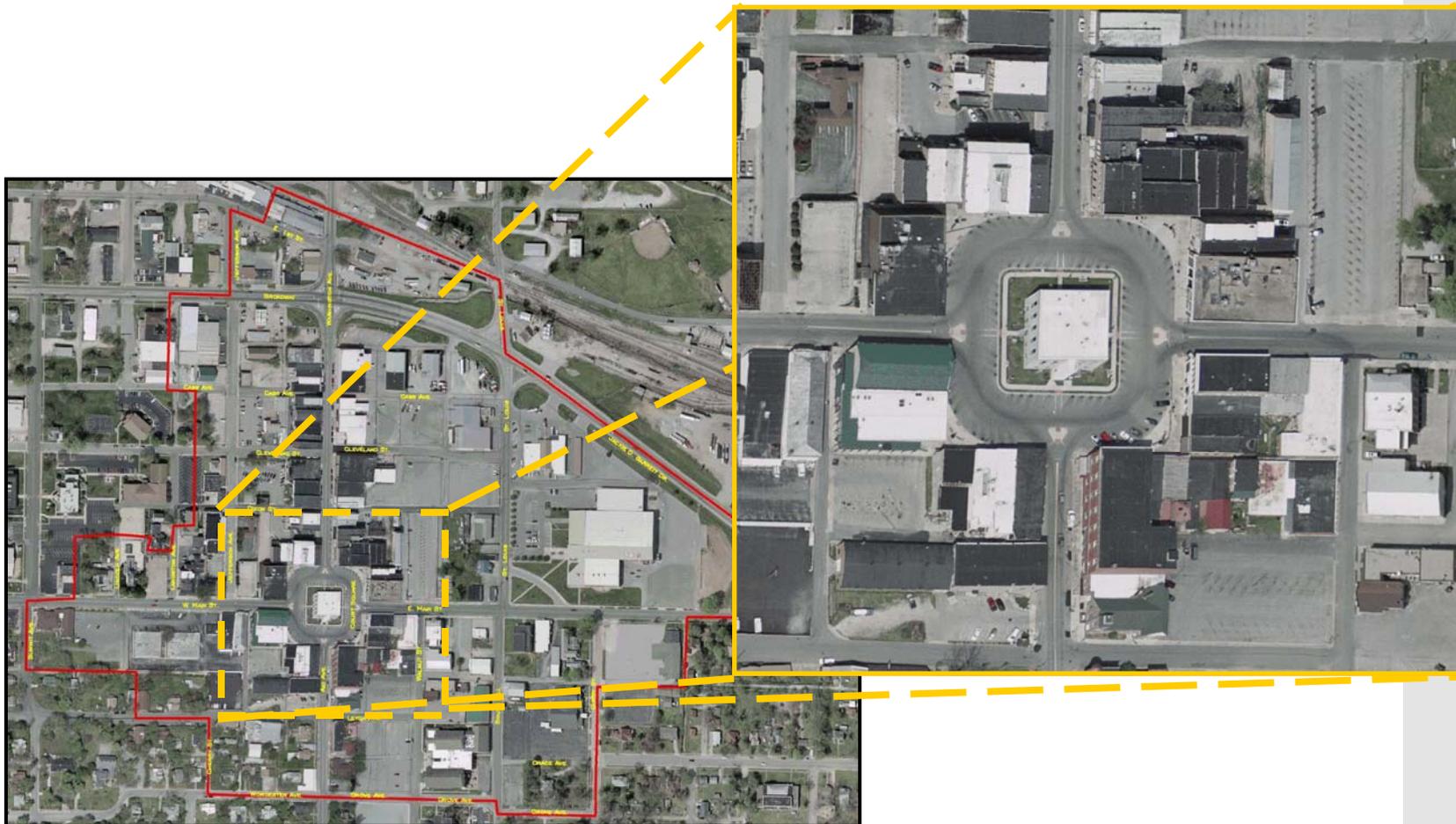
After World War II there was a movement in America to remove all things that were considered old and replace them with something new and modern. In the intervening years subtle, and not so subtle, changes took place that had a commutative effect on the entire architectural environment. Original glass storefronts were removed and replaced with smaller, economical windows and entrances. Upper facade windows were removed or covered up completely. Building cornices and ornaments were removed, in an attempt to "clean-up" the old looking façade. Historic character and qualities were removed and replaced with new and inappropriate materials and design. In some cases, entire buildings have been removed, replaced with new buildings that fail to account for the rhyme and scale of the surrounding buildings and street. The streetscape was not spared either, historic light poles and fixtures were removed and replaced with out-of-scale "cobra-head" fixtures and poles.



The City is blessed with a nearly complete storefront façade on all four blocks facing Court Square, as well as its outside corners. Many towns have lost much of their Main Street buildings and as a result have lost any definition of a strong downtown. Anchoring the Square is the Howell

County Courthouse, a wonderful limestone Art Deco-influenced building. The Courthouse's position at the center of the block, its median lines establishing a strong directional orientation is a traditional theme in court house designs across the country. Much of the original landscaping is gone, green lawns and old trees have been removed over the years leaving the building isolated in the downtown core. The Courthouse still strongly anchors the area as the approaching streets are focused directly at the center of its four sides, giving each approaching street a wonderful view.

The Study area is included entirely within the DREAM boundary and is depicted in the indicated diagram.

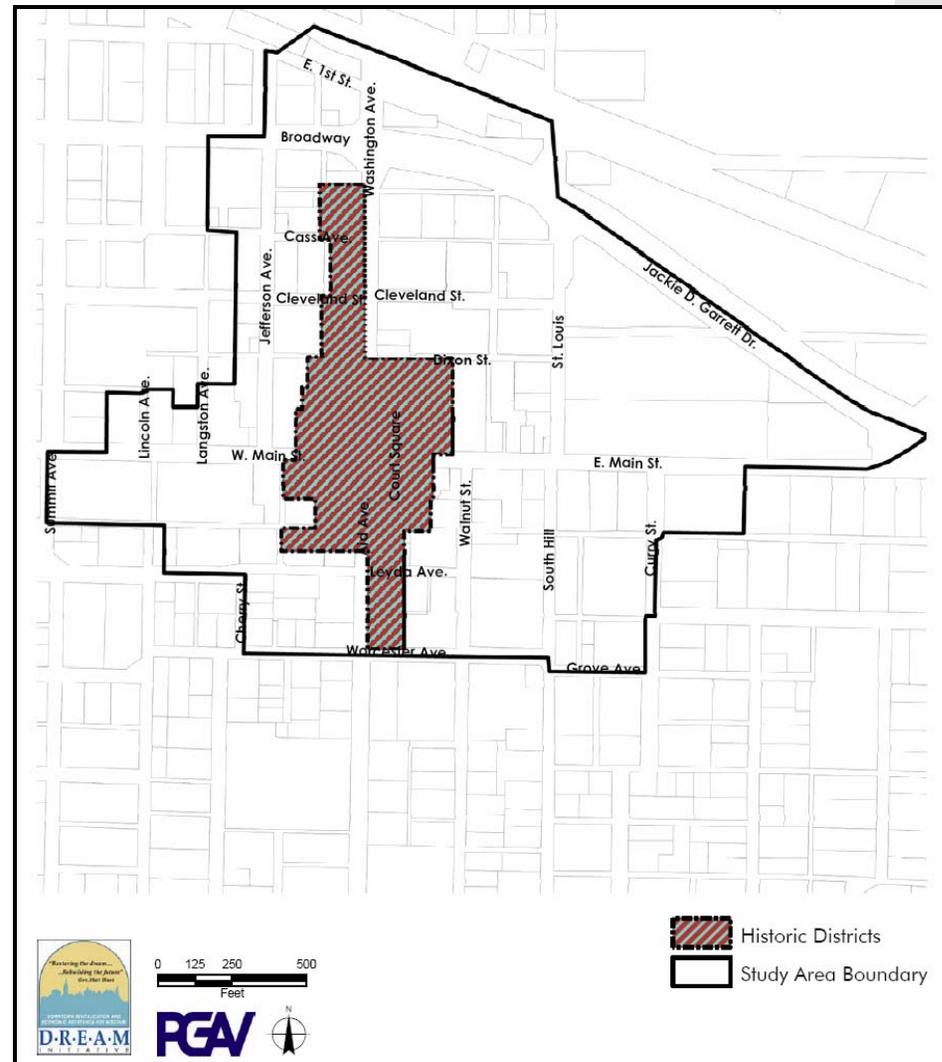


Intent of Guidelines

The West Plains Courthouse Square has many outstanding attributes to build upon. Beginning with an appreciation of the original architecture on the Square, and with the introduction of new buildings and structures into the downtown fabric and streetscape, all elements should have the look and feel of belonging in the same composition. This document is a guide to recapturing the charm and historic feel of West Plains while promoting appropriate new development.

The first step is to conduct a Historic Resources Survey, updating the available information about the current building stock in the existing **Courthouse Square Historic District**. This will essentially be an update to the information contained in the registration form of the District on file with the National Register of Historic Places. This update process should be conducted annually and ask a variety of questions including but not limited to; What is the current condition of the building? Have any buildings been torn down and if so, what has replaced them? A search for historic photographs or drawings will be useful as they provide a great resource in illustrating the history of the **Courthouse Square Historic District** determining what is appropriate for the Square. The District is shown to the right.

The next step is to develop a plan to accomplish the renewal of the Downtown overall. First and foremost, this means improving the existing design guidelines that will guide new development and rehabilitation of existing buildings to bring back the vitality of the district and restore a sense of civic pride. In order for the Courthouse Square to be a success it must respect the tradition of rhythm and unity that existed before, not to create an exact copy of the historic past. Working within the existing fabric of downtown buildings the community should develop a sensible approach to the renewal of the district including; the removal of inappropriate materials, adherence to the design guidelines, and developing appropriate streetscape improvements.



The building facades along with the sidewalks and street make up the outdoor living room of the city. This space is at the center of the community, alive with activities and events. As such, the responsibility of redevelopment falls on the community as well as to both individual property owners and the City. The individual building facades are owned and maintained by the property owners. The street improvements, utilities and sidewalks are the responsibility of the City. An individual owner cannot be expected to invest in redeveloping his building without the City commitment to restore the streetscape and the City can't be expected to make these investments without commitment from the property owners. Both areas must be redeveloped at the same time and pace for a successful redevelopment of the Courthouse Square.

Over the last several years West Plains has been consistently pursuing revitalizing downtown. With both private and public means, portions of the historic district have undergone restoration & renovation efforts including new street lights, renovated storefronts and new sidewalks. There are many wonderful restoration projects underway on several significant buildings in the Square, additionally many have been recently completed. The City cannot rest and assume that private renovations will continue, however, it must seek to increase such activity. The City has also sought to implement decade old design guidelines in relation to the *Courthouse Square Historic District* and these guidelines should build upon those efforts.

It is important that officials and other leaders understand that this document does not achieve any design ends unto itself. This report will guide the City as it seeks to implement the ideas in this report. The City building codes, nuisance ordinances, zoning overlays, sign restrictions, and other ordinances will create the legal documents needed to achieve the design concepts these guidelines represent. As the City researches and develops this legislation with its legal counsel, critical questions to be considered and decisions to be made will include the following:

- Will these design ideas be voluntary (guidelines), or will they be mandatory (standards)?
- What will be the main mechanism used to enforce these concepts?
 - Zoning Overlay
 - Building codes
 - Historic District
 - Incentives(likely a combination of all of these will be most effective)
- What are the procedural elements required?
 - Review Board composition
 - Clearance certificates for construction
 - Appeals process
 - Penalties for non-compliance
- Do other codes need to be enacted?
- Do existing City codes need enhanced enforcement or updating?
- How will the community receive this legislation?

BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

Downtown Fabric of Buildings

While these guidelines are written for the Courthouse Square, the design recommendations are sound advice that might be applicable elsewhere in the community. These guidelines are written for commercial areas, not residential. The principles to be discussed, in many cases, can be altered and adapted to apply to an aspect of the entire town or a specific neighborhood, but care should be taken that the Courthouse Square and the overall downtown area should remain unique in character.

To successfully support the revitalization of Downtown West Plains, the Court Square property owners, City staff, elected officials, and other community organizations will have to change the way they think about Downtown West Plains and make a long term commitment to an overall unifying theme, feel, and sense of atmosphere. This process will not happen overnight, in a week, nor in a month or a year. West Plains will not wake up one morning and be “finished” with the establishment of the downtown place. This will be an ongoing effort that will evolve, pick-up speed, slow down, be applauded, and be criticized. The one constant should be the desire to slowly adjust the downtown core to an atmosphere that is attractive to West Plains residents and its visitors. In this overall “fabric of downtown” there will be 3 types of structures; those that contribute, those that detract, and those that do neither. The objective is to maximize contributing elements and minimize detracting elements, over time.

Façade Elements -

The various elements of a façade must be balanced. Appropriate massing, building and floor heights, proportions, roof lines, materials, and setbacks are some critical considerations in new construction. Any future development should be encouraged to implement a design that contributes to the fabric of downtown. Any future design that will detract from the fabric should be denied.

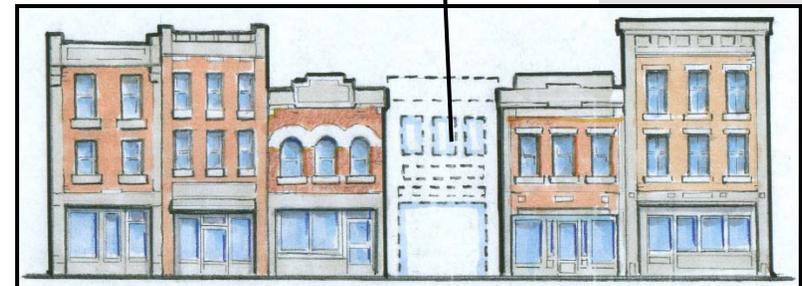
Other aspects like architectural details, colors, and cornices are more important to the restoration of historic buildings, but can be used effectively in new construction as well. Developing a well balanced character between all elements can allow a building to be very individual in its character, but at the same time be a complementary thread woven into the overall fabric and feel of downtown.

Rhythm -

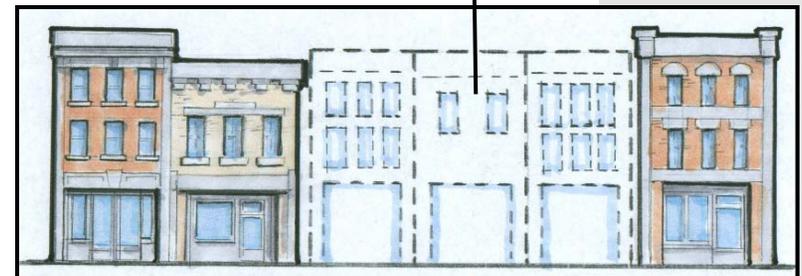
The defined rhythm of West Plains should be maintained along a street frontage by adhering to uniform lot widths, building widths, and window spacing.

- New infill buildings and structures should maintain the rhythm through proper repetition of details and orientation to the street.
- Vertical elements, entrances, lighting, and other street furnishings can also develop the rhythm of a specific block.

New façade fills opening.

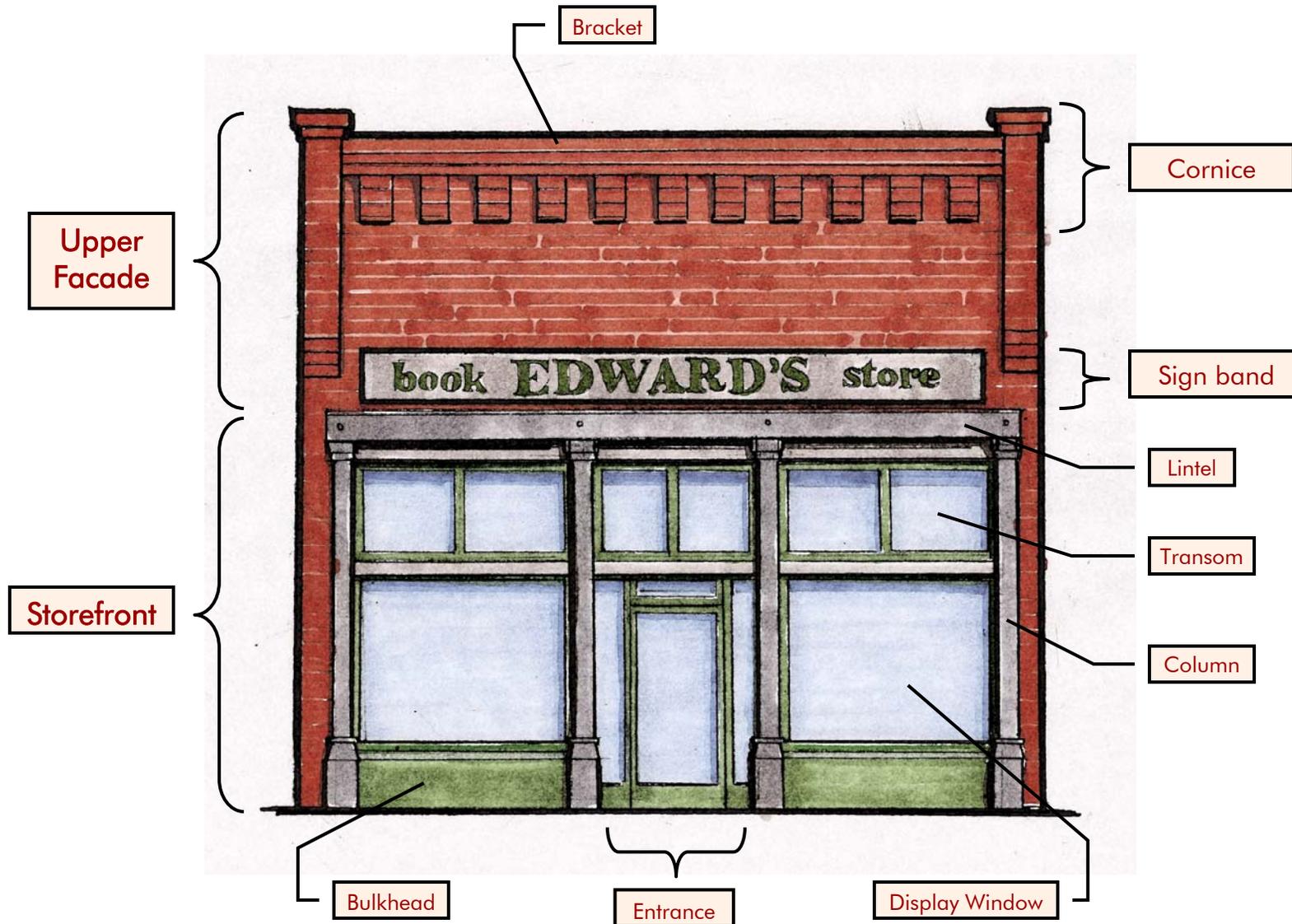


New façade as a series of bays.



Building Zones -

Improvements to individual buildings will be discussed in the context of three distinct 'zones'; the **Storefront**, the **Upper Façade**, and the **Rear Façade**. The elements of the front façade zones are depicted in these diagrams.



Alterations -

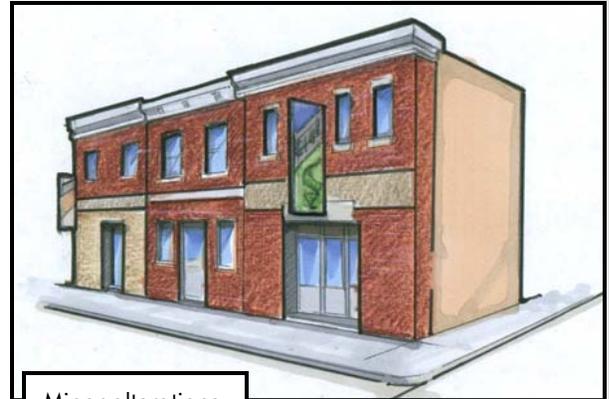
Inappropriate alterations or additions that disrupt the fabric of the Storefront Zone should be removed. It is possible that non-historic and new construction can complement the building fabric that has developed, therefore some alterations may not need be removed. Decks, ADA structures, and other 'detachable' alterations can be utilized, but should be as unobtrusive as possible and located on the rear or sides of the building. Court Square in West Plains is unique in that it services many retail shops, with both a front and rear access for customers. Special consideration should be given to how these shops function related to signage, lighting, and entry.

As a rule, any and all alterations or additions to the Upper Facade zone should be removed. Alterations in this zone can significantly change the appearance of the face of the building. This includes any and all signs and lighting as these should be restricted to the Storefront Zone. Avoid removing or altering any historic material or significant architectural features. Care should be taken during the removal process due to the possibility of damaging original elements hidden behind the alterations. When disassembly of a historic element is necessary, use methods that minimize damage to the original materials.

The illustration at right depicts how alterations progress and damage the building fabric.



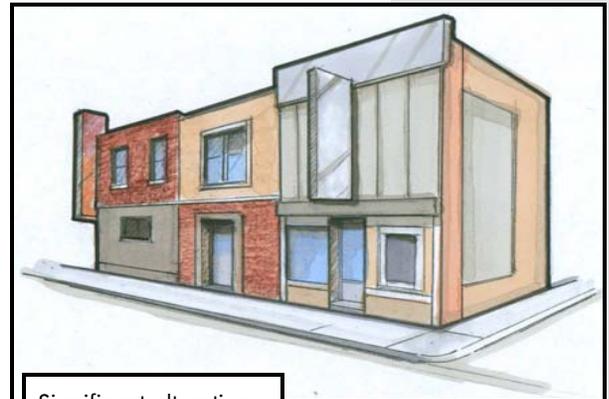
Original design.



Minor alterations.



Storefront is lost.

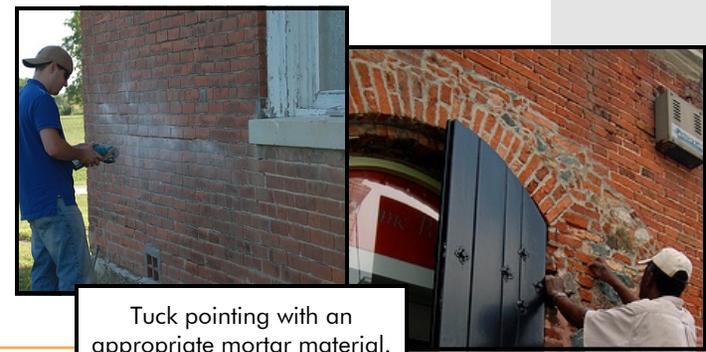


Significant alterations.

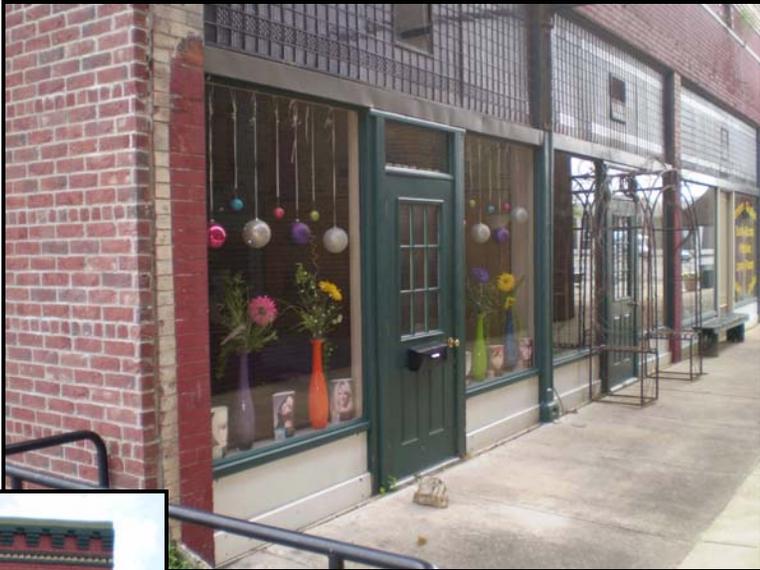
Masonry -

Masonry is typically the preferred façade material for downtown. Most existing construction will utilize some masonry. In most instances metal and wood siding is not a comfortable choice for downtown building fabric. These types of siding provide harsh lines, stark contrast, and no relief or warmth to the buildings. If wood was the historic material, it may be restored.

- Masonry restoration, particularly on historic structures, should be done with great care.
- If the masonry has been painted or stained a minimally intrusive removal process should be used. Never resort to sand blasting as this will permanently damage the brick.
- Unpainted masonry should remain natural, not painted or sealed.
- If painting of existing masonry is required, paint should be applied with “breathable” elastomeric base coats prior to finish painting, special consideration must be given to appropriate use of joints and sealants on all improvements made to structures
- Damaged masonry should be repaired or replaced with similar color, texture, and style masonry products.
- Tuck pointing should be done with an appropriate mortar material with a consistent color across the entire façade.
- Masonry replacement and/or repair should only be done with appropriate materials. Portland cement as a patch for masonry is unacceptable.
- If a historic façade has been covered with metal or wood siding it should be removed. Exposing the underlying brick will help re-establish the character of the building and contribute to the visual continuity of the block. Metal cladding often is easy to remove, and only small areas of the underlying material will have been damaged.
- Cover-ups also hide interesting details that can enhance building identity. If, after removing the covering material, portions of the original must be replaced, use a material that is similar to the original in color and texture.



West Plains, Missouri



West Plains has many appropriately restored, contributing facades.



All examples of building materials that do not contribute to the fabric of West Plains Downtown.

All of these facades could be improved.



Awnings -

Awnings used in the storefront zone provide shade for merchandise, shelter for pedestrians, and bring a colorful accent to the building front that can be changed frequently without great expense. The following suggestions are should enhance appropriate use of awnings and improve downtown aesthetics:

- Mount the top edge to align with the top of the transom, or to align with the framing that separates the transom from the main display window. This will help strengthen the visual continuity of store fronts.
- Roll-up awnings were a common site on historic storefronts and can be used following a similar approach to the original application. If a roll-up awning is not operable, the awning should at least follow the shape of an operable awning.
- Like the storefront, awnings should be confined to the extent of the original storefront opening.
- Awnings should be trapezoidal in profile with closed ends, not rounded or curved, and a consistent color.
- Awning colors should coordinate with the color scheme for the entire building.
- Awning signage or lettering should be limited to the hanging vertical flap of the awning and be complementary in color to the building.
- Awning signage or lettering should not be allowed where another flush faced sign exists.
- Signboards under the awning intended to assist pedestrians should be a limited, uniform size and complement the awning and building.
- Awnings will wear and should be acknowledged as an operating cost of doing business which can be changed every few years for a fresh look.
- Aluminum and/or steel awnings and structures are not original building elements and typical detract from the overall appeal of downtown façades. These awnings should be removed and points of attachment repaired on the building façade.

Improper awnings extending beyond the storefronts.



Appropriate awnings establishing rhythm.





Examples of undesirable awnings in West Plains.

Poor choices of materials, shapes, locations of installation, and extensions beyond the storefronts.





Awning installed too high.



Although in disrepair, good use of awning to locate rear entrance.



This community should never have allowed an awning to be installed in this condition. The meager bench and planters do not begin to make up for the condition of the awning.

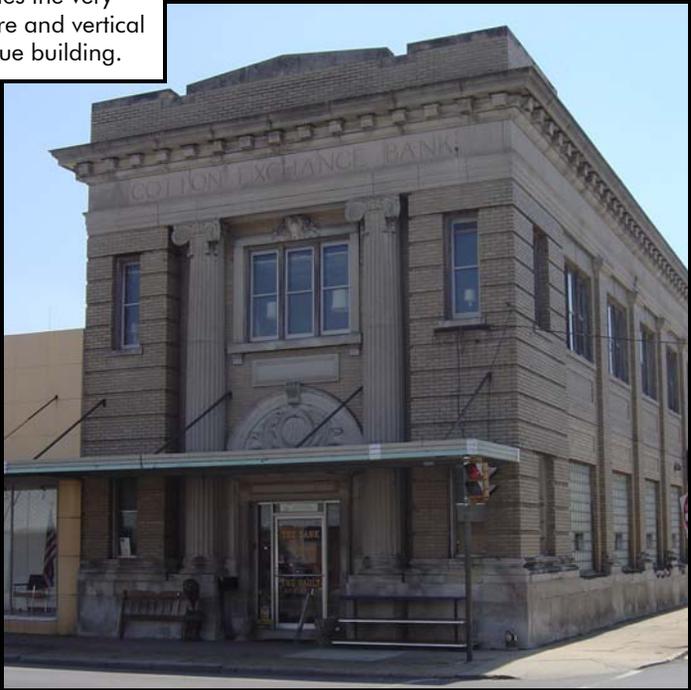


Awning use for upper façade zone.

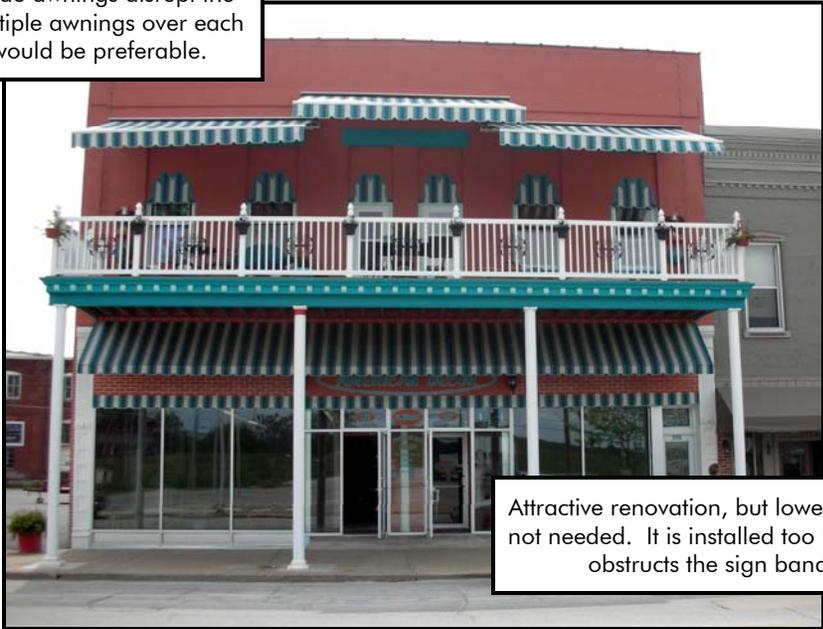


Awning should be at the same level across the building front.

This awning hides the very detailed architecture and vertical lines of this unique building.



Upper Façade awnings disrupt the rhythm. Multiple awnings over each window would be preferable.



Attractive renovation, but lower awning not needed. It is installed too high and obstructs the sign band.

Lighting -

Buildings should be interesting to pedestrians and motorists at night, as well as by day. A well-lit storefront or rear façade creates a positive impression about downtown. The following lighting conditions can be implemented to enhance the impression and safety of the downtown:

- Use lighting as a design element to draw attention to the entire building, not just the sign.
- Any lighting at the storefront should be used to accent the entrance, signage, or architectural elements as well as provide light for safety and security.
- Light fixtures should be the lowest wattage possible and of a concealed, simple, and non-intrusive design or a style that is appropriate to the period of the building.
- Sign lighting should be balanced in color and intensity with light in display windows.
- Warm-colored light is preferred for all exterior lighting, since this is more pleasing to the eye, and will more easily draw attention to window displays.
- Neon lights and cool fluorescent lights should not be used.
- Lighting on Rear Facades should provide illumination at the entry door as well as along the pedestrian path from the parking area. This lighting should be similar to the lighting in the front.
- Building lighting, in particular uplighting, should be coordinated with regulations set forth by LEED guidelines.
- Lighting technologies are advancing quickly. The community should be prepared to allow innovative concepts with an emphasis on sustainability, attractiveness, and efficiency.
- Lighting can be effectively and attractively combined with other façade elements to be functional and make the building more interesting.
- Care must be taken so that the lighting does not overwhelm the nature of the street and become garish or “too much” in relation to the other buildings.



Signage -

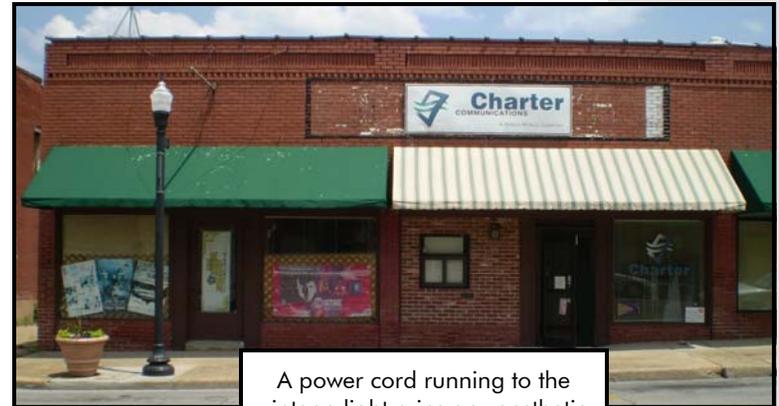
For a successful West Plains Courthouse Square each business must have its own identity while maintaining the integrity of the district. Proper signage will identify the business without detracting from the architecture of the building and the fabric of downtown. Sign types and their locations should be kept simple and consistent for ease of public awareness. Signage should be restricted to the Storefront or Rear Façade Zones. The following guidelines will help enhance this aspect of Downtown West Plains:

- The size of the sign should be of an appropriate scale for the building and street. Large signs should not be needed as the signage in a downtown area is more oriented to the pedestrian than the motorist.
- Rooftop, blade, pole, abandoned, neon, electronic message boards, and billboard signage should not be allowed or severely restricted.
- Position flush-mounted signs that fit within architectural features are preferred. This type of signage will help reinforce horizontal lines along the street.
- Coordinate color schemes with the building front.
- Locate flush signs so they do not extend beyond the outer edges of the building front.
- Look to see if decorative moldings define a “sign panel” for flush-mounted signs.
- Locate projecting signs along the first floor level of the façade, not above.
- Place signs near the business entrance, to guide a customer’s eyes to the door.
- Use symbols in projecting signs; these are more easily identified and remembered and will add interest to the building.
- Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs by aligning several smaller signs or grouping them onto a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate. Use similar forms or backgrounds for the signs to tie them together visually and make them easier to read.
- Mount signs so they will not obscure any architectural details.
- Sign materials should be compatible with the façade materials.



Too many signs can clutter the view down the street and make any streetscape attempt useless.

- Good craftsmanship will pay off in longer service for your sign, and it will convey a stronger image to the public. Select high quality materials: Signs are exposed to extreme weather conditions, and a deteriorating sign presents a poor image to customers.
- Encourage the use of “custom” designs that portrays a business as being unique. Mass-produced signs, especially rectangular plastic panel ones with internal lighting, fail to make a lasting impression.
- Sign materials should be easy to fix and maintain.
- Take precautions to provide power directly to signage without to locate power lines across the existing façade.
- Illuminate signs in such a way as to enhance the overall composition of the façade.
- External lighting cast from period style, non-intrusive fixtures is preferable to internal sign lighting.
- Awning signage or lettering should be limited to the hanging vertical flap of the awning and be complementary in color to the building.
- Awning signage or lettering should not be allowed where another flush faced sign exists.
- Signboards under the awning intended to assist pedestrians should be a limited, uniform size and complement the awning and building.



A power cord running to the vintage light ruins any aesthetic enhancement from the lighting.



Signs should be properly installed, not temporary or painted on windows or walls. This is not a quality installation.



Good use of a projecting sign in a West Plains arcade.

Bicycles -

A downtown area should not only be pedestrian friendly, but bicycle friendly as well. Concerns for a bicyclist should include routes of travel, clearance, type of traffic signals, traffic lanes, signage, drainage grate and curbing obstacles, and parking.

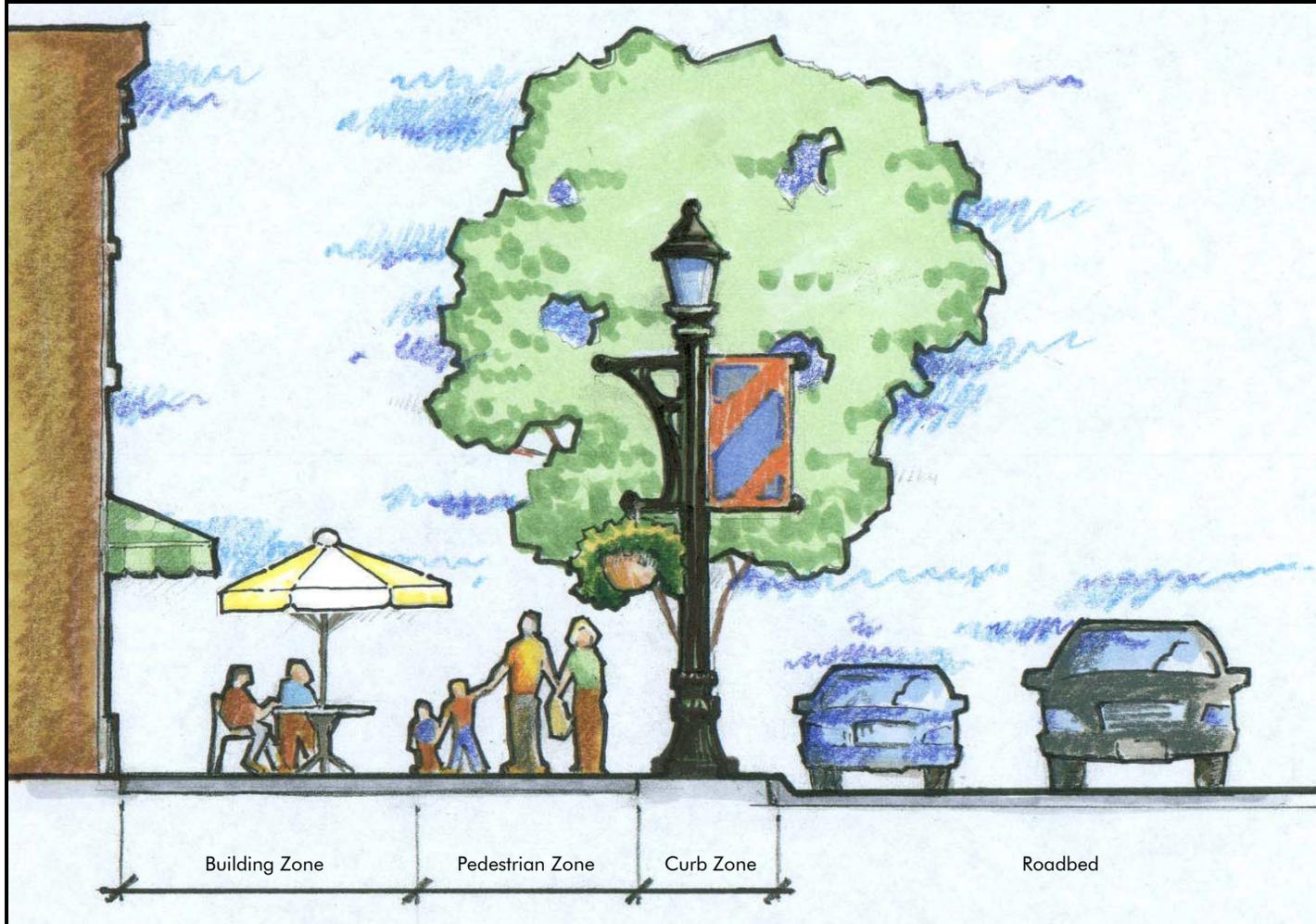
- Bicycle parking racks should be a uniform and integral component of the downtown furnishings.
- Racks should be located at useful activity nodes and on all four corners of the courthouse square.
- Established bike routes within the vicinity should be linked to downtown.

Outdoor Café Seating -

Outdoor Café or sidewalk seating is an exciting tool that adds to a vibrant impression about downtown. Seating areas for restaurants should be encouraged, but monitored by the City. A proper arrangement will:

- Be located in the sidewalk area fronting the restaurant.
- Allow a clear and unencumbered path along the sidewalk for pedestrian traffic or be located close enough to the building. In either case the sidewalk must maintain ADA compliance. The restaurant owner is responsible for keeping the sidewalk and this pathway clear at all times.
- Areas adjacent to the building should not block entrances or exits to the building.
- Provide a clearly defined area connected with the restaurant.
- Utilize appropriate umbrellas or other patron covering in a uniform color, matching the building colors, and with only the restaurant name. Any other wording or message should not be allowed.
- Temporary outdoor seating material must be kept in top condition to provide an attractive image for the restaurant and all of downtown. Such furnishings should be durable, weatherproof, and sturdy enough to prevent movement by winds.
- Plastic furnishings should not be used.
- Furnishings should be stored in a secure location inside at the end of the day.
- At least one sturdy trash receptacle should be provided.
- The use of exterior heaters for outside seating should be considered for extending the seasonal appeal of outdoor cafes and restaurants.

SIDEWALK ZONES: Appropriate zones in front of a building should be maintained. The Building Zone, Pedestrian Zone, and Curb Zone all have unique characteristics that should be regulated to ensure that private elements do not adversely impact public improvements. These are also important aspects of the streetscape plan to be discussed later in this document.



Aside from ADA accessible pavement improvements, Streetscape Amenities should remain clear of the Pedestrian Zone and allow for free movement of an upright pedestrian. These elements will attract pedestrians, but must not obstruct them.



Outdoor Seating in Building Zone.

Public event signage in Curb Zone.

Private event or temporary signage in Building Zone.

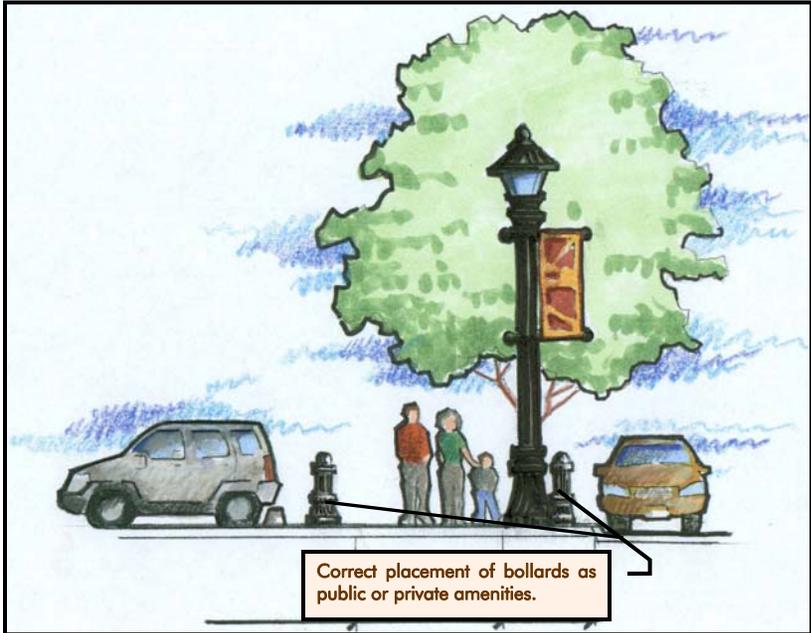
Wayfinding and public signage in Curb Zone.

Businesses must be educated on the importance of maintaining Sidewalk Zones. Each business should care for the zones within their building's street frontage.



Items such as bicycle racks, bollards, and benches have traditionally been City provide streetscape enhancements.

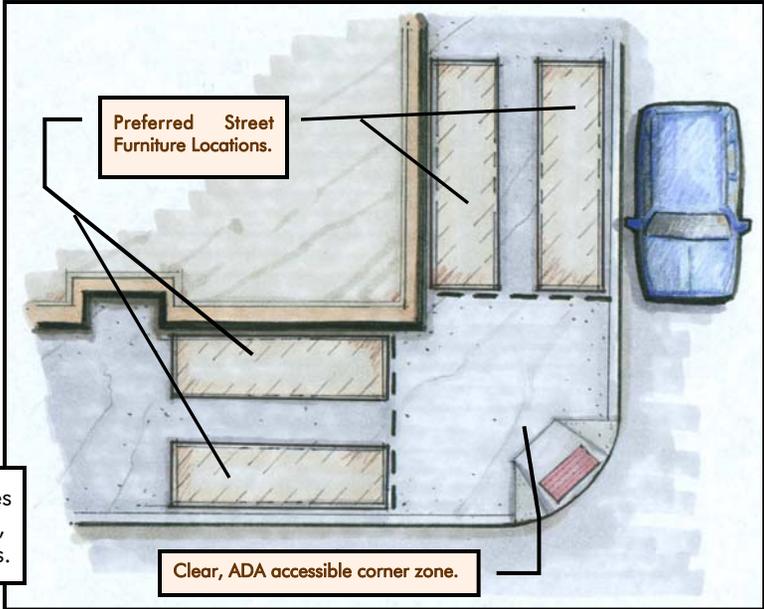
Businesses should consider providing and maintaining such elements within their Building or Parking Lot Zones to enhance service to their patrons.





Sturdy outdoor seating that will stand up to weather and wind is critical for a café.

Umbrellas should be a solid color or advertise the name of the café only, not products sold at the café.



Proper location of cafes is important for safety, success, and aesthetics.

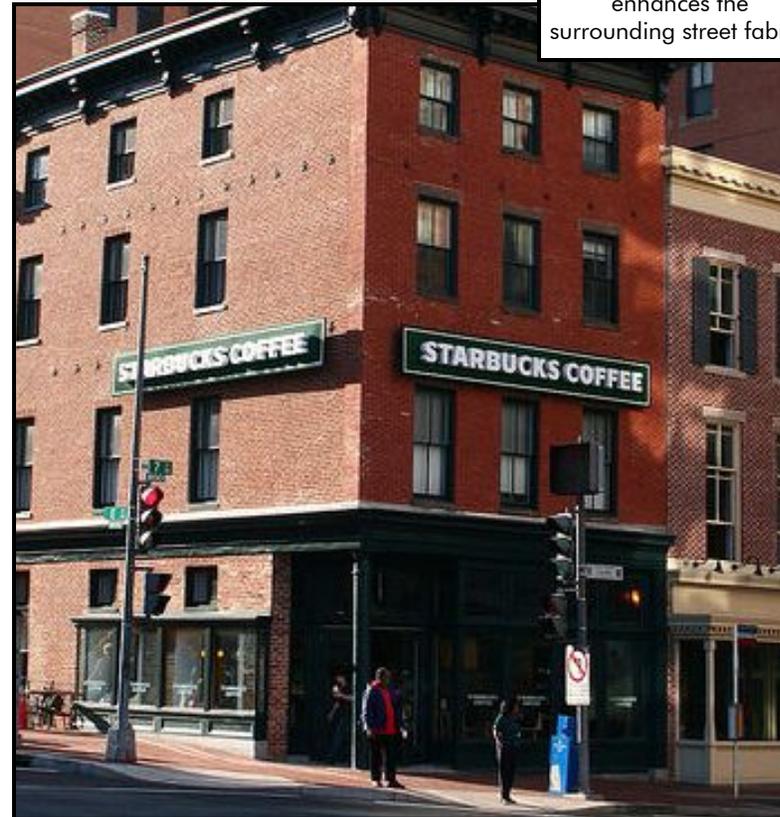
Franchise Architecture -

To establish a unique atmosphere in the West Plains Courthouse Square, branding the downtown buildings in the style of a company should not be allowed. Large franchises and national chains typically have a 'downtown style' in addition to their trademarked brand. West Plains should insist the company follow these design standards and adapt their company brand to create a complementary downtown building façade.

A franchise façade that does not complement the surrounding street fabric.



A franchise façade that enhances the surrounding street fabric.



Maintenance of Facades -

Facades, particularly restorations, may need extra care and maintenance. The city should encourage proper maintenance by firm code and nuisance enforcement. In addition, if a city has implemented any sort of incentive for façade work a requirement should be proper maintenance according to city standards. An example would be the ability to call a revolving loan should the façade fall into disrepair.

Often deteriorating rear facades cause a buildings collapse. Several buildings were viewed in West Plains that have severely deteriorating rear facades.



Maintenance of all parts of a building is critical. This community dealt with a severe collapse.



Intact, but poorly maintained
West Plains facades that
could be great contributors.

Historic Buildings

Original Elements -

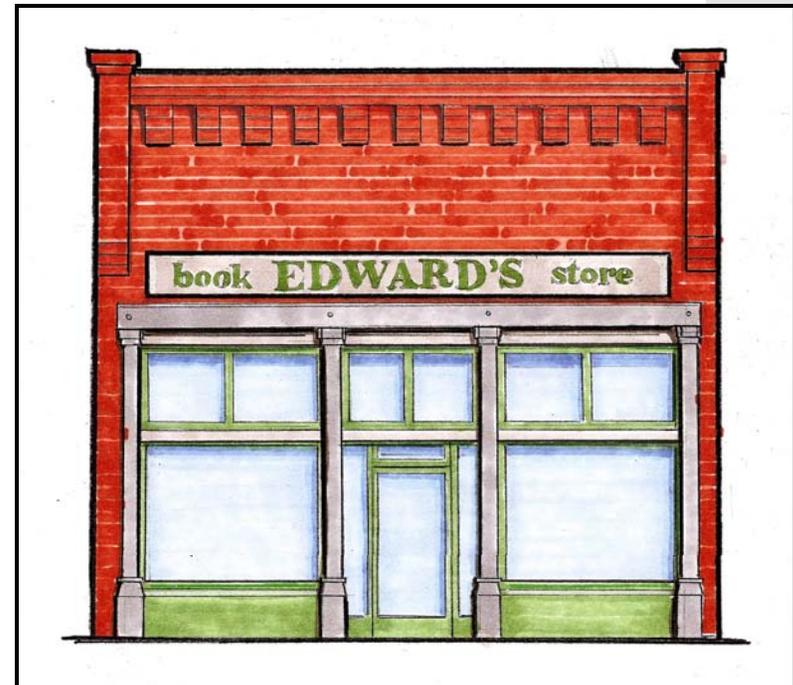
Any original element or material that still exists, particularly on the storefront, should be retained if possible. Original elements provide a historic value that can not be replaced. Prisms glass in transom windows or a decorative wooden door with beveled glass would be an examples of original materials.

Replacement of missing architectural elements should be based on accurate duplications of original features. When an entire detail must be reconstructed the new material should match the original in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Where reconstruction of an element is impossible because of a lack of historical evidence, then a new design that relates to the building in general size, scale and material may be considered. Use design elements that reflect the building's style. A simplified interpretation of similar features on comparable buildings may be acceptable.

Storefront -

Entrance:

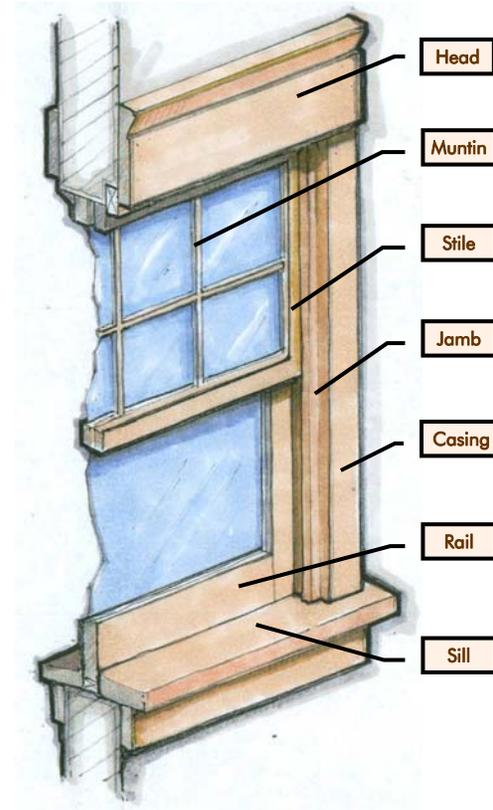
- The entrance door should be recessed to emphasized the entry, provide a bit of shelter and remove the open door from the path of pedestrians on the sidewalk. These areas also repeat rhythm of shaded areas along the street helps to identify business entrances.
- If the original recessed entry has been removed, consider establishing a new one.
- The recessed entrance door should also be ADA compliant.
- The door should provide a view into the building as well as a sense of openness. Solid doors should be avoided.
- Consider using an accent color on the door.



Storefront Continued -

Windows:

- Preserve any of the large panes of glass that make-up the original store front if they still exist. These transparent surfaces allow pedestrians to see goods and activities inside.
- Any new or replacement storefront should be built of similar materials compatible with the original façade design and craftsmanship.
- Wood framing similar to the original is preferred but metal framing with the appropriate historic profile is acceptable.
- Clear insulated glass with low 'E' coating is a good choice for replacement storefronts.
- Tinted or reflective glass and interior reflective films should not be used on the storefront.



Never allow window unit AC in front facade. Only in back.



Storefront Continued -

Spandrel Panels:

- Maintaining the original spandrel panel if it exist is preferable but if the panel is missing, reconstruction using old photographs as a guide is acceptable.
- Coordinate the color scheme of the spandrel panel with other façade elements.
- If original design information is not available, another option is to design a simplified panel using appropriate materials such as painted wood or metal.

Transoms:

- These bands of glass are found on many buildings and they often align at the same height in a block. Maintaining this line will help to reinforce a sense of visual continuity for the street.
- When transoms are covered and original moldings and window frame proportions are concealed, the impact of the store front is weakened. If the interior ceiling is now lower than this glass line, move the dropped ceiling back from the window to maintain its historical dimensions.
- Some transoms have hinged panels to allow natural ventilation. Restore these to working order where feasible. Used in combination with ceiling fans these operable transoms can be very effective in improving comfort levels when full air-conditioning is not as necessary.



Great example of a Mesker Brothers Iron Works façade with intricate details well restored and maintained. Mesker Buildings can be found throughout Missouri. See www.gotmesker.com West Plains should research the background of its downtown buildings to learn of any similar significant traits.

Upper Facade -

Windows:

- Typical upper windows are vertically oriented and uniformly spaced across the building front. This rhythm of upper story windows is an important unifying feature of downtown, because it is repeated on most buildings.
- Any window opening covers, masonry infill or mismatched windows should be removed.
- If the original window still exists, it should be restored to serviceable condition when possible.
- Do not allow Window AC units. If they must be used, use only on the rear façade.

Upper Facade Continued -

Windows:

- Replace only missing portions of original elements where feasible. Sometimes trim elements and other materials must be removed in order to repair or refinish them. Always devise methods of replacing the disassembled materials in their original configuration. Code trim pieces, for example, so you can replace them accurately.
- Installation of interior storm windows should be considered.
- Keep window unit AC in the rear façade, not in front.
- If the existing window is beyond repair an appropriate replacement window of the same size and profile should be installed.
- Use design elements that reflect the building's style. A simplified interpretation of similar features on comparable buildings may be considered.
- Window shades or curtains in colors that coordinate with accent trim should be encouraged.
- If the ceiling is lower than the window head, pull the ceiling back from the window to keep the original height at the window.

Cornice and Architectural Details:

- Replacement of missing cornices or architectural elements should be based on accurate duplications of original features. In some cases, an entire detail must be reconstructed. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the original in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Photographic evidence is a good source for research.
- If the cornice is missing, a similar cornice of like size and scale should be installed.
- If no evidence exists as to form and detail, the reconstructed cornice should be as simple and non-intrusive as possible.
- If the cornice is intact it should be repaired and maintained as required.
- Where architectural details have been removed, look at photos for details to use as patterns for new designs.
- Where suitable reference materials are not available, consider basing the cornice details on adjacent buildings.
- Where exact reconstruction of details is not feasible, consider developing a simplified interpretation of the original, in which its major form and line is retained.

Rear Façade -

The rear facade typically faces an alley and provides access for deliveries and pick-up. In some cases customer parking is provided behind a building and entry to the business through the rear elevation is desirable. Attention to the appearance of the rear elevation can be extremely important to the quality of the customers' shopping experience. Consider how image can be improved here, while accommodating service functions. West Plains has numerous buildings and apartments which are accessed from the rear of the building. In addition, many buildings have been modified to include second floor balconies at the rear of buildings. Special consideration should be given to modifying or adding these types of structures due to the existing hierarchy of the rear elevations and the challenges presented by the topography in and around the West Plains Courthouse Square.

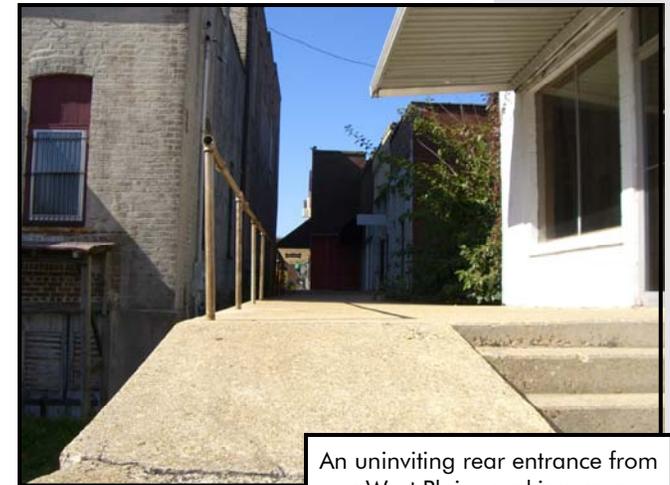
Entry Door:

- The rear door will no longer just be for service but should project a sense of openness and welcome.
- Customers might also feel a loyalty or sense of 'special access' by using this door and the business can build on this loyalty by catering to that customer and improving that experience.
- A new door and hardware with a large area of glass may be considered.
- A small canopy or awning may provide some of shelter.

Upper Rear Façade:

The rear upper facade elements should be treated similar to the front. Too often this is a façade that is neglected and allowed to deteriorate and this deterioration can damage the structural integrity of the entire building.

- Windows should be restored or replaced and have no covering except an awning.
- Gutters and downspouts should be in good repair and painted.
- Use materials and colors that coordinate with the main façade so customers will learn to recognize both entrances are related to the same business.
- Use a smaller version of the front sign to identify this entrance.
- New exit stairs and balconies can enhance the marketability of second story space, especially when these lead out onto parking lots located on the back side of the building. Encourage installing new stairs that comply with current building codes.



An uninviting rear entrance from a West Plains parking area.

Fences:

- Fences should be designed to harmonize with the surrounding structures in both scale and color.
- Some materials which may be appropriate include masonry, wood and wrought-iron.
- Chain-link should not be a permitted material.

Trash, Ancillary Structures, & Utilities:

Sensible, yet firm enforcement of the city's building and nuisance codes will be required and should be a priority throughout the West Plains Downtown.

- Trash containers should be placed in an enclosure or behind a screen.
- Central trash collection locations should be considered to minimize the quantity of enclosures.
- Recycling collection centers should also be considered in downtown as residential and retail use increases.
- Enclosures and screens should harmonize with the surrounding buildings in scale and color.
- Landscaping can also be used to screen air-conditioning condensers and utility transformers. All landscaping for such use should be of hardy plant goods with relatively low maintenance needs.
- Use solid wood or masonry partitions, lattice screens, or hedges to screen trash areas.
- Any ancillary structures should match the surrounding buildings style and scale. These structures must be maintained well.
- Keep electrical service boxes and conduits in good repair and painted.
- Encourage using a color scheme on these screens that matches that of the rest of the building.



Regulations for refuse haulers can be established and enforced to prevent situations like this.



Rear façade improvements and proper maintenance can make a drastic difference.

These locations are both visible from public parking, but provide very different feelings about West Plains.

Those on the left are in need of maintenance and those on the right are being maintained.

This demonstrates the need to uniformly and fairly enforce building codes.



Existing Buildings and New Construction

Some buildings in Court Square do not have historic features or ornamentation. Many were built as simple fronts. These buildings and any new construction should implement the following standards:

- New construction should develop a design using the traditional storefront elements described in these guidelines or on nearby historic buildings that contributes to the fabric of downtown.
- Use a simple design, complementary to the downtown, with these three basic elements; a unified paint and color scheme, an awning, and non-intrusive signage.
- Emphasize horizontal features that can align with other buildings.
- Encourage highlighting a simple cornice, a band of color, a sign panel or an awning edge that can line up with similar elements on the street nearby.
- Some newer buildings downtown are set back from the street, with space in front for parking. These buildings are intended to relate to cars more than pedestrians. Landscaping elements that will enhance the site for pedestrians should be required.

Color Guidelines

Use color to your advantage. Some of the most noticeable results are achieved with a fresh paint job. The most effective and economical schemes often start with the natural colors of the building materials themselves as a base, such as the native red of many brick buildings. The following techniques should be encouraged:

- Use only one base color for the majority of the background wall surface, but use a different color for accents. Do not paint a building entirely one color.
- Base colors should be muted earth tones or pastels.
- Look for “built-in” features of the façade that can be highlighted with an accent color.
- Window frames, sills, moldings, and cornices are potential elements to dramatize with a contrasting color.
- Use bright colors only in small amounts. Place them at the first floor level to direct the customer’s eyes to the business.
- Consider accent colors for signs, awnings, and entrance doors.
- Earth tones will hold their color well, as will darker pastels. Check for color stability in ultra-violet light; some colors, such as red, tend to be unstable and will shift in hue over time.

Building Design Examples

West Plains Bank:

The modern look of the bank building could be softened by the installations of planters in front of the building. Some other minor changes might be to enhance the signage, alter the front entrance, and consider lighting effects like sconces on the columns.

Should West Plains Bank desire to remodel substantially, the City should work to suggest additional details that would break up the expanses of walls and windows.



Ray and Fisher Law Office:

These buildings sit adjacent to each other and currently house a single law firm. Ideally, such prominent locations on Court Square would be occupied by retail uses.

Minor repairs, painting of contrasting elements, and cleaning of these buildings will contribute to the enhancement of the Luster Arcade entrance landscaping.

Different awning styles should also be used on these buildings to indicate separate storefronts. Although the business may be the same, the storefronts should each reflect their uniqueness.



Wiles Abstract Co. Block:

The predominant feature of the block is an imposing awning. Recent reconstruction of the awning has occurred, but this construction does not enhance the area any better than the previous awning. The brown awning has been replaced by green.

The three buildings should each be given back their identities by considering each façade separately and installing three distinct styles of awnings, if any at all. Metal awnings are not appropriate and should never be considered.

The rich architectural details and transom windows will be visible with the correct awning and create a more open feeling. The pillar on the corner of the Wiles Abstract Building is unique architecture that can best be brought-out with a better awning installation.

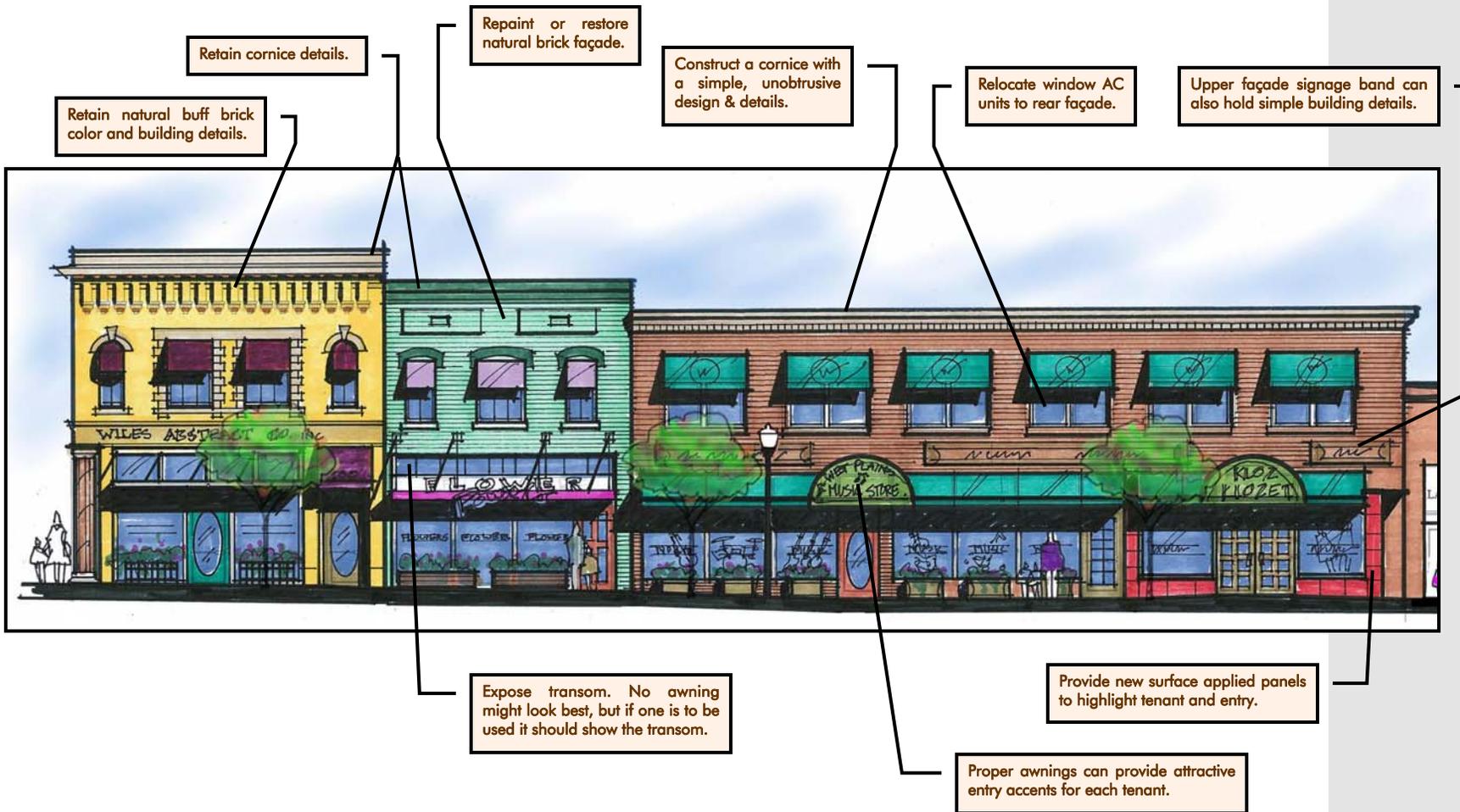


Previous awning installation.



Recently allowed awning installation.





Luster Arcade:

The shops in Luster Arcade should be composed of retail uses and encourages to use the Arcade as an extension of their store. Outdoor displays and seating will add to the inviting feeling. Adequate pedestrian right of way must be maintained. Hanging planters on the opposite wall of the Luster shops can add warmth.

With improvements Luster Arcade could function as a natural extension of the square. It's connection to parking on the East has been strengthened and an entry way for that parking area has been created. This new entry can boast improved parking with landscaping islands and trees throughout. Sidewalks on the East side of Luster can tie in with sidewalks on East Main and Dixon Street to the North.



Luster Arcade today.

The Arcade is a very unique feature in West Plains and should be utilized to its potential.

One of the four arcades has already been lost and care should be taken to keep and enhance the other three.



Luster Arcade connected to Parking.



What Luster Arcade might look like.

STREETSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Many of the guidelines for historic downtown squares across the country are similar. The City of West Plains should look for opportunities that set itself apart or unique from its sister cities. City history, notable personalities, and natural resources and landmarks are usual places to start, and the City of West Plains is very rich with all of these.

The term Streetscape typically refers to exterior public spaces located between the building facades on one side of the street and the building facades on the other side of the street. An organized streetscape with combined lighting and way-finding signage is more efficient and user-friendly for visitors to the Courthouse Square. For the purpose of our design exercise we were advised to focus our study on the Northwest corner of the West Plains Court Square including the Luster Arcade and the adjacent perimeter parking East of Luster Arcade. This area of study was then to be considered as a guide for future downtown enhancements. Please refer to the plan image outlining the project area.

As illustrated, the existing West Plains Court Square is formed by the four streets, West Main, Washington Ave, East Main and Aid Ave. The vehicular traffic is routed into a very wide lane (2 lane plus) one-way loop going counterclockwise around the Court Square block. Parking is angled on both sides of the street including the outside corners of the interior square with the cross walk located mid-block instead of the corners. Median dividers (drive over curbs/ Islands) have been placed at the entry to the to force traffic onto the square. All four streets leading into the square collide head on with the North, South, East, and West exterior building facades of the Courthouse. Overhead electrical and telephone lines have been mostly relocated off the square in previous city improvements. Curbs were repaired and storm water drains installed at all corners of the square. Sidewalks with new street lighting have also been added, as well as street landscaping in the form of planters and trees.

These repairs and updates have been made over an extended period and do not reflect a uniform approach.



Design Coordination

A comprehensive design approach to the Courthouse Square will result in a successful project. A district can display a sense of order and rhythm through the repetition of design elements on buildings and street furnishings. A sense of arrival should exist upon entering Court Square.

- The district should have well lighted and maintained streets and walks.
- Particular care should be devoted to the main entries and corridors as these will be the first impressions of the downtown area.
- Good, clear signage provides an invitation to enter and spend some time.

Infrastructure

- Overhead electrical and telephone lines may pose a visual distraction from the overall unity of entire Downtown Square. Although costly, relocation of overhead utilities should be considered.
- Curbs should be in good repair and a consistent material along the street. There should be no gaps or areas of uneven elevation along the curb line. At all street intersections there should be ADA compliant curb cuts.

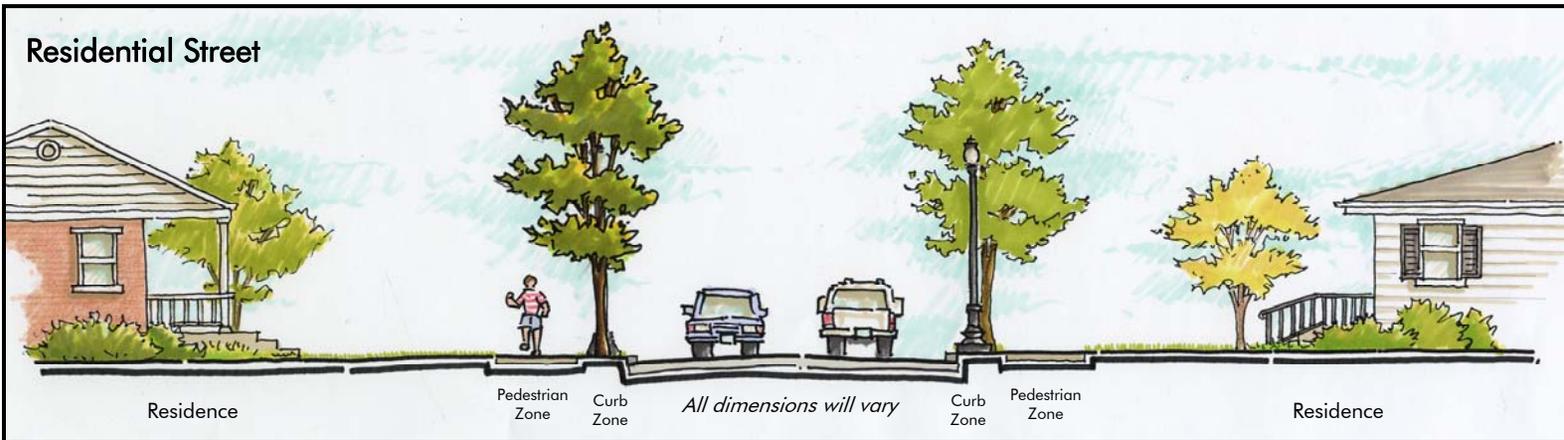


- Poorly working or non-existent storm drains can create an undesirable situation at street intersections when runoff water collects in large pools. This condition makes pedestrian access virtually impossible and must be corrected.
- A public works project should be considered in connection with any other work such as sidewalk, curbs or street pavement to minimize street closings and maximize cost savings through economies of scale.

A representative cross-section of commercial-oriented streets in the DREAM boundary are indicated below. As the City seeks to extend streetscape improvements out Washington, Aid, Main Street, Jefferson Ave, St. Louis, and South Hill, consideration could be given to a long-term plan for the remaining streets in the DREAM boundary save for Summit, Cherry, Worchester, and Grove.

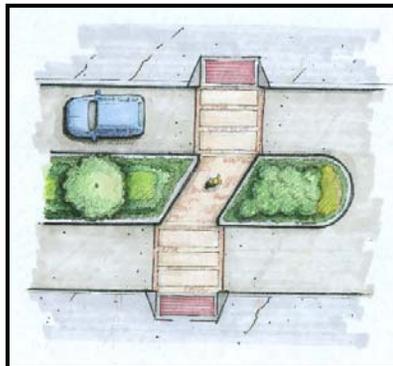
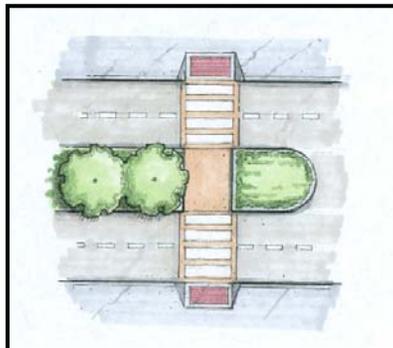


A representative cross-section of residential-oriented streets in the DREAM boundary is indicated below. Streets within the DREAM boundary that this might be representative of include portions of Summit, Cherry, Worchester, and Grove. In addition, this could also be representative of the immediate streets around the downtown where the residential has not yet converted to commercial uses.

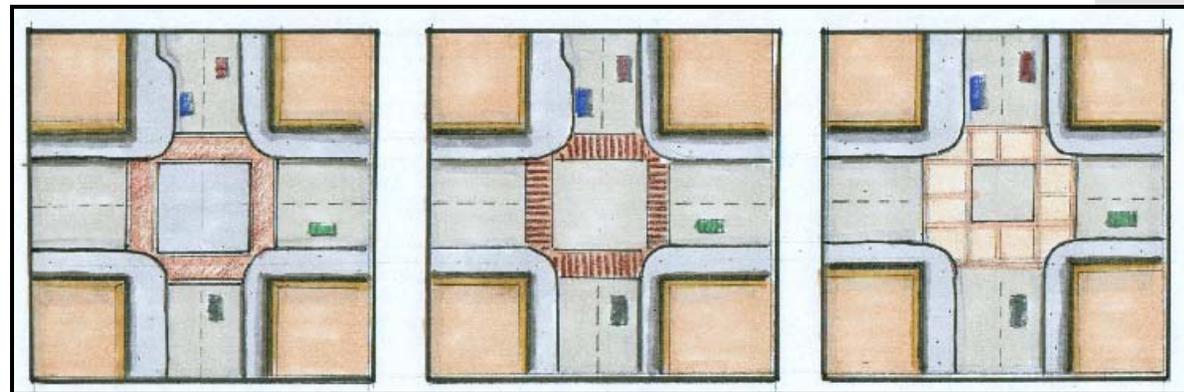


Pedestrian Access and Sidewalks

- A clean, clear and well lit pathway for pedestrians should be provided from any remote parking area to the Downtown Square. This pathway will also need to comply with Federal ADA Accessibility Guidelines. Such guidelines not only include ramps, but warning strips and colors as well. A knowledgeable engineer should be used to ensure compliance.
- Sidewalks should run continuously through an entire block to create a clearly defined pedestrian pathway and minimizing conflicts between people and vehicles.
- All roadway crosswalks should be clearly marked with signage and striping.
- The crosswalk itself can become a downtown design element through the use of decorative pavement or concrete stamping. Such installations require maintenance but are an effective way of providing beautification and safety features.



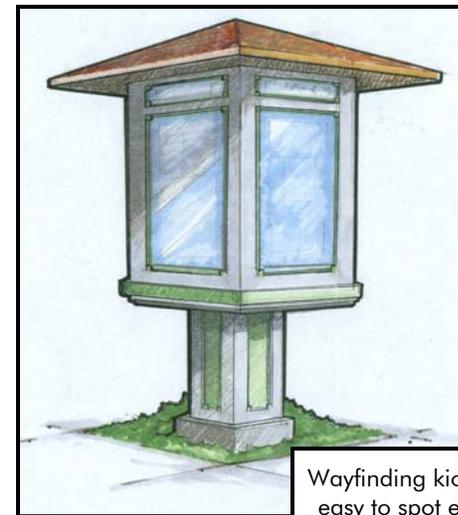
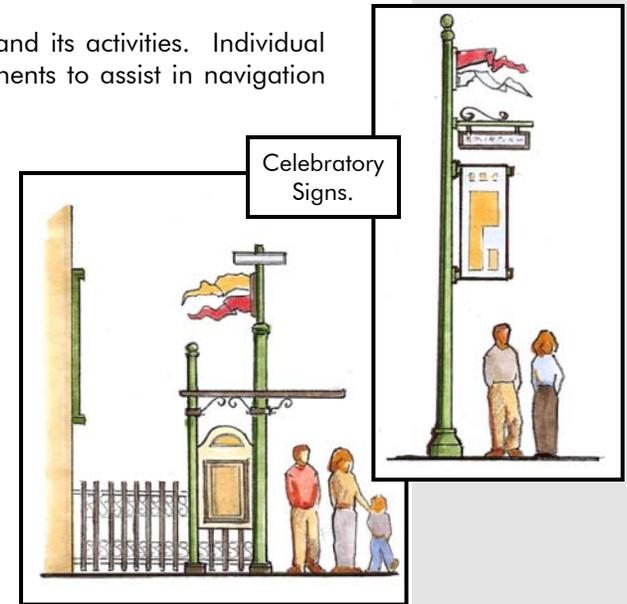
Suggestions for sidewalk alignment and designation.



Signs and Banners

This section is concerned with signage that will identify, define and promote the downtown area and its activities. Individual building and business signage was discussed on page 19 and wayfinding techniques and components to assist in navigation through the area will be addressed in a later section.

- Street name signs should be chosen and installed that are distinctively different from the street name signs located in the rest of the community. This will give a feeling of 'place' to the downtown.
- Street address signs should be uniform throughout the downtown area and prominently displayed. Merchants can be encouraged to adopt the same type of sign.
- The style of the street name and street address signs should complement if not match completely. A 'historic plaque' type can provide a very elegant touch. The style, font, and colors of these signs should be easily read.
- Banners and other temporary signs should be allowed, but restricted as to size, prevalence, and length of display.
- Hung from the light poles, seasonal banners or decorations approved by the City can tie the downtown area together.
- Banners can also add a sense of excitement while providing information about upcoming events or festivals.
- Banners should be well designed and are most effective with a simple design, repeated throughout downtown, minimal lettering, and no sponsor panels.
- The banner brackets used for these banners should be maintained by the City and only for use by the City.
- Banners should be changed on a regular schedule and replaced as needed.
- Balloons, pennants, and other distracting sign novelties should not be allowed in the downtown area.
- Murals must have an artistic component and are allowable by City approval only.



Wayfinding kiosks can be an easy to spot element of the downtown pedestrian system.

Parking and Service Areas

- Adequate parking to support business and retail tenants must be provided. Street parking will accommodate some but not all of the required parking spaces.
- Nearby well lit and landscaped parking lots on previously vacant property is a good solution for additional parking spaces. Parking lots are the chance for a downtown to make a lasting impression.
- Provide planting buffers at the edges of parking lots or use decorative paving to define the site border.
- Include landscape islands throughout the lot. This will improve the aesthetics as well as the stormwater percolation.
- Side or rear locations off the main street are preferred for parking lots.
- A clear and well lit pathway for pedestrians from any parking area in the Downtown Square should be provided.
- The street and alley and sidewalk pavement should be in very good condition with no tripping hazards for pedestrians.
- Crosswalks should be clearly marked and free of landscaping and other obstacles to provide a clear view for traffic.
- Care must also be taken that lots are policed in the evening as they will tend to become a gathering place for youth. This, in and of itself is not a bad thing, but it will make any visitors or evening patrons nervous about using the lot.



Parking Meters

Parking meters can contribute to the overall sense of clutter and so coordination with other elements should be considered. The economic benefits of revenue from parking meters is often offset by the costs to enforce the meter limits and the unseen costs of discouraging customers from parking in downtown. Meters are not recommended, but if they are to be used should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Meter poles should be of the same design as light and signage poles.
- To reduce the number of poles, two adjacent parking spots should share one pole.

Lighting

Lighting of the West Plains Downtown should provide the minimum illumination required by the Missouri Department of Transportation for the applicable road surfaces.

- The sidewalks should be provided with pools of light at a higher level of illumination than the roadway.
- Storefront lighting can add to the pedestrian walkway illumination.
- Street lighting should be on pedestrian height poles and project light down onto the sidewalk not out into second floor windows.
- Lighting should be uniform in style, type, height, and brightness throughout the area.
- The antique replica light poles are not preferred unless it can be shown that they previously existed, however, the style used in the current streetscape plans is attractive and should be continued as a theme throughout the Downtown.
- Lighting poles with brackets for banners or electrical outlets can effectively display temporary or seasonal City approved decorations.
- An overall lighting design strategy should be developed to ensure appropriate lighting levels.
- The lighting plan should not neglect parking areas, rear entrances, and alleys.



Complementary vintage lighting can replace utilitarian 'cobra head' lighting and still provide good illumination.

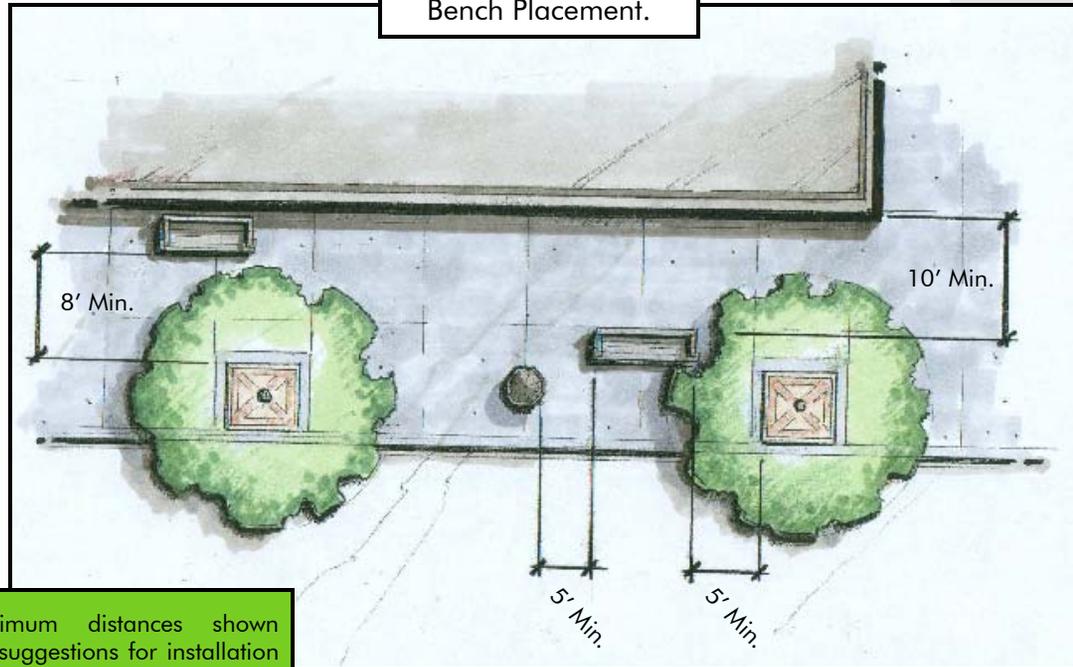
Site Furnishings

- Benches within the streetscape encourage social interaction which will contribute to a successful, dynamic neighborhood.
- Planters and window boxes provide color and can be a volunteer rallying point if maintained by a local club or organization.
- Public art and sculpture can provide an inspirational atmosphere in which people enjoy lingering.
- Trash receptacles provide a place to dispose of potential litter.
- Grouped together, such furnishings will enhance the downtown and provide a gathering place for pedestrians.
- Furnishings should be coordinated with light and sign poles to present a unified look to the streetscape.

The minimum distances shown represent suggestions for installation placement. Actual distances may vary due to site conditions.

Furnishings will invite people to get out of their cars, walk around, and linger in downtown West Plains.

Bench Placement.





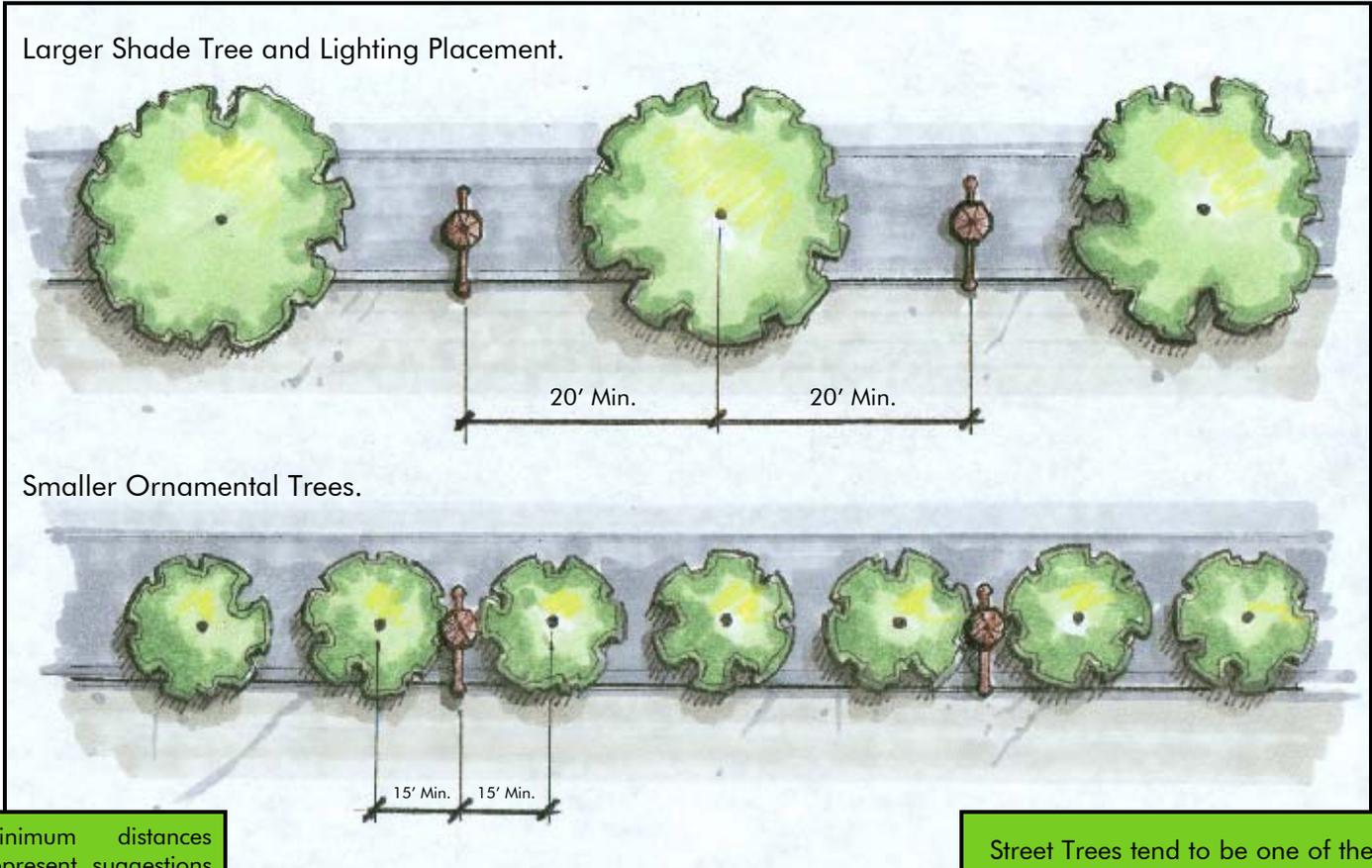
A potential view from Luster Arcade with furnishings in place.

Landscaping

The West Plains Court Square appearance can be further improved by the installation of low maintenance landscaping placed, in particular, around the Courthouse. This location will not adversely effect the businesses. Landscaping will require some maintenance and the City should be prepared to care for this valuable asset to its image from the outset.

- Street trees in front of main street building facades should be avoided. Instead street trees should be planted in front of parking lots or other property without street edge building facades.
- Landscaping spots can also be identified along side streets to complement, but not obstruct building facades.
- If landscaping in front of a business is desired, plants in movable containers should be considered. Containers should never be place in the pedestrian pathway but rather immediately adjacent to buildings or curbs.
- Trees work best when planted in groups or islands where they can thrive on larger volumes of soil.
- Trees and shrubs should be of any hearty variety common to the region but specified at a size which will allow a minimum of seven feet of clearance before any lateral branching begins.
- The fullness of the tree should be considered to avoid excessive roosting of birds.
- Fruiting berries or other intricacies of a trees annual cycle should be a maintenance and clean-up concern.
- Trees should also be chosen for their root growth structure. Care should be taken to select varieties with downward growing roots, not lateral growth that will damage surrounding concrete features. As trees grow, the surrounding tree well, brick, or concrete should also be enlarged as appropriate.
- Shrubs should be massed in groupings of five to seven plants with no more than two different species within a planting bed.
- Locate plantings in traditional areas of the site. For residential buildings, plantings along fences, walks, foundations, and at porch edges are good locations.





The minimum distances shown represent suggestions for installation placement. Actual distances may vary due to site conditions.

Street Trees tend to be one of the most controversial streetscape elements, but they are well worth the trouble. The natural feeling provided by correctly placed, selected, and cared for trees is critical to connecting with pedestrians.

Street Improvements

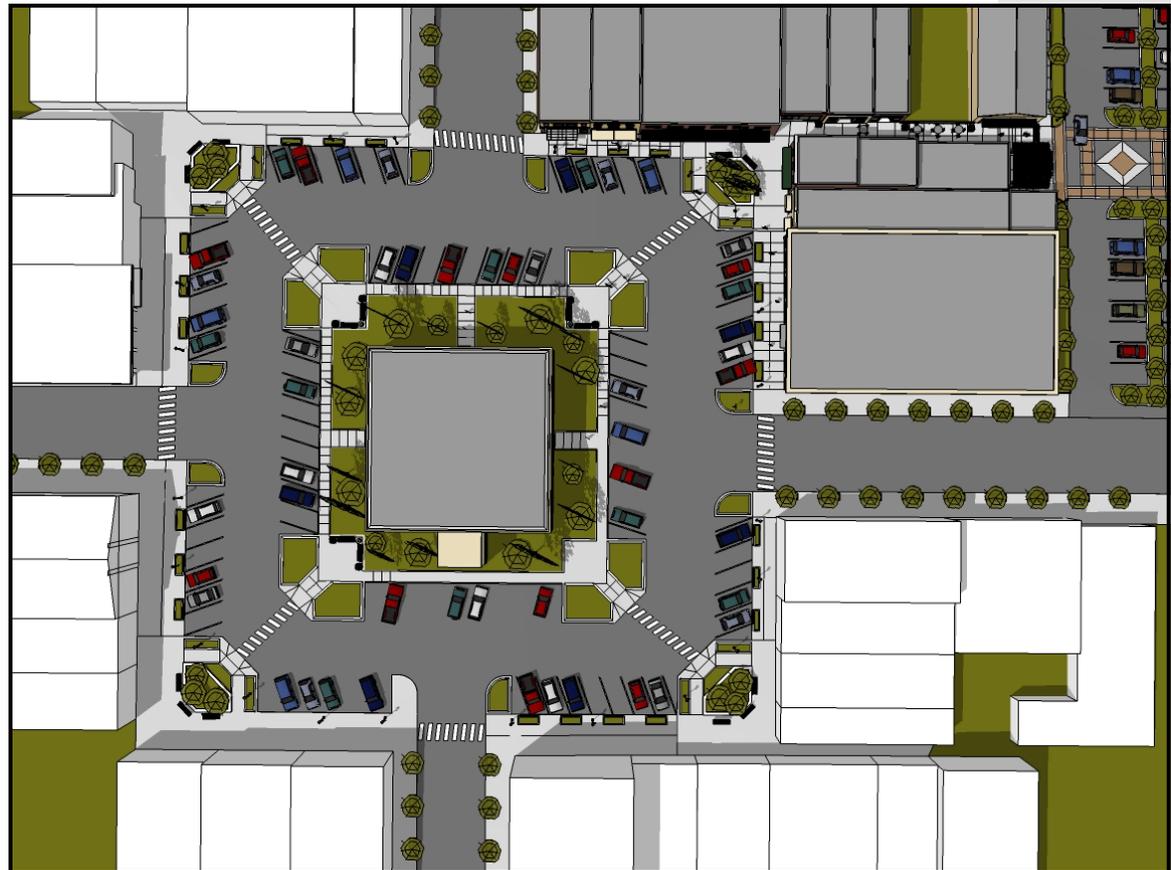
In order to create a friendly pedestrian atmosphere conducive to a civic and retail presence, a major element that needs to be addressed is the vehicular traffic around the square. The existing streets widths are extremely generous and enable a “racetrack mentality”. The streets could easily be thinner and still allow for two lanes of one-way traffic to flow. This would also have a traffic calming effect allowing pedestrians to feel much safer crossing the street as well as quieting the street activity for outdoor strolling and dining. However, special attention must be paid to the unique interaction of the four streets leading into the West Plains Downtown Square. As these streets enter the square they are directly focused on the main element in the square; the Courthouse.

Strengthening the Square

In an effort to strengthen the square the City should give serious thought to changing the existing traffic flow and parking patterns in the four corners of the square. The existing angled parking in these corners negates the use of these corners as strong connection points for pedestrian traffic.

By removing parking in these areas and providing sidewalk and landscaped elements at all four outside corners including sidewalks and landscape elements on the Courthouse side, we can effectively use these corners as crosswalks. This will have the effect of moving pedestrian traffic away from the busy intersection points of their current locations and allows the removal of the existing paved islands which are not functioning.

With the curved curbs and angled parking removed from the four corners of the square, the new landscaped elements can now act as identifiers for each of the four corners of the square. These areas can now function as smaller landscaped courts which lead pedestrians into the attached arcades and their respective merchants and retailers. The landscaped corners are now also capable of retaining water and reducing the amount of stormwater run off.



Additional planters at the edge of sidewalks act as buffers to parked vehicles and help establish a much clearer sidewalk zone. Brick pavers should also be used to more strongly define existing features, like the crosswalks at the midpoints of the block. This strip could be raised to act as a gentle speed bump as well as architecturally define the Courthouse's grand meridian markers (the North/South, East/West orientation lines prevalent in many courthouse designs across the country.)

Trees along the front of retail storefronts are usually an issue of contention by shop owners. The problem of blocking signage, falling leaves, bird droppings and maintenance have led to many trees being removed from these areas. However, by proper selection and placement, colorful ornamental trees will enhance the pedestrian experience tremendously and still allow signage visibility and lower maintenance. In the Summer they provide shade for pedestrians strolling along the sidewalks and, with the right selection, flowering blossoms in the spring. Trees with smaller leaves can be selected to minimize fall cleanup, but still provide colorful autumn foliage. In the Winter, the bare branches can provide support for a magical holiday lighting display.



Curbside planters can enhance any storefront, but will require ongoing maintenance...perhaps by volunteer organizations.

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding Principles

Wayfinding is an indispensable tool for directing travelers to destinations while at the same time creating a positive first impression. The term wayfinding was originally coined by Kevin Lynch in his seminal 1960 book *The Image of the City*. Lynch presented the concept that people use a cognitive map to move through their environment to their destination. Wayfinding develops a system to assist travelers in interpreting the map.

Wayfinding systems have been used for many years in institutions such as colleges and corporate headquarters. As it is commonly recognized today wayfinding helps travelers *find* their *way* to the destination, in this case Downtown. The goal in relation to community planning and specifically to downtown West Plains, is to assist this process in becoming as transparent and seamless as possible. Furthermore, by taking a comprehensive approach in developing the wayfinding system it can reinforce the community's unique identity and sense of place. This can be accomplished through four main aspects that can be controlled and enhanced through appropriate design and building codes:

Architecture:

- Visual clues of buildings and other features of a street aid people in knowing their location and the direction of their destination without the use of signage.
- Strong architecture, such as the Howell County Courthouse, serve as landmarks and orientation points. These points are often destinations as well as starting points and other wayfinding techniques should exploit this aspect.
- Buildings themselves have visual aids that draw our eyes to where we expect an entrance or a shop window to be located.

Sight Lines:

- The motorist will feel most comfortable in maintaining visual contact with his or her destination and will want to make as few direction changes as possible.
- Clean, clear lines down streets at key intersections should be maintained.
- Avoid allowing buildings to encroach or block these lines.
- Repetitive landscaping and furnishings can enhance and draw the eye down these streets, but care must be taken that these items do not obstruct important navigational landmarks.

Lighting:

- Lighting can be used to encourage routes and pathways.
- Warmly lit sidewalks and streets draw the customer onward. Warmly lit storefronts and entrances draw the eye and provide the customer with the information needed to get to the business.
- A repetitive line of lighting can be a very effective navigation tool.
- Poor lighting causes missed information and leaves an unsafe impression.

Signage:

- Uniform signage at important decision points is a critical element of downtown wayfinding.
- Excessive signage will lessen the effectiveness of individual signs. Fewer, easy to read, appropriately placed signs are preferred.

Specific Issues for West Plains will include the motorists' need for clear direction to reach the Missouri State University campus and the West Plains Civic Center.

Wayfinding Components

Wayfinding systems are made up of components that create an arrival sequence to the Downtown. The system consists of common themed signs, of various types that direct travelers to attractions. All too frequently existing wayfinding systems are inadequate. Typical problems with existing wayfinding systems include:

- Lack of accuracy, with arbitrary sign location
- Visual clutter from too many signs and foliage
- Lack of focus in directing traffic to Downtown
- Diffuse allocation of signs, across many “entrances”
- Signs that lack charm, or are standard Department of Transportation issue
- Routes actually direct travelers around Downtown
- Signs are too small and consist of different sizes, colors, and types

A successful wayfinding system is made up of many components that can be utilized in a variety of configurations. Some communities may require only a few of the components or can gradually add components into a complete system. Determining how many of the components a wayfinding system needs, depends upon the size, number and type of Traffic Corridors and Key Transportation Nodes within the system.

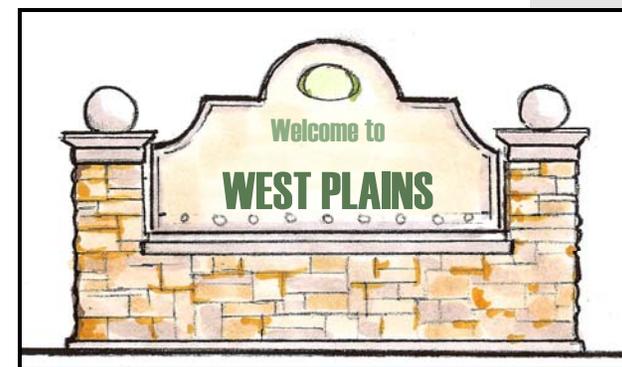
Key Transportation Nodes are significant sites that require directional signage or other wayfinding mechanisms that will assist in the visitors decision making process. These Nodes are typically located at major road intersections or crossings, and have a high amount of traffic relative to the area. Effective Transportation Nodes will not rely just on signage, but on architecture, sightlines, and lighting as well.

Other components of a successful wayfinding system include, but are not limited to:

- Primary Gateway Sign—Serves as the “Welcome” to a visitor, creating the first impression of the community. The sign should be significant, serving as a landmark.
- Traffic & Directional Signs—As unobtrusive and attractive as possible, while still meeting Department of Transportation guidelines for safety. Amenities like parking and public restrooms can usually be enhanced and improved.

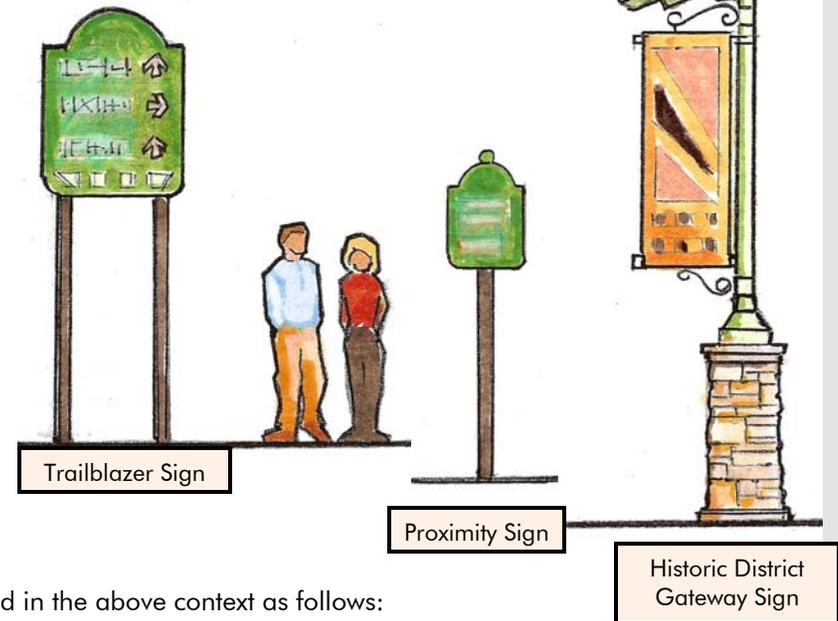


Too many signs decrease the effectiveness of all signs.



- Trailblazer Sign—Utilitarian purpose combined with unique branding and design elements. Attractions to consider as destinations on Trailblazer Signs include; Downtown, Historic Districts, museums, event areas, government offices, parking, colleges/universities, and visitor centers. Signs should be located at or near a key transportation nodes.
- Proximity Signs—In close proximity of the attractions these signs direct visitors to the destination.
- Historic District Gateway Sign—Creates a boundary for the Historic District, should be used within the Historic District Corridor. These signs should reflect the size, scale and character of the architecture within the district.

All signs and banners included in the wayfinding system should have a simple and uniform design. Above all, the signs need to be brief and easy to read with large type face, appropriate coloring, and adequate character spacing. The wayfinding system signs should be unique and stand out in their surroundings. The automobile perspective should be taken when placing signs. The sign guidelines should be developed using the Uniform traffic Control Devices Standard.



Wayfinding Planning Areas

The key planning areas for wayfinding for Downtown West Plains can be described in the above context as follows:

- Court Square—The central component and primary focus of the downtown activity.
 - Key transportation nodes should have the goal of getting visitors to this area. Trailblazer signs should be located near highways 63, Business route 63, and 160.
 - The goal of the wayfinding within the Court Square is to efficiently direct visitors to their destinations.
 - Use of Primary Gateway Signs and Historical District Gateway Signs in this area will let the visitor know they have 'arrived' in the heart of the activity.
 - Directional and amenity signage will also be critical components.
- Broadway / Washington Avenue Entry Corridor—This is typically the route for visitors heading into Downtown West Plains and the Court Square. Highways 63 and Business 63 connect West Plains most directly with the Interstate system. Broadway is the closest and most direct corridor into downtown. This corridor needs to be inviting with simple, clear trailblazer signage that the motorist is approaching downtown. At the intersection of Broadway and Washington should be directional signs for the turn required and Primary Gateway signs.

- Missouri State University Campus—This significant node of activity for West Plains begins just a few blocks Northwest of the Court Square. Visitors to the Campus have a view of second tier commercial facades without much of the historic ornament found on Court Square.
 - With regular student traffic, additional proximity signage should be placed along Jefferson Avenue to allow easy recognition of the University Campus.
 - Trailblazer signage should also be located nearer the highways.
- West Plains Civic Center—This is another important node that is located a few blocks Northeast of Court Square.
 - This signage needs to be clear and easy to route large amounts of traffic into and out of the area during events.
 - Additional signage along the highways should provide key turning points for motorists and trailblazing signage should guide them to the most appropriate parking.
 - Proximity signs should be used and directional signs to encourage and invited pedestrians to walk the short distance from their event at the Center to the Court Square. Exciting rear facades and lighting can also provide this enticement.

Broadway and Washington is a key intersection that is in need of clear signage to invite motorists to turn into downtown.

This entry corridor represents the approach to Courthouse Square and as soon as the turn South is made the visitor should get the feeling that they have 'arrived'.



An inviting tree-lined approach can dramatically enhance this natural vista and build on the topography.

IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendations

This section is intended to provide direction, financial and otherwise, to assist the community in implementing the desired design guidelines developed through the DREAM initiative. It is very likely that some of the following points have been noted in other aspects of the DREAM documentation, such as the Organizational Structure Review. Although some of these ideas may also apply to other DREAM aspects, the discussions in this document will focus on the improvements noted in these design guidelines only. Sustainability of the downtown organizational structure, while critical, is not considered in this document so that the focus can remain on the physical improvements of downtown.

Another assumption made is that the community wants to implement the suggested design guidelines. The DREAM initiative is a unique planning initiative in that it not only sets out plans and goals, but links those plans with the appropriate agencies that can provide funding. A DREAM community is responsible for choosing, initiating, promoting, and ultimately implementing the ideas provided through this program. These recommendations will assume that the officials, residents, and property owners will 'buy in' to the improvements desired by the community.

Accomplishing this 'buy in' includes:

- ⇒ Demonstrating a thorough understanding of the mechanism being proposed
- ⇒ Effectively communicating the benefits to the downtown revitalization effort
- ⇒ Honestly explaining the impact to all residents and property owners
- ⇒ Reinforcing the link between the health of downtown and the overall health of the community
- ⇒ Strategically maintaining visibility and momentum

To create the resources that will ultimately achieve the goal of a successfully revitalized downtown, it is important to understand that additional taxes, districts, or legislation may be required. The benefits created for downtown by these new mechanisms should far outweigh any new costs to the residents, property owners, or consumers.

In addition, the recommendations that follow are not to be considered "stand alone" elements and the community may wish to implement several on the road to revitalization. This approach diversifies the effort and increases the chances of successful programs; it is encouraged.

Short-Term -

- The City should review its code enforcement practices and ordinances to see if adjustments are necessary. Effective practices will include regulations that:
 - ◇ Address more than just safety concerns. This is an appropriate tool to ensure aesthetics as well.
 - ◇ Secure the condition of the downtown structures for longevity. Quality construction practices must be insisted upon.
 - ◇ Promote the conservation and efficient use of resources. "Green" and other energy efficient, innovative building methods should be considered and can be required through codes.
 - ◇ Are firmly enforced. This will demonstrate to future developers that their development risk will be minimized because West Plains will insist on the same quality of structures surrounding their investment property.
 - ◇ Can be flexible if reasonable variations will not compromise quality or other construction aspects. Any governmental process needs to be able to bend for unusual situations.

Short-Term continued -

- The City has been successful in obtaining grant funding for aspects of downtown. Efforts should be expanded to include foundation grants and programs provided by large companies with locations in West Plains. Coca-Cola and Wal-mart are two examples.
- Downtown West Plains Inc. (DTWP) and the City might also have some benefit by looking for partnerships to improve Downtown safety and access with companies such as Air Evac, Ozark Medical Center, and the University. These entities might be interested in assisting streetscape plans that improved ADA accessibility for example.
- DTWP or the Greater West Plains Chamber of Commerce should organize a seminar series aimed at area contractors and downtown property owners concerning appropriate restoration procedures for downtown buildings. The main speaker can be obtained from, or suggested by the State Historic Preservation Office, the City can present these guidelines, and a business, perhaps a bank, could sponsor lunch.
- The City should consider applying for Preserve America. Preserve America is another initiative that, if continued to be funded, is an option for grant funding for 'preservation minded' communities.
- The DTWP should work with the City to develop a sponsorship program whereby individuals or businesses can "buy" specific street furnishings for public use. A catalog can be printed that will show the costs of items, which should include installation and a plaque with a message from the sponsor. The City should do all installations and will maintain ownership. This could evolve into a formal "Adopt-a-spot" program whereby the burden to maintain landscaping and other maintenance can be adopted by civic groups and clubs throughout the downtown area. The City should supervise, but allow the volunteers freedom to install flora, remove litter, and do other minor repairs and clean-up on a quarterly basis. The City should post a plaque indicating the adopting group at the spot and the Chamber and DTWP should recognize the groups in newsletters and other opportunities.
- DTWP and the City should cooperatively work to identify and recognize outstanding design installations in the Downtown area. If a prize can be offered, a plaque created, and other local recognition and praise provided competition may result which can be a great motivator as property owners revitalize their buildings or grounds. This type of voluntary program should require strict adherence to the guidelines the City develops.
- The City should maintain and enhance funding for code enforcement personnel and training. In particular code enforcement should learn to assess the structural deterioration and dangers that lead to building collapse. Implementation of improvements to several rear facades is a critical issue.

Long-Term -

- In addition to adjusting current codes and ordinances by utilizing the suggested guidelines and the guidelines it has recently developed, the City should consider forming a new district that will link these guidelines to the entire downtown area, not just the Courthouse Historic District. This can be accomplished by implementing a downtown zoning district or a special incentive district.
 - ⇒ A zoning district is implementable by the City and more flexible, but will not have any funding attached.
 - ⇒ A special incentive district such as a Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Community Improvement District (CID), or a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) is a very compelling method to tie in the design guidelines with the funding for the improvements to be made. These districts will require in depth analysis, property owner support, and additional taxes or fees. This method will create sustainable funding.
- The City should also consider applying for Certified Local Government status. This status will require putting procedures in place for guidelines and a preservation commission, but specific standards are left up to the community to define. CLG status will allow the community to apply for grant funds that are not open to non-CLG communities.
- The City could form an Architectural Review Board to review all construction and ensure that these guidelines are implemented. Such a procedure will require strict adherence to State Statutes concerning appeals and property rights.
- DTWP should expand and enhance its efforts for multi-year funding. As the organization stabilizes, more opportunities for individuals and businesses to make donations to DTWP will be available if DTWP can show the benefits of those donations. Dynamic programs to solicit for donations should be developed.
- The City should include a study of traffic patterns, specifically as they relate to downtown visitors and Highway 63 through traffic. From this study may emerge a plan and implementation steps to be included in the comprehensive plan.
- The City should consider developing and implementing a community-wide wayfinding plan along with any transportation improvements. Major wayfinding components should wait until the transportation plans are decided upon, but others should be implemented as soon as possible to help increase downtown appeal.
- In addition to any enhancements to the code enforcement department, the City should develop an occupancy inspection program. This program could be triggered by change of occupancy which would be easily tracked by City utility service starts and disconnects.
- The City should also consider a violation reporting system to local banks and insurance companies. Property owners with lengthy lists of code violations should be well documented and perhaps publicized.

- There is outstanding potential with the Arcades in West Plains. This potential will require resources to fully utilize. West Plains should be diligent about finding and allocating future funding to any planning efforts that identify improvements for the Arcades. In addition, the City may want to consider special zoning to allow only retail uses in the Arcade buildings.
- Street art can be a unique addition that would stand out in West Plains visitor's minds. The corners of Court Square near the Arcade entrances would be an ideal location to introduce such art to the Downtown and may become a meeting place. Maintenance considerations will apply.



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ATTACHMENT 1

Attachment 1 - Missouri Financing Mechanism Matrix
Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri
West Plains, Missouri

Name	Eligible Uses of Funds	Formation	Powers & Limitations	Governance	Borrowing Authority	Sources of Revenue
Community Improvement District (CID) (Ch. 67, R.S.Mo.)	Public capital improvements; Private capital improvements (located in a blighted area); Special services	By governing body of City, on petition of majority owners by assessed value or number	Petition for district formation specifies: area and duration of district; maximum rate of taxes; method and maximum rate of assessment; types of services; types of improvements; maximum borrowing authority; eligible uses of funds	Program managed by district board, with annual report to City; Board to consist of 5-30 members, appointed by City or elected by "qualified voters" of district, depending on petition; petition may identify original members; annual levy of taxes/assessments set by Board (within petition limits); District may be terminated by City, upon majority of property owners, by value and per capita	Board may issue obligations payable solely from district revenues and assets pledged; District obligations are not general obligations of the district, unless approved by supermajority of voters in district	Special assessments approved by petition or any reasonable method of assessment; Taxes on real property and/or business license or approved by qualified voters; Authorizes different property classes and levy rates for each class based on level of benefit
Special Business District (SBD) (Ch. 71, R.S.Mo.)	Public capital improvements; special services	By governing body of City, on petition by one or more property owners	City makes all decisions for district	Advisory board of commissioners, with final authority in City governing body	District may issue general obligation bonds, with approval of supermajority of voters of the district; District may issue revenue bonds to finance revenue-producing facilities, payable from revenue generated by those facilities	Real property taxes with maximum of \$0.85 per \$100 assessed valuation and approved by qualified voters and property owners; Business license taxes if City already imposes tax on businesses licenses, then additional tax cannot exceed 50% of current tax and approved by qualified voters
Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) (Ch. 67, R.S.Mo.)	Public capital improvements	By governing body of City, upon either approval of voters in district or petition signed by 2/3 of owners of property in district by area	Election ballot or petition for district formation must specify general nature of improvement, estimated cost, boundaries, method of assessment; City makes all other decision, including classifications and assessment methods	Governed by City	City must issue general obligation bonds to pay for improvements within district if special assessments are inadequate	Special assessments only; Assessment on per lineal foot or square foot or any other reasonable assessment method; Approved by vote of people in district or petition of property owners
Tax Increment Financing (99.88-.865 R.S.Mo.)	Public capital improvements; property assembly (including acquisition and demolition of buildings); costs or rehabilitation, reconstruction, or repair or remodeling of existing buildings and fixtures; relocation costs	By governing body of City; requires TIF Commission review and public hearing	Requires adoption of Redevelopment Plan which describes the project, redevelopment project costs, sources of funds to pay costs, type and term of sources of funds to pay costs, type and term of obligations, cost-benefit analysis, eligibility analysis and other findings per the TIF Act; must pass "but for" test	Governed by City; Incremental revenues allocated to Special Allocation Fund	Obligations secured by Special Allocation Fund and may be issued by the City; Obligations shall not be a general obligation of the political subdivision and cannot exceed 23 years; Obligations may only be payable out of any funds or properties other than those specifically pledged as security	Special Allocation Fund collects local incremental revenues generated within the district; 100% PILOTS and 50% EATS are captured by the Special Allocation Fund
Community Development Block Grant Funds	Funds a variety of economic development activities, including site acquisition, assessment, demolition, remediation, public works and support the development of affordable housing	Contingent on annual appropriation by HUD to Metropolitan cities and urban counties (entitlement communities) or State for distribution to non-entitlement communities	Submit a Consolidated Plan, annual action plan, and certifications to HUD. If you are a non-entitlement community, an individual or organization, apply to the appropriate city, state or county for funding. Funding restricted by program guidelines and availability of funding.	Entitlement communities or the State receive entitlement funds from HUD that may be used for eligible activities, such as infrastructure. Non-entitlement communities compete for funding via application process to State.	N/A	Funding based on project need, available funding, and program limitations. No match is required, but local in-kind and/or cash matching funds are encouraged.
Missouri Downtown Economic Stimulus Act (MODESA)	Certain public improvements; Financing; Relocation costs; Property assembly	Governed by local Downtown Development Authority (DDA) appointed by mayor or chief financial officer of municipality; MODESA application reviewed by Missouri Development Finance Board (MDFB); Combined local and state approval	Applies to "major initiative projects only; must pass "but for" test; project must be located in a "blighted" area; Financial threshold based on new jobs and localities population; local development approvals required; DDA has statutory powers to borrow funds, own property, etc., Need MDFB approval from state participation in funding	Governed by City or Downtown Development Authority	Obligations secured by Special Allocation Fund and may be issued by the City, DDA, or MDFB; Obligations shall not be a general obligation of the political subdivision, DDA, MDFB or the state and cannot exceed 35 years; Obligations may only be payable out of any funds or properties other than those specifically pledged as security	Special Allocation Fund collects local incremental revenues generated within the district; 100% PILOTS and 50% EATS are captured by the Special Allocation Fund; With MDFB approval the Special Allocation Fund may also collect new revenue generated in the form of 3% state sales tax and a 2% portion of the state income tax withholding

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Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri
West Plains, Missouri

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Transportation Development Districts (TDD) (238.200-238.275 R.S.Mo.)	Transportation infrastructure	By City or County, by voter petition, local transportation authority petition, property owner petition; must be approved by a majority of those voting	Project improvements shall not be under the control and jurisdiction of a local transportation authority (City) while the TDD retains control and jurisdiction. Power to acquire, sell and convey property subject to local authority approval.	Program managed by district board, with MODOT and Local Authority oversight; Board may consist of at least 5 nor more than 15 persons with one MODOT and one or more Local Authority advisors; Election by voters or Owners require approval of special assessment, tax or funding method	District may contract and incur liabilities, may borrow money and issue bonds, notes and other obligations; May issue bonds payable from its revenues but may not exceed 40 years	District may levy a property tax not to exceed \$0.10 per \$100 assessed valuation or sales tax not to exceed 1%; District may levy tolls or special assessments for improvements benefiting the project
Missouri Historic Preservation Tax Credits (253.545-.559 R.S.Mo.) (S.B. 1, 1997) (S.B. 827, 1998)	Hard and soft costs of the rehabilitation of buildings on the National Register of Historic Places or in a historic district which is a National Register Certified Historic District	N/A	Any person or entity incurring costs for rehabilitation of eligible property which is a certified historic structure or structure in a certified historic district shall be entitled to a State income tax credit of 25% of the cost of rehabilitation, provided the rehabilitation costs exceed 50% of the total basis in the property and the rehabilitation meets historic standards	Requires project approval by the State Historic Preservation Office and funding approval by the State Department of Economic Development (DED)	N/A	Excess tax credits may be carried back for three years and forward for 10 years or until fully used; Taxpayers eligible for such credits may transfer, sell (monetize) or assign credits
Brownfield Redevelopment Program (447.700-447.718 R.S.Mo.)	Voluntary brownfield remediation	N/A	Project must anticipate creating at least 10 jobs or retaining at least twenty-five workers and must be found to focus its redevelopment effort on an eligible site. Completion of remediation subject to the State Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency	Eligibility for an entity is contingent on being accepted into the Missouri Voluntary Cleanup Program; Entity can then apply to State Department of Economic Development (DED) for financial assistance; DED may approve incentive package that is limited to the least amount necessary to achieve remediation or incur a positive net benefit. Local jurisdictional participation may be required.	N/A	Incentives may include tax credits; tax exemptions; grants; loan guarantees, or loans; once appropriated, these funds can be used to purchase or to offset the purchase of materials, supplies, equipment, or other things related to the redevelopment of the site as approved
Urban Redevelopment Corporations (Ch. 353, R.S. Mo.)	Clearance, replanning, reconstruction or rehabilitation of blighted areas, and the construction of such structures as may be appropriate	Incorporation with the Secretary of State, Application to the City for authorization of a Redevelopment Plan; Requires public hearing and the granting of rights and powers by City ordinance consistent with Ch. 353 provisions	Corporation can only operate in an area with a Redevelopment Plan. Powers of the corporation must be authorized by the local jurisdiction, including the authorization for tax abatement. The provisions of the general corporation law apply unless in conflict with Ch. 353.	A corporation that has been organized to serve a public purpose.	Any Urban Corporation may borrow funds and secure the repayment thereof by mortgage which shall be a lien upon no other real property except that forming the whole or a part of a single development area.	The City may authorize a 100% abatement of taxes in years 1-10 and a 50% abatement of taxes in years 11-25 on properties owned by the Corporation; the Corporation may accept grants or loans from government agencies
Tax Reimbursement Agreements (Ch. 43, R.S. Mo.)	Publicly owned infrastructure	Redevelopment Agreement between the City and Developer; Approved by ordinance	May require all contracts for work to be subject to public bids; Only City's tax revenue is utilized;	City oversees project	N/A	Incremental increase in the City's property taxes and as much as 100% of the City's incremental increase in sales and utility taxes, depending upon municipal charter limitations

