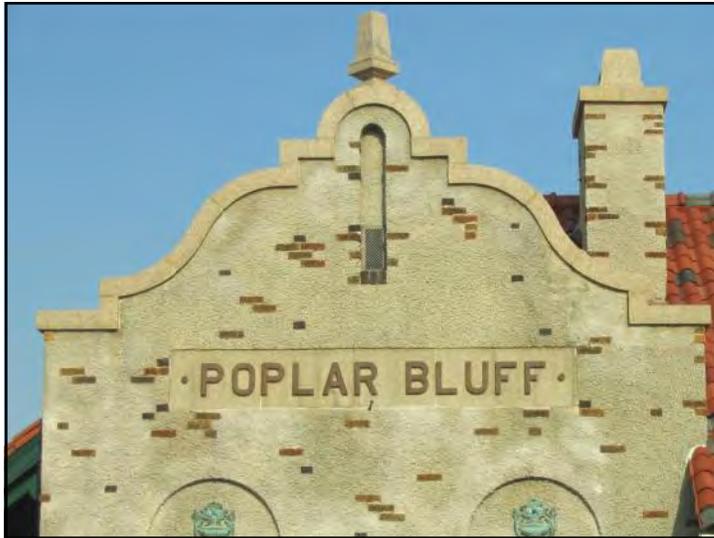


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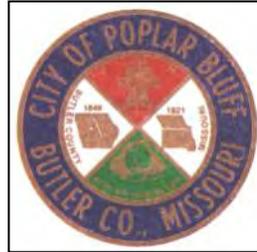


STREETSCAPE AND
BUILDING
DESIGN GUIDELINES

JULY 2010



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR MISSOURI (DREAM) PROGRAM SPONSORS:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 History and Heritage

The history of Poplar Bluff is very colorful and deeply rooted in transportation. The early settlers built camps along the Natchitoches Trail west of the current City. During the organization of Butler County, residents chose to locate the County Seat in the center of the County along the Black River. The Black River was an important resource and navigable waterway, in particular to the logging industry in the area. Poplar Bluff was so named for the trees that proliferated along the well traveled river. By the end of 1850 the town was established and the first Court House constructed in 1855. Poplar Bluff was incorporated in 1870 and currently has a population of about 17,000 people.

The decision to improve accessibility and put transportation first as an important aspect of the City would become a common thread throughout the history of “The Bluff”.

As river travel lessened in the early 1900’s, the railroads arrived and Poplar Bluff found itself as a railroad town with passenger service to such major cities as St. Louis and Little Rock. Amtrak services Poplar Bluff today and two historic train depots are located Downtown. As the rise of the automobile occurred, Poplar Bluff was not to be left out. The early decision to install brick paved streets was an initiative mostly paid for by the Downtown merchants in 1909. This was the first public-private streetscape installed in Poplar Bluff and suggested that public improvements were an important investment. Former plans also included an entryway arch on South Main Street, although not constructed.

A parking garage was constructed in the 1960’s on South Broadway, although it is largely underutilized today. Poplar Bluff and Butler County have also played an important role in constructing a four-lane highway



Existing beveled brick in
Downtown Poplar Bluff

from the City to St. Louis. These efforts, although more modern than brick streets, are further evidence of The Bluff's prioritization of accessibility and willingness to embrace the latest transportation development.

Downtown Poplar Bluff boasts many multiple story buildings with beautiful architecture. Some of the buildings were significantly damaged by a tornado in 1927 and, in many cases, this damage is still evident. The brick streets are still in place as are, of course, the river and rail lines. Arguably, Poplar Bluff is still a "River Town" and a "Railroad Town". The vibrant heritage of the logging industry and river, railroad, and early automobile travel, must not be overlooked and can be emphasized by the DREAM program.

One has to wonder, pondering this history..."What will Downtown Poplar Bluff do next?"

1.2 Background

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 cumulative effect on the entire architectural environment. Original glass storefronts were replaced with smaller, economical windows and entrances. Upper facade windows were removed or completely covered. Building cornices and ornaments were eliminated in an attempt to "clean-up" the old looking façade. Historic character and qualities were replaced with new and featureless materials and design. In some cases, entire buildings have been demolished and replaced with new buildings that fail to account for the rhythm and scale of the surrounding buildings and street. The public elements of the streetscape were not spared either. Historic light poles and fixtures were replaced with out-of-scale "cobra-head" fixtures and poles. These changes have accumulated over the years and the sense of the main street community space was lost.

The physical layout of the core of Downtown Poplar Bluff is framed by the Black River on the East and South, and by the major thoroughfares of 5th Street on the West and Pine Street (State Highway 60) on the North.

Often a central feature found in many downtowns, the county courthouse serves as a hub of activity. In Downtown Poplar Bluff, the Butler County Courthouse serves as that hub, but is located on the eastern edge of the Downtown core overlooking the Black River. This location lessens its focus as a central point or “square” in Downtown.

Although Poplar Bluff may lack the central focus of the Courthouse, it has numerous other activity generators spread throughout Downtown. The Black River Coliseum, Library, Commercial Historic District, Railroad Museum, Rodger’s Theatre, and Post Office ensure activity. These dispersed activity centers make traffic flow and signage critical issues. In addition, at the center of Downtown is a parking garage that interrupts Poplar Street at Broadway.

Many towns have lost significant Main Street buildings, but this is not the case in Poplar Bluff. Numerous multiple story buildings exist in Downtown. However City zoning codes are resulting in severe underutilization of the building stock, particularly on the upper floors.

Numerous factors must be addressed, through both public infrastructure investments and private property improvements, to help Poplar Bluff strengthen its Downtown core.

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2.0 STREETSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

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. The DREAM Initiative proposes an organized streetscape with combined lighting, site furnishings, and wayfinding signage. The Streetscape will result in a more efficient and user-friendly environment for visitors to Downtown Poplar Bluff.

A review of existing conditions show no previous overall Streetscape attempt. Original brick streets are uncovered notably on Vine, Broadway, Cedar, and 2nd Streets and have numerous maintenance issues. Sidewalks are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) or Proposed Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) and are often in poor shape. Trees are planted near the intersections of Main with Vine, Cedar, and Poplar Streets. The Butler County Courthouse and some of the public parking lots have existing landscaping. There are landscaping attempts by private property owners typically in the form of planters in front of storefronts. The existing improvements however, lack uniform streetscape elements such as site furnishings, decorative lighting, and wayfinding signs.

Recent efforts have been made by the Poplar Bluff Historical Preservation Commission to initiate streetscape improvements by the development of a Streetscape Concept and Implementation Plan. This Streetscape Implementation Plan is focused on the Downtown Commercial Historic District and can be found in its entirety in the **Appendix on page 103**. The Streetscape Implementation Plan is integrated into the DREAM Design Guidelines.

Additionally, the streetscape will focus on two distinct street types: the Major Arterial; and the Downtown Street. In general, the Major Arterial Streets exist to move people through Downtown and Downtown Street's exist to move people within Downtown.



Existing streetscape conditions in Downtown Poplar Bluff

2.1 Design Coordination

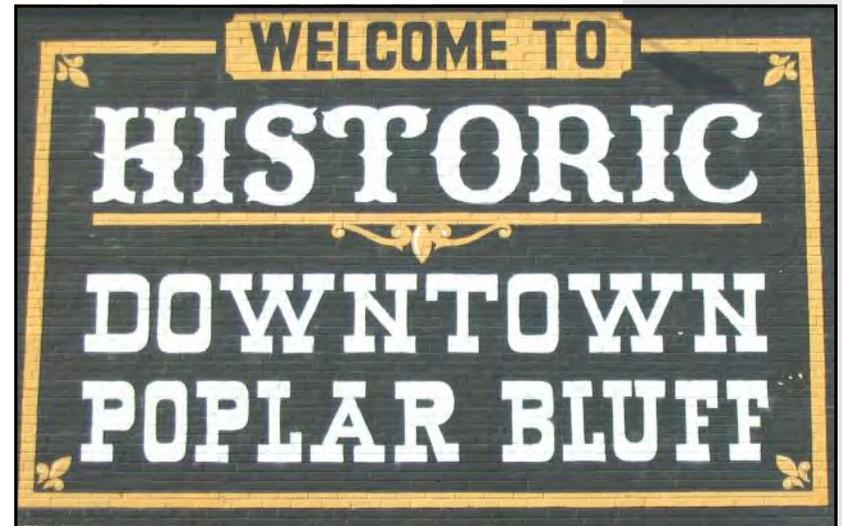
An overall design approach to Downtown Poplar Bluff will create an atmosphere that pulls together the buildings, streets, parking areas, public spaces, and pedestrian walkways into a pleasing experience that encourages visitors to explore the area. A downtown can, and should, display a sense of order and rhythm through the repetition of design elements on buildings and street furnishings. Other efforts occurring in Downtown Poplar Bluff must be supported by any new design elements.

The DREAM Streetscape Guidelines found within this report provide general concepts regarding public spaces and fixtures, propose a detailed wayfinding system, and discuss several projects for implementation.

As previously noted, the design efforts of the Poplar Bluff Historical Preservation Commission include the development of a Streetscape Implementation Plan found in the **Appendix**. Of particular note in the Appendix, is the proposed streetscape concept Alternative A found on pages **A-34 and A-35**.

With the development of the Streetscape Implementation Plan, the Preservation Commission has expanded their efforts beyond the buildings in the Historic District and provided input on streetscape elements. The accepted alternative includes elements proposed to be replicated throughout Downtown Poplar Bluff, not just in the Historic District. The DREAM boundary encloses the Historic District completely, yet the Historic District does not appear to be substantially different from the non-historic district area in the DREAM boundary. Therefore, the design elements identified for the Local Historic District, particularly the Streetscape elements, are proposed to be continued throughout the DREAM area.

Any variances due to newer construction, such as the area around the Black River Coliseum, should complement and visibly connect the newer construction to the Historic District. This will be accomplished by integrating some of the design elements into the newer construction.



Mural on 5th Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

In addition, other design issues and elements of aesthetically pleasing downtowns must be addressed in Downtown Poplar Bluff, including:

- Exposed brick streets are an incredible design asset and should be retained wherever possible. The brick streets will, however, require improvements and special attention to maintenance.
- Many sidewalks will need replacement and updating to current Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) or the Proposed Right-Of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG). Ideally, overhead power lines can be buried as sidewalks are reconstructed (Page A-24).
- Enhanced, decorative, lighting throughout Downtown (Page A-22).
- Clear signage with a consistent theme at key intersections is critical (Page A-23).
- Landscaping and other street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles should be installed (Pages A-26 and A-27).

Without exception, all of the physical, public owned elements of Downtown must be maintained in top condition. Elements should be reviewed on a regular basis and repairs or replacements made as timely as resources allow. There is no way to avoid the maintenance costs required by a physically improved Downtown, but Poplar Bluff cannot afford to let Downtown continue in its current state of decline. A commitment must be made to enhance Downtown and keep it that way.

These Streetscape improvements will help unite Downtown Poplar Bluff, promote pedestrian activity, and dispel negative safety, parking, and traffic perceptions. Public Streetscape enhancements will demonstrate to private property owners that the City is an investment partner with them in the rebirth of Downtown Poplar Bluff.

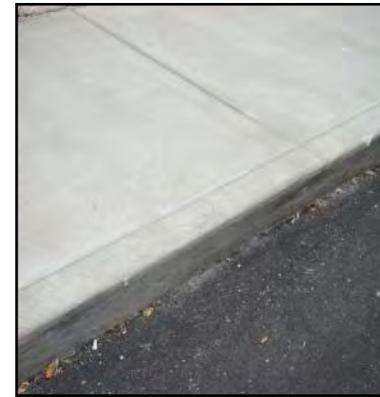


Existing Conditions of Brick Streets in
Downtown Poplar Bluff

2.2 Infrastructure

Downtown cannot function without intact infrastructure, but this does not imply infrastructure should just be functional. The City should view infrastructure as a design element that can be enhanced aesthetically for the benefit of residents, visitors, merchants, and property owners.

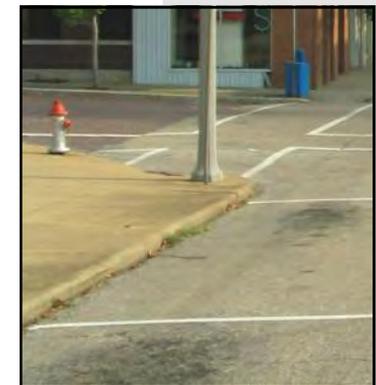
- Overhead electric and telephone lines may pose a visual distraction from the overall unity of Downtown. Although costly, relocation of overhead utilities should be considered, especially with each new development/redevelopment project (Page A-28).
- Curbs should be in good repair and constructed of 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 ADAAG or PROWAG compliant curb cuts.
- Existing street markers are unique in appearance and should be maintained.
- Poorly working 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.
- Street improvements such as pavement, curbs, or sidewalks should be coordinated at the same time as public works projects to minimize street closings and costs.
- New or replacement curb and gutter should be vertical curb design as seen in the upper right photo on this page.



New vertical curbing sample



Existing curb conditions in Downtown Poplar Bluff



2.3 Street Improvements

As noted, brick streets are a unique feature in Downtown Poplar Bluff. While brick requires different maintenance techniques, there is recent evidence that it is more durable than more common materials. The aesthetic value of a brick street cannot be matched, and the heritage and history behind Poplar Bluff's streets should be maintained and promoted.

Recently the brick portions of the main artery of 5th Street have been paved with asphalt. In addition, the brick under Main Street from Pine to Cherry has not been uncovered.

Shown here is a page from the DREAM Map Reference Handbook created during the Land Use, Building, and Infrastructure Survey task that depicts the existing brick paved streets in the DREAM boundary.

In order to create a unique pedestrian atmosphere, it is recommended that, in general, the City of Poplar Bluff seek to uncover the brick streets and properly maintain all exposed brick streets.



The following pages include photos of existing conditions and

recommendations for each street within the DREAM boundary.

2nd Street

- The section of this street on the North side of Pine is brick but covered. If possible, this portion should be uncovered to help tie Government offices located here to the rest of Downtown.
- 2nd Street on the South side of Pine is uncovered and should remain so, but is in need of maintenance.
- The section South of the railroad tracks is a gravel road servicing the rail yard farther South and the beauty school. As improvements are planned for the riverfront area, the utilization and necessity of this section will require review.

Main Street

- Main Street is currently brick North of Pine Street and paved to the South where it sees a somewhat higher traffic flow than other Downtown streets. The South portion of Main Street is also one-way from Pine. The brick under Main Street to the South could be uncovered and this will help reclaim the street for Downtown Poplar Bluff's visitors, pedestrians, and merchants. The brick streets will promote a local Downtown Street image and help calm traffic.
- If uncovering existing brick isn't economically feasible, there may be some streetscape elements that can still bring the street back to the storefronts and pedestrians.
- To be addressed in the DREAM Strategic plan; Main Street could likely be returned to two-way traffic.



2nd Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff



Main Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Broadway Street

- The section of Broadway North of Pine is critical to the Rodger’s Theatre and should be uncovered to promote the pedestrian atmosphere at that location. Patrons of the Rodger’s should feel they are Downtown, though they may be separated from the core by Pine Street / Highway 60 traffic.
- The remainder of Broadway is exposed brick, and should remain so, but has some serious maintenance issues. These issues need to be addressed and the street kept in good shape with ongoing maintenance.
- To be addressed in the DREAM Strategic Plan; Broadway could likely be returned to two-way traffic.
- The Southern terminus of Broadway near the depot entrance and railroad tracks is an important pedestrian location due to future improvements along the riverfront.

Moran Street

- This street serves as an alley and service area. It is currently concrete and has never had a brick base.
- Moran can be an important access as the rear facades of buildings in the Commercial Historic District are improved. The area near the Railroad Museum, the Coliseum parking lot, and potentially the exterior of the Post Office may be improved in the future. Moran Street should be reconstructed.



Broadway Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff



Moran Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

5th Street

- 5th Street has been recently paved and is an important traffic artery. There are stop lights located at the intersections of 5th with both Pine & Vine Streets, although the Vine Street light is a flashing red light only. 5th Street should remain paved and improved to handle the traffic of the Coliseum.
- The City should plan to reconstruct 5th from Cedar to Pine as concrete to match the section in front of the Coliseum. The underlying brick could be salvaged for other street projects elsewhere in Downtown.
- Improvements to 5th Street need to tie in to the design elements of the smaller brick streets.
- The City should also consider the corridor for potential redevelopment. The traffic signal at Vine serves only to slow traffic and might be more effective at Poplar or Cedar Streets, making the Post Office property a potential redevelopment site.

Oak Street

- Oak Street lies to the North of and parallels Pine Street. Oak connects the Rodger's Theatre, Library, Justice Center, and City Hall. Oak Street should be uncovered and improved as a brick street to help tie in the institutional nature of the area North of Pine with the core of Downtown.



5th Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff



Oak Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Pine Street / State Highway 60

- Enhancements to Pine Street should focus on improved aesthetics, traffic calming, wayfinding, and visibility. However, as a State Highway, no surface changes are proposed.



Pine Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Vine Street

- Vine Street runs from the Western edge of the DREAM boundary to a bridge across the Black River on the East. Vine Street is uncovered brick and should be maintained as such.



Vine Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Poplar Street

- Poplar Street runs from the Western edge of the DREAM boundary to the railroad tracks and is interrupted at Broadway by the City parking garage. Poplar is uncovered brick only at the approach to the parking garage from Main Street and this is possibly the worst section of brick street in the Downtown. This street should be reconstructed.
- Poplar Street should be uncovered to expose the brick from 5th to 2nd Streets. The section West of 5th Street is primarily residential and could remain covered.



Poplar Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Cedar Street

- Cedar Street runs from the Western boundary to 2nd Street and has intermittent areas of brick.
- The Eastern portion from 5th Street should be exposed and maintained as a brick surface as it runs through Downtown.
- West of 5th Street on the North side of the Coliseum could remain covered in the residential areas.



Cedar Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Maple Street

- Maple Street within the boundary consists of one small section between Moran and Broadway. It is currently exposed brick and should be maintained as such, however it is another portion of brick street badly in need of repair.



Maple Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Cherry Street

- Cherry Street runs from the Western edge of the DREAM boundary to Broadway and is paved throughout. The portion west of Moran Street services the parking areas for the Coliseum and could remain paved.
- The section from Moran Street to Broadway, however, represents the entrance to Downtown and should be made attractive to visitors of the Coliseum. This street should be reconstructed as brick and an archway included to beckon visitors. This will be the beginning of an inviting pathway into the Downtown from the parking area.



Cherry Street in Downtown Poplar Bluff

Park Avenue Area

- Park Avenue in the DREAM boundary consists of two sections each on either side of the railroad tracks. The Western section from 5th to Broadway is an area used like Cherry Street by the parking areas and should remain paved.
- The Eastern section of Park Avenue runs from the railroad tracks to 2nd Street and is an access for the rail yard farther South. The utilization of this road is dependant upon future plans for the park and Black River.

In addition to the above street recommendations, there are numerous access alleys in Downtown Poplar Bluff that require maintenance. The entrances and exits into the nearby alleys for the parking garage make it a very uninviting experience. Alleyways could be asphalt paved as they typically do not disrupt the Downtown atmosphere, but they still must be maintained in top condition, regardless of the surfacing.



Alleyway Conditions in Downtown Poplar Bluff

2.4 Accessibility

The U.S. Access Board is an independent Federal agency that has been established to monitor and issue updated accessibility guidelines for new or altered facilities covered by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). These major civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and establish design criteria for the construction or alteration of both public sector facilities and private sector facilities for public and commercial use. These guidelines address new construction and alterations and are referred to as the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines or ADAAG. A recent addition the Proposed Right-Of-Way Accessibility Guidelines or PROWAG is meeting acceptance by various federal agencies and will soon expand upon the ADAAG standard for public improvements.

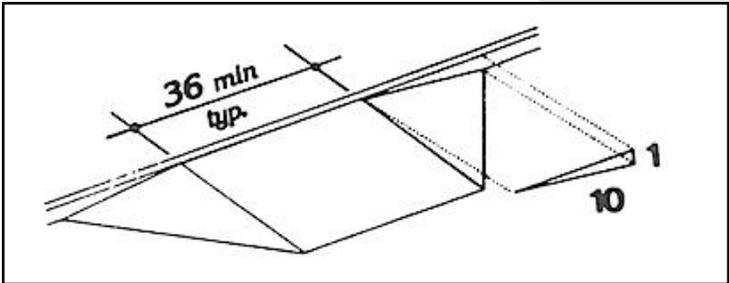
Without the required curb ramps, sidewalk travel is dangerous, difficult, and in some cases impossible for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids. Ramps allow people with mobility impairments to gain access to sidewalks and pass through center islands in streets. Additionally, vision impaired visitors to urban downtowns require detectable warning strips along ramps leading to streets.

When streets and roads are newly built or altered, they must have ramps wherever there are curbs or other barriers to entry from a pedestrian walkway. Likewise, when new sidewalks or walkways are built or altered, they must contain curb ramps or sloped areas wherever they intersect with streets or roads. While resurfacing a street or sidewalk is considered an alteration for these purposes, filling in potholes alone will not trigger the alterations requirements. Under program access, alternative routes to buildings that make use of existing ramps may be acceptable where people with disabilities must only travel a marginally longer route.

These aspects and improvements are particularly important in Downtown Poplar Bluff. ADAAG or PROWAG compliant improvements must be maintained for the safety of Downtown’s visitors and residents.



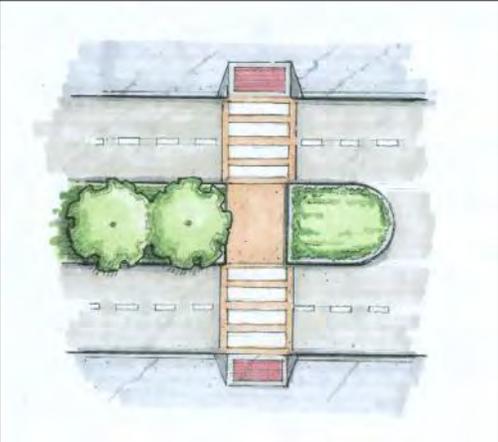
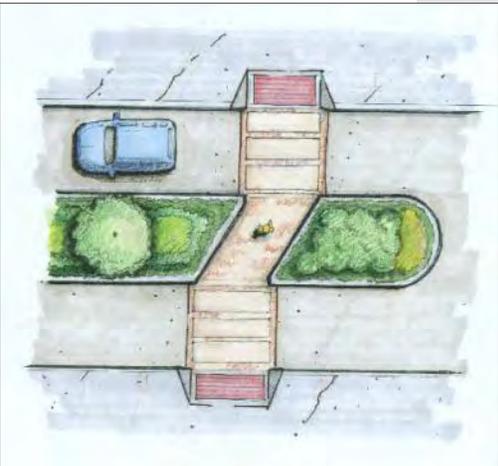
Example of ADA compliant ramp construction



ADA ramp construction dimensions

2.5 Pedestrian Access and Sidewalks

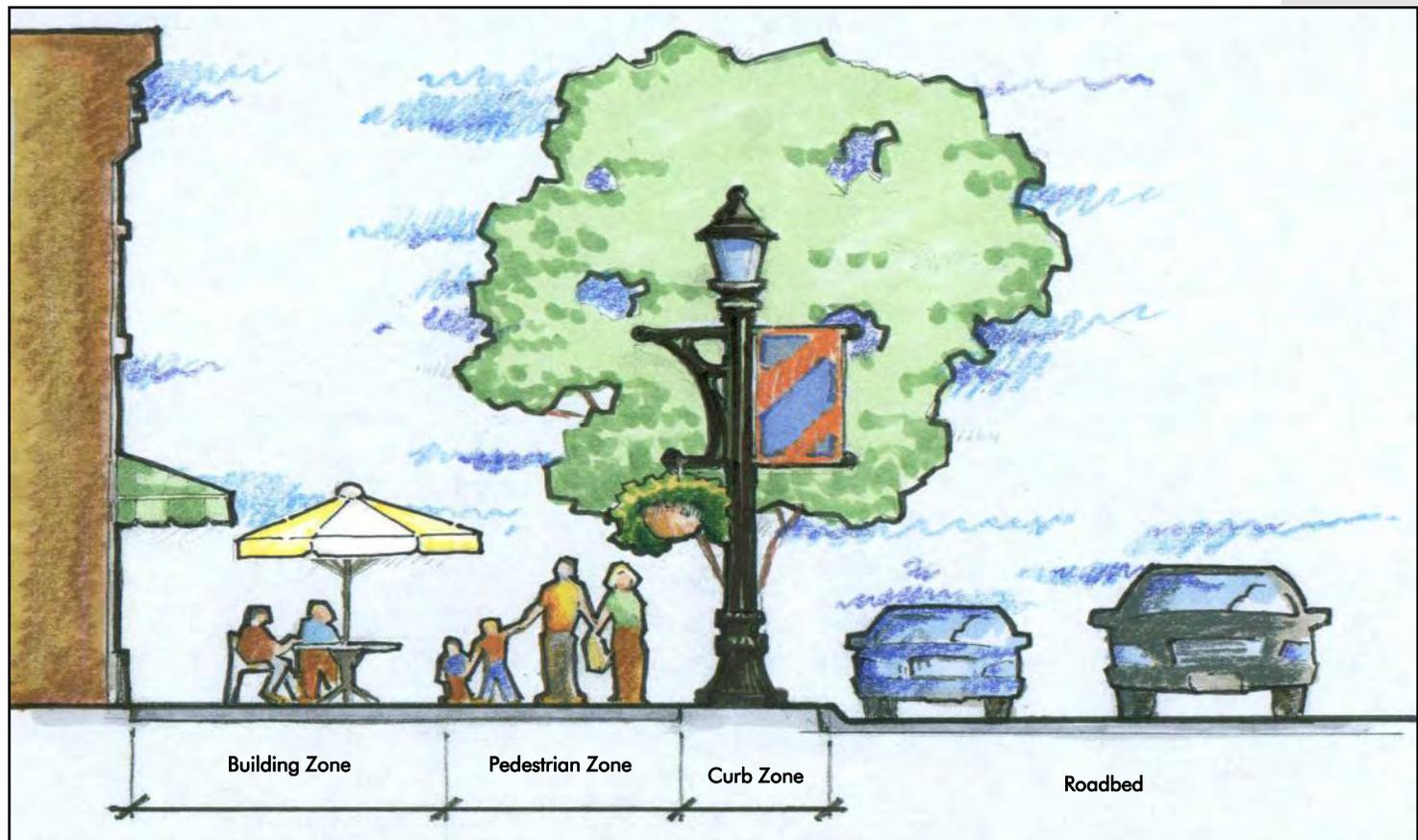
- A clean, clear and well lit pathway consistent with the accepted Streetscape Concept Alternative A developed for the Local Historic District (**Pages A-34 and A-35**) should be provided from any remote parking areas to Downtown.
- The parking areas within Downtown Poplar Bluff need to be maintained better. Current stall and directional flow markings are faded and unclear, creating a haphazard situation at best.
- The parking garage at Poplar and Broadway is a unique feature and is discussed in **Section 4.0 Streetscape Implementation and again on pages A-42 and A-43**. The current conditions of the garage cannot be allowed to continue.
- As noted in **Section 2.4 Accessibility**, pedestrian pathways will need to comply with Federal ADAAG or PROWAG.
- Sidewalks should run continuously through an entire block to create a clearly defined pedestrian pathway and minimize conflicts between people and vehicles.
- All roadway crosswalks should be clearly marked with signage and striping. If necessary, stamped asphalt crosswalks at key locations can simulate a continuation of the brick roadway to reinforce the presence of a crosswalk and calm traffic on the main arterial paved roads.



Concept suggestions for sidewalk alignment and designation

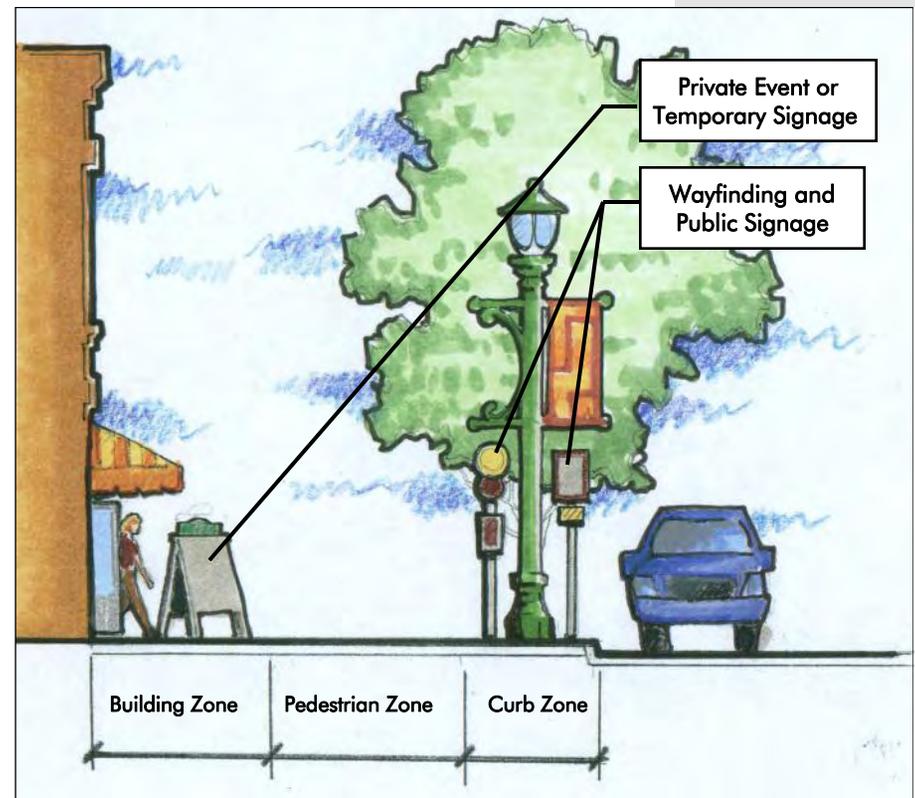
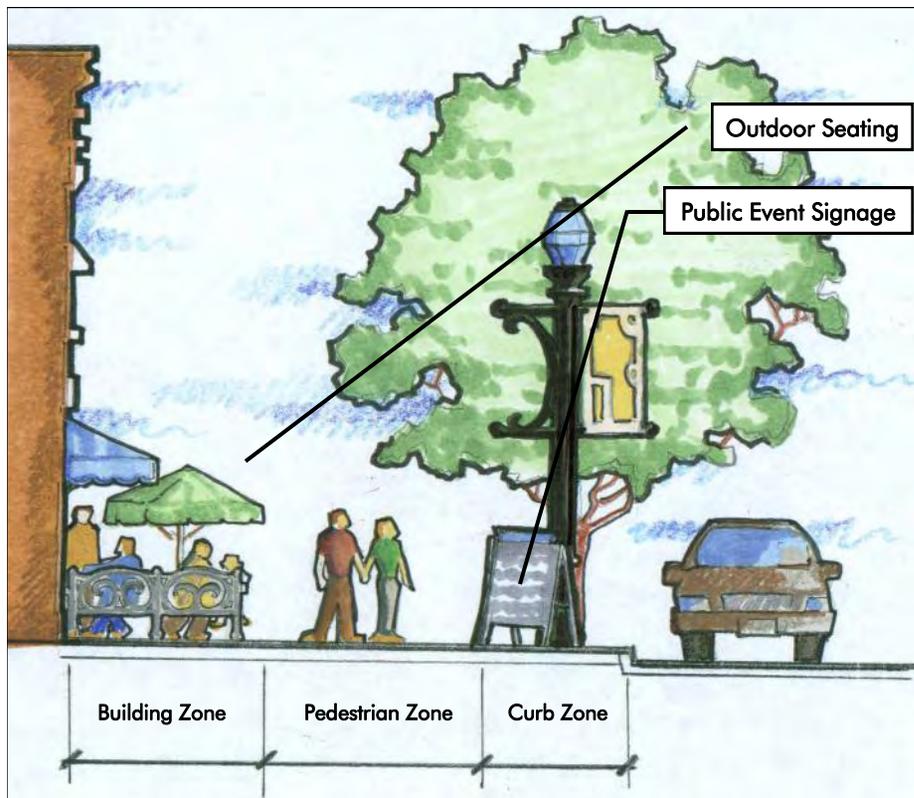
2.6 Sidewalk Zones

As a Streetscape project is contemplated, it is important that adequate zones in front of a building are 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.



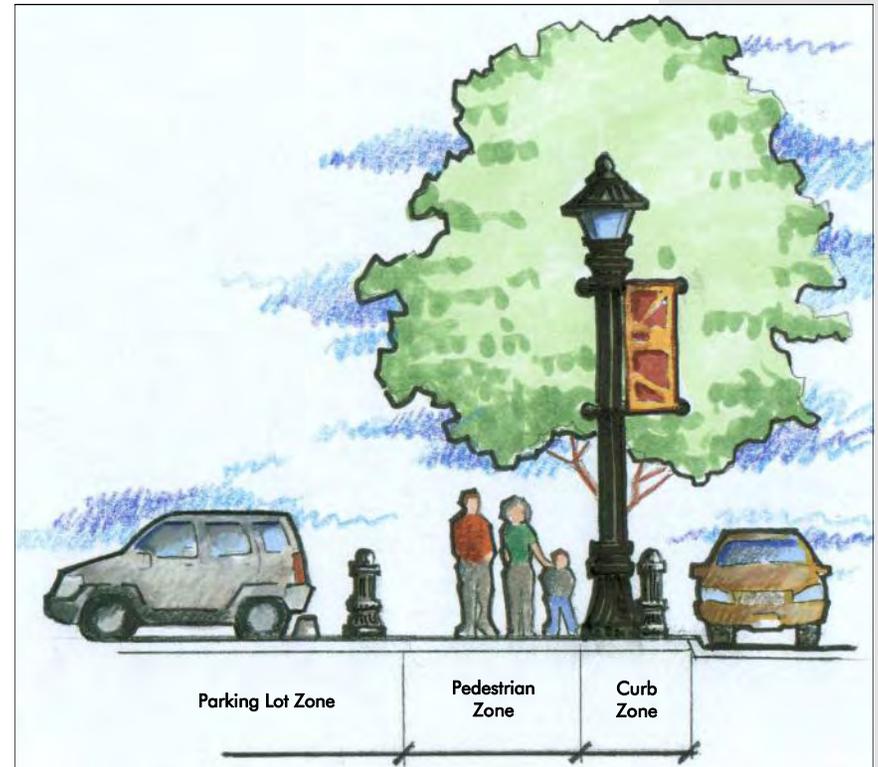
Aside from ADAAG or PROWAG pavement improvements, Streetscape amenities should remain clear of the Pedestrian Zone and allow for free movement of pedestrians. Amenities should enhance the pedestrian experience, not be obstructive.

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



Street furnishings such as bicycle racks, bollards, and benches can add to a streetscape, but must be installed in useful locations. Care must also be taken that furnishings are not excessive and do not block on-street parking lanes.

Businesses should consider providing funding for such City installed and maintained elements within their Building or Parking Lot Zones to enhance service to their patrons.



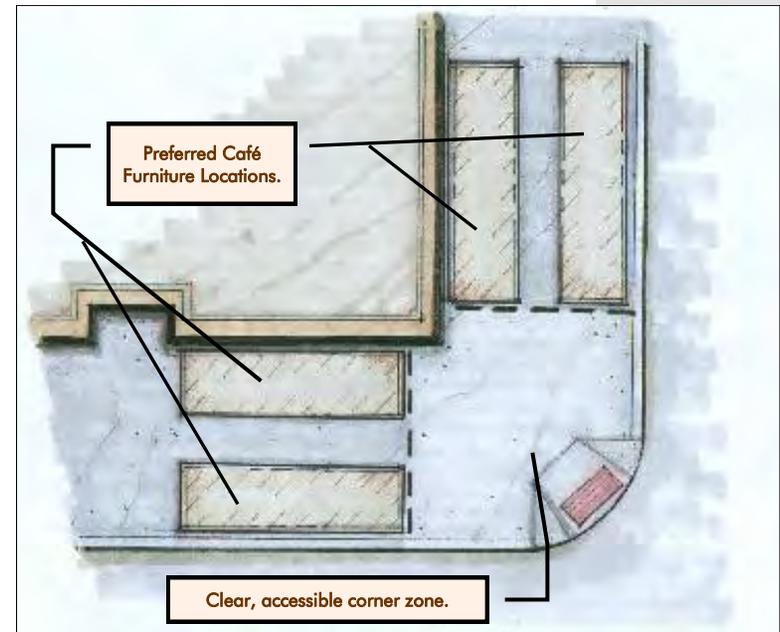
2.7 Outdoor Café Seating

Outdoor Café or sidewalk seating is a common element of a vibrant Downtown. Such seating areas can be accommodated but require special attention. 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. The sidewalk must maintain accessibility compliance. The restaurant owner is responsible for keeping the sidewalk and this pathway clear at all times.
- Not block entrances or exits to the building and provide a clearly defined area connected with the restaurant. Areas adjacent to the buildings should be ideal.
- Use umbrellas or other patron coverings in a complementary color and style and with only the restaurant name. Any other wording or message should not be allowed to avoid a cluttering effect.
- Be properly maintained. Furnishings should be durable, weatherproof, and sturdy to prevent movement by wind. For these reasons, plastic furnishings should not be used.
- Be stored inside or off-site during the winter months.
- Provide sturdy trash receptacles. The restaurant owner must maintain the area free of trash



Examples of outdoor seating in other cities



2.8 Parking and Service Areas

Parking to support business and retail tenants must be provided. Street parking will accommodate some, but not all of the required parking. Additionally, public owned parking lots can be used for Streetscape element installations. Poplar Bluff has two key City owned parking areas, at which Downtown entryway signage and landscaping could be installed to welcome visitors. Poplar Bluff’s parking garage will be discussed in detail in **Section 4.0 Streetscape Implementation**. Parking areas should:

- Be well lit and landscaped. Vacant lots can provide a solution for additional parking spaces, but only if well maintained.
- Provide planting buffers at the edges of parking lots or use decorative paving to define the site border.
- Include landscape islands throughout the lot to improve the aesthetics as well minimize storm water run-off.
- Be located to the side or rear of the main business areas and be clearly marked as public parking.
- Provide a clear and well lit pathway for pedestrians from any parking area in Downtown.
- Be maintained in good condition. All parts of the street, alley, and sidewalk pavement should not present tripping hazards for pedestrians.
- Have clearly marked crosswalks that are free of landscaping and other obstacles to provide a clear view for traffic.
- Be policed in the evening as they may become a security concern for some patrons.



Good example of a planting buffer along a parking area in Chillicothe, Missouri

2.9 Lighting

Streetscape lighting should enhance the pedestrian experience and nighttime image of Downtown while also providing an attractive installation during the day. Generally, lighting should:

- Provide pools of light on the sidewalks at a higher level of illumination than the roadway. Storefront lighting can add to this illumination.
- Be on 12'-14' height poles and project light down onto the sidewalk, not into second floor windows.
- Be uniform in style, type, height, and brightness throughout the Downtown.
- Used the same type of illumination (metal halide, high pressure sodium, incandescent, etc.) throughout the Downtown.
- Be equipped with brackets for banners or electrical outlets that can effectively display City approved decorations.
- Be part of an overall lighting design strategy to ensure desired lighting levels.
- Not neglect parking areas, rear entrances, and alleys.

Streetscape lights and poles for Downtown Poplar Bluff should coincide with the models selected in the Streetscape Implementation Plan found in the **Appendix on Page A-22**. Generally, material for replacement poles should match the concrete aggregate construction of the historical poles with a fixture similar to the historical fixture.

There is no existing decorative lighting remaining. The existing lighting is the typical overhead style lamp on a wooden utility pole.



Historical lighting installation in
Downtown Poplar Bluff



A similarly themed existing
installation in Rolla, Missouri

Lighting along the Arterial Streets (5th & Pine) should reflect the vehicular nature of the street as opposed to the pedestrian feel of the Downtown Street and its parking areas.

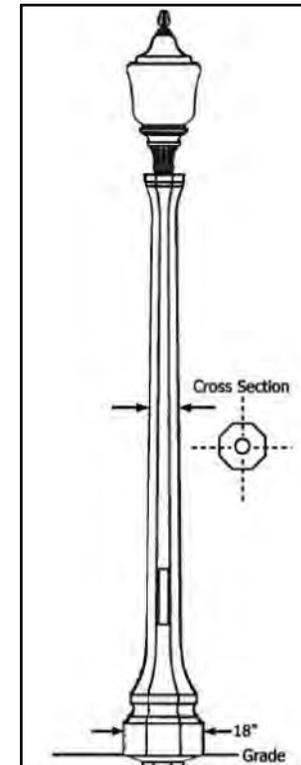
Ground Fault Interrupt receptacles and banner brackets should be installed on each pole, along with any wayfinding signage.

Arterial Street Installation:

- Multiple fixture poles could be used for added illumination along these busy streets.
- The MODOT overhead lighting should be maintained so that roadway illumination is not compromised.
- Poles should be taller. These roadways tend to have buildings farther back from the street, so there is a larger scale to the area.

Downtown Street Installation:

- Single fixture poles should be used on the Downtown Streets and parking areas.
- The City should seek to replace the overhead lighting on the Downtown Streets with fixtures that provide as much or more roadway lighting. Any MODOT approved installations should be phased out in a selective, planned manner.
- The poles should be 12' - 14' to provide light at the roadway, but not in the second floor windows of buildings. This will provide lighting that is of primary assistance to the pedestrian.



Potential historical
lighting replacement

2.10 Signs and Banners

Public signage should be used to identify, define, and promote Downtown Poplar Bluff and its activities. All too often signage is not thought of as an important part of the Streetscape, but just as functional. With every business having at least one sign, public signs can quickly get lost.

Wayfinding techniques and components to assist in navigation through the area will be addressed in detail in **Section 3.0 Wayfinding**. Recommendations for individual building and business signage is discussed in **Section 5.2.8 Business Signage**.

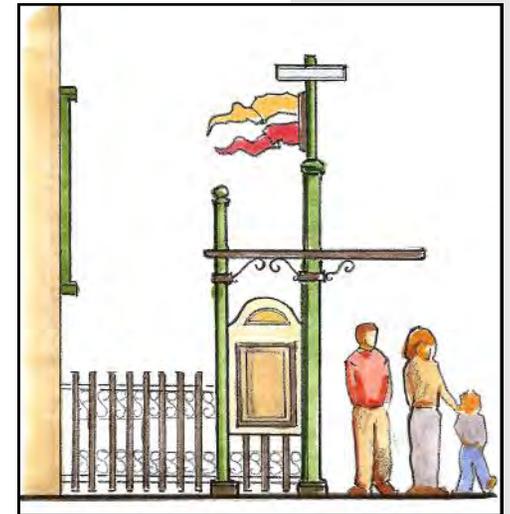
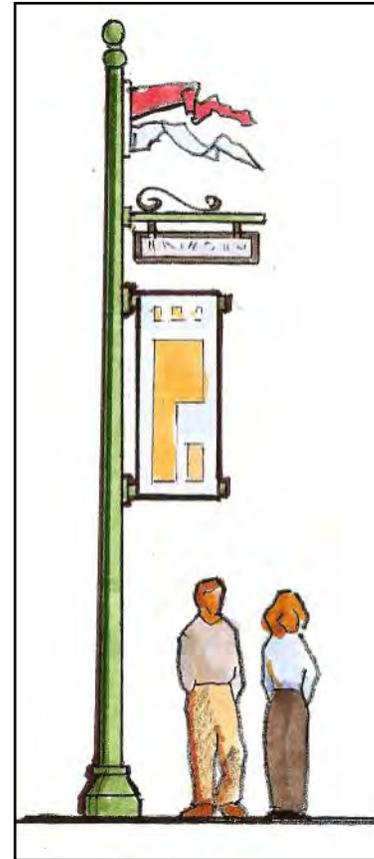
The following are design concepts that the City should utilize to make its public signage an attractive and effective element of the Downtown Poplar Bluff Streetscape:

- 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 reinforce a feeling of place. Decorative traffic signs, such as the one shown at right, can also be used effectively.
- 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.
- In an effort to reduce visual clutter, regulation and directional signage should be combined where possible.
- Banners and other temporary signs should be allowed, but restricted as to size, prevalence, and length of display.



Good examples of elements that can support the chosen Streetscape theme

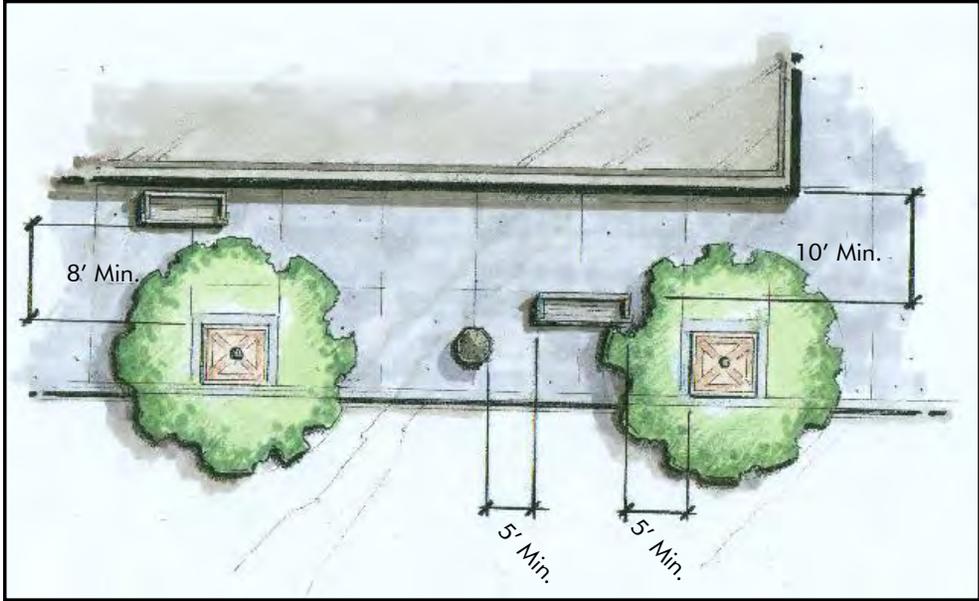
- Hung from the light poles, seasonal banners or decorations approved by the City can create seasonally festive streets.
- Banners can add a sense of civic identity while providing information about upcoming events or festivals.
- Banners should be well designed and are most effective with a simple design, repeated throughout downtown, and with minimal lettering. Sponsor panels should only be allowed within a uniform design panel.
- The banner brackets used for these banners should be maintained by the City.
- Banners should be changed on a regular schedule and replaced as needed. Banners which have been faded or worn due to long term use, should be replaced.
- Balloons, pennants, and other distracting sign novelties should be strictly regulated in the Downtown area. It is possible that these elements can be used on public signage, but this should be uncommon.
- Murals must have an artistic component and are allowable by City approval only. Murals should be professionally painted. Any mural not approved should be considered in violation of the sign code.



Illustrations of banners and other celebratory signs

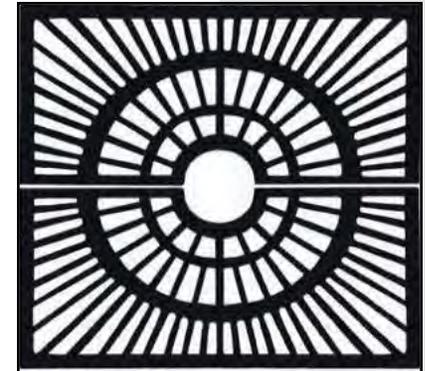
2.11 Site Furnishings

- Furnishings as noted in the Streetscape Implementation Plan found in the **Appendix on page A-27** and in Alternative A on **pages A-34 and A-35** should be used.
- Benches within the streetscape encourage social interaction which contributes to a successful Downtown.
- Planters and window boxes provide color and can provide opportunities to volunteer service if maintained by a local club or organization.
- Trash receptacles provide a place to dispose of potential litter.
- Bollards, tree grates, and boundary fencing can provide attractive accents.
- Grouped together, furnishings will enhance the Downtown and provide gathering places for pedestrians.
- Furnishings should be coordinated with light and sign poles to present a unified look to the streetscape.
- The minimum distances shown for Bench Placement represent suggestions for installation. Actual distances may vary due to site conditions.
- Street furnishing will invite people to get out of their vehicles and walk around in the Downtown.



A good example of bench placement

- The styles of site furnishings should be simple and not too intricate or flashy.
- Sturdy materials that can be painted are preferred for site furnishings. Wood and soft material that can be vandalized should be avoided to reduce maintenance costs.
- Concrete is a sturdy material, but metal furnishings will be easier to maintain and replace than concrete elements.



Good examples of potential site furnishings for Downtown Poplar Bluff

2.12 Bicycles

Downtown Poplar Bluff should not only be pedestrian friendly, but bicycle friendly as well. Concerns for a bicyclist will include routes of travel, clearance, type of traffic signals, traffic lanes, signage, drainage grates and curbing obstacles, and parking. Downtown plans should implement bicycle facilities which can be used by local citizens and visitors. The City should identify opportunities for future bicycle facilities in Downtown and throughout the community. Such facilities include:

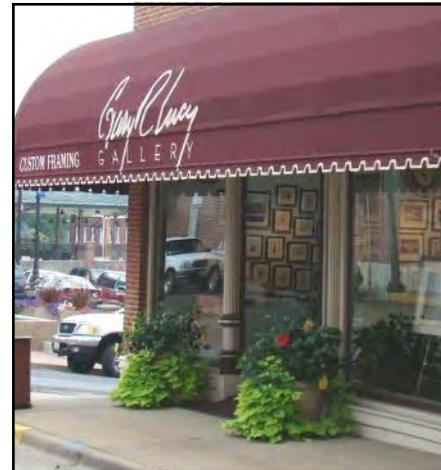
- Bicycle racks which should be of uniform design of materials, color, and style as other site furnishings. Racks should be located at useful activity nodes throughout the Downtown.
- Directional and regulatory street signage which identifies local streets as bike routes and share the road routes.
- Wayfinding signage to direct cyclists to various destinations within Downtown.
- Public restrooms and drinking fountains.
- Dedicated bicycle lanes on streets, where feasible.



Good example of bike rack and wayfinding signs in Webster Groves, MO

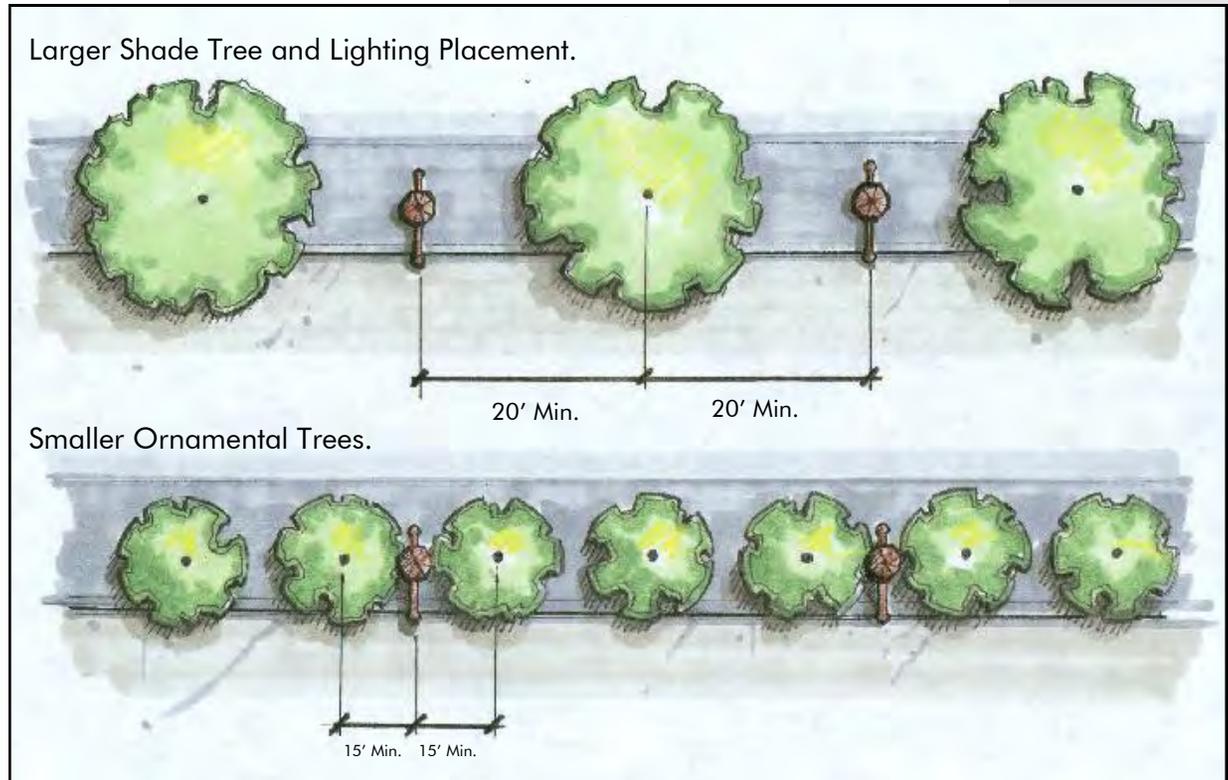
2.13 Landscaping

- Landscaping elements, particularly street tree species, are identified in the Streetscape Implementation Plan for the Local Historic District found in the **Appendix on page A-26**.
- Landscaping zones 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 used where no available landscape strip is present. Containers should be placed 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 should be of a hardy 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 canopy of the tree should be considered to avoid excessive roosting of birds.
- Trees producing fruiting berries should be avoided.
- Trees should also be chosen for their root growth structure. Select varieties with downward growing roots, not lateral growth that will damage surrounding pavement.
- Shrubs should be massed in groupings of five to seven plants with no more than two different species within a planting bed.



Good examples of landscaping in Clinton, MO (top) and Washington, MO (bottom).

- 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 placement distances shown below represent suggestions for installation only. Actual distances may vary due to site conditions.
- Street Trees tend to be one of the most controversial streetscape elements. The natural feeling provided by correctly placed, selected, and maintained trees will enhance the pedestrian environment.



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, trees will enhance the pedestrian experience tremendously and still allow signage and storefront visibility.

Poplar trees, while providing a dramatic vertical line and being the namesake of Poplar Bluff, should be avoided along streets. Poplars can be utilized in areas along the Black River and in larger open spaces.

2.14 Fountains and Public Art

The introduction of fountains and public art can enhance Downtown Poplar Bluff and the pedestrian experience. These features will be most effective as simple interactive elements which Downtown visitors can enjoy. Fountains could be simple bubblers that provide a refreshing respite in the summer months, and are lower maintenance than fountains in a pool.

- Fountain water should be left in its natural state (no coloring).
- Public art and sculpture can provide an inspirational atmosphere in which people enjoy lingering.
- Fountains and art can also serve as memorial in nature, commemorating City founders or other notable citizens or historical events.



Example of Water Fountain.



Example of Street Art.

3.0 WAYFINDING

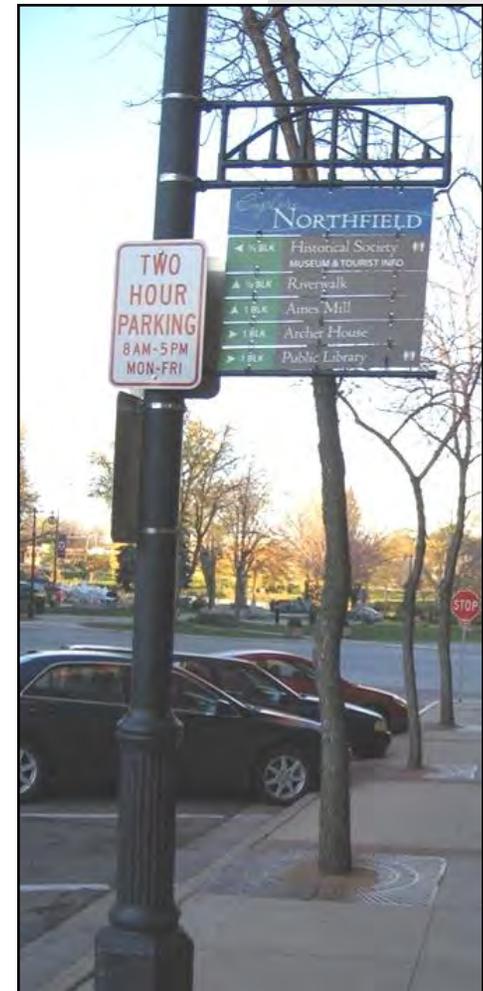
3.1 Wayfinding Principles

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 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.

In relation to community planning and specifically to Downtown Poplar Bluff, the goal of the wayfinding system is to make the journey to Downtown 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 design and building codes centered on four primary aspects:

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 Butler County Courthouse, Black River Coliseum, Rodger's Theatre or the Amtrak Train Depot, serve as landmarks and orientation points. These points are often destinations as well as starting points and other wayfinding techniques should utilize this aspect.
- Buildings have visual aids that draw our eyes to where we expect an entrance or a shop window to be located.



Examples of good wayfinding solutions. Webster Groves, Missouri at left. Northfield, Minnesota at right.

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, while similarly lit storefronts and entrances will draw the eye of the customer.
- A repetitive line of lighting can be an effective navigation tool.
- Poor lighting causes missed information and leaves an unsafe impression in a visitors mind.

Signage:

- Uniform signage at important decision points is a critical element of Downtown wayfinding. Kiosks can direct visitors to various attractions, advertise events, and consolidate signage.
- Excessive signage will lessen the effectiveness of individual signs. Fewer, easy to read signs placed at strategic locations are preferred.



Illustration of an easy to spot wayfinding kiosk

3.2 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.
- 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 signage.
- Routes actually direct travelers around Downtown.
- Signs are too small with inconsistent sizes, colors, and types.

Components of successful systems seamlessly integrate the visitors experience with the messages needed to navigate around Downtown. These components include:

- 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. This type of public signage was discussed

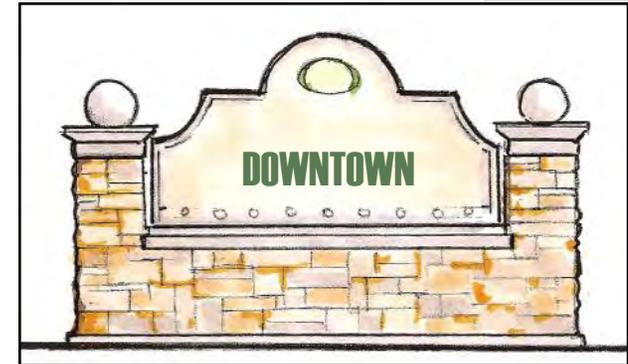


Illustration of a primary gateway sign

in **Section 2.10 Signs and Banners** and can help define the Downtown by utilizing a similar theme. Additionally, signs for visitor amenities like parking and public restrooms can be enhanced and improved.

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

A successful wayfinding system is made up of elements that can be used in a variety of configurations. Some communities may require only a few of these elements or can gradually add components into a complete system. All components included in the wayfinding system should have a simple and uniform design. Above all, signs need to be brief and easy to read with large type face, and adequate character spacing. Sign coloring should be attractive, not discordant. The wayfinding system signs should be unique and stand out in their surroundings.

Signs directing the automobile user should be developed using the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration.

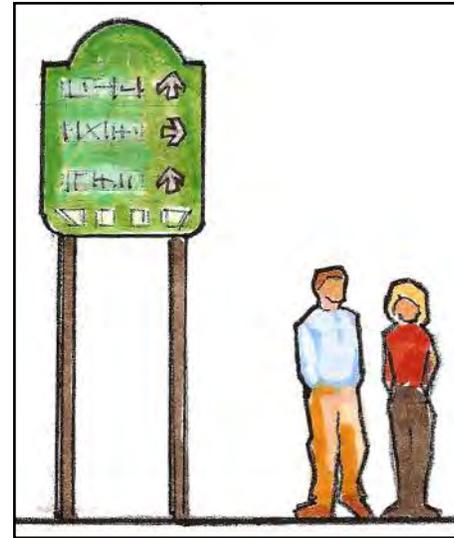


Illustration of a trailblazer sign



Illustration of a proximity sign

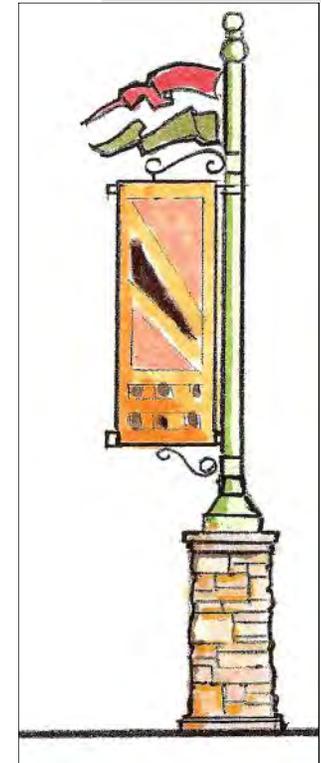


Illustration of a district gateway Sign

3.3 Conceptual Downtown Poplar Bluff Wayfinding

Downtown Poplar Bluff, as defined by the DREAM boundary, has many activity centers dispersed throughout the area. The two main vehicular traffic arteries of 5th Street and Pine Street (State Highway 60) have key decision points or significant nodes that require directional signage to help a visitor find a desired destination. Activities and events that occur at the Black River Coliseum have the potential to pull in many visitors that need to be able to locate the coliseum quickly, but also may feel more welcomed to explore other Downtown points of interest with encouraging and clear signage.

For the indication of the overall Downtown area, primary gateway signs are proposed. These signs should be stately monuments on public property or parking lots that are oriented to the main traffic corridors.

The addition of a cohesive wayfinding system in Downtown Poplar Bluff will help with delineation and establishment of various districts. This segmentation of Downtown will not only improve navigation, but will help to identify and promote the activities that occur within these districts. Residents may find themselves referencing the districts when they give directions. Businesses should be encouraged to advertise in the context of the district in which they are located. Ideally, a district will emerge as a favorite meeting place for residents and visitors.

The signage concept suggested revolves around an emblem that has been identified for Downtown Poplar Bluff. This emblem, depicting a tulip poplar leaf within a circle though which water is flowing, will be repeated as a recurring thematic design element in this, and other, DREAM reports.



Proposed Downtown emblem

3.3.1 Primary Gateway Signs:

These signs need to make a statement to visitors that they have arrived in Downtown. The Downtown emblem will fit nicely on a masonry base and could be precast stone or metal. The emblem is designed so it can be recognizable from either side with the installation of lettering on each face.

Locations for these signs should be highly visible along the major traffic arteries. Three locations are preferred and shown circled in blue at right.

At both the Pine & 5th, and 5th & Cherry locations there is a publicly owned parking area. The gateway signs should be oriented on a diagonal facing the oncoming traffic with landscaping rounding out the installation. This will also allow for an attractive view from the parking area itself and should only impact a few parking spaces.

At the Pine & 2nd location, there is publicly owned land at the Butler County Courthouse or, alternatively, across the street in the Courthouse parking area. The Courthouse property is preferred as it provides a better view for vehicles traveling into Downtown.

A potential gateway sign for Downtown Poplar Bluff is illustrated on the following page. Although the illustration shows a stone foundation, brick could be used to tie in with the brick streets in Downtown.

DREAM Boundary with proposed gateway sign locations

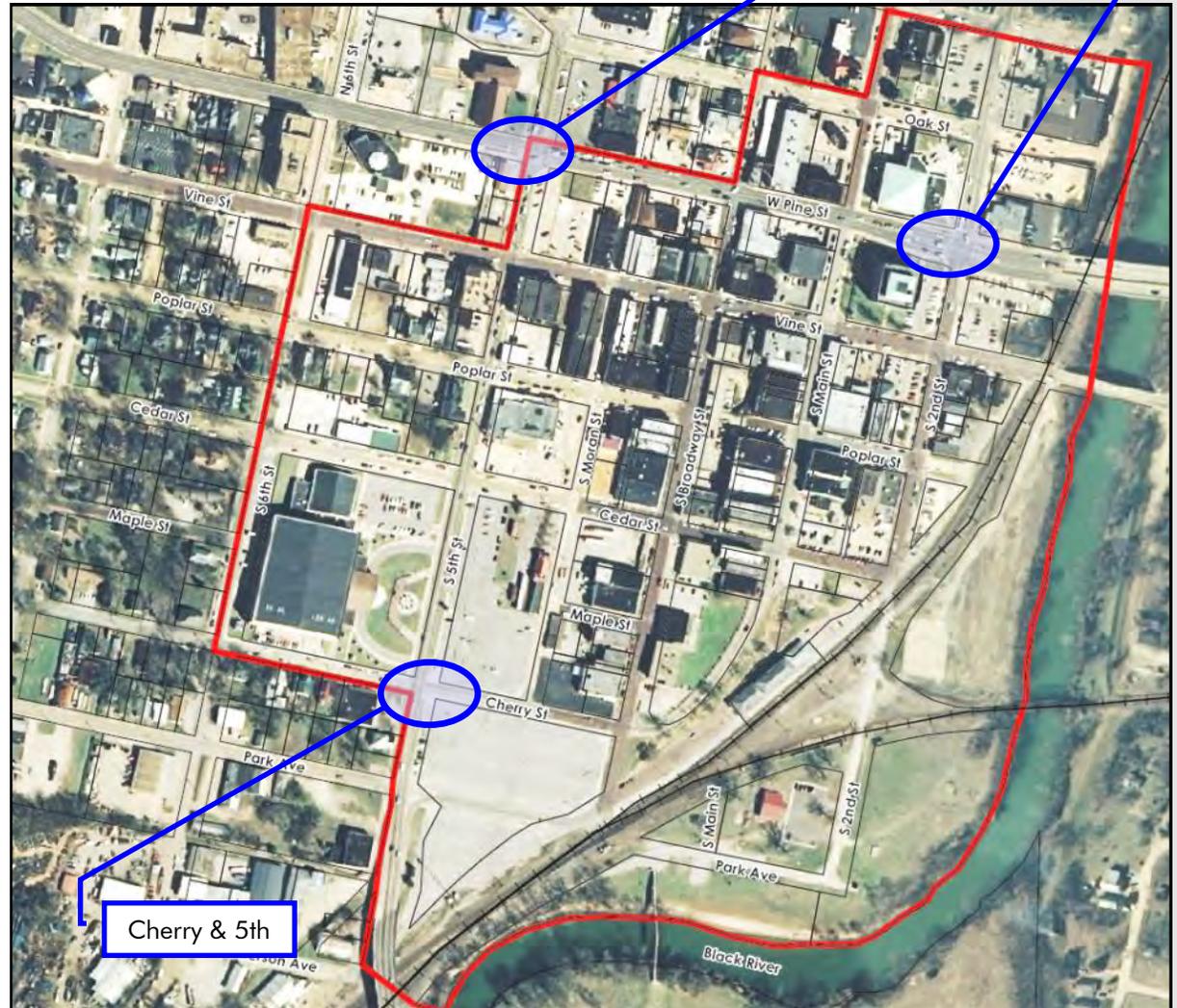




Illustration of potential primary gateway sign

3.3.2 District Signs:

The Downtown emblem will be repeated on signage in the various districts with a round seal that indicates that district. This identifying signage can be located on freestanding poles or on the decorative lighting poles as the streetscape is constructed.

The districts proposed include a Coliseum District, a Depot District, a Government District, a Historic District, and a River District. These conceptual districts were chosen to illustrate the activities that take place in these areas. Poplar Bluff leaders may find that there are more or less districts, or that there are different activities that are more suited to an area than proposed. Additionally, as the Downtown attracts more businesses, there may be a need to develop an Entertainment District, Arts District, or Restaurant District, instead of, or in addition to, the districts proposed.

The district seals should be punched, painted metal that will be relatively inexpensive to produce. The nature of the sign, as shown in the example at right, will allow for changes to the district seal, without disturbing the Downtown emblem and pole. This type of construction should allow for flexibility of the wayfinding system to adapt to future needs.



Government District Sign

Coliseum District:

The Black River Coliseum represents a sizeable investment by the community and is a great source of pride. Defining this area and its activities as a district of Downtown will demonstrate to the visitors of the Coliseum that Downtown Poplar Bluff is an interesting place to explore.

This seal would be utilized along 5th Street within a block of the Black River Coliseum and in the parking area for the Coliseum. Potentially the residential streets surrounding the Coliseum could also be included.



Depot District:

The Downtown has two historic train depots and Poplar Bluff has quite a rich heritage connected to the railroads. The recommendations concerning the Amtrak Depot in this report are seen as the top priority project and will drive the Downtown revitalization for years to come. The depot district should include both depots however, connecting through Cherry Street. As the improvements are made on Cherry, including the archway to Downtown, the area should include the Depot seal.

Potentially the seal could be repeated enough for a self-guided "Depot Tour" starting at the Depot housing the Railroad Heritage Museum on the Coliseum parking lot.



Government District:

The area by the Butler County Courthouse to the North that includes the Library, Justice Center, and City Hall has a distinctly different feel and is divided by Pine Street / State Highway 60. Defining this area will primarily assist local residents, but visitors will find it helpful to know where official offices are located as well.



Historic District:

The Poplar Bluff Local Commercial Historic District includes the South side of Vine Street from 5th to Broadway, The North side of Vine Street from Moran almost all the way to Main, and the West Side of Broadway from nearly Pine to Cedar Street. The City of Poplar Bluff Historical Preservation Commission has established Building Design Guidelines within this district and will develop a Preservation Plan along with these DREAM Streetscape and Building Design Guidelines. This District is the heart of Downtown Poplar Bluff and has procedures in place to improve. Potentially this district could be expanded to take in more of Broadway and Main Street.

The seal shows the brick streets that are so integral to the heritage of Downtown and should be used along both sides of Broadway and Vine in the Historic District.



River District:

The influence of the Black River on Poplar Bluff and Downtown cannot be denied. The river is a major feature and provides an outstanding setting for festivals and events. As the shoreline and park area is developed and used for recreational and public purposes, the area should be defined and the River District formed. The seal should be used along the Founder's Pedestrian Bridge, pathways, and service roads by the river.

The District signs as proposed can unite Downtown Poplar Bluff's attractions, even if they are dispersed geographically. Each of these areas can develop a rich identity and be promoted in a variety of ways.



3.3.3 Trailblazer and Proximity Signs

Other wayfinding signs can be solicited by the City through contact with various sign companies. A Request for Proposals should be written with the Downtown Poplar Bluff emblem and the district seals included so that the sign company understands the existing theme in Downtown. Trailblazer and proximity signs can be simple painted metal panels with attractive colors that use the Downtown emblem and district seals in conjunction with text and directional arrows to assist with navigation.

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4.0 STREETSCAPE IMPLEMENTATION

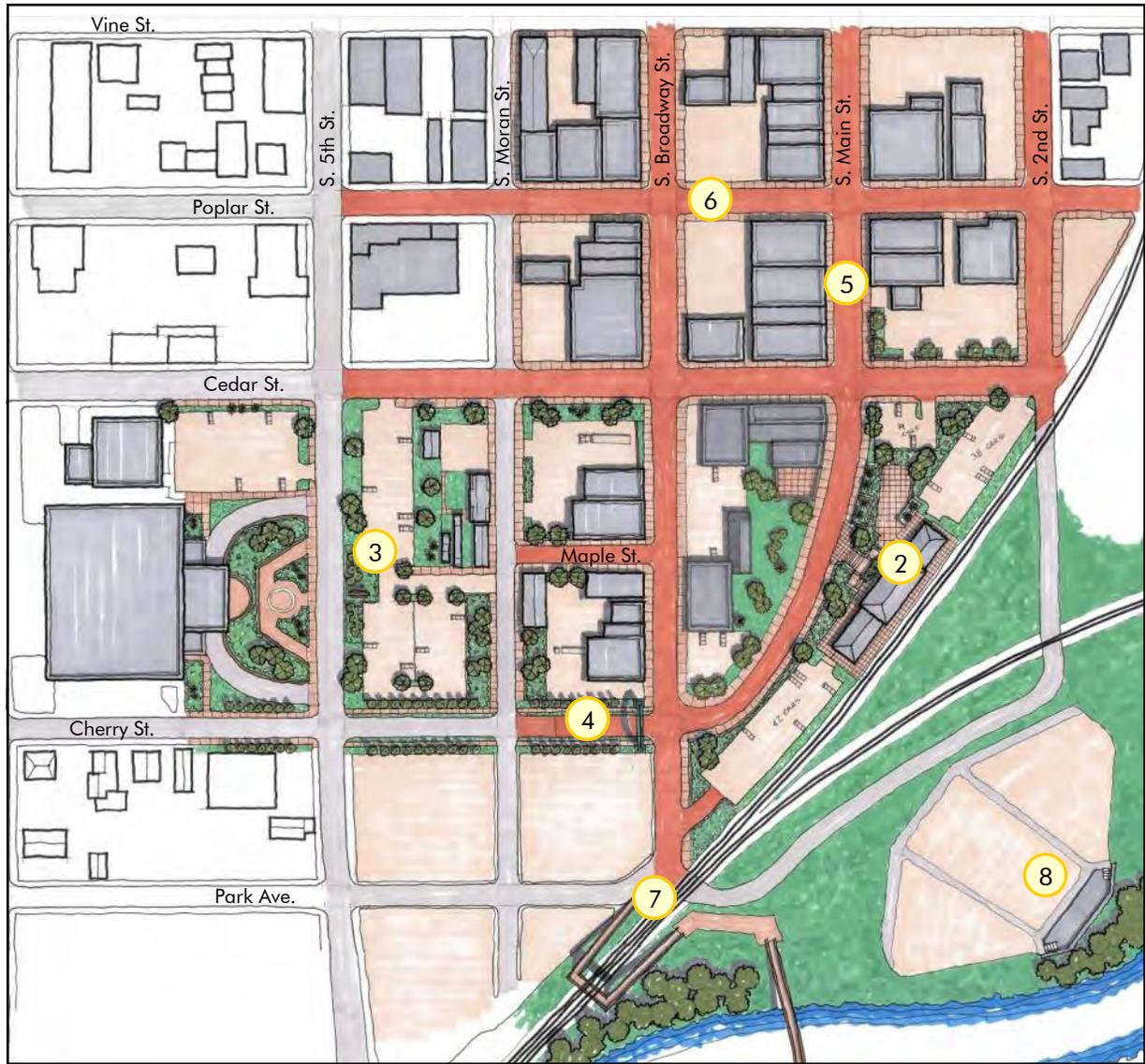
4.1 Recommendations

The first step towards implementing the Streetscape recommendations contained in this report is to build public support. Effectively communicating the benefits of the improvements will help to mitigate misunderstanding and opposition. Downtown businesses and property owners should be encouraged to view these improvements as the City's investment to the turnaround of Downtown. Explaining this positive impact to the community as a whole, beyond Downtown will help to garner broader community-wide support. And strategically maintaining visibility and positive momentum will keep these recommendations and the overall Downtown revitalization program successful.

Recommendations are prioritized in order of their ability to positively impact Downtown revitalization efforts. The illustrative plan view on the following page shows a concentration of streetscape projects south of Vine Street, although the Main Street brick recommendation is applicable to Main Street's entire length in the DREAM Boundary. Illustrations such as these, will help maintain public support and enthusiasm, as will open meetings where residents are able to voice their opinions on the projects.

These steps will provide the momentum and understanding necessary to continue the revitalization efforts. However, Poplar Bluff has taken another important step by developing the Streetscape Implementation Plan for the Local Commercial Historic District found in the **Appendix on page 103**. The Streetscape Implementation Plan provides more detail and preliminary cost estimates for streetscape improvements. The City should proceed with the implementation steps in the Streetscape Implementation Plan and seek to extend that design throughout Downtown as well as initiate the more general concepts and special projects found within this section.

Plan view of proposed DREAM Streetscape Concept projects in priority order



- DREAM Streetscape Concept Projects:
- 1 **Wayfinding System and District Designation**
(This project is located throughout the DREAM Area. Specific locations should be installed per City standards.)
 - 2 **Amtrak Depot Development and Grand Stair Restoration**
 - 3 **Black River Coliseum Parking Improvements**
 - 4 **Cherry Street Archway**
 - 5 **Main Street Brick**
(To apply to the entire length of Main Street located in the DREAM Area.)
 - 6 **Removal of Parking Garage**
 - 7 **Pedestrian Bridge Crossing**
 - 8 **Multi-use Amphitheatre**
 - 9 **Redevelopment Opportunities**
(Potential sites located throughout the DREAM Area.)

Wayfinding System and District Designation

The Streetscape plan views and sketches on the following pages demonstrate several projects, large and small, that the City of Poplar Bluff should initiate within the Downtown. All of these projects have the potential to launch a successful revitalization effort, but the simplest and least costly is the proposed system discussed in **Section 3.3 Conceptual Downtown Poplar Bluff Wayfinding**. Therefore, the wayfinding system is the first recommendation:

- Begin the process of developing the wayfinding system. Charge the Preservation Commission or a City appointed Ad-Hoc Wayfinding Committee with the project oversight. The committee should meet with Downtown Poplar Bluff institutions, business owners and managers, and tourism and government officials to discuss the following:
 - The concepts of the gateway signs and the boundaries of the various districts.
 - Which attractions should be included on the trailblazer and proximity signs.
 - There are likely ways that the City Street Department can consolidate signs immediately and other policies and replacement signage that can be folded into a Capital Improvement Plan.
 - A Request for Proposals (RFP) should be written detailing the concepts desired and to include items such as electrical lighting work, landscaping, preliminary cost estimates, and construction phasing. This RFP should be published and distributed widely.

Amtrak Depot Development and Grand Stair Restoration

The Depot area has the potential to be the gem of Poplar Bluff. This ambitious project will transform the area into an activity center and bolster lagging tax revenues by incorporating private for-profit businesses into the final use plan. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and should be restored according to The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards of Rehabilitation.

Within the structure, space should be created for the Amtrak passengers, Union Pacific Railroad workers, and a restaurant and banquet hall. The building has several thousand square feet on two levels and should be able to accommodate all of these uses.

The Amtrak stop should be maintained according to Amtrak requirements and expanded if possible. Room could be created for the railroad workers such as a locker room and break area. With a renovated building the City should be able to attract a restaurant operation for the remainder of the building. This, preferably railroad-themed, restaurant could also make space for a banquet facility on the upper level. With all the character of a well-restored building, the restaurant will become a regional draw and a favorite of train enthusiasts. Ideally there is also enough room to create a gift shop and visitor kiosk, although these uses might be included in the Amtrak Station or Restaurant.

The grounds of the station should be improved pavement and the parking areas to the north and south can remain brick. A terraced area on the north could provide an outdoor seating option for the restaurant and connect more directly to the existing parking lot.

The boarding platform can be used for special events and as a launching point for a potential “Transportation Heritage” walk heading to the south and connecting with the proposed pedestrian bridge over the rail lines. Exhibits along the walk can provide visitors with information on the rich history of transportation in Poplar Bluff including, pioneer trails, the Black



Existing Conditions of Depot and Grand Stair in Downtown Poplar Bluff

River, the brick streets, the railroad influence, and the modern highways. Each exhibit should be located at a strategic point along the walk over the pedestrian bridge.

The Grand Stair should also be restored and re-integrated into the fabric and culture of Downtown. This fabulous feature can be the site of many wedding photos and can become a favorite meeting place.

Initially the site, including the parking areas to the north and south, the surrounding hillside, and the Grand Stairway to Main Street, should be brought under development-friendly control and annexed to the City. This entire area is important to the development project. The building is currently owned by a local group desiring to raise restoration funds. The City should show its support by taking steps to acquire the surrounding site and fully support the restoration.

A close-up, plan view illustration is shown at right and **pages 50 and 51** show illustrations of this important project concept. The rehabilitation of this structure and the surrounding area can become a major catalyst in the revitalization of Downtown.

These concepts are also included in the Streetscape Implementation Plan found in the **Appendix**.

Plan view of Amtrak Depot and Grand Stair area

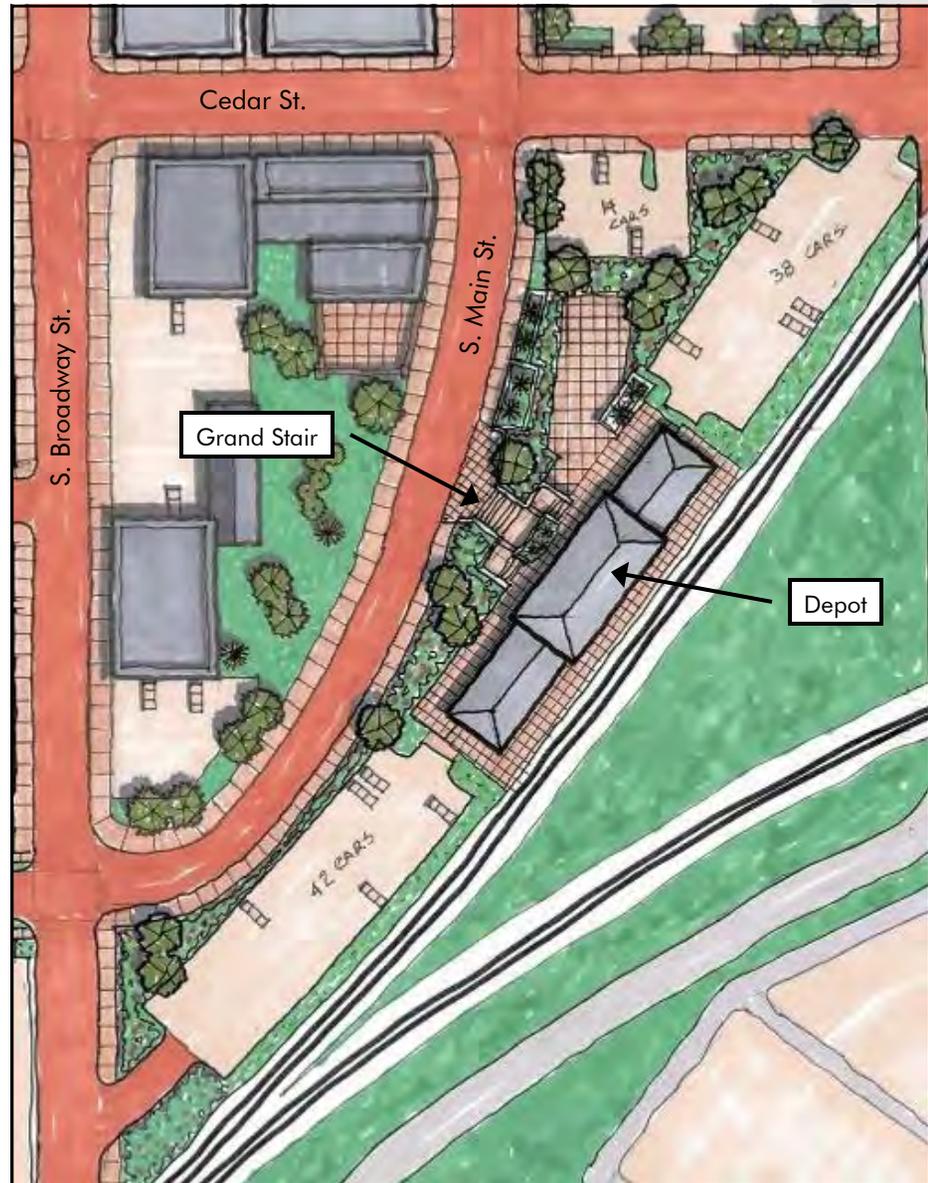


Illustration of Potential Amtrak Depot Rehabilitation



Illustration of Potential Grand Stairway Improvements



Black River Coliseum Parking Improvements

The current environment is very barren in the parking lots that serve the Coliseum. This is a poor image to portray to the many visitors attending events and sends an image that the only reason to come to Downtown Poplar Bluff is for the Coliseum. In addition, the restored Frisco Train Depot that houses the Railroad Heritage Museum utilizes the same parking lot and has the same empty atmosphere. Due to the number of visitors that these conditions impact, this should be a top priority for Downtown Poplar Bluff.

The following page shows an illustrative plan view of the conceptual parking improvements. The lots to be reconfigured include the areas to the north and south of Cherry Street. Currently Cherry Street serves as an entrance into the lots with no curbing regulating traffic. Other entrances to the northern lot exist from Moran and Cedar Streets. The drawing on the following page reflects the proposed concept and primarily focuses on Cherry Street and the northern lot. The southern lot, as described below, is seen as overflow parking.

Cherry Street should be re-established with curbing, sidewalks, and landscaping. Repetitive landscaping should be carried directly into the S. Main and Cherry Street intersection and potentially along the residential area south of the Coliseum.

During events, it may be feasible to route traffic to both parking lots along Cherry Street to Moran Street where visitors can turn north or south. Coliseum staff could close the route to the north lot when it becomes full and send overflow traffic to the south lot. Use of the Cedar Street entrance may need to be restricted during large events.



Existing Conditions of Black River Coliseum Parking Lot in Downtown Poplar Bluff

The north lot should be reconfigured to better define the boundary of the lot through the use of landscape along the edges and green space. Developing this area into a more park-like setting will carry the handsome atmosphere and elements from the Coliseum across 5th Street and enhance the feeling of the grounds around the Railroad Museum. Additionally, trees along 5th Street will have a calming effect on the traffic flow and make it easier for visitors of the Coliseum to cross.

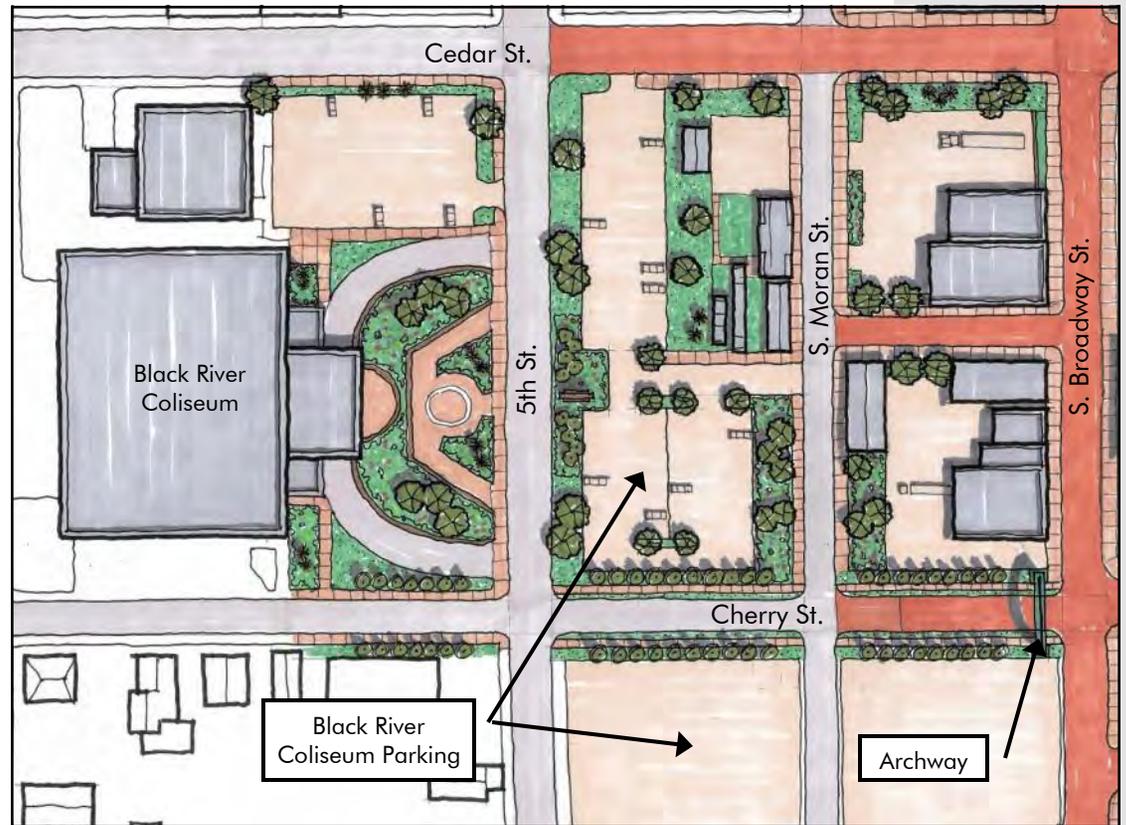
Cherry Street Archway

Existing conditions of Cherry Street are shown in the photograph on page 14 in Section 2.3 Street Improvements of this document. The illustration at right shows the plan view with the archway in place.

The re-establishment of Cherry Street from Moran to Broadway should include not only the curbing and landscaping as discussed for the Coliseum parking lots and the uncovering of the original brick, but an entryway statement into Downtown. An archway was previously suggested over Main Street when the brick streets were originally installed. This idea was a demonstration of Downtown welcoming visitors from a thriving passenger railroad service, but was never constructed. The concept can now apply to visitors of the Black River Coliseum.

With the wayfinding system in place, the Depot restored and thriving, and parking enhanced for the Downtown's largest activity generator, the archway at this location would indicate to visitors that Downtown is ready to receive them. The design concept for the archway could incorporate the Downtown emblem and the district seals.

Plan View of Black River Coliseum Parking and Cherry Street Archway



Good archway example
in Caramel, Indiana

Main Street Brick

As noted in the recommendations in **Section 2.3 Street Improvements**, Main Street should be returned to, or reconstructed to match, its original brick surface. This project would secure Downtown as a pedestrian area and enhance a unique physical and historic element. The original brick pavement was installed by local merchants and the effort quickly spread to other areas of the City. Improvement and maintenance of the brick should be a high-priority for the City as it is integral to Downtown’s atmosphere.

Removal of Parking Garage

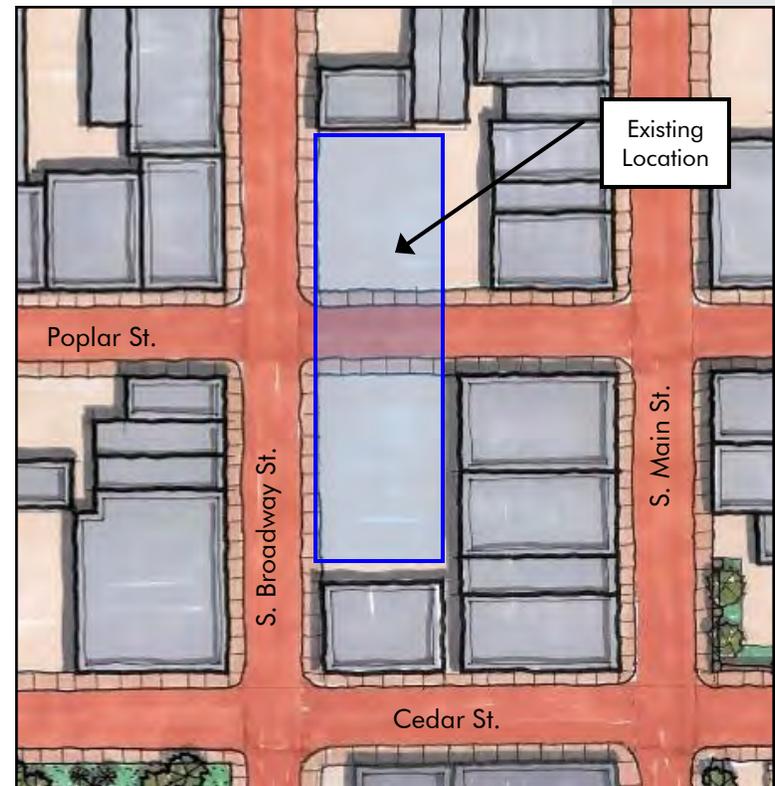
Another project that the City should consider is the removal of the parking garage at the intersection of Broadway and Poplar Streets. This structure disrupts the traffic flow of Poplar Street. According to comments in the DREAM Community and Consumer Survey task, many residents and visitors feel the garage is unsafe. The structure itself is utilitarian in design and does nothing to enhance the fabric of Broadway Street. Additionally, the garage does not fit well with the Local Poplar Bluff Commercial Historic District. Surrounding buildings are contributors to this district and some of these buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Poplar Bluff would be best served by removing the garage. This action would restore the natural flow of Poplar Street and make two lots available for in-fill development. New construction on these lots should be carefully planned and reviewed its impact on the Historic District. New structures can be built that are complementary to the historic nature of Downtown.

Existing conditions of the garage are shown on **page 55** and the illustration on **page 56** shows potential use of the lots, one developed with a complementary in-fill building and the other as an open parking lot that could also be used as a festival venue.

The parking garage is also discussed in the Streetscape Implementation Plan found in the **Appendix**.

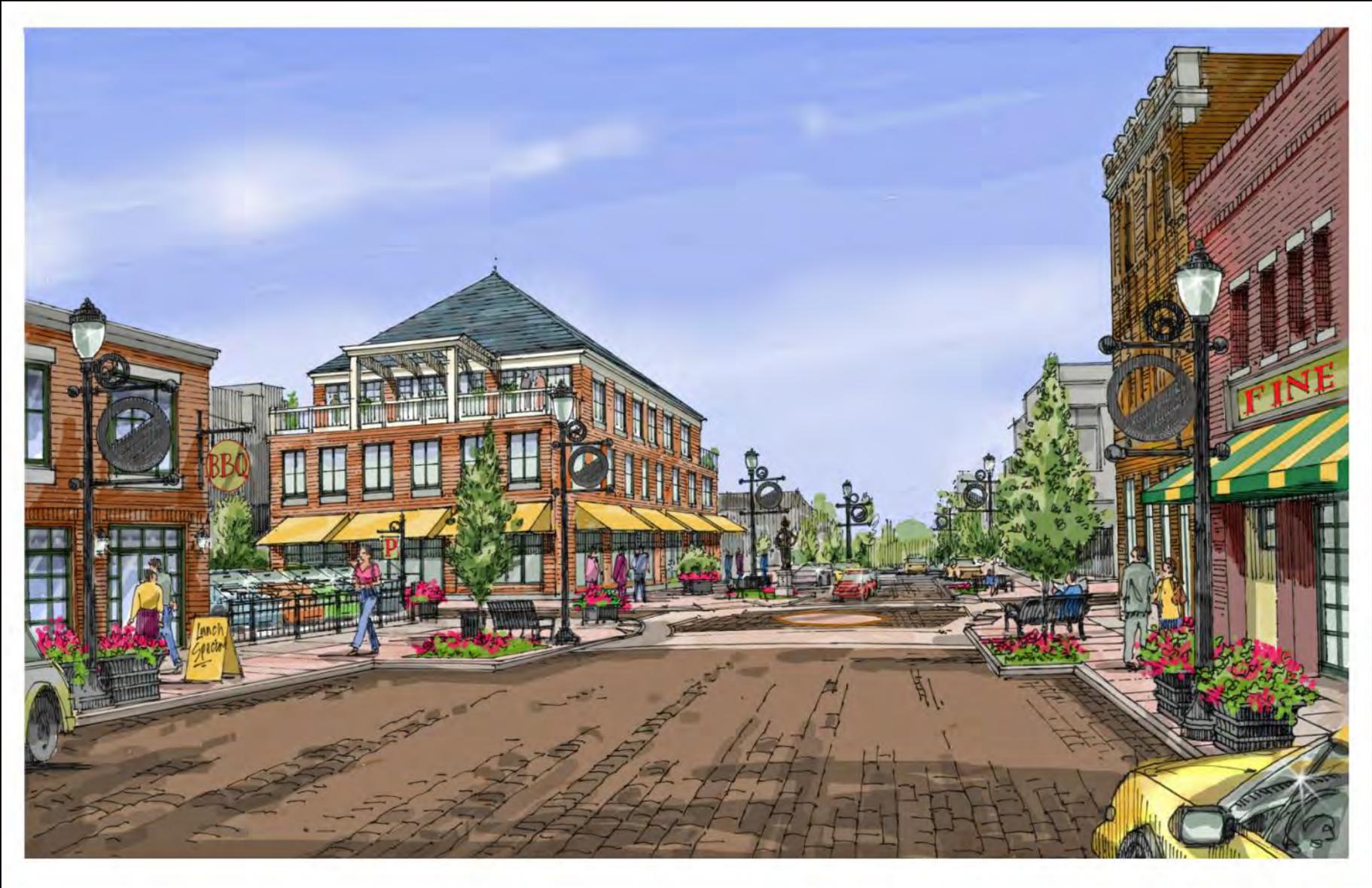
Plan view of Parking Garage Location



Existing conditions of Broadway and Poplar parking garage



Illustration of Potential Parking Garage Redevelopment



Pedestrian Bridge Crossing

In an effort to more fully connect the core of Downtown with the shoreline of the Black River and the nearby parkland, Downtown should construct a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks near the intersection of Main, Broadway, and Cherry Streets. This bridge will be important and visible to the visitors of the Coliseum and connect with an existing pedestrian bridge over the Black River.

The bridge will be a corridor to house outdoor exhibits of the proposed "Transportation Heritage" walk that would begin at the Amtrak Depot.

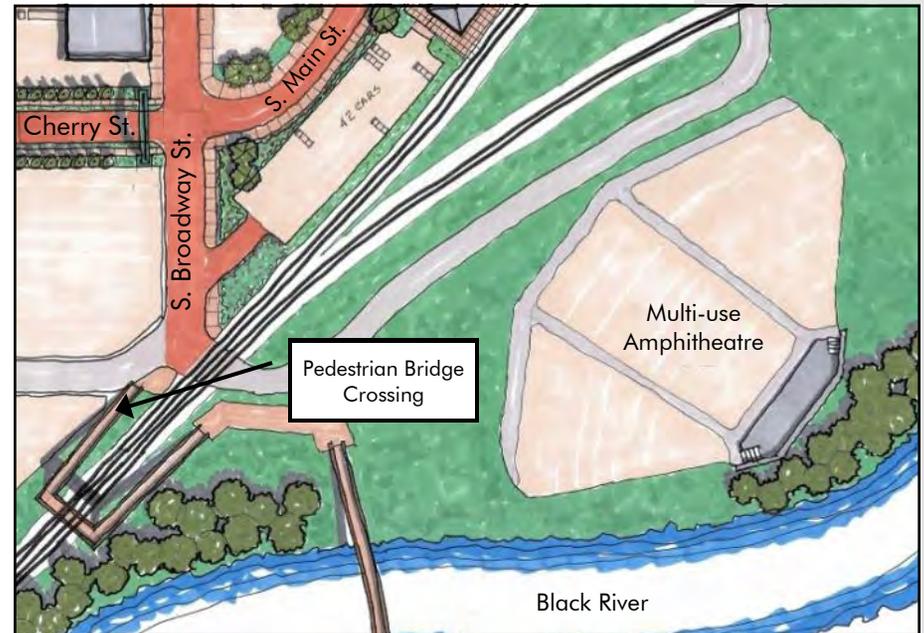
Multi-Use Amphitheatre

With the connection made of the pedestrian bridge, the open space of the Black River can now be used as public park land. The City should seek to assemble and acquire all this property and remove any structures that will impeded floodwaters. New structures built should not impact the floodway and also not be overly damaged by flood waters. An amphitheatre can provide a location for festivals, music and performances while blending in with the natural beauty of the area and not impacting the Black River.

Redevelopment Opportunities

With the development of the ambitious projects proposed, Downtown Poplar Bluff will need to identify blocks for redevelopment. Commercial services are currently lacking nearby the Coliseum and with improved attendance, the demand for commercial businesses will increase. In addition, the City should plan to re-balance the Downtown mix through zoning to correct the current overabundance of social services. Property owners of buildings that are not historically significant should be encouraged to redevelop their buildings in a nature that complements the rest of the Downtown structures.

Conceptual Plan view of Pedestrian Bridge and Amphitheatre Area



4.2 Other Considerations

As Downtown seeks to implement the Streetscape recommendations proposed in this report, there are other steps for the leaders to consider:

- A priority list of projects should be developed. The conceptual projects in this report are not small nor inexpensive. Nevertheless, they are important projects, but the City may wish to adjust the phasing or order in which they are approached.
- A determination of the cost of each phase, similar to the wayfinding system process as noted in **Section 4.1 Recommendations** should be initiated.
- The Historic District should be the area of focus for the initial phases of improvements to streets, sidewalks, and lighting as the Historical Preservation Commission already has preliminary cost estimates per linear block.
- The City should work with the Downtown Commission to determine funding availability and identify other mechanisms to fund Streetscape improvements. The DREAM Financial Assistance Review will suggest funding mechanisms in greater detail and tools like a Community Improvement District or a Transportation Enhancement Grant can be very effective in launching many of the proposed projects. For most granting agencies, Downtown will need to obtain local match funding.
- The Downtown Commission should also work with the City and Chamber to develop a sponsorship program whereby individuals or businesses can donate funding for specific street furnishings. A plaque recognizing the donor can be adhered to each street furnishing. The City should perform all installations and maintain ownership.

- The Downtown Commission can also create an “Adopt-a-Spot” program whereby the burden to maintain landscaping and other maintenance can be adopted by civic groups and clubs. 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 Downtown Commission should recognize the groups in newsletters and other opportunities.

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5.0 **BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES**

5.1 **Background and Intent of Guidelines**

Downtown Poplar Bluff has strong attributes upon which to build including original storefront architecture, many multi-story buildings, historic districts, and significant structures. All Downtown elements, including new construction, should have a similar design feel or composition. This document will help to recapture the charm and historic feel of Poplar Bluff and guide new development.

As property owners seek to invest in their buildings, they will need guidance and encouragement. Guidance for historic buildings should adhere to the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation. The Standards and various Preservation Briefs can be found at the National Park Service website located at www.nps.gov.

Encouragement and incentive programs such as historic tax credits, are noted in the DREAM Financial Assistance Review. Property owners interested in applying for historic tax credits are encouraged to contact the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office through www.dnr.mo.gov/shpo.

The Nationally designated Poplar Bluff Commercial Historic District has building design guidelines in effect dated November, 2005 and is principally located along the intersection of Vine and Broadway Streets. The DREAM Land Use, Building, and Infrastructure Survey task includes the map shown on the following page that depicts the National Historic District and its contributing structures as registered with the National Park Service. The City has also established the Poplar Bluff Historical Preservation Commission and dedicated a Local Historic District, generally described as south of Pine and east of 5th Streets to the Black River.

To bring vitality to Downtown and restore a sense of civic pride, there must be respect for the tradition of rhythm and unity that existed before the Downtown's deterioration. The intent is not to create a copy of the historic

past, but to provide complementary rehabilitations. The City must develop a sensible approach to the renewal of buildings in the Downtown including removal of undesired building materials, adherence to design guidelines, and firm and fair enforcement of City codes.

The building design guideline concepts noted within this DREAM report mesh historic guidelines already in place with sound planning practices for the benefit of the entire DREAM Study area. The concepts expressed will help the City establish ordinances that guide new, infill, and rehabilitation construction in Downtown. The City should work to ensure that impact on the integrity of the Local and National Historic Districts is positive in nature.

The existing building design guidelines tied to the National Historic District are quite sufficient and no changes are recommended. Implementation issues concerning these guidelines include the need to increase support of elected City officials and staff as well as procedural adjustments. Additionally, the City needs to more aggressively enforce its existing nuisance and maintenance codes.

The conceptual guidelines indicated herein are a base upon which the City will launch an effort to establish specific ordinances and codes. The concepts expressed are recommended to allow flexibility for property owners while moving their rehabilitation efforts in a consistent direction that is acceptable to the City and complementary to Downtown.



Design guidelines have a positive economic effect on Downtown by enhancing property values, promoting heritage tourism, and reinforcing a community's identity and marketability. Investment in historic neighborhoods and commercial areas has increased significantly in recent decades resulting in stabilization and enhancement of property values.

Building façades, which are typically privately owned, and public sidewalks and streets make up the outdoor living room of Downtown. This space is at the center of the community and should be alive with activities and events. As such, the responsibility of redevelopment falls on not only individual property owners and the City, but Poplar Bluff residents. Individual building facades are owned and maintained by property owners. Street improvements, utilities, and sidewalks are the responsibility of the City. But the residents will bring the area to life and need encouragement to view Downtown as a place where they want to shop, eat, visit, and meet.

All of these aspects, the physical storefronts, the streetscape, and the human interaction, must be developed for the successful revitalization of Downtown Poplar Bluff.

5.2 Downtown Fabric of Buildings

While these conceptual guidelines are written for Downtown Poplar Bluff, they are sound advice applicable elsewhere in the community. However, these guidelines focus on commercial areas, not residential. In many cases, the principles to be discussed can be adapted to apply to an aspect of the entire City or a specific neighborhood, but care should be taken that Downtown remains unique in character and design.

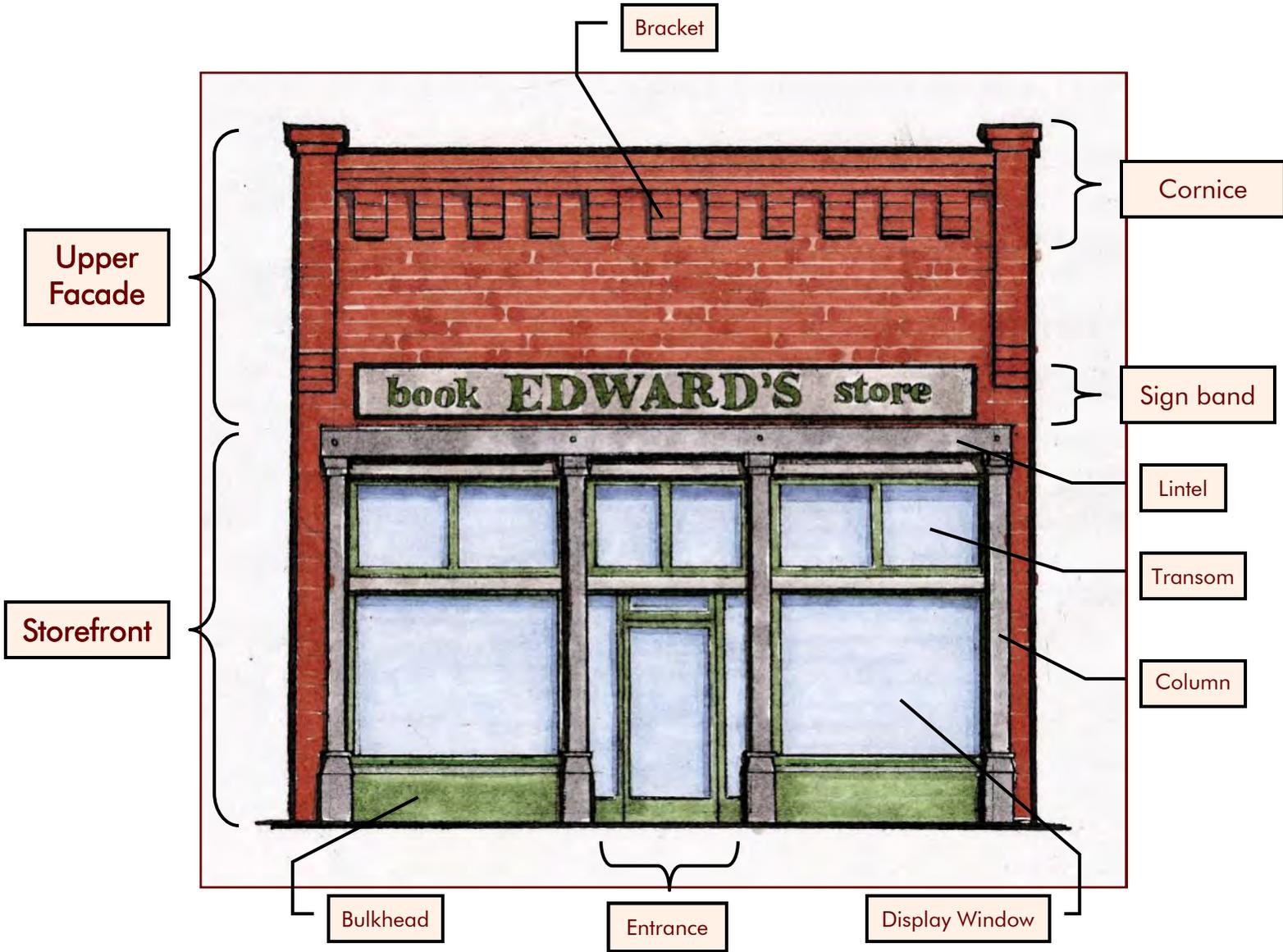
To successfully support the revitalization of Downtown Poplar Bluff, property owners, City staff, elected officials, and other community organizations will have to change the way they think about Downtown and make a long term commitment to an overall unifying design theme, feel, and sense of atmosphere.

The Downtown revitalization process takes time and requires an ongoing effort that will evolve, pick-up speed, slow down, be applauded, and be criticized. The one constant should be the desire to create a Downtown atmosphere that is attractive to Poplar Bluff residents and its visitors.

In the overall “fabric of Downtown”, types of structures include those that contribute, those that detract, and those that do neither. The objective of these design guidelines is to maximize contributing elements and minimize detracting elements.

5.2.1 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 zone are depicted in the diagram on the following page.



5.2.2 Façade Elements

The various elements of a façade must be balanced. 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.

Other features such as 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 balance between all elements can allow a building to be individual in character, but also be part of a complementary thread that is woven into the overall fabric and feel of Downtown.

5.2.3 Rhythm

The defined rhythm of Downtown Poplar Bluff buildings should be maintained along the street frontage by adhering to uniform lot widths, building widths, and window spacing.

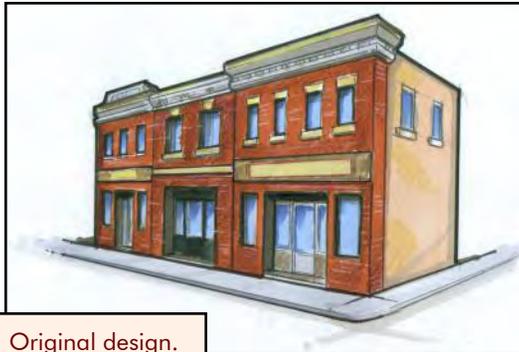
- New infill buildings and structures should maintain the rhythm through proper repetition of details and orientation to the street.
- Vertical elements, entrances, lighting, and other street furnishings can also develop the rhythm of a specific block.



5.2.4 Alterations

City leaders should encourage removal of alterations or additions that disrupt the fabric of the Storefront Zone. It is possible that non-historic and new construction can complement the building fabric that has developed, therefore some alterations may not need to be removed. Decks, structures providing access for people with disabilities, and other alterations can be used, but should be as unobtrusive as possible and located on the rear or sides of the building.

As a rule, any and all alterations or additions to the Upper Façade zone should be removed. Alterations in this zone can significantly change the appearance of the face of the building. Signage and lighting in the Upper Façade zone should be carefully considered, as these elements should normally 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 to avoid damage to original elements hidden behind the alterations.



Original design.



Minor alterations.



Storefront is lost.



Significant alterations.

5.2.5 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 suitable 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. Listed below are effective recommendations related to the treatment of masonry façades.

- Masonry restoration, particularly on historic structures, should be done by professionals.
- 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.
- Damaged masonry should be repaired or replaced with similar color, texture, and style masonry products.
- Re-pointing, of brick or stone, should be done with a replacement mortar material that will provide a consistent color and texture.
- Masonry replacement and/or repair should be done with elements that maintain the character of the original construction.
- Portland cement as a patch for masonry is unacceptable.



Poor examples of a material choice to repair brickwork



- If a historic façade has been covered with metal or wood siding it should be removed. Exposing the underlying brick masonry 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.
- Siding and cladding may also hide interesting details that enhance a building's identity. If, after removing the covering, portions of the original must be replaced, use a material that is similar to the original in color and texture.
- Regular maintenance of stone foundations should occur to prevent structural and water damage.
- Water-proofing of foundations should be applied beneath the finished grade or inside the structure.



Existing conditions of awnings and canopies in Downtown Poplar Bluff



5.2.6 Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies 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 without great expense. The following suggestion and concepts can dramatically improve Downtown Poplar Bluff:

- 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.
- Colors should coordinate with the color scheme for the entire building.
- Signage or lettering should be limited to the hanging vertical flap of the awning and be complementary in color to the building.
- 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 and canopies will wear and this aspect should be acknowledged as an operating cost of doing business which can be changed every few years for a fresh look.
- Aluminum, steel, and wood shingle awnings and structures are not original building elements and detract from the overall appeal of Downtown façades. These awnings should be removed and the points of attachment repaired.



Awning in disrepair in Downtown Poplar Bluff



Poor example of awning material in Kennett, MO

5.2.7 Building 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 as well as the business.

Downtown Poplar Bluff has a distinct lack of interesting building lighting and could benefit greatly from a lighting plan to enhance the attractiveness and safety of Downtown. This plan addresses the following elements of commercial lighting:

- 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 of a simple, non-intrusive design in a style that matches 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.



Existing conditions of building lighting in Downtown Poplar Bluff

- Building lighting, in particular up-lighting, should be coordinated with regulations set forth by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines. These guidelines have been established by the United States Green Building Council to encourage environmentally sustainable construction.
- 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.



Poor examples of lighting style and intensity in Columbia, Illinois.



Good examples of how lighting can be used to illuminate doorway and entrance signage in St. Charles, Missouri.

5.2.8 Business Signage

For a successful Downtown Poplar Bluff each business must have its own identity while at the same time maintaining high standards of quality for such building accents as business signage. Effective signage identifies 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 concepts will help enhance this aspect of Poplar Bluff's Downtown:

- The size of the sign should be of a balanced scale in relation to the building and street. Large signs are not be needed as the signage in Downtown is oriented to the pedestrian, not the motorist.
- Rooftop, blade, pole, neon, electronic message boards, and billboard signage should not be allowed or severely restricted.
- Abandoned signs should be removed.
- Position flush-mounted signs within architectural features if possible. This type of signage will help reinforce horizontal lines along the street.
- Coordinate color schemes with the building's front façade.
- Locate flush signs so they do not extend beyond the outer edges of the building front.



Existing Business Signage in Downtown Poplar Bluff



- Use existing decorative moldings to define a sign band 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.
- The use of symbols instead of text on projecting signs can be easily identified and remembered by the customer.
- 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 architectural details.
- Sign materials should be compatible with façade materials.
- Good craftsmanship will pay off in longer service time and 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.
- Encourage the use of custom designs that portray a business as being unique. Mass produced signs, especially plastic panel, internally lit boxes, do not make a lasting impression.
- Illuminate signs in such a way as to enhance the overall composition of the building's façade.



Good example of an attractive flush mounted sign with external lighting from Washington, MO



Good example of a projecting sign from Galena, Illinois

- 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 front façade.
- Awning signage or lettering should not be allowed where another flush faced sign exists.
- Signboards under the awning intended to assist pedestrians should be limited.
- Signboards, if allowed, should have uniform size and complement the awning and building.
- Painting signage on buildings should not be allowed.



Signboards on the sidewalk in Hannibal, Missouri

5.2.9 Franchise Architecture

To maintain the unique atmosphere in Downtown Poplar Bluff, 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. These styles are more fitting to Downtown as opposed to a highway corridor.

Poplar Bluff should insist the company follow these design standards and adapt their brand to create a complementary Downtown building.



A poor example showing a franchise façade that does not enhance the building nor sidewalk in Port Austin, Michigan

5.2.10 Maintenance of Facades

Façades, particularly historical restorations, may require extra care and maintenance. The City of Poplar Bluff should encourage proper maintenance of all elements of a building through firm and fair code enforcement.

Additionally, if the City implements a Downtown incentive program for façade work, a requirement for the property owner to maintain the building according to City standards is in order. An example would be the ability to utilize a revolving loan for initial façade restoration having a provision to call the loan should the façade fall into disrepair.

Façade coverings, as noted earlier, hide the character of the building, but also can conceal a poorly maintained structure in danger of collapse.

Rear façades and lot maintenance tend to be neglected, but are no less important to the overall structure of the building and the aesthetics of Downtown.



A good example of façade maintenance in Downtown Poplar Bluff



A poor example of façade maintenance in Downtown Poplar Bluff

5.3 Historic Buildings

5.3.1 Original Elements

Any original element or material that still exists, particularly on the front elevation of the building, should be retained if possible. Original elements provide a historic value that are costly to replace. Prism glass in transom windows or a decorative wooden door with beveled glass are 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.

5.3.2 Storefront (see page 65 for components)

The following are suggested methods for treating various storefront elements of Downtown building façades.

Entrance

- The entrance door should be recessed to emphasize the entry, provide a bit of shelter, and remove the open door from the path of pedestrians on the sidewalk. These areas also repeat a pattern of shaded areas along the street that helps to identify entrances.
- If the original recessed entry has been removed, consider establishing a new one.



Existing conditions of architectural details found on S. Main Street in Poplar Bluff



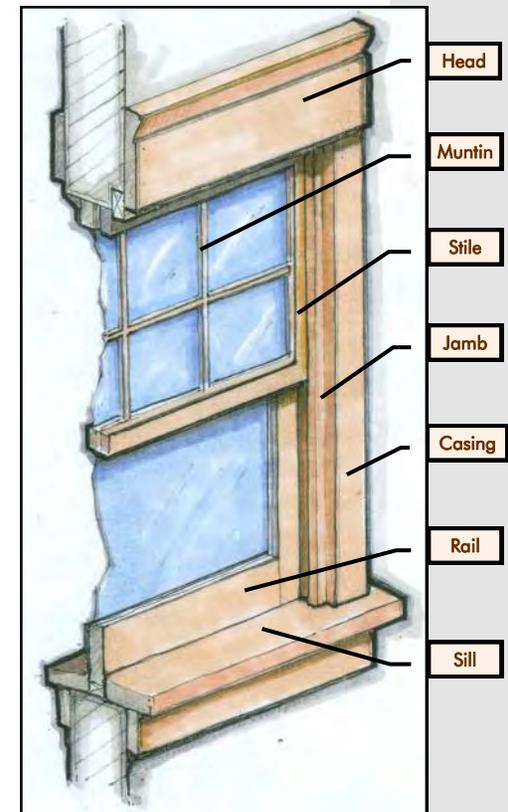
- The recessed entrance door should also be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.
- The door should provide a view into the building as well as a sense of openness. Solid doors should be avoided.
- Consider using an accent color on the door.

Windows

- Preserve any of the large panes of glass from the original storefront 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 historic profile that matches the building period 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.
- Window AC units should never be allowed in front façades.

Spandrel Panels

- Maintaining these original panels over doorways, if existing, is preferable but if the panel is missing, reconstruction using old photographs as a guide is acceptable.

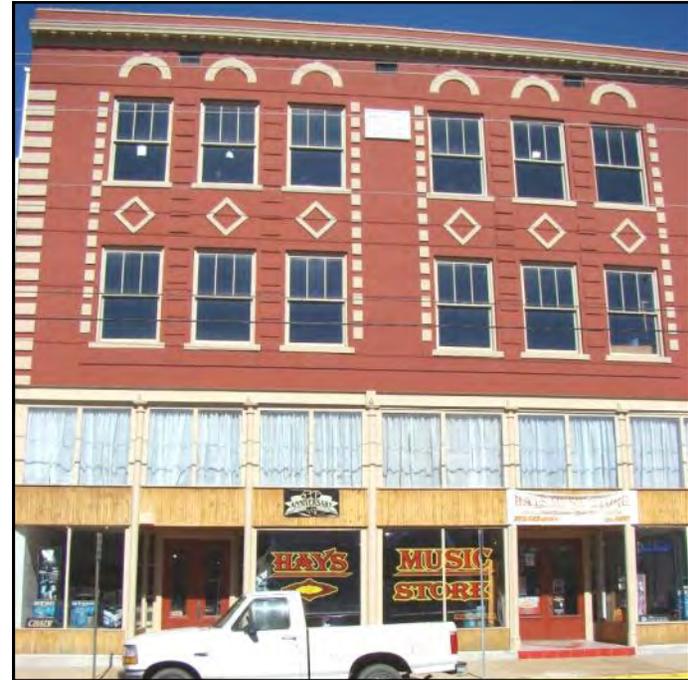


Typical window elements

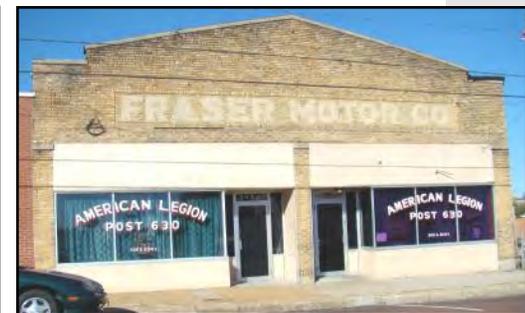
- Coordinate the color scheme of the spandrel panel with other façade elements.
- If original design information is not available, a simplified panel using original materials is acceptable.

Transoms

- These bands of glass are found on many buildings and 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.
- 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 necessary.



A nicely restored storefront showing the transom in Downtown Poplar Bluff



These transoms in Poplar Bluff should be uncovered and restored

5.3.3 Upper Façade (see page 65 for components)

The Upper Façade is often neglected as property owners tend to focus on the ground floor, business space. This is a mistake as the impression of a building and a business is formed by the overall image of a property. Customers notice the condition of the upper floors though they may never set foot in them. Standards of care for upper façade elements follow.

Windows

- Typical upper floor 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 windows covered by masonry infill, wood panels, or mismatched windows should be removed.
- If the original window still exists, it should be restored to serviceable condition when possible.
- 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 they can be replaced accurately.
- Installation of interior storm windows should be considered.
- Window AC units should not be allowed on front façades.
- If the existing window is beyond repair a replacement window of the same historic size and profile should be installed.



Intricate upper façade with ornamental cornice in Neosho, Missouri



Front window AC units shown here in Poplar Bluff should be avoided



- 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, 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 reconstructed from photographic evidence.
- If no evidence exists as to form and detail, the reconstructed cornice should be as simple and non-intrusive as possible.
- An intact cornice should be repaired and maintained.
- Where architectural details have been removed, look at photos for details to use as patterns for new designs.
- 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.



Decorative cornices and details in Poplar Bluff

5.3.4 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. The building and business image can likely be improved here while accommodating service functions. Suggested methods of caring for rear façade elements follow.

Entry Door

- The rear door will no longer be just 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 shelter and helps to identify the entrance.

Upper Rear Façade

- Upper rear facade elements should be treated similar to the front. Often these elements are allowed to deteriorate.
- Windows should be restored or replaced.
- Gutters and downspouts should be in good repair and painted.

- Use materials and colors that coordinate with the front façade so customers will learn to recognize that both entrances are related to the same business.
- Use a smaller version of the front façade signage to identify the rear entrance.
- New exit stairs and balconies can enhance the marketability of upper floor space, especially when these lead out onto parking lots located behind the building. Encourage installing new stairs that comply with current building codes.

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, wrought-iron and ornamental aluminum.
- Chain-link should not be a permitted material for fencing in Downtown.

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 Downtown Poplar Bluff.
- Trash containers should be placed in an enclosure or behind a screen.
- 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.
- 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.

5.4 Existing Buildings and New Construction

Some buildings in Downtown Poplar Bluff do not have historic features or ornamentation, only simple fronts. Additionally, there are several vacant lots where new buildings might be constructed in the future.

The City should implement the following standards concerning existing buildings and new construction in Downtown:

- New construction should be of design considerate of 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 other Downtown buildings, with three basic elements; a unified paint and color scheme, an awning, and non-intrusive signage.
- Emphasize horizontal features that can align with other buildings. In-fill construction should match the size and scale of surrounding 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 infill buildings 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 rhythm and front position of adjacent buildings should be encouraged.



Example of a block showing in-fill construction adhering to similar basic design guidelines in Washington, NC

5.5 Color Guidelines

Use color to your advantage without being garish or too flashy. Some of the most noticeable improvements are achieved simply with an application of fresh paint. 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 color techniques should be encouraged for Downtown:

- 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, canopies, 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.



Good example of painted areas complementing building material colors in Washington, MO

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6.0 BUILDING DESIGN EXAMPLES

6.1 305—301 S. Main Street

This section of South Main in Poplar Bluff contains three buildings with great potential, but in rather poor condition. 305 S. Main may be in danger of collapse. 303 and 301 appear much more stable and include many decorative details.

Existing conditions are shown below and an illustration of improvements is shown on the next page.

Existing conditions



305 S. Main Street

303 S. Main Street

301 S. Main Street

Illustration showing improvements



6.2 213—209 S. Main Street

The photos shown are the three buildings on the Southern end of the 200 block of S. Main Street.

Again, intricate details can be found on these buildings. In some cases these details are not obvious or they have been covered with an inappropriate material as in the far right photo.

Existing conditions

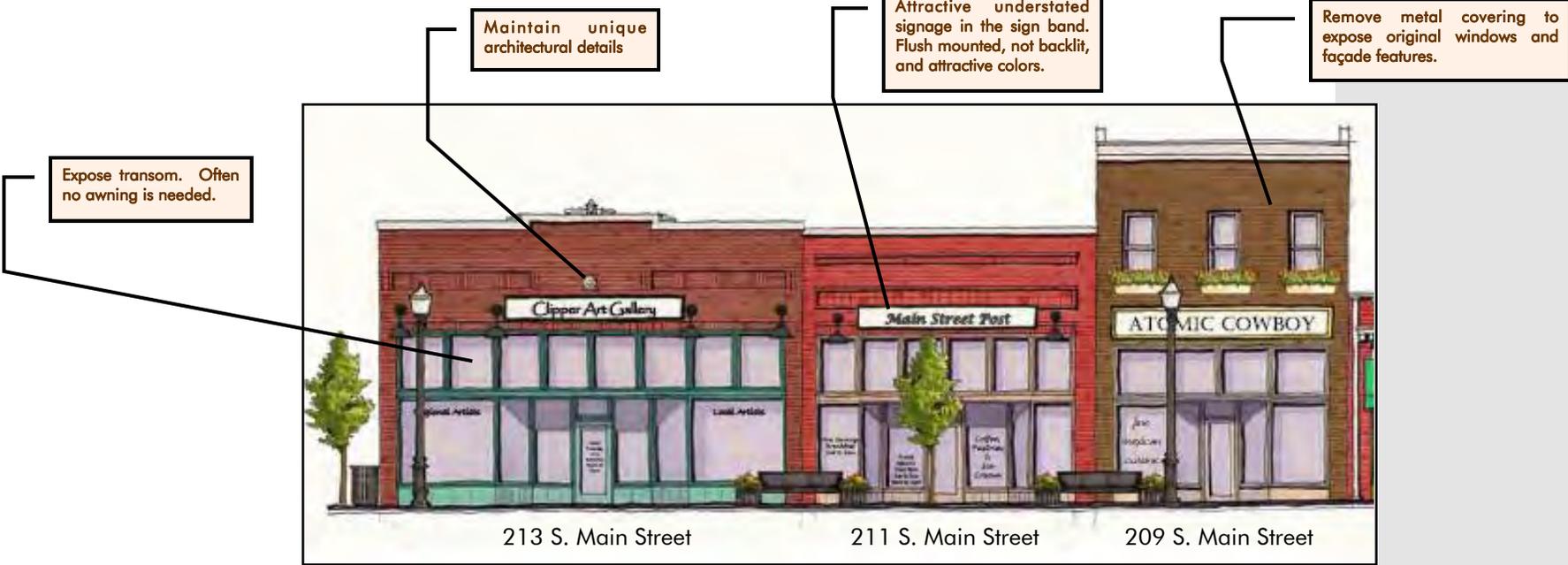


213 S. Main Street

211 S. Main Street

209 S. Main Street

Illustration showing improvements



Expose transom. Often no awning is needed.

Maintain unique architectural details

Attractive understated signage in the sign band. Flush mounted, not backlit, and attractive colors.

Remove metal covering to expose original windows and façade features.

213 S. Main Street

211 S. Main Street

209 S. Main Street

6.3 207—201 S. Main Street

These photos show the Northern end of the 200 block of S. Main Street.

The buildings in the middle of the block are rather plain. The building that anchors the block at the North end shows nice details, but is in poor condition due to maintenance. This building also is currently being used for an adult store. The benefits of allowing such a use in Downtown are questionable. This use could be phased-out with proper zoning changes.

Existing conditions are shown below and an illustration of improvements is shown on the next page.

Existing conditions

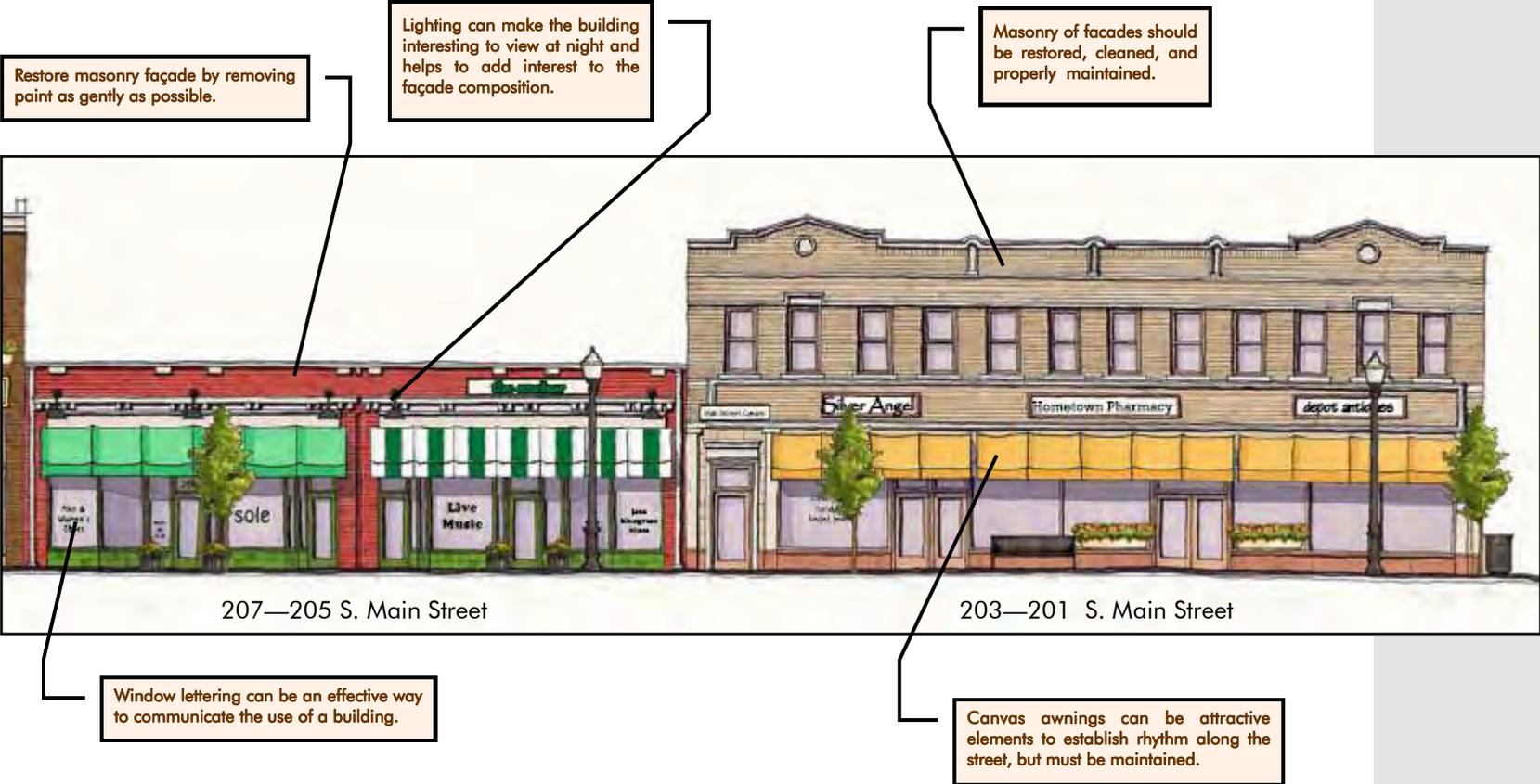


207—205 S. Main Street



203—201 S. Main Street

Illustration showing improvements



6.4 115—111 S. Main Street

These photos show the Southern end of the 100 block of S. Main Street.

These buildings suffer from numerous alterations to their storefronts. Any details they may have are completely hidden. Likely there are very handsome buildings under these inappropriate materials.

There is a moderate slope to the South along the entire 100 block.

Existing conditions are shown below and an illustration of improvements is shown on the next page.

Existing conditions

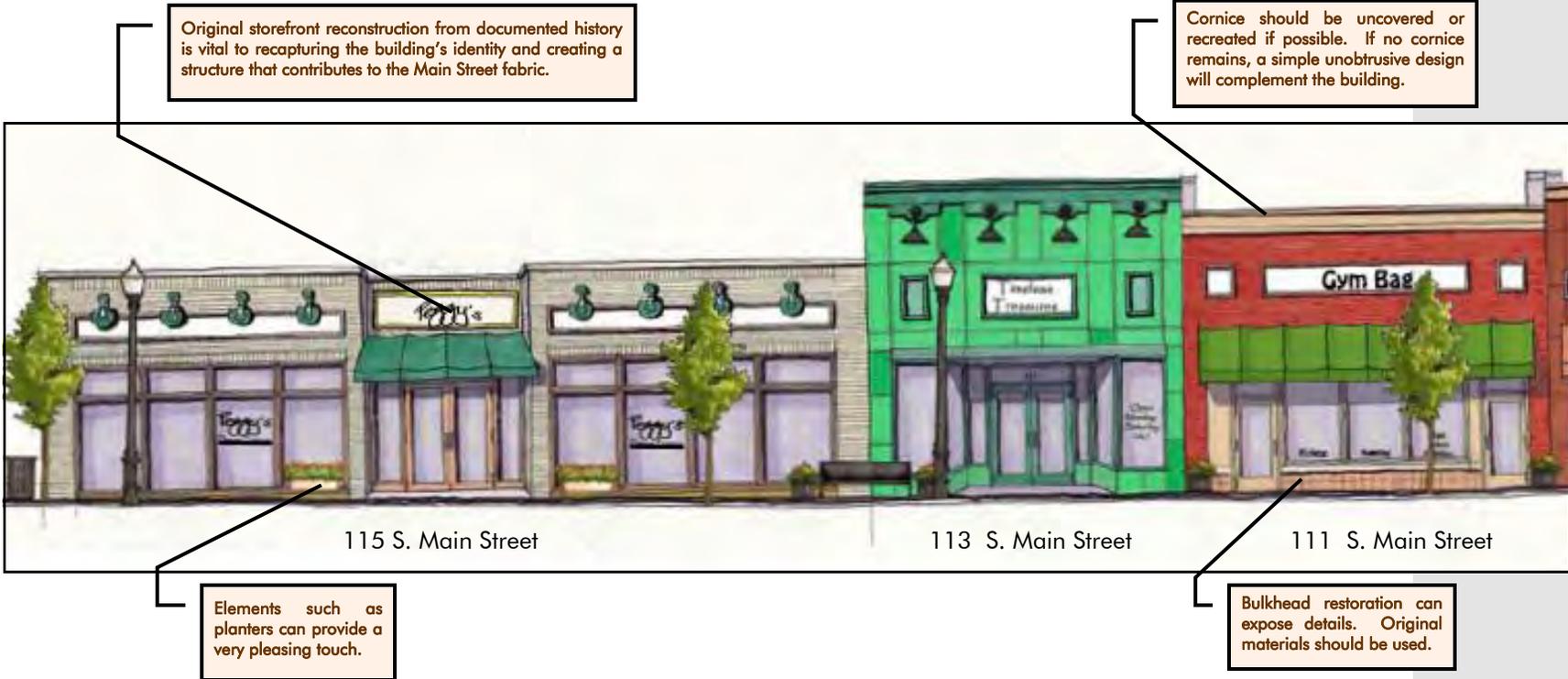


115 S. Main Street

113 S. Main Street

111 S. Main Street

Illustration showing improvements



6.5 109—101 S. Main Street

These photos show the Northern end of the 100 block of S. Main Street.

The bank building is a tremendous wealth of architectural detail, but presents a blank brick wall directly to its South that breaks up the façade line of the street.

There is a moderate slope to the South along the entire 100 block. The bank building sits on the highest point on S. Main Street.

Existing conditions are shown below and an illustration of improvements is shown on the next page.

Existing conditions



109 S. Main Street



101 S. Main Street

Illustration showing improvements



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7.0 BUILDING DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION

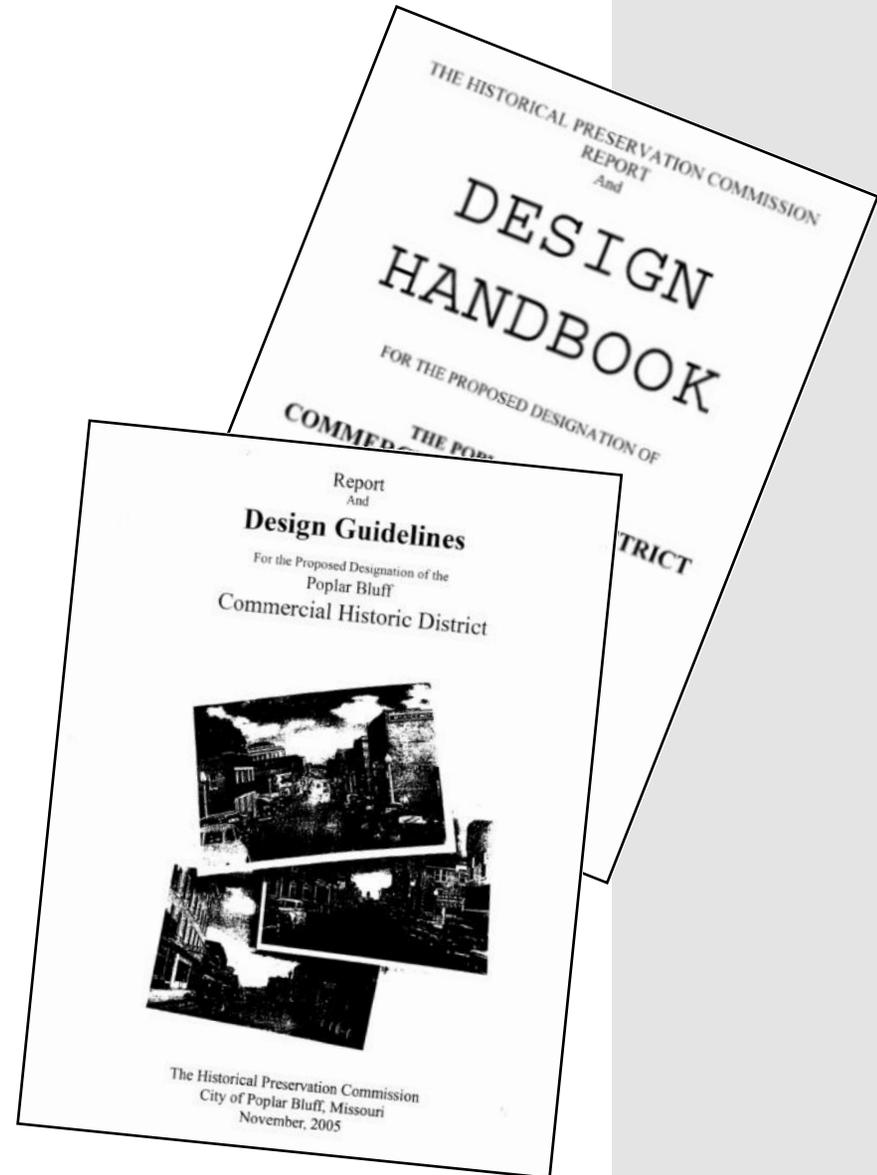
7.1 Coordination with Historic District Guidelines

The building design guideline concepts presented in this report can be meshed with the Poplar Bluff Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines developed in November of 2005 and applied throughout Downtown. The Design Handbook that was compiled by the City of Poplar Bluff is a comprehensive review of the Local Historic District, the procedure for Certificates of Appropriateness, and the design criteria by which the Preservation Commission reviews project applications.

Of particular note is the requirement for a Certificate of Appropriateness before a building permit is issued by the Planning Office of the City. This is an important requirement that is often overlooked or circumvented.

Given that these guidelines and procedures exist and are, hopefully, adhered to and supported by the Poplar Bluff elected officials and staff, expansion of the design concepts throughout the Downtown should be an easier effort than if no previous guidelines existed. The Local Historic District is overseen by the Historical Preservation Commission and is nearly congruous with the DREAM Boundary.

The recommendations which follow suggest some general changes. The City must determine how to proceed to expand Building Design Guidelines to the areas of Downtown that are not in the Historic District. The City must also commit to providing support for the Historical Preservation Commission. In any case, should the City choose to implement an incentive district, adherence to these guidelines should be a condition to receiving incentive funding.



7.2 Recommendations

First steps for Building Design Guidelines are similar to those of the Streetscape effort; build public support and buy-in and communicate the City-wide benefits of adhering to design guidelines. Suggestions for next steps are:

- The City should review its code enforcement practices and ordinances to see if adjustments or improvements are necessary. Some evidence was found during field work in Poplar Bluff that indicates Downtown enforcement, nuisance, and maintenance procedures are not being applied to commercial property, only to residential property. This situation must be fixed and will require a critical review of the City Codes.
- Along with this effort must come regular inspection procedures that include reviews of components beyond structural and safety issues. The City should review with its legal counsel how it can issue violations for items such as peeling paint, broken or missing windows, wood covering in windows, and general disrepair of buildings.
- Another issue is that permits for demolition or rehabilitation in the Downtown are given for an entire project. Initially there should be a “Material Removal” permit so that the City and Historical Preservation Commission can make a better determination of the state of a façade before granting a Certificate of Appropriateness. Recent issues have arisen where a developer indicates the building is not sound and after façade materials are removed, attractive details are found.
- Other effective practices will include firm and fair regulations addressing construction quality, conservation of resources, flexibility to allow innovation in design, and energy efficiency.

- In order 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, there are other issues that are non-design related that Downtown should seek to solve. Zoning issues involving the types of businesses in Downtown and the allowance of upper floor residential are two critical areas that the City of Poplar Bluff must address soon.
- The Poplar Bluff Chamber of Commerce should organize a seminar series aimed at area contractors and downtown property owners concerning 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 could sponsor lunch. It is important that local contractors understand the effort to revitalize Downtown.

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APPENDIX:

Downtown Commercial Historic District
Streetscape Concept and Implementation Plan

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