



A CITY/NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM TO SUPPORT HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

PART

3



Advisory Recommendations

This section addresses cooperative efforts that the city, in association with neighborhoods, should consider to support the value of its historic districts. These efforts fall into four categories:

- Neighborhood Identification
- Ridgeway Boulevard Project
- Design of the Street Environment
- Streetlighting
- Commercial Buffering & Landscaping

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTIFICATION

Neighborhood identification efforts, such as special street signs, gateways, and markers, build neighborhood cohesion, call attention to the quality of special districts, and make historic neighborhoods more marketable. De Pere has begun this process by installing special street signs identifying these three historic neighborhoods as National Register districts. Other actions the city and neighborhoods should consider include:

- **Renaming.** Residents of the Randall and Michigan-Superior Historic Districts expressed a desire through this planning process to use original addition names to identify their neighborhoods in the future. These original names were “Urbandale” for the Randall District and “Irwin” for the Michigan-Superior District.
- **Neighborhood Entrance Signs.** Attractive and architecturally compatible signs at key neighborhood entrances would complement existing street signs that mark the National Register Districts.

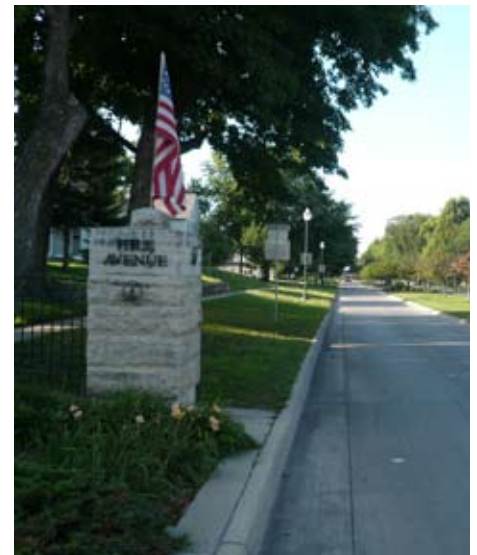
RIDGEWAY BOULEVARD

Ridgeway Boulevard is a critical to a quality public environment for all three historic districts, and should continue as an attractive, low to moderate-speed and volume neighborhood collector. The Ridgeway Boulevard program includes measures to calm traffic, improve landscaping and street lighting, and enhance the street’s pedestrian quality. Figure 3.1 illustrates strategies for physical improvements that are described below:

- **Nodes.** Establish nodes (curb extensions) at intersections along Ridgeway Boulevard. This calms traffic by reducing the perceived width of the street at the intersection and preventing cars from attempting to pass slower vehicles at intersections. It also reduces the distance that pedestrians must negotiate as they cross the street and provides opportunities for additional street landscaping.
- **Medians.** Ridgeway’s existing median breaks the scale of this relatively wide street and contributes to its quality as a park-like corridor. Additional landscaping should filter but not block a motorist’s view of the opposing street channel. This is effectively done by combining low-level and overstory plantings. Flower and ornamental plantings should be employed to add color.
- **Gateway signage.** Neighborhood entrances off Ridgeway are good locations for special neighborhood identification signs described above. Monument signs could also be utilized in the median to define the boulevard as a distinctive place in its own right. Street signs along the boulevard may also be upgraded or use thematic elements.
- **Street Lighting.** Street lighting along Ridgeway appears inadequate to provide reasonable night visibility. A lighting program should be executed, using thematic fixtures and poles. Gateway signage may also be a source of subtle lighting. Thematic lights should be designed to focus light at street and sidewalk level.

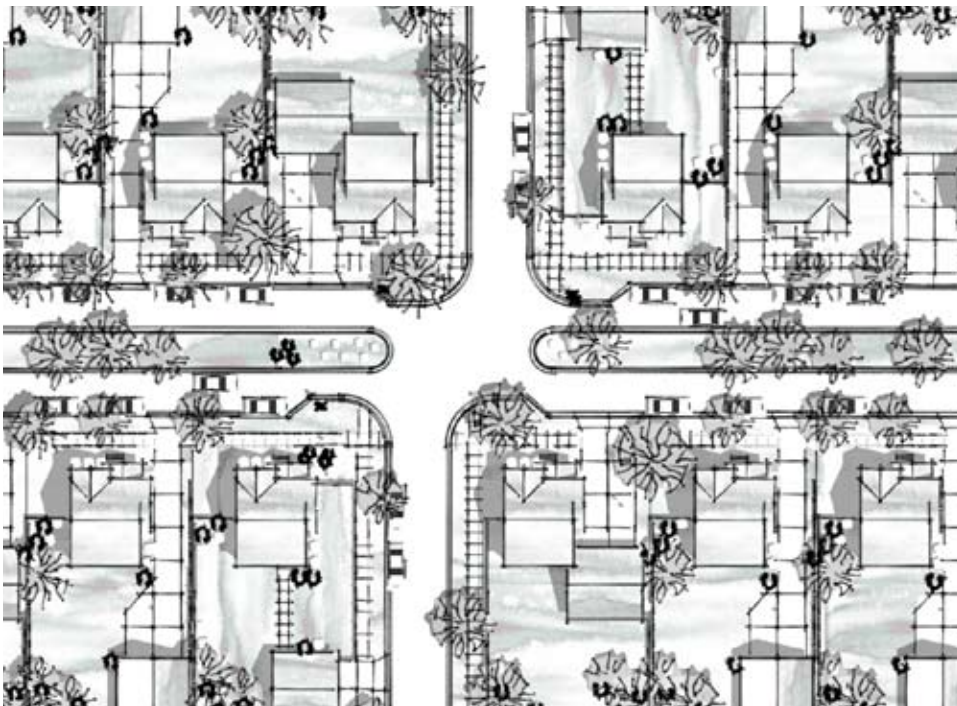


Historic district marker in Cathedral District, Bismarck, North Dakota



Neighborhood and boulevard identifier monuments along Hill Avenue in Spirit Lake, Iowa

Figure 3.1: Ridgeway Boulevard Nodes



Ridgeway Boulevard Concept
- nodes and landscaping

- **Signalization at North Broadway intersection.** In the future, a traffic study may be warranted for the intersection of Broadway and Ridgeway Boulevard to determine the need for a traffic signal. A signal may slow traffic on Broadway to some degree, but could cause additional traffic to use Ridgeway Boulevard. Neighbors prefer that the intersection not be signalized. A priority should be placed on strategies to relieve Ridgeway Boulevard traffic to avoid signalization.
- **Street trees.** Trees should be planted to restore the tree canopy along the street. Each property should ultimately have a minimum of one tree placed in the tree lawn between the sidewalk and curb. Tree plantings should utilize diverse species suited to northern street environments, and avoid overuse of a single tree type.
- **Bury Overhead Wires.** During street improvement projects, overhead utility wires should be buried, when possible.

DESIGN OF THE STREET ENVIRONMENT

Streets and public rights of way account for 20 to 25% of the total land area covered by the three historic districts, making the design of the street environment very important to the overall quality of these neighborhoods. While Ridgeway Boulevard warrants special community consideration, the study area's other streets are equally important as the public face of individual houses. Elements of the streetscape include landscaping, paving materials, lighting, street furniture, signs, and similar features. In these three districts, with dominant tree cover and front yards, a "green street" concept, merging street landscape and sustainable design, is especially relevant, and presents significant advantages that include:

- **Improved traffic safety.** Green streets create more pleasant pedestrian and vehicular environments that reduce stress and calm traffic. Green streets can help restore civility to our local travel environment.
- **Increased property values.** Home values are enhanced by attractive, well-landscaped streets, especially given the dominant orientation of homes in the three historic districts. Unattractive or poorly landscaped major corridors cause properties to turn away from them, producing blank walls and reducing the street's sense of security, comfort, and neighborliness.
- **Increased pedestrian and bicycle access.** Green streets are friendly to pedestrian and bicycle transportation, creating complete access environments that safely and attractively accommodate both motorized and non-motorized transportation. Complete streets use landscaping to help define good spaces for the slower speeds of pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- **Better stormwater management.** Tree canopies and landscaped areas can increase the permeability of street right-of-ways and help manage major storm loads.



*Crossing at Broadway and Ridgeway
Boulevard*

A green streets program applicable to the three historic districts and exportable to other De Pere neighborhoods is implemented by:

- **New tree installations.** Street trees should be planted at regular but not rigid intervals in the parkway or tree lawn strip between curb and sidewalk. Spacing depends on the crown size, root structure, and maintenance needs of individual specimens. Tree plantings may be relatively informal depending on context, and need not be at the same interval in every situation. The City of De Pere's Street Tree Program through the Park, Recreation and Forestry Department provides trees in the spring and fall. The City assist homeowners in selecting and planting the tree in the parkway.

Tree selection is important. Trees should also be resilient and appropriate to their surrounding neighborhood environment. Diversity of tree plantings is very important, because an over-reliance on a single species can destroy the neighborhood's entire tree canopy. Elms and oaks continue to be threats in Wisconsin, while ash borers are an emerging concern for these neighborhoods.

- **Street tree maintenance.** De Pere's Forestry Department will prune all trees planted between the curb and sidewalk. Property owners should alert the department when pruning is necessary. The Forestry Department will also instruct homeowners how to prune trees on their private property. The Forestry Department's contact number is 339-8362. Private owners doing their own work should:
 - Avoid "topping off" trees. It makes them susceptible to disease the insect attacks.
 - Avoid pruning elms and oaks between April 1st and October 1st. Pruning these trees during this period makes them susceptible to disease.
- **Alley maintenance.** Alleys are important to the Michigan-Superior district, with its small and relatively narrow lots and rear-access garages. Unmaintained alleys impair visibility, cause property damage and obstruct emergency and service vehicles. Alleyways should not be obstructed by brush. Private property owners should prune vegetation back to at least one foot behind the edge of the path and ten feet above it.
- **Best stormwater management practices.** These techniques include rain gardens, drainage swales, or wetlands, and can be developed both by individuals and public/private actions. These can increase the amount of green space and improve the appearance of streets in the neighborhood. More importantly, they control stormwater runoff from the neighborhood into Fox River. Private property owners may elect to work with the city to establish these features.
- **Landscaping.** The landscaping plan should respond to the individual buildings and neighborhoods, and may be guided by a neighborhood landscape master plan.

- **Sidewalks.** Sidewalks in De Pere's traditional neighborhoods were typically set back behind an eight foot parkway strip, providing enough space for street trees and providing a sense of layering of the vehicular and pedestrian environments. In De Pere and other cities, newer subdivision practices reduced the size of the parkway, consequently reducing the generosity and green quality of the street and the comfortable separation of pedestrians and motor vehicles. New sidewalks established in the historic districts should continue to respect a six to eight-foot minimum sidewalk setback. Minimum sidewalk widths for neighborhood streets are four feet wide, with a desirable width of five feet. All sidewalk intersections should meet ADA design standards.

STREET LIGHTING AND UTILITIES

Additional street lighting is required along Ridgeway Boulevard and may be needed along local neighborhood streets in the historic districts. Fixtures should be used that are consistent with the historic quality and precedents of the neighborhood, and efficiently direct light to the sidewalk and street plane, limiting light into adjacent buildings. Full cut-off or cut-off fixture optics focus the observer's eye on the illuminated surface below the fixture. Efficient light sources can achieve equivalent lighting levels with lower energy use. Their scale, spacing and style of the fixtures contribute to the visual tone of the street. Recommended lighting for districts with historic quality includes:

- **Dorchester Luminaires supplemented by roadway lighting.** Most of downtown De Pere utilizes Dorchester luminaires. This lamp design was popular in the 1800's when Victorian styles were matched with the soft glow of gas lamps. Later, these gas-fired fixtures were replaced by electric lamps. Current installations collect insects. These lamps and future installations should be routinely cleaned and maintained.
- **Acorn Luminaires.** Acorn-style lighting is frequently used in historic neighborhoods. Fixtures should be selected with reflecting optics that direct light to the ground.
- **Bury Overhead Wires.** During street improvement projects, overhead utility wires should be buried, when possible.



Cut-off fixture in Downtown



Dorchester Luminaire



COMMERCIAL BUFFERING AND LANDSCAPING

The large ShopKo structure along Michigan Street contrasts sharply with the fine residential scale of the east side of the street. A significant buffer yard screens the long rear wall of ShopKo from the residential street. However, landscaping could be improved and the rear elevation should be redesigned to complement neighborhood quality. In addition, the store's truck loading area is accessed directly from and visually exposed to Michigan Street. The curb cut into the loading area should be significantly reduced and techniques such as a screen wall with landscaping should be used to reduce impact on the neighborhood. The city, ShopKo, and the neighborhood should cooperatively develop and implement a master plan that addresses the neighborhood/commercial interface, addressing the store elevation, bufferyard landscaping and utilization, and loading area screening.



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