

Dubuque's Historic Millwork District

- **Streets – design – ADA/Bikes**
- **Streets – design - pavers**
- **Streets – funding**
- **Loading Docks solutions**

Background

Located in northeast Iowa, “Dubuque is the region’s main commercial, industrial, educational, and cultural center. The city has historically relied on manufacturing and other heavy industrial enterprises, but over the last few decades it has witnessed fundamental economic and demographic shifts.”¹

In 2004, Dubuque adopted the Downtown Master Plan, which identified the rehabilitation of Dubuque’s Historic Millwork District as a “keystone to the region’s aggressive economic development strategy.”²

Millwork District Goals

- Implement ‘Complete Streets’
- Preserve the millwork history of Dubuque
- Create an urban, mixed-use neighborhood
- Become a model for redevelopment by incorporating sustainable practices

¹ Barrett, Evan, Anna Lackender, Sushil Nepal, and Kyle Smith. Dubuque Warehouse District Recommendations for Revitalization. Rep. Dubuque. Print.

- Attract and retain a quality workforce for Dubuque’s growing economy

Phase I of Millwork District Revitalization

2010

- 75 residential units and 35,000 SF commercial space completed (reuse of historical buildings)
- Caradco Community Improvement Hub buildout completed
- DOT TIGER funded streetscape construction begun including new utilities and complete streets design
- Iowa Great Places grant for artistic streetscape elements completed

2011

- 125 residential units, 45,000 SF commercial space scheduled for completion (reuse of historical buildings)
- Streetscape construction project scheduled for completion

‘Complete Streets’ and Streetscape Construction

With an estimated 60% of new residents in the Historic Millwork District working in the downtown area, many will likely travel the 3-5 block distance to work on foot or by bike.

‘Complete Street’ concepts are being implemented on all streets within the District and connecting to the downtown business district and the Washington Neighborhood. The intent of the Complete Streets program is to design streets that are

attractive, convenient and safe for a broad range of users, including drivers, public transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, people without access to automobiles, children and people with disabilities.

Dubuque's 'Complete Streets' will include:

- New concrete roadways with permeable pavers in parking lanes
- New concrete sidewalks with brick accents
- ADA accessible pavers (in pavilion areas)
- Installation of 75 bike racks
- Bumpouts at intersections to provide larger pedestrian queue areas and shorter crossing distances
- Introduction of pedestrian strips
- Both bike lanes and shared bike lanes (to monitor the situation, The City is installing remote cameras to observe the traffic and see if there are any issues that develop)
- On-street bike trails that connects the central, north and west areas of the community
- Street trees
- Public art projects
- Street furniture

Removal of Brick Streets

Many Millwork District streets were paved with historic red brick and a functioning rail spur line ran through the heart of the Warehouse District on Jackson Street. Dubuque has since excavated and stockpiled all historic pavers and rail spurs.

During public input/design development meetings, many

people in the biking community voiced concern/opposition to reset historic pavers, as bikers have trouble navigating wheels through brick paved streets. Accessibility advocates also noted wheel chairs experience difficulty in navigation of uneven roadways. To comply with 'Complete Streets' philosophy of giving equal street access to all users, the City decided to construct new concrete streets. Only at Jackson St. (the main thoroughfare) and at the periphery of bumpouts, will historic pavers be re-laid. Jackson St. will serve as visual interpretation of the District's transportation history.

Jon Dienst, P.E., Civil Engineer for the City of Dubuque said Iowa SHPO and the National Trust of Historic Preservation have approved of the City's removal of historic street materials, new streets designs, and new material usages.

Loading Docks

The City is developing the streets and sidewalks up to the face of the loading docks. Private property owners are developing the docks as part of their developments. Because 38% of the district's rehabilitation projects are seeking tax credits, IA SHPO weighs in on restoration design and the City adheres to SHPO's decisions.

The first dock to be modified is located at the Caradco building. The Caradco building is built on a hill, resulting in only one of four elevations (north) at street level. The north entrance provides main access to the building. The east elevation has a loading dock and stairs at its entrance. The building owners rebuilt the concrete loading dock and installed an exterior chair lift next to entry stairs. The building is now

handicap accessible on two facades and all interior spaces can be accessed through north and east entrance points.

Surrounding the Caradco building are new sidewalks with bumpout crosswalks and on street parking.

Green Alleys

Dubuque has a “green alley” program, which places pervious pavers in the alley for stormwater management. All pavers used in this program are new. The City Engineer said old pavers made him nervous in relation to the heavy truck load (i.e. garbage trucks, delivery trucks) in the alleys. He felt the old pavers could get dislodged because they do not have notches on the side to allow for setting.

Financing

The projected improvement budget for public infrastructure in the Millworks District (streets, utilities, pedestrian signage) was estimated at \$6.2 million. Dubuque received an US DOT TIGER (ARRA funds) in the amount of \$5,600,000 to fund said infrastructure.

TIGER grants (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) are administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (“DOT”). \$1.5 billion is available through September 30, 2011, for Supplementary Discretionary Grants for a National Surface Transportation System. These grants are to be awarded on a competitive basis for capital investments in surface transportation projects that will have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area or a region.

The DOT cited Dubuque’s project benefits as: “The project will improve livability in the Millwork District by reducing commute times and providing new and improved travel options for walkers, bicyclists and transit riders. It will improve connectivity and provide greater access for people that are transit-dependent. As many as 60 percent of the new residents within the Historic Millwork District are estimated to be traveling to work downtown and the project will allow them to more conveniently and safely walk, bike or take transit to work. The project will also increase the sustainability of the transportation system by making more fuel efficient travel options more attractive to area residents. The vibrancy of the Complete Streets neighborhood will also encourage economic development and business activity in the downtown area.”³

Lessons for Minneapolis’ Warehouse District

- 38% of Dubuque’s Historic Millwork Revitalization is being funded through (\$37.8 million) State and Federal Historic Tax Credits; 28% of revitalization is being funded by Private Developers (\$28.05 million), with the City currently contributing 4% or \$4.4 million. Minneapolis needs to harness creative funding mechanisms to move their project forward.
- Early in the process, “Sustainability” and “Complete Streets” were identified as two main project goals. The

³ "Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants." Recovery Act TIGER Grant Announcements. U.S. Department of Transportation. Web. 26 Jan. 2011.

City was given flexibility in design and historic infrastructure retention because of their foci.

- Greening, street tress, and storm water management via pervious pavers are three prevalent additions to the Dubuque Warehouse District; Minneapolis may want to consider natural ecology as a storm water management tool.
- Many interesting design options were used to make Dubuque's streets and buildings ADA compliant such as exterior elevators on loading docks, building orientation access, concrete sides walks with brick accents, PED strips, etc.

