

# PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION & STREETScape DESIGN

In recent years, the City has constructed new sidewalks and enhanced existing ones in the downtown with brick pavers, lighting, benches, signs and plantings. This has established a distinct and attractive image around the square. Now, streetscape improvements should be extended to other portions of the downtown, and it should be integrated into an overall pedestrian circulation system that accommodates the entire downtown and not just the Town Square Historic District. Many of the recommendations in this chapter also apply to bicyclists.

Presently, sidewalks exist only along a few of the blocks in the downtown. This discontinuity in the pedestrian system is a major impediment to development of a healthy retail sector and it also negatively affects the ability to attract offices and residences into the area. The sidewalk system should be extended to all block faces within the planning area and this should be a high priority for implementation.

A system for extending the sidewalks into blocks with varying conditions is described later in this chapter. This system is to be used in determining specific sidewalk designs for individual applications, where building setbacks, parking layout and topography may influence the design of curb, gutter and sidewalk.

## Pedestrian Circulation Routes

Pedestrian ways, bike trails and streets should be considered in a broad context. They should be a means of circulation that strengthen business centers and link neighborhoods. Therefore, roadways, sidewalks and trails should be coordinated in a comprehensive system that assures continuity of circulation especially for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Links between downtown development anchors are defined in the basic framework strategy. These links should be enhanced to connect established improvements to nearby neighborhoods. Connec-

tions should also be expanded for regional trail connections.

### **1. Enhance sidewalks and crosswalks to establish a sense of hierarchy in pedestrian routes.**

The primary routes that pedestrians are expected to use the most should receive the focus of signage and sidewalk improvements. Along these primary routes, installing sidewalks and improving crosswalks should be high priorities. Map #7 on page 61 details the hierarchy of sidewalk designs that should be used downtown in order to establish a hierarchy of primary and secondary pedestrian routes. Within this hierarchy, the amount of decorative paving used varies, in response to the levels of use anticipated.

### **2. Strengthen the functionality of the pedestrian and bicycle systems.**

The pedestrian system is a complex network of sidewalks, paths, trails, alleys, crosswalks, lighting, benches, waste receptacles, bicycle racks and signs. These components should be assembled in various ways, from block-to-block to respond to specific conditions. Expanding the pedestrian system “kit of parts” throughout much of the downtown will strengthen the role pedestrians play in Georgetown’s economy.

The pedestrian system should include:

- Plazas, parks and other places to rest and refresh,
- Directional signs and wayfinding devices tailored to the pedestrian and,

- A series of destinations that make downtown a fun place to explore at all times during the day, week, or year.

**3. Provide trail connections to and from the downtown core for pedestrians and bicyclists.**

The City of Georgetown’s Parks and Recreation Department is planning an expansive trails system in and around Georgetown. Connections to these trails to and from the downtown area should be provided. Priority should be given to trail improvements that would link downtown to outlying neighborhoods. Of particular importance are the trails found along the banks of the North and South San Gabriel Rivers.

Trail improvement actions:

- Provide clearly defined paths between the river and downtown.
- Install markers as important parts of these regional trail connectors.

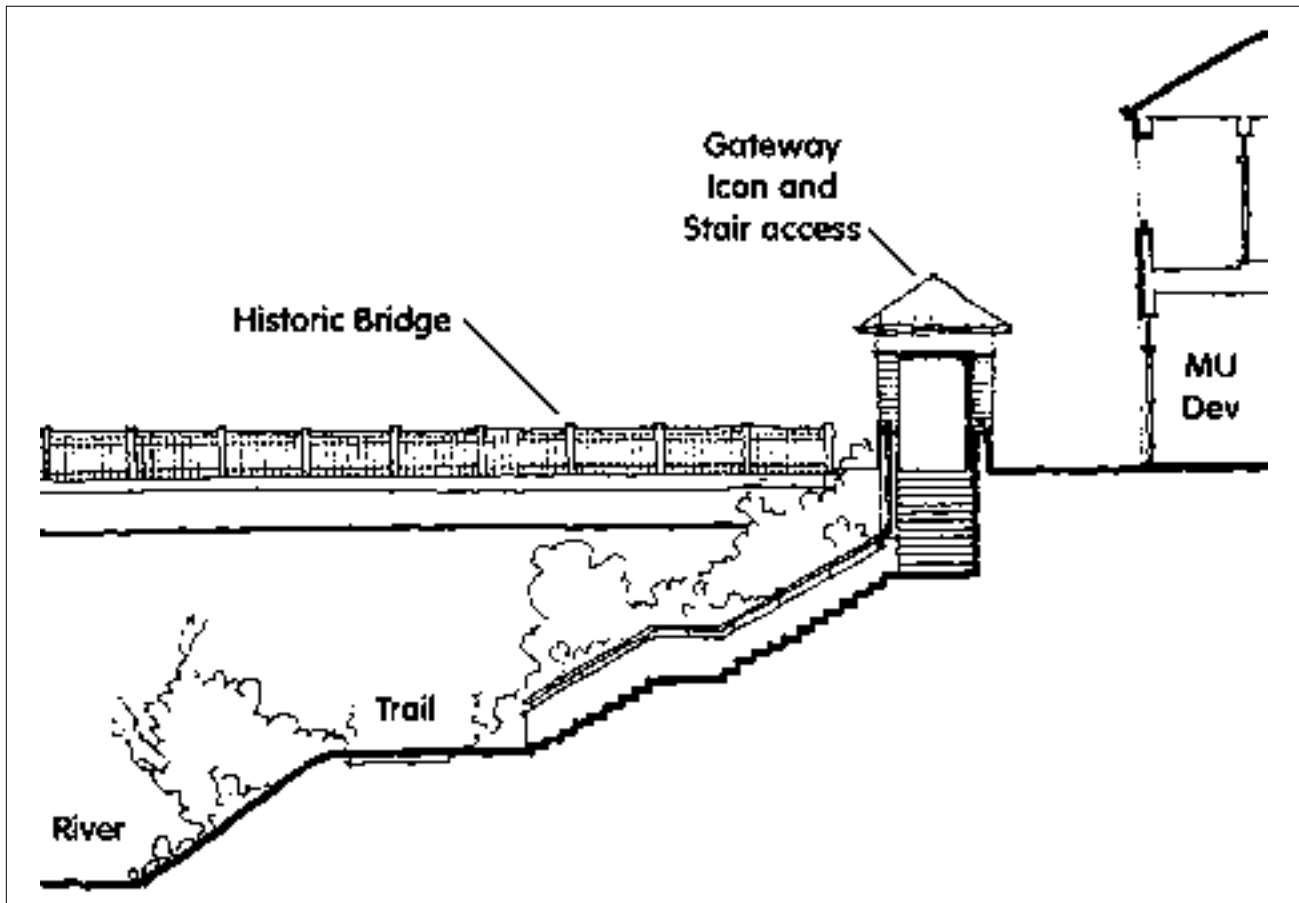
- Study the feasibility of providing pedestrian connections across both the North and South forks of the San Gabriel River, that are separate from those used by automobiles.

**4. Coordinate bicycle circulation as a system.**

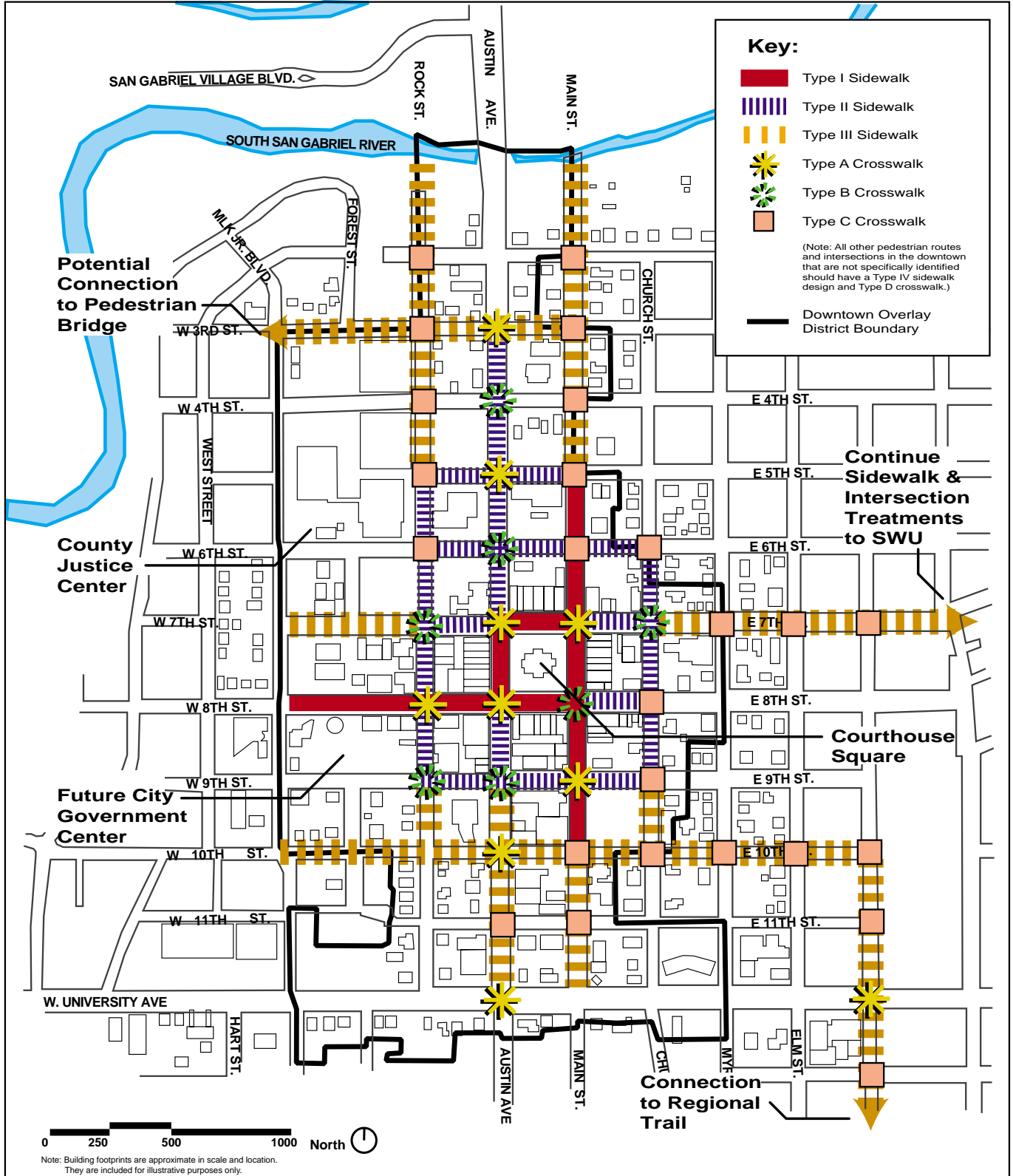
Bicyclists do use the many regional trails in and around Georgetown. Strengthening the linkages to the downtown and improving signage to key destinations will improve the role which this user group plays in the economy. This includes linking existing and planned trails, as well as providing for bicyclists on some streets.

Bicycle system actions:

- Bicycle routes should be clearly defined.
- Bike routes should be implemented to provide continuity of access from outlying areas to the downtown.
- Bicycle racks should be provided at activity centers.



*A better pedestrian connection needs to be made to the trail along the South San Gabriel River. Stairs should be considered that lead from river-side developments to these trails.*



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**Georgetown Downtown Master Plan  
 Sidewalk & Crosswalk Design**

**Map #7**  
 April 6, 2003

**5. Provide clearly defined pedestrian routes between the downtown and Southwestern University.**

An important asset to the community and market for the downtown businesses is the student body at Southwestern University. Clear and safe pedestrian routes should be provided. Note that this particular pedestrian connection should be well lit as an extra measure of security for those students who travel this route at night.

Actions:

- Improve walking conditions to the university with new sidewalks, where conditions permit.
- Install decorative lighting and directional signs along the route.
- Improve crosswalks as indicated on the intersection improvements plan.

**6. Provide a physical pedestrian connection between the downtown and the west bank of the South San Gabriel River.**

Apartment complexes and overnight accommodations located across the river from downtown are a missed opportunity. Presently there are no convenient routes for these residents and visitors to walk to the downtown, which is surprisingly close. When confronted with an automobile trip, their decision is likely to take them onto the interstate and out of town because its access is more convenient.

Action:

- Study the feasibility of installing a pedestrian bridge across the river to link downtown with development to the west.

**Sidewalks**

To help guide pedestrian activity in and around the downtown, four types of sidewalk designs are recommended. This level typology provides for a range of experiences from basic scored concrete to routes with brick pavers, benches and decorative lighting. Map #7 on the previous page illustrates where these different levels of sidewalk design should occur.

Proposed sidewalk enhancements are based on the following basic streetscape principles:

- Install improvements and amenities in *response* to high levels of pedestrian activity
- Install decorative crosswalks in areas where pedestrian crossing volumes are high

Decorative paving should be used strategically, to express a visual theme for downtown. Decorative paving should denote special activity zones, such as intersections and pedestrian crossings, street furniture areas and public plazas. The decorative paving design proposed in the sidewalk typologies that follow are based upon those developed for the Town Square Historic District. Again, the basic approach here is to expand these existing elements into the surrounding blocks.

In some areas of intense pedestrian activity, decorative paving should be installed throughout the entire intersection. This will help to identify these intersections as places of major pedestrian use and will establish the downtown as a strongly pedestrian-oriented area.

<u>Sidewalk Widths:</u>	
<i>Minimum:</i>	<i>6 feet</i>
<i>Standard:</i>	<i>8 feet</i>
<i>Optimum:</i>	<i>10 feet</i>

**Type I Sidewalk**

In this classification, the entire sidewalk is constructed of brick paving, in order to indicate its high level of pedestrian use. These sidewalks offer the highest level of pedestrian enhancement. This design is currently in place on the four blocks facing the Courthouse Square.

Key features:

- Brick paver laid in a herringbone bond
- Brick paver bands on both sides of central pavers, laid in a stack bond (use of both single and double bands of these accent bricks are seen)
- Concrete band (curb and gutter) on street side of pavers
- Tree and flower planters
- Decorative lights, benches and waste receptacles

### **Type II Sidewalk**

This sidewalk has a band of brick pavers at the outside edge of the walk. The remainder of the walk is finished concrete, scored in 2 foot square modules. This provides texture and interest in a more economical manner, and helps to distinguish these streets from those that are all brick.

Key features:

- Modular pavers along the sidewalk edge, laid in a common bond
- Concrete bands (curb and gutter) on street side of pavers
- Tree and flower planters
- Decorative lights, benches and waste receptacles



*Example of a Level I sidewalk. (Georgetown, TX)*

### **Type III Sidewalk**

In this classification, the sidewalk is constructed of scored concrete, in the 2-foot square module. Brick pavers would be used for accents, at special seating areas or corner landscape features. These sidewalks can either be installed detached from the street and separated by a landscaped planting strip or attached to the street with a concrete curb and gutter. Installation is dependent upon the existing streetscape character along the block.

Key features:

- Scored concrete in 2-foot modules
- Decorative lights, benches and waste receptacles should be installed on the 7th Street route to Southwestern University, which is one route designated for this application.



*Example of a Level II sidewalk. (Anderson, SC)*

### **Type IV Sidewalk**

In this classification, the entire sidewalk is constructed of scored concrete. These sidewalks can either be installed detached from the street and separated by a landscaped planting strip or attached to the street with a concrete curb and gutter. Installation is dependent upon the existing streetscape character along the block.

Key features:

- Scored concrete sidewalk

### **Sidewalk Implementation**

A key issue in downtown is how a consistent sidewalk layout can occur, in existing blocks where irregular setbacks exist and parking varies from diagonal to perpendicular to parallel. Essentially, a sidewalk with curb and gutter should define each street edge. In some cases, where room does not exist for diagonal pull-in parking, parallel parking should be installed. However, there are some locations where there is adequate room for diagonal parking while still maintaining sufficient sidewalk widths. Each of these situations must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The sidewalk system may be extended incrementally, as properties redevelop. When this occurs, the site should be evaluated to determine which sidewalk layout is most appropriate, taking the use of the property and the setback of the building into consideration. Wherever feasible, pull-in parking that obstructs pedestrian flow should be eliminated or redesigned. Sidewalks with curb and gutter should then be installed, and on-street parking should be established.

While incremental construction of the sidewalk system is possible, a preferred alternative is to construct several blocks of sidewalks at one time. In order to do so, an improvement district should be considered, as described in Appendix A.

Actions:

- Develop an improvement district to construct sidewalks. (See Appendix A for potential funding tools.)
- Construct sidewalks in a phased program (See also Appendix A for suggested phasing strategies.)

## **Crosswalks and Intersections**

Safe street crossings are essential for a vital pedestrian-oriented environment. Crosswalks should be clearly identified and ample space should be provided to allow groups of pedestrians to cross. They should be designed such that motorists would be discouraged from parking so close to the corner that the visibility of pedestrians would be impaired.

Attractive crosswalks are especially important in encouraging downtown patrons to use off-street parking lots. Because sidewalk amenities and pleasant street crossings enhance the walking experience from these locations, they can help to reduce traffic congestion and relieve demand for on-street parking spaces.



*Adding pedestrian-controlled crossings will greatly increase the safety of pedestrians in the downtown. (Anderson, SC)*

There are few pedestrian crossings along Austin Avenue except at 7th and 8th Streets, and it is seen by many as effectively cutting the downtown in two, due to heavy traffic volumes and high speeds. While there are striped crossings at most major intersections, these are not safe due to turning traffic and the distance of the crossings. Routes between destination points are not well defined or marked either.

Adding pedestrian-controlled signals at 3rd, 5th and 10th Streets will greatly increase the safety for pedestrians, as well as help to clearly identify the preferred routes that pedestrians should take. This means moving away from “timed” traffic lights which are quite popular but which only encourage high speeds that are not appropriate through a pedestrian environment.

In response to the varying levels of use of intersections within Georgetown, a range of crosswalk designs should be employed. Many of the intersection designs include the use of decorative paving to more clearly identify the crossings, establish visual continuity and enhance the pedestrian experience downtown. Intersection typologies are identified on Map #7 on page 59.

The following intersection design categories should be used:

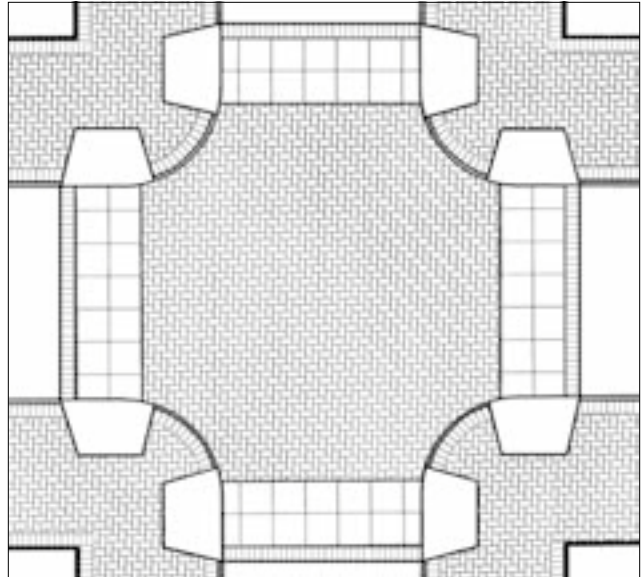
### **Type A Intersection**

In this classification, the intersection is constructed of decorative paving, in order to indicate its high level of pedestrian use. These intersections offer the highest level of pedestrian enhancement and provide the strongest identity for crossings in the downtown area. In some cases, the existing curb line and corner radius should be retained, but in some special conditions, corners of sidewalks may be expanded to protrude into the parking lanes to provide additional area for street furniture and plantings, similar to those around the square.

The advantage of using expanded corners on sidewalks is that they prevent illegal parking at pedestrian crossings where visibility would otherwise be impaired, and they make it easier for pedestrians to be seen by motorists before entering the crosswalk. The expanded corners also effectively reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians, thereby improving pedestrian safety. The radius of the expanded corner should also be designed to facilitate turning for large delivery trucks.

Key features:

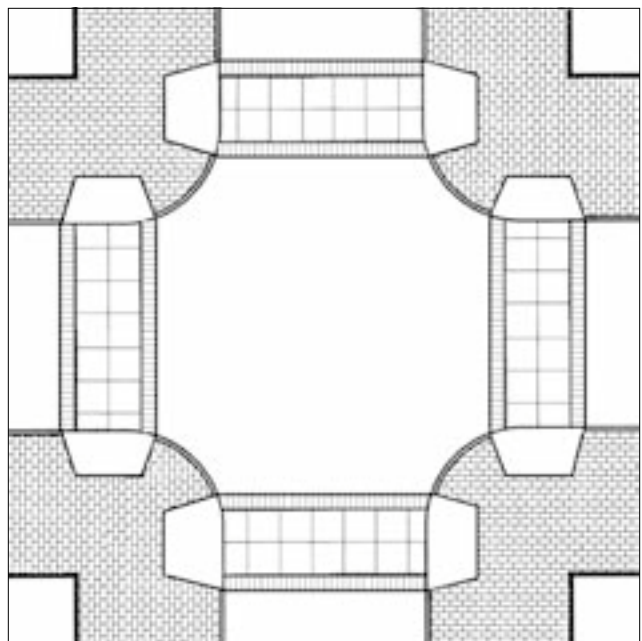
- Decorative paver at corners
- Decorative paver in center of intersection
- Scored concrete crosswalks
- Pedestrian controlled crossing signals



*Example of a Type A intersection.*

### **Type B Intersection**

In this category, either decorative pavers or scored concrete is used within the sidewalk boundaries at corners. The crosswalk areas are defined by scored concrete. The “paver” treatment is dependent upon the type of sidewalk designation for the intersection and should be consistent.



*Example of a Type B intersection.*

Key features:

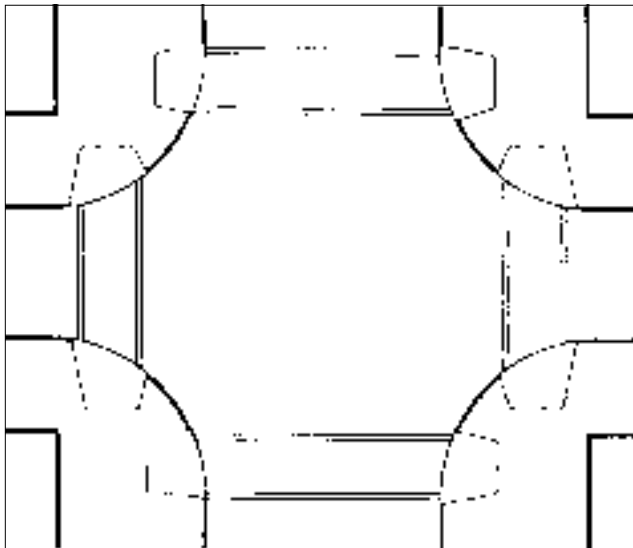
- Decorative pavers at corners
- Scored concrete crosswalk

### **Type C Intersection**

In this category, scored concrete is used within the sidewalk boundaries at corners only, while the crosswalk areas are defined by conventional stripes. This level of intersection design is appropriate in areas of lower crossing conflict.

Key features:

- Striped crosswalk
- Scored concrete corners



*Example of a Type C intersection.*

### **Type D Intersection**

In this category, intersections appear as conventionally designed. No upgrades or enhancements are necessary.

### **Intersection Implementation**

Actions:

- A series of intersections should be constructed at one time, as a set, such that one of the key pedestrian routes is completed. These may be financed as a part of the city's capital improvements program, or through a special improvement district. These techniques are described in the appendix.

- As an initial step, detailed designs must be developed, based on the conceptual sketches provided in the plan.

## **Streetscape Strategy**

One issue related to the streetscape is the wide variety of design elements that presently are used throughout the downtown. The Town Square Historic District, for example, has several streetscape features that give it a distinct identity: street trees in grates, period lighting fixtures with banners, decorative paving and landscape elements at several corners. While these elements contribute to an identity for a few blocks in the downtown, extending these elements into the surrounding blocks would enhance the overall pedestrian experience. The design and treatment should help create a more pleasant downtown experience, and help identify the downtown area as a cohesive, inviting place to work, live, shop and conduct business.

In order to achieve this vision, the following basic principles should be followed:

- 1. Use different combinations of street furniture to distinguish the two sub-areas in the Downtown Overlay District.**

Street furniture within the historic district should



*Street furniture in Area 1 would continue the wood slat bench and waste receptacle design. Street lights would include hanging baskets and banners.*



*Street furniture for Area 2 would include black strap metal benches and waster receptacles. This historic acorn street light would be continued.*

continue the use of the wood slat benches and wood slat waste receptacles, along with the historic acorn street light design. Ornamental hanging flower baskets and banners should be used within the historic district.

Street furniture in Area 2 should use black metal slat benches and waster receptacles, along with the historic acorn street light design. These should remain simple, without use of hanging baskets. This will provide a subtle distinction between the two areas.

## **2. Enhance major pedestrian routes within the downtown area.**

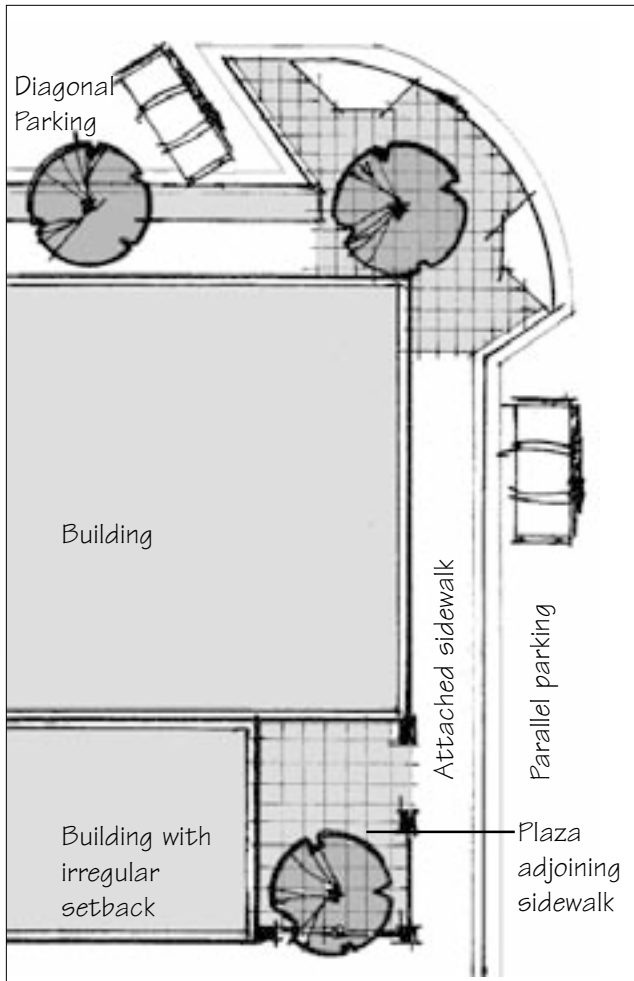
Apply the hierarchy of sidewalk paving designs to define pedestrian routes.

## **3. Use on-street parking to buffer pedestrians from auto travel lanes.**

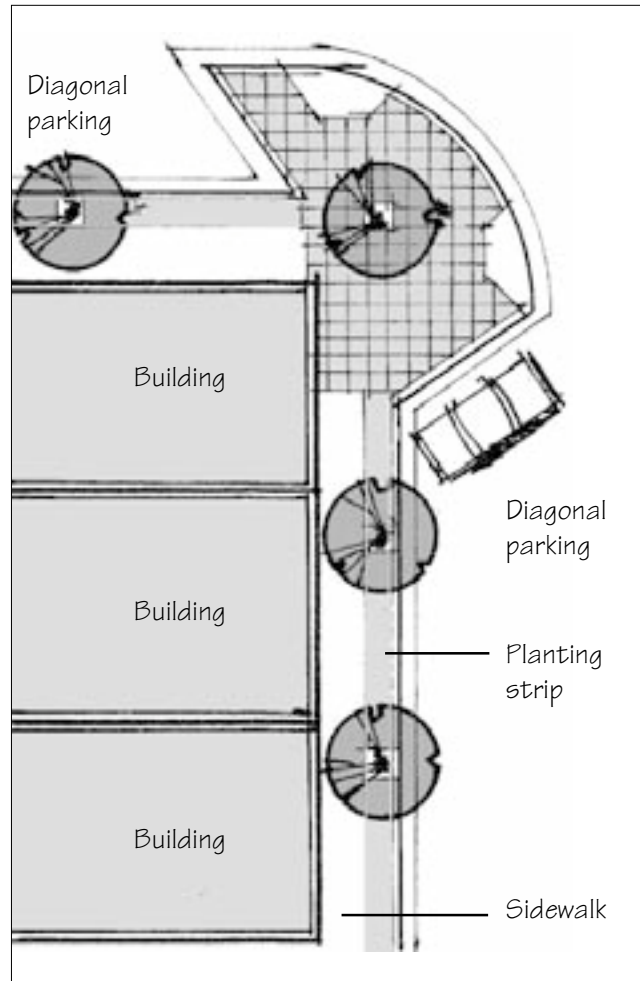
Apply parallel and diagonal parking layouts as conditions permit.  
(See page 66 for those layouts.)

## **4. Install street trees where conditions permit.**

In some cases, street trees may be installed in mid-block locations. In others, room may only exist at corners where expanded “bulb-outs” provide additional room.



**Parallel Parking Design:** Where space is limited, parallel parking should be installed.



**Diagonal Parking Design:** Where space permits, diagonal parking may be provided, but first, a sidewalk must be accommodated.