

Downtown Papillion



Concepts for the Enhancement and Growth of Papillion's Traditional Town Center

Developed for the City of Papillion by
RDG Planning & Design

T

raditional downtown districts occupy a particular place of importance in their cities. They express the history and individuality of a town and often represent the hearts of their communities. Papillion's traditional town center is similarly important to life in the town. The traditional center along Washington Street traces its origin from a time when the Papillion was a rural village, connected to Omaha by the lifeline of the Union Pacific Railroad and, for a few years, by an interurban trolley. Papillion's traditional town center retains a scale and intimacy that mark it as a special place.



As Papillion has grown, the role of Downtown has also changed. The area remains a focus for city life, but no longer fills the role of a major retail center. Yet, its scale and character provide distinctive opportunities for new growth and investment as a signature district for the city. The adjacent Halleck Park Trail, part of the metropolitan area's trail system, and nearby major parks like City Park and Halleck Park also make the town center central to community life. We can envision a new future for Papillion's old town center as a lively urban area that enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike. Papillion's comprehensive plan, developed with the help of hundreds of city residents, projects just this type of future for the district.

While Papillion's traditional town center has many advantages, it also has challenges that prevent it from reaching its full potential as a special city district. Washington Street channels heavy traffic through the district, but creates a relatively harsh environment. The district's features, including City Hall, the Sump Memorial Library, retail and office establishments, the trail, and City Park, are separated from each other. An improved and pleasant public environment provides the way to weave these many features into a cohesive, attractive district. It also creates the conditions to help bring about improvements in downtown properties and ambitious new development projects such as Piazza Papillion.



The Concept

T

he Papillion Center program provides realistic concepts that can help connect the important features of Downtown, making it a memorable place and a good business and civic environment. Its components include:

- **The Washington Street corridor**, addressing the appearance and function of the “main street” of the district, creating a high quality front door for visitors and travelers.

- **Municipal Plaza**, providing a space of civic importance that connects City Hall and the Sump Memorial Library.

- **Second Street**, a street that can provide a calmer town center environment away from the traffic of Washington Street, and links the library with the future Piazza Papillion project.

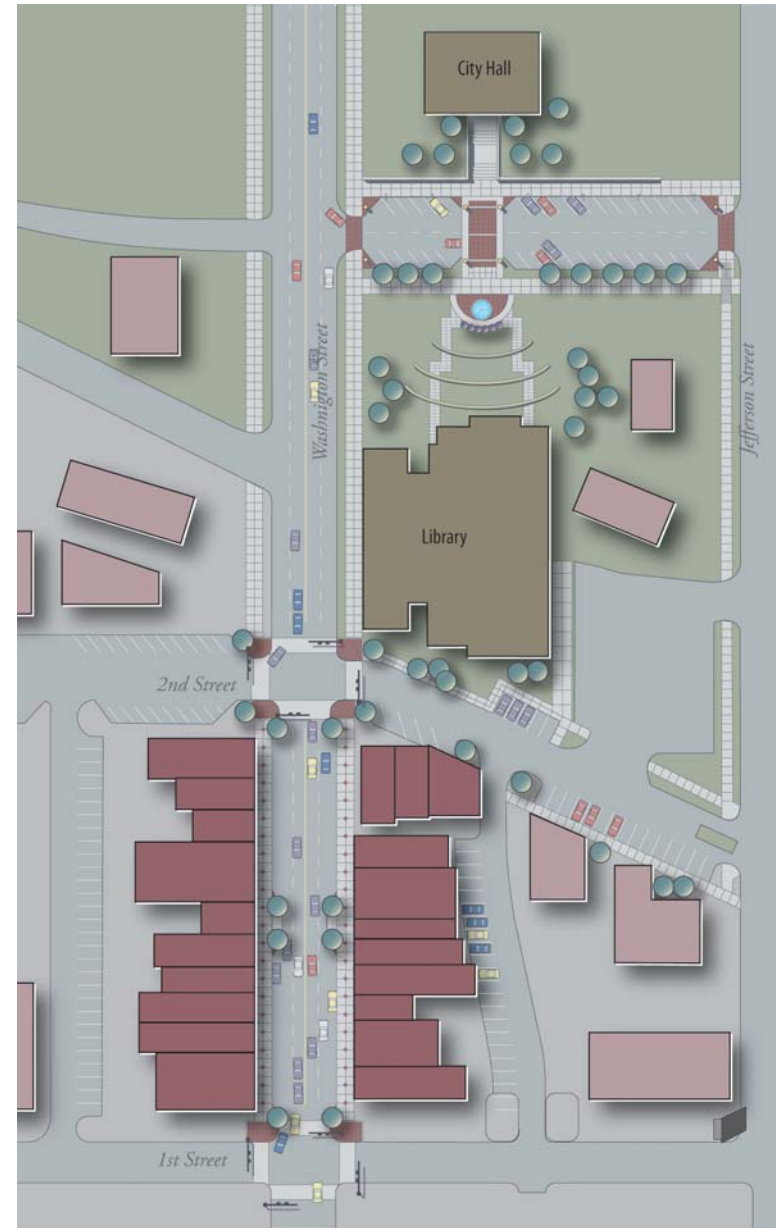
- **The Washington Street Bridge**, the connection between the north and south parts of the traditional Downtown.

- **Storefront Renewal**, providing a unified design framework for reinvestment and enhancement of existing storefronts.

- **Piazza Papillion**, a redevelopment proposal contained in the Papillion Comprehensive Plan that creates a unique mixed use project that includes residential and commercial uses, public space, and a connection to City Park and the Halleck Park Trail.



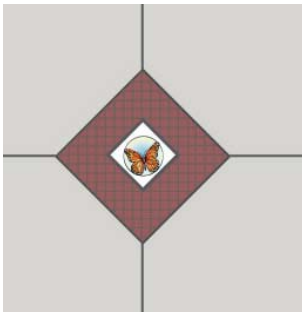
- 1 Washington Street
- 2 Municipal Plaza
- 3 Second Street
- 4 Washington Street Bridge
- 5 Renewed Storefronts
- 6 Piazza Papillion
- 7 City Park



Washington Street

T

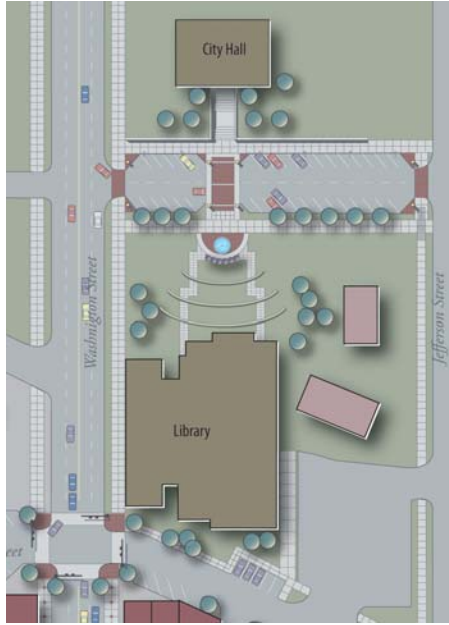
he Town Center program envisions sidewalk reconstruction and streetscape enhancements along Washington Street, designed to make the district's front door more friendly and attractive to users. New sidewalks would be accented by paver panels and special ceramic tiles imprinted with the city's butterfly logo. Landscaping and street furniture will be provided at the corners and center of blocks. Thematic lighting enhanced by colorful graphics will add scale and distinction to the streetscape. Defined crosswalks and corner nodes will make the street easier for pedestrians to cross; a possible new signal at 2nd Street can also help calm heavy traffic through the center of town and strengthen the connection between the two sides of the street. The result will be a public environment that creates a better investment atmosphere for business and property reinvestment.



Municipal Plaza



Third Street between Jefferson and Washington Streets provides a special opportunity as the unifying space between two of the city's most important and busiest public buildings – City Hall and the Sump Memorial Library. The plan envisions creating a Municipal Plaza, providing good public access and function in an setting that connects two important civic landmarks. The plan proposes:

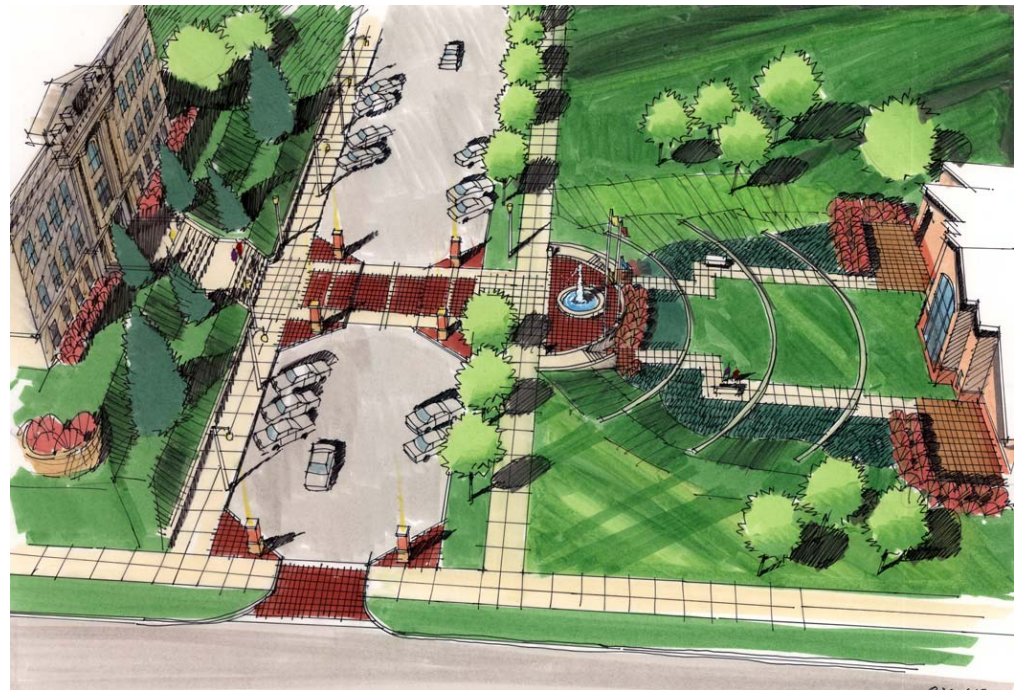


- Gateway elements and lighting features that extend the historic lights on the grounds of City Hall.

- New sidewalks and landscaping.

- Contrasting paving on the axis between City Hall and the Library, creating a strong link between the two sites.

- A fountain overlook along this connecting axis, emphasizing the monumental entrance to City Hall and establishing a ceremonial axis between the two buildings.



Second Street



While most people think of Washington Street as Downtown's principal business street, east-west Second Street also provides great potential for main street development. The street's angle east of Washington, parallel to what was once the Union Pacific mainline through the town, creates an interesting outdoor room. The street forms a front door for the library and is lined on its south side by traditional commercial uses. West of Washington Street, Second Street would connect to the proposed Piazza Papillion project. Concepts for Second Street include:

- Improving sidewalks and establishing street landscaping between Jefferson to Adams.
- Installing thematic, pedestrian scale lighting and graphics to define the small scale of the street.
- Creating gateways to 2nd Street on both sides of its intersection with Washington Street.
- Possibly installing a traffic signal at the Washington Street intersection.



Washington Street Bridge



The West Papillion Creek is a central feature of Downtown Papillion, and in the future, the town center will make good use of this important visual and recreational resource. A key part of this strategy will be the enhancement of the Washington Street bridge, which should provide a strong connection between the north and south parts of the district. Bridge enhancements should include thematic lighting, ballustrades that set off the bridge's sidewalks, more attractive outer railings, and graphics. The current bridge's width permits some expansion of the pedestrian area. Observation platforms cantilevered from the bridge may be developed if the structure permits. These platforms can provide benches and a unique overlook of the Papio valley for people crossing the bridge.



Piazza Papillion

Piazza Papillion is an exciting concept for a new mixed use development in Downtown Papillion. The project would incorporate the city-owned public works yard and an adjacent salvage yard to create a unique project that combines downtown housing, retail space, performance areas, and major public open spaces. The Piazza Papillion project includes:

- Acquisition of the existing salvage yard north of the public works yard and relocation of the Public Works Department's street maintenance facility and yard to a new location.
- Commercial reuse of the historic flagstone Public Works building on Adams Street.
- A new, mixed use building, with commercial and office uses on a lower level and apartments above, designed to both define the street grid and follow the diagonal alignment of the creek.
- An outdoor plaza oriented toward the creek and defined by the existing public works building, the new development, and the Fire Station's back wall. This plaza can accommodate small performances and public events, as well as passive use and enjoyment.
- A pedestrian bridge over the West Papillion Creek, connecting Piazza Papillion to City Park and providing a direct link to the regional trail system.



Storefront Renewal

Downtown Papillion is an important civic environment, but also must be an attractive business environment for specialty retailing, entertainment, and services. Improvements in the public environment encourage private reinvestment in buildings. This reinvestment should be guided by design guidelines that encourage variety within a consistent vocabulary, and enhance the overall character of the district. Financial incentives may also be provided to encourage storefront restoration in the downtown district.



*Consistent
Exterior Signage*



*Consistent awnings in
shape and scale*

*Consistent vocabulary
of color & materials*

