

AMS Design Committee

A walk down Main Street



As we begin to think about the paver replacement project on Main Street, I find it important to understand what the streetscape along Main Street currently is and to begin to imagine what it might become.

So, let's take a walk!

Existing Features

- Street Lighting
- Artistic Lighting
- Curb Planter
- Free Standing Planter
- Bike Rack
- Pavers



As we begin our walk, I want to identify several of the many features of the Main St. Streetscape.

First, there are two types of lighting that we will call Street Lighting and Artistic lighting. The street lighting illuminates for vehicle traffic and the artistic lighting illuminates the pedestrian walkways.

There are also two types of planters. The curb planters that feature trees and perennials, and the free-standing planters that feature annuals.

We will also see many varieties of bike racks.

And of course the pavers.

Main St. and Duff

South Plaza

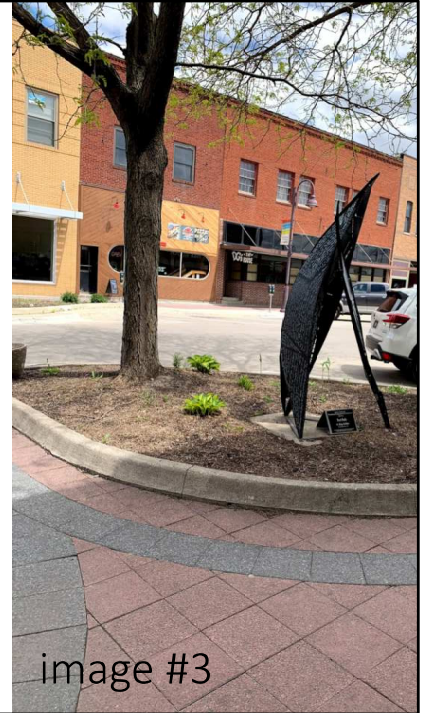
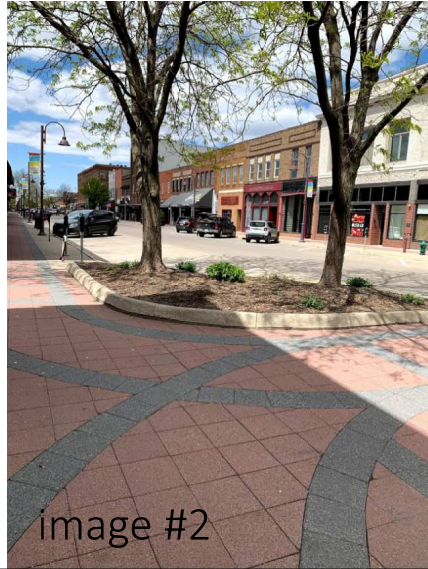
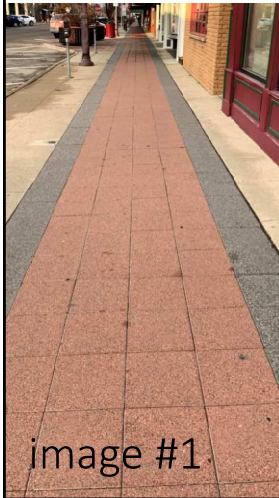


North Plaza



We begin our walk on Main Street at the intersection of Main St. and Duff. Here we will find two smaller open plazas on both the south and north sides.

Hierarchy of Paving Pattern



What I find very interesting about the paver pattern on Main Street is the hierarchy it implies. At its simplest form the pattern is a 4' wide path of 12"x12" red pavers with a 1' border of 12"x12" black pavers on each side (image #1). You will see this pattern along the sidewalk that fronts the businesses on each side of Main St.

As that walkway passes through an intersection the red pavers maintain their linear orientation while the black pavers curve to identify the walking "path." This curvature is replicated in the shape of the curb planters (image #2 & #3). Adding the element of the curve creates the second level of design of the paver pattern.

Main St. and Duff

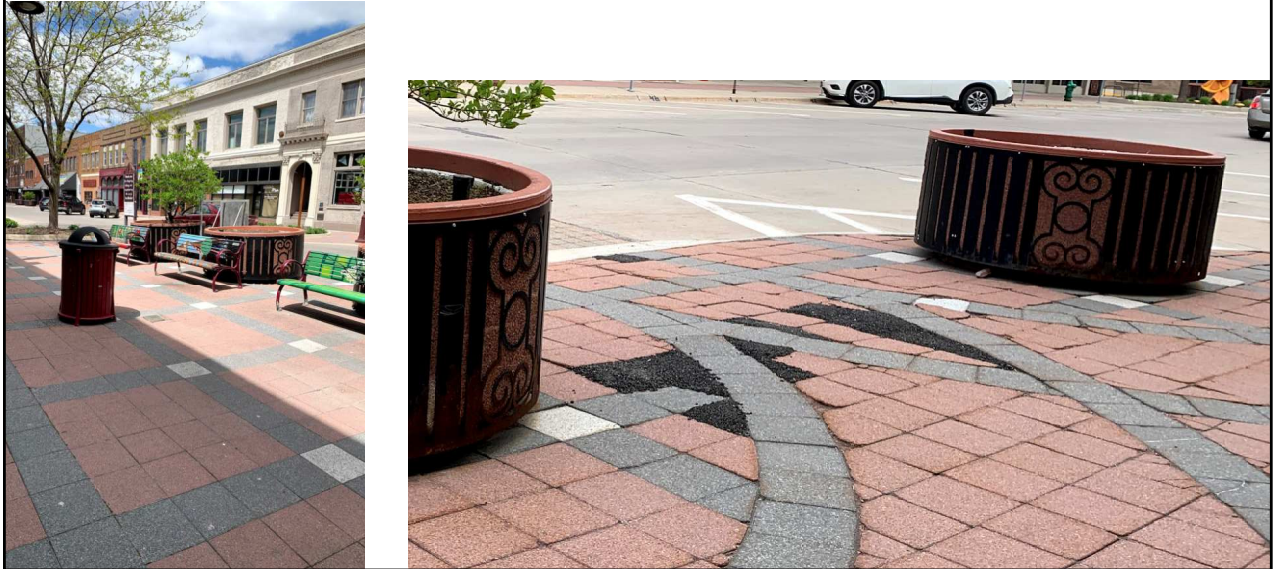


This image shows the paver pattern in the south plaza at the east entrance. Notice the pattern takes the sidewalk pattern and overlays a linear grid, at a 90-degree angle, creating a 2-way grid of 12"x12" black pavers. Where the grid lines intersect a white 12"x12" paver is inserted. This element creates a 4'x4' square of red 12"x12" pavers.

Adding these two elements create the third level of design of the paver pattern.

Along our walk to Grand Ave, you will see this same pattern at the intersections of Main and cross streets; Douglas, Kellogg, Burnett, & Clark.

Paving pattern at nodes.



Whereas level one identifies a walkway, and level two identifies direction of travel, level three says something different is happening here. It may be a place to gather or a place to cross the street.

You will also see level three patterning at the nodes that occur midway between the intersections.

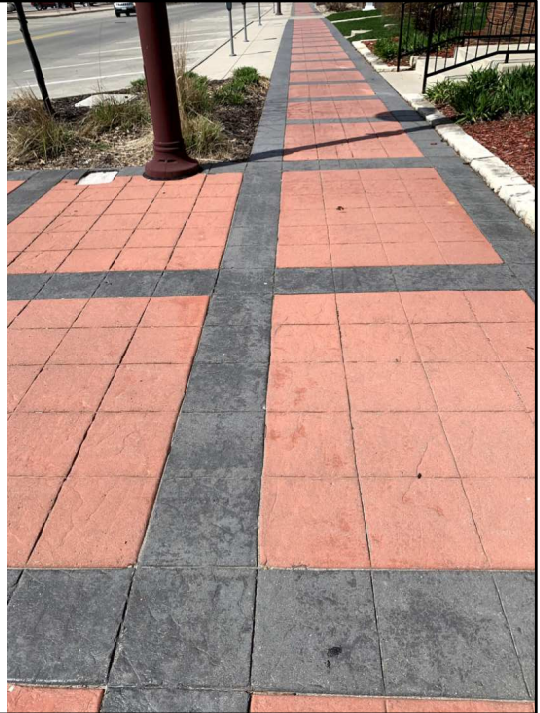
Paving pattern at Main & Kellogg.



When we arrive at the “center” of Main Street, the intersection of Main & Kellogg we find the fourth level of patterning or hierarchy.

Here we see a large “ring” of street pavers that intersect with the sidewalk pavers. To emphasize this, a street paver with a different color and size overlays and defines how the two paver types come together and articulates pedestrian and vehicle separation.

Stamped Concrete



As our walk continues past the Main and Clark intersection, we see a different “paver language”. Here, several years later, stamped concrete was used to create a 12’x12” grid. Red and black stain was applied to mimic the look of the concrete pavers used to the east, however the pattern created by the staining doesn’t follow the four levels of pattern design or hierarchy we see on the rest of Main Street.

Also, the planters in this area are not curved and do not have curbs. They remain rectilinear to relate to the linear shape of the stamped concrete.

Pavers



These images show the movement and deterioration of the existing pavers. As the city moves forward with the paver replacement project, the AMS Design Committee respectfully requests the existing 4 level pattern hierarchy be maintained.

Existing Lighting



As our walk continues down Main Street, we take notice of the two types of lighting. Street Lighting and Artistic lighting.

Street Lighting

new

fading

faded



new



The style of the street lighting reflects the historic nature of the streetscape. The light poles allow for the hanging of banners and holiday feature lighting, as well as posting of flags. The fading of the paint on the street lighting and bollards is a concern. Red fades and thus items painted red quickly begin to look old and worn. It is desired these items be repainted, possibly a different color.

Artistic Lighting



The artistic lighting along Main St. occurs at each of the main intersections. These fixtures act as pillars of light announcing the Main Street District and their placement is very specific at each of the corners.



Materials used to create these custom features include red brick (a standard on Main St), glazed terra cotta, granite, steel, and acrylic. Each of these materials is deteriorating; brick has efflorescence, acrylic is cracking and yellowing, terra cotta is spalling, and the granite is being stained by the rusting of the steel.

It is the desire these light fixtures be removed and new be installed.

Benches



Ames Main Street has sponsored a bench program for many years. The benches are artistically painted and positioned on Main Street at gathering nodes. Because the benches are anchored to the pavers, they will need to be removed during the paving project. It is the committee's goal to have the metal support pieces repainted before reinstallation. We will also revisit placement opportunities as well.

Sculptures



Many of the curb planters have concrete pads designed for supporting sculptures. These are periodically rotated and available for sale. Currently, many pads are empty, and many signs are missing or in need of repair. It is desired to have a sculpture with signage at each pad.

Bike Racks

current



current



new



The existing bike racks are looking a little sad. We would like to see them replaced with the new style installed on the east end of Main Street.

Group bike racks

current



proposed



At areas that we deem group bike parking would be desired, we would like to install several racks with a posted sign similar to that shown in the right image. We believe the signage will help bikers locate bike parking.

Art or Bike Rack?



Although comments on the internet refer to artsy bike racks as the ones that don't get used, they add an element of design that we enjoy. We will want to reinstall these. We might consider having them painted to prevent the rust from staining the pavers and perhaps add a detail that indicates, yes you can park your bike here.

Planters – Free Standing



Walking along Main St. one notices the many shapes, sizes and colors of the free-standing planters. The largest of these planters, the ones with the black rusting steel, feel large for the pedestrian scale.

Planters – Free Standing



In researching free standing planters, one thing that stood out is when concrete planters remain a natural color the plants in the planter get the attention, they become the color that draws your eye. The desire is to remove all planters during the paving project, replace the large 5' planters with 4' planters that fit the paving pattern and feel a better scale for the walkways. Additional planters will be sized and located in a thoughtful way with the benches and other streetscape items.

District Signage



There are several Main Street Cultural District signs along Main St. that are faded and rusting. The desire is to replace these with up to date signage as the paving project progresses.

7 Shades of Red

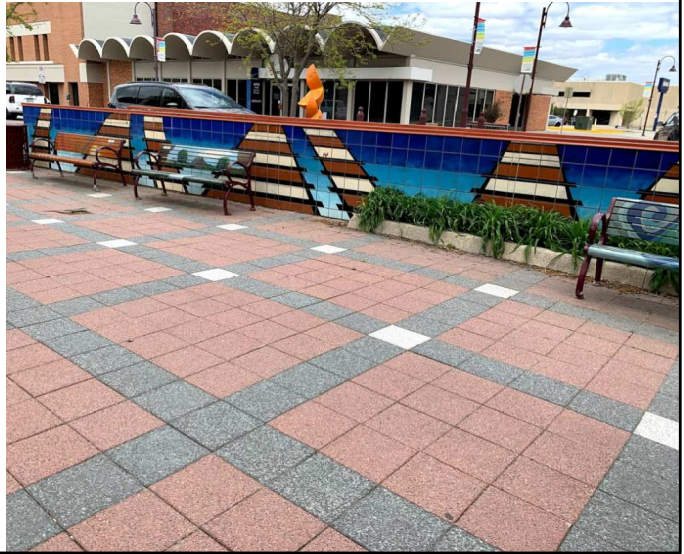
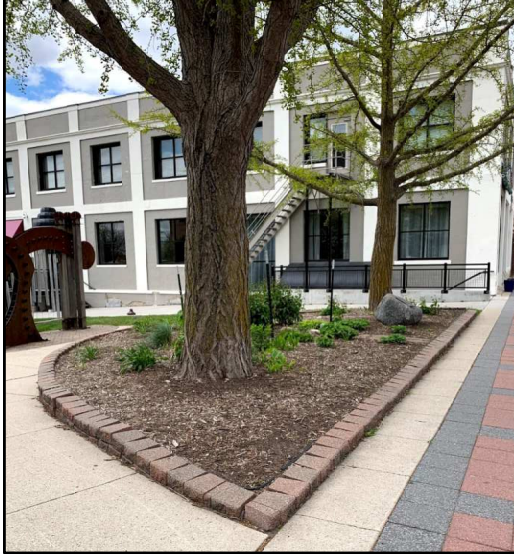


The color red is a strong color and many shades of red exist on Main Street. As we move forward with this project the committee will look at ways to minimize the red. Perhaps bollards, streetlights, and bench supports are painted black. Perhaps all free-standing planters are a natural concrete color.

Imagining the possibilities

- When we think of updating a streetscape, or any piece of a built environment, it's important to look at the big picture: to identify the character of the space, to recognize historic value, to look at opportunities of re-use, and to imagine the possibilities.
- Being respectful of budget constraints, the AMS Design Committee has selected one "possibility" that is a change to the current streetscape.

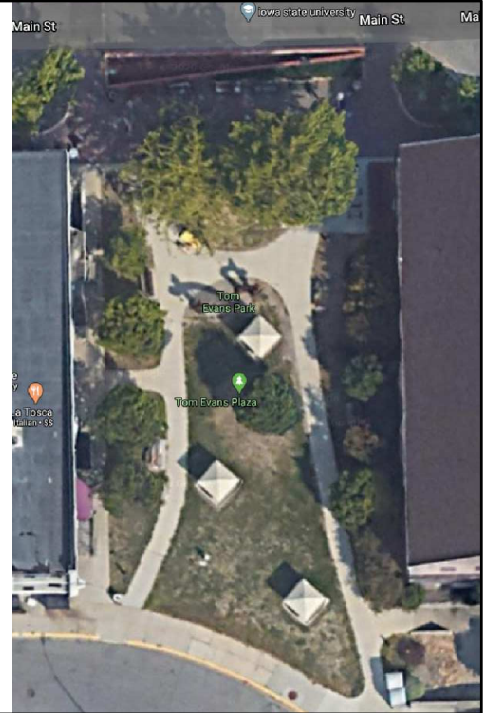
Tom Evans Park



The decision was made years ago to remove the wall at the north edge Tom Evans Park. Alas, it has not happened, however as the wall and pavers are totally integrated, now seems like an ideal time to remove it and to reimagine Tom Evans Park.

Tom Evans Park

- Plan view



Tom Evans Park

What if . . .

- Remove north wall
- Complete circle planter
- Plant live evergreen
- Circle tree with seating



What if . . .

Provide opportunities for musical play



What if . . .

- Provide opportunities for game playing





Thank you for taking a walk with us down Main Street. We hope you will support us with this endeavor.

Elizabeth Erbes
Chair, AMS Design Committee