

Dubuque Historic Millwork District, **Dubuque, Iowa.**

Project Sponsor: City of Dubuque
Project Manager: John Dienst



The Dubuque Historic Millwork redevelopment project is located in downtown Dubuque, Iowa. The vision was to revitalize a historic but run-down industrial section of Dubuque. The city wanted to create a district that would attract businesses and residents while providing a cultural destination for the city and its visitors. In order to maximize the revitalization Dubuque utilized a five layered approach, including water, energy, development, vegetation/open space and arts and culture.

In planning for the project, the city studied eight similar revitalization efforts across the nation to gain insight and glean best practices. Project partners included the city of Dubuque, private property owners, Dubuque Main Street, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, Northeast Iowa Community College Business Works and Envision 2010 Historic Millwork District Committee.

The Complete Streets project is a part of the larger revitalization and the city received a Tiger Grant for this portion of the project. Completed in 2012, the project utilized CSS principles in order to:

- Preserve the historic integrity of the Millwork District.
- Accommodate vehicular traffic for businesses, residents and visitors.
- Accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Provide an aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Provide an environment that would attract commercial concerns, residents, cultural destinations and visitors.

Challenges included the need for safe, attractive, ADA compliant streets within a set footprint, the nature of the neighborhood effectively prevented widening streets, and existing sidewalks did not meet modern requirements. In addition the historic nature of the district had to be maintained. The city coordinated closely with the State Historic Preservation Officer in order to achieve a proper balance between sense of place and functional utility. Dubuque also coordinated closely with FHWA to complete environmental documentation.

The Dubuque Historic Millwork District incorporated many concepts into the project including:

- Livability – The project is tied to the overall revitalization of the district to provide employment, entertainment, and access to necessities all in the same neighborhood.
- Planning & Environmental Linkages – The project was part of a larger effort to provide economic growth utilizing assets already in place, emphasizing water and energy conservation and avoiding “urban sprawl”.
- Safety – Through innovative design a safe environment for pedestrians and motorized traffic was provided.
- Sustainability – Revitalization and maximization of existing assets, energy and water conservation.
- Complete Streets – Pleasant, safe streets that accommodate cyclists, pedestrians and motorized traffic as well as providing a sense of place.

Treatments for the project included the use of bump-outs at corners to shorten the crossing for pedestrians and provide traffic calming. The project provides open spaces, through the development of courtyard spaces between some buildings. Other treatments include planters, bicycle racks, light poles, drinking fountains and benches that are all designed to blend in and accent the historic nature of the neighborhood. Many of the plantings are located in mobile planters to avoid altering the historic nature of the sidewalks. The streets were originally brick and many bricks were reused to provide decorative patterns in the sidewalks, and for crosswalk delineation. A historic rail bed in the middle of one street was preserved, but in a fashion that wouldn't provide a danger to cyclists or pedestrians.

