

City of Darlington Beautification Report

Approved by the City of Darlington Beautification Board February 2016

The New Downtown

Darlington has seen many changes during the past decade with the rehabilitation of older buildings and second-story buildings converted to apartments. In order to continue the progress the downtown area has outgrown previous conceptions.

Overview of Current Streetscape

Much of the older street furniture (benches, trash cans, etc.) is reaching the end of usefulness, is non-existent, or lacks a coherent aesthetic look. Even though some of these items are functional, they add little appeal to the town streetscape. Some areas are lacking the infrastructure necessary for pedestrians such as crosswalks and new sidewalks. They also lack the aesthetic elements which encourage foot traffic. The entrance signs to the city need to be replaced, and the signage has failed to grow with the town. Signs directing to local attractions and parking are limited, and the current signs often seem cluttered and lack cohesion.

All of these elements are key to maintaining vitality in Darlington. Improving and updating the downtown streetscape will not only increase the beauty of the town, it will enhance the perception of our town as welcoming, safe and pedestrian-friendly. The downtown has long been seen as a community gathering place and improving the streetscape will help ensure that it remains a place where people want to shop, dine, work and live.

To address these elements the board has developed a plan to update the streetscape, which will only increase the beauty of downtown and enhance the perception of our town.

Pedestrian Areas

Pedestrian areas should be human-scale. Planters, small signs, and maps, benches, trashcans, bike racks, newspaper racks, and pedestrian light fixtures are all appropriate elements for these areas.

Attractor Street

A number of areas have the potential to become “attractor” street – streets that draw people to them because something special is happening there. Attractor streets include Main Street, Orange Street, Pearl Street, and Cashua Streets.

Standard Streets

All other streets are classified as “standard.” Standard streets should also be tailored to the perspective of the motorist. Appropriate beautification element includes parking strip trees, sidewalk repairs, new lighting, and underground electrical when applicable.

Green Space

Green space should be considered, not only from a pedestrian view, but a motorist view as well. Well-maintained parks and public areas project a pride in community and encourage citizens to maintain their areas as well.

Highway Medians



Certain highway medians have foliage that is non-existent or at the end of its life span. These areas should be addressed with an updated landscape plan and a process put in place for the maintenance and upkeep of these areas. Sidewalks should be edged on a regular basis to prolong the life of the sidewalks, and grass cut with clippings removed. Additional equipment may be needed and labor to maintain all of the current public spaces.

Downtown Streetscape Plan

The proposed streetscape plan includes new street furniture such as benches, trashcans, and bike racks. Also planned are new decorative banners, downtown signage system, and additions to the Christmas lights. New updated street lights should be considered in the long term plan as well.

The final element is a proposal of infrastructure improvements such as rebuilt sidewalks, Addition street trees and pedestrian-friendly designs in the downtown and feeder street areas.

Elements of the planned must be prioritized and addressed based on available funding.

Beautification Board Priorities

Below are the priorities the Board is suggesting Council consider as it approaches its funding decisions.

Priority Items
1. Entrance Signs
2. Highway Islands
3. Crosswalks
4. Benches
5. City Parking Lots
6. Bicycle Racks
7. Street Signs
8. Wayfaring Signs
9. Bus Stops
10. Parking Signs
11. Banners

Entrance Priority
1. South Main Street
2. North Main Street
3. Lamar Highway
4. SC 151 (race track)
5. Cashua Street
6. Washington Street

Park Priorities
1. Bathrooms
2. Entrance Signs
3. Water Fountains
4. Bicycle Racks
5. Playground Equipment
6. Landscaping
7. Exercise Equipment

A Phased Approach

Our streetscape plan will be implemented in five phases, beginning with the high-traffic areas in our town.

Phase I

- Street furniture
- New banners installed on the square
- Street light poles painted
- Signage system enters planning and design phase
- Sidewalk repair begins based on level of need and availability of funds
- Christmas decoration planning begins

Phase II

- Banner arms and banners installed
- Christmas decorations purchased
- Installation of new directional signs and gateway signs
- Medians updated
- Sidewalk repair continues
- Crosswalk planning begins
- Planting in public areas

Phase III

- Signage and gateway system installations continues
- Street light installation continues
- Sidewalk repair continues
- Crosswalk installation begins
- Planting in public areas

Phase IV

- Expansion into standard streets with respect to stop signs and directional signs
- Sidewalk repair continues
- Crosswalk installation continues
- Planting in public areas

Phase V

- Street light updates or installation completed
- Sidewalk repair and installations completed.

Criteria:

1. Street furniture should be concentrated in pedestrian areas of downtown.
2. All furniture should have a similar style and color (black) to add a sense of unity to the area.
3. Placement of each element should be based on activity that occurs in the area.
4. Furniture should be affordable, durable, low-maintenance, and resistant to vandalism.
5. Any furniture should be designed to prevent misuse. For instance, benches should not allow for sleeping.
6. Furniture should also provide an element of beauty to the streetscape.

Potential Elements

Benches

The recommended bench is a metal bench, 6' long that is black in color and manufactured by Dunmor. This manufacture is currently supplying benches to the Columbia for use in their downtown area. The backless bench is recommended for areas in seating allow access to both sides of the bench.



Trashcans

Trashcan should remain in the style currently used in the downtown area. City crews recently updated the paint on these cans to black for uniformity with this Beautification Plan. Areas for additional trash cans should be considered with high pedestrian traffic.

Bike Racks



The recommended style is a bollard style that is black in color. The approximate cost for this style is \$320 per rack. The racks give a safe and secure place for citizens to park their bikes and allow the bike riders from other cities to stop and park in Darlington.

Light Poles

- Achieve an attractive, historic look
- Maintain light levels
- Strive for complete conversions when possible to avoid piecemeal replacements
- Keep costs at a minimum

Current plan

1. Retain the current light poles
2. Install new luminaries on existing light poles to provide better lighting in high traffic areas.
3. Add optional pedestrian luminaries mid pole as needed.
4. Paint all existing light poles black.

Pedestrian Arms

Two foot scroll arms with match current light poles
Suggest teardrop-style light in black

Signage

Criteria

- Signs should be easy to read and understand.
- Signs should be affordable, durable, low maintenance, and resistant to vandalism.
- Signs should complement or match other streetscape elements – such as benches or trashcans.
- The style of signs should be adaptable for either vehicular or pedestrian traffic, rather than having two unrelated styles in the area.
- Older duplicative signs should be removed.



Directionals

Directionals are signs that guide people to certain buildings, parking or point of interest. These signs should be free standing with black poles and decorative touches to match existing street décor.

Maps

Maps – General maps of the entire downtown area may be included in the directional signs. Priority locations are pedestrian streets and parking areas.

Wayfinding Signs



Stop signs and street signs should be free standing with painted black poles. As the signs are in need of replacement, they should be updated to co-ordinate with the streetscape designs.

Street Signs should contain the town logo. The tree is used as an example and may be decided upon at a later date.

Example:



The Historic Landmarks Commission is in agreement on some type of signage indicating streets in historic districts as well. City of Florence has something similar in its historic areas.



Entrance Signage

Signs should be placed at the main entrances to the city. In keeping with the historic aspects of the city, **brick** is recommended by the board. If space limits restricts the size of the sign then a small pole sign may be used. The Board said the most urgent place one should be installed is South Main Street given the development happening there.

Sidewalks

The average life of a concrete sidewalk is 20-40 years. Many of the city sidewalks are beyond their lifespan and in need of replacement or repair. The City of Darlington has established criteria for sidewalk repair. A plan is in place that has rated the existing sidewalks. The City has prioritized sidewalks based on condition and accessibility issues. Council should set aside funds on an annual basis to systematic correct the existing sidewalks. A sidewalk plan should also be developed for other areas of the city and a long-term plan put in place for completion of new sidewalks.

Landscaping

Priorities

- Extending current plantings on Main Street to include the traffic islands where feasible.
- Add planted beds at each of the city entrances.

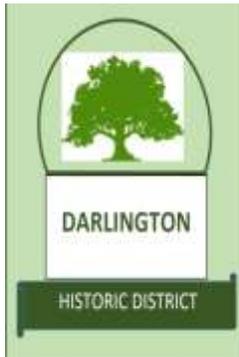
Sidewalk Planters

Plants used in downtown may vary depending on availability and the design intentions. The decisions will be based on performance goals that encourage year-round interest with maximum appeal during active growing period.

Trees

Trees for the downtown will be chosen primarily for their ability to withstand extreme conditions. Limited soil volume, water and fertility make the available trees list limited. Trees will be selected to prevent damage to sidewalks and other infrastructure. The tree board should determine a list of preferred trees for the town.

Banners



Banners are used within the city to designate special events and placed only for a limited time. Many cities use banners on a permanent basis to welcome visitors to their town. The City of Darlington may wish to use banners on a more permanent basis or to designate historic areas of Darlington.

Public Transportation Seating



Seating near bus stops would increase usage and improve its utility for residents. The recommended seat to be placed at the bus stops are Simme-Seat designed for Public Transportation which is to be black to match the other streetscape items. An Eagle Scout project has installed a few of these seats, one near the Post Office, one at IGA, and one on Cashua Street near Genesis Healthcare. Continued installation at various locations would be preferred. There are 43 stops on the DART route.

Cost: \$400 each in lots of 6 for single seat

Public Parking Lots

The current lots are in need of refurbishment with black top, parking stripes, and handicap designations.



Pedestrian Safety



Cross walks are in need of refurbishment and must be clearly visible by motorists and pedestrians. As roads in the city are updated, these crosswalks may be installed with Stamped Asphalt Cross Walks in a brick design. This will help to maintain consistency in the town's overall design.

Install stamped asphalt to resemble brick paver crosswalks. Prices currently range from as little as \$4 to as much as \$9 per square foot.

A long term plan should be developed with the location and number of crosswalks within the city.

Public Parking

The current parking signs are in need of refurbishment with new paint.

