

# Sidewalk Improvements in the Downtown Area



## Problem

The Village of Okauchee is nestled between two lakes and is a very beautiful and historic town, but neglect has decreased the area's attractiveness. The sidewalks in downtown had not been replaced since they were first laid over 40 years ago. This resulted in cracks and an overall run down look throughout the downtown business area.

## Background

A "First Impressions" study was conducted by the local government to gather participants' comments on the appearance of the Village. The following responses were collected:

"very limited curbs, gutters, and sidewalks"

"appearance was of general neglect"

"NO SIDEWALKS!"

"Unfulfilled potential, given location and historic-type building stock"

The Okauchee Vision Committee was created in 1998 with the purpose of designing a comprehensive plan for the business district in the downtown area. The committee started the project by gathering data through surveys. One survey completed by 459 households showed support for the following changes:

59 percent ... Improve the appearance

21 percent ... Road work

21 percent ... Sidewalk construction and repair

The presence of historic areas also greatly affected the construction of the sidewalks and roundabout.

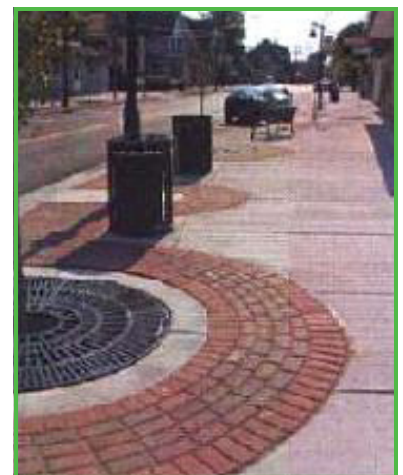
## Solution

Replacing the sidewalks in the downtown area was the first priority since they had not been repaired in 40 to 60 years. The replacement of these sidewalks eliminated the presence of cracks and uneven surfaces that made the old sidewalks extremely hazardous to all pedestrians. It also added to the overall aesthetic value of the downtown area.

The areas surrounding the business district didn't have any sidewalks and many of the roads had no storm sewers or curbs, which caused the shoulders to often be muddy and filled with runoff. These roads led to an elementary school, a local park, and three restaurants. It became a priority to attempt to transform this into an accessible and safe area for pedestrians, especially children. The addition and replacement of sidewalks increased the walkability and aesthetic value of the downtown area but didn't provide pedestrian amenities. To fix these problems 61 decorative street lamps were added to the downtown village area to promote



Sidewalk conditions before the project.



A much better pedestrian environment after the project.

# Sidewalk Improvements in the Downtown Area — Village of Okauchee, WI

safe walking and to increase the area's beauty. Six black metal street benches and trash receptacles were also added to the project area. Two of these benches were added to the plaza area along with low shrubs, roses, day lilies, and an assortment of 50 low growing trees, all of which greatly added to the atmosphere of the plaza.

## Results

By the end of this project there were 14,700 linear feet of curb and gutter constructed, 41,340 square feet of sidewalks, one roundabout with a decorative retaining wall, sidewalk plantings, a clock, and 61 street lights. The total cost of the project was \$3.3 million and the duration of construction lasted from September 2002 to December 2003.

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### *Image Source*

*ITE Pedestrian Project Award Submittal. Town of Oconomowoc and Ruckert/Mielke.  
<http://www.ite.org/awards/pedproject/Okauchee.pdf>*

