



A typical street in downtown Cedar Rapids just after conversion from 4-lane 1-way to 2-lane 2-way with protected cycletrack.

In the summer of 2012, the Cedar Rapids Department of Public Works retained Speck Dempsey (then Speck & Associates) to consider the redesign of all of the streets in its 25-block downtown core. Understanding that funding was limited, the resulting proposal focused exclusively on the areas between curbs, avoiding any reconstruction beyond repaving, restriping, and the modification of traffic signals.

The typical street in downtown Cedar Rapids consisted of four travel lanes and two parallel parking lanes. Remarkably, only one of these streets routinely carried more than 6000 car trips per day. Since a two-lane street can typically carry more than 10,000 trips per day without undue congestion, it was evident that most of these four-lane streets could be converted to two-lane streets, freeing up a tremendous amount of excess pavement for alternative uses. These uses included turning parallel parking lanes into angle parking lanes and introducing a robust cycling network into the downtown grid. Additionally, almost half of the downtown streets were one-ways, notoriously harmful to retail activity. This plan reverted all one-ways back to two-way travel.

Rather than budgeting specific funding for the work, the City decided to simply restripe individual streets as they came up for repaving. As a result, the project took about 6 years to complete, with no large street closures needed. Additionally, transforming a four-lane street system into a two-lane street system allowed the City to replace many of its signalized intersections with mostly four-way stop signs, at a savings of approximately \$150,000 per intersection.

As reported in the local paper, Jennifer Pratt, Cedar Rapid's community development director noted that the "one-way conversions are a critical piece to making [the downtown] feel like a place where you would want to live and walk around and feel safe."

City Manager Jeff Pomerantz

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