

Shopping and Retail

It all started downtown

In the early days, residents of Batavia did the majority of their shopping downtown. While residents today still shop downtown, they have more options. Native Batavians have many stories to tell about having everything accessible just blocks away. From food shopping at Walts (now Amstadt's) to finding everything at Swanson's Hardware – it was all there.

Today, downtown Batavia continues to be a delight for shoppers looking for a specific item or spending a relaxing afternoon or evening. The creation of MainStreet, a not-for-profit community based program devoted to enhancing downtown Batavia's identity as the heart of the community, has helped promote the downtown area. Whether it's an arts walk, outdoor concert or sidewalk sale, downtown maintains the unique charm it has had for over 175 years. The historical buildings, along with the unique stores and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, work together to make for an enjoyable visit. On any given weekend day, it's not uncommon for the streets to be filled with bicycle riders taking a break from the renowned Fox Valley bike trails and stopping for ice cream at the Batavia Creamery or a quick bite to eat at one of the 26 restaurants.

As Batavia has grown, so have the shopping options. The Randall Road corridor on the west side is a rapidly expanding commercial area, featuring several large shopping centers and a host of national retail shops. Shoppers can find everything from appliances, electronics and building materials for their homes, furniture and more along Randall road and the surrounding retail centers in Batavia.

Retail sales is big business in Batavia and represents a large portion of the city's income. It is estimated that the city will collect approximately \$7.6 million in sales tax revenue in 2008. This figure represents about 31% of the estimated total General Fund Revenue. As a sense of comparison, property taxes conversely represented only about 22% of the General Fund Revenue. In 2007 the city estimates there was \$555,732,700 of taxable retail sales.



Two eras of shopping: To the left, at historic Gammon Corner and below, the modern Batavia Plaza.



HISTORICAL FACT: Local realtor Kathy Barkei's family owned Perma's shoe store in downtown Batavia when she was a young child. She remembers walking to the Ben Franklin to shop and her parents did most of their Christmas shopping at Swanson's Hardware Store.



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