Belle Plaine Design Manual

City of Belle Plaine Community
Vision for Commercial Development
Commissioned by the City of Belle Plaine

Final Report

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Prepared by the Center for Rural Design, University of Minnesota
Belle Plaine Design Manual

City of Belle Plaine Community Vision for Commercial Development

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Belle Plaine Design Manual is a set of Design Guidelines that provide the framework for the physical expression of the community’s values for new commercial / industrial development and renovations in downtown Belle Plaine and the US Highway 169 Corridor Commercial areas. The Design Manual seeks to unify and distinguish the downtown and the US Highway 169 Corridor businesses to enhance economic development. The intent of the Belle Plaine Design Manual is to guide developers, owners and the Urban Design Review Committee towards a building and landscape character that is complimentary to the community’s vision for the 21st century. The community’s vision strives to shape the physical identity of Belle Plaine by drawing from the City’s sense of place, which includes the Minnesota River, prairie and blufflands, small town heritage, significant location on the rural/urban edge, agriculture traditions and technologies, and local economic development.

This Design Manual includes objectives, policy statements and design guidelines for the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard, the Downtown District, the US Highway 169 Corridor District and City gateways. The Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard District is intended to distinguish, connect and provide legible access to the Downtown District and the US Highway 169 Corridor District. The boulevard features a bike path, consistent street trees, lighting and signage. The Downtown District focuses on the urban core of the City and focuses on architectural elements and streetscape applications. The US Highway 169 Corridor District includes the commercial and industrial businesses along the highway and features guidelines on building orientation, architectural elements and streetscape applications. The City gateways announce and celebrate the City. Each gateway monument will have a similar character and highlight the location and prominence of the sign’s specific location.

The Belle Plaine Design Manual is an update to the Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines and the product of the City of Belle Plaine’s Community Vision for Commercial Development Project effort. The Community Vision for Commercial Development project was commissioned by the City of Belle Plaine, guided by the Steering Committee and prepared by the Center for Rural Design (CRD) at the University of Minnesota.
INTRODUCTION

• Project Vision and Purpose
• Overview of Belle Plaine
• Overview of Issues
• Planning Context
Project Vision and Purpose

The Belle Plaine Design Manual (Design Manual) is an update to the Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines (See Appendix A) and the product of the City of Belle Plaine's Community Vision for Commercial Development Project effort. The Design Manual seeks to unify and distinguish Belle Plaine’s downtown and the US Highway 169 Corridor businesses to enhance economic development. The intent of the Belle Plaine Design Manual is to guide developers, owners and the Urban Design Review Committee (URDC) towards a building and landscape character that is complimentary to the community’s vision for the 21st century. The community’s vision strives to shape the physical identity of Belle Plaine by drawing from the City’s sense of place which includes the Minnesota River, prairie and blufflands, small town heritage, significant location on the rural/urban edge, agriculture traditions and technologies, and local economic development.

The name of the Guidelines have changed from the Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines to the Belle Plaine Design Manual because the content of the document has expanded to include a community-based vision and design guidelines for the new commercial and industrial development along US Highway 169 and improvement and restoration of buildings in the historic downtown. The Design Manual also includes recommendations for legal implementation and as such is intended to be a part of, or an addition to, the City Code.

The Community Vision for Commercial Development project was commissioned by the City of Belle Plaine, guided by the Belle Plaine Urban Design Review Committee (UDRC) and prepared by the Center for Rural Design (CRD) at the University of Minnesota. The Belle Plaine City Council approved the contract with CRD in December 2007 and the project concluded with the Design Manual in July 2008.

The Community Vision for Commercial Development Project was based on the community’s values about Belle Plaine’s current and future image. Community values were obtained from the project’s Steering Committee and a Community Design Workshop. The Community Design Workshop took place on April 8th, 2008 and included close to 30 community members, plus Steering Committee members. The Steering Committee was comprised of the UDRC and a broad base of additional community members. The UDRC was reappointed to prepare recommendations for design components, potential funding sources for community-wide improvements and administer the design standards for properties in all commercial zoning districts.

The Design Manual is the product of Steering Committee guidance and the Community Design Workshop results.
**OVERVIEW OF BELLE PLAINE**

The City of Belle Plaine is located in Scott County which is approximately fifty miles from the Twin Cities (Figure 1). US Highway 169 is the major highway that connects the City to the metro area. The City’s location is significant because it is on the urban / rural edge of development and land use, which suggests that Belle Plaine is the southwest gateway into the seven-county metro area.

![Figure 1. Belle Plaine Region, CRD, February, 2008.](image)

Belle Plaine, as shown in Figure 2 (located at the end of the section), is home to more than 6,744 people (Metropolitan Council, 2007) and a hub for manufacturing, education and agriculture. The City resides within the glacial floodplain of the Minnesota River and the surrounding landscape is characterized by rolling prairie and bluff lands. The City is serviced by State Highway 25 and US Highway 169. State Highway 25 majestically crosses the Minnesota River and provides access to the City of Green Isle. US Highway 169 connects Belle Plaine to the Twin Cities to the north and Mankato to the south and bisects the northern and southern portions of the City. Recently, the Minnesota Department of Transportation modified the access of US Highway 169 to the local roads of the City resulting in one interchange finished in 2007 located in the northeast and one proposed interchange in the southwest of the City. As a result, two areas of commercial and industrial development were defined: the area of development around the US Highway 169 Corridor and the historic downtown district.
Overview of the Issues

**Overview of the Issues**

**Regional Development Pressures**

The City of Belle Plaine, located along the Minnesota River in the southwest corner of Scott County, is in one of the fastest growing counties in Minnesota, yet it has a strong relationship to the rural agricultural landscape surrounding the City. Like many rural communities at the urban/rural edge, it is experiencing many changes today and will experience even more in the future, and with change comes a new identity that may or may not reflect community values. Historically the city was built on the north side of US Highway 169, but with the upgrading of highway interchanges, future residential growth is expected to be primarily on the south side and future commercial growth is expected along both sides of the highway.

**Downtown**

Downtown Belle Plaine, located at the intersection of Main Street and Meridian Street, is the center of community life and commercial business on the north side of US Highway 169. Historically, the town was designed to accommodate horse and buggy transportation and today the downtown roads reflect that heritage. The roads are approximately sixty-five feet wide with perpendicular parking and traffic speed is posted at thirty miles an hour.

The streets have a huge presence in the downtown, suggesting that it is heavily auto-oriented rather than pedestrian-oriented. The urban design elements also complement an auto-oriented environment with minimal pedestrian-oriented city way-finding signage, little vegetation and sporadic street lighting.

The buildings also play a significant role in shaping the public pedestrian environment. Some of the downtown building types are historic and all of the buildings maintain a narrow facade at the sidewalk and are two to three stories high. The buildings have a small footprint, with rectilinear and narrow geometry and all face the street grid with a uniform setback flush with the sidewalk. The buildings help to enhance the pedestrian environment by reducing the urban scale with elements such as human-scale windows and facade detail improvements, non-fixed awnings, and perpendicular signage oriented towards the sidewalk.

Connections to the Minnesota River, the regional trails, and the City Parks and Recreation system are developing. Consistent signage, bike paths and enhanced roadside landscaping could help pedestrians and bikers connect to the recreational systems and local natural amenities.
US Highway 169 Corridor

The US Highway 169 Corridor, planned and maintained by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), connects the City of Belle Plaine with the Twin Cities to the north and Mankato to the south. US Highway 169 is located on a northeast to southwest angle in relation to the Belle Plaine city grid and is designated as a “High Priority Interregional Corridor” to the State by MnDOT. The Corridor Management Plan, published by MnDOT in 2002 addresses concerns about increased traffic, decreased highway speeds and safety concerns. MnDOT identifies US Highway 169 as essential to the mobility of those in Southwestern Minnesota. Highway performance and safety between the Twin Cities and Mankato is expected to significantly decrease over the next 20 years.

The plan addresses these concerns by controlling and limiting access to the highway in the corridor to achieve a balance between the needs and visions of individual communities and the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. This includes minimizing adverse community effects while maintaining or improving both highway and local traffic by striving for the following performance goals:

- An average travel run target speed of 65 mph for the entire US Highway 169 corridor (2001 average was 61 mph, and 61 mph through the Belle Plaine section).
- Improved safety and crash rates lower than the state average. Traffic volumes are predicted to increase 38 percent from 2000 to 2025 between Main Street and Meridian Street.

MnDOT published the TH 169 Corridor Belle Plaine Area Plan in 2003 that established a plan for the transition of TH 169 from a highway to a freeway in the city. The plan involves eliminating at-grade intersections and providing access to area businesses through frontage roads, including the following elements:

- Interchanges at Main Street and Meridian Street
- A south frontage road between Meridian Street and South Street, and a north frontage road between Meridian and Main Street.
- An extension of Enterprise Drive to Main Street/CR 64.
- Grade-separated pedestrian crossings
- An over/underpass in the vicinity of the western terminus of Belle Plaine Trail
- Essentially, all roads crossing the highway will be converted to an interchange, an over/underpass, or will be closed.
The interchange at MN 25/Cr 64 was completed in the Spring of 2007, and provides primary access from the highway to the City of Belle Plaine. Construction has not begun on the Meridian Street interchange, and the current at-grade intersection remains open and protected by a two-way stop sign. Vehicles wishing to access or cross the highway must either use the Main Street interchange or use the at-grade crossing at Meridian Street. In the fall of 2008, MnDOT will start construction on a 3/4 access crossing at US Highway 169 and Meridian Street. Cross traffic will not be allowed from South Meridian Street to North Meridian Street. This poses a connectivity problem.

The US Highway 169 Belle Plaine Corridor is a four lane highway with traffic speeds of upwards of fifty-five miles an hour. The highway corridor currently divides the town due to the barrier of the highway itself and the difficulty of accessing the businesses and communities on either side. Access between north and south Belle Plaine is limited to the Main Street overpass and the proposed Meridian Street interchange.

The buildings on the highway are either generic strip mall, pole barn or big box structures one to two stories high. The buildings have large footprints, large parking lots, and are mostly rectilinear. The buildings front both the highway and the city grid and have large setbacks. The businesses are commercial and industrial. The commercial signage is tall, highway scale and oriented to the automobile. The landscaping in the US Highway 169 Belle Plaine Corridor is limited to low shrubs and grass with no overall landscape concept. The highway is oriented towards automobile traffic with few pedestrian elements. The north and south gateways of Belle Plaine are small signs with a small City logo or a small, standard MnDOT sign. There is no context signage alerting people using the highway about the Minnesota River or the Minnesota River Scenic Byway.

Community Entry Points

The Belle Plaine entry points are located at the interchange of Main Street, the Meridian intersection, south of the Minnesota bridge on County Road 25, County Road 3 approaching from the south and County Road 64 approaching from the east. Currently, there is some small City logo signage and some standard MnDOT City signage. All of the entrances could benefit from highway scale signage that is appropriate to the road usage hierarchy.
Planning documents directly applicable to the Design Manual are the guiding principals and economic development goals of the proposed 2008 City of Belle Plaine Comprehensive Plan, the Belle Plaine Main Street Program and the 2005 Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan.

**2008 City of Belle Plaine Comprehensive Plan**

The guiding principles and the economic development goals of the proposed 2008 City of Belle Plaine Comprehensive Plan have portions which support the efforts of the Design Manual. Portions of these sections of the Comprehensive Plan are excerpted and discussed below.

**Guiding Principals**

Based on the Mission Statement, community input and Planning Commission and staff guidance, the 2008 Comprehensive Plan is being developed with the following guiding principals:

_Belle Plaine strives to provide:_

- An atmosphere that encourages active involvement of its citizenry
- A safe and wholesome environment
- An attitude that encourages a vibrant business community
- A safe and efficient transportation system
- A well planned community with adequate infrastructure
- An atmosphere that promotes quality of life with functioning parks, trails and other recreational opportunities
- Fiscally responsible decisions
- An atmosphere which captures the spirit of a small town
- Housing that reflects a full range of choices
- Downtown ~A place for people to gather and preserve as the city’s central core
- A well balanced tax base
- A proactive position on future growth
- An identity that reflects the place
- A caring, learning environment

Belle Plaine’s Comprehensive Plan supports a vibrant business community. The Design Manual seeks to unify and distinguish the downtown and the US Highway 169 Corridor businesses to enhance economic development.
Belle Plaine’s Comprehensive Plan supports its small town character. The Design Manual seeks to enhance the City’s small town character by providing for new development and restoration standards in keeping with the architectural style and scale of downtown Belle Plaine.

Belle Plaine’s Comprehensive Plan supports the City’s central core as a place for people to gather. The Design Manual provides for pedestrian-oriented urban design elements such as landscaping, lighting, intersection treatments and building façade upgrades to enhance the walkability and livability of the downtown and US Highway 169 Commercial districts.

Belle Plaine’s Comprehensive Plan supports an identity that reflects place. The Design Manual draws on the community’s sense of place to connect and distinguish the downtown and US Highway 169 Commercial districts with the Belle Plaine Boulevard.

**Economic Development Agency’s Mission Statement and Goals**

*EDA’s mission statement is as follows,*

“The mission of the Belle Plaine Economic Development Authority is to improve the economic well being of Belle Plaine as measured by job creation, increase in the tax base and expansion of business concerns; and instill a commitment to excellence, integrity, pride and respect in the community by working independently and cooperatively with other organizations and individuals, both public and private, for the purpose of promoting and advancing industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural development and redevelopment.”

The EDA has adopted the following for their five year goals:

- Implement an ongoing community beautification and enrichment program, including assistance to businesses to aesthetically improve their buildings and properties.
- Expand infrastructure to meet projected industrial, commercial and residential growth as well as improve existing infrastructure to better serve existing industrial, commercial and residential properties.
- Maintain and utilize an organizational focus, coordinated by the Executive Director of the EDA, for the purposes of promoting economic development efforts and enhancing community awareness and participation in economic development/redevelopment.
- Recruit, encourage and assist new and existing business and industry
to locate and expand within the City through the development and implementation of a marketing plan.

• Maximize opportunities to access appropriate public and private sources of technical and financial assistance to achieve community goals and objectives.

• Implement specific guidelines for promoting and utilizing the revolving loan fund.

• Investigate and actively participate in obtaining grant monies for community development activities.

• Address removal of blighted conditions in commercial and industrial areas.

• Promote a continued high quality of life within the Belle Plaine Community.

• Conduct an annual meeting with Community Officials and the public to receive input on economic development issues.

The EDA’s mission statement supports the improvement of Belle Plaine’s economic well-being and the enhancement of commercial and industrial development and redevelopment. The Design Manual seeks to provide a unified and unique aesthetic for the Downtown and US Highway 169 Districts to retain and attract businesses and clients. By visually connecting and distinguishing these two districts, the city’s and business’ images will be more noticeable and marketable. Increased marketability will enhance efforts for commercial and industrial development and redevelopment.

The EDA’s five-year goals include an ongoing beautification and enrichment program and promotion of high quality of life within the Belle Plaine Community. The Design Manual seeks to provide the tools to enhance the architecture, landscape architecture and urban design of the Downtown District, US Highway 169 District, Belle Plaine Boulevard and City Gateways. The enhancement of the Districts and City Gateways will increase efforts to beautify the City. City beautification supports the efforts to enhance the quality of life. A high quality of life tends to attract new residents and businesses.

One of the EDA’s five-year goals is to address blighted conditions in commercial and industrial areas. The Design Manual will provide the framework from which blight is identified. The Design Manual will guide business owners toward acceptable architecture, landscape architecture and urban design within the City.
Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines, Belle Plaine Main Street Program

Developed by the Design Committee of the Belle Plaine Main Street Program, this set of guidelines outline the requirements for rehabilitation of historic building facades. This document provides detailed recommendations in regards to storefronts, upper stories and sign standards. Compliance with these guidelines is required for consideration in the low interest loan pool provided by the City. These guidelines were developed with concern for the appearance of the town, for the economic abilities of the building owner, and for general compliance with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Please see Appendix A for a complete copy of both the Main Street Program Design guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines developed through the Main Street Program is the precusory document to the Design Manual. The detailed design guidelines in this document are the basis for the Downtown District design guidelines in the Design Manual. Compliance with the Design Manual will supersede the Belle Plaine Main Street Design and Sign Guidelines for the consideration of the City Low Interest Loan Program.

The Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan Goals

The 2005 Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan highlights the assets and amenities of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Section of the 1999 City of Belle Plaine Comprehensive Plan and plans for the City’s green infrastructure. The Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan is important to the Design Manual because the Design Manual seeks to link to local and regional natural and recreational amenities. The Design Manual also includes urban design guidelines. Urban design is the design of the pedestrian friendly environment. A pedestrian friendly environment provides ease of access by foot, bike or other non-motorized transportation and as such incorporates bike paths, park space and wayfinding signage. The following is an excerpt of the goals from the 2005 Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan. The highlighted goals support the efforts of the Design Manual:

1. Natural resource protection and management.
2. Cooperation with other governments and communities.

The City of Belle Plaine will enhance its green infrastructure by co-

1. “Green infrastructure, also called ‘natural infrastructure’, is a planning term used to refer collectively to parks, trails, open space, surface water and shoreland, and natural systems” Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan, CR Planning, 2005.
operating with other governments, agencies, and communities with land use interest or authority around Belle Plaine. The City adopts the following goals to guide green infrastructure decisions:

A. Open and maintain dialogue with neighboring communities, the school district, county and state agencies, and other planning and regulatory authorities to conduct cooperative planning and programmatic initiatives.

B. Create long-term park, recreation, and open space goals in cooperation with other communities, units of government, and agencies.

C. Create links between Belle Plaine’s park, trail, and open space system and the regional systems administered by surrounding counties and the State.

3. Systematic expansion of the park, trail, and natural open space system.
The City of Belle Plaine will carefully and efficiently expand its park and open space system to meet the needs of its growing population base. The City adopts the following systematic expansion goals:

A. Maintain or improve its residents’ access to parks and park facilities, both in terms of an even distribution of parks across the City and in providing a variety of recreation opportunities to meet the needs of the City’s growing population.

B. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout the community.

C. Promote the creation of new green space, native plant landscaping, and expansions of the urban forest on both private and public lands.

D. Provide for new park, open space, or other green infrastructure in growth corridors and annexations.

4. Ensuring sustainability of green infrastructure

5. Offering a range of recreation areas and sport facilities to serve people of all ages

6. Management and system expansion that enhances private property values and property rights.

The Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan supports the creation of links between Belle Plaine’s park, trail, and open space system and the regional systems administered by surrounding counties and the State. The Design Manual seeks to connect Belle Plaine’s commercial areas to the parks, trails and recreational areas to enhance people’s sense of place, provide a variety of entertainment options and promote the rural and natural resource heritage of the City.
The Belle Plaine Park and Open Space Plan supports pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout the community. The Design Manual seeks to enhance the pedestrian-oriented urban design elements to enhance the small town quality of life of Belle Plaine. Incorporating pedestrian and bicycle paths are important to connect the commercial areas and green infrastructure. The paths physically slow people down to allow for contemplation of place which helps to promote the rural heritage of the City. And, the paths provide for a connection and extension of the regional bike system.
Design Guidelines

- Design Elements
- Design Districts
- General Objectives and Principles
- Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard Guidelines
- Downtown District Guidelines
- US Highway 169 District Guidelines
- Gateways Guidelines
Design Elements

Connecting and differentiating the US Highway 169 Corridor District and the Downtown District is of high priority to the Community Vision for Commercial Development effort. Through natural and physical inventory research, discussion with the Steering Committee and the Community Design Workshop, certain features surfaced as being driving elements in connecting the two districts. As illustrated in Figure 3 (located at the end of the section), the landscape and urban grid form are prominent features influencing Belle Plaine’s unique place in Minnesota.

The Landscape
The Minnesota River, blufflands and prairie landscape are significant features in Belle Plaine because the landscape helped shape the economy and culture of Belle Plaine. The City is located between the Minnesota River to the northwest and the blufflands to the southeast. The Minnesota River is significant as a design element for the Design Manual because of its historical and cultural importance and its regional connections to the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway and the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Line. The Minnesota River has a wide valley with wetlands on either side. The bridge over the River provides access to Belle Plaine from the northwest and is a key gateway into the City. The blufflands, which are remnants from the ancient glacial Minnesota River Valley, reside on the southeast of Belle Plaine. The blufflands are important because they create a valley and the undulating topography which Belle Plaine is located. The presettlement landcover is prairie grasses. Belle Plaine’s prairie landcover is significant because of the open views that the grasses afford.

The Urban Grid Form
Belle Plaine’s urban form is organized in a grid with land uses concentrically located in relationship to the historical Central Business District. Main Street and Meridian Street form the main downtown intersection and lead to the interchanges with US Highway 169. The urban grid is north-south and US Highway 169 intersects the grid at an angle. The grid form of the City is significant because it was the historic design of the City and the grid is well maintained today. As such, it is more dominant than the new US Highway 169.
Design Districts

The Design Districts, shown in Figures 5 and 5a, include the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard, the Downtown District, the US Highway 169 District and the City Gateways. The Downtown District and the US Highway 169 Districts correlate respectively to the City’s 2008 Land Use and Proposed Land Use Map. The Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard District connects the Downtown and US Highway Districts with a series of urban design features. The City Gateways feature new signage and landscape treatments that embrace the proposed entry locations and the Belle Plaine community vision for the future.

Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard
The intent of the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard is to connect, distinguish and provide legible access to the Downtown District and the US 169 Corridor District through urban design elements. The Boulevard will be distinguished with consistent street trees, lighting and a bike path. The major intersections of the Boulevard, illustrated in Figure 6 (located at the end of the section), will feature prominent context-sensitive monuments or signage.

Downtown District
The intent of the Downtown District is to provide architecture, landscape architecture and urban design guidelines that maintain a vibrant historic, pedestrian-oriented urban center. (Figure 7- located at the end of the section)

US Highway 169 Corridor District
The intent of the US Highway 169 Corridor District is to provide architecture, landscape architecture and urban design guidelines that provide a complementary aesthetic to the Downtown District and embrace the large-scale nature of highway development.

Gateways
The gateways to the City, as illustrated in Figure 5, are important because they are the first and last image that a visitor sees. As such, the gateways should be significant and complement the roadway’s scale and daily usage. Gateway signage that has the most impact incorporates images and materials that have meaning to the community, are designed with the surrounding landscape in mind and are complementary in size to the scale of the roadway.
Planning Principles

The Design Manual is an update to the Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines produced from the Belle Plaine Main Street Program. The Design Manual includes Belle Plaine’s updated Design Guidelines and a summary of the Belle Plaine Community Vision for Commercial Development Project. The goal of the Design Manual is to provide a flexible framework for making architecture, landscape architecture and urban design decisions. Essential to the Design Manual are Planning Principles. The Planning Principles outline and guide the character and quality of the general and area-specific design guidelines.

General Principles

1. The Downtown Belle Plaine and US Highway 169 Districts will be united by the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard. The Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard will include consistent landscape, signage, lighting and banners.

2. The City of Belle Plaine will designate downtown Belle Plaine, the US Highway 169 Corridor and the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard as Design Districts.

3. The City of Belle Plaine will continue to maintain the appointment of the Urban Design Review Committee to review the application for new construction, remodeling and renovation using the Design Manual.

4. All of the Design Districts will embrace Belle Plaine’s:
   • sense of place, which includes the Minnesota River, prairie and bluffs.
   • small town heritage and significant location on the urban and rural edge.
   • agricultural history and future economic pursuits.

5. The Downtown and US Highway 169 Districts will be complementary and appropriate for the scale of land use.

6. The Downtown and US Highway 169 Districts will encourage sustainable design techniques and methods. Sustainable design techniques and methods include but are not limited to pedestrian-oriented design, the improvement of heat islands, emphasize energy and water conservation, and increase biodiversity with the utilization of native planting.

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2. Biodiversity: 1. The number and variety of organisms found within a specified geographic region. 2. The variability among living organisms on the earth, including the variability within and between species and within and between ecosystems. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Copyright © 2006.
GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The General Objectives and Policies apply to all of the Design Districts.

• Objective
  o To develop and encourage the application of a set of design guidelines that maintains the heritage and character of Belle Plaine as a rural community in both the public and private realm.

• Policy
  o The City of Belle Plaine recognizes the value in maintaining its heritage as a small rural community. As the City expands it has become necessary to identify mechanisms that maintain a unified rural character throughout the City while allowing divergent but complimentary development patterns and architectural styles to be utilized. Therefore, the City will abide by the design guidelines in the Design Manual intended to maintain a unified and recognizable identity throughout the community.
  o As needs change and new areas are annexed into the city, additional portions of the community may be assigned as expansions of the Design Districts described in this document. The objectives, policies, and guidelines outlined for each District will apply to any new expansion of the Districts.

• Additional Notes
  o Recognizing that each project is unique in its relationship to the site and surroundings, the Urban Design Review Committee will endeavor to interpret the guidelines within the Design Manual for the most appropriate application.
Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard District Guidelines

The Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard District connects the Downtown District with the US Highway 169 Corridor District by a series of urban design features. The intent of the Boulevard is to embrace the two commercial areas and to provide easy access locally and from US Highway 169.

- Objectives
  - To link the spatially separated commercial districts of Belle Plaine through a common identity imparted by a designated connecting loop with unique signage and other wayfinding techniques.

- Policies
  - The City of Belle Plaine will designate a Commercial Boulevard District that connects key commercial districts within the City. The designated loop will serve as a wayfinding mechanism that guides local residents and visitors to and between these spatially separated commercial districts. The loop will be identified in the public realm through unique signage and streetscape treatments at key intersections and appropriate intervals along the route.

- Additional Notes
  - Recognizing that each project is unique in its relationship to the site and surroundings, the Urban Design Review Committee will endeavor to interpret the guidelines within the Design Manual for the most appropriate application.

- Guidelines
  - The Commercial Boulevard District will be identified in the public and private realm with complimentary design elements.

  - **Signage** - Signage plays an important part in the creation of “pedestrian friendly” streets by establishing a visual guide and orientational tool for pedestrians and vehicular users of the downtown. Lack of wayfinding tools such as signs and graphics can cause confusion, and most importantly discourage walking. Specific images and recommendations for street signage would be developed further in a future detailed signage study. Generally however, signage for the Commercial Boulevard District should meet the following criteria:

    * In developing the signage system, Identification Signs (naming signs to identify areas within the Commercial Boulevard District, important buildings etc.), Directional Signs (used to guide the motorist or pedestrian in and around the district) and Regulatory Signs (signs that set the rules for travel and parking within the district) should be included.
* Signs should communicate required information effectively. Information should be presented in a visually comprehensive manner. The sequence in which information is communicated should be logical and should correspond to user needs.

* Signs should reinforce the overall visual image and character of the Commercial Boulevard District. The design of the signage system should be consistent throughout the Commercial Boulevard District. It should be coordinated with the design of any site furniture and lighting.

* The signage system should provide flexibility. It should be adaptable to changes and additions over time. Consideration might be given to a modular system to facilitate this requirement.

* Signage should include consistent and usable mapping that is coordinated with Identification and Directional Signs.

Figure 8. Example Signage, St. Louis Downtown Streetscape Design Guidelines, 2000.

Figure 9. Example Signage, St. Louis Downtown Streetscape Design Guidelines, 2000.
Street Lighting - performs a number of important functions and may have additional impacts on the visual environment. Due to these factors and the prevalence of lighting fixtures on all streets, lighting should be used as a unifying streetscape element. Although levels of illumination are important for safety and security, other aesthetic aspects of lighting design including color rendition, luminaire design and lighting patterns should be given equal consideration in the overall lighting system. Additionally, consideration for energy conservation must be included in the site lighting design process. LED street lamps should be pursued when the technology becomes available, both to improve lighting levels and save operation and maintenance costs. LED technology also offers the opportunity to achieve a “friendlier” roadway lighting that could better coexist with new, pedestrian-scale lighting on the sidewalks. Cobra head light fixtures and sidewalk lighting should be considered jointly in determining the optimum lighting quality for the Commercial Boulevard District. One feature to consider in creating an optimum lighting quality is the addition of cut-off shields on the roadway lights. Such shields would diminish the glare from the cobra head fixtures, allowing the eye to better focus on storefronts and other sidewalk amenities.

* Lights should consist of a coordinated family of luminaires and poles with regard to design, materials and color.
* Lighting should define and reinforce the hierarchy of street systems to promote a sense of site orientation and organization.
* Use light fixtures of durable materials to discourage vandalism.
* Use lighting sources that provide good color recognition appropriate for the use.
* Provide illumination levels and lighting sources that minimize areas or points of glare while providing adequate levels of light for safety and security.
* Construction should be of steel or aluminum.
* Use a partial lens over the luminaire (as opposed to fully exposed globe) to reduce glare and light pollution.
* Luminaire design should provide a vandal resistant lens.
* Luminaire design should provide easy serviceability.
* Light source mounting height shall not exceed 12 feet.
In some locations pedestrian lighting may be strictly supplemental and spacing will depend on the specific situation. In all cases, however, lighting design will focus on pedestrian usability and safety.


**Street Trees**

* Provide a minimum 6’x4’ by 3.5’ deep tree pits in existing or new sidewalks.
* Consider the use of continuous street tree pits to provide maximum soil area for roots to spread, and water and air to penetrate.
* Allow sufficient room for tree canopies to grow and develop without conflict with other building or sidewalk elements.
* Install tree grates to protect soil compaction over the root ball.
* Install tree guards to protect tree trunks from damage in high pedestrian use areas.
* Street trees should be spaced 20 to 40 feet apart depending on underground vaults and utilities.

Figure 13. Boulevard tree planting, Wilsonville, Oregon
Recommended Plant List

Native species:
Acer saccharum   Sugar Maple
Betula (Varieties)   Birch
Celtis occidentalis   Hackberry
Fraxinus pennsylvanica lanceolata   Green Ash (Summit, Marshals)
Gleditsia triacanthos   Honeylocust
(Imperial, Majestic, Skyline, Sunburst and Thornless)
Gymnocladus dioicus   Kentucky Coffee Tree
Quercus (Varieties)   Oak
Tilia americanus   Basswood (American Linden)

Non-native species
Acer platanoides (and varieties)   Norway Maple
(Schwedler, Emerald Queen, etc.)
Ginkgo biloba (male tree only)   Ginkgo
Tilia cordata (and varieties)   Little Leaf Linden
(Redmond Greenspire, etc.)

And all other varieties as approved by the City Council.

Above list extracted from Belle Plaine City Code, 1107.03 Subd 6.
**Multiple Use Path** - The Commercial Boulevard District will incorporate a multiple use path that connects to local and regional trail systems. This multiple use path may include both on-road bicycle lanes and off-road shared use paths.

- **Bicycle Lane (Bike Lane):** A bike lane is a portion of the roadway or shoulder designated for exclusive or preferential use by people using bicycles. Bicycle lanes are distinguished from the portion of the roadway or shoulder used for motor vehicle traffic by striping, marking, or other similar techniques.

- **Shared use paths, greenways, and state trails must be designed for users other than bicyclists.** The design should take into account others on shared use paths such as inline skaters, adult tricycles, bicycle trailers, recumbent bicyclists, and wheelchair users. The dimensions and operational characteristics of bicyclists are important, other user types that are allowed to share the same space as bicyclists should be integrated into the initial planning stages and the design and selection of a bikeway type.

- All multiple use paths will follow the design standards outlined in the MN/DOT Bicycle Facility Manual, March 2007.
Figure 17. Example bike lane design criteria, MN/DOT Bicycle Facility Manual, 2008.

Figure 18. Example shared use path design criteria
Community Vision for Commercial Development

Downtown District Guidelines

The northwest corner of the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard is to be developed with an emphasis on maintaining the historic and cultural significance of Belle Plaine. Meridian and Main Streets should meet at a four way stop that heralds entry to the historic downtown. Signage along Meridian and Main Streets should indicate significant historic and cultural places in downtown. The northwest corner of the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard should maintain the same grid pattern as the rest of the town. A pedestrian and bike trail should follow Meridian and Main Streets and lead into the historic downtown.

• Objectives
  o To preserve the historic character, pedestrian orientation and architectural commonality amongst buildings of downtown Belle Plaine through the application of design standards in the public realm and suggested design guidelines in the private realm.

• Policies
  o The City of Belle Plaine finds that the historical, architectural, business, and cultural heritage of the Downtown District is among the City’s most important assets. Therefore, the City will engage in a program that encourages the preservation of historic properties and architecture through sensitive renovation following design guidelines.
  o The City of Belle Plaine will maintain and enhance the pedestrian-friendly character of the Downtown District by adhering to design standards that provide features such as pedestrian-safe sidewalk and street crossings, attractive streetscaping, and context sensitive signage, among others.

• Additional Notes
  o Recognizing that each project is unique in its relationship to the site and surroundings, the Urban Design Review Committee will endeavor to interpret the guidelines within the Design Manual for the most appropriate application.

• Guidelines
  o **Pedestrian Oriented Streetscape** - The streetscape should be uniform so that it acts to provide continuity throughout the downtown. Maintaining a minimum sidewalk width of 12 feet should be considered on both Main Street and Meridian Street in the Downtown District. This width allows for a minimum six feet for pedestrian passage and six feet for boulevard tree planting. Where this width does not currently exist every attempt will be made to provide it during city infrastructure upgrades. (Figure 20 - located at the end of the section)
* Approved boulevard trees shall be located as feasible and appropriate to soften the character of the building massing and to provide shade for pedestrians.
* Painted crosswalks, where feasible, should be considered at intersections to enhance the visibility and safety of pedestrians crossing the streets.
* Diagonal parking will be maintained to provide adequate parking for visitors to the Downtown District, to minimize the visual impact of the wide street surfaces, and to calm traffic.

Figure 21. Intersection of Main and Meridian Streets Aerial, Color Ortho Photo, Farm Services Administration, 2003.

Figure 22. Intersection of Main and Meridian Streets Guidelines Plan, CRD, 2008.
o **PRIVATE SECTOR LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS** - Benches, planting containers, flower boxes, fencing, trash receptacles or trash enclosures, should be compatible to historic character of the district.

Good example of planting containers and flower boxes that are compatible with the historic character of the architecture.

Figure 23. Urban Landscape Elements, Wayzata Design Standards, 2004.

o **AWNINGS** – Awnings should enhance the historic feel of downtown, while providing sun protection for display windows, shelter for pedestrians, and a sign panel for businesses.

* Retractable or operable awnings are encouraged.
* Long expanses of awning should be broken into segments that reflect the door or window openings beneath them.
* Backlit awnings are discouraged
* Awnings with graphic material must be within the sign guide lines below.

Good example of operable awning that are compatible with the historic character of the architecture.

SIGNAGE - Signs should be architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors and details of the building and with other signs on nearby buildings, while providing for adequate identification of the business.

* Symbolic and historic three-dimensional signs such as barber shop poles and appropriately-sized projecting signs are encouraged.
* Projecting signs must be no greater than 12 square feet and have a maximum width of three feet and cannot extend beyond the first floor of the building.
* No less than 10 feet of clearance shall be provided between the sidewalk elevation and the lowest point of the projecting sign.
* Maximum distance between sign and building face is one foot.
* Building and signage lighting must be indirect, with the light source(s) hidden from direct pedestrian and motorist view.
* Lighting and signage must be a separate and distinct. Combined lighting and signage is not encouraged.

Figure 25A and B. Signage Detail, CRD, 2008.
Downtown District Guidelines

Figure 26. Signage Example, Wayzata Design Guidelines, 2004.

Figure 27. Signage Example, Wayzata Design Guidelines, 2004.

Figure 28. Signage Example, Stillwater Design Manual, 2006.

Figure 29. Signage Example, Rhinebeck, NY, Project for Public Spaces.
Roofs and Parapets

- Rooflines should mimic the separate yet complementary rhythm of historic downtown buildings.
  - Flat roofs (slightly sloped to drain) are preferred with parapets that articulate the rhythm of the buildings.
  - Parapets should be embellished with brick detailing and stepped or sloped to achieve a visually interesting yet harmonious sequence along the building façade.
  - Difference in building heights should not exceed 1/2 a story.

Figure 30. Roof Articulation Example, Stillwater Design Manual, 2006.

Figure 31. Parapet Embellishment Example, Stillwater Design Manual, 2006.

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1 Parapet: Decorative top of a building. Wayzata Design Guidelines, 2004. Any low protective wall or barrier at the edge of a balcony, roof, bridge, or the like. Dictionary.com
Building Width — Building widths should be designed to break up the monotonous appearance of long facades.

- A building more than 45 feet in width should be divided into increments of no more than 45 feet through articulation of the façade. This can be achieved through combinations of the following techniques:
  - Divisions or breaks in materials
  - Window bays
  - Separate entrances and entry treatments
  - Variation in roof lines (within guidelines)
  - Building setbacks (within guidelines)

Windows — Windows should encourage large, open views into the commercial space enhancing the pedestrian experience by providing a visual connection to the use inside the building.

- The restoration or renovation of a storefront should attempt to return the façade to its original character. Preserve original materials or details and the shape and size of original window openings.

- On upper levels, windows should provide privacy while aesthetically and functionally serving the building.
**COLOR** – The varied but complimentary use of color is encouraged.

* The color of buildings should complement the adjacent buildings’ colors
* The color of brick or other natural building materials should dictate the color family choice.
* Buildings should use primarily earth tones with light and bright colors used only as minor accents.
* The accent colors should complement the primary color.

**MATERIALS AND DETAILS** - Rehabilitation or redevelopment projects should be constructed to be long lasting and use materials and detailing that maintains the distinct character and harmony of the downtown.

* Traditional materials including brick, stone (including cast stone) and stucco should be used as the primary building materials.
* Tile, stone, glass block, copper flashing, metal and wood should be considered for accent materials.
* Building renovation and alterations should restore architectural details of cornices, brickwork, transom, display windows and bulkheads.
* Infill construction should reflect some of the detailing of surrounding buildings in window shape, cornice lines and brickwork.
**Setbacks** - Buildings in the historic downtown district should work together to give the effect of a traditional “Main Street” area
* New construction and infill buildings must maintain the alignment of facades along the sidewalk edge
* Exceptions may be granted if the setback is pedestrian-oriented and contributes to the quality and character of the streetscape.

**Avoid Setback from Adjacent Buildings**

**Build in Line with Adjacent Buildings**

Figure 39. Building Setback Example, Stillwater Design Manual, 2006.

**Lighting** - Lighting in the downtown should serve to illuminate façades, entrances and signage and provide an adequate level of personal safety while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the buildings.
* Street lighting will be pedestrian scale and provide for safe pedestrian travel at night.
* Building and signage lighting must be indirect, with the light source(s) hidden from direct pedestrian and motorist view.
* Lighting and signage must be a separate and distinct. Combined lighting and signage is not encouraged.

Figure 40. Indirect Light Example, City of Minneapolis, Facade Design Guide.
US Highway 169 District Guidelines

• Objectives
  o To create a unique and attractive commercial district along the US Highway 169 corridor that enhances economic development within Belle Plaine while maintaining a common identity with the rest of the city through the application of design standards in the public realm and suggested design guidelines in the private realm.

• Policies
  o The City of Belle Plaine recognizes the significance of commercial development in the US Highway 169 District to the present and future economic health of the community. Therefore, the city will engage in a program in the public realm that enhances the character of the corridor to create a “destination shopping district” that attracts people regionally and services the needs of residents.

• Additional Notes
  o Recognizing that each project is unique in its relationship to the site and surroundings, the Urban Design Review Committee will endeavor to interpret the guidelines within the Design Manual for the most appropriate application.

• Guidelines
  o **Landscaping** – Landscape treatments should emphasize the form of the City of Belle Plaine’s urban street grid. Landscaping treatments should be used to enhance the pedestrian experience, complement architectural features and/or screen utility areas.
    * Plant Material – Landscaping should reinforce the indigenous plant communities found in the Minnesota River Valley and the existing woodlands. Massing of native prairie, trees and shrubs should be sensitively utilized and should not restrict visibility of business signage.
  
  o **Screening** – Screening of all service areas, parking, loading and outdoor storage areas, mechanical and rooftop equipment, refuse storage containers and utility components are required.
Figure 41. Example of Landscape Treatments Plan, Center for Rural Design, 2008.

Figure 42A and B. Screening Examples, Stillwater Design Manual, 2006.
**SIGNAGE**

Commercial districts, with their many businesses vying for attention, can become cluttered with signs. This is particularly true in auto-oriented commercial areas, but can also be the case in pedestrian-centered urban cores. Signs in pedestrian areas should address the scale of the pedestrian, should be simple in materials and message, and enhance the overall street environment. This is not to say that signs cannot be colorful, unusual, or noticeable – in fact, interesting signs can add a memorable dimension to a commercial area. In essence, commercial district signs should:

* Be organized in a hierarchical order (shopping center, business, wayfinding) to avoid clutter and confusion.
* Incorporate similar design characteristics or materials to enhance both the district’s identity and Belle Plaine’s community identity.
* Effectively communicate the character of the business they advertise.
* Not overwhelm the pedestrian streetscape.

While not strictly commercial, signs in residential areas that identify neighborhood entry points contribute to the visual impact of the streetscape. They should be of the appropriate scale and constructed of the same high quality materials as the commercial signage.

*The following Sign Design Guidelines are based from the Sign Design Guidelines City of Leon, TX, 2002.*
• **Building - Mounted Roof Signs:** Roof Signs are those signs erected in whole or in part upon or over the roof or parapet of a building.

  * **Number and Location:**
    - Roof signs shall be limited to one sign per street frontage up to three signs total.
    - Roof signs will be allowed in place of a wall sign.

  * **Total Sign Area is limited:**
    - A roof sign shall not exceed 1 sq. ft. for each linear foot of street frontage not to exceed a maximum of 100 sq. ft.

  * **Sign height is limited:**
    - No roof sign will be permitted which extends beyond the highest point of a pitched roof, a mansard roof or a parapet line of a building.

Figure 43. Roof Sign Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.
• **Free-standing Signs:** Pylon signs are a free-standing sign with visible support structures or with a support structure with a pole cover or pylon cover. Monument Signs are a ground-mounted sign with a low overall height. Pole signs are a free-standing sign with a visible support structure. Typically a pole supports a sign cabinet aloft. A pole sign can also be defined as a free-standing sign with two or more poles provided the poles and structure of the sign support is not encased or enclosed by a cover. Pole signs are discouraged. Pylon Signs and Monument Signs are preferred over Pole signs.

* Number and Location:
  - No free standing on-premise sign shall be constructed within 100 feet of any existing free-standing on-premise sign on the same site, or within 40 feet of a free-standing sign on a neighboring site.
  - No free-standing sign, other than a multi-tenant sign shall occupy the same frontage as a projecting sign.
  - One free-standing sign shall be permitted on each frontage, as follows:
    - Less than 250 ft. of frontage: One sign
    - 250 ft. or more of frontage: One sign per 250 ft. of frontage when approved by the UDRC
  - Total Sign Area is limited:
    - Each face of a free standing sign may not exceeding 100 sq ft in sign area if mounted back-to-back.
    - In the case of irregularly shaped signs, refer to Zoning Code calculations of sign area.
**Free-Standing Sign Height**

Sign height shall be restricted to:
* 35 feet on arterial roadways.
* 25 feet on collector roadways, and
* 50 feet on expressway frontage roads.

Figure 44. Free Standing Sign Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.

Figure 45. Sign Height Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.
• **Free-standing multi-tenant signs:** Multi-tenant signs shall be required as part of a Master Sign Plan for properties with 4 or more tenants.
  * **Number and Location:**
    - No free standing multi-tenant sign shall be constructed within 100 feet of any existing free-standing on-premise sign on the same site, or within 40 feet of a free-standing sign on a neighboring site.
    - Other limitations of free-standing signs, and of the Guidelines in general shall apply, within the following limitations:

• **In the case of shopping centers for example:**
  * A business within the shopping center may have one projecting sign and/or one other building-mounted sign (such as a wall sign, awning sign or roof sign), and
  * Each tenant shall be allowed one identification sign on a directory signpost or multi-tenant sign.
  * **Tenant sign area is limited:**
    - The area of each tenant’s building-mounted sign shall not exceed 1 sq. ft. for each linear foot of store frontage for the business on which it is mounted not to exceed a maximum of 100 sq. ft
  * **Total Sign Area is limited:**
    - Multi-tenant signs shall be limited to 250 feet of sign area.

**Sign height is limited**

Multi-tenant Signs height shall be restricted to:
* 35 feet on arterial roadways.
* 25 feet on collector roadways, and
* 50 feet on expressway frontage roads.
**Landscape Buffer for Free-Standing Signs**: Unless an alternate method of providing traffic and pedestrian safety is approved through a Master Sign Plan, each free-standing sign shall be placed within a landscaped area.

* Planting shall be in accordance with the City’s Landscape Ordinance.
* Landscape buffers for free-standing signs shall extend a minimum of 4 feet from the sign in each direction.
* Such measurements shall begin at the sign base or at the edge of any overhang within 20 feet of the ground, whichever requires the greater barrier.
Parking and Circulation

* Driveway Location - The location and spacing of a driveway should insure proper and efficient circulation into and around a development, reduce conflicting movements internal and external to the site and promote the smooth flow of traffic on the abutting street.

* A landscaped buffer strip at least 6 feet wide shall be provided between all parking areas and the sidewalk or street. The buffer strip shall consist of shade trees at maximum intervals of 30 feet and a decorative fence, masonry wall or hedge. A solid wall or dense hedge shall be no less than three feet and no more than 4 feet in height.

The Parking and Circulation Design Guidelines are based from the 2004 Wazata Design Guidelines.
Figure 48A and B. Landscape Buffer Strip Example, Wayzata Design Guidelines, 2004.

Figure 49. Off Street Parking Example, Wayzata Design Guidelines, 2004.

It is very important that these parking lot arrangements provide adequate sight lines for the pedestrians and the drivers to clearly see each other as vehicles cross the sidewalk exiting the parking lot.
ARCHITECTURE: This corridor is the northern “entrance” from the Twin Cities and the southern entrance to Mankato thus, development should be designed to reflect this important location in the City of Belle Plaine.

* **Orientation of Building** – The orientation of the commercial and industrial buildings within the US Highway 169 Corridor is of high priority. The buildings should front the highway corridor and align with the City of Belle Plaine’s urban street grid.

* **Building Facades** – Since the buildings will be perceived and utilized from all four directions, it is of high priority that the US Highway 169 District architecture must be developed and designed 360 degrees around the building.

* **Building type and materiality** - It is a high priority that no pole-barn type buildings will be allowed to be developed in the US Highway 169 District. All new buildings should be constructed of high-quality materials and utilize green, sustainable building practices through the demolition site preparation, construction, operation and maintenance phases of the building cycle.

  - Traditional materials including brick, stone (including cast stone) and stucco should be used as the primary building materials.

  - Tile, stone, glass block, copper flashing, metal and wood should be considered for accent materials.

* Market visibility from the street is critical to the successful development efforts and as such, buildings, landscaping, and features should be easily visible from the roadway.

* The development design should be compatible with surrounding buildings and improve upon the architecture in height, massing, style, composition, color and materials.

* **Green Building Design and Materials:** Consideration should be given to using green building design and meeting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. Green building design elements such as green roofs will help limit energy demands and establish a healthier environment by reducing the heat island effect and storm water runoff from roofs and other impervious structures. (Design Guidelines for the Cook County Highway Department Property)
Community Vision for Commercial Development

Belle Plaine Design Manual

Figure 50. Example of an unacceptable pole barn building, Atlantic Insulated Panels Website.

Figure 51. Brick building designed 360 degrees around building, Building Green Website.

Figure 52. Brick building designed 360 degrees around building, Building Green Website.

US Highway 169 District Guidelines
**LIGHTING** - Lighting in the US Highway 169 District should serve to illuminate façades, entrances, signage and provide an adequate level of personal safety while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the buildings.

* Exterior lighting shall be the minimum necessary for safety and security. Overall light levels should be consistent with the character and intensity of the surrounding areas. Lighting should be designed to relate to building architecture and landscaping. Pedestrian scaled lighting, not exceeding 15 feet in height, should be located adjacent to walkways and entrances to commercial buildings. Parking lot lighting should consist of cutoff fixtures and located below the mature height of trees located in parking lot islands.
**Gateways District Guidelines**

- **Objectives**
  - To introduce travelers to the unique identity of Belle Plaine at key entry points to the City through commonly themed signage and landscape plantings.
  - To identify additional locations for the gateways to Belle Plaine with consideration to the sense of entry or vista to the City.
  - While it is important that all gateways identify the distinct character of Belle Plaine, each gateway will occupy a unique setting and the design must respond to the characteristics of its surroundings.

- **Policies**
  - The City of Belle Plaine will identify key entry points to the City and apply a set of signage and landscaping standards to create gateways to the city that convey the unique character of Belle Plaine.

- **Additional Notes**
  - Recognizing that each project is unique in its relationship to the site and surroundings, the Urban Design Review Committee will endeavor to interpret the guidelines within the Design Manual for the most appropriate application.

- **Guidelines**
  - **Belle Plaine’s Community Logo:** draws from the city’s agricultural heritage and its intimate physical relationship with the Minnesota River and surrounding prairie landscape.
    * The Belle Plaine logo will be incorporated into all community gateway designs.

  - **Sign Height:** Sign height should be appropriate for the scale and use-intensity of the roadway. The following sign heights should be considered:
    * 35 feet on arterial roadways.
    * 25 feet on collector roadways, and
    * 50 feet on expressway frontage roads.

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*Figure 53. Belle Plaine’s city logo, City of Belle Plaine, 2008.*
o **MATERIALS:** for gateway signs, supporting structures and other landscape structures will be high-quality and durable, preferably natural, and consistent with the specific characteristics of its location.

* Traditional materials including brick, stone (including cast stone) and stucco should be used as the primary building materials.
* Tile, stone, glass block, copper flashing, metal and wood should be considered for accent materials.
Landscaping Around Signage: will be native and in keeping with the specific characteristics of the gateway’s location. Plant material and planting designs that reflect the agricultural or horticultural heritage of Belle Plaine (e.g., orchard-like) may be acceptable.

* Planting shall be in accordance with the City's Landscape Ordinance.
* Landscape Buffers for free-standing signs shall extend a minimum of 4 feet from the sign in each direction.
* Such measurements shall begin at the sign base or at the edge of any overhang within 20 feet of the ground whichever requires the greater barrier.

Figure 57. Sign Landscape Buffer Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.

Figure 58. Sign with Vegetation Example, River's Edge, Online Resource.

Figure 59. Sign with Vegetation Example, Coventry Hills Community, Online Resource.
- **Lighting:** Where feasible, lighting may be incorporated in the gateway designs to enhance the entry experience at night. Any lighting will be the minimum needed and sensitively placed to avoid light pollution and adding to visual clutter.
Figure 3. Design Elements, CRD, 2008.
Belle Plaine Design Districts and Gateways

Figure 4. Belle Plaine Design District Diagram and Key, CRD, May 2008.

Lower priority location for potential gateway signage.
Figure 5. Enlarged Belle Plaine Design District Diagram and Key, CRD, May 2008.
Figure 6. Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard, CRD, May, 2008.

The Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard District connects the Downtown District with the US Highway 169 Corridor District by a series of urban design features. The intent of the Boulevard is to embrace the two commercial areas and to provide easy access locally and from US Highway 169.

Examples of potential future development
*Please note- Curb bump-outs are not included in the Downtown District Design Guidelines specifically or the Design Manual in general.
Figure 20. Downtown Existing and Proposed Elevation, Center for Rural Design, May, 2008.
IMPLEMENTATION

• Implementation Strategies
Introduction
Design guidelines function to guide construction, expansion, and renovation of new and existing structures. They assist the city in reviewing development proposals. They allow development to occur in a way that is consistent with the community vision. In general, design guidelines serve three primary functions:

• They serve to preserve, protect, and enhance the physical character of a community, or sections of a community, in the public realm.
• They serve to guide owners, developers, and designers who undertake to redevelop and renovate existing properties or to develop new properties.
• They serve to assist communities in reviewing development or redevelopment proposals.

In order for design guidelines to function in the capacity outlined above some approach to implementation needs to be adopted. This section will explore various approaches to implementation. First, however, it will be useful to explore some concepts.

Implementation Strategies
The City of Belle Plaine desires to maintain and enhance its rural small town character while, at the same time, fostering opportunities for redevelopment in the City’s core and opportunities for economic development and commercial expansion along the US Highway 169 corridor. To accomplish these goals it is recommended that the City:

• Adopt the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard as a mechanism to integrate a common, cohesive identity for all commercial districts in the city.
• Adopt a ‘district’ approach to planning, public sector investment, and application of design guidelines to recognize unique character, capitalize on divergent opportunities, and prioritize public sector investments.
• Adopt design guidelines that provide opportunity for flexibility and creativity in the design of redevelopment and new development.
• Formalize the design guidelines in regulations that encourages adherence for both redevelopment and new development.
• Formalize a design review process, through a design review committee, that supports a collaborative and iterative approach to review to maximize communication and minimize misunderstanding between the development team and the design review committee.
• Formalize an incentive program to encourage and reward compliance with the design guidelines.
• Amend the Belle Plaine City Code Section 1103.07 Site Plan Review, 1107.17 Highway and Industrial Design Standards and Section 1107.22

Implementation Strategies
Preservation of Belle Plaine’s Character Design Standards to reference the Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard, Downtown, US Highway 169 Corridor, and Gateways Design Districts as areas where these sections of the City Code directly apply in addition to the other areas identified.

- Amend the Belle Plaine City Code Section 1103.07 Site Plan Review, 1107.17 Highway and Industrial Design Standards and Section 1107.22 Preservation of Belle Plaine’s Character Design Standards to reference the Belle Plaine Design Manual as an additional recommended reference for design guidelines within the identified Design Districts.

- Include Section 1103.07 Site Plan Review, 1107.17 Highway and Industrial Design Standards and Section 1107.22 Preservation of Belle Plaine’s Character Design Standards of the Belle Plaine City Code within the Belle Plaine Design Manual, as edited below, to identify the site plan review process and pre-existing design standards.

Proposed edits to Section 1103.07 Site Plan Review, 1107.17 Highway and Industrial Design Standards and Section 1107.22 Preservation of Belle Plaine’s Character Design Standards of the Belle Plaine City Code are indicated at the end of the section. Words that are bold and strike-through are proposed deletions. Words that are bold and underline are proposed additions.

**Design Guidelines vs. Design Standards**

The terms ‘guidelines’ and ‘standards’ are frequently used interchangeably. For instance, in their Smart Growth program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers this definition of design guidelines:

**Design Guidelines** — a set of standards that aims to maintain a certain level of quality and architectural or historic character, addressing features such as building facades, public spaces, or landscaping.

However, there is a significant functional difference in the meaning of the terms and their application.

**Guideline**: “a principle by which to determine a course of action” (Webster); and in this case, “principle” means a law explaining a thing’s action. For purposes of this document, principle refers to and is defined as design intent.

**Standard**: “something established for use as a rule or basis of comparison in measuring quantity, quality, value, etc.” (Webster)

Standards can be specific, detailed, and prescriptive rules for development actions. An advantage of their specificity is that they can be clearly interpreted by
the owner, developer, or designer and their application clearly evaluated by the
design review committee. However, due to their specificity, standards often dis-
courage design creativity and impose serious, sometimes unintended constraints on
development form or function.

On the other hand, guidelines can set forth an overall design intent which may have
numerous and varied means of accomplishing the intent, and therefore may be less
prescriptive and specific than standards. Fundamentally, design guidelines are per-
formance-based. Some significant advantages of performance-based guidelines
are that they allow creativity and innovation in the design of development and
tend to avoid unintended constraints while still outlining the intended outcome. How-
ever, since they lack specificity, they are more difficult to interpret and evaluate by
the development team and the design review committee. Successful implementation
of design guidelines requires a collaborative and, often, an iterative design review
process. (adopted from Silverdale Design Guidelines: Design Workshop 1, March
2005)

**Mandatory vs. Interpretive Guidelines/ Standards**

Mandatory refers to obligatory application of design standards/guidelines. This
approach involves formalizing the guidelines/standards in regulations that con-
trol development. Many cities in Minnesota establish design guidelines/standards
for areas of interest through their zoning ordinances. These design standards are
generally rooted in the city’s authority to protect the general welfare and safety
of the public.

Interpretive refers to an explanation or translation of a design intent, where a vari-
ety of conceptualizations is possible and may require more flexibility in implemen-
tation. This approach does not formalize the guidelines/standards in regulations that control development. While adherence to the guidelines/standards may be
encouraged through incentive programs, this approach is fundamentally voluntary.
(adopted from Silverdale Design Guidelines: Design Workshop 1, March 2005)

The concepts of ‘guideline vs. standard’s and ‘mandatory vs. interpretive’ are key
to this document. They imply a set of tradeoffs in implementation that must be con-
sidered:

• Flexibility vs. predictability: Is the guideline/standard intended as a rule of
  law or a rule of individuals? Should the area for negotiation be wide or
  narrow? To what extent should this be determined by the Code or by prac-
tice?
• Flexibility vs. administrative cost: What are the costs to the applicant, to
  opponents, and to the City’s tolerance for hearings?
• Development cost vs. quality: Guidelines/standards should be written with an understanding of their effect on developers’ and consumers’ costs and on the quality of the environment for both user and community at large.
• Preservation vs. development: Will a particular regulation stimulate or dampen change in uses, users, or appearance?
• Under regulation vs. over-regulation: How does the community find the least number of rules that will do the job?

Incentive Programs
Communities can utilize a number of incentive programs to encourage compliance with the objectives embodied in the design guidelines/standards:
• To a certain degree, public sector spending, through a community’s Capital Improvement Program, for example, can be directed toward public realm improvement projects in priority areas where development or redevelopment projects that comply with the community’s adopted design guidelines have been proposed.
• Proposed projects that comply with the community’s adopted design guidelines can receive special consideration on other issues requiring a variance such as density, bulk, parking, etc.
• The community’s fee structure for applications, permits, and reviews can be reduced on a sliding scale based on compliance with the design guidelines/standards.
• The community can collaborate to seek funding for, and/or directly invest in, programs to support private sector development/redevelopment that enhances the public realm.

Example Approaches to Design Guideline Implementation
Two example approaches to implementing design guidance as a mechanism to maintain a certain preferred physical character are outlined below. The communities, Wayzata and Stillwater, are local but the approaches represent the wide variation discussed above.

The City of Wayzata wanted to direct the physical character of development in several portions of the city and chose to accomplish this goal by implementing a set of prescriptive design standards tailored to each area of concern. The design standards are intended to influence architectural character specifically. Master planning, spatial relationships, and connections to the public realm are guided by the City’s comprehensive plan. The City outlines a specific design review process that is separate from review of the technical/engineering requirements. The standards are embedded within the City’s code and zoning ordinances and, therefore, enforceable as law. Violation is a misdemeanor.
The City of Stillwater had a more focused area of concern and developed a design manual intended specifically for its commercial historic district. The core of the design manual is a set of design guidelines that represent recommendations for appropriate character of new development or redevelopment within the district. The guidelines were intentionally meant to be flexible, allowing a greater range of design creativity, accommodating unique solutions for unique situations, and avoiding the danger of ‘sameness’. The City enacted an ordinance establishing a Design Review Committee and Design Permit Requirements. The review process integrates architectural design with site and off-site spatial relationships. Recommendation for approval is based on the perception of the design review committee that the proposed design meets the intent of the guidelines. The Committee’s report is reviewed by the Planning Commission which makes final recommendations to the City Council which, in turn, grants final approval. The design guidelines are separate from the City’s zoning ordinance and represent an additional consideration to the project approval process in the commercial historic district.

The approach that the City of Belle Plaine implements, as recommended in this document, falls in between the approaches of Wayzata and Stillwater. The design guidelines identify the character the City wishes to maintain and enhance while providing flexibility to owners, developers, and designers in achieving that character. Although not prescriptive in nature, they are embedded within the City Code and therefore enforceable. Finally, the design review process, also embedded in City Code, supports a collaborative approach between the private sector and the City.

Wayzata, Minnesota
The City of Wayzata, Minnesota, has created design standards that allow the city to grow while maintaining its unique small town character. The standards guide the architectural character and scale for new buildings in certain areas of the city. The primary functions of Wayzata’s design standards, as quoted from the city’s 2004 Design Standards are as follows:

- To guide applicants wishing to expand, renovate existing structures or construct new buildings or parking within the commercial districts of the City;
- To assist the City and the public in reviewing development proposals;
- To improve the City’s public realm — its streets, sidewalks, walkways, and its streetscape and landscape treatments.

Wayzata established three design districts that have their own respective design standards. The Lake Street District embodies design standards that foster a “Main Street” character. The Bluff District addresses an area with diverse issues, and is designed to protect the aesthetics of the bluff slope and ridge. The Wayzata Bou-
Belle Plaine Design Manual

Implementation Strategies

The Boulevard District addresses a commercial strip leading into the town.

Wayzata’s design standards are embedded into the zoning ordinance of the city. “For the purpose of protecting the general welfare, the public, and safety of the City and also to ensure the physical, aesthetic, and economic viability for the city of Wayzata, the Design Standards have been created and are hereby established” –Wayzata Zoning Ordinance

The ordinance directs all non-residential and multi-family residential developments that occur in the established design districts consult and comply with the design standards for that district.

The design standards work in a method similar to the site plan review process. A party interested in substantial exterior renovating or constructing a new building within a design district would consult the design standards to create a design that conforms to the standards. The party then submits their designs to city staff for review. City staff makes recommendations for approval or denial to the planning commission, who then decides whether to issue a building permit for the project. Plans that do not conform to design standards can be approved through a process similar to variance procedures. The city can issue a “stop work” order if construction does not follow the approved plans.

Wayzata’s design standards are effective because they are embedded in the zoning ordinance. The city established a clear link between design standards and the need to protect the general welfare, the public, and safety of the city. This makes design standards legally enforceable because cities have a right to regulate for the general welfare, the public, and safety.

Stillwater, Minnesota

The City of Stillwater, Minnesota, has developed a design manual composed of an accumulation of design guidelines that apply in two specific situations:

• For site or building alteration permits issued by the heritage preservation commission.
• For specific types of projects within the downtown plan district and the west business park plan district

Quoting from the Design Manual, the design guidelines are intended as “recommendations created to direct and lead Stillwater in its endeavor to conserve and enhance its appearance, preserve its historical and/or architectural assets, protect and encourage areas of existing or potential scenic value, and assist its property owners. They encourage the community to effectively work together as new construction, renovation, and restoration is proposed.”
The design criteria and associated guidelines form the core of the design manual. Each guideline or criteria will contain a background paragraph that describes the history of that criterion. Hopefully this will help to explain why this criterion is important in preserving the character of Stillwater. The guidelines are not formulas or specific solutions, but are meant to be flexible recommendations to develop compatibility within the building, its neighbors, and the area. The guidelines are intentionally flexible, thus avoiding the danger of sameness. They are meant to encourage rather than insist, and discourage rather than prohibit. They guide, but they cannot design. Hopefully, the inherent flexibility of the process will allow for creative, imaginative design while preserving the historic attributes and maintaining the pedestrian character of downtown Stillwater.

While the design guidelines themselves are not embedded in the City Code, the existence of the Design Review Committee and the design permit and review process is. Upon application by an owner, the design review committee reviews the design plans for both architectural character and site/off-site spatial relationships. The committee then recommends to the planning commission which may impose conditions for approval. The planning commission makes recommendation to the city council which makes final decision for approval.
1103.07 SITE PLAN REVIEW.

1103.07 SUBD. 1. REQUIREMENTS.
The City Council declares it necessary and appropriate to require site plan approval of
development in certain zoning districts to preserve and promote attractive, well-planned stable
urban conditions. This includes all proposed multiple-family buildings (three (3) or more units),
commercial developments, industrial developments and all proposed developments in the Flood
Plain District. Site plan approval by the City Council must be obtained before a building permit is
issued. True and accurate representation of the following requirements is the responsibility of
the applicant.

1. Application for Site Plan Approval.

   Applications for Site Plan Approval shall be on a form provided by the Zoning
   Administrator and shall include the fee as set by City Council resolution. The application
   and copies of the site plan shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator. In all cases,
   the Site Plan shall contain:
   A. Name of project.
   B. Location of project, including a vicinity map.
   C. Name and mailing address of developer/owner.
   D. Name, telephone number, and mailing address of the project engineer and/or
      architect.
   E. Date of plan preparation.
   F. North point and graphic scale.
   G. Boundary line of project site with dimensions. All site plans shall be drawn at an
      engineering scale (e.g. 1"=40').
   H. A Registered Land Survey if deemed necessary by Zoning Administrator.

   The site plan shall also contain the following features, both existing and proposed, drawn
   by a Registered Engineer, Architect, Landscape Architect and/or Land Surveyor:
   1. Topographic contours at a minimum interval of (2) two feet.
   2. Adjacent and on-site streets and street rights-of-way. Any access onto County
      or State roads must be approved by such authority prior to City Council
      approval.
   3. Utilities and utility right-of-way easements, man-hole rim elevations and pipe
      elevations and sizes.
   5. Parking and loading facilities.
   6. Surface water collection and conveyance features including arrows indicating
      the direction of surface water flow over the map of proposed contours.
   7. Surface water ponds, ditches and wetlands.
   8. Sidewalks and trails.
   9. The location of tree cover, including the designation of trees of fifteen (15)
      inches in diameter of more.
   10. Fences and retaining walls.
   11. Shielded exterior refuse collection areas.
   12. Landscaping, including species and minimum size (refer to Section 1107.03
       Screening and Landscaping).
   14. Height above mean sea level of buildings.
   15. Project data including square footage of buildings and number of parking
       spaces.
17. The current zoning of the property and a listing of all required federal, state, and city permits and the status of such applications. The Zoning Administrator may require the developer to submit the following items if he or she feels that they are important for adequate understanding of the project by the Planning Commission, City Council and/or public:
   a. Aerial photograph(s) of the site.
   b. Cross-section drawings.
   c. Perspective sketch(es).
   d. A professional analysis of traffic impact or other infrastructure impact (e.g., storm sewer, water, sanitary sewer).

2. Review and Recommendation.
   In considering applications for Site Plan Approval under this Ordinance, the Zoning Administrator, Planning and Zoning Commission, Design Review Committee, and City Council shall consider the following:
   A. How the site plan relates to conditions both on and off the site.
   B. Conformance with the Belle Plaine Comprehensive Plan.
   C. The impact of the site plan on the existing and anticipated traffic and parking conditions.
   D. Building location and height.
   E. Sanitary sewer, water, and drainage conditions, landscaping, lighting, open space, signage, setbacks, and related matters.

   F. The design guidelines as outlined in the Belle Plaine Design Manual.

3. Developer's/Builder's Agreement.
   Prior to issuing a building permit, the Zoning Administrator may require the developer/builder to sign an agreement with the City which assures that particular elements of the Site Plan approval application, either proposed by the applicant or imposed by the City Council, shall be carried out. The City Council may require the applicant to provide a performance bond or irrevocable.
SECTION 1107.17  HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STANDARDS.

1107.17 SUBD. 1.  PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Section is to meet the following objectives:

A. Implement the goals and policies set out in the Comprehensive Plan;
B. Preserve the character of the City's commercial and industrial areas;
C. Maintain and improve the City's tax base;
D. Reduce the impacts of dissimilar land uses;
E. Promote orderly and safe flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
F. Discourage the development of identical and similar building facades which detract from the character and appearance of the neighborhood;
G. Preserve the natural and built environment; and
H. Minimize adverse impacts on adjacent properties from buildings which are or may become unsightly.


1107.17 SUBD. 2.  DESIGN STANDARDS.

The following design standards shall be incorporated into site and building plans for all highway commercial and industrial properties:

A. Any noise-producing portions of the development, such as loading docks, and outside storage activities shall be placed away from adjacent residential areas.

B. Utility service structures such as utility meters, lines, transformers, above ground tanks, refuse handling, loading docks and maintenance structures, shall be located inside a building or entirely screened from off-site views. In addition, all utility services shall be placed underground.

C. Exterior surface materials which are permitted are divided into three “Classes” with a minimum amount of the each class of material being required on buildings as follows:

1. Class I: Brick, marble, granite or other natural stone, textured cement stucco, copper, porcelain and glass.

2. Class II: Exposed aggregate concrete panels, burnished concrete block, integral colored split face (rock face) and exposed aggregate block, cast-in-place concrete, artificial stucco, artificial stone, pre-finished metal.

3. Class III: Unpainted or surface painted concrete block (scored or unscored), unpainted or surface painted plain or ribbed concrete panels and unfinished or surface painted metal.

D. Minimum Use of Class I Material Required: At least sixty (60) percent of each building face visible from off-site must be constructed with Class I materials, except as permitted below. Not more than ten (10) percent of the building face not visible from off site may be constructed of greater percentages of Class II or III materials, if the structure
otherwise conforms to all City ordinances. The mixture of building materials must be compatibly integrated.

a. Class I materials may be reduced to a minimum of twenty-five (25) percent for buildings in the B-2 (Highway Commercial) or I-C (Industrial/Commercial) or I-2 (Industrial) Use Districts which are not located on a principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector or adjacent to or across from any residential district, provided that the remaining materials are functionally and durably equal to a Class I material as certified by the developer’s architect or the manufacturer.

b. Class I materials may be reduced to a minimum of twenty-five (25) percent for building walls in the B-2 (Highway Commercial) or I-C (Industrial/Commercial) or I-2 (Industrial) Use Districts facing on a principal arterial, minor arterial or major collector, or adjacent to or across from and a residential district provided that the remaining materials are functionally and durably equal to a Class I material as certified by the developer’s architect or the manufacturer and that the architectural design and site plan must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. The exposed height of the building wall shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet.
2. The number of required plantings shall be increased by twenty (20) percent or the size of twenty (20) percent of the overstory trees installed shall be increased to three and one-half (3 ½) caliper inches.
3. A minimum of ten (10) percent of the building façade must be windows or glass spandrels.

c. In addition to the minimum criteria, the following additional architectural design elements may be considered in determining whether to permit the reduced use of Class I materials: 1) building bulk, 2) general massing, 3) roof treatment, 4) proportion of openings, 5) façade design elements and variation, 6) compatibility of materials, 7) color and 8) texture. Site plan design elements which will be considered in determining whether to reduce the Class I building material requirement include quantity, quality, variation, compatibility and size of plant material, landscape berms and screening walls. Also considered will be the overall harmony and unity of the various elements of the architectural design and site plan within the site and also within the larger context of the area or corridor.

Generally buildings of lower height, less bulk, pitched or gabled roofs, variations in façade and numerous openings will be considered eligible for a reduction in the use of Class I materials. Generally site plans with increased amount, variation and size of landscape materials and higher landscape berms and screening walls will be considered eligible for Class I material reductions.

E. Building designs shall be consistent with the following requirements:

1. The height, bulk, general massing, roof treatment, materials, colors, textures, major divisions and proportions of a new or remodeled building shall be compatible in design style and character with that of other buildings on the site and on adjacent sites.

2. No unbroken wall may exceed a four-to-one (4:1) ratio of wall length to wall height, and each wall deviation four-to-one (4:1) ratio shall be a minimum depth of four (4)
feet. Where a maximum wall length to wall height ratio is used, the minimum depth of each building wall deviation may be reduced to three (3) feet. Where a maximum two-to-one (2:1) wall height ratio is used, the minimum depth of each building wall deviation may be reduced to two (2) feet;

3. No building may display more than five (5) percent of any elevation surface in bright, pure accent colors.

4. Design shall be informed by the Design Manual and be reviewed by the Urban Design Review Committee and Planning and Zoning Commission and approved by the City Council as a part of the site plan review process.

5. The site lighting shall provide adequate light for the safety and welfare of persons and shall not present a nuisance or hazard and shall otherwise comply with lighting standards in Section 1107.01 Subd. 3.

6. For projects where the lot area exceeds fifty-thousand (50,000) square feet, at least one (1) percent of the lot area shall be devoted to pedestrian use such as plazas, sidewalks or trails.

7. The relationship of the building to the site and adjacent property including the site access and pedestrian movement shall be complementary.
SECTION 1107.22 PRESERVATION OF BELLE PLAINE’S CHARACTER DESIGN STANDARDS.

1107.22 SUBD. 1. PURPOSE.

a. To promote high standards of building and site design in the Central Commercial Business Belle Plaine Commercial Boulevard, Downtown, US Highway 169 Corridor, and Gateways Design Districts with the purpose of preserving an atmosphere consistent with the character of the City of Belle Plaine.

b. To protect and enhance the appeal and attraction of the City of Belle Plaine to residents, visitors and tourists, and to serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry.

c. To foster civic pride in the beauty and notable accomplishments of the past.

d. To preserve the value of existing buildings which are located in the City of Belle Plaine.

1107.22 SUBD. 2. APPLICATION.

a. Existing Commercial Buildings – Expansion or Alteration of Exterior: Commercial buildings existing upon the effective date of this Ordinance, shall be allowed to continue with their existing design; except when the exterior appearance of any such building is to be altered in a manner which requires a building or sign permit.

b. New Buildings: New commercial buildings in the Central Business Design Districts which are proposed after the effective date of this Ordinance must consider the Design Standards set forth in this Section and the design guidelines outlined in the Belle Plaine Design Manual.

c. Application: Any owner or his/her agent desiring to construct a new commercial building, or to expand, alter, repair, remove or remodel an existing commercial building, in the Central Business Design Districts, B-3, shall submit the following:

1. Application.

2. Other items necessary to review; drawings, site plan, and proposed colors.

3. Applications shall be submitted to the Design Committee. The Design Committee shall be appointed by the Mayor and City Council and consist of not less than two (2) business/property owners, two (2) members of the Main Street Committee or Chamber of Commerce and two (2) members at large. The Chamber of Commerce/Main Street Director shall serve as the staff liaison to the Committee.

4. The Design Committee shall approve, conditionally approve or deny application requests, within sixty (60) days of receipt of a complete application, or the application shall be considered approved. If the applicant does not agree with the decision of the Design Committee, they may file an appeal with the City Council through the variance process outlined in Section 1103.04 of this Ordinance.

1107.22 SUBD. 3. DESIGN STANDARDS: DOWNTOWN DESIGN DISTRICT.

Every proposed new building, or expansion, alteration, repair, removal, or remodeling of an existing commercial building in the B-3, Central Business Downtown Design District, shall conform with the standards provided in this Section and the design guidelines outlined in the Belle Plaine Design Manual:

The building façade shall be finished in materials traditionally used for main street storefronts that maintain the character of Belle Plaine, such as brick, glass, and wood.

a. Distinctive features: Finishes, construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the architectural character of a property shall be preserved whenever reasonably possible.

b. Deteriorated features. Shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever reasonably possible. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where reasonably possible, materials.

c. Masonry surfaces: Masonry and other original surfaces should be conserved. Brick should not be covered with stucco, shakes, or other veneer.

d. Windows: Windows should not be filled in with wood, brick, or any other material. Window sizes and shapes should be maintained if replacement or removal of original window is necessary.

2. New Construction/Alterations.

a. New additions or exterior alterations shall be compatible in material, color, scale and architectural features with the existing building.

b. In the case of a proposed new building, such building shall not itself, or by reason of its location on the property, materially impair the architectural value of buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity.

c. Signs shall meet all existing codes and requirements, and in addition, should not cover architectural features and spaces that characterize a property.

d. Any proposed awnings should be sized to fit the windows and store front behind them. They should not greatly obscure the architectural features behind them. Canvas is the most suitable material for most store fronts built between 1870 and 1910.

e. Existing buildings with flat roofs shall continue to have the appearance of a flat roof.

f. All ground mounted mechanical equipment, including heating and air conditioning units and trash receptacle areas, shall be completely screened from adjacent properties by use of a wall or fence, or shall be enclosed within a building whenever practical. Mechanical equipment shall be set back from the edge of the building and painted the same color as the roof. All roof appurtenances, including air conditioning units and mechanical equipment, shall be shielded and architecturally screened from view from adjacent streets and properties.

g. There shall be no outdoor display or storage of merchandise on public property without Council approval.

h. Colors from the 1850’s to 1910’s are most suitable. This is an “Italianate” period. Earth tone colors will be supplied to applicants by the Design Committee.


a. If a building is removed, the space shall be seeded and maintained as “green space.”

b. The Design Committee shall review the historic value of the building prior to approving of its demolition.

1107.22 SUBD. 4. ENFORCEMENT.

In the event any building or structure subject to the Development Standards of this Section is to be constructed, reconstructed, altered, repaired, converted, moved or subject to demolition, in violation of this Section, the building inspector, in addition to any other remedies, may:

a. Institute a civil action for injunctive relief to stop, prevent, or abate a violation of this Section.

b. Issue a stop-work order to prevent a continuing violation of this Section.

Work which proceeds in violation of this Section, in contravention of a stop-work order, or in disregard of a court-ordered injunction shall be a public nuisance.
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Appendix A

• Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines
List of Figures

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure A1. Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines Brochure, Belle Plaine Main Street Program.
Figure A1. Belle Plaine Design and Sign Guidelines Brochure, Belle Plaine Main Street Program.
Belle Plaine Design Guidelines

Introduction:
The following guidelines were developed by the Design Committee of the Belle Plaine Main Street Program. They were developed to assist historic building owners in facade renovations. These guidelines must be complied with if a building owner wants to apply for the low interest loan pool. To apply, visit the Main Street Office at 133 North Meridian or contact Greg Nybeck at 873-4295. The Design Committee has developed these guidelines with concern for the appearance of the town, for the economic abilities of the building owner, and for the general compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

Storefront

Bulkhead:
When renovating a building, special attention must be paid to the bulkhead area of the building. This is the part directly below the storefront window. The bulkhead, or kickplate, serves many functions. First, it protects the storefront window; second, it puts the merchandise up at a better viewing point for the customer, and finally, it can define the entrance. Traditionally, the bulkhead was made of wood with trim applied. Later, many bulkheads were altered with either aluminum, structural glass, or brick.

Guidelines for renovation of the bulkhead:
The bulkhead should be restored to its original look if at all possible. Removal of the existing bulkhead may be necessary. If the original bulkhead does not exist, it should be rebuilt or recreated. Sometimes the bulkhead has been completely altered both in size and design. At that point it is important to consider the size of the window. If the bulkhead was downsized to fit a larger storefront window, the existing bulkhead should be used. See "Windows" section for more information on size.
Windows:
The main purpose of the storefront window is to display merchandise. It also allows for natural light and heat to enter the building. It is the link between the passerby and the store interior. The large window gives the store a sense of openness and friendliness. Most storefront windows were framed in wood and the sill sloped forward for drainage.

Guidelines for renovation of windows:
The storefront windows should be kept open. If the windows have been covered up, they should be uncovered as close to their original size as possible. In most cases, interior barriers that block the view of the passersby to the inside of the store should be taken out.

Transoms:
Originally the transom was directly over the storefront window and allowed light to reach the back of the store. Since the age of the fluorescent light, many of the transoms have been closed up and the ceiling lowered. The transom was often made of prism glass, or a tinted glass.

Guidelines for renovation of transom windows:
The transom should be uncovered and exposed as it was originally. If the transom does not exist it should be replaced. There are a number of options for replacing the transom windows. Less expensive glasses can be used to simulate the original transom. If the ceiling has been lowered inside, the glass can be back-painted or reflective glass can be used. There are many inexpensive options and all should be explored before the transom is filled in with plywood and painted an appropriate color. If it is used as a sign board or covered by the signage, the signage must fall within the sign guidelines set by the committee, and to conform to the City sign ordinance.

Awnings:
Cloth awnings were typically used in historic districts and downtowns. Traditionally, awnings were retractable and were used to control the amount of light that went into the store. They were also used as protection from the elements. They were placed above the transom window.
Awnings can enhance the look of a plain building as well as provide protection.

Guidelines for renovation of awnings:

Metal or aluminum awnings should be replaced with cloth or canvas awnings. Both fixed and retractable awnings can be used. The awning should provide shade for the storefront window and protection for the pedestrian. To do this, the awning must extend at least three feet out from the building. The distance of the bottom awning to the sidewalk should be at least seven feet. The top of the awning should not extend more than six inches over the top of the transom window. Lettering and signage on the awning should be limited to the valance area and must meet standards set in the sign guidelines. Signage can be placed on the awning over the entrance upon committee approval. Backlighting of the awning is acceptable only over the entrance. Styles and colors can be obtained at the Belle Plaine Main Street Program's office.

Storefront doors:

Storefront doors were usually made of wood with a glass panel and built with attention to detail. The door is the first experience that the customer has when he/she walks into the store. Ornate or unique doors can define the character of the business.

Guidelines for renovation of storefront doors:

Every effort should be made to utilize or recreate the original storefront door. Plate glass and aluminum doors are not recommended; however, the committee is aware of the expense of replacing the door. Therefore, we would encourage the store owner to paint the door a historic color that matches and complements the color of the building. Appropriate materials for the door range from wood to steel. A standard aluminum door with a wide stile can be used. Baked or dark anodized enamel finish is recommended.

Upper story windows:

Upper story windows add rhythm and balance to a two story building. Often, it is the window for an apartment or office. Windows were large to allow maximum light and ventilation. Recently, many upper story windows have been filled in with boards or smaller windows. This disrupts the rhythm of the building and projects a negative closed up image.
Guidelines for renovation of upper story windows:

If the original windows exist they should be repaired, repainted and weatherproofed if necessary. Storm windows are recommended to help avoid heat loss. Under no circumstances should upper story windows be blocked in. If the windows have been infilled they should be replaced. The Design Committee suggests looking at historic photos to best match the windows. Most window manufacturers offer energy efficient matches to historic windows. New replacement windows should not have reflective glass as it takes away from the historic effect of the building.

Tuckpointing:

This is a term that refers to putting new mortar in the joints between the bricks. Tuckpointing is an important maintenance tool that should be used to maintain the structural integrity of the building and to prevent water and air from entering. This process is very important and one of the most crucial steps in building upkeep. The Belle Plaine Main Street Program cannot recommend a contractor but will provide names. References should be checked and previous projects inspected. Older brick is often softer and special care should be taken to ensure the correct mortar mixture. The Secretary of Interior’s “Standards for Historic Preservation” is a good source for technical aspects of tuckpointing. It is always our recommendation that if tuckpointing is needed, it should be one of the first steps of the renovation.

Cornices:

The cornice can be one of the most ornate parts of the building. It is the projected molding along the top of a building where the roof and wall meet. Those that exist should be rebuilt to their original splendor. Car putty can be used to rebuild dented or ripped metal cornices. They can also be rebuilt out of wood. As in all aspects of building renovations, repair of the existing should come before replacement. Under no circumstances should they be removed from the building.

Upper story windows, such as those in Melgram Jewelers, need to be kept open.
Painting:
Buildings should be painted only in extreme cases. If paint exists on brick buildings, the owner should make all attempt to remove the paint and restore the brick color. If the brick has no paint then it should be left the natural color. If the building owner wishes to change the color scheme of the building, a designer should be consulted. The Design Committee offers a selection of historic colors at the Main Street Office. The committee recommends that these colors be used in all cases. The color selection process for the trim and the main building is important and time should be spent on this to ensure a satisfactory selection of color. The Design Committee and manager will work with the building owner in the selection process. The historic color of the building can be uncovered by scratching off a patch of the old paint in an inconspicuous area. If the building is to be repainted it should be washed first with a low pressure wash to remove dirt and loose paint and then thoroughly dried.

Cleaning:
Many brick buildings need to be cleaned periodically. This can be done with a low pressure wash and light scrubbing, or in some cases, a low pressure wash with appropriate chemical cleaners. Chemical cleaners should be patch tested in an inconspicuous area. Under no circumstances should a building be sandblasted. Sandblasting destroys brick, stone and wood! The only material on a historic building that can be sandblasted is cast iron.
BELLE PLAINE
LOW INTEREST LOAN POOL FOR FACADE AND INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

The Belle Plaine Main Street Program, along with the State Bank of Belle Plaine, has developed a low interest loan pool to assist building and business owners with improvements to their property and business.

Loan Rate and Term

- Initial rate is prime (New York Prime) at closing with a floor of 6%
- Maximum term for loan under low interest program is three years. Upon maturity loan is to be paid in full or renewed at current market (bank) rate.
- Minimum loan is $1,000.00, maximum loan is $20,000.00.
- This is not a grant. All loan applications must meet participating financial institution credit criteria.

General Criteria

- Projects must follow the Belle Plaine design guidelines, City and County ordinances, and have approval of the Belle Plaine Main Street Program Design Committee.
- No more than 30% of the project cost can be used for interior improvements.
- Applicants must pick up an application form at the

  Belle Plaine Main Street Office
  133 N. Meridian
  Belle Plaine, Mn 56011.
  Phone (612) 673-4295.
  Office hours:
  9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday.

- All work should be done by a building contractor located in the Belle Plaine area.
- Applications must be accompanied by a written proposal of improvements, estimated costs (bids), and appropriate building permits.
Belle Plaine Sign Guidelines

Introduction:
The purpose of these guidelines is to make suggestions to building owners on how to better enhance their business and the historic area of Belle Plaine through signage. These guidelines have been written with the intention of promoting voluntary change. The committee has had to consider both the needs of the businesses and the public. It is necessary to contact City Hall for a permit prior to rectifying a sign.

Type of Sign

Plastic formed signs:
Plastic formed signs are not appropriate for the historic core area. Their original intention was to be used in strip shopping center areas and with newer structures. The integrity of the historic building is lost when plastic formed signs are applied.

Historic buildings by definition are any building built before 1936. There are a few newer buildings in the downtown and exceptions should be made for them, however, we encourage building owners to use signs in a tasteful and respectful manner.

Neon
Neon is generally not appropriate for buildings in the downtown. If approved, the size should fit within the guidelines established by the City’s sign ordinances.

Wooden
Wooden painted, carved signs, or wooden letters are appropriate for all buildings in the historic area.

Banners/Cloth
Banner or cloth type signage is appropriate for the area. Care must be taken to see that
Metal

Aluminum, steel, and copper are some of the options for metal signs and are appropriate for the historic area.

Painted

Signs may not be painted directly on the wall or roof of a building, but may be painted on the window.

Standard for Signs

Size

Signs must be proportionally balanced to the building. All signage will be reviewed by the Design Committee prior to approval.

Number of signs

Each business should have no more than three signs on its storefront, indicating the name and type of business. The building number is not considered a sign. The Design Committee recommends that all businesses paint their building number somewhere near the entrance of the business. There should be only one overhanging sign, one flush mounted sign and one window sign or signage on the awning. Each business should have no more than one sign on the back of their building. Signs used in back of the buildings should be similar in style and color to the front signage.

Placement of signs

Signs should be flush-mounted on the building. The transom area and over the transom are two places for the signage. Overhanging signs are discouraged but allowed with committee approval. Signs can also be painted on the window or on the awning. The valance of the awning is the best location for the sign.

Colors for signs

The Design Committee recommends no neon or fluorescent colored signs. If desired, special approval is required by the committee. Signs should be limited to three or four colors. The best types of colors are the same historic colors as the design guidelines suggest.

Summary

In conclusion, too much signage, poorly maintained signage, or signs placed in competition with one another, can give the entire town a bad image. Each business owner should be aware of how their signs look in relationship to their neighbors and how their signs affect the look of the business district as a whole.

RENOVATION PROCESS

1. Idea
   - Building owner decides to renovate his/her Main Street property

2. Design
   - Owner, contractor, architect work up renovation plans for building

3. Present renovation approach to Main Street Design Committee for suggestions and approval

4. Arrange project financing

5. Construction using local trades and benefiting from Main Street group purchasing agreements

6. Grand Opening
   - Celebration! Block Party, awards and plaques for Building
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIORS
STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The following standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time, those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of the deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
APPENDIX B

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Figure B6. 2000 Belle Plaine Commute Time to Work, CRD, May, 2008.
Community Profile

Demographic Information
The Metropolitan Council estimated that Belle Plaine had a population of 6,595 in 2006. This is a 74 percent increase from the 2000 U.S. Census population of 3,789. During the same time period, the number of households in Belle Plaine grew by 69 percent. This growth is consistent with Metropolitan Council forecasts that project moderate population growth in the city through 2030. Belle Plaine's population is expected to reach 16,300 in 2030, a nearly 150 percent increase from its current population estimate. The State Demographer's Office projects that the number of households in Scott County will increase 81 percent between 2000 and 2020, from 30,692 households to 55,540 households. Belle Plaine will likely experience higher household growth given previous Belle Plaine household growth relative to Scott County household growth and population projections. (Figure B1)

Belle Plaine had a median age of 34.9 years in 2001 according to the U.S. Census. Comparatively, Scott County's median age was 32.7 years and Minnesota's median age statewide was 35.4. 49.4 percent of the population was male, and 50.6 percent was female (Figure B2). 97 percent of the population was white, and the largest minority group was Hispanic or Latino, comprising of 1.1 percent of the population. Results from the American Community Survey indicate that diversity is increasing in Scott County, particularly among Asians, African Americans, and Hispanics. (Figure B3)

Socioeconomic Information
The 2000 Census reported that 81.5 percent of the population age 25 and older in Belle Plaine has attained at least high school diploma, and 17.3 percent a bachelor's degree or higher. 16 percent of Belle Plaine's non-institutionalized population had a disability in 2000. 97.5 percent of the city's population spoke English at home.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development reported the unemployment rate in Scott County was 5 percent in March 2008. This compares to 5.4 percent statewide and 5.2 percent nationwide. There were 28 families (29 percent of all families) or 206 individuals (5.6 percent of population) below the poverty level in Belle Plaine. The Median income was $50,272 in the city in 2000, above the nationwide figure of $41,994.

Manufacturing was the largest employing industry among Belle Plaine's workforce in 2000, followed by education (Figure B4). According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, major employers in the city include Belle Plaine Lutheran Home, the Belle Plaine School District, and Emma Krumbee's. (Figure B5).
95 percent of Belle Plaine’s workforce age 16 and older in 2000 did not work at home and therefore must commute. Of these commuters, 81 percent drove alone, 10.7 percent carpooled, 3.5 percent walked, and less than 1 percent used other means. No commuters reported using public transportation. The average travel time to work was 24.5 minutes. (Figure B6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belle Plaine</td>
<td>20.30%</td>
<td>92.70%</td>
<td>61.60%</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belle Plaine Twp</td>
<td>16.60%</td>
<td>-4.50%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>64.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott County</td>
<td>54.70%</td>
<td>63.50%</td>
<td>27.60%</td>
<td>18.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Figure B1. Belle Plaine / Scott County Population Growth, CRD, May, 2008.

Figure B2. 2000 Belle Plaine Sex and Age Population Growth, CRD, May, 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex and Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,916</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (Years)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>7.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>14.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>16.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 59</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 64</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>6.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 to 84</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,789</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000
### Community Profile

**Figure 3: 2000 Belle Plaine Race and Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Ethnicity</th>
<th>2000 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Race</td>
<td>3,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,789</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

**Figure 4: Belle Plaine Employment by Industry, 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Number of Workers</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational; health and social services</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>17.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts; entertainment; recreation; accommodation and food services</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>11.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance; insurance; real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing; and utilities</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional; scientific; management; administrative; and waste management services</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture; forestry; fishing and hunting; and mining</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,949</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Figure B3. 2000 Belle Plaine Race and Ethnicity, CRD, May, 2008.

Figure B4. 2000 Belle Plaine Employment by Industry, CRD, May, 2008.
### Figure 5: Belle Plaine Major Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Employee Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belle Plaine Lutheran Home</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belle Plaine Public Schools-ISD #716</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Krumbee's Family Restaurant</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell Pharmaceutical</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huber's SuperValu</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lupient - Belle Plaine</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Bk of Belle Plaine</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belle Plaine, City of</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley View Golf Club</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belle Plaine Co-op</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seimon Implement</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belle Plaine Clinic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Tool &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Farm Supply</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minn. Dept. of Employment & Economic Development

Figure B5. 2000 Belle Plaine Major Employers, CRD, May, 2008.

### Figure 6: Belle Plaine Commute Time to Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commute Time (Minutes)</th>
<th>0-9</th>
<th>19-Oct</th>
<th>20-34</th>
<th>35-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belle Plaine Commuters</strong></td>
<td>Number of Commuters</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent of Commuters</td>
<td>27.30%</td>
<td>9.90%</td>
<td>37.20%</td>
<td>20.50%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Figure B6. 2000 Belle Plaine Commute Time to Work, CRD, May, 2008.
APPENDIX C: PROJECT PROCESS AND COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

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- Exercises
- Results
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Figure C10. Exercise One Future Vision Results– Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C11. Exercise One: Four Most Important Results– Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C12. Exercise One Part Two A. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C13. Exercise One Part Two A. – Dotmacracy Response, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C14. Exercise One Part Two B. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C15. Exercise One Part Two B. – Dotmacracy Response, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C16. Exercise Two A. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C17. Exercise Two B. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C18. Exercise Two C. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C19. Exercise Two D. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C20. Exercise Two E. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C21. Exercise Two F. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Figure C22. Exercise Two G. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
The Community Vision for Commercial Development project was commissioned by the City of Belle Plaine, guided by the Belle Plaine Commercial Design Committee (Commercial Design Committee) and prepared by the Center for Rural Design (CRD) at the University of Minnesota.

The project process, illustrated in the timeline in Figure C1 (located at the end of Appendix C), began with the Belle Plaine City Council approval of the project in December 2007, the re-appointment of the Commercial Design Committee and the establishment of the project Steering Committee. The project included three major phases: the organizational and inventory phase, the vision identification phase and the Design Manual documentation phase.

The organizational and inventory phase focused discussion with the Steering Committee on existing physical and cultural assets and opportunities, potential design guideline implementation measures and precedents for urban design features and policy implementation. This phase was facilitated by two Steering Committee meetings.

The goal of the vision identification phase was to gain insight into the community’s values in regards to the City’s current and future image. The community values helped guide the planning principles and design guidelines in the Design Manual. The vision identification phase included two Steering Committee meetings and the Community Design Workshop. The two Steering Committee meetings focused on the design of the exercises and process of the Community Design Workshop. Figure C2, illustrates the Design Workshop Flier prepared by the City of Belle Plaine.

The Design Manual documentation phase is a synthesis of the outcomes of project phases 1 and 2, Steering Committee conversation and further research into the report. The project phase included two Steering Committee Meetings and one public meeting with the Belle Plaine City Council. The intent of the first Steering Committee Meeting was to review and gain approval of the Community Design Workshop results. Between the first and second Steering Committee meetings was an electronic transfer of a draft of the Design Manual for review and edit. The second Steering Committee meeting involved gaining the comments and further approval of the Steering Committee for the Design Manual. The culmination of the process was the public meeting with Belle Plaine City Council for approval of the Design Manual.

This project could not have been made possible without the re-appointed Belle Plaine Commercial Design Committee. The Commercial Design Committee formed the basis of the Steering Committee and was a direct liaison to the City Council. Ef-
forts were made to have as diverse of a Steering Committee as possible. Steering Committee diversity provides needed insight into multiple perspectives and opinions from people in the City and surrounding areas. As such, additional members of the community were asked to provide assistance to the project without official voting rights. The combined group was the Steering Committee for the remainder of the project. The Steering Committee’s role was to provide insight and guidance to the Center for Rural Design for the Community Vision of Commercial Development project.
Join us at the Belle Plaine Community
PUBLIC WORKSHOP
for the Vision of Commercial Design

You are Invited
to a
Community Workshop!

Tuesday April 8th,
2008
6:00-8:00 P.M.
Belle Plaine
Government Center
218 North Meridian
Street

Please join us!
Your opinion matters!

If you live, work, or play in Belle Plaine, we need you here!

Help Define:
• Belle Plaine’s Community Vision
• The Relationship of Downtown Belle Plaine to Highway 169

We would like to hear from you!
If you can’t make the workshop, please email your comments to Trisha Rosenfeld at trosenfeld@ci.belleplaine.mn.us or call 952-873-5553.

Sponsored by the City of Belle Plaine Steering Committee with the Center for Rural Design, University of Minnesota.
For more information check out the Belle Plaine website: www.belleplainemn.com

Figure C2. Public Workshop Flier, City of Belle Plaine April, 2008.
Exercise 1
The intent of Exercise 1 was to gain a better understanding about what Belle Plaine’s identity could be. As expressed in the public participation results of the Comprehensive Plan, economic development is important to the community of Belle Plaine. Research shows that in order to increase economic development, marketing the quality of life or image of a community is key. This exercise began to help the community frame the meaning of Belle Plaine to the broader region.

The Exercise 1 questionnaire (Figure 3C) was designed as an individual exercise with the goal of constructive group discussion. The table participants rated their current vision of Belle Plaine in relation to broad vision topics (e.g. arts and entertainment, industry, agriculture, etc.) individually. A rating of ten was the best or most heavily weighted. The participants then rated their future vision of Belle Plaine in relation to the same broad vision topics. The participants then picked four areas of the most importance to their future vision. The four areas were ranked comparatively from one to four, with four being the most important.

The next part of the Workshop, Exercise 1 Part 2 A and B, as shown in Figure C4, was a group dotmacracy exercise. The intent of this Exercise was to gain insight into the community’s perception of the City’s image. Dotmacracy is a public participation technique, in which there are a number of opportunities to submit input for one set of questions. This dotmacracy exercise entailed the participant table groups to first individually answer:

A. If Belle Plaine were to prepare a postcard what would be illustrated on it?
B. What type of destination should Belle Plaine be in the future?

After these questions were answered the table’s answers were collected and traded with a different group. The new group then read, interpreted, discussed and recorded answers. The recorded answers were publicly posted and then the participants placed dots on the answers to the above questions that they identified with best.

Exercises 2A and B
Exercise 2A and B, as shown in Figure C5, was a set of individual questions that focused on gaining insight into the community’s values in relation to the perceptions of the existing and future physical character of downtown Belle Plaine, the US Highway 169 Corridor and the City’s gateways. The first set of questions focused on the character of downtown Belle Plaine. Downtown Belle Plaine is the historic
heart of the City and may be the source of the principle defining character of the community. The following questions were asked of the community:

A. What elements currently make downtown special?
B. What elements could make downtown even better in the future?

Exercise 2C
Exercise 2C, as shown in Figure C5, focused on gaining insight into the community’s sense of character of commercial development outside of the historic downtown Belle Plaine and the US Highway 169. The following question was asked:

C. How important is it that commercial development in the other portions of Belle Plaine embody the identity of the historic portions of the City? And to what extent?

Exercises 2D and E
Exercise 2D and E, as shown in Figure C6, focused on gaining insight into the community’s sense of physical character of the US Highway 169 Corridor. US Highway 169 moves through Belle Plaine on a diagonal creating a corridor that offers opportunity to introduce through-traffic to the unique character of Belle Plaine, enticing them to stop or to return in the future to explore the city. The following questions were asked of the community:

D. Should the highway businesses facilitate the highway (face the highway) or facilitate the community (maintain the grid)?
E. How important is it that highway businesses embody the identity of the historic portions of city? And to what extent?

Exercises 2F and G
Exercises 2F and G, as shown in Figure C7, was the third set of questions focusing on character of the Belle Plaine. The City’s entry points can be an asset to the broad community, functioning as gateways to the City. They provide a crucial ‘first impression’ to visitors coming to Belle Plaine and can also be a source of community pride, providing a sense of ‘arriving home’ to residents. The following questions were asked of the community:

F. Where are the key entry points to Belle Plaine?
G. Should the entry points provide linkages to broader community features such as the parks, the river, internal and regional trail systems, etc., as well as the commercial districts?
## Table: Exercise One Questionaire, CRD, April, 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision Related Areas</th>
<th>Belle Plaine’s CURRENT Vision Score Individually 1-10 Rating: 10 being the best</th>
<th>Belle Plaine’s FUTURE Vision Score Individually 1-10 Rating: 10 being the best</th>
<th>Pick 4 Areas of the Most Importance to the FUTURE Vision of Belle Plaine (Rank 1-4, 4 being the most important)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location to the Twin Cities</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Experiences</td>
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<td>Landmarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of Place (Downtown Belle Plaine)</td>
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<td>Senior Living</td>
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<td>Sense of Community / Rural Heritage</td>
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<td>Bedroom Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Belle Plaine / Old Belle Plaine</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
City Belle Plaine Community Vision for Commercial Development
Charrette Exercises

Exercise One Part Two - Dotmacracy

The Belle Plaine Community Vision

• If Belle Plaine were to prepare a postcard what would be illustrated on it?

• What type of destination should Belle Plaine be in the future?

Figure C4. Exercise One Part 2 A & B Questionaire, CRD, April, 2008.
Exercise Two - Dotmocracy

Transforming Identity into Physical Character

• The character of downtown Belle Plaine: Downtown Belle Plaine is the historic heart of the City and may be the source of the principle defining character of the community.
  o What elements currently make downtown special?

  o What elements could make downtown even better in the future?

• The character of commercial developments in Belle Plaine: Commercial development outside of historic Belle Plaine and the US169 corridor can have its own character.
  o How important is it that commercial development in the other portions of Belle Plaine embody the identity of the historic portions city? And to what extent?

Figure C5. Exercise Two A, B, C Questionaire, CRD, April, 2008.
• The character of the US169 Corridor: US169 moves through Belle Plaine on a diagonal creating a corridor that offers opportunity to introduce through-traffic to the unique character of Belle Plaine, enticing them to stop or to return in the future to explore the city.
  ○ Should the highway businesses facilitate the highway (face the highway) or facilitate the community (maintain the grid)?

  ○ How important is it that highway businesses embody the identity of the historic portions of city? And to what extent?

Figure C6. Exercise Two D & E Questionaire, CRD, April, 2008.
The character of the Entry Points: Entry points can be an asset to the broad community functioning as gateways to the City. They provide a crucial ‘first impression’ to visitors coming to Belle Plaine and can also be a source of community pride, providing a sense of ‘arriving home’ to residents.

- Where are the key entry points to Belle Plaine?

- Should the entry points provide linkages to broader community features such as the parks, the river, internal and regional trail systems, etc., as well as the commercial districts?

Figure C7. Exercise Two F & G Questionnaire, CRD, April, 2008.
Exercise 1
The results of Exercise 1 and rest of the exercises of the Community Design Workshop were tallied and illustrated by bar graphs. The bar graphs are color coded, as shown in Figure C8, to highlight the first, second, third and fourth ranked results where appropriate.

The results of the first part of Exercise 1: Belle Plaine’s Vision NOW, shown in Figure C9, suggests that the community members consider Belle Plaine to be a bedroom community to the Twin Cities, with a significant agricultural base. The participants identify Belle Plaine as having close proximity to the Twin Cities and a strong sense of community and rural heritage. The results also suggest that Belle Plaine is a significant place for senior living. These results imply that Belle Plaine’s location to the Twin Cities and the community’s perception of living on the urban and rural edge is significant and should be considered in the project.

The results of the second part of Exercise 1: “Belle Plaine’s future vision”, as shown in Figure C10, suggests that the community would like Belle Plaine to focus interests on enhancing and promoting industry, outdoor recreation and the sense of place of the downtown. Sense of community and rural heritage is also significant and important to the future of Belle Plaine. These results imply that the community of Belle Plaine would like to strengthen the City’s economy, natural recreational assets, downtown and community heritage.

The results of the third part of Exercise 1: “four areas of the most importance to the community’s future vision”, as illustrated in Figure C11, shows that industry, community heritage, uniting new and old Belle Plaine, and the location to the Twin Cities is significant. These results imply that enhancing Belle Plaine’s economy is most important. Preserving and strengthening the community’s heritage is important. Uniting new and old Belle Plaine or north and south Belle Plaine is significant, as well as the relation to the Twin Cities being significant.

Exercises 1 Part 2 A and B
The cumulative individual results of Exercise 1 Part 2 A, illustrated in Figure C12, shows that if Belle Plaine were to prepare a postcard, the Minnesota River would be the most significant image featured. Visions of agriculture would also be an important feature on a postcard. The prairie and bluff landscape, trails and churches (steeples) are also significant features to be represented on a Belle Plaine postcard.
The dotmacracy results of Exercise 1 Part 2A, illustrated in Figure C13, shows that a potential postcard should represent a series of images, mainly the Minnesota River, farmland, churches, the golf course, the new Highway 25 bridge, commercial areas, historic buildings, the Belle Plaine Government Center mural and wide streetscapes. The Minnesota Riverfront, parks, Belle Plaine’s relation to the River and the trail systems are highly favored by the community. A transitional panorama representing the Belle Plaine and its historic and modern relationship to the Minnesota River is also significant to represent in a postcard of Belle Plaine.

The cumulative individual results of Exercise 1 Part 2B, illustrated in Figure C14, shows that Belle Plaine should be a destination that features retail/shopping, working/job center, trails, food businesses and entertainment. Outdoor recreation, parks, community heritage promotion and a place to stop are also significant features in a future vision for Belle Plaine as a destination.

The dotmacracy results of Exercise 1 Part 2B, illustrated in Figure C15, shows that Belle Plaine as an industrial job center destination is highly significant. And, Belle Plaine as a destination for the arts, entertainment, industry, connectivity to the river and trails is also important.

**Exercises 2A and B**

The results for Exercise 2A, illustrated in Figure C16, shows that historic storefronts are the most significant feature that currently makes downtown Belle Plaine special. The wide streets and historic architecture are highly significant. The friendly community atmosphere and pedestrian friendly environment also contribute to the elements that make downtown special.

The results for Exercise 2B, illustrated in Figure C17, expresses that new planting and a variety of restaurants and shops would most significantly enhance downtown Belle Plaine in the future. The renovation of downtown’s buildings and streetscape would also enhance Belle Plaine. The community had suggested that the addition of a theater would be significant in making downtown better in the future. Enhanced business signage, benches and places to go would also make the downtown better.

**Exercise 2C**

The results for Exercise 2C, illustrated in Figure C18, suggests that the community mostly had no response or found it very important that the commercial businesses
that are not located in either the Downtown or US Highway 169 Corridor Districts have their own character.

**Exercises 2D and E**
The results for Exercise 2D, shown in Figure C19, expresses that new development along the US Highway 169 Corridor should face and facilitate the highway. The responses also indicate that the new commercial development should maintain the existing grid of the City and that there should be easy access to the businesses from the highway interchanges and the community.

The results for Exercise 2E, as shown in Figure C20, suggest that it is very important that the highway businesses embody the identity of the historic portions of the City. There were also a significant amount of responses that didn’t consider that the physical character of the historic downtown should be extended to the highway businesses.

**Exercises 2F and G**
The results for Exercise 2F, as shown in Figure C21 support areas north and south of Belle Plaine on the US Highway 169 Corridor and areas north and south of the City on Highway 25 as being the primary entry points into Belle Plaine. The County Road 3 entry point south of the City was also significant.

The results for Exercise 2G as shown in Figure C22, expresses that linkage from the key entry points to broader community features are highly significant. More and better signage was also suggested in relation to linking entry points to major City assets such as the parks, the Minnesota River, internal and regional trails systems, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Color Code</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1st</td>
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<td>3rd</td>
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<td>4th</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure C8. Graph Key for Charrette Results, CRD, May, 2008.
Figure C9. Exercise One Vision Now Results—Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Belle Plaine's Vision in the Future

Attributes:
- Arts and entertainment
- Industry
- Agriculture
- Environmental Location
- Outdoor Recreation
- Location to the Twin
- History
- Cultural Experiences
- Landmarks
- Sense of Place (Downtown Belle Plaine)
- Senior Living
- Sense of Community / Rural Heritage
- Bedroom Community
- New Belle Plaine / Old Belle Plaine

Figure C10: Exercise One Future Vision Results– Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

Appendix C

Community Design Workshop: Results

Belle Plaine Design Manual

APPENDIX C
Figure C11. Exercise One: Four Most Important Results – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
If Belle Plaine Were To Prepare a Postcard What Would Be Illustrated On It?

- no response
- North & South “A Tale of Two Cities”
- can’t get in or out because of roads
- great location
- good people
- family oriented
- adequate water
- a place you can call home
- futuristic designs
- combining the old and the new
- first settlers (History)
- MN River
- vision of agriculture
- representation of industry
- historic homes
- historic downtown and buildings
- prairie and bluff contrast (topography)
- apple orchards
- trails – hiking
- church (steeple)
- new bridge
- golf course
- Hwy 169
- residential – commercial areas
- 2 story outhouse
- mural and city civic center
- fine arts facility
- BP Barbeque Days
- parks
- schools
- sports
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Showing new community, bridges side by side: Old 25 bridge showing old community linked by new bridge. Never design of the future or vice versa. Historical touches, the reflection in the river shows the new part of town and its traditional panorama: The town and the river. A picture of Old Town and its surrounding.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Visits/Views</td>
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<td>Natural Features</td>
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<td>Trails</td>
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<td>Emojis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Historical aspects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Minnesotan River Valley</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>River</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agricultural fields</td>
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<td>Mural of City Council</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historic buildings/Worql, wide streetscapes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>River, Farmland, Churches, Golf Course, New Bridge (25), Commercial areas</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Oriented Activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historic Architecture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bluffs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History of Settlement/Downtown</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riverfront/Parks/Relation to the River/Trails</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Dots</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial business growth, Ex: Arbor Lakes, Maple Grove</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• both sides of Hwy unified,</td>
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<td>• self-sufficient town</td>
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<tr>
<td>• theater</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• neighborhood feeling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping, working, recreation - all in one</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>One stop shop</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture center</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional center for variety of services</td>
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<tr>
<td>High quality of life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Something for everyone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks to admire views/bluffs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and entertainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers little bit of everything: Arts, entertainment, industry, connectivity to the river &amp; trails -&gt; link to regional access/activities - bike tours.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Art gallery - places to stop during a long trip on 169.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local shopping access to keep business dollars cycling in Belle Plain instead of being outsourced to Shakopee/Burnsville - but not as the focal point of our character.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Remove/restrict downtown parking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Downtown filled with wider sidewalks with outdoor seating for restaurants for destination restaurants for a feeling of an evening out on the town.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freestanding rural growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relaxation/Entertainment destination</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Eco-Tourism&quot; destination - birding, biking, canoeing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial job center</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Riverwalk - River town</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &quot;Ag Tourism&quot;/local food center</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Industrial - Good Employment work base</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Commercial - Shopping, relaxing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pedestrian-oriented</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure C15. Exercise One Part Two B. -Dotmacracy Response, CRD, April, 2008.
The Character of Downtown Belle Plaine: Downtown Belle Plaine is the Historic Heart of the City and May be the Source of the Principle Defining Character of the Community.

What elements currently make downtown special?

- no response
- nothing/not much/few/needs help
- historical aspects
- historic preservation
- historic storefronts
- historic churches
- architecture/historic buildings
- "cheers community" friendly, easy place to be
- walkable - human scale
- day trips
- city hall/post office
- cut off highway access
- wide streets
- lighting/signage
- "tight bond of business"
- anchor businesses
- clean
difficulty identifying with outlying parts
- hospitality industry
- center of celebrations
- renovation/growth
- friendly business people
- local eating
- bluffs/river
- potential of vacant corner lot

Figure C16. Exercise Two A – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
Community Vision for Commercial Development

Figure C17. Exercise Two B. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

The Character of Downtown Belle Plaine: Downtown Belle Plaine is the Historic Heart of the City and May Be the Source of the Principle Defining Character of the Community.

What elements could make downtown even better in the future?
The Character of Commercial Developments in Belle Plaine: Commercial Development outside of Historic Belle Plaine and the US 169 Corridor Can Have its Own Character.

- No Response
- Attractive road signage
- Easy on-off access
- Prospered East end
- All of the above
- Preserve historic areas
- new development should reflect historic and bring in new
- Incorporate downtown "charm" into newer businesses
- Distinct rather than cookie cutter businesses
- Look like a well organized town
- Similar lighting and signs
- larger businesses (Trang/ rainbow)
- Not over commercialized
- Small town atmosphere
- modern day amenities
- Development on outskirts will lead people into town
- Questionable
- Destination types of businesses "service & office"
- not important
- They are different
- Let old be old and new be new
- original small town design stretching outward
- Keep options for non-motorized travel and convenience
- Not important to have old building look on 169
- Modern brick store fronts on 169
- commercial development very important to get traffic to stop on 169
- Somewhat important
- Get more development
- Bring historic perspective to commercial areas
- Very important
- Façade of our community matched in our new businesses
- Excelsior building expresses character and pride
- No need as long as BP downtown can and wants to maintain its
- Rural, aesthetic feel
- similar feel to downtown
- People-friendly
- Big box may come but shouldn’t take over
- Don’t become Big-box bog-tights Shakopee - link between
- Keep downtown special
- Buildings not too modern
- Access to other development
- Development scaled to location and character
- Important
- Frontage road along 169 to south will make it easier to get around

Belle Plaine Design Manual

APPENDIX C
Figure C19, Exercise Two D – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.
How Important is it That Highway Businesses Embody the Identity of the Historic Portions of City? And to What Extent?

- No response
- very important
- not important

- more important to get businesses to want to invest in BP
- would be part of what would bring people into BP to do business
- unique identity that separates BP businesses from others
- unique appeal to bring people to visit
- common lighting and signage
- somehow highway businesses could be linked to downtown businesses to provide easy access and signage to both areas
- difficult to do
- questionable benefit if connection not widespread
- two time periods and ok for them to have different identity
- really subjective and have no really desire to pursue this
- help with having the people want to visit downtown
- to feel a unified whole
- highway traffic is different than town traffic
- need signage to draw people into town
- have a relationship between all areas
- promote "new" technologies but maintain the beauty of the rural character
- capture part of the historic feel but not totally
- opportunity to invite people into town with nostalgia

Belle Plaine Design Manual
Community Vision for Commercial Development

Figure C21. Exercise Two F. – Cumulative Individual Responses, CRD, April, 2008.

- The River, Inland and Regional Trail Systems, etc. as Well as the Commercial District?
- Should the Entity Points Provide Linkages to Broader Community Features Such as the Parks?
Should the Entry Points Provide Linkages to Broader Community Features Such as the Parks, the River, Internal and Regional Trail Systems, etc., as Well as the Commercial Districts?

- No response
- Yes
- No
- River and Trails
- Schools
- Churches
- 26 Bridge access to trails
- Rural Charm
- Appealing landscape
- Link to heritage
- Provide people with information
- Link old and new
- More/better signage
- If possible
- Would be difficult
- This is what planning is all about
- 25 corridor tourist oriented
- 169 corridor commercial oriented
- Historic downtown
- Special attractions
- Build on quality of life, then express quality of services
- Much to offer but hard to find
- Physical linkages
- Safe trail connections across Main St
- Parks and regional features
- Highlight the beautiful
- Not sure
- Should be engaging and in historic character
- Rail and Bluff views
- Access to old BP
- Entry on CR 3 should be moved closer to school & hook up w/ Commerce Dr
Community Design Workshop: Results
PHASE 1
Organize and Inventory

PHASE 2
Vision Identification

PHASE 3
Design Manual Documentation

Design Manual

3. Community Design Charrette

April 8

Review Results Draft Design Manual

May 30

Draft date for review comments. Send via mail or email.

May

Final Design Manual

Final STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

June 10

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