

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 bluffslands, 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.