

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 bluffslands.
 - 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 islands¹, emphasize energy and water conservation, and increase biodiversity² with the utilization of native planting.

1. *Heat Island: An urban area having higher average temperature than its rural surroundings owing to the greater absorption, retention, and generation of heat by its buildings, pavements, and human activities. Based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2006.*

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

- 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

- 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.
- 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

- 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.