

US Highway 169 District Guidelines

Objectives

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.

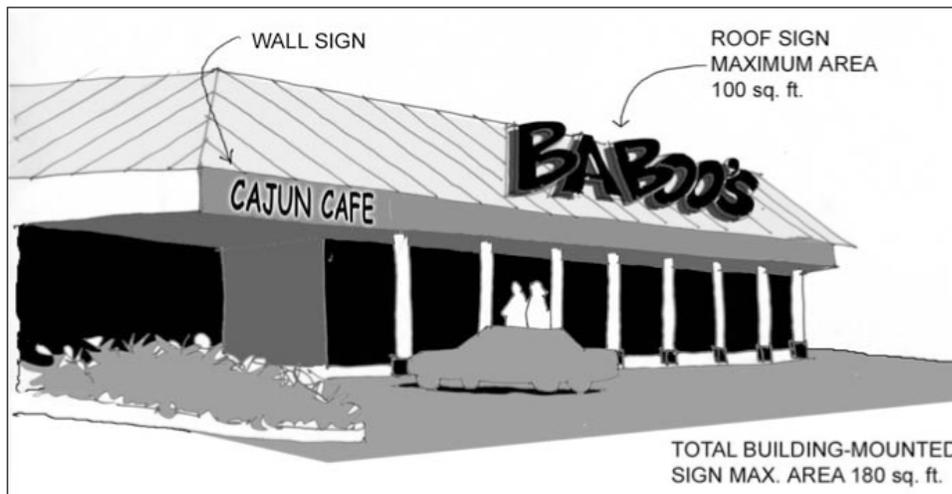


Figure 43. Roof Sign Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.

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.

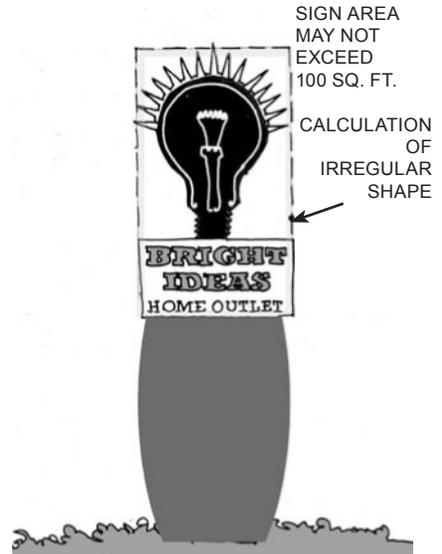


Figure 44. Free Standing Sign Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.

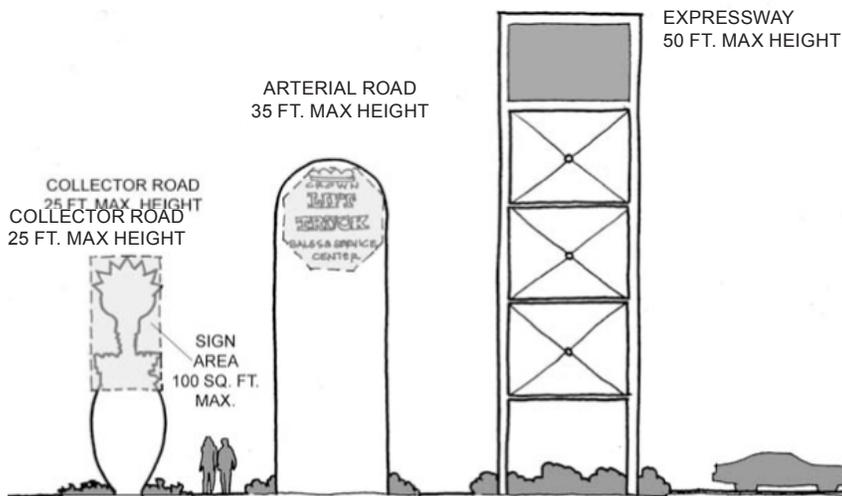


Figure 45. Sign Height Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.

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.

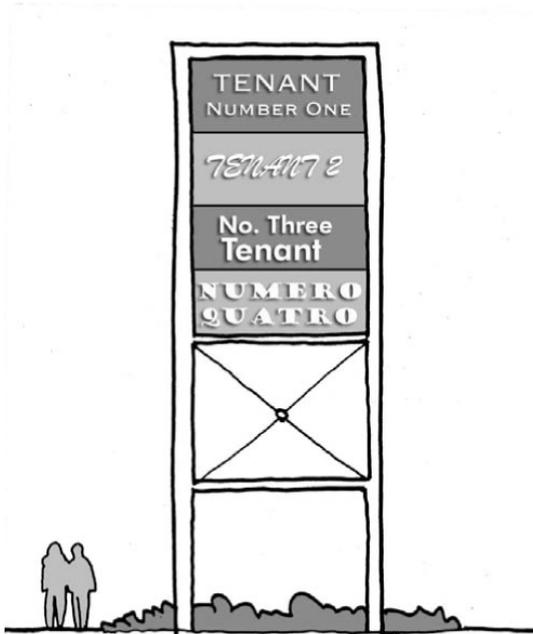


Figure 46. Multi-Tenant Sign Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.

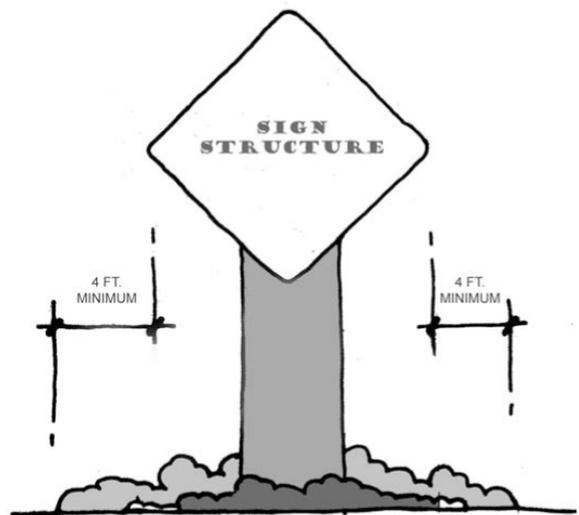


Figure 47. Multi-Tenant Sign Example, Sign Design Guidelines, City of Leon, 2002.

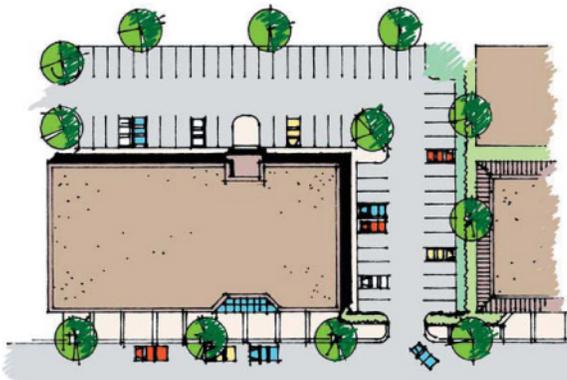
Parking and Circulation

- 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.



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 existing in the parking lot.



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

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** - 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.
- **Development Design** - 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)



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.

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.

Gateway 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.



Figure 53. Belle Plaine's city logo, City of Belle Plaine, 2015.