

**Commercial Design and Development Guidelines
Village of Prairie Grove, Illinois**

EXHIBIT C

To Annexation and Development Agreement

September 8th, 2005

Commercial Design and Development Guidelines

Introduction

These *Commercial Design and Development Guidelines* present basic principles that shall be used in improving the overall appearance and character of commercial development throughout Prairie Grove, Illinois and its planning areas. The guidelines focus on promoting high quality improvements and developments that will compliment and enhance the overall character of the Village.

The purposes of the *Commercial Design and Development Guidelines* are to: a) promote high-quality and compatible new commercial and mixed-use development; b) improve the design and appearance of existing commercial buildings and properties; c) improve the bimage and appearance of the public rights-of-way; d) promote more design compatibility among buildings and groups of buildings; and e) establish a distinctive visual image and character for the commercial areas of the Village.

While the *Commercial Design and Development Guidelines* focus on new development, they also address the improvement of existing buildings and property. They are based on the premise that even small improvements, if done properly, can have a major impact on the overall appearance and character of individual properties and the surrounding commercial environment.

The *Commercial Design and Development Guidelines* do not attempt to dictate architectural styles or “make all the buildings look the same.” They are not intended to restrict creativity or limit design solutions, but to improve and enhance the overall scale, quality and character of the commercial areas within the Village and its planning areas. The guidelines strive to promote a level of quality, compatibility, and consistency that will help make the Village of Prairie Grove attractive and distinguishable from other surrounding areas.

It should be emphasized that the *Commercial Design and Development Guidelines* are for overall guidance only. Each individual project should be reviewed and considered by the Village on a case-by-case basis.

In addition to these *Commercial Design and Development Guidelines*, all new commercial development and building improvements within the Village and its planning areas are subject to the appropriate Village codes and ordinances which address the public interest.

This document provides a more complete listing of design and development guidelines for the Village of Prairie Grove. The guidelines address both the public and the private improvements within the Village and its planning boundary, and are intended to support and strengthen land-use and development and public improvement recommendations found in the Comprehensive Plan which reflects the desires of the residents of the community. In general, the design guidelines strive to:

1. Promote public and private improvements and developments that will help create and reinforce the desired character and identity for the Village of Prairie Grove.
2. Promote new development that complements the existing development and desired scale and character of the Village.
3. Improve the appearance and quality of existing sites and buildings within the Village.
4. Ensure high-quality and compatible building and site design throughout the Village.
5. Establish a development pattern that enhances the existing natural resources in the community, and foster development that is sensitive to, and protective of, the natural environment.
6. Foster development that respects pedestrian and bicycle activity, while still accommodating automobile and truck traffic.

The guidelines presented below shall be used by the Village in reviewing plans and proposals for all new developments within the community. They shall be considered “supplements” to the Village’s Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance , Subdivision Regulations and other applicable codes and ordinances.

Architects, property owners and developers are advised to use these guidelines as a reference as they prepare plans for new development projects.

Corridor Commercial Areas

The guidelines for Corridor Commercial development apply to all commercial properties located along IL Routes 31 and 176, excluding the Town Center area on Route 31. The guidelines for Corridor Commercial are intended to create attractive and appropriate commercial development that is primarily designed to accommodate vehicular orientation and traffic circulation, while also providing safe and attractive pedestrian and bicycle circulation and amenities. Commercial development along these two corridors will contribute significantly to the overall image and character of the Village as perceived by motorists passing through the Village as well as those shopping, dining, or visiting the area.

Building Scale and Design

New development shall maintain a “traditional” scale and charm and should provide a unique character for the Route 31 and Route 176 corridors.

- Buildings consisting of commercial uses shall be one-story in height, with no occupied space above the ground floor. Building heights should remain flexible to accommodate contemporary development and storage needs.
- A multiple-story architectural element, such as a clock tower, spire, or bell tower, may be appropriate as a design “highlight” at Village approved locations along the corridor.
- Distinguishing architectural features are encouraged, such as decorative cornices, columns, reliefs, and other façade ornamentation and detailing.
- Covered walkways and colonnades are encouraged along the fronts of the buildings to create a pedestrian orientation.
- Architectural details shall be visible from the street. Buildings shall not be setback so far as to diminish the aesthetic impact of the building on passing pedestrians and motorists. Buildings shall be attractive at both a pedestrian and vehicular scale.
- Mansard, shake or shingle roofs are prohibited.
- Buildings may have either a pitched or flat roof, but rooflines must compliment the overall design and architecture of the building. Rooflines and parapets shall look complete when viewed from all sides of the building.
- Rooftop-mounted equipment and vents shall be screened from views along all sides of a building. Rooftop screening shall be incorporated into the overall design of the building and be an integral part of the architecture.
- Dumpster enclosures shall be of masonry construction and shall compliment overall building design. Dumpster enclosures shall be well landscaped and located at the rear or sides of buildings.

Building Placement and Orientation

- Buildings shall have a strong visual and physical relationship to the Route 31 and Route 176 corridors to enhance the identity and pedestrian orientation of the Corridor. Buildings shall be attractive at both a pedestrian and vehicular scale.
- Although the corridor is primarily oriented to the automobile, commercial buildings shall have a strong pedestrian orientation with display windows, attractive detailing, and convenient and “hospitable” entrances.

- The Commercial Corridor areas shall be characterized by building setbacks, side yards and surface parking lots. Consequently, the street frontage shall be maintained through the use of low-profile landscaping and decorative walls or fencing.
- All buildings shall "front" Route 31 or Route 176 (or Collector Streets if there is no State Route) wherever possible. When front doors face north or south, display windows or distinctive facade treatments shall be provided along public road frontage.
- Long, blank facades along Route 31 and Route 176 should be avoided. More consideration should be given to retail uses along Route 31 to help establish and maintain a pedestrian oriented appearance.
- Covered walkways, such as arcades, are encouraged along the fronts of multi-tenant commercial buildings to create a "pedestrian-friendly" orientation. The columns of the arcade shall be aligned with the façade of the building.
- All service entrances, dumpsters, loading facilities, and outdoor storage shall be located at the rear of buildings; they shall be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of decorative screening, masonry walls, and/or evergreen plantings.
- Any business permitted to have a "drive-thru" facility shall be sited so that drive-through lanes and pickup windows are not prominently featured.
- Window glazing shall be clear or slightly tinted and dark, mirrored, or reflective glass is not permitted.
- Any outdoor seating areas, such as those provided by restaurants or cafés, shall be well landscaped and incorporated into the overall site design. Outdoor seating areas shall be set back and screened from parking areas and driving aisles.
- Awnings and canopies may be used to provide weather protection and to add visual interest at the street level. They shall be integrated into the façade and shall be in character with the architectural style of the building. Arched or rounded awnings should be discouraged, unless they are compatible with and appropriate to the architectural style of a building. Internally illuminated or back lit awnings and canopies, shingle and mansard canopies, and plastic awnings shall not be permitted.

Building Materials and Colors

The use of appropriate building materials is fundamental to compatible new development and rehabilitation of existing structures.

- Quality materials shall be used on all sides of the building, providing an attractive "360° degree" appearance.
- New commercial and industrial buildings shall be constructed primarily of traditional masonry building materials such as brick or stone. These materials shall be used on all sides of the building. Recommended accent materials include stone, simulated stone, terra cotta, and wood and metal trim.
- "Exterior insulation finish systems" (EIFS) is not permitted as a primary building material OR as an accent material. Stucco, consisting of 3-coat Portland Cement shall be used instead. Rough sawed wood, aluminum siding, and plastic or metal panels shall not be used within the Corridor Commercial areas.
- The predominant colors for new buildings shall consist of earth tones. While the natural brick and stone colors should predominate, contrasting and complementary colors should also be used to

accent building components, highlight architectural elements and to help distinguish the Corridor Commercial areas.

- Damaged and deteriorated exterior building materials shall timely be repaired or replaced.

Lighting

Lighting promotes safe and secure parking and pedestrian areas, and it can also serve to enhance the appearance of the Property.

- Lighting shall be used to illuminate entries, signage, displays, and pedestrian and parking areas, as well as to highlight significant architectural elements.
- Front and rear building entries shall be adequately lit for overall security and visibility.
- Building lighting shall be subtle and understated; light fixtures shall be designed and oriented to produce minimal glare and spillover onto nearby properties.
- Down-lighting shall be required on all commercial buildings; spot-lighting shall be limited to major features and key landmarks within the Corridor, including gateway entry features.
- Incandescent lighting creates a warm atmosphere and shall be encouraged; if neon lighting is used, colors shall be compatible with and complement the façade of the building. High pressure sodium (orange lighting), or a diffused, soft white light is also encouraged; metal halide lighting is prohibited. Extensive lighting shall also be avoided to reduce light pollution.
- Exterior lighting shall be concealed to provide indirect illumination. Where concealment is not practical, light fixtures shall be compatible with building architecture.
- Parking lots within the corridor commercial areas must strive to create a more pedestrian scale and minimize light pollution and glare. This can be accomplished by using shorter lighting standards (12'-18') to help establish pedestrian environments within individual developments. Taller light standards (25'-40') should be avoided.
- Light poles and standards with an historic or traditional design shall be used for all parking lots, walkways and pedestrian areas.
- Bollard lighting may be permitted as accent lighting and may be used in pedestrian seating areas and to highlight pedestrian walkways and crossings in parking lots.
- Diffused, soft white light is required and high-pressure sodium lighting is prohibited.

Parking Lots

Adequate parking is essential within the commercial area. Off-street parking lots shall be designed and located so that they are safe, attractive and efficient.

- Parking areas of no more than 60 feet in depth shall be located between the building and the public rights-of-way. This depth will be sufficient to accommodate a single driving aisle with 90° parking on both sides. Additional parking areas can be provided adjacent to the building on interior portions of the lot.
- The number of curb cuts along Routes 31 and 176 shall be minimized. Within the Corridor Commercial areas, adjacent parking lots shall be connected and access points shall be unified. All parking areas shall be accessible from cross streets whenever possible.
- All parking areas shall be paved or bricked, striped and have surfaces in good condition. The use of pervious brick paver systems is encouraged.

- Parking lots shall be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the combined use of free forming berms, low masonry walls, hedge plantings, and shrubs.
- Parking lots shall have curbed perimeters and curbed landscaped islands. Clearly marked pedestrian pathways shall be provided within the interior of parking areas to avoid large expanses of asphalt and to enhance pedestrian safety.
- Parking lot landscaping shall include “landscape islands” at a ratio one per fifteen parking spaces. Landscape islands shall consist of canopy trees (3 to 4 inches in caliper), attractive groundcover, and/or decorative bushes (2 to 3 feet in height).
- All parking lots shall be designed for proper drainage.
- Parking lots that are used during evening hours shall be adequately illuminated.
- Whenever possible, parking lots shall be shared between multiple stores and businesses to allow for a more efficient lot layout and to minimize curb cuts. Cross access between adjacent parking lots shall also be encouraged.

Landscaping and Site Improvements

- Native plants to the Northeastern Illinois Region shall be encouraged for all landscaped areas within the corridors. Although initially these plants and grasses may be difficult to establish, long-term maintenance costs will be reduced.
- Planters and landscaped areas shall buffer parking and service areas. Plantings shall consist of low evergreen and/or deciduous shrubs planted in conjunction with low-growing annual or perennial plants and groundcover. Large expanses of exposed mulch are to be avoided.
- A landscaped buffer at least five to eight feet in width shall be provided around the perimeter of surface parking lots. Perimeter landscape plantings shall include a continuous hedge (3’–4’ in height) accented by trees and ground cover but shall not obstruct tenant signage and views to buildings and site features.
- In conjunction with landscaping, decorative fencing is encouraged to delineate and screen parking and service facilities, outdoor storage areas, etc. Low-profile, decorative wrought iron fencing or masonry walls are recommended; chain link fencing is prohibited within the Village of Prairie Grove.
- All landscaping shall be maintained in a healthy and attractive condition. Maintenance programs shall be established as part of new development approvals to ensure that private landscaping is adequately cared for and that its value is retained over time. Regular maintenance shall include turf mowing, periodic fertilization, pruning, and the clean-up of litter and debris. Internal irrigation systems are preferred and encouraged.
- Where site size or configuration does not allow for the minimum five-foot perimeter landscaping, vertical landscaping elements shall be employed to provide an effective screen between parking lots and the public right-of-way.
- Areas adjacent to entrances, monument signs and other site features shall be planted with seasonal flowers or colorful groundcover.
- Evergreens, berming, and other “vertical” landscaping elements shall be used to screen intense commercial activity from adjacent residential properties. Masonry walls may be considered as a screening device where landscaping alone is incapable of providing an effective screen. A non-contiguous berm may screen uses and at the same time provide attractive views into the commercial development.

- All landscaping within and adjacent to the public right-of-way shall be compatible with existing plant materials in the area and be composed of native and salt tolerant species.

Business Signage

- Exterior building signs shall be limited to business identification and description; exterior advertising signs are not permitted. The size, material, color, and shape of building signs should complement the architectural style and scale of the building.
- Wall-mounted signs are encouraged, although signage shall not project above the cornice line or be mounted on the roof of a building.
- Raised, individual letters mounted directly on the building, as well as signs that use light colors for lettering and darker colors for backgrounds, are preferred. Box signs are not permitted.
- When a building contains multiple ground-floor tenants, signage for all businesses shall be compatible in design and consistent in placement.
- Street numbers shall be prominently displayed at the main entrance to every business and be clearly visible from the street.
- Free-standing signage within the corridors is limited to low-profile monument signs for multi-tenant commercial properties. Monument signs shall be attractively landscaped and constructed of traditional building materials similar to the primary building on the site.
- The letters of a monument sign shall be internally illuminated with a white light source. External illumination may be appropriate for a natural metal or engraved stone monument sign. Excessive light and light pollution shall be avoided.
- “Gateway” signage and design features at key locations along the corridors are encouraged. Gateway treatments may include special signage, landscaping, and/or lighting.
- The size of signs shall complement façade proportions, and should be constructed from the appropriate scale of the building.
- The design and color of the sign shall compliment the architectural style of the building, and integrated as a component of the building’s facade.
- Internal illumination is preferred for building mounted signs. Externally lighted signs may also be acceptable if they are compatible with other architectural components.
- Pole signs, pylon signs, and billboards are prohibited within the corridor commercial areas.

Town Center Design and Development Guidelines

A common theme overheard throughout much of the Comprehensive Planning process for the Village of Prairie Grove was the desire to maintain the Village’s rural character, while at the same time expanding and diversifying the Village’s tax base. While these community desires may seem contradictory, they are not. A common characteristic of traditional small rural towns was a town center – a place to shop with a strong civic function. Instead of detracting from the rural atmosphere for these small settlements, the town centers defined and enhanced them.

Prairie Grove’s new Comprehensive Plan identifies an area west of Illinois Route 31 for “Town Center”. According to the Comprehensive Plan, the Town Center should consist of a mix of retail, entertainment, service and residential uses. The Town Center area should develop as a pedestrian oriented shopping destination for residents of the Village and beyond. A new Metra Station, a new Village Hall, a new Post

Office, and a central park or village green will anchor the Town Center, and row houses, upper floor residential units and town homes will provide a local population to support Town Center businesses.

Building Height, Bulk & Proportion

Successful downtowns and town centers are successful in creating an intimate pedestrian atmosphere, creating an “outdoor” room for visitors and shoppers. Much of this atmosphere can be attributed to the bulk and proportion of buildings as they relate to the street and one another. Development within the Town Center should be comprised of primarily of two- and three-story buildings. Buildings of this height contribute to a sense of enclosure and an intimate and pedestrian scale

- Town Center Commercial buildings should create a “streetwall”, creating a sense of enclosure. The ratio of width and height (as measured horizontally between opposing store fronts and vertically from sidewalk to roofline) shall be between 2:1 and 3:1.
- New development within the Town Center should avoid extreme differences in building height. Consideration should be given to the height of adjacent buildings.
- Four story design elements may be acceptable in select locations, provided they are in character with the surrounding area. Vertical architectural elements may include clock towers, spires or bell towers. These elements should be considered as design “highlights” at key locations.
- The third and fourth stories of buildings within the Town Center should be setback to soften the bulk and visual scale of the building.
- Townhomes and other multi-unit buildings within the Town Center should be 2 ½-3 stories in height and also utilize upper floor setbacks. Where townhomes or multi-unit buildings directly border or face single-family uses, the height of these buildings should be restricted to two-stories in height.

Building Placement and Orientation

Typical town center and downtown areas are characterized by continuous rows of commercial buildings constructed at the front property line. This development pattern creates a distinctive “streetwall” effect that adds visual interest, enhances the pedestrian environment, and establishes a “human” scale within an area. Building placement and orientation objectives strive to create this development pattern within Prairie Grove’s Town Center.

- Buildings within the Town Center shall be positioned at the front property line. Buildings located on corner lots shall be built out to both fronting property lines.
- In other subareas, buildings may be set back from the sidewalk, appropriate for the site and in keeping with adjacent uses in the district and consistent throughout each block front.
- New construction in the Town Center shall occupy the entire width of the lot to avoid gaps between buildings and discontinuities in the streetwall, except where pedestrian access to rear parking is designed and planned for.
- Where maintaining a continuous streetwall is not possible or desirable, the streetwall shall be maintained through the use of landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and decorative walls or fencing.
- Buildings throughout the Town Center shall face the street, with strong pedestrian orientation.
- The placement of buildings at odd or irregular angles to the street shall be avoided. However, corner buildings might take advantage of their prominent locations with angled, rounded or recessed corner entrances or other small setbacks.

Architectural Style

The creation of a new Town Center provides the Village of Prairie Grove with the opportunity to establish an architectural style that can strengthen the rural character, and distinguish Prairie Grove from surrounding communities. While the Village should not attempt to dictate any one specific architectural style, it can promote new construction that complements the traditional building style evident within the homes of the community.

- Development within the Town Center shall consist of traditional architectural styles. Modern architectural styles are discouraged.
- New buildings need not be historic replicas, but should offer high quality and compatible interpretations of the traditional styles present within historic and traditional town centers and within the residential areas of Prairie Grove.
- Regardless of style, new buildings shall use traditional masonry materials and reflect the predominant scale, height, massing, and proportions of traditional downtowns and town centers.
- New buildings shall incorporate decorative cornices, columns, reliefs, terra cotta tiles, and other significant façade detailing.

Building Materials

The building materials most commonly used within traditional Town Centers are earth-toned brick and stone. Ceramic tile and terra cotta are also used as ornamentation around doors, windows and cornices.

- New buildings shall be constructed of traditional masonry building materials such as brick or stone; these materials shall be used on all sides of the building. Stucco, siding of all types, and any other exterior wall covering are prohibited within the Town Center.
- Recommended accent materials include stone, simulated stone, terra cotta, and wood and metal trim.
- Since parking will be promoted in the rear of the buildings, new construction within Prairie Grove's new Town Center should have "360° degree" appearance, with design and detail consideration for all visible sides.
- Rough sawed wood, aluminum panels and siding, and plastic or metal panels are prohibited within the Town Center.
- Exterior insulation finish systems (EIFS) or Dryvit are prohibited within the Town Center.

Doors & Entrances

The doors and entrances to the new buildings in the Town Center should provide an open invitation to potential customers, be attractive and inviting to pedestrians, and add visual interest to the street. However, doors should be appropriately sized and in scale with a building's façade.

- The front doors of new buildings shall reflect the scale, placement, and proportions of traditional downtown and civic center buildings; recessed entrances are encouraged.
- Main entrances shall be at the front of the building and face the sidewalk. Buildings situated on corner lots may take advantage of their prominent locations with angled, or rounded corner entrances.
- Doors and entryways of buildings shall be compatible with the original style and character of the façade.

Windows

Display windows on the ground floor of commercial buildings in a town center are one of the distinguishing features of pedestrian oriented shopping area and downtown. They allow passersby to see merchandise within a commercial building from the sidewalk. Windows on the upper floors of traditional Town Center buildings are smaller and less prominent, but often have attractive detailing and decorative trim.

- Large ground-floor display windows and bays are strongly encouraged for retail and entertainment uses within the Town Center and should be in consistent proportion with historic downtowns.
- Windows on the upper floors of new buildings should appear to be “punched” openings within a solid wall, rather than as continuous rows of windows separated only by their frames. Curtain-wall window treatments are not permitted within the Town Center area. Upper floor windows shall be recessed, not flush with the surface of the building.
- Windows shall complement the architectural style of the building.
- Window glazing shall be clear or slightly tinted; dark, mirrored, or reflective glass are not permitted.
- Where existing windows are important architectural features in a building’s façade, window size and configuration should be maintained; window openings shall not be covered over or boarded up.
- Ground floor windows can be used for displays, however business owners shall allow full and unobstructed views into their businesses. Obstructing windows from the interior of a building with shelving, display cases, signage or other objects is not permitted.

Rooflines & Parapets

The rooflines of new buildings should be similar to the rooflines of traditional downtowns and town centers in terms of shape, alignment, and architectural detailing.

- The roofs of commercial buildings shall be flat, shallow-sloped or gabled.
- Roof parapets shall be utilized to create an interesting building profile and to hide vents and other rooftop equipment.
- Cornices, and other decorative detail are encouraged along the rooflines of buildings.
- Sloped mansard style (shake or shingle) roofs are prohibited within the Town Center.
- Cedar shingles are permitted within the Town Center. Cedar shakes are not permitted.
- Rooflines and architectural details shall compliment the buildings architectural style, and contribute to the Town Center’s character, image and appeal.

Color

Color should be used to unite the elements of a façade and to highlight architectural features. However, the colors on individual buildings should complement and be compatible with the predominant hues of nearby buildings.

- The predominant colors for Town Center buildings shall consist of earth tones. The natural brick and stone colors shall predominate. Darker or lighter hues may be used as accent trim.
- Ceramic tile, terra-cotta, brick, stone, and glass surfaces shall not be painted, unless it is appropriate to the architectural style.

Awnings & Canopies

Awnings (temporary/seasonal) and canopies (permanent) protect shoppers from the elements, add color and visual interest to the street, and contribute significantly to an area's pedestrian scale and interest.

- Awnings and canopies shall be integrated into the façade of all commercial buildings within the Town Center and shall be in character with the architectural style of the building.
- Awnings shall be properly placed above entrances and may extend over storefront windows.
- The color of awnings and canopies shall complement and enhance the overall color scheme of the building façade.
- Awnings and canopies shall be positioned at least eight feet above the sidewalk.
- Awnings shall be made of a canvas or durable fabric material that can be easily cleaned. Hard plastic, or other materials that could be cracked or broken are prohibited. Awnings and canopies that become windblown or torn shall be repaired immediately.
- Back lit awnings and canopies, shingle and mansard canopies, and metal and plastic awnings are prohibited within the Town Center.
- Awnings and canopies shall be used only when they are compatible with, or complement the architectural style of the building. Awnings should not appear out of place, "forced", or as an afterthought.

Lighting

The lighting of a building's façade can help identify stores and businesses, promote a sense of safety and security, and highlight prominent Town Center buildings and building features.

- Lighting shall be used to illuminate entries into the Town Center, signage, displays, and pedestrian and parking areas, the proposed Metra Station as well as to highlight significant architectural elements.
- Building lighting shall be subtle and understated; light fixtures shall be designed and oriented to produce minimal glare and spillover onto nearby properties.
- Exterior lighting sources shall be concealed to provide direct illumination; where concealment is not practical, light fixtures shall be compatible with overall storefront design. Spotlighting is prohibited for commercial buildings within the Town Center.
- Incandescent lighting creates a warm atmosphere and is encouraged; if neon lighting is used, colors shall be compatible with and complement the façade of the building. High pressure sodium (orange lighting), or a diffused, soft white light is encouraged; Extensive lighting shall be avoided to reduce light pollution.
- Street lighting within the Town Center shall be at a pedestrian scale. Light standards shall be between 12'-15'. Parking areas within the Town Center shall contain both pedestrian and vehicular scale lighting.
- A common style of pedestrian-scale light fixtures shall selected and used throughout the Town Center. The style of light fixture shall enhance the desired atmosphere of the Town Center and complement the architecture of buildings.

Signs

Signs not only communicate the nature of individual businesses, but also influence the overall image and character of Prairie Grove's Town Center.

- Raised, individual letters mounted directly on the building, as well as signs that use light colors for lettering and darker colors for backgrounds, is encouraged throughout the Town Center.
- Wall-mounted signs shall be designed as an integrated component of the building façade, and shall not cover important architectural details.
- Exterior signs shall be limited to business identification and description. Signs for special promotions, sales, products, and advertising signs are discouraged.
- The size, material, color, and shape of signs shall complement the architectural style and scale of the building.
- When a building contains multiple storefronts, signage for all businesses shall be compatible in design and consistent in placement.
- Pole signs and internally illuminated box signs are prohibited in the Town Center.
- Temporary signage, such as sandwich board signs and banners are prohibited in the Town Center.
- Street numbers shall be prominently displayed at the main entrance to every home or business and be clearly visible from the street. Consideration shall be given to a consistent style and placement of street numbers within the Town Center.
- The Village should establish a comprehensive wayfinding signage system that can direct visitors to the Town Center. Directories and signage could also guide and direct both motorists and pedestrians to key destinations within the area, include parking lots, the Metra Station and the new Village Hall.

Rear Yards & Rear Façades

The rear portions of all properties shall be clean, attractive and well maintained, particularly where these areas are visible to the public.

- The backs of existing commercial buildings shall be well kept, with rear façades being “comparable” to front façades.
- Secondary rear entrances to stores and shops are encouraged in blocks where public parking or pedestrian walkways are located behind the buildings.
- Trash receptacles, dumpsters and service areas shall be located inside the primary building or be fully enclosed in small masonry structures.
- Outdoor storage and service facilities shall be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls or evergreen plantings.

Parking Areas

Parking in the Town Center needs to accommodate commuters, shoppers, employees and residents. Parking areas should consist of a combination of on-street parking, off-street parking lots and commuter parking lots. Off-street parking lots should be designed and located so that they are safe, efficient, and do not disrupt the traditional pedestrian scale of Town Center. On-street parking areas should be designed to provide short-term convenient parking, which will assist in protecting the pedestrian, calming traffic and contributing to the desired character of Prairie Grove’s Town Center.

- Parking lots shall be located behind buildings. Parking lots in front of buildings are not permitted within the Town Center.
- Vehicular access to parking lots shall be provided from alleys or side streets. Curb cuts and access drives are not permitted along pedestrian shopping streets.

- Pedestrian access to parking lots shall be provided through planned walkways located in gaps between buildings.
- Parking lots shall have curbed perimeters; landscaped islands and clearly marked pedestrian pathways are required within the interior of parking areas.
- Parking lots shall be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls or evergreen plantings and decorative fencing.
- All parking lots shall be paved, well marked, sufficiently lit, and provided with proper drainage.
- Parking lot lighting shall consist of vehicular scale lighting and pedestrian scale lighting. Excessive lighting and light pollution shall be avoided.
- Commuter parking areas shall consist primarily of permitted parking spaces, with a percentage of spots available for metered daily use parking. During off-peak times, such as evenings and weekends, designated areas of commuter lots shall be designed to accommodate shoppers and special events within the Town Center.
- Parking lot landscaping shall include “landscape islands” at a ratio of approximately one per fifteen to twenty parking spaces. Landscape islands should consist of canopy trees (3 to 4 inches in caliper), attractive groundcover, and/or decorative bushes (2 to 3 feet in height).

Residential Areas

Prairie Grove’s Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town Center consist of mix of commercial and residential areas. The Comprehensive Plan identifies areas for new condominium and townhouse development. Each of these areas should be characterized by high-quality design and construction, and sites should be attractively landscaped to serve as a “transition” from the Town Center commercial areas to quieter, less dense residential areas.

- The height of new multi-family buildings that directly border or face single-family uses shall be limited to two-stories in height.
- New housing construction shall reflect the traditional scale and character of a traditional Town Center, particularly in terms of masonry building materials, colors, mass and proportion, and fenestration.
- New housing shall also reflect the appearance and design of established residential areas in the community.
- Rowhouse buildings are encouraged located at or near the sidewalk and aligned with and “face” the street.
- Multi-family sites shall be attractively landscaped, particularly front setbacks and the perimeter of parking and service areas.
- Where possible, parking to serve multi-family uses shall be located inside the primary buildings; if garages are provided, they shall be located behind the residential buildings and should have access via alleys or side streets.
- Conservation design and development concepts are encouraged for all residential development within the Town Center. Porous brick driveways, naturalized drainage swales bioswales, and narrower roadways are examples of acceptable techniques.

Landscaping and Site Improvements

Significant wooded areas contribute to Prairie Grove's rural character, and distinguish the Village from neighboring municipalities. Likewise, trees and other landscaping will distinguish the Town Center area from other commercial areas, and help reinforce the small town atmosphere.

- Native plants to McHenry County and the Northeastern Illinois Region are encouraged for all landscaped areas within the Town Center. Although initially these plants and grasses may be difficult to establish, long-term maintenance costs will be reduced.
- Planters and landscaped areas shall be installed to buffer parking and service areas from adjacent uses. Plantings should consist of low evergreen and/or deciduous shrubs planted in conjunction with low-growing annual or perennial plants and groundcover. Large expanses of exposed mulch shall be avoided.
- In conjunction with landscaping, decorative fencing is encouraged to delineate and screen parking and service facilities, outdoor storage areas, etc. Low-profile, decorative wrought iron fencing or masonry walls are recommended. Chain link fencing are not permitted within the Town Center.
- All landscaping must be maintained in a healthy and attractive condition. Maintenance programs shall be established as part of new development approvals to ensure that private landscaping is adequately cared for and that its value is retained over time. Regular maintenance should include turf mowing, periodic fertilization, pruning, and the clean-up of litter and debris. Internal irrigation systems are required.
- Areas adjacent to entrances, monument signs and other site features shall be considered for seasonal flowers or colorful groundcover.
- A Streetscape Improvement Program should be implemented to "visually unify" the Town Center. The Village of Prairie Grove should develop and implement a detailed Streetscape Improvement Plan for the entire Town Center to establish a visual identity for the streets, and to link together the diverse land uses. Streetscape improvements to the Town Center should include coordinated landscaping on both sides of the street; pedestrian lighting; distinctive signage and banners; coordinated street furniture including benches, bike racks and trash receptacles; accent landscaping at key locations; and gateway signage.
- Regularly spaced street trees shall be planted in rows along both sides of all streets within the Town Center. Trees shall be located within the sidewalk through the use of iron tree grates. Trees shall be planted every 30'. Tree grates shall be located adjacent to the back of the curb, resulting in a tree placement of the tree 3'-4' from the street.
- Along commercial area streets, sidewalks shall be 10' wide, extending from the storefronts to the curb. In residential areas in the Town Center, sidewalks shall be 5' wide, separated from the curb with a 5' wide parkway.
- Parkway landscaping shall consist of salt-tolerant street trees, shrubs, groundcover and perennials.
- Within the shopping areas, plantings in raised beds, planters, urns, or other containers shall be utilized along the curb line in selected locations and to highlight key entrances and activity areas. Plantings shall be attractively maintained throughout all seasons. Consideration shall be given to an appropriate mix of plant materials to ensure screening and greening still occurs during winter months.
- All landscaping within and adjacent to the public right-of-way shall be compatible with existing plant materials in the area and be composed of native and salt tolerant species.

- Street trees and other landscaping along the public rights-of-way shall be protected from motorized and pedestrian traffic by curbs, tree grates, and other devices.

Public Improvements

In addition to site and building improvements of commercial and residential sites, a range of projects should be undertaken within the public rights-of-way and on publicly owned property to enhance the image and appearance of the Town Center to create a safe, attractive, and “hospitable” working, shopping, living, and leisure-time environment. These public sector improvements can also help promote new private investment and development, and attract additional visitors and business patrons to the area.

- Streets within the Town Center shall be designed to support vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians on a relatively equal basis. While accommodating vehicular traffic, streets shall also promote walking, cycling, and an overall sense of place.
- The use of a landscaped median, to create a boulevard along the entire length of Gracy Road shall be considered. As the primary entrance to the Town Center and Metra station, Gracy Road will establish initial perception of Prairie Grove and the Town Center. A landscape median will enhance the appearance of the roadway, calm traffic, and assist in distinguishing the Town Center from other shopping destinations.
- Streets within the Town Center shall be designed and controlled to reduce the speed of traffic, particularly along streets with shopping and storefronts. Streets shall be no larger than 4 lanes wide (2 lanes for parallel parking and 2 lanes for the movement of vehicles). In shopping areas, the 2 lanes for parallel/angle parking shall be permanent. Other streets with little or no commercial uses, or where the primary goal will be the efficient movement of traffic such as Gracy Road, on-street parallel/angle parking shall be prohibited during peak times.
- To improve visibility and safety, pedestrian crosswalks within the Town Center shall be made prominent and noticeable by employing a change in paving materials, texture and color. Striping, small pylons and special bollard lighting fixtures might also be used to highlight crosswalks.
- Sidewalks shall be 10’ wide in shopping areas, and 5’ wide in residential areas. In shopping areas, the sidewalk should extend from the storefront to the back of the curb. In residential areas, the sidewalk shall be separated from the curb of a street with a 5’ landscaped parkway.
- Sidewalks shall be provided along both sides of all streets within the Town Center.
- All public and private sidewalks within the Town Center area shall be accessible to the handicapped and should comply with appropriate ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act) standards.
- Pylons and bollard lighting shall be considered as accents and for ornamental purposes. These fixtures could be used to highlight crosswalks, open spaces, seating areas, and major pedestrian ways.
- The Village should establish a comprehensive signage system that can direct motorists to the Town Center, and guide and direct both motorists and pedestrians to key destinations within the area.
- “Gateway” signs shall be developed along Gracy Road, as it serves as one of the primary entry ways into Prairie Grove’s Town Center. In addition to signage, gateway features shall include special landscaping, lighting and paving.

- Banners attached to street light standards will distinguish the Town Center and could also be used to commemorate special events within the Village of Prairie Grove is encouraged. Banners might be changed periodically during the year.
- A new “icon” shall be considered to specifically brand Prairie Grove’s new Town Center. This new icon shall appear on the full range of way finding signage, directories, and also be used in conjunction with the Village’s current logo in a variety of marketing and promotional efforts.
- Improvement and development of Town Center shall include a unified system of “street furnishings,” such as seating areas, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, bike racks, and other pedestrian amenities. Street furnishings shall be consistent with the materials, colors and architectural styles.
- Trash receptacles shall be placed at key locations within the Town Center. Benches, fountains and other pedestrian amenities shall be located at key intersections and high activity areas. Bike parking shall be provided in visible areas and near main parking areas.
- Whenever possible, utility lines within the Town Center shall be placed underground.