Design Guidelines

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Design Guidelines | Outline

General Outline

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I. INTRODUCTION

Relationship to Other Ordinances & Plans

These Design Guidelines, hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines, were developed to further specific objectives from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and strengthen the existing section in the Zoning Ordinance, being Article 11, Section 505, that apply to design review in the City of Oak Forest.

2008 Comprehensive Plan

This plan outlines specific planning issues and key opportunities in the City that relate to the character and aesthetic of the built environment. A few of these design related issues are: that the City has no "center" or "downtown"; that the commercial corridors appear confusing with no defined pattern or identity; and that both pedestrian and automobile access and mobility is challenging. To move forward in resolving these issues, a few key opportunities identified are: use new development to raise the bar with the design quality; establish a more continuous character along commercial corridors; build upon existing community character; and pursue development and site design that is more pedestrian-oriented.

In essence, these issues and opportunities identify a clear need for a unified and defined approach and process to improvements in the built environment within the City. These Guidelines seek to refine this need, by also supplementing sections dedicated to design review in the existing Zoning Ordinance, as described below.

Zoning Ordinance

Article 11, Section 505 explains the two levels of design review requiring a Design Review Permit. These are identified by the scope of work proposed for the project. Exemptions from this process are also identified. References to Article 11, Section 505 are made in regard to the public process required for each level of design review. Building and structure design requirements are listed, which apply to all commercial, multi-family, and single-family new construction, additions, and façade improvements.

The public process through which a Design Review Permit is reviewed and the criteria used to determine approval of said permit. The criteria for approval includes the following subsections: general building design and relation to street and pedestrians, visual compatibility, overall site design and landscaping, special consideration for existing buildings, and design criteria for signs.

Together, these two sections are used and applied to projects which qualify for design review. They serve as an outline for the process and provide general criteria and design considerations for applicants. These Guidelines seek to further enhance the standards and considerations by providing expanded and specific examples, both in text and in images, of what applicants should refer to prior to developing and submitting an application for a Design Review Permit.

Vision Statement & Objectives

Nearly all boundaries of the City of Oak Forest abuts the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, giving the community abundant access to open space and outdoor recreation. Enhancing this unique location amidst large public parks is the access to downtown Chicago, with a Rock Island Metra line station and proximity to I-57. The City also enjoys a lesser amount of traffic congestion due to its less dense population, while still being near everyday amenities and shopping areas. Coupling access to regional attractions with a small town atmosphere, the City seeks to continue its more community oriented and locally focused approach to development.

Vision Statement

The City of Oak Forest seeks to increase its accessibility via all modes of transit, enhance its connections to surrounding open space, and promote its sense of community and safety through maintenance of its small-town atmosphere and definition of its character and scale. A more accessible, inviting, and attractive built environment will serve to retain and draw businesses, make Oak Forest a lifelong home for its current and future residents, and turn those "just passing through" into regular visitors of our public amenities and local businesses.

Objectives

The following objectives each directly support the Vision Statement for these Guidelines. In the event that any guideline stated in this document should be unclear or otherwise convoluted, these objectives should serve to clarify the intent of the guideline in question. The objectives are separated into three focus areas, which will be reflected as subsections in each chapter of these Guidelines. The focus areas are based upon existing attributes of the City that can be enhanced and opportunities for improvement of which the City can take advantage, and generally correspond in their order to Section 11-505 of the Zoning Ordinance. They are as follows: architecture, open space, and transit.

Architecture

I. To encourage site and building design that reflects and maintains the existing scale of development within the City.
II. To increase the longevity of existing and new development with the incorporation of durable materials and established architectural design principles.
III. To ensure new construction and alterations to existing buildings incorporate balanced design elements that are oriented to pedestrians as well as automobiles.
IV. To ensure a variety in creativity and design is applied throughout new and existing development.
V. To take into consideration the site and building's size and scale to maintain proportionality within the site and in relation to other sites

Open Space

I. To create gathering spaces for the public that reflect and connect to the City's local and regional open space network.
II. To reflect the City's proximity to nature by incorporating appropriate and attractive landscaping and screening.
III. To promote site design that allows for interaction with the natural and built environment while also promoting social and civic engagement in the community.
IV. To ensure that site access, parking, and circulation is arranged in a logical and safe manner for pedestrians and vehicles;
V. To ensure landscaping is provided as a project amenity while also functioning as a buffer
VI. To maintain and increase the safety and vitality of the site

Transit

I. To incorporate sufficient site amenities that accommodate all modes of transit, including pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile.
II. To ensure site designs provide multi-modal connections that encourage active transportation.
III. To maintain, and strive to reduce, the existing automobile level of service needs of by creating a multi-modal transportation network.
IV. To ensure efficient delivery of public infrastructure

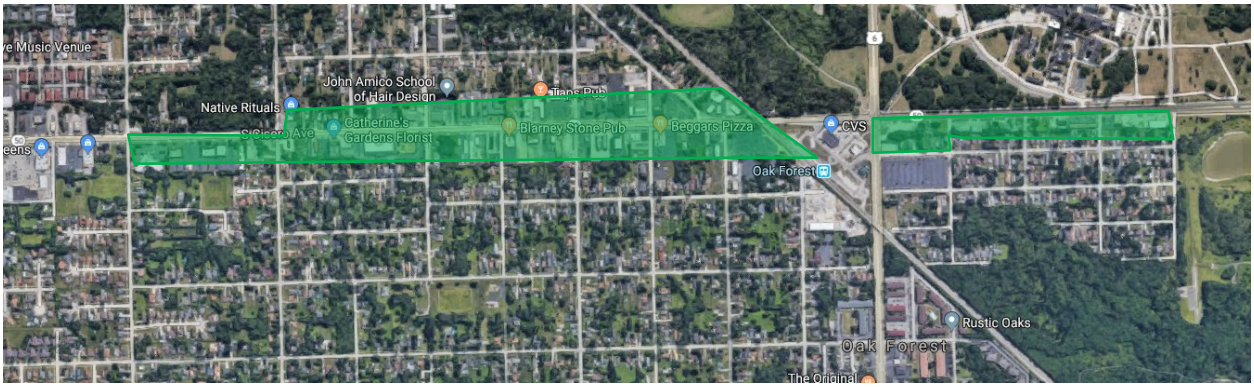
Applicability

The Guidelines should apply to all non-residential development that qualifies for a Minor or Major Design Review Permit, per Subsection 11-505(C) of the Zoning Ordinance. This includes any work beyond ordinary or routine maintenance or like-for-like replacement of minor features to a site or building. Should there be any question as to whether or not a proposal should adhere to these Guidelines, the aforementioned code section should be referenced or the Community Development Department should be contacted at (708) 687-4050.

Below is a map illustrating the non-residential subareas where the majority of commercial and other non-residential development exists within the City. These subareas each are unique in their location, context, and function within the City. As such, these subareas have additional guidelines that apply so as to create definition and identity within each subarea.

Metra Station Subarea

Cicero Avenue Corridor



159th Street Corridor

Using the Design Guidelines

Step 1: Determine your project's scope of work.

You will need to know what type of change you are planning, in addition to the degree of that change. Are you simply changing building materials, or will you be installing windows and doors in new locations as well? Is it a small addition of a few hundred feet, or is it a third of the size of your existing building?

Step 2: Meet with Community Development Department staff

The Community Development Department is responsible for reviewing all Design Review Permits before they go to the Building Department for construction review. They will tell you if the project is considered a Minor or Major Design Review Permit and the materials required to apply.

Step 3: Review applicable parts of these Design Guidelines

If your project is related to an existing building, review and apply Part III, Existing Development. If your project is related to new construction starting with an empty lot, review and apply Part IV, New Development.

If your property is located in any of the Subareas referenced above, review and apply that applicable section in Part V, Unique Design Considerations.

Step 4: Compile the required submittal materials

The required materials as directed by the Community Development Department staff must be submitted four weeks in advance of date you are hoping to file a construction permit with the Building Department. This is to allow for review and possible resubmittals.

Step 5: Apply for the required Design Review Permit

Submit the required materials, the application form, and the fee, if any, to the Community Development Department for review.

Legal Authority

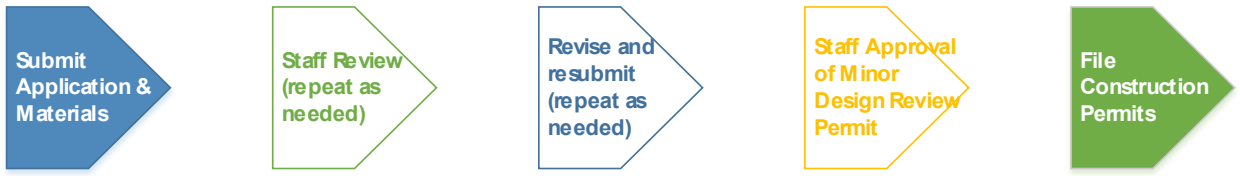
For City staff and reviewing bodies, these guidelines are intended to serve as a supplemental tool with which proposals should be reviewed. They support the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, and are to be used in conjunction with these documents as well as any and all other applicable codes and ordinances.

For businesses, architects, property owners, and developers, these guidelines are intended to serve as recommendations or suggestions that proposals should strive to meet. The City does not wish to dictate the compete design of the building or site, but act in an advisory role through partnership with the applicant to ensure development conforms to the progression of quality as recommended in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. In the event that any guideline conflicts with any City ordinance or other applicable codes, those should take precedent.

II. PROCESS

Minor Design Review Permit

If you need a Minor Design Review Permit, no public meetings are required. The Community Development Department will approve the Permit and forward the Building Department as such. The Building Department will then request any additional materials required prior to reviewing and issuing a construction permit.



Major Design Review Permit

If you need a Major Design Review Permit, one public meeting is required. The Community Development Department will review and recommend approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the Major Design Review Permit to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission will then make a final determination on the Permit. Following its determination, it will be forwarded to the Building Department. The Building Department will then request any additional materials required prior to reviewing and issuing a construction permit.

In the event of denial of either Permit, an appeal can be filed with the next highest reviewing body (Minor Design Review Permit: the Planning and Zoning Commission; Major Design Review Permit: the City Council).

III. EXISTING DEVELOPMENT | GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Architecture

Elevation Materials and Updates

- On elevations which consist of one building material, a second material three to four feet in height from grade, or in line with the bottom of existing window openings, should be installed as a knee wall or foundation enhancement. This material should be of a heavier, denser composition than that of the existing material. Examples of foundation – wall material combinations are:
    - Stone – brick
    - Stained, split face CMU – brick
    - Brick – Fiber cement board
- Preferred primary materials should make up no less than sixty percent (60%) to ninety (90%) of building elevations, including those facing the sides and rear of a property.
- Preferred primary materials should make up, at a minimum, the first floor of a multi-story building.
- Preferred primary materials should be used for the building foundation
- Preferred accent materials should make up no more than ten percent (10%) to forty (40%) of building elevations, including those facing the sides and rear of a property.
- On elevations where the primary material is stucco, EIFS, or other discouraged material, such materials should be removed and replaced with one or more preferred primary materials.
- On buildings which have blank walls, windows, awnings of neutral color or approved color, wall articulation, wall arcades and/or pilasters, or architectural lighting (see Building Lighting section) should be added for visual interest.

  Preferred Primary Materials and Treatment of Existing Primary Materials
  - Brick
  - Quarried stone (i.e. granite, etc.)
  - Cultured Stone
  - Face brick (brick veneer)
  - Fiber cement board (i.e. HardiPlank), provided it is of a neutral or natural finish that imitates traditional commercial building materials, such as brick
  - Pre-cast concrete (with recessed panels and reveal lines)
  - Architectural metals & standing seam metal roofing
  - Split-faced CMU block, stained in neutral color
  - Cast stone
  - Stained brick

  Preferred Accent Materials
  - Pre-cast concrete accents
  - Stucco or EIFS as an accent material (not a major building component). Limited amounts of stucco may be considered for vertical surfaces only, if the quality of the design merits such consideration
  - Glass accents
  - Painted CMU block in acceptable accent colors

- Split-faced CMU block, stained in neutral color
- Other CMU block finished with split face, fluted, scored, honed, etc.
- Decorative concrete block

Rooflines and Shapes

- Partial and/or full mansard roofs should be removed in their entirety. Rooflines should be modified or restored to a flat roof and a parapet wall should be constructed to screen any rooftop mechanical units.
- Where parapet walls do not exist, they should be added to enhance the top of the building and serve as screening of rooftop mechanical units.
- Downspouts should be on side and rear elevations of buildings and not be visible from arterial or collector rights-of-way. Design elements of the structure should be used to hide the spouts.
- Where parapet wall construction is not structurally feasible, pre-treated acrylic butylene styrene, aluminum, or other durable material which matches the primary building material in color and/or appearance should be used.
- Cornices, eaves, and brackets should be added to buildings which do not have any roofline ornamentation to add architectural interest. Such additions should be consistent with and enhance the existing design of the building.

Windows and Doors

- Window and door openings should be restored to their previous size and shape if modifications were made.
- Aged window and door frames should be replaced with wood, cast iron, or anodized aluminum frames.
- Storefront windows with multiple lights should be replaced with single, large single light glass window panels, or multiple glass window panels with vertical as opposed to horizontal breaks.
- On elevations facing a public right-of-way where no windows exist, windows should be added that fit with the design and scale of the existing building to add visual interest and create a 360 design.
- Such windows which are added should be properly scaled to the building
- On elevations with primary pedestrian entrances, doors should be fifty to one hundred percent transparent using one to two glass panels to encourage entry.

Building Lighting

- Decorative lighting on building exteriors should be provided near primary entrances.
- Such lighting should enhance architectural features and landscaping and be down lit.
- In cases were wall packs are needed to assist in the lighting of parking areas, a mixture of both decorative wall lighting and decorative wall packs should be implemented in some manner.
- To enhance the building design and the adjoining landscape, subtle and understated building lighting should be added.
- Replacement light fixtures should be decorative with aluminum or other metal material finish.
- The exterior finish of the decorative light fixtures should also be compatible with the building color and material.

Site Features & Design

Parking Lot Design & Circulation

- Parking lots should be repaired, resealed, and restriped to create legal conforming stalls and create manageable and intuitive traffic flow.

- Where existing site configurations allow, landscape medians should be installed along right-of-way frontage between parking stalls and parkway or sidewalk to comply with Section 9-107 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Where no space is provided or available along a street frontage, landscape planters planted with perennials should be placed along the front elevation of the building, especially directly adjacent to the primary entrance.
- Parking lots which have parts of their lot diagonally striped, such as parking row ends, or a corner which is not a full parking stall, should replace the striped area with a curbed landscape island. Such islands should have a tree installed where the area allows, or be landscaped with hardy landscape materials. Refer to the suggested and preferred landscape materials list for acceptable landscape materials.
- Shared parking agreements and cross access easement agreements should be initiated between properties which already share parking or where businesses have off hours to alleviate existing parking constraints.
- The direction of travel and parking areas should be consolidated and made similar to reduce points of conflict at connections between properties and parking areas.

Landscaping & Open Space

- All landscaped areas should contain a combination of shade trees, ornamental trees, evergreen trees, shrubs, flowering plants, ground cover plants, and other native or ornamental grasses and plants.
- Canopies over outdoor seating areas should be part of the architectural design of the existing building and be of a durable material and neutral color scheme.
- Landscaping along building foundations, parking lots, and property perimeters should be installed in a naturalized or rhythmic pattern.
- Where no space is provided or available along a building frontage, landscape planters with perennials should be implemented along the front elevation of the building, especially directly adjacent to the primary entrance.
- All landscaping, including along building foundations and parking lots, should be properly mulched to prevent weed growth or be of plant materials that are self-contained.
- Landscaping along property perimeters should be naturalized and imply property boundaries while allowing for transition between uses.
- All yards, open space, and landscaped areas should be kept clean of debris and trash.
- All landscaping should be maintained by the property owner/responsible party allowing for healthy growth of the plantings and to preserve the overall aesthetics.
- All adjacent areas to principal and/or accessory structure that is not paved or landscaped should be sodded and maintained with grass cover and/or other plant material.
- Undeveloped areas should be mowed and kept clean of debris and trash.
- Plant material should be utilized to screen mechanical equipment, services and loading docks.

Refuse, Utility, and Service Areas

- All service and utility areas which include, but are not limited to, loading docks, outdoor storage areas, dumpsters and mechanical equipment such as plumbing vent stacks, HVAC transformers, fans and cooling towers, should be modified wherever possible to be screened from view from the right-of-way, pedestrian areas and adjacent residential structures.
- Move above ground utilities below ground wherever possible.

Outdoor Storage and Refuse Areas

- Relocate outdoor storage areas, dumpsters, and other unsightly building equipment to the side or rear of the building.
- Consolidate outdoor storage and dumpster areas for shared use.
- The construction of dumpster enclosures should complement and be similar to the overall building design, as well as be properly landscaped.

Mechanical Equipment

- Relocate mechanical equipment such as air conditioners/exchangers, where possible out of view from public rights of way and circulation paths, and away from residential living or sleeping areas.
- HVAC transformers and other ground located mechanical units should be screened from view by a durable material, such as brick, stained split face CMU block, PVC fence which matches the existing building in material and/or color, or evergreen landscape material.
- HVAC transformers and other ground located mechanical units which are metallic in color, when replaced, should be of a neutral or natural color that matches the existing building or landscaping to be used as screening, if not otherwise required to be a certain color by a utility company.

Site Lighting

- Replacement light fixtures on a site should be installed, designed, and oriented so as to produce minimal glare, nuisance, and spillover onto adjacent properties and streets.
- To avoid light pollution and over illumination, diffused, soft white light is preferred.
- High-pressure sodium (orange lighting) and metal halide lighting are strongly discouraged.
- To create a more pedestrian scale within parking lots, parking lot lighting should be retrofitted to minimize light pollution and glare and use shorter light poles no taller than 18 feet.

IV. NEW DEVELOPMENT | GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Architecture

Massing & Placement

- When infill lots are redeveloped, the front setback of the new building should be the same as those adjacent to it or as the same as the building closest to the street, provided compliance with the required setbacks is met.
- New buildings should be located as close to the front property as possible while maintaining required setbacks per the Zoning Ordinance.
- Building height should be similar to those adjacent to it. Specifically, buildings should not have a height difference more than one-story. For example, a three story building is not appropriate when proposed next to a one story building. A degree of height variation, however, is appropriate.
- Building mass should be similar to those adjacent to it.
- Buildings should be segmented in distinct massing elements.
- Decorative cornices, columns, reliefs, and other facade ornamentation and detailing are encouraged.

Building Design & Materials

- A variation of building materials should be carried throughout the design of the building.
- The primary entrance to the building should be uniquely identifiable by using variations in masses, building materials, colors, projecting/recessing and architectural detailing.

- Vertical and horizontal elements should be offset to minimize building bulk implementing one or all of these three design features:
    - Variation in the wall plane. (Projections and recesses)
    - Variation in wall height.
    - Roof peaks located at different levels.
- Apply a 360-degree architecture principle avoiding blank walls by using:
    - Windows
    - Awnings of neutral color or approved color
    - Wall articulation (see above)
    - Wall arcades and/or pilasters
- Preferred primary materials should make up no less than sixty percent (60%) to ninety (90%) of building elevations, including those facing the sides and rear of a property.
- Preferred primary materials should make up, at a minimum, the first floor of a multi-story building.
- Preferred primary materials should be used for the building foundation
- Preferred accent materials should make up no more than ten percent (10%) to forty (40%) of building elevations, including those facing the sides and rear of a property.
- Buildings should be designed with two or more preferred primary materials, with materials differentiating between different function parts of the building. For example, a foundation material three to four feet in height from grade, or in line with the bottom of existing window openings, should be installed as a knee wall or foundation enhancement. This material should be of a heavier, denser composition than that of the existing material. Examples of foundation – wall material combinations are:
    - Stone – brick
    - Stained, split face CMU – brick
    - Brick – Fiber cement board
- Blank walls without windows, awnings of neutral color or approved color, wall articulation, wall arcades and/or pilasters, or architectural lighting (see Building Lighting section) are strongly discouraged fir any side of a building.
- Building walls which are more than forty (40) in length should incorporate variation in the roofline or articulation on said elevation.

Preferred Primary Materials

- Brick
- Quarried stone (i.e. granite, etc.)
- Cultured Stone
- Face brick (brick veneer)
- Fiber cement board (i.e. HardiPlank), provided it is of a neutral or natural finish that imitates traditional commercial building materials, such as brick
- Pre-cast concrete (with recessed panels and reveal lines)
- Split-faced CMU block, stained in neutral color
- Cast stone

Preferred Accent Materials

- Pre-cast concrete accents
- Stucco (EIFS) as an accent material (not a major building component). Limited amounts of stucco may be considered for vertical surfaces only, if the quality of the design merits such consideration

- Glass accents
- Stained CMU block in acceptable accent colors
- Other CMU block finished with split face, fluted, scored, honed, etc.
- Architectural metals & standing seam metal roofing

Rooflines and Shapes

- Rooflines and parapets should look complete when viewed from all sides of the building.
- Partial and/or full mansard roofs are strongly discouraged.
- Parapet walls should be added to enhance the top of the building and serve as the required screening of rooftop mechanical units.
- Downspouts should be on side and rear elevations of buildings and not be visible from arterial or collector rights-of-way. Design elements of the structure should be used to hide the spouts.
- Cornices, eaves, and brackets should be added to buildings to add architectural interest. Such additions should be consistent with and enhance the design of the building.

Windows and Doors

- All fenestration (doors, windows, vents, skylights) should be in scale with their associated building with some ornamental element, i.e. window sills, window/door hoods, transoms, etc.
- Building elevations which face a public right-of-way should have windows that fit with the design and scale of the proposed building to add visual interest and create a 360 design.
- Such windows which are added should be properly scaled to the building
- Elevations with primary pedestrian entrances should be fifty to one hundred percent transparent, with the doors using one to two glass panels to encourage entry and windows extending no higher than knee wall height.
- Storefront windows should be single, large single light glass window panels, or multiple glass window panels with vertical as opposed to horizontal breaks.

Building Lighting

- Decorative lighting on building exteriors should be provided near primary entrances.
- Such lighting should enhance architectural features and landscaping and be down lit.
- In cases were wall packs are needed to assist in the lighting of parking areas, a mixture of both decorative wall lighting and decorative wall packs should be implemented in some manner.
- To enhance the building design and the adjoining landscape, subtle and understated building lighting should be added.
- Decorative light fixtures with aluminum or other metal material exteriors should be used on all sides facing a public or private right-of-way, or with a pedestrian entrance.
- The exterior finish of the decorative light fixtures should be compatible with the building color and material.

Site Features & Design

Parking Lot Design & Circulation

- Internal site vehicular circulation system should be designed to minimize conflicts between inbound and outbound traffic and ensure such internal traffic does not negatively impact external traffic.
- Internal pedestrian paths should be enhanced by using different paving materials, such as those with a texture and color, or decorative striping, and or bollard lighting fixture no more than 4 feet in height.

- Conflict points between pedestrian vehicles should be minimized through the installation of visible and accessible cross walks.
- Parking lots should have curbed perimeters and curbed landscape islands.
- Parking access points, whether located on front or side streets must be located as far as possible from street intersections so that adequate stacking room is provided.
- Access points should be limited to the minimum amount necessary to provide adequate circulation.
- Diagonal striping in place of a curbed landscape island to guide traffic flow and form parking rows is strongly discouraged.
- Shared parking agreements and cross access easement agreements should be initiated between properties where off-street, cross property connections provide an alternative route for users with multiple stops.
- Safe vehicle and pedestrian connections should be installed between such properties to allow for the safe passage between them through the use of parking lot cross access, walking paths, crosswalks, and the like.

Landscaping and Open Space

General Landscaping Requirements

- All yards and open space between and about structures and parking lots should be landscaped
- Plant material should be utilized to screen mechanical equipment, services and loading docks.
- All yards, open space, and landscaped areas should be kept clean of debris and trash.
- All landscaping should be maintained by the property owner/responsible party allowing for healthy growth of the plantings and to preserve the overall aesthetics.
- Undeveloped areas should be mowed and kept clean of debris and trash.
- All such landscape areas should contain a combination of shade trees, ornamental trees, evergreen trees, shrubs, flowering plants, ground cover plants, and other native or ornamental grasses and plants.
- Landscaping along building foundations, parking lots, and property perimeters should be installed in a naturalized or rhythmic pattern.
- Landscaping along property perimeters should be naturalized and imply property boundaries while allowing for transition between uses.
- For a list of recommended trees see Exhibit B of these guidelines.

Foundation Landscaping

- All adjacent areas to principal and/or accessory structure that is not paved or landscaped should be sodded and maintained with grass cover and/or other plant material.
- Landscaping should provide relief to large expanses of exterior walls and enhance walkways, entrances, outdoor seating areas, and other pedestrian areas.
- If landscape planters with unique features or a decorative design are proposed and implemented (see adjacent examples), the Director of Community Development may grant relief from the landscaping regulations of these guidelines and city code.

Outdoor Patios

- Outdoor seating areas, such as those provided by restaurants or cafes, should incorporated into the overall site design and be well landscaped.
- Outdoor seating areas should be sited away from parking areas, drive aisles, and high traffic streets where possible.

- Canopies over outdoor seating areas should be part of the architectural design of the existing building and be of a durable material and neutral color scheme.

Refuse, Utility, and Service Areas

- All service and utility areas which include, but are not limited to, loading docks, outdoor storage areas, dumpsters and mechanical equipment such as plumbing vent stacks, HVAC transformers, fans and cooling towers, should be located and screened from view from the right-of-way, pedestrian areas and adjacent residential structures.
- Joint use of service areas by multiple adjoining buildings should be accommodated during site design wherever possible.
- Utility connections for all new developments should be installed underground.

Outdoor Storage and Refuse Areas

- Trash enclosures should be incorporated into building design with placement at the rear of the building and using the same or a similar building material.

Mechanical Equipment

- Utility service areas should be screened from public view with building elements and/or materials similar in appearance to the main structure.
- Mechanical equipment such as air conditioners, exchangers, etc. should be placed out of view from public rights of way and circulation paths, and away from residential living or sleeping areas.
- HVAC transformers and other ground located mechanical units should be screened from view by a durable material, such as brick, stained split face CMU block, PVC fence which matches the existing building in material and/or color, or evergreen landscape material.
- HVAC transformers and other ground located mechanical units which are metallic in color, when replaced, should be of a neutral or natural color that matches the existing building or landscaping to be used as screening, if not otherwise required to be a certain color by a utility company.

Site Lighting

- Light fixtures should be designed and installed in a manner oriented to produce minimal glare, nuisance, and spillover onto nearby properties.
- To avoid light pollution and over illumination, diffused, soft white light is preferred.
- High-pressure sodium (orange lighting) and metal halide lighting are strongly discouraged.
- To create a more pedestrian scale within parking lots, parking lot lighting should be no taller than 18 feet.

V. UNIQUE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS | Metra Station Subarea, Cicero Avenue Corridor, & 159th Street Corridor

This Section of the Guidelines is intended to be supplemental to the preceding Sections III and IV for properties within the following described parts of the city.

First, the Metra Station Subarea is located at the northwest corner of the highly traveled intersection of Cicero Avenue (SR 50) and West 159th Street (SR 6). This area is broadly bound by W. 157th Street to the north, Cicero Avenue to the east, Laramie Avenue to the west, and W. 160th Street to the south, as defined within the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. Second, the Cicero Avenue consists of the properties fronting Cicero Avenue between 151st Street and 159th Street. Finally, the 159th Street Corridor consists of the properties fronting 159th Street between Ridgeland Avenue and Laramie Avenue.

Each of these parts of the city have their own unique development patterns. The supplemental guidelines below are intended to be applied only to properties within each of the aforementioned boundaries, so as to ensure the reuse of existing sites and new development reflects the intended character of each area.

Metra Station Subarea

Intent

The proximity of this area to open space and the Oak Forest Health Center to the east and southeast, respectively, provides a unique view shed not often found in the south suburbs of Chicago. Being directly adjacent to existing open space and well connected to major transit routes, this area was identified and has been developed as a transit-oriented development, or TOD, with the intent of becoming the town center, by the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. It should serve as both a point of connection as well as a gathering place for the community and region at large. As such, pedestrian-scale design elements should be prioritized at all levels of design.

Architecture & Building Placement

- On corner lots, new buildings should be located as close to the front and corner side property lines as possible while maintaining required setbacks per the Zoning Ordinance to “hold the corner”.
- Buildings should create a “streetwall”, creating a sense of enclosure, by maintaining a consistent setback as close as possible to the public right-of-way.
- New construction in this area should 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 should be maintained through the use of landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and decorative walls or fencing.
- Buildings throughout this area should face the street, with strong pedestrian orientation.
- Buildings must have clearly defined, highly visible customer entrances with features such as canopies or porticos, arches, wing walls, and integral planters.
- Main entrances should be designed as an important architectural feature of the building.
- Window glazing should be clear or slightly tinted. Dark, mirrored, reflective glass, or glass block is not permitted.
- Awnings should be properly placed above entrances and may extend over storefront windows.
- The color of awnings and canopies should complement and enhance the overall color scheme of the building façade.

- Commercial buildings should have a strong pedestrian orientation with display windows, attractive detailing, and convenient and "hospitable" entrances.

Site Features & Design

- Fencing should complement the architectural and landscaping designs on the site.
- Parking lots should be screened from view along sidewalks and roadways through the use of low masonry walls or plantings and decorative fencing.
- Parking lots should be located behind buildings toward the rear lot line.
- Vehicular access to parking lots should be provided from side streets.
- Pedestrian access to parking lots should be provided through planned walkways located between buildings.
- Parking lots should be designed and located so they are safe, attractive, and efficient. Excessive parking can be detrimental to its aesthetic and should be discouraged.
- Site lighting should consist of both vehicular scale lighting and pedestrian scale lighting. Excessive lighting and light pollution should be avoided.
- Sidewalk cafes, outdoor patios, and retail display areas should be enclosed by a decorative fence or corral. The fence or corral should be compatible with existing character and be located in order to maintain a safe, accessible, and continuous public sidewalk and be removed during cooler seasons.
- Parking lots should be located behind buildings. Parking lots in front of buildings are not encouraged within this area.

Cicero Avenue Corridor

Intent

The properties along this corridor are narrow and the majority of them are developed with small strip centers or small-scale, stand-alone buildings. The corridor also features excessive curb cuts, some blocks with buildings that are set back from the street, and older buildings that are in need of updates or repairs. This chapter will focus on connectivity and appropriate building treatments.

Architecture & Building Placement

- On corner lots, new buildings should be located as close to the front and corner side property lines as possible while maintaining required setbacks per the Zoning Ordinance to "hold the corner".
- Buildings should create a "streetwall", creating a sense of enclosure, by maintaining a consistent setback as close as possible to the public right-of-way.
- Where maintaining a continuous streetwall is not possible or desirable, the streetwall should be maintained through the use of landscaping, pedestrian amenities, and decorative walls or fencing.
- Ground floor windows can be used for displays, however business owners should 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.
- All buildings should "front" the corridor wherever possible. When front doors do not face these primary streets, display windows or distinctive facade treatments should be provided along the visible public road frontages.
- Covered walkways and colonnades are encouraged along the fronts of the buildings to create a pedestrian orientation.

- Awnings and canopies designed for weather protection and to add visual interest at the street level should be integrated into the facade and be in character with the architectural style of the building.
- Buildings should have a strong pedestrian orientation with display windows, attractive detailing, and convenient and "hospitable" entrances. Obstructing windows from the interior of a building with shelving, display cases, signage or other objects is not permitted.

Site Features & Design

- New drives/curb cuts are strongly discouraged unless necessity is proven through engineering design.
- Where possible, consolidation of drives may be applicable in order to eliminate the numerous drives along arterial roadways.
- Parking lots should be designed and located so they are safe, attractive, and efficient. Excessive parking can be detrimental to its aesthetic and should be discouraged.
- Parking lots should be located behind buildings. Parking lots in front of buildings are not encouraged within this area.
- Where possible, pedestrian access to parking lots should be provided through planned walkways located in gaps between buildings.
- Parkway landscaping should consist of salt-tolerant street trees, shrubs, groundcover, perennials and shrubs limited to maximum 3' mature height
- Development should create logical linkages to surrounding areas by extending the existing street grid and incorporating on-site streets whenever possible.
- Parking lots should be accessible from side streets to prevent cars from having to use primary streets.

159th Street Corridor

Intent

The properties along this corridor are larger and have more frontage when compared to those fronting Cicero Avenue. The buildings often have larger footprints and also farther setback. A unique feature of this subarea is that the south segment of the corridor between Ridgeland Avenue and Central Avenue is the George Dunne National Golf Course, operated and maintained by the Forest Preserve of Cook County. This creates a challenge in encouraging cross traffic and permeability in the corridor, which this part will seek to address.

Architecture & Building Placement

- All buildings should "front" the corridor wherever possible. When front doors do not face these primary streets, display windows or distinctive facade treatments should be provided along the visible public road frontages.
- Any business permitted to have a drive-thru facility should be sited so that the drive-thru lanes and pick up windows are not prominently featured. Any canopies over drive-thru windows or lane should match the material and architectural character of the primary building.
- Covered walkways and colonnades are encouraged along the fronts of the buildings to create a pedestrian orientation.
- Architectural details should be visible from the street. Buildings should not be setback so far as to diminish the aesthetic impact of the building on passing pedestrians and motorists. Buildings should be attractive at both a pedestrian and vehicular scale.

- Long blank faces along the corridor should be avoided. Articulation and covered walkways, such as arcades, are encouraged along the fronts of multi-tenant commercial buildings to create interest and a “pedestrian-friendly” orientation.

Site Features & Design

- New drives/curb cuts are strongly discouraged unless necessity is proven through engineering design.
- Where possible, consolidation of drives may be applicable in order to eliminate the numerous drives along arterial roadways.
- Where parking islands are implemented, they should not be used for snow storage and a snow storage area should be designated on the site and landscape plan during the design phases of the site.
- Parking islands should be generally dispersed throughout the site.
- Parking areas of no more than 60 feet in depth should be located between the building, the public rights-of-way, and the front yard setback. This depth will be sufficient to accommodate a single drive aisle with 90 degree parking on both sides. Additional parking areas can be provided adjacent to the building on interior and rear portions of the lot.
- Development should create logical linkages to surrounding areas by extending the existing street grid and incorporating on-site streets whenever possible.
- Large scale development should establish an internal street network that connects to the external grid at logical intersections.
- Parking lots should be accessible from side streets to prevent cars from having to use primary streets.
- Any business permitted to have a “drive-thru” facility shall be sited so that drive-through lanes and pickup windows are not prominently featured.