

Section F. Commercial Design Guidelines

I. INTRODUCTION

The Town of St. Croix Falls, located in western Polk County, Wisconsin, is in a rural setting with some major thoroughfares including both Federal and State Highways. These major thoroughfares provide easy access to the Twin Cities metropolitan area and also provide a location for compatible commercial uses to be located. To integrate such uses along these highways, lands are zoned commercial and the Comprehensive Plan designates these areas for commercial uses.

II. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Commercial Design Guidelines (“CDG”) have been prepared to provide the minimum design criteria for commercial development within the Town of Saint Croix Falls. These guidelines are intended to result in the enhancement of community appearance as well as further the establishment of a sense of place by the following:

- The use of specified high quality building materials.
- Identification and consistent use of design elements which contribute to quality and good design in site planning, architecture, landscaping and signage.
- Creating a consistent, cohesive character within a development that is also compatible to its surroundings.
- Encouraging development that is not dictated by franchise architecture and is punctuated by unique, individualized building design decisions.
- Promoting orderly and logical patterns of commercial development.

High quality design solutions deviating from strict interpretation of guidelines noted herein may be considered for approval by the Town only when the resulting design is one which is determined to be desirable by the Town and enhancing of the community. The Town will encourage the implementation of alternative or innovative practices and may modify these Design Guidelines if equivalent public benefits are provided without adverse impact on the community.

III. APPLICABILITY

The Town Commercial Design Guidelines will be applied to the Commercial Zoning District. Pursuant to Town Zoning Ordinance Chapter III, 3:

All new commercial development and commercial development involving a structural alteration, addition or repair to a structure that exceeds seventy-five (75%) percent of the equalized assessed value of the structure over a two year period shall be subject to Town Commercial Design Guidelines including site plan review and shall not be allowed unless reviewed by the Plan Commission and reviewed and approved by the Town Board.

Development involving aggregate structure area includes any additions plus an existing structure. The value of alterations, additions and repair work shall include the value of all labor and materials.

All structural alterations, additions or repairs must comply with the current State of Wisconsin, Department of Commerce Uniform Dwelling Code for residential buildings and the State of Wisconsin, Department of Commerce Building Code for commercial buildings.

All structural alterations, additions or repairs must comply with any current applicable Polk County Ordinances.

A site plan and facility plan ("Site Plan") shall be submitted for each new request to which the ordinances apply. The Site Plan shall be a professionally drawn plan, to scale, showing the minimum elements required by these CDG. The Plan Commission will consider the architecture and design of a building, its arrangements on the lot, landscaping, parking, pedestrian amenities, signage, lighting and other design elements. These standards are intended as a guideline for development of commercial properties. These guidelines shall serve as guidepost for developers in understanding the type of development that is encouraged and what shall be reviewed by the Plan Commission and the Town Board in considering site plan approval. Non-compliance to these guidelines may be grounds for denial of a project. Compliance with these guidelines does not assure or guarantee approval of a project, and does not create any entitlement or right to approval.

Development of commercial properties is subject to Town Commercial Design Guidelines and should expect a 120 day minimum approval process to allow for community input and review into the design process.

The Site Plan shall be submitted for review contemporaneously with any proposed or required applications for land use or other zoning approvals.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

These guidelines and standards are intended to encourage an orderly and logical pattern of commercial development that is easily recognized by local residents and that enhances the Town of St. Croix Falls.

The design issues inherent in commercial development are generally easier to resolve if the full extent of commercial development at a particular location is dealt with as one unified project, rather than split into a number of isolated projects. Although ownership patterns may limit the degree to which large parcels can be assembled, preliminary development plans should contain all contiguous land under the developer's control, including land that use or zoning is not commercial. Cooperative planning between adjacent property owners is encouraged and may, in some cases, be required.

In the event of a conflict or discrepancy between this document and any other Town document, the most restrictive shall apply. Large retail development over ten thousand (10,000) square feet may require increased setbacks and other additional development criteria in addition to the development criteria herein, specific to each development as may be conditioned in site plan approval. In addition, during site plan review, the Town may require certain elements for these standards to be imposed for existing commercial uses when a significant change occurs.

V. APPROVAL PROCESS

The procedure for concept, preliminary and final site plan review shall occur as follows:

- (1) Meet with town staff to review requirements and the concept plan.
- (2) Applicant shall complete and submit a Site Plan along with the Town's completed CDG application and any supplementary materials necessary.
- (3) Town staff, applicant and owner, if not the same, shall present the plan to the Plan Commission for concept review, comment, and recommendation for approval or denial.
- (4) The Plan Commission will hold a public hearing for site plan review and compliance with these CDG.
 - (a) The Plan Commission may recommend approval.
 - (b) The Plan Commission may recommend denial of the site plan and provide to the applicant findings of fact for why the site plan was rejected.

(c) The Plan Commission may table the action and request additional information and/or changes.

(5) Town Board approval is required for the site plan and compliance with CDG.

(6) The applicant must take action on the approved application within one (1) year of approval by the Town Board and hold a certificate of occupancy within two (2) years of holding a building permit or the application is null and void.

VI. SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Site Design

a. Preservation of Natural Features

Preserving natural features enhances the local character as well as protects natural functions, including storm water management, air purification, and provision of shade. New development shall work with the natural environment by preserving and integrating natural features, including mature trees, where feasible.

- i. Development should integrate existing natural features into the overall design and layout of the development. Existing natural features should be used to create site amenities and provide physical separators and buffers from adjacent development where needed.
- ii. Preservation of existing trees and vegetation should be preserved whenever possible to act as buffers between adjoining developments and as site amenities within the development.

b. Landscaping. A detailed landscape plan is a required element of site plan approval.

- i. The Site Plan shall show berms or other screening desirable to shield the adjacent property as the Board may require noise, light and dust mitigation measures.
- ii. Trees or vegetation designed to beautify and enhance the visual appeal of the project.
- iii. Sites that contain significant stands of native trees, springs or creeks shall, when possible, incorporate the preservation of such into the site plan.
- iv. All main entrances to the development site shall be extensively landscaped with entrance islands.
- v. All utilities, including cable television, telephone, gas, water, storm and sanitary sewers, shall be underground except electric power lines exceeding 1,200 volts.

2. Parking Lots and Access

- a. Parking lots shall be landscaped to include trees and pedestrian walkways.
- b. At least ten (10) percent of the interior space of all interior parking lots shall be landscaped areas.
- c. Parking lot lights shall be total cut-off luminaries with angles of less than ninety degrees to ensure no fugitive up lighting. Exterior lighting shall not exceed more than 0.5 foot-candles above ambient levels along all property lines and shall not exceed an average illumination level of 1.0 foot-candles in public parking and pedestrian areas.

- d. Poles in parking lots shall have a maximum height of twenty four (24) feet measured from finished grade.
- e. Asphalt and concrete are acceptable paving materials for parking areas. Additional materials, such as tile, brick, and exposed aggregate may be introduced where appropriate. The use of recycled material is encouraged.
- f. Parking lots shall be graded so that storm water draining from the site will not cross public sidewalks.
- g. All roads, walkways, driveways, parking lots and loading areas shall be constructed of materials that are approved by the Town Board.
- m. The Plan Commission and the Town Board may require cross easements where commercial lots are side-by-side to allow linking of parking areas.
- n. Minimum road right-of-way shall be sixty-six (66) feet unless the right-of-way pre-exists adoption of the ordinance.
- o. Minimum access point width shall be twenty-four (24) feet.
- p. The Town may require, at the developer's expense, the construction or easement of right-of-way for frontage or backage roads to ensure continuous movement of vehicles between various and adjacent land uses and to alleviate traffic volume on Highway 8 and Highway 35, thus improving public health and safety.
- q. Road standards for commercial development may be increased by the Plan Commission and the Town Board. An increase of these standards will be on relevant information such as Town plans, driveway widths, speed limit, number and types of vehicles using the road parking availability, sound engineering judgment and other pertinent information.

3. Pedestrian Circulation

- a. Sidewalks at least five (5) feet in width shall be provided where pedestrian traffic will occur.
- b. Sidewalks at least ten (10) feet in width shall be provided along the full length of the building façade featuring a customer entrance and along any façade abutting public parking areas.
- c. Provisions shall be made for handicap, bicycle and motorcycle parking.

4. Materials and Colors

The following applies to facades that are visible from a public street or adjacent property:

- a. Predominant exterior building materials shall be high quality materials, including but not limited to brick; wood; hardie plank; stone; tinted and textured concrete masonry units; and exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS).
- b. Façade colors shall be low-reflectance subtle, neutral or earth-tone colors. The use of high intensity colors, metallic colors, black or fluorescent colors is prohibited.
- c. Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors, including primary colors.

5. Facades and Exterior Walls

The following guidelines apply to facades that are visible from public streets or adjacent properties:

- a. Facades greater than seventy five (75) feet in length, measured horizontally, shall incorporate wall plane projections or recesses having a depth of at least three percent (3%) of the length of the façade and extending at least 20 percent (20%) of the length of the façade. No uninterrupted length of any façade shall exceed seventy-five (75) horizontal feet.
- b. Ground floor facades that face public streets shall have arches and columns, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features shall attempt when reasonably possible to cover at least 60% of the horizontal length of the building.

6. Customer Entrances

A sense of entry or arrival must be created at primary entryways into the development. Building placement, landscaping, gates, entry monuments, specialty lighting and other design elements can be used to create this design effect.

7. Roofs

1. When reasonably feasible roofs shall have no less than two (2) of the following features:
 - i. Parapets, mansard roofs, gable roofs, hip roofs, or dormers shall be used to conceal flat roofs and roof top equipment from public view. The average height of parapets shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the height of the supporting wall, and parapets shall not at any point exceed one third (1/3) of the supporting wall.
 - ii. Overhanging eaves, extending no less than three (3) feet past the supporting walls. Sloping roofs that do not exceed the average height of the supporting walls, with an average slope greater than or equal to one (1) foot of horizontal run.
 - iii. Three (3) or more roof slope planes, with varying lengths and design.

8. Central Features and Community Spaces

This section is applicable to all developments exceeding 50,000 square feet in total gross floor area.

- a. At least (1) of the following community and public spaces shall be provided:
 - i. Patio/seating area
 - ii. Pedestrian plaza with benches
 - iii. Window shopping walkway
 - iv. Outdoor play area
 - v. Kiosk area
- b. All central features and community spaces shall have direct access to the public sidewalk network and shall not be constructed of materials that are inferior to the principal materials of the building and landscape.

9. Outdoor Storage

- a. Areas for truck parking, trash collection/compaction loading or other such uses shall not be visible from public or private abutting rights-of-ways and to the greatest extent possible, shall be located in the back of buildings.
- b. No areas of trash collection or compaction, loading, or other such uses shall be located within fifty (50) feet of any public or private street, public sidewalk or internal pedestrian way.
- c. Loading dock, truck parking, outdoor storage, utility meters, HVAC equipment, trash collection (i.e. dumpsters), trash compaction and other such services shall be incorporated into the overall design of the building and the use of screening landscaping so that the visual and acoustic impact of these functions are fully contained and out of view from adjacent properties and public

streets. Screening materials shall not be inferior to the principal materials of the building and landscaping.

10. Storm Water Detention Ponds

- a. Submit to the Town, copies of approved storm water plan.
- b. All storm water detention ponds on site shall be landscaped in an aesthetically pleasing manner. The Town shall work with the developer in reviewing landscape plans for storm water detention and such landscape plans shall be submitted with the Site Plan. The Town may require the developer to construct a four (4) foot high black decorative fence around storm ponds where such are designed or placed in such a manner that left unimpeded pose a risk to the public health and safety.
- c. The maximum side slope shall be 5:1.
- d. Irregular configuration is encouraged.

11. Park and Recreation Dedication

The Town's Parkland Dedication Fee shall be applied per Resolution regarding subdivision plat review fees and other land-use and zoning fees for the Town of St. Croix Falls.

12. Developer's Agreement

The Town may require site plan approval to be accompanied by a Developer's Agreement which shall incorporate certain understandings or agreements in interpreting these guidelines and other agreed upon standards or conditions of site plan approval.

The Town may employ, on behalf of the Town, an independent technical expert to review technical materials or design proposals submitted by the applicant or to prepare any technical materials or design evaluations required but not submitted by the applicant. The applicant shall pay the costs of such review and/or independent analysis. In addition, the Developer is required to pay all engineering review and building inspection fees associated with both plan review and construction of the project.