Naperville

# COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Southwest Community Area
## City of Naperville, Illinois

May 2006

HNTB

# Table of Contents

# Acknowledgements

The *Commercial Area Design Guidelines* for the Southwest Community Area of the City of Naperville, Illinois were prepared through the efforts of the City of Naperville, an appointed Citizen's Advisory Committee and the project consultant, HNTB Corporation. Many citizens, staff and officials of the Naperville community, too numerous to mention here, participated in the planning process. Their involvement and insights are sincerely appreciated.

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# Introduction

The need for Commercial Design Guidelines was originally identified as part of the *Southwest Community Area Plan*, adopted by the City in May 2002. Community sentiment pointed to the need to distinguish the design of commercial areas within the Southwest Community Area from other areas to the north and the south. The Plan also identified the need to create a more cohesive and functional physical environment for commercial properties within the Southwest Community Area. The extent of the Southwest Community Area (also referred to as Sector G) is illustrated at right.


## Purpose of the Design Guidelines

The City of Naperville's image and identity are influenced by the overall design of its most visible areas: its commercial corridors. The purpose of these Design Guidelines is to further enhance Naperville's community image and identity within the Southwest Community Area through site improvements and building design that offer a high level of aesthetic appeal, clarity and order.

**Aesthetic appeal** is a key element of community identity within commercial corridors. Abundant landscaping can integrate the built environment with natural features and express a welcoming feeling. Attractive and thoughtfully designed buildings and signage express permanence and quality.

**Clarity** is an important characteristic in the navigation and use of commercial areas. Thoughtfully considered signage and landscape placement, curb cuts, building forms and other visual "clues" enable motorists to assimilate information quickly and locate their destinations

*Abundant landscaping, integrated signage and high quality materials help to establish a positive image for commercial areas.*

easily. As a result, well designed commercial areas can help to create a successful business environment.

**Order** is important as a means of reducing stress, by enabling people to understand where businesses are located in relation to one another and providing predictability. Clearly organized parking areas and readily accessible pedestrian path networks encourage safe vehicle and pedestrian movement, and enhance the overall shopping experience.

Although none of these characteristics is absolute, a measure of each is necessary to perpetuate a unified sense of community, improve livability and distinguish the Southwest Community Area. This in turn serves to support Naperville's identity as a community with lasting value – one which will be strengthened through its community of residents and businesses committed to high standards of excellence.

## Community Design Issues and Preferences

A Citizen's Advisory Committee was formed to provide guidance and direction in the development of the Commercial Design Guidelines, representing a variety of stakeholder groups interested in commercial development in the Southwest Community Area. In addition, a public workshop and web-based opinion survey were undertaken to encourage participation from the community at large in the development of the Guidelines.

During the public workshop, attendees provided their opinions regarding their satisfaction with the existing commercial development within the Southwest Community Area. Among the meeting participants, 74% were satisfied with the appearance of newer commercial areas, and 70% felt that they promote a positive image of the City. However, only 60% were satisfied with the way newer commercial areas "function." Respondent's to the City's web-based comment form were more neutral in their assessment of the appearance of commercial developments in the Southwest Community Area, with 28% of respondents indicating that they are satisfied,

*Facilitating pedestrian access and comfort was a primary concern expressed by the community.*

33% indicating a neutral opinion, and 25% indicating that they were unsatisfied.

Issues of concern discussed during the workshop included traffic congestion on IL Route 59, a disjointed development pattern, and a lack of connections between adjacent land uses in general, and for pedestrians in particular. Several web-based survey respondents commented that shopping choices are made on the basis of the appearance of a facility, and also on how easy it is to access the development.

The clear message and preferences communicated by the Committee and the community was that commercial developments in the Southwest Community Area should be well integrated with their surroundings, and should strive to move beyond the "generic strip shopping center" design to more pedestrian friendly formats.

# I.
# Organization and Use of the Design Guidelines

This document contains two sections, each providing a different function and role in the development review process. These are briefly described below.

- **Commercial Design Guidelines** – Chapter II serves as the City's official policy guide for the development of commercial property in the Southwest Community Area. The Design Guidelines should be referred to when reviewing commercial area development and redevelopment within the Southwest Community Area.

- **Commercial Design Prototypes** – Chapter III is intended to illustrate the use and application of key design guideline concepts. It is not a part of the City's official design guideline policy, but is intended to aid the reader in understanding and incorporating aspects of the Commercial Design Guidelines.

## Applicability of the Design Guidelines

The Commercial Design Guidelines are intended to serve as an advisory companion to the City of Naperville's development review process. They can provide guidance and direction to the development community early in the plan making process. While compliance with the Design Guidelines is voluntary, careful consideration is recommended. The Design Guidelines form the policy program which should be applied in the development review process. A companion document, entitled Compendium of Design Tools, is available under separate cover. Because the Compendium of Design Tools offers a number of more specific and detailed design ideas, it is not considered as policy, and should not be used by the City in the plan review

*Successful commercial development examples in other communities have informed the development of the Commercial Design Guidelines.*

*Pictured above: Oakbrook (top) and Deerfield (bottom).*

process. Rather, the Compendium provides ideas that the development community may choose to consider in the plan making process. Encouraging flexibility and creativity is an important aspect of the Design Guidelines.

## Design Review Process

It is recommended that the use and application of the Design Guidelines become a part of the established development review process of the City of Naperville. The Design Guidelines are not intended to add an additional level of review beyond established development processes. Regardless of the approving authority, developers and designers should be encouraged to review the Design Guidelines to understand the City of Naperville's design preferences in the Southwest Community Area. Early reflection of the City's design expectations should help ensure a more predictable and timely review and approval of development proposals.

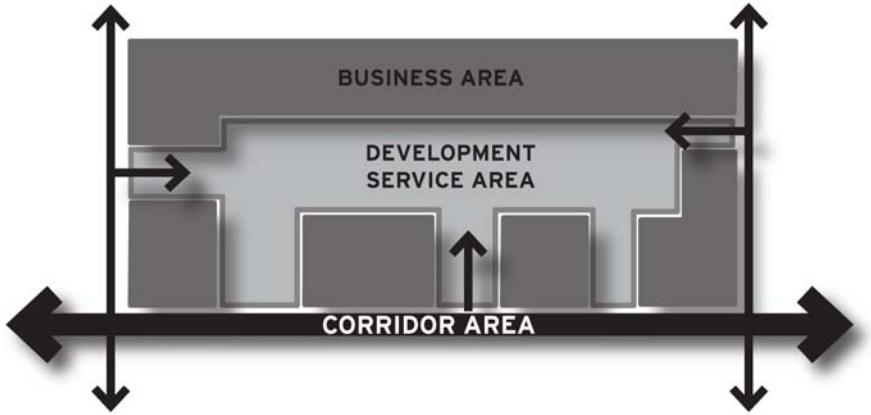
# II.
# Commercial Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are organized around three basic development areas common to all commercial properties in the Southwest Community Area. These areas will serve as a basic organizational framework to continue to improve the aesthetic appeal, clarity, and order of the area's commercial properties.

For design purposes, commercial sites within the Southwest Community Area each maintain three distinct functional areas, regardless of their scale:

- **The Corridor Area** – which focuses on the design needs unique to the street corridor as a gateway to development sites.
- **The Development Service Area** – which includes the internal access, circulation and service systems within each development site.
- **The Business Area** – which emphasizes the design characteristics desirable within the active business locations of a development site, including more unconventional business area arrangements.

The diagram to the right illustrates the general physical relationship of these three functional areas. The Design Guidelines are organized to address each of these three functional areas.



The chart below illustrates how general topic areas found within the Design Guidelines relate to the three functional areas. While some design considerations are relevant only to one or another functional area, others need to be considered at varying levels of detail across the site. For this reason some general topic areas (landscaping, for example) are addressed in more than one section of the Design Guidelines.

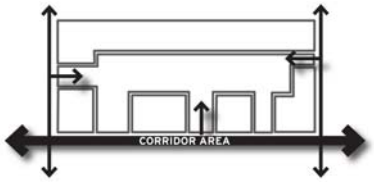
| | CORRIDOR AREA | DEV'T SERVICE AREA | BUSINESS AREA |
|---|---|---|---|
| Access and Circulation | ■ | ■ | |
| Parking Areas | | ■ | |
| Perimeter Buildings | ■ | | |
| Building Arrangement | | | ■ |
| Building Form | | | ■ |
| Building Materials | | | ■ |
| Building Massing and Articulation | | | ■ |
| Landscaping | ■ | | ■ |
| Open Space and Amenities | | ■ | ■ |
| Signage | ■ | | |
| Equipment, Loading and Storage Areas | | ■ | |

The Commercial Design Guidelines relevant to each of the three functional areas can be found on the following pages.

## The Corridor Area

Design improvements adjacent to street corridors in the Southwest Community Area should establish the following values:

- A sense of arrival
- Beautification through the provision of landscape features
- An organized and predictable access system
- Harmony among visual elements, expressing a cohesive district rather
- than a sequence of unrelated businesses




THE CORRIDOR AREA

*Access and Circulation*

1. Access to development sites should be provided primarily from public side streets and signalized mid-block intersections, with non-signalized right-in/right-out access provided as appropriate at major streets.
2. Bicycle and pedestrian access to adjoining residential neighborhoods is encouraged in appropriate locations, based upon existing facilities and site layout, to facilitate non-motorized access from adjacent areas.

*Perimeter Buildings*

1. To the extent practical, drive-thru facilities should be oriented away from public streets and primary development entrances.
2. The facades of free-standing buildings should be designed to an equal level of material finish and design quality on all sides.
3. The setbacks of buildings along arterial roadways should be varied, to avoid "crowding" the roadway and to allow for overall site visibility.

*Natural plantings in a generous buffer area along major roadways will enhance the image of the corridor.*

*Landscaping*

1. The street corridor should reflect a natural landscape pattern, utilizing an informal pattern of high canopy trees and clusters of low-height shrubbery within the setback or buffer area adjacent to the roadway, particularly at parking areas. These plantings may need to be located on the owner's side of the sidewalk.

2. Perimeter planting beds should be provided when adjacent to public rights-of-way, landscaped with low shrubs and groundcover. Large expanses of exposed mulch and grass are not desirable.
3. A mix of deciduous and evergreen plantings should be utilized to maintain texture and greenery in winter.
4. Landscape features should be used to highlight entryway and other free-standing signage, and to screen sign supports and ground-mounted equipment where practical.
5. Special gateway landscaping should be incorporated at signalized intersections.

*Varied greenery adds to the attractiveness of shopping areas throughout the year.*

*Signage*

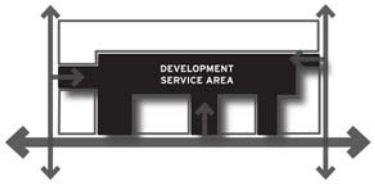
1. Signage should be harmonious with the visual character of the street corridor.
2. Signs and sign locations should be an integral part of the overall development, reflecting the scale, image and style of associated buildings.
3. Monument signage is most appropriate along the access corridor; pole signs should not be used.
4. Landscape features should be provided at the base of monument signage.
5. Provide small scale "directory" signage as needed within the development to aid in orientation for drivers and pedestrians.
6. Sign design and materials should relate to building elements.
7. Franchise signage should be accommodated within a consistent color palette and sign style.
8. The following sign types are <u>not</u> recommended in the Southwest Community Area:
    - Illuminated box signs, whether flat or projecting
    - Flashing signs
    - Moving signs, or signs with moving elements


*Signs should express "permanence" in their design and materials, and should be considered an integral site feature.*

## The Development Service Area

Design improvements for on-site areas which provide access, amenities and services for businesses should establish the following values:

- Clear and well ordered vehicular circulation patterns
- Minimize visual perceptions of "expanses of pavement" in parking fields
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety and comfort
- Coordination among adjoining properties



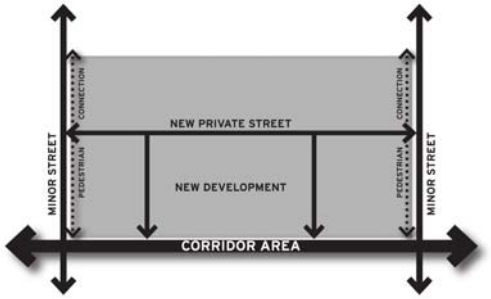

THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE AREA

*Access and Circulation*

1. Internal roadways and walkways within larger developments should function as "pedestrian streets," with the development pattern in the Southwest Community Area establishing a "block" pattern consistent with adjacent neighborhoods.
   - Public or private streets with sidewalks should separate these commercial blocks, providing easy pedestrian circulation between residential areas and the commercial street frontage.
2. Development organization should minimize potential traffic pattern conflicts between uses and travel modes.

   Vehicles

   a. Circulation within a site should be provided with an internal roadway system, establishing a clear hierarchy of access routes to aid in orientation and minimize congestion.
   b. Primary entrances to developments from the access corridor should include a median to separate incoming from outgoing traffic.
   c. Where possible, cross-access easements should be created between parking areas at adjoining developments.




*Larger shopping areas should provide a private street network that connects to the access corridor and adjacent areas.*

Pedestrians and Bicycles

a. Public walkways should connect directly to pedestrian walkways within developments.
b. Pedestrian walkways should connect commercial areas to adjacent residential neighborhoods via attractively designed entryways.
c. Protection for pedestrians should be provided at walkways adjacent to streets- utilizing parkways, bollards or parallel parking. Safe bicycle movement should also be facilitated.
d. Primary pedestrian crosswalks should be improved with material and/or texture changes, to highlight crossing locations. Stop sign control at significant crossings should be provided.
e. Bicycle parking racks should be conveniently located along walkways or in plazas convenient to store entrances, while minimizing pedestrian conflicts.

*Protected pedestrian paths and crosswalks provide added safety and comfort for shoppers.*

Public Transportation

a. Where bus service is to be provided, safe locations for bus stops should be provided at key curbside locations adjacent to the development.
b. Bus amenities should be incorporated with the hardscape elements of the site.
c. Where bus service is to be provided, shelter structures should be provided.
d. Clear linkages between bus stops and the pedestrian pathway system should be established.
e. Bus access and facilities should be provided in accordance with Pace design guidelines.

*Parking Areas*

1. In large scale developments, rows of parking should be aligned perpendicular to the building face, with landscaped islands established at the ends of rows for safer pedestrian crossings across main aisles.
2. Longitudinal planting islands should be used to break up large parking fields. Planting islands should be landscaped with shade trees for user comfort and with low groundcover for visual relief.
3. Evergreen hedges and groundcover should be incorporated to break up the visual expanse of parking lots during all seasons.
4. Parking lots should be visually buffered at the perimeter from their surroundings, using landscaping and possibly an intermittent low fence or masonry wall in key locations.
5. Cart corrals should be integrated into the overall parking lot design and landscaping scheme, and should have no advertising on the structure.
6. Structured parking should be incorporated as an integrated design feature of the overall development, utilizing consistent building design and materials.
7. Parking structures can incorporate ground level storefront commercial space, or can otherwise be concealed with architectural design features consistent with nearby buildings.

*Planting islands help to clarify traffic patterns internal to development sites, and provide visual relief.*

*Open Space and Amenities*

1. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities can be provided in conjunction with a system of longitudinal planting islands to make connections through a development site.
2. Drainage improvements should be designed as natural landscape features, avoiding structural improvements in design where practical, and potentially accommodating pedestrian access.
3. Lighting should be consistent throughout the development and coordinated in appearance with building-mounted light fixtures.
4. Fixtures should incorporate cutoffs to screen the view of light sources from neighboring residential uses.

*Enhanced water features can become a development amenity.*

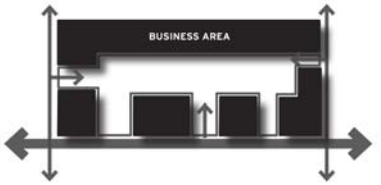
*Equipment, Loading and Storage Areas*

1. Where feasible, loading, service and equipment areas should not be visible from public roadways or parking areas.
2. All service entrances, dumpsters and loading facilities should be located in the least visible location, and should be fully screened from view with building materials and landscaping that is coordinated with the overall building design.
3. Mechanical equipment (such as air conditioner units) should be screened from view, and located either in the rear of the building or on the roof.
4. Outdoor storage areas (including auto repair staging areas) should be located behind or beside buildings and be shielded from view of the street.

## The Business Area

Design improvements within the business area of commercial sites should establish the following values:

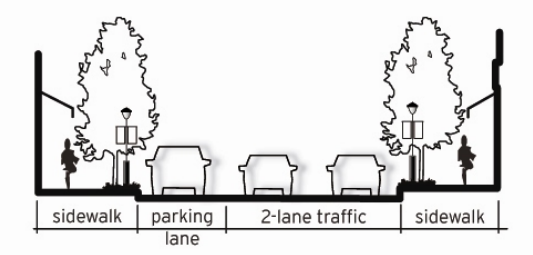
- Building patterns that create visual interest and support commercial functions
- Encouragement of walking and biking rather than driving between businesses, including traffic calming measures
- Pedestrian amenities and services and gathering spaces
- Visibility into commercial buildings at the ground level
- Building heights that are appropriate in relation to surrounding development




THE BUSINESS AREA

*Building Arrangement*

1. In larger scale shopping centers, create a "shopping street" along a main parking aisle or plaza, with a double-loaded access aisle where feasible. Finished facades from all vantage points are important. Buildings should be finished to an equal level of quality on all sides.
2. Smaller commercial buildings can be located in front of "big box" structures to disguise their overall bulk, while still allowing for clear identity and points of entry.
3. Vary the layout of primary buildings and outlot buildings to achieve an interesting visual environment.
4. The use of outlots along the main commercial frontage is desirable to hold the corners of the development and mitigate the view of large fields of parking from public streets.




*Create a walkable environment, ideally on both sides of a "shopping street" that provides convenient curb-side parking.*

*Building Form*

1. In developments with multiple structures, recurring forms and materials should be used to tie the development together, while establishing an overall hierarchy of buildings for visual interest and to aid in orientation.
2. Where a shopping street is to be created, structures should be built with minimal retail storefront setbacks at internal roadways and plazas to

create a pedestrian oriented "street wall." Structures in this alignment should include inviting storefront windows, easily identifiable entrances, and prominent display areas.

3. Multiple-story taller buildings may be acceptable where compatible with adjoining uses and designed to minimize the appearance of building bulk and mass. This can be accomplished through upper story setbacks, changes in building materials, and the articulation of building details.
4. Along storefronts and at building entrances, generous walkways should be provided that establish a comfortable pedestrian zone adjacent to storefronts.

*Accommodate a generous walkway with pedestrian amenities adjacent to a "street wall" of storefronts.*

*Building Materials*

1. Structures should consist of durable and natural materials.
2. The use and design of materials in the composition of structures shall consider pedestrian level durability.
3. Materials should blend in with the surrounding architecture.
4. If concrete wall panels are used, create a unified and high quality appearance, minimizing the appearance of joint lines.
5. Glass curtain wall and synthetic cladding and trim materials should be used sparingly.

*Building Massing and Articulation*

1. Long front facades should demonstrate a rhythm and articulation of "storefront" modules, to lend a pedestrian scale to the development.
2. Flexibility in the division of larger buildings into smaller tenant spaces should be considered in the design and articulation of storefront modules.
3. Facades should be well composed, and articulated with a variety of materials and forms. Cornice lines, accent bands and other facade elements can create interesting shadow effects, contributing to the visual interest of a facade.
4. Building entrances should be designed in a manner which "breaks up" the building mass and aids in pedestrian orientation.

*High quality materials, such as stone and masonry, are both natural and durable.*

5. Building forms should be articulated by varying roof heights and wall planes. Upper story setbacks and false second stories can be utilized to add visual interest. Long, unbroken volumes and large, unarticulated wall and roof planes are not appropriate.
6. False fronts and false roof structures applied to generic buildings are not appropriate. Facade treatments should be applied to all sides of a structure and be integral to the overall massing of the building.

*Building Fenestration*

1. The facades of larger buildings should vary in vertical plane to create a "storefront" rhythm.
2. Roof forms should appear to be integral to the massing of the building.
3. Buildings should meet the ground with a solid base treatment that creates a visual transition from sidewalk to building wall. Glass storefront wall systems that extend to the ground are not recommended.
4. An interesting variety of window sizes and styles should be utilized in larger developments.
5. Building entrances should be defined for ease of use. Weather protection features are also encouraged.

*Applied Architectural Elements*

1. Applied architectural elements- including signage, lighting and awnings- should be integrated into the overall building design and color scheme.
2. Street numbers should be prominently displayed at the main entrance to every business, and be clearly visible from a reasonable distance (per applicable City codes).
3. Lighting should be used to illuminate entrances and adjacent walking areas, and to highlight key building features.
4. Awning colors should complement the overall building color scheme.


*Varying rooflines and building forms add to the visual interest of a development and minimize the perception of building scale.*

*Landscaping*

1. Landscaping should be considered an integral and complementary element of the overall design of commercial developments.
2. Accent color(s) should be introduced through the use of plantings in low planters/planting beds, storefront awnings and signage, and pole-mounted banners.
3. Defined planting beds should be encouraged at storefront walkways and plazas, and should incorporate ornamental and shade trees in planting beds or in tree grates.
4. Foundation plantings should be provided at the base of buildings.
5. Foundation plantings should consist of clusters 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 not desirable.
6. When landscaping is the primary material, evergreen planting material should be provided to conceal ground-mounted equipment and service areas from view.
7. Develop a consistent palette of planting materials for use throughout the development.
8. Provide irrigation at planting bed areas.

*Foundation landscaping can soften the effect of large wall expanses.*

*Open Space and Amenities*

1. Outdoor common areas- including hardscape plazas, green spaces, water features and play areas- are desirable elements, and should be treated as visual and functional focal points.
2. The use of public art, as appropriate in new developments, is desirable.
3. Integrate plazas and other spaces of varying scales to provide rest, relaxation and outdoor dining opportunities for shoppers and other visitors. Spaces should be conveniently positioned adjacent to walkways and buildings.
4. Site features should be varied in color, pattern and texture within a coordinated palette that relates to the building architecture. High quality materials and finishes should be used throughout.

*Outdoor amenities are very important for shopper comfort and convenience.*

5. Where practical, benches, water fountains and waste receptacles should be visually and functionally coordinated with the overall site design. The location of waste receptacles should be provided as part of the development plan.
6. Provide ornamental pedestrian scale lighting sufficient to ensure secure walking conditions after dark, especially at sidewalks, plazas and pedestrian crossing areas.

# III.
# Commercial Design Prototypes

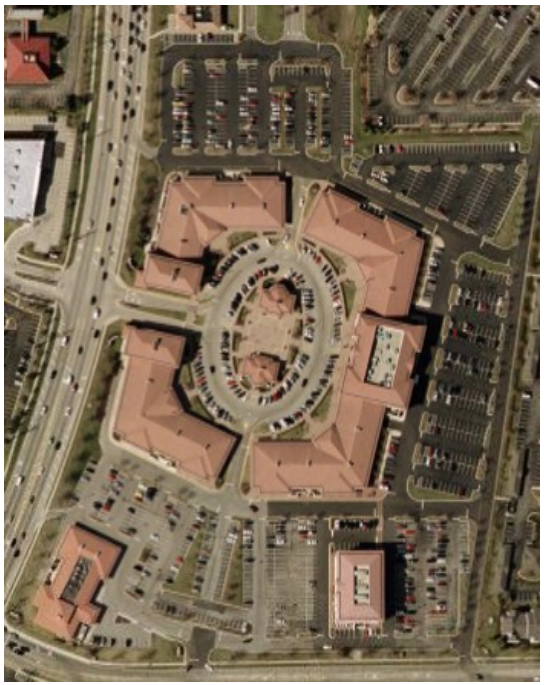
Two *Commercial Design Prototypes* have been developed to demonstrate potential strategies for applying the Commercial Design Guidelines in the Southwest Community Area. The prototypes are not a part of the Design Guidelines, but suggest potential site planning alternatives consistent with the intent of the Design Guidelines. The Design Prototypes illustrate ways in which aspects of the Design Guidelines can be implemented in two common settings - a large scale site and a smaller scale site. Creative solutions are encouraged by the City as commercial sites along the corridor will no doubt provide unique constraints and opportunities.

## Prototype A: Large Scale Development Site

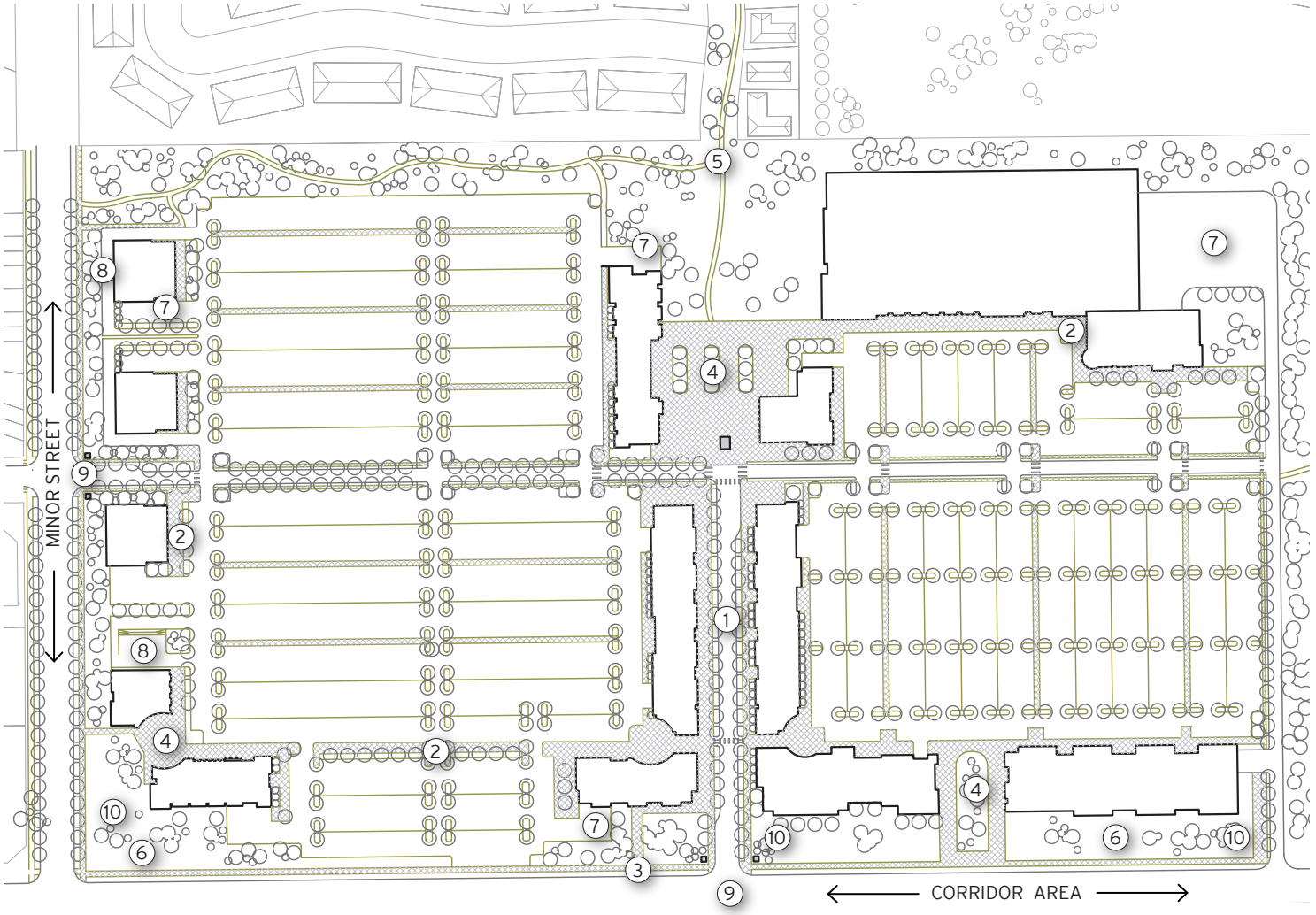
This prototype explores site planning and design alternatives for larger scale commercial developments that can accommodate multiple buildings and larger footprint business formats. These sites will afford the opportunity to develop a unique building pattern, a visual hierarchy of structures and entry points, an internal access system, and integrated plazas and open spaces. Visual consistency among site elements and adjoining properties, edge treatments, and appropriate setbacks at adjacent uses will also be important considerations on sites of this scale. (see page 20)

## Prototype B: Small Scale Development Site

Smaller scale sites pose unique development planning and design challenges. Often they are large enough to accommodate only a single business or several small businesses. These sites present more limited opportunities for unique building arrangements, and will not likely include a significant internal access system or multiple structures. Landscaped areas, plazas and entry treatments will be important features of these sites, as will linkages to neighboring properties and buffering at adjacent uses. (see page 21)



*Wheaton Town Center provides a pedestrian friendly environment within an auto-oriented commercial corridor.*




Prototype A - Large Scale Development Site

**DESIGN FEATURES:**

1. **Shopping Street**
A traditional shopping street places buildings in close proximity to the street and includes pedestrian elements.

2. **Pedestrian Amenities**
Interconnected sidewalks, landscaped open spaces, plazas and other features cater to pedestrian needs, and add visual interest to the development.

3. **Bus Transit Amenities**
A curbside stop with a shelter structure is connected to the internal walkway system and the public sidewalk.

4. **Plazas and Open Space**
These areas provide conveniences and help to establish a hierarchy of protected pedestrian space across the site.

5. **Transitional Areas**
A landscaped walkway and open space is situated along adjoining residential uses.

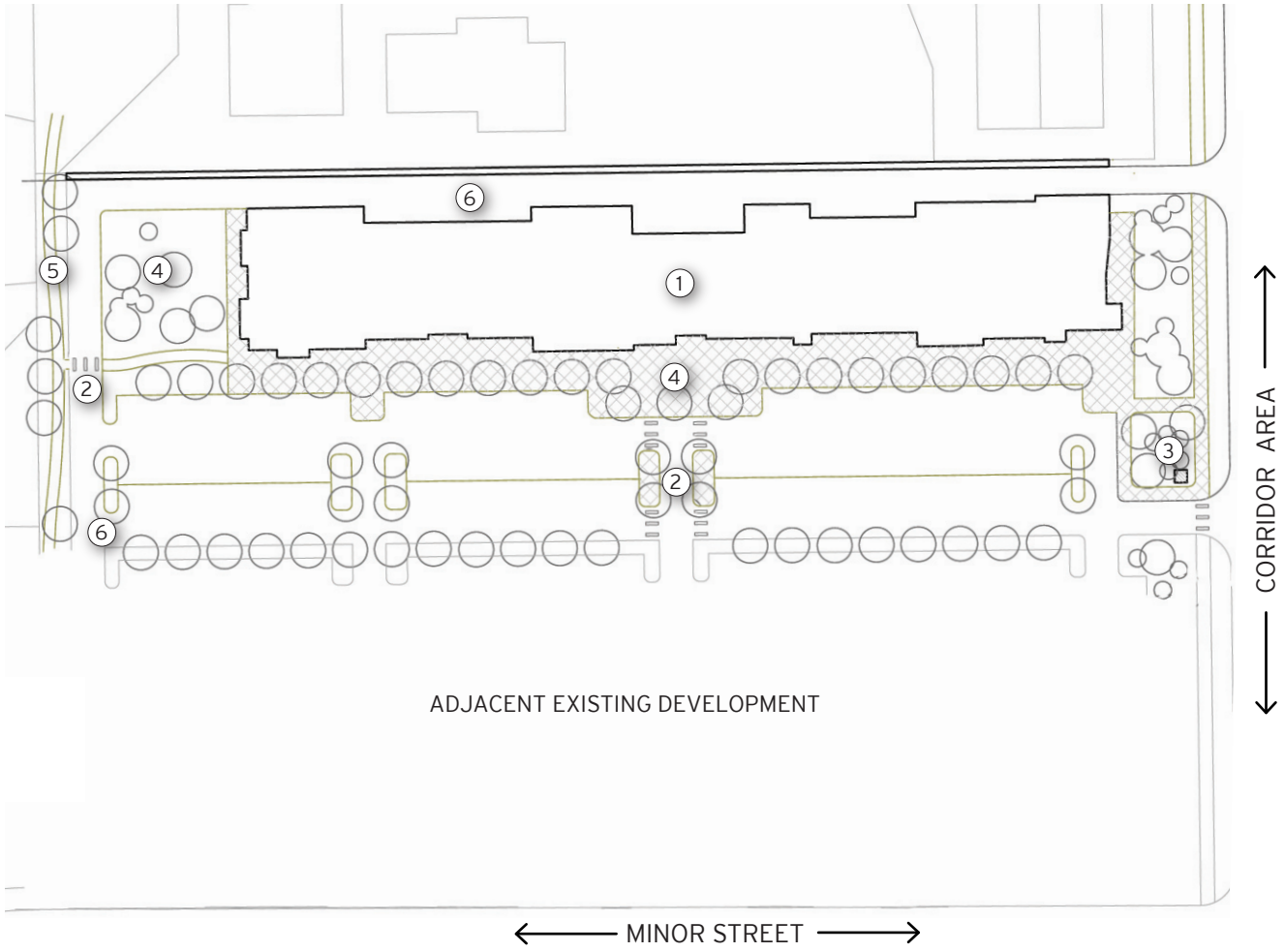
6. **Route 59 Corridor**
This area establishes a more informal parkway appearance. Structures are setback so as to not "crowd" the right of way.

7. **Loading/Service Areas**
Service areas are designed with significant visual barriers.

8. **Drive-thru Facilites**
These facilities are placed away from the main access corridor.

9. **Gateway Feature**
These features are located consistently at all main entrances.

10. **Corner Buildings**
Buildings should hold the corners at the site perimeter and at major entry points.




Prototype B - Small Development Site

**DESIGN FEATURES:**

1. **Building Articulation**
   In smaller developments articulate the buildings with varied and high quality materials.

2. **Pedestrian Amenities**
   Pedestrian facilities should be integrated throughout the site, allowing safe movement through each site, and connecting to adjacent properties as appropriate.

3. **Gateway Entrance**
   In smaller developments, well designed gateways that are consistent with the character of adjoining developments are important.

4. **Plazas and Open Spaces**
   While more difficult to accomodate in smaller shopping centers, these features remain very important.

5. **Transitional Areas**
   Significant buffering against adjacent residential areas is important, while allowing pedestrian access points.

6. **Loading/Service Areas**
   Service areas are designed with significant visual barriers. Where feasible, cross easements should be used to minimize service access directly from IL Route 59.