

Maize Design Standards

*Maize, Kansas
Adopted April 24, 2006*

Prepared for:
The City of Maize, Kansas

Maize Design Standards

Introduction: Form, Function and Design

“Urban design” or “community design” refers to the relationship of different buildings to each other, the relationship of buildings and the spaces between buildings, and the relationships of buildings and sites to the public realm – primarily the streets and rights-of-way of the city. On a larger scale, it refers to the relationships of different areas of the city to one another, and specifically how different contexts can warrant different design solutions in achieving the same goal.

Ultimately, these relationships impact much more than aesthetics - they impact patterns of movement and activity within the city. Although urban design reflects visual and aesthetic principles, the essence of urban design is the form and function of the various components of the city. Urban design may be the most important factor in creating a livable city and a healthy economy, delivering an expected quality of life for residents while promoting a specific vision for those seeking to make long-term economic development investments in the city.

This document provides policy guidance on design principles that can help bring about the City of Maize’s vision. It is intended to guide and coordinate both private and public initiatives, and thereby provide a more uniform and synergistic investment by the private and public sectors. The guidelines also ensure elected officials and staff implement planning and development decisions through appropriate and consistent criteria, that better implement the *Maize Comprehensive Plan* through a series of incremental, day-to-day decisions, that cumulatively have a significant and lasting impact on the physical form and function of the community.

Development Patterns: Center, Neighborhood, Rural Residential, Agriculture

The *Maize Comprehensive Plan* recognizes that it is not just the *land uses* that are important for the future growth of the City of Maize, but also the development patterns. Development patterns combined with urban design determine how the various land uses relate and connect with one another.

Similarly, it is largely the design and function of the public rights-of-way connecting these specific and distinct areas that make up the single most important element of urban design – both in extent of land areas dedicated to rights-of-way and the impact the public realm has on citizens and visitors. The design of these areas, and the private property frontages that shape these areas, should be in context with the development pattern they are intended to support.

Different areas of the city serve different purposes for the citizens – requiring a different “form” and “function”. Therefore different urban design policies should reflect these differences. The plan identifies four basic conceptual Development Patterns:

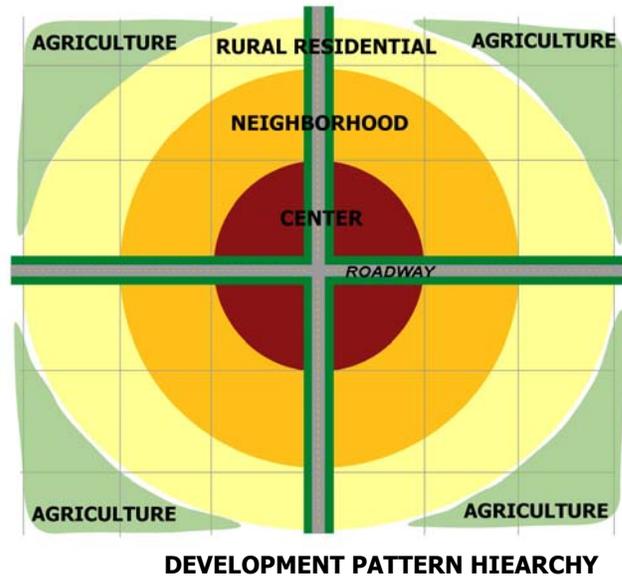
- Center;
- Neighborhood;
- Rural Residential; and
- Agriculture

Design Elements: Streetscapes, Residences, Sites, and Open Space

The form and function of the above Development Patterns and specific development projects within those patterns is primarily due to the design of four basic Design Elements: streetscapes, residences, sites, and open spaces.

- **Streetscapes** – Streetscape design refers to the design of public rights of way, and the relationship of building frontages to that design aimed at creating a coherent visual aesthetic along a street. It consists primarily of the roadway design, roadway landscape edge, and pedestrian facilities.
- **Residences** – Building design involves the location, orientation, scale, massing, façade design, and architectural elements of a building. Basic urban design rules regarding each of these aspects of building design can create a compatible environment capable of blending a diversity of architectural styles in a consistent manner.
- **Sites** – Site design refers to the use, function, and design of areas between buildings on private lots. It addresses elements of landscape, access, circulation, parking, signs, and exterior lighting.
- **Open Space** – Open space design refers to areas set aside to perform a specific function as open exterior areas. It may be in public, common, or private ownership, but it is distinguished from mere un-built areas by its design for a specific function, and its intentional relationship to streetscapes and buildings. It covers a range of sizes, scales, and designs, including courtyards, plazas, squares, greens, parks, and conservation areas.

The design guidelines in the following sections are organized under the principle Development Patterns of the *Maize Comprehensive Plan*, and are broken into guidelines for each of the major Design Elements tailored to support the specific Development Pattern. The Agriculture development pattern does not include guidelines, as it contemplates little or no development activity beyond agriculture or conservation developments.



Center

Form and Function

Centers are strategic and concentrated activity centers, located in the middle of the generally radial surrounding area which it supports. Centers are typically located at the intersection of two streets classified as collector or arterial. Within a Center, patterns are more compact and integrated, with multiple connections to surrounding areas in all directions. They provide efficient dispersion of traffic through short, well-defined blocks. It is highly pedestrian oriented. Through traffic is not a priority, and it either moves more slowly through the Center or makes use of alternate connections to other destinations. Ground floor uses are retail or other uses that generate high pedestrian traffic, while upper level uses may be office or residential. Centers make more efficient use of public investment in infrastructure and private investment in buildings and site design elements.

Design Guidelines

Streetscapes. Streets should not only be designed to get people someplace but also be designed to be "someplace," balancing the needs of multiple users of the public rights-of-way. The streetscape *is* the "destination" in a center.

- ❑ Use expanded landscape areas to transition from the on-street parking to the pedestrian zone. Amenities such as landscape beds, tree wells, benches or other street furniture should be regularly spaced in a 4 to 6 foot wide area, interspaced with an expanded pedestrian area.
- ❑ Expanded sidewalks, where significant areas for through pedestrian traffic remain, may create areas for street activities related to uses in the buildings, such as sidewalk sales, outside dining or seating areas, and kiosks.
- ❑ Street trees should be densely located to provide shade for pedestrians, yet achieve canopy heights and crown heights that maintain visibility of adjacent buildings and the street level uses.
- ❑ Frequent connections to adjacent Neighborhoods should provide multiple alternative routes between the Neighborhood and the Center. However the design of these connections should discourage through traffic which does not originate in the Neighborhood.
- ❑ Curb-cuts should be limited in width, frequency, and location. Vehicular access to sites should not occur on any primary street, but be located on secondary streets or alleys. Access points should be combined and shared within blocks. Curb-cuts should always be designed to emphasize the priority of pedestrian movements along the streetscape.
- ❑ Intersections should appropriately balance vehicle turning movements and pedestrian movements. Techniques to slow turning movements and decrease pedestrian crossing distances, such as bump-outs or curb-projections, smaller curb radii, and pedestrian refuge items should be incorporated into the streetscape.



Buildings: Buildings should have a uniform setback with no visual obstructions for adjacent buildings.

- ❑ All buildings shall have its primary façade and primary entrance oriented towards the street.
- ❑ Metal siding shall not be allowed as the primary building material for building facades visible from the right-of-way
- ❑ Street level facades should include significant proportions of transparent display windows. Generally, between 60% and 90% of all street-level facades between 2 and 10 feet above grade shall be transparent with views to the interior of the building. No window starting at a level of greater than 3.5 feet above the street level should be included in the calculation.
- ❑ Upper level facades should include punched openings with transparent windows. Openings should occupy between 25% and 60% of the upper facades. Each story should meet this requirement independently.
- ❑ No more than 30 feet of horizontal blank wall space should be permitting along street level facades without a display window or building entrance.
- ❑ Significant deviations from building alignments may occur along the street wall at limited locations along a block face. These deviations should be strategically located to emphasize and embellish important elements of the public realm – the streetscape design and include features such as public art and water fountains. Examples of significant deviations in the street wall are front entry courts for dining or building entrances, courtyards or plazas, or upper level patios.
- ❑ All facades shall include architectural elements such as accent banding, base plates, cornices, soffits, sills, parapets, transoms, and windows aligned horizontally. The horizontal alignment should differentiate stories in a building and create a base and crown for the building. The base should be between 5% and 25% of the building height, and the crown should be between 5% and 15% of the building height.
- ❑ Architectural diversity and creativity should be encouraged and rewarded to avoid dull or homogeneous buildings. Buildings should incorporate elements from the vernacular of buildings in Maize and Central Kansas.



Sites: Sites should be designed to emphasize buildings and their relationship to the streetscape, rather than individual lots along a block.

- ❑ Primary access to most individual sites shall be pedestrian oriented, with vehicle access concentrated at shared entrances, provided internal to the blocks, or central parking facilities or on-street parking.
- ❑ When located on the side or in front of buildings, parking areas shall be screened in accordance with landscape ordinance.
- ❑ High-impact site elements, stormwater facilities, storage areas, or loading areas shall be limited or located and designed to minimize impact on the streetscape design.
- ❑ Exterior lighting and signs shall be provided and should coordinate with building architecture and landscape materials and in accordance with sign code.
- ❑ Use screens and buffers only when a better site design that relates to adjacent sites, buildings, and uses is not possible.



Open Spaces: Open spaces are valuable for their ability to enhance public life in Centers, providing patrons of businesses opportunities for gathering and social interaction.

- ❑ Plazas or courtyards should be located at key focal points along the streetscape with high accessibility and visibility, and be consolidated within blocks.
- ❑ Open spaces should be designed to provide a balance of “hardscape” for public gathering and “landscape” for ornamental purposes.
- ❑ Open spaces should include elements of public art.
- ❑ Any green space in the Center should be designed to serve multiple functions of stormwater mitigation, recreation, aesthetic amenities, or strategic screening. Undevelopable remnant green space is not valuable to Centers.
- ❑ Incorporate sensitive natural areas or prominent topographic features into natural open space features.



Neighborhoods

Form and Function

Neighborhoods are geographical locations of the city that are highly identifiable and provide a variety of dwelling types for residents. The “neighborhood model” of Centers transitioning to identifiable edges is the basic planning unit of the city, and Neighborhoods should generally be no larger than ¼ mile radius (a 5 minute walk) without transitions to Centers, other Neighborhoods, Rural Residential, or Agriculture areas. Neighborhoods provide multiple internal and external connections, but street layouts may discourage through traffic with shifts or offsets in the block pattern. Blocks may be moderate lengths or irregular shapes to adjust to topography or create focal points along streetscapes in the Neighborhood. Neighborhoods rely on adjacent Centers to support most of the daily needs of residents. Higher-density residences should be located more closely to Centers or fronting major street corridors. Lower-density residences should transition to Rural Residential areas or align landscaped boulevards.

Design Guidelines

Streetscapes: Streets define the character of Neighborhoods. The streetscape provides the transition for public realm and private realm – allowing for safety and socialization through “eyes on the street,” yet creating defined and defensible spaces for privacy and security.

- ❑ Minimize the width and number of travel lanes so that vehicle design speeds are compatible with residential environments. Yield lanes that allow two way traffic, but limit simultaneous free-flow in both directions due to on-street parking or other streetscape designs create particularly desirable residential streets.
- ❑ Sidewalks shall be separated from the street edge by a landscape planting strip at least 7 feet wide, with large shade trees spaced at regular intervals. Where rights-of ways are constrained the planting strip may be as narrow as 4 feet wide, but medium or smaller shade trees should be used to avoid roots disrupting the sidewalk surface.
- ❑ Sidewalks shall be on at least one side of the street and at least 5 feet wide to allow two individuals to walk comfortably side-by-side.
- ❑ Curb radii at intersections shall be minimized to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and slow vehicle turning movements in accordance with the subdivision regulations.
- ❑ Local streets should discourage through traffic either through narrow cross sections, off-set or “T” intersections, or other traffic-calming devices.
- ❑ Collector streets shall provide continuous routes to Centers or between adjacent Neighborhoods at regular intervals.



Residences: Residences mark the transition from the community area of the streetscape to the private areas of dwellings and lots. They allow monitoring of street activity and shield residents from community activity.

- ❑ Residences shall maintain a consistent or similar setback along facing sides of a single block.
- ❑ All residences shall have a primary building entrance facing the street with enhanced architectural features such as porches, stoops, or porticos.
- ❑ Ground levels of residences shall be slightly elevated the shorter the setback from the right-of-way, preserving the privacy of the interior while permitting monitoring of the street. Residences closer than 25' to the right-of-way should be elevated based upon approved drainage plan.
- ❑ Front loaded garage doors shall be limited along the streetscape – particularly where setbacks are closer than 50' to the right-of-way line. Techniques such as stepping back front loaded garages at least 20' from the front building line, limiting them to no more than 40% of the façade width, using detached or rear-entry or side load garages should be used.
- ❑ Architectural diversity and creativity should be encouraged to avoid dull or homogeneous buildings. Residences should incorporate elements from the vernacular typical dwellings throughout in Maize and Central Kansas.



Sites: All sizes of Neighborhood lots should provide the following clear and defined transitions: a common streetscape area along the frontage; a transition to the principal building area; and a private rear area for out buildings, back yards, or private gardens.

- ❑ Frontage areas shall be primarily reserved for lawns and formal landscape, enhancing the building frontages.
- ❑ Direct pedestrian connections from the public right-of-way to building entrances shall be provided on all sites.
- ❑ Front-loaded driveways shall be limited to no more than 15% of the lot frontage. Site design techniques such as alley entrances, shared single-lane driveways accessing rear parking pads, or single-lane driveways accessing expanded parking pads behind the front building line should be used on more narrow lots.
- ❑ Encourage any exterior off-street vehicle parking areas to be located and designed to provide the least intrusive visual impact on the public rights-of-way, primarily behind the front-building line.



Open Spaces: Open spaces provide significant recreational opportunities for residents of Neighborhoods. A “walkable” Neighborhood requires a public or common open space within a convenient walk.

- ❑ Open space should be concentrated and located within walking distance of most residents in the neighborhood
- ❑ Incorporate sensitive natural areas or prominent topographic features into open space plans.
- ❑ Locate active public or open spaces (i.e. playgrounds or plazas) in prominent areas of the Neighborhood with high visibility from adjacent land uses.
- ❑ Link public or open space to areas outside the Neighborhood through sidewalks or joint-use trails.
- ❑ Open spaces should be preserved in public, common, or private (land trust) conservation areas.
- ❑ Conservation areas should be connected beyond parcel and development boundaries based on functional natural systems.
- ❑ Conservation areas should be concentrated in large, continuous areas that minimize edge conditions and narrow swaths that erode natural conditions and functions.
- ❑ Crossings of open space by roads and utilities should be minimized in quantity, extent or width, and where necessary, crossings should be designed for minimal environmental impact.
- ❑ Constructed paths in conservation areas should use pervious materials.



Rural Residential

Form and Function

Rural Residential areas are transitions from Neighborhoods to more agricultural or natural environments. Rural Residential provide the exception to the “neighborhood model” as the fundamental planning unit, and allow sub-urban large-lot development, or alternatively cluster or conservation developments that concentrate dwellings in exchange for larger areas of more contiguous open space. Rural Residential provide an alternative living environment more akin to a rustic lifestyle, yet can still be highly accessible to the amenities of Neighborhoods and Centers if developed in a limited fashion.

Design Guidelines

Streetscapes: Streets should transition from more urban cross-sections to rural or rustic streetscapes in Rural Residential areas.

- ❑ Streets should be designed to accommodate low levels of traffic. Alternatively, principle connections to these areas should be designed as boulevards or parkways with enhanced landscape amenities.
- ❑ Landscape areas along streets should remain in a more natural with rough and dense vegetation lending more privacy to lots.
- ❑ Streets networks should maintain connectivity, but may meander to accommodate natural and topographic features, and follow natural contours to minimize grading, cut, and fill.
- ❑ Streets with residential frontages should follow the neighborhood connectivity standards and form smaller block sizes.
- ❑ Natural edges that infiltrate storm water run-off into the ground should be used as opposed to curb and gutter.



Residences: Buildings and Sites in Rural Residential areas tend to be less formal and irregular, in favor of a more natural and predominately rustic environment.

- ❑ Residences shall maintain a large setback, which does not necessarily need to be consistent along a street.
- ❑ Residences shall be located on sites causing the least disturbance to the natural features as possible, with larger setbacks based upon lot acreage.
- ❑ Frontage areas shall primarily be preserved in a natural state, including topography, vegetation, and ground cover. Large manicured lawns should be avoided in favor of areas closely surrounding the principle building.
- ❑ Front-loaded driveways shall be limited to double-lane driveways accessing expanded parking areas closer to the buildings.
- ❑ Any exterior off-street vehicle parking areas shall be located and designed to provide the least intrusive visual impact on the public rights-of-way, primarily behind the front-building line.
- ❑ For cluster or conservation developments the Neighborhood Site and Residences Design Guidelines should be followed for the cluster area.



Open Spaces: Open space needs in Rural Residential areas are primarily served by the large size of private, individual lots. The low density nature of the area makes any public or common open space not efficient, unless provided through a cluster or conservation development. The following guidelines apply only to cluster or conservation developments.

- ❑ Open spaces should be preserved in public, common, or private (land trust) conservation areas.
- ❑ Conservation areas should be connected beyond parcel and development boundaries based on functional natural systems.
- ❑ Conservation areas should be concentrated in large, continuous areas that minimize edge conditions and narrow swaths that erode natural conditions and functions.
- ❑ Crossings of open space by roads and utilities should be minimized in quantity, extent or width, and where necessary, crossings should be designed for minimal environmental impact.
- ❑ Constructed paths in conservation areas should use pervious materials.

