

To: Tom Lovelace, City Planner
City of Apple Valley

From: Cindy Gray, AICP

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Subject: Draft Central Village Design Guidelines

Enclosed is the first draft of design guidelines for the remaining portion of the downtown area that remains to be fully developed – the Central Village – and potentially to redevelopments and reconstruction / maintenance of public facilities in the downtown area. As part of the comprehensive plan, these guidelines could be placed within the Land Use Chapter, due to their importance as a bridge between land use category assignments and implementation through zoning. Alternatively, these guidelines could be an appendix to the comprehensive plan document and as such could be referred to more directly by city staff and the development community.

Bridge to Implementation

The guidelines are intended to provide general design guidance for new development and redevelopment within the Central Village, including the public (streets, sidewalks, parks, trails, stormwater features) and private realms. As identified in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan and as intended to be carried into the new comprehensive plan, the Central Village will largely be designated for “mixed use” development—the design guidelines are intended to provide the framework to begin envisioning what this type of development will look like.

The design guidelines will need to be implemented through the use of the city’s desired set of zoning tools. The use of the Planned Development District could involve the direct use of the design guidelines in the review of planned development application submittals (site plans, elevations, architectural renderings, etc.). The city could also use the design guidelines as the framework to craft a new mixed use district particular to the type of development envisioned by the guidelines for the Central Village.

Downtown Design Guidelines

Introduction

The area currently identified as Downtown Apple Valley (see Figure 1) is well-developed with stable commercial land use. It is unlikely that this area will be redeveloped dramatically in the next 20 years. The small portion of undeveloped land that lies within Downtown, is in the area known as the “Central Village” (see figure 1). The portion of the Central Village that is developed has a mix of commercial/retail and higher density residential housing. Stormwater ponds are a focus and not an afterthought and connected to a larger central park/open space. The Central Village presents the most opportunity for creating a pedestrian-friendly attraction, with a unique urban-suburban sense of place in the heart of Downtown Apple Valley. The Downtown Design Features listed below are focused on the Central Village.



Figure 1 Central Village Area within larger Downtown context

Key Themes:

- Create a new or revived “sense of place”; a downtown focal center of Apple Valley that is unique from the rest of the city.
- Create a walkable, vibrant mixed use district.
- Create a safe, inviting and connected public realm.

Supporting Initiatives:

A. *Establish a Central Village Identity*

- a. Promote the Central Village.
Consider renaming the district with a unique and identifiable name that resonates with Apple valley residents and use that name in public areas within and surrounding the village area.
- b. Create strong, identifiable village gateway elements from all four directions to the village. Gateway design and materials should complement the Red Line and Ring Route aesthetic but be unique to the village.
 - i. Potential locations for Central Village gateway elements include 153rd/Garret, 153rd/Foliage, 152nd/Galaxie, and south of Founders Ln/Galaxie.
- c. Provide identifiable, cohesive wayfinding signage throughout the village.
- d. Incorporate public art in key focus areas to provide wayfinding and strengthen identity.
- e. Maintain key visual connections to gateways, signature features, and wayfinding elements.
- f. Develop a consistent vocabulary of design elements for the built and public realm to promote unification and a unique sense of place.
- g. Focus building intensity and density around the Founders and 153rd roundabout to encourage pedestrian activity and to create a key focal intersection for the Central Village.



Figure 2 Red Line Gateway Signage and Aesthetics



Figure 3 Public Art as a Unique Focal Point and Wayfinding Device



Figure 4 Roundabout as Gateway Focus, Excelsior on Grand

B. Establish Mixed-Use Development

- a. In the Central Village area, strongly encourage zero-lot line development bringing buildings to the right of way edge. Allow minimal setback variation to make room for sidewalk cafes and to break up the visual vertical wall of building development.
- b. In the Central Village area, limit mixed use to vertical mixed use only (office or residential above retail).
- c. All buildings in the village area shall be limited to a **minimum** of two floors.
- d. Consider a “stepped” vertical building approach where the second and third stories are stepped back from the first story to create an inviting pedestrian-scale environment while still maintaining density.
- e. Scale building height down to two-stories near edges of the Central Village to provide a gradual transition to the existing adjacent one-story buildings.
- f. Encourage a variety of retail activity at-grade (restaurants, cafes, stores, boutique shops, fitness, etc.)
- g. First floor retail should be connected directly to the adjacent sidewalk at-grade to best engage pedestrians along the sidewalk.
- h. Buildings should include a high level of transparency at the first-floor level.
- i. Building materials should tie into the larger Central Village aesthetic and be comprised of a combination of brick, stone, cast concrete, steel, and glass. Encourage the more tactile materials like stone and brick to be included at the pedestrian level to reinforce a sense of place and a pedestrian scale.



Figure 5 Pedestrian-friendly mixed use development



Figure 6 Variety of retail at-grade with sidewalk and with second and third floor mix use in a "stepped back" configuration

C. Consolidate Parking

- a. Strongly encourage parking to the rear of the building frontage.
- b. For mixed use projects, consider a district parking approach (joint use parking reduction) to encourage walking and reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking.



Figure 7 Variety of materials in a uniform vocabulary. High transparency at sidewalk level.

- c. Continue to encourage on-street parking and consider the use of on-street parking spaces along building frontage as a reduction to off-street parking requirements.
- d. Where parking must be located abutting right of way, provide additional landscape buffer amenities such as decorative fencing, perennial plantings, street trees, and benches between the sidewalk and the parking lot to maximize pedestrian comfort.



Figure 8 Encourage on-street parking

D. Establish Signature Open Spaces

- a. Strongly encourage building frontage onto Kelly Park.
- b. Kelly Park should act as the central park within the Central Village. Kelly Park should be designed to include a signature feature, flexible space to accommodate informal use and larger events, and be useable in all seasons.
- c. Celebrate stormwater ponds by treating each as a community amenity and part of the larger pedestrian and green space network.



Figure 9 Promote Kelly Park to be a central green space.

E. Enhance Connections to Promote Walkability

- a. Emphasize pedestrian and trail connections to open water and green space within the Central Village.



Figure 10 Incorporate signature features in Kelly Park

- b. Provide pedestrian/trail connections from the Central Village to the surrounding residential neighborhoods allowing adjacent residents to easily access the village by foot.
- c. Provide easily accessible on-street and district parking for motorists to park and freely walk about the village.

F. Create a Welcoming Streetscape and Pedestrian Environment

- a. Sidewalk widths should be at least 8-feet wide. Encourage use of decorative scoring and colored concrete.
- b. Along main thoroughfares, amenity zones should be at least 6-feet wide and be located between on-street parking and the sidewalk. Amenity zones may include:
 - i. Decorative scoring/colored concrete or material differentiation
 - ii. Sidewalk furniture
 - iii. Lighting with banners, identity signage, or hanging baskets
 - iv. Street trees
 - v. At-grade perennial plantings
 - vi. Fixed or moveable above grade planters
- c. Along minor roadway connections, include amenity zones or retrofit where possible.
- d. Amenity zones should include street trees. Retrofit where possible to include street tree plantings.
 - i. Plant street trees every 30-40 feet to promote a comfortable walking environment.
 - ii. Select a variety of tree species that provide a filtered canopy that does not overly conflict with sightlines to building frontage.



Figure 11 Celebrate stormwater as a community amenity



Figure 12 Wide sidewalks with planted amenity zones creates a welcoming pedestrian environment

- iii. Encourage use of tree grates and/or pervious pavers to maximize pedestrian space along walkways.
- iv. Consider employing state-of-the-art strategies to establish and support a thriving tree canopy.
- e. Increase emphasis on pedestrian amenities and comfort at major intersections throughout the village area. Consider additional elements such as:
 - i. Landscaped bump-outs
 - ii. Sidewalk furniture
 - iii. Pavement texture/differentiation
 - iv. Pedestrian-scale wayfinding signage
- f. Promote safety and comfort for pedestrian crossings. Consider use of pavement differentiation or decorative patterns to distinguish crosswalks.
- g. Encourage planted medians and roundabouts, if present, to enhance the streetscape environment. Incorporate pedestrian refuges where possible.



Figure 13 Retrofit street tree plantings into the existing amenity zone where possible



Figure 14 A higher level of amenity at key intersections and focal points provides a welcoming and safe place for pedestrians