



DESIGN REVIEW GUIDE

Design Review Process

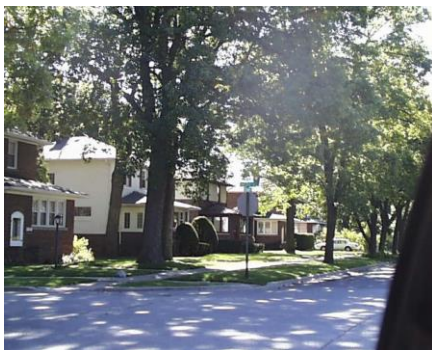
Waukegan is well known as a city with a high quality of life, small and cohesive neighborhoods, a vibrant downtown and waterfront – all within a spectacular setting on the shores of Lake Michigan. This deserving reputation is due in part to the City’s small size, entrepreneurial spirit, civic-minded citizens and activist government. One of the many factors that make Waukegan such a great place to live, work and visit is the community’s attention to detail, and respect for its setting, heritage and quality urban design.

Waukegan’s Design Review process strives to protect the city’s unique qualities and strong sense of place by carrying out citywide development and design objectives. The purpose of this *Design Review Guide* is to help applicants in preparing projects to be reviewed by the Development Review Board and the Waukegan Development Commission. Through materials such as this, the Department of Planning & Zoning seeks to make information available well before the final design of a project saving the applicant, and the city, time and money.

WHAT IS DESIGN REVIEW?

Design review is a part of the zoning process that pays special attention to residential, commercial and industrial areas within the city. It is used as a tool for maintaining the city’s special character and appeal, and high quality of life.

The purpose of design review is to protect the character of these districts, and to ensure that new development, or changes to existing development, are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Design review works to keep Waukegan from looking and feeling like “Anywhere, USA.”



The design review process considers a wide range of design issues. These include such things as open space and natural features, pedestrian and traffic circulation, building scale

and massing, architectural history and details, signs and advertising features, landscaping, site lighting, utility connections and storm water runoff. Each issue considered may appear individually small. However, in combination, they can make the difference between a bad project and a good project.

HOW DOES DESIGN REVIEW BENEFIT THE CITY?

Design review is a very important tool for protecting community character and revitalizing areas targeted for development. It allows the City to look beyond the specifics of a proposed development, and consider its context and how a project will fit and benefit it’s surroundings. Design

review benefits the community, and individual property owners, in many important ways.

Reinforce Community Identity

Waukegan clearly has a special character. Think about your neighborhood, the lakefront or downtown – if you saw a photograph of one of these places, could you tell it was



Waukegan, or does it just look like any other place? Many communities across the country are struggling to regain their identity. We all want to improve our quality of life and make our city more attractive for investment. Waukegan already has a strong character and high quality of life. Design review helps protect this asset for future generations.

Enhance and Protect Property Values

Design review helps assure property owners that their investment will be protected. Just like traditional zoning prevents landfills from locating in a residential neighborhood, design review tries to ensure that the character of the neighborhood is maintained. Improvements in the quality of design stabilize, and in some cases enhance, the value of private property. This in turn makes property more attractive for investment and benefits the overall character of the neighborhood and city.

Promote Economic Development

Design review is an especially important tool for commercial districts where increased private investment and maintaining an image of vitality is the goal. Places like the Downtown and Lakefront rely heavily on design review to

protect and enhance public and private investments, and to support and encourage new development. The same is true for many other communities that are striving to protect their vitality and character.

HOW DO I KNOW IF DESIGN REVIEW APPLIES TO ME?

The *Waukegan Zoning Ordinance* identifies that all zoning districts are subject to design review. Additionally, any major development project is also under the design review criteria. Staff in the Department of Planning and Zoning can easily tell you if your property or proposed development project will be considered under design review.



WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FROM THE PROCESS?

Projects going through design review are examined by various departments. The typical turnaround time for review of the applications is approximately two weeks. The Department of Planning and Zoning usually reviews applications first to determine zoning compliance before the applications are forwarded to the Building Department and Engineering Department for further review.

It is often best if you can meet with the Department of Planning and Zoning staff before completing the plans for your proposal. They can offer ideas about particular concerns or issues that may arise during the review of your project. By meeting with staff early, these points can be incorporated into your project before you have made a significant investment of time and money.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

City zoning permits & general information

Department of Planning & Zoning

100 N. Martin L. King, Jr. Avenue

Waukegan, Illinois 60085

847.625.6878

City building permits

Building Department

100 N. Martin L. King, Jr. Avenue

Waukegan, Illinois 60085

847.625.6868

Engineering and rights-of-way

Engineering Department

1700 McAree Road

Waukegan, Illinois 60085

847.625.6830

Historic photographs and buildings

Waukegan Historical Society

1917 N. Sheridan Road

Waukegan, Illinois 60087

847.336.1859



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