PLANNING

OFFICE

MEMO

DATE: January 12, 2005
TO: Lawrence/Douglas County Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Staff
RE: Commercial Design Standards and Guidelines

Attached please find a draft Community Design Manual. Included in this manual are the draft commercial design standards and guidelines (Section Two). Also included is the terminology element (Section Four). Sections One (Residential Development) and Three (Industrial Development) are currently reserved. As the City begins discussing neighborhood and community development in the upcoming months, staff is anticipating the initiation of design guidelines and standards that would address these areas. Additional sections (beyond those reserved for residential and industrial development) could also be proposed as a result of these discussions. What they might include are: mixed-use development, civic/public spaces, green/open spaces, street corridors, downtown, and historic preservation.

Today's discussion will focus on Section Two (Commercial Development). The other sections were provided to give everyone an understanding of the context and direction staff anticipates occurring in the upcoming months.

The initial draft of the commercial design standards and guidelines represent nearly a year's work by the Commercial Design Standards Committee (CDSC) and Planning Staff. During this time, the CDSC researched and reviewed standards and guidelines from numerous communities across the country. The past several months have included taking the "best of the best" and refining these to fit the needs of our community.

Since the standards and guidelines were last presented to this body in October, the CDSC has further refined them into the document you see today. It is Section Two (Commercial Development) of the design manual that is recommended to move forward for public hearing by the Planning Commission at an upcoming regularly scheduled meeting. It is also this section that is recommended to be adopted by reference in the City's Land Development Code [Section 20-501(aa)].

This document will be posted on the website (www.lawrenceplanning.org) and two paper copies will be available at the public library so that the public can have time to review and make comments prior to a public hearing and recommendation by the Planning Commission. CDSC and staff request initiation of a text amendment to the Land Development Code for March or April for formal consideration of the commercial design standards and guidelines, and for public hearing of the text amendment.