

Case Study: Overland Park, Kansas

After trying to enforce an “informal” brick requirement for years, Overland Park is putting its preference for brick on the books. The city’s design guidelines, which have been in the works for over three years and are expected to receive final approval in October 2002, require 40% brick or stone on all new multi-family and commercial construction. Previously the city’s site plan review committee had tried to steer builders and developers toward brick, but didn’t have the necessary legislation back them up.

According to Senior Planner Leslie Karr, “The city chose to require brick or stone for multi-family residential construction because the materials are considered high quality and solve long-term maintenance issues that come with the high occupant turn-over inherent to apartment living.”

The city went even further when specifying materials in the plan for its 151st Street Corridor, incorporating a brick requirement as a goal for the downtown district. In the plan, “Goal 13: Use of Brick” states that all nonresidential buildings shall use brick on all facades visible from the public street or parking areas, and multi-family buildings should use 100 percent brick on all facades visible from the street and a minimum of 50 percent brick on all other facades. The plan states that stone and tile can be used as an accent, but concrete block, stucco and EIFS are prohibited in all cases.

As they are embarking on the enforcement of such a strong brick requirements, Karr was pleased to hear about the success of cities like Urbandale, Iowa, which have attracted major retailers and have seen them adapt their recognizable designs and looks to the brick requirement with little or no problem.

JUST THE FACTS

City:	Overland Park, Kansas
Population:	155,000
Founded:	1960
Masonry Requirement:	Commercial/Multi-Family = 40% Brick or Stone 51st Street Corridor = 100% Brick
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