

## Bannockburn's Community Character

The community character of the Village of Bannockburn can be viewed both in the aggregate and in terms of community subareas. There are three such subareas within the Village, as delineated on Map 5. Subarea One is generally located east of the west right-of-way line of the Metra Railroad. It includes both incorporated and unincorporated lands, and contains mainly office and retail uses. Subarea Two is the residential central core of the Village and is the largest area. Subarea Three lies west of the residential core and contains office and institutional uses, including Trinity International University.

The community character types for the Village and its planning subareas were determined pursuant to a thorough survey and based upon the definitions and descriptions set forth in this chapter. Various factors that modify the impact of development, such as extensive landscaping, narrow roads, and street edge landscaping, were also taken into consideration.

Subarea One is Suburban in character. This area contains non-residential developments built at low to average intensities and having extensive landscaping. Several parcels also contain significant areas of preserved open land which contribute to and enhance the overall character. The Bannockburn Green Retail Center (Photo 27) is one of the few shopping centers in the region that has a Suburban character. This character has been achieved through the preservation of mature oak trees and extensive landscaping. The use of a two-story structure means the overall intensity of use is similar to more conventional centers. Bannockburn Lake Office Plaza and TWG (Photo 28) utilize a similar approach to achieve the same result. Older buildings such as Sears have extensive lawns, but the buildings are well below average in their floor area ratio and the additional landscaped area ensures the Suburban character. Whenever redevelopment is planned for this area, substantial landscaping shall be required.

The residential core of the Village in Subarea Two has a Countryside character. This character results from its large residential lot sizes, low intensity development, lush and abundant vegetation, and limited access. The residential streets include narrow two-lane and one-lane roads (Photos 29 & 30). The rural appearance of these roads is a major factor in the Countryside character of the area. Even residential collectors such as Telegraph Road, that distribute traffic to local residential streets, have a rural appearance. Widening the roads and clearing the rights-of-way to conform to standard engineering practice would destroy the Countryside character. Similarly, the older residential subdivisions in Bannockburn platted prior to the Village's incorporation, if viewed independently from the rest of the residential area, provide examples of the Estate character. These follow very much in the model of mature estate areas with landscape dominating over buildings and intense privacy on the lots. (Photos 31 & 32) The original Aitken "Country Estates" now have a Countryside character because of the intensive vegetation. Comparing the early photograph (Photo 33) of the Meadow Lane - Robin Road area with one taken in 2003 (Photo 34) illustrates the impact of intensive landscaping and the passing of more than 60 years. The two-acre lots in this area now have many attributes of Countryside character. The choice in landscaping made over 60 years ago is fortuitous. Such matters cannot be left to chance and time. Therefore, the Village enacted landscaping and bufferyard standards to promote this desired character in 1996.

Not unlike Subarea One, Subarea Three has also been developed with a Suburban character. It has a low intensity and contains large areas of open space on both the Trinity International

University campus and office sites, and vacant land. While the earlier buildings in this area do not have the same intensity of landscaping found in Subarea One, landscaping standards for future development and redevelopment with Subarea Three should cause the final build-out of Subarea Three to be Suburban in nature.

Maturation of existing landscaping, as well as the installation of additional vegetation both before and in connection with future development, will further enhance the Suburban character of this Subarea. In some areas natural landscaping is growing in (Photo 35) and new development should enhance this natural look. In other areas more attentive landscaping will be needed as part of any development, because existing trees are still maturing and have not been planted near the roads where they would be most effective (Photo 36).

The characters of Bannockburn's three community subareas are quite distinct, with the two non-residential subareas exhibiting a more intensive Suburban character than the Countryside character in the rural residential core of the Village. When a community has distinctively different areas rather than a uniform character type, it is essential for planning purposes to maintain the character of each subarea when planning for and evaluating the community as a whole. Bannockburn has historically paid particular attention to preserving these distinct areas and, specifically, to protecting the Countryside character of its residential core. The residential core is the heart of the Village where all of its residents, other than University students, live. In large part, Bannockburn's unique qualities are drawn from its residential core, and that Subarea of the Village must be viewed as a separate area that has been carefully protected from the character of surrounding villages and even from the Suburban character of the office, University, and commercial developments in Bannockburn's other two Subareas.

The boundaries between these areas need particular care. The Village must resist attempts to change the boundaries and permit intrusions into the heart of the Village of higher intensity uses. Fortunately, the eastern boundary between Subarea One and Subarea Two, Waukegan Road and the Metra Railroad, is a very definite boundary that is unlikely to change. Another threat lays in the northern part of the Village where there are still unincorporated and underutilized lands along Half Day Road. Not only should zoning changes be denied, but the Village must continue to encourage enhanced buffer landscaping on all new development and encourage the same on existing properties.

