



City of Columbus

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Legislation Text

File #: 1851-2004, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND:

In 1999, Columbus City Council adopted the Urban Commercial Overlay (UCO). The purpose of the UCO is to regulate development in specifically designated areas in order to protect, re-establish and retain the unique architectural and aesthetic characteristics of older, urban commercial corridors. Such corridors are typically characterized by pedestrian-oriented architecture, building setbacks ranging from 1-10 feet, rear parking lots, commercial land uses, a street system that incorporates alleys and lots sized smaller than 0.5 acre. The provisions of the UCO are intended to encourage pedestrian-oriented development featuring retail display windows, reduced building setbacks, rear parking lots, and other pedestrian-oriented site design elements.

In the spirit of the original UCO, several additions to the overlay are being proposed. These additions include provisions relating to upper story windows, awnings, fences and site lighting.

The UCO is currently used in 11 areas of the city. A public meeting was held on July 29 to discuss the proposed changes with community and business leaders from those 11 areas. The Columbus Development Commission has recommended approval of the amendments.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No funding is required for this legislation.

To supplement the Columbus City Codes, 1959, by the modification of Chapter 3372, Planning Overlay, in order to add standards to the Urban Commercial Overlay that address second story windows, awning, fences and site lighting.

WHEREAS, Columbus City Council adopted the UCO in 1999 to regulate development in specifically designated areas in order to protect, re-establish and retain architectural and aesthetic characteristics of older, urban commercial corridors; and

WHEREAS, in the spirit of the original UCO, several additions to the UCO are being proposed. These new standards relate to upper story windows, awnings, fences and site lighting. The new standards will enhance the UCO and work to achieve the goals of the overlay; and

WHEREAS, the new provisions contained in the overlay will apply to all properties currently in the UCO and any future application of the UCO; and

WHEREAS, the provisions contained in the UCO will continue to be reviewed and modified as appropriate and necessary in order to continue to meet the intended goals of the overlay; and

WHEREAS, a public meeting was held in which all community and business leaders from the 11 UCO areas were invited and the provisions have been recommended by Columbus Development Commission for adoption by City Council; **now, therefore**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

Section 1. That the existing section 3372.607 of the Columbus City Codes, 1959, is hereby amended to read as follows:

3372.607 Applicability and Extent.

The standards and requirements of the UCO apply as follows:

A. On a commercially-zoned or commercially-used property within a designated UCO area:

1. the placement, construction, or reconstruction of a principal building is subject to all standards and requirements of this Chapter;
2. the expansion of a principal building's gross floor area by up to 50% is subject to C.C. 3372.611 and 3372.613 and the expansion of a principal building's gross floor area by more than 50% is subject to all standards and requirements of this Chapter;
3. the extension or expansion of a principal building towards a public street is subject to all standards and requirements of this Chapter; and
4. exterior alteration of a primary building frontage is subject to C.C. 3372.611 and 3372.613. Secondary building frontages and primary building frontages set back from an abutting street a distance of more than 30 feet are exempt from this requirement. For purposes of this requirement, the placement of window shutters, fabric canopies and awnings and/or building-mounted signage is not considered to be exterior alteration.

B. The construction or installation of parking lots, fences and other accessory structures on commercially-zoned or commercially-used properties shall comply with C.C. 3372.609 B. and C., 3372.611, 3372.613, and 3372.615.

C. The installation of new on-site lighting must comply with C.C 3372.612.

D. The standards and requirements of this Chapter may be waived for buildings officially recognized as historic if they would result in an unacceptable modification of the original, historic appearance of the building as determined by the City of Columbus Historic Resources Commission.

E. Residentially-zoned properties and residences are exempt from the standards and requirements of this Chapter, except in architectural review commission districts.

F. In architectural review commission districts, residences, residentially-zoned properties and commercially-zoned or commercially-used properties are subject to C.C. 3372.615, 3372.612 and 3372.609, excepting 3372.609 B, and are not subject to Sections 3372.611 and 3372.613.

G. Routine maintenance and in-kind replacement of materials are exempt from the standards and requirements of this Chapter.

The standards contained in the UCO are in addition to the regulations of the underlying zoning districts. Where the provisions of this Chapter conflict with those of the underlying zoning district or other provisions of this Zoning Code, the most restrictive provision applies.

Section 2. That the existing Section 3372.611 of the Columbus City Codes, 1959, is hereby amended to read as follows:

3372.611 Design Standards.

Design standards are as follows:

A. A primary building frontage shall incorporate at least one main entrance door. At a building corner where two primary building frontages meet, one main entrance door may be located so as to meet the requirement for both building frontages.

B. A building frontage that exceeds a width of 50 feet shall include vertical piers or other vertical visual elements to break the plane of the building frontage. The vertical piers or vertical elements shall be spaced at intervals of 15 feet to 35 feet along the entire building frontage.

C. For each primary building frontage, at least 60% of the area between the height of 2 feet and 10 feet above the nearest sidewalk grade shall be clear/non-tinted window glass permitting a view of the building's interior to a minimum depth of 4 feet. For a secondary building frontage, the pattern of window glass shall continue from the primary frontage a minimum distance of 10 feet.

D. The standards below apply to upper story windows. They recognize that regularly spaced upper story windows (any story above ground) create a repeated pattern for unity and are an integral part of the building design. Upper story windows are generally smaller than storefront windows at street level, are spaced at regular intervals and give scale and texture to the street edge formed by building facades.

1. For any new installation or replacement of upper story windows, the new/replacement windows must be clear/non-tinted glass.
2. Windows must not be blocked, boarded up, or reduced in size, unless otherwise required by Code for securing a vacant structure.
3. At least 25% of the second and third floor building frontages (as measured from floor to ceiling) must be window glass. This requirement may be waived if historic documentation (e.g. historic photos) from when the building was first constructed can be provided that shows a different percentage of window glass was used on the second and third floor building frontages. In such cases, the historic percentage must be maintained.

E. All roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from public view to the height of the equipment. The design, colors and materials used in screening shall be architecturally compatible with the rooftop and the aesthetic character of the building.

F. Dumpsters and all ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be located at the rear of the building and screened from public view to the height of the dumpster/equipment.

G. Fences, with or without masonry piers, shall be decorative and constructed of ornamental metal tubes or solid metal bars. Fences may not exceed a height of 4 feet. Chain-link fences are not permitted.

H. Masonry or stone walls may be used for screening, sitting, or used as independent architectural elements. Walls may not exceed a height of 4 feet.

I. Parking lots must be screened from all abutting public streets. In architectural review commission districts, required parking lot screening will be the screening approved by the architectural review district commissions. In all other areas, parking lot screening shall consist of either:

1. a 4-foot high solid masonry or stone wall; or
2. a 4-foot high decorative metal tube or solid metal bar fence located at the street right-of-way line (property line), with or without masonry pier supports, with a minimum 3 foot wide landscaped area along the parking lot side of the fence. The landscaped area must be planted with three evergreen shrubs and one deciduous shade tree per 30 feet of frontage. Trees and shrubs must be maintained in good condition; dead material must be replaced within one year. Chain-link fences are not permitted.

J. Commercial signage shall comply with C.C. 3375-3383. Billboard signs are not permitted.

K. Backlit awnings are not permitted.

Section 3. That the Columbus City Codes, 1959, is hereby supplemented by the enactment of new Section 3372.612, which reads as follows:

3372.612 Site Lighting.

Exterior lighting must be designed, located, constructed, and maintained to minimize light trespass and spill over off the subject property. To achieve this objective, the following are mandatory site lighting requirements:

- A. Area lighting fixtures must direct light downwardly, i.e. must be cut-off type fixtures.
- B. The height of any parking lot light pole/fixture must not exceed eighteen (18) feet above grade.
- C. Exterior building light fixtures must not generate excessive light levels, cause glare, or direct light beyond the façade onto neighboring property, streets, or the night sky. Strobe or flashing lights are not permitted.

D. Security lighting must be from full cut-off type fixtures, shielded and aimed so that the light is directed to the area that is being protected by light.

Section 4. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period provided by law.