

# memorandum

**DATE:** March 10, 2021  
**TO:** Susie Stec, Manager – Community & Economic Development  
**FROM:** Jill Bahm & Eric Pietsch, Giffels Webster  
**SUBJECT:** Zoning Amendment – Building Materials

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## Previous Discussion

- May 16, 2020: The Planning Commission reviewed a recommended zoning amendment and asked to set the public hearing. In as much as this was not a high priority item at the time, it was postponed.
- April 21, 2020: The Planning Commission discussed amending the zoning standards for building materials, to permit some flexibility for architects and designers using modern products. The Planning Commission made the following observations about the proposed text:
  - Generally, commissioners supported the idea of modernizing the language and allowing the Planning Commission the ability to apply standards with flexibility.
  - More guidance on how the commissioners would make consistent decisions is desired.

## Introduction

*What prompted this amendment?*

- With recent commercial and residential building improvements in the City, some questions have come up regarding the intent and restrictions on building materials. Clarification and updating the ordinance is needed.
- It should be noted that single family homes are required to follow standards for building materials and, particularly in the rear of homes, these may be cumbersome requirements that may not have been consistently applied over the years.

## Current Language

The Zoning ordinance has two sections on building materials: a general standard for building materials and materials in the Village Center (VC) district. The VC district has the highest standards in terms of building form, design and materials because architectural and design quality supports the intent for a walkable district – the idea being that when people are walking close to buildings, they really notice details much more than if they are in a car driving past. While the rest of the city is certainly important in terms of quality, the highest standards should be in the Village Center. Using the VC standards as a starting point, standards for the rest of the city may similarly use percentages of materials to promote flexibility.

### **Section 3.1.8.E.3. Building Materials:**

- A. Facing Street, park or plaza: At least 90% of all exterior building façades facing a street, park, or plaza shall be finished with a combination of two or more of the following: Glass, brick, cut or cast stone, wood, cementitious board (e.g., Hardie Plank), integrally colored concrete units with brick proportions (e.g., half-high “C” brick), and textured stucco.
- B. Facing other buildings: at least 70% of the exterior façade shall consist of the materials specified in 3.A. above and may also include split-faced, scored, or fluted block.
- C. Variation: There shall be a change in the vertical or horizontal building plane when there is a change in color or material. Street facing facades shall be divided vertically into segments no greater than sixty (60) feet wide.

### **Section 5.4 Building Material:**

Except as otherwise provided in this ordinance, on all permanent buildings, exterior wall construction and exposed, exterior chimneys shall be either brick, natural stone, masonry materials other than brick, or a combination thereof, provided all such materials comply with the following specifications:

- A. All brick made from clay, shale, fire clay, or mixtures thereof shall be hard burned facing brick meeting all the specifications contained in American Society for Testing and Materials Standard C216-65, for grade SW facing brick.
- B. All other brick, stone and other masonry materials not included in the foregoing paragraphs shall nevertheless meet the durability, strength, and rate of absorption standards established in said above-mentioned specifications.
- C. Architectural trim material may be wood, aluminum, or other material of equal strength and durability if the building walls proper are of fire-resistant material. Such trim material shall not cover more than ten percent of the exterior wall construction.
- D. All building materials must also conform to state and local building code requirements.

## **Recommendation**

Amend the Zoning ordinance to allow more flexibility in the application of building material standards as noted in the following pages.

ORDINANCE NO \_\_ OF 2021

ORDINANCE AMENDING

THE LATHRUP VILLAGE ZONING ORDINANCE

ARTICLE 5, TO UPDATE STANDARDS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LATHRUP VILLAGE MICHIGAN:

PART 1. Replace Section 5.4 in its entirety as follows:

**Section 5.4 Building Material:**

~~Except as otherwise provided in this ordinance, on all permanent buildings, exterior wall construction and exposed, exterior chimneys shall be either brick, natural stone, masonry materials other than brick, or a combination thereof, provided all such materials comply with the following specifications:~~

- ~~A. All brick made from clay, shale, fire clay, or mixtures thereof shall be hard burned facing brick meeting all the specifications contained in American Society for Testing and Materials Standard C216-65, for grade SW facing brick.~~
- ~~B. All other brick, stone and other masonry materials not included in the foregoing paragraphs shall nevertheless meet the durability, strength, and rate of absorption standards established in said above mentioned specifications.~~
- ~~C. Architectural trim material may be wood, aluminum, or other material of equal strength and durability if the building walls proper are of fire resistant material. Such trim material shall not cover more than ten percent of the exterior wall construction.~~
- ~~D. All building materials must also conform to state and local building code requirements.~~

**Section 5.4 Building Material:** The city values the historic architecture of its residential neighborhoods and strives to maintain a sense of permanence throughout the city through the use of long-lasting high-quality building materials. Building materials in all zoning districts shall comply with the following, except as otherwise provided in Section 3.1.8.E.3.:

- A. Facing Street, park or plaza:** At least 75% of all exterior building façades facing a street, park, or plaza shall be finished with a combination of two or more of the following: Glass, brick, cut or cast stone, wood, cementitious board (e.g., Hardie Plank), integrally colored concrete units with brick proportions (e.g., half-high “C” brick), and textured stucco. The use of accent materials should be limited on ground floor building elevations.
- B. Facing other buildings:** at least 50% of the exterior façade buildings shall consist of the materials specified above and may also include split-faced, scored, or fluted block. For single-family residential buildings, vinyl siding is permitted.
- C. Alternative materials:** Alternative building materials may be approved when the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Planning Commission that the application of alternative materials is consistent with the intent of this section and will not have an unreasonable impact on adjacent uses. For demonstration purposes, building material specification sheets, photographs of existing application and material samples are encouraged to illustrate that

durability and appearance equivalency with materials listed in subsection A above will be maintained.

PART 2.

If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause and/or phrase of this Ordinance or the application thereof is declared unconstitutional, unenforceable or invalid by the valid judgment of any court of competent jurisdiction such unconstitutionality, unenforceability or invalidity shall not affect any of the remaining sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses and/or phrases of this Ordinance, since the same would have been enacted by the City of Lathrup village without the incorporation in this Ordinance of any such unconstitutional, unenforceable or invalid section, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase. To this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared severable.

PART 3.

All other Ordinances, or any parts thereof, which are in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance, are hereby repealed. To the extent that any provision or provisions of this Ordinance are inconsistent or in conflict with any other provision of the Code of Ordinances or any regulation of the City, the provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed to control.

PART 4

This Ordinance shall become effective upon final adoption and publication of the same in the manner prescribed by law.

This Ordinance was introduced on \_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_; Notice of Public Hearing was published on \_\_\_\_\_. A Public Hearing was held, the title having been read and the Ordinance considered, on motion to adopt by \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, a record vote was taken and the following result was had:

**YEA:**

**NAY:**

**ABSENT:**

**WHEREUPON**, the presiding officer declared the above Ordinance duly adopted on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

**ATTEST:**

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