

# TOPIC 5 | DEVELOPMENT & COMPATIBILITY STANDARDS

**GOAL:** Ensure development is compatible and sensitive to adjacent uses and neighborhoods.

## EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

### MONOTONOUS DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

#### THE CHALLENGE

Commercial regulations can allow for monotonous building facades and long blank walls that do not contribute to the built environment in a positive way.

#### APPROACH FOR UPDATE

Architectural massing patterns were studied to develop standard requirements for facade offsets, roof types, and simple design features on commercial and industrial buildings.

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Specified commercial and industrial buildings are prohibited from having uninterrupted blank walls longer than 40 feet.

## PROPOSED UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE

### STANDARDS FOR MIXED COMMERCIAL AND “EE” ZONING DISTRICTS

#### Mixed Commercial District Building Massing

- There shall be no uninterrupted lengths of blank walls longer than 40 feet for facades that are at least 60 feet in width. This applies to all elevations visible from rights-of-way and from residential zoning districts. The following techniques may be used to implement this standard:
  - Recesses and projections in the wall that are at least two (2) feet in depth;
  - Facade material or color changes following the same dimensional requirements;
  - Pilasters measuring a minimum of one (1) foot by one (1) foot with a minimum height of 80% of the building facade (See Figure 4-3 below); or
  - Roofline changes that correspond to the aligned material changes in the facade.
- Windows, awnings, entry areas, and arcades shall total at least 60% of the facade length facing a public street.
- Individual retail spaces that are part of a larger principal retail building shall be transparent between three (3) feet about the walkway grade and eight (8) feet above the walkway grade, for no less than 60% of the horizontal length of the storefront's occupied building facade. Windows shall be recessed and should include visually prominent sills, shutters, or such forms of framing. Individual retail spaces shall have separate outside entrances.



#### Specific EE District Standards

##### Truck Docks and Off-Street Loading

- Truck docks and off-street loading areas shall not be visible from any public right-of-way, residential zoned property, or any recorded residential subdivision; however, if all nearby residential properties are zoned for a commercial use or planned for a commercial use by the Frankfort Franklin County Comprehensive Plan, off-street loading areas may be visible from such properties.
- In cases where an industrial development contains two or more buildings, any proposed truck docks or off-street loading areas shall be located between the buildings and partially enclosed by architectural projects from the building and/or wing walls wherever possible, which shall be tall enough to screen the loading area. If the Planning & Zoning Administrator determines that this requirement is not feasible due to site design considerations, staff may require additional screening which meets the intent of this requirement.
- In addition to the regulations contained herein, all off-street loading areas shall be subject to the regulations set forth in [Section 5.05, Off-Street Loading Requirements](#).



#### Applicability Tables

Rather than all site improvements being required when a property owner makes general improvements, applicability tables are established to bring clarity on the improvements that are triggered based on pre-determined thresholds.

#### Section 4.05.B. & 4.06.

Site and building design standards are established based on applicability that apply to the Mixed Commercial Districts and the Enterprise Employment (current IC zoning district). These standards do not apply to other zoning districts.

#### Figures and Graphics

Illustrations and graphics were created to provide visuals to supplement standards outlined in the text of the UDC. The illustrations and graphics serve as examples to demonstrate intent of the standards.

## COST BURDENS FOR CHANGES AND MODIFICATIONS

#### THE CHALLENGE

Forcing small business owners to immediately bring their entire property into 100% compliance with modern landscaping and parking codes for a minor building expansion acts as a massive financial barrier to redevelopment.

#### APPROACH FOR UPDATE

A tiered 'Applicability' framework was designed to ensure that modern site-design requirements are triggered proportionally based on the actual scale of the expansion.

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Minor additions under 25% of floor area are exempt. Mid-sized additions between 25% and 50% only require Partial Compliance (installing 25% of standard required landscaping and plantings), making upgrades feasible.

## CLARITY THROUGH SITE IMPROVEMENT APPLICABILITY TABLES

| Table 4.05-1: Applicability of Design Standards for Mixed Commercial Districts |                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Site/Building Improvement                                                      | Applicability of Design Standards         |
| NEW CONSTRUCTION                                                               |                                           |
| New Construction                                                               | Full Compliance                           |
| BUILDING EXPANSION / ADDITION                                                  |                                           |
| Less than 25% of floor area                                                    | N/A                                       |
| Less than 25% of floor area, but >2,000 sq. ft.                                | Compliance for Addition Only              |
| 25 – 50% of floor area                                                         | Compliance for Addition Only              |
| >50% of floor area                                                             | Full Compliance                           |
| EXTERIOR FACADE RENOVATION                                                     |                                           |
| <25% of Facade Area                                                            | N/A                                       |
| 25 – 50% of Facade area                                                        | Compliance required for renovated portion |
| >50% of Facade Area                                                            | Full compliance                           |
| CHANGE OF USE / OCCUPANT                                                       |                                           |
| Change in Use Only (No Expansion or Renovation)                                | N/A                                       |
| VEHICULAR USE AREA IMPROVEMENTS                                                |                                           |
| Parking Lot Expansion < 10 Spaces                                              | N/A                                       |
| Parking Lot Expansion > 10 spaces                                              | N/A                                       |
| Resurfacing or Restriping                                                      | N/A                                       |

#### Table 4.05-1. Mixed Commercial Districts Standards Applicability

Provision of clear thresholds for whether specific building or site improvements trigger compliance for pre-defined applicability of standards established by Section 4.05. Design Standards for Mixed-Commercial Districts

| Table 5.02-1: Applicability of Parking, Loading, and Circulation Standards |                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Site/Building Improvement                                                  | Applicability of Parking, Loading, and Circulation Standards |
| NEW CONSTRUCTION                                                           |                                                              |
| New Construction                                                           | Full Compliance                                              |
| BUILDING EXPANSION / ADDITION                                              |                                                              |
| Less than 25% of floor area                                                | N/A                                                          |
| Less than 25% of floor area, but >2,000 sq. ft.                            | Full compliance for additional spaces required               |
| 25 – 50% of floor area                                                     | Full compliance for additional spaces required               |
| >50% of floor area                                                         | Full Compliance                                              |
| EXTERIOR FACADE RENOVATION                                                 |                                                              |
| <25% of Facade Area                                                        | N/A                                                          |
| 25 – 50% of Facade area                                                    | N/A                                                          |
| >50% of Facade Area                                                        | N/A                                                          |
| CHANGE OF USE / OCCUPANT                                                   |                                                              |
| Change in Use Only (No Expansion or Renovation)                            | Must provide additional spaces per new use                   |
| VEHICULAR USE AREA IMPROVEMENTS                                            |                                                              |
| Parking Lot Expansion < 10 Spaces                                          | N/A                                                          |
| Parking Lot Expansion > 10 spaces                                          | Full Compliance for New Spaces                               |
| Resurfacing or Restriping                                                  | N/A                                                          |

#### Table 5.02-1. Parking, Loading, and Circulation Applicability

While minimum parking space requirements have been replaced by the provision of parking analysis, the UDC establishes when certain vehicular use area (parking lot) improvements are required based on pre-defined criteria. This ensures that incremental improvements on sites move towards compliance without an undue burden on the applicant.

| Table 6.02-1: Applicability of Landscaping and Buffering Standards |                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Site / BUILDING IMPROVEMENT                                        | COMPLIANCE REQUIRED WITH APPLICABLE STANDARDS                                                                                           |
| NEW CONSTRUCTION                                                   |                                                                                                                                         |
| New Construction                                                   | Full Compliance                                                                                                                         |
| BUILDING EXPANSION / ADDITION                                      |                                                                                                                                         |
| Less than 25% of floor area                                        | N/A                                                                                                                                     |
| 25 – 50% of floor area                                             | Partial Compliance <sup>(1)</sup><br>(Parking Lot Landscaping, Perimeter Landscaping)                                                   |
| >50% of floor area                                                 | Full Compliance                                                                                                                         |
| INTERIOR RENOVATIONS / TENANT FINISH                               |                                                                                                                                         |
| Less than 50% of floor area                                        | N/A                                                                                                                                     |
| >50% of floor area                                                 | Partial Compliance <sup>(1)</sup><br>(Parking Lot Landscaping, Perimeter Landscaping)                                                   |
| EXTERIOR FACADE RENOVATION                                         |                                                                                                                                         |
| <25% of Facade Area                                                | N/A                                                                                                                                     |
| 25 – 50% of Facade area                                            | N/A                                                                                                                                     |
| >50% of Facade Area                                                | N/A                                                                                                                                     |
| CHANGE OF USE / OCCUPANT                                           |                                                                                                                                         |
| Change in Use Only (No Expansion or Renovation)                    | Compliance required if new use triggers higher landscaping requirements (adjacent use compatibility, additional parking required, etc.) |
| VEHICULAR USE AREA IMPROVEMENTS                                    |                                                                                                                                         |
| Parking Lot Expansion < 10 Spaces                                  | N/A                                                                                                                                     |
| Parking Lot Expansion > 10 spaces                                  | Compliance required for expanded portion                                                                                                |
| Resurfacing or Restriping                                          | N/A                                                                                                                                     |

**Table 6.02-1. Landscaping and Buffering Applicability**  
An applicability table has been introduced to the Landscaping and Buffering article to ensure clarity on when landscape improvements are required, and who is responsible for planting and maintenance.

## INSUFFICIENT BUFFERS BETWEEN USES

#### THE CHALLENGE

Standard existing buffers are often too narrow (capping at 20-30 feet) to adequately shield residential backyards from the noise, glare, and active loading bays of high-intensity commercial or industrial properties.

#### APPROACH FOR UPDATE

Land uses were organized into tiers based on off-site impact (such as heavy vehicle storage or 24-hour shipping) to design customized, dense buffers featuring physical walls and earthen berms.

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT

High-impact sites must install wide, heavily landscaped buffers. Tier II Enterprise uses (like warehousing) require a 75-foot wide buffer featuring a 6-foot tall earthen berm and dense evergreens.

## DEFINED LANDSCAPE BUFFERS AND LAND USE TRANSITIONS

#### Landscape Buffer Predictability

By clearly defining and establishing various buffer types, plantings, berm and fence heights, and site location, developers and adjoining properties can get a clear indication of the treatment that is required between properties. This approach also provides staff and review boards clear direction for interpretation and application of zoning requirements.

| Table 6.07-2: Multi-Family Residential and Public & Institutional Use Buffer Yard Requirements |                                               |                                        |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SCENARIO                                                                                       |                                               | BUFFER YARD REQUIREMENTS               |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| When the...                                                                                    | Adjoins a...                                  | Type Required                          | Width (min.) | Installation Requirements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Multi-Family Residential Use or Public & Institutional Use                                     | Any single-family residential district or use | Residential Buffer 'A' (Eurasian 0.01) | 20'          | A double row of evergreen shrub hedge (B) planted on the less densely wooded side (B) planted ever 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C. OR a mix of all types (B, C, or D).                                                                                  |
|                                                                                                |                                               | Residential Buffer 'B' (Eurasian 0.01) | 20'-30'      | Minimum 6' tall wall or fence or 3' tall ornamental shrub hedge (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or shrub trees (C) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (D) planted every 20'-30' O.C. OR a mix of all types (B, C, or D). |
|                                                                                                |                                               | Residential Buffer 'C' (Eurasian 0.01) | 36'          | A continuous, staggered double row planting of evergreen trees (C) planted every 15' O.C.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Table 6.07-3: Commercial Use Buffer Yard Requirements                                          |                                               |                                        |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| SCENARIO                                                                                       |                                               | BUFFER YARD REQUIREMENTS               |              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| When the...                                                                                    | Adjoins a...                                  | Type Required                          | Width (min.) | Installation Requirements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Service Drive / Storage                                                                        | Commercial                                    | Commercial Buffer A (Eurasian 0.01)    | 25'          | Minimum 6' tall wall or fence or 3' tall ornamental shrub hedge (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or shrub trees (C) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (D) planted every 20'-30' O.C. OR a mix of all types (B, A, B, C). |
|                                                                                                |                                               | Commercial Buffer B (Eurasian 0.01)    |              | A staggered double row of evergreen shrub hedge (C) (RUS) or mix of deciduous shrubs planted every 30'-40' O.C., deciduous flowering trees (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (C) planted every 20'-30' O.C.                                                            |
|                                                                                                |                                               | Commercial Buffer C (Eurasian 0.01)    |              | Minimum 6' tall wall or fence or 3' tall ornamental shrub hedge (B) or D (E) facing commercial (RUS)                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Service Yard (Tractor Trailers / Loading Dock)                                                 | Residential Use                               | Commercial Buffer B (Eurasian 0.01)    | 36'          | A mix of deciduous shrubs (A) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (C) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (D) planted every 20'-30' O.C.                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                                |                                               | Commercial Buffer C (Eurasian 0.01)    |              | A continuous, staggered double row planting evergreen trees (C) planted every 15' O.C. OR deciduous shrubs (A) planted every 40' O.C., deciduous flowering trees (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (C) planted every 20'-30' O.C.                                      |
|                                                                                                |                                               | Commercial Type D (Eurasian 0.01)      |              | A continuous, staggered double row planting evergreen trees (C) planted every 15' O.C. OR deciduous shrubs (A) planted every 40' O.C., deciduous flowering trees (B) planted every 20'-30' O.C., or evergreen trees (C) planted every 20'-30' O.C.                                      |



**Section 6.07. Buffers Required**  
Establishes landscape and separation buffer requirements between adjacent uses where appropriate. Buffers are based on minimizing performance impacts of uses onto adjacent properties.

**Table 6.07-4. Enterprise Use Tiers**  
With the clarification of use types in the UDC, each enterprise use type established has varying levels of visible and audible impacts. In order to ensure each are handled appropriately, landscape buffers vary based on the level of intensity of enterprise use type.

**Figures and Graphics**  
Graphics and section views were created for each buffer scenario to provide visuals in addition to the established tables in order to provide clarity and direction for developers and residents.