



Development Services Department

Development Services Staff Report

File Number	PL2025-123
File Name	Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Article 8 Site Standards pertaining to Architecture and Building Design and Article 15 Rules of Interpretation and Definitions
Applicant	City of Lee's Summit
Property Address	Citywide
Planning Commission Date	July 10, 2025
Heard by	Planning Commission and City Council
Analyst	Aimee E. Nassif AICP, Deputy Director of Development Services Adair Bright, AICP, Senior Planner

Public Notification

City Council and Planning Commission Joint Meetings: December 17, 2024, and April 22, 2025
Newspaper notification published on: June 21, 2025

1. Project Summary

Over the past six (6) months, staff has worked with our consultant, Confluence Inc., on developing a new set of architecture and building design standards. This has been a collaborative effort with community stakeholders, Planning Commissioners, and the Mayor and Councilmembers to develop these standards to increase aesthetics while remaining a community of choice for developers. Through the process, staff also identified several sections of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) where updating existing language and organization would improve readability. These updates were identified by staff and also recommended from discussions with the Planning Commission, Governing Body, and development community.

This series of updates include the following:

	UDO Article, Division	Current Section	Description
A	Article 8, Division I	8.010, 8.020	Update Purpose, Intent, and Applicability.
B	Article 8, Division I	Subdivision 3 (8.110-8.150)	Existing standards updated and new Architecture and Building Design Standards created. Site standards retained and relocated.
C	Article 8, Division I	Subdivision 2 (8.030-8.100)	Relocation of Planned Residential District Design Standards for ease of readability. Removal of Section 8.040.
D	Article 8, Division I	8.160	Relocation of the sidewalk location standards for ease of readability.
E	Article 8, Division I	8.180	Clean up and reorganization of standards and updated language for roof-mounted and ground-mounted equipment.
F	Article 15, Division II	15.315	Addition of an Architecture section and related definitions.

2. Research and Analysis

On June 12, 2024, the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) directed staff to prepare new architectural and building design standards to further advance the goals of the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan, address opportunities to clarify goals and expectations for quality development, and improve readability for developers and other stakeholders. Agenda packet items including meeting minutes, information presented to the CEDC, and meeting videos are available at: [The City of Lee's Summit - Community and Economic Development Committee \(legistar.com\)](https://legistar.com/summit/2024/06/12/cedc/)

The majority of the work with this UDO update involved the addition of regulations and development requirements for architecture and building design standards; however, updates to improve readability of Article 8 and its subdivisions were also included. This report will focus mainly on the architecture and building design updates since that was the focus of discussions and research.

Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

A. City Council and Planning Commission Joint Meetings

Two (2) joint meetings with the City Council and Planning Commission were held to understand the desired outcome and share recommendations. Descriptions of each joint meeting session is provided below.

Agenda packet items including meeting minutes, presentation materials, supporting documents, and meeting videos are available at:

[The City of Lee's Summit – December 17, 2024, Joint Session \(legistar.com\)](https://legistar.com/summit/2024/12/17/joint-session/)

[The City of Lee's Summit – April 22, 2025, Joint Session \(legistar.com\)](https://legistar.com/summit/2025/04/22/joint-session/)

1. **December 17, 2024** – The Mayor, Councilmembers, and Commissioners shared their goals and perspective on future growth and development. The input provided the necessary direction to form draft language which included building material classifications and tables outlining requirements by building type. Staff also shared the project timetable and outreach strategy along with information received from stakeholder interviews and Open House.
2. **April 22, 2025** – This session served as an opportunity to gain clarification on a few code sections such as franchise architecture and standards for single-family residential. Staff also provided a project status update

B. Open House

An Open House was held on December 11, 2025, at the Gamber Community Center to receive input from the general public. A brief presentation was held by the consultant followed by conversation and the ability for residents to participate in a dot poll for development and design features they like. The Open House was advertised on the City's social media and, although the turnout was small with about seven (7) people, the information gained was invaluable in helping craft the amendments. The feedback included:

- Focus on quality design and materials
- Masonry looks better and lasts longer
- Focus on commercial, office, and multi-family developments
- Allow for flexibility in design standards

C. Stakeholder Interviews

Staff provided the consultant with a list of developers and design professionals that regularly work within the community to participate in this work with us. The consultant then met individually with seven (7) of these stakeholders. The feedback included:

- Focus on quality exterior materials versus building design requirements such as wall articulation
- Support for four-sided architecture and opposition to it
- Push for long-term quality
- Concerns that standards push up costs
- Allow flexibility in design standards
- Allow a variety of building materials such as architectural quality metal panels and fiber cement
- Allow EIFS, thin brick, and similar materials on upper stories

After the initial interviews, the consultant worked with staff to draft language which was then shared with the stakeholders. One individual from that group expressed concerns with the application of EIFS and the requirement for four-sided architecture. Four-sided architecture has been required since 2001, and the proposed code allows for modifications when the request is not solely based on cost and the resulting design will not detract from the aesthetics of the surrounding area.

D. Kansas City Home Builders Association (HBA) Meeting

On May 15, 2025, a meeting was held with the Kansas City HBA to discuss the proposed code amendments, specifically those pertaining to residential structures. The attendees, five (5) frequent builders, were in favor of the proposed table outlining requirements by building type. They were also

amenable to the maximum garage width for lots 70-ft. or greater in width. One main question for the HBA was their input on the width requirement for garages on single-family and two-family structures. The original draft recommendation proposed a maximum percentage of fifty percent (50%). After discussions with the HBA and review of residential plans approved by the City over the past several years, Staff has updated the recommendation to allow a maximum garage width of sixty percent (60%); requests to exceed this amount would require the addition of decorative architectural elements. This new update is supported by the HBA group we met with and will ensure that out-of-town developers or first-time developers will remain consistent with the level of quality development currently seen throughout the City.

E. Research of Regulations and Developments

Throughout the process, staff has researched various cities both within the Kansas City Metro and nationally with comparable suburban communities. The research ranged from general inquiries to see the depth of other cities' architectural regulations; to more specific analysis to compare which cities have design requirements related to specific items such as residential garage width and projections. The following cities were researched:

- Blue Springs, MO
- Overland Park, KS
- Lenexa, KS
- Shawnee, KS
- Olathe, KS
- Franklin, TN
- Caramel, IN

Staff also looked at developments previously approved and built within the City to ensure that the proposed code amendments identify standards and design elements currently being achieved.

While other communities have stricter requirements than these currently proposed, the goal was to improve current UDO requirements while being mindful of construction and building material costs so that the final recommendation would not price developers out of choosing to do business in the City. From reviewing other municipalities, the proposed amendments would fall in the middle by not being overly strict and prescriptive while still setting the bar for quality design.

3. UDO Updates

Below is a description of each recommendation. A marked up and clean copy of all draft language is included as attachments.

A. Article 8, Division I, Sections 8.010 & 8.020

Existing Language

Current language outlines the applicability of the design standards and the purpose. The applicability section references other UDO sections with which the design standards should be reviewed in conjunction with.

Recommendation

The proposed language adds a statement of intent while retaining the existing purpose. The applicability section has been refined to note that developments will be reviewed with the proposed design standards along with all other applicable sections of the UDO while providing improved direction on how standards are to be applied.

B. Article 8, Division I, Subdivision 3 (Sections 8.110-8.150)

Existing Language

This subdivision outlines general building design requirements for office, commercial, and industrial districts.

The existing design objectives for each district speak to the types of uses to be included and the relationship of buildings to one another. The objectives briefly mention architecture in that the districts shall incorporate thematic architecture, but overall, the objectives are high level.

The subdivision also includes standards for building form and use which speaks to four-sided architecture and vertical and horizontal articulations. The standards are designated by district.

The remaining sections include requirements for public gathering spaces, the buildings relationships to the street network, and development's relationship to highways or arterial streets.

Recommendation

The proposed updates incorporate exceptions and modifications, general provisions outlining requirements for architectural features such as four-sided architecture, a table classifying exterior building materials in terms of durability and aesthetics, and tables for building design requirements by building type.

General provisions include requirements and standards for architectural features such as four-sided design, wall and roof articulations, visual differentiation between the base, body and top of a building, use of trim on primary facades, windows and doors on commercial storefronts in relation to the pedestrian view zone, awnings and canopies, and overhead doors. The following is an overview of other language included in the new standards:

1. Staff is recommending street-facing overhead doors be discouraged; however, if street-facing overhead doors are utilized the following standards would apply:
 - a. For commercial and retail storefronts, street-facing overhead doors shall contain no less than 75% clear glass.
 - b. All other buildings with street facing overhead doors shall have no less than fifty percent (50%) clear glass and shall be recessed a minimum of eighteen inches (18") into the building wall plane or shall include additional architectural enhancements or building materials to mitigate the visual impact. Additional site design enhancements including fencing, landscaping, and increased setbacks may also be required.
2. Building facadism is discouraged. Building facadism is the application of false or fake building facades or elements over an existing building façade or roof.

3. Also discouraged is the use of franchise architecture. Franchise architecture refers to the standardized design of buildings or integral building forms that are readily identifiable with a specific commercial franchise. By discouraging franchise architecture, businesses will be aware that the City has architecture and design standards and goals to ensure compatibility with the existing environment yet are open to discussion when appropriate by allowing applicants to request a modification to this requirement.
4. A building materials table has been created which includes a classification system from one (1) to four (4) with one (1) being the top-quality, very durable materials and four (4) being lower-quality and less durable. The table is used in conjunction with the building design requirements by building type.
5. There are two sections and corresponding tables for building design – residential and non-residential. The residential section identifies residential building types which correlate to the applicable design requirements. The non-residential section is structured similarly.
6. Staff is also recommending the metal building area be reinstated with modifications. Buildings within the specified areas will have the least amount of building material and articulation requirements. This will provide the needed flexibility for buildings in this area while still codifying the articulation that is regularly provided by applicants.
7. It is important to note that the existing architecture section contained statements related to open space and site layout instead of speaking to the building design itself. These standards have been moved to a new subdivision identified as “Site Design Standards” to improve readability for the general public and other stakeholders

C. Article 8, Division I, Subdivision 2 (Sections 8.030-8.100)

Existing Language

The subdivision contains planned residential district design standards.

Recommendation

The existing language is proposed to remain; however, Section 8.040 contains language pertaining to laterally attached residential units and multi-family standards which are duplicative and proposed to be removed. Staff is recommending the standards be relocated from Subdivision 2 to Subdivision 4 for ease of readability.

D. Article 8, Division I, Section 8.160

Existing Language

This section contains sidewalk location standards.

Recommendation

The existing language is proposed to remain. Staff is recommending the section be relocated from Subdivision 4 to Subdivision 3 for ease of readability.

E. Article 8, Division I, Sections 8.180

Existing Language

Currently, Section 8.180 contains architectural characteristics related to roofs, articulations, and screening of ground-mounted and roof-mounted equipment.

Recommendation

The proposed language consolidates these architectural characteristic requirements, so they are located with all other building design standards. In addition, all requirements for screening of roof-mounted and ground-mounted equipment, including trash enclosures, will be relocated to their own section.

Staff recommends all roof-top equipment be screened by a parapet or supplementary screen complementary to the building materials. All trash enclosures shall be screened using an enclosure with gates or doors that are compatible with the building materials. Ground-mounted equipment must be screened using landscaping, masonry screen walls, decorative fencing, or a combination thereof.

F. Article 15, Division II, Section 15.315

Existing Language

This section of the UDO contains definitions. Definitions do not currently exist for architecture related terms.

Recommendation

The proposed language also includes a section for terms related to architecture. That section will include ten (10) terms and definitions: building facadism, clear glass, façade area, fenestrations, franchise architecture, major façade materials, pedestrian view zone, primary façade, secondary façade, and street facing façade.

4. Ignite! Comprehensive Plan

This series of code updates aligns with the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan by identifying and implementing standards to achieve the community's desired image.

- A. Land Use and Community Design.** Goal 3.7 of the Ignite! Plan is ***Land Use and Community Design***. As stated in the Ignite! Plan, "the community supports land use and community design policies that best balance the need for growth with the protection of the environment, enhancing, community assets, image, and design". The Land Use and Community Design goal description states: ***"promote sustainable land use to meet the needs of the future"***.

This goal (**Goal 3.7**) encompasses a couple strategies to achieve the goal stated above. The strategies to achieve this goal include: 1) Plan for purposeful growth, revitalization, and redevelopment and 2) Protect the environment and meet the needs of the future.

A link to the Land Use and Community Design element of the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan is provided here: [Land Use and Community Design \(cityofls.net\)](https://cityofls.net/land-use-and-community-design)

As stated on page 70 of the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan, the community supports land use and community design policies that best balance the need for growth with the protection of the environment, enhancing, community assets, image, and design.

5. Summary

This effort to create a new set of architecture and building standards was truly a collaborative effort with city staff, the city's consultant, and our community partners and stakeholders. The recommendations were formulated after months of research and sharing of draft language to ensure the city's vision and goals are met.

In addition to meeting goals of the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan, these proposed updates also achieve the following:

- Improve understanding and clarity of code requirements for development.
- Provide developers with a comprehensive list of materials organized by class and how those materials should be applied.
- Identify architecture requirements by building type rather than zoning district.

Building and architecture design standards provide developers with an expectation for aesthetics and set a baseline for quality development. The proposed standards, specifically the classification table for exterior materials, focus on durability and longevity of materials to allow buildings to be readapted as land uses change. These new standards achieve a balance of protecting and ensuring continued quality growth, while remaining a place of choice in the region for developers.

Attached is a marked up copy of each of the Article updates broken down by subdivision along with a clean copy of the Article updates. The draft language presented is a result of research of other communities, public input from the stakeholder interviews and open house, and discussions at the joint Planning Commission and City Council meetings.