

Section 556 – Downtown Overlay District

556.01. Boundaries. Subdivision 1. The boundaries of the overlay district are as follows:

south side of First Street North to north side of First Street South; the west side of 6th Avenue to the east side of 13th Avenue

556.02. Application. Subdivision 1. Commencing on the date of the adoption of this ordinance the overlay district standards will apply to the following:

- a) All newly constructed buildings or structures
- b) All exterior building improvements and sign changes for which a conditional use permit is not required but which require a building and/or sign permit (overlay district standards are applicable only to the changed element or improvement)
- c) Renovations for which a conditional use permit is required under the provisions of the Hopkins City Code as in effect at the time of the renovation (all applicable standards apply)
- d) All new or reconstructed parking areas with 5 or more spaces
- e) Temporary signage

Subd. 2. Grandfather. Any building, structure, parking area or sign that lawfully exists at the time Ordinance 03-900 is enacted, which would not otherwise be permitted under Ordinance 03-900, may be continued in the same manner as existed before the effective date of the Ordinance, but any future construction, additions, reconstruction, renovation, or sign erection shall be subject to the requirements of this ordinance.

Subd 3. Compliance. At the time of application for any CUP, building permit, or sign permit. The applicant shall demonstrate the proposed building, structure, improvement, renovation or sign complies with the requirements of this Ordinance. No CUP, building permit, or sign permit shall be issued until the requirements of this ordinance have been met. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the necessary information to the City staff to determine compliance with the section of the ordinance.

556.03. Awnings. Subdivision 1. Awnings may be required to enhance the historic character of Mainstreet while providing sun protection for display windows, shelter for pedestrians, and a sign panel for businesses.

Subd. 2. Length. Awnings cannot extend across multiple storefronts and/or multiple buildings.

Subd. 3. Materials. Awnings must be constructed of durable, protective, and water repellent materials. Plastic or fiberglass awnings are not allowed.

Subd. 4. Lighting. Backlit or illuminated awnings are not allowed.

Subd. 5. Projecting. Awnings must project a minimum of 36" from the building.

556.04. Signs. Subdivision 1. Signs will be architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors, and details of the building to which they are affixed and with other signs on nearby buildings, while providing for adequate identification of the business.

Subd. 2. Lighting. Internally illuminated signs (not including neon) are prohibited except for theater signage.

Subd. 3. Prohibited. Pylon and monument signs are prohibited on Mainstreet.

Subd. 4. Window signage. Temporary window signs are limited to one-third of the window surface area.

Subd. 5. Size. The combination of neon, permanently painted, and temporary window signs shall not exceed a total of two-thirds of the window surface area for that facade.

Subd. 6. Projecting. Projecting signs will have a maximum size of 12 square feet and a maximum width of three feet. Projecting signs cannot extend beyond the first floor of the building. No less than 10 feet of clearance shall be provided between the sidewalk surface and the lowest point of the projecting sign.

Subd. 7. Distance. Maximum distance between sign and building face is one foot.

Subd. 8. Design details. Signs cannot block or obliterate design details, windows or cornices of the building upon which they are placed.

556.05. Building height. Subdivision 1. New buildings, building and additions and redeveloped or remodeled buildings will complement the existing pattern of building heights.

Subd. 2. Height. Buildings in the overlay district may not exceed four stories or 45 feet in height.

556.06. Buildings. Subdivision 1. Buildings in the overlay district will together create the "wall of buildings" effect associated with traditional "Main Street" areas.

Subd. 2. Setback. New construction and infill buildings must maintain the existing alignment of facades along the street front. Exceptions may be granted if the setback is pedestrian-oriented and contributes to the quality and character of the streetscape. An example would be outdoor dining.

Subd. 3. Parking lots. In instances where there are parking areas abutting the street, the sidewalk edge must be delineated with landscaping.

556.07. Roofs and parapets. Subdivision 1. Rooflines will mimic the separate yet complementary character and design of historic Mainstreet buildings.

Subd. 2. Roofs. Sloped roofs are not allowed unless the roof form is concealed by a parapet or false front. Exceptions may be granted if the sloped roof is used on top of a multi-story building to help reduce the overall height of the façade and define the residential character of the upper floors.

556.08. Utility areas, mechanical equipment and screening. Subdivision 1. Utility areas, mechanical equipment, and screening will be designed so that they do not detract from the aesthetic appeal of the district.

Subd. 2. Materials. The screening of exterior trash, storage areas, service yards, loading areas, transformers, heating, and air conditioning units must use the same materials, color and/or style as the primary building in order to be architecturally compatible with the primary building and the building it is adjacent to. If the utility area is separate from the building it serves, it should be consistent with the City of Hopkins streetscape theme.

Subd. 3. Roof equipment. All roof equipment will be screened from public view so as not to be visible from the street.

Subd. 4. Screening. All exterior trash and storage areas, service yards, loading, areas, heating, and air conditioning units must be screened from view. Camouflaging heating and air conditioning units is an acceptable screening method.

556.09. Facades. Subdivision 1. To break up the monotonous appearance of long facades, the exterior of buildings will be designed with visual breaks.

Subd. 2. Width. A building more than 45 feet in width will be divided into increments of no more than 45 feet through articulation of the facade. This can be achieved through combinations of the following techniques:

- a) Divisions or breaks in materials
- b) Window bays
- c) Separate entrances and entry treatments
- d) Variation in roof lines
- e) Building setbacks

556.10. Windows and doors. Subdivision 1. It is encouraged and may be required that windows and doors be incorporated in building designs to provide large open views into the commercial space enhancing the pedestrian experience by providing a visual connection to the use inside the building.

Subd. 2. Upper level windows. Windows are required on upper levels, and should provide privacy while aesthetically and functionally serving the building.

Subd. 3. Ground level windows and doors. A minimum of 30% of the ground level facade and sides of buildings adjacent to public streets shall consist of transparent materials.

Subd. 4. Rear facade. A minimum of 15% of the building's rear façade facing a public right-of-way, parking area, or open space shall consist of transparent materials.

Subd. 5. Glass. Reflective glass is not allowed. Glass tinted more than 40% is not allowed.

556.11. Materials and detailing. Subdivision 1. New buildings and structures, additions and renovations will be constructed to be long lasting and use materials and detailing that maintain the distinct character and harmony of the downtown.

Subd. 2. Materials. The following materials are not allowed on the facades or sides of buildings adjacent to public right-of-ways:

- a) Painted concrete block
- b) Aluminum, vinyl or fiberglass siding or roofing materials
- c) Precast concrete panels
- d) Painting previously unpainted brick on the facades of buildings

Subd. 3. Approval. Any exterior material used in new construction or change in exterior materials on more than 50 percent of the front, rear, or side of a building facing a public right-of-way, shall require prior approval of the Zoning and Planning Commission and City Council for compliance with the requirements of this subsection and the other provisions of this Ordinance.

556.12. Franchise architecture. Subdivision 1. To maintain the unique character of Hopkins downtown, buildings will not be constructed or renovated using franchise architecture.

Subd. 2. Franchise. Franchise architecture is defined as building design that is trademarked or identified with a particular franchise, chain or corporation and is generic or standard in nature. Franchise architecture is not allowed. Franchises or national chains must follow the standards of this ordinance to create a building that is compatible with downtown Hopkins.

556.13. Streetscape. Subdivision 1. The streetscape will be uniform so that it acts to provide continuity throughout the downtown.

Subd. 2. Replacement. When a redevelopment project disturbs existing streetscape elements, those items must be replaced with approved Hopkins streetscape elements compatible with the character of downtown Hopkins.

556.14. Lighting. Subdivision 1. Lighting in the overlay district should serve to illuminate facades, entrances, and signage to provide an adequate level of personal safety while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the buildings.

Subd. 2. Source. Building and signage lighting must be indirect, with the light source(s) hidden from direct pedestrian and motorist view. For exterior sign illumination, shaded gooseneck lamps are encouraged.

556.15. Parking. Subdivision 1. Parking in the overlay district must adequately serve the users without detracting from the compact design that makes it a successful commercial center.

Subd. 2. Off-street parking. Off-street parking must be located in the rear of buildings on Mainstreet.

556.16. Exceptions. It is recognized that there may be projects that require a departure from the requirements in this ordinance in order to be feasible. Possible grounds to be considered in determining possible reasons for granting exceptions to the ordinance are as follows:

- a) Safety
- b) Unique site or building characteristics
- c) Standards would have a detrimental effect on the use of the property
- d) Public benefit

Financial hardship alone is not a basis to grant an exception. Exceptions will be reviewed by the Zoning and Planning Commission with a recommendation to the City Council for action. Minor exceptions can be granted on a staff level.