

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT**  
**Regular Agenda -- Public Hearing Item**

PC Staff Report  
06/24/09

**ITEM NO. 9: TEXT AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 20 DEVELOPMENT CODE (DDW)**

**TA-5-8-09:** Consider Text Amendments to various sections of the Lawrence SmartCode to revise the architectural standards. Initiated by the City Commission on 1/20/09

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation for approval of the proposed amendments [TA-5-8-09 to revise the architectural standards of the Lawrence SmartCode] to the City Commission. The sections being amended are 21-500.1.4, 21-500.1.5, 21-500.1.8, 21-500.3.5, 21-500.4.5, 21-500.5.5, and 21-500.6.5.

**Reason for Request:** The City Commission initiated this amendment during the adoption process of Lawrence SmartCode – Chapter 21 of the City Code – to provide more flexibility to the architectural standards.

**RELEVANT GOLDEN FACTOR:**

- Conformance with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the relevant factor that applies to this request. Adoption of new regulatory tools, one of which is the Lawrence SmartCode, is an implementation step in Chapter 13 of *Horizon 2020*, the City/County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The proposed amendments will ensure the recently adopted Lawrence SmartCode is more flexible in its regulation of building design.

**PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED PRIOR TO PRINTING**

- None to date.

**KEY POINTS**

- The Lawrence SmartCode (Chapter 21 of the Code of the City of Lawrence) was adopted by the City Commission on January 20, 2009 with an effective date of July 1, 2009.
- The Lawrence SmartCode is a parallel development code for the City of Lawrence.
- The City Commission directed staff to revise the architectural standards to make them more flexible.
- The architectural standards are an optional module for the SmartCode that many communities don't include with their adopted codes.
- A group of local architects assisted staff with the revisions. Staff also discussed the revisions with the consultant for the Lawrence SmartCode project.

**OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

The amendment proposes to change the architectural standards (prescriptive) to design guidelines (advisory) in Transects T3, T4 and T5. The amendment also proposes to re-write some of the standards.

- Changing the architectural standards to design guidelines will provide more flexibility in their application for development projects.
- The architectural standards are not integral to the functionality of the SmartCode. The architectural standards are an optional module that can be included with the code or left out. Lawrence included the standards in the Lawrence SmartCode, but many communities choose to leave them out.
- A number of the standards were re-written and some were deleted.

The amendment also proposes to eliminate the architectural standards for T5.5.

- T5.5 applies only to downtown Lawrence. Downtown is currently covered by historic resources review under the Conservation of Historic Resources Code (Chapter 22 of the Code of the City of Lawrence. Per Section 21-100.3.2 of the Lawrence SmartCode, Chapter 22 takes precedence over the Lawrence SmartCode.
- Building design guidelines in T5.5 are redundant and unnecessary.

#### **CONFORMANCE WITH *HORIZON 2020***

*Horizon 2020* Chapter 15 is the policy guidance for the development regulations of the Lawrence SmartCode. The proposal to amend the architectural standards of the Lawrence SmartCode is not in conflict with *Horizon 2020* Chapter 15 – Place Making.

#### **CRITERIA FOR REVIEW & DECISION-MAKING**

The Lawrence SmartCode does not contain criteria for text amendment decision making. Section 20-1302(f) of the Development Code provides review and decision-making criteria on proposed text amendments. This review will borrow those criteria. Section 20-1302(f) states that review bodies shall consider at least the following factors:

- 1) Whether the proposed text amendment corrects an error or inconsistency in the Development Code or meets the challenge of a changing condition; and**

**Staff Response:** The proposed amendment meets the challenge of a changing condition. The City Commission raised the issue of the flexibility of the architectural standards during the adoption process. Although the City Commission approved the Lawrence SmartCode, they directed staff to make the appropriate changes to make the standards more flexible.

- 2) Whether the proposed text amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the stated purpose of this Development Code (Sec. 20-104).**

**Staff Response:** The proposed amendment is consistent with *Horizon 2020* as describe above.

## PROPOSED LANGUAGE

Proposed text is shown in ***bold italic*** font. Proposed deleted text is shown as struck through.

Section 21-500.1.8 is proposed to be added to the Lawrence SmartCode, and Sections 21-500.1.4, 21-500.1.5 of the Lawrence SmartCode are proposed to be amended as follows:

### 21-500.1 INSTRUCTIONS

21-500.1.1 Lots and buildings located within a New Community or Infill Community Plan shall be subject to the requirements of this Article. No more than one Principal Building shall be located on a platted lot.

21-500.1.2 Developers may have plans under this Article prepared on their behalf.

21-500.1.3. [Reserved]

21-500.1.4 The requirements described in this Article shall control the Building Disposition, Building Configuration and Building Function, as well as their density, ~~architectural~~ ***design***, landscape, parking, signage, and ambient standards.

21-500.1.5 Building Scale Plans submitted under this Article shall set forth the following, in compliance with the standards described in this Article:

a. For preliminary site and building approval:

- Building Disposition
- Building Configuration
- Building Function
- Required Parking standards
- Pre-Existing Conditions
- Density Calculations

b. For final approval, in addition to the above:

- ~~Architectural Standards~~ ***Design Guidelines***
- Landscape Standards
- Signage Standards
- Ambient Standards

21-500.1.6 Building Scale Plans shall show and provide dimensions for topography, thoroughfares, sidewalks, utilities, and easements.

21-500.1.7 Parking requirements for Civic Buildings shall be set by Warrant.

***21-500.1.8 Design Guidelines are provided to give guidance to building design. The guidelines are meant to be flexible in their application. Projects should strive to meet the overall objective for each Transect when applying the guidelines.***

Section 21-500.3.5 of the Lawrence SmartCode is proposed to be amended as follows:

**21-500.3.5 ~~Architectural Standards~~ Design Guidelines (T3)**

***Objective: The Sub-Urban Zone consists of low density suburban residential areas, differing by allowing home occupations. Planting is naturalistic with setbacks relatively deep. Blocks may be large and the roads irregular to accommodate natural conditions. Buildings in this Transect shall respond to this less urban environment by ensuring they respect the sub-urban fabric in relation to neighboring structures and respond positively to the pedestrian nature of the area.***

- ~~a. Building wall materials may be combined on each Façade only horizontally, with the heavier below the lighter.~~ ***When multiple building wall materials are combined horizontally they should be combined on each Façade in a manner that places the heavier material at the pedestrian level.***
- b. Streetscreens should be between 3.5 and 6 feet in height and constructed of a material matching the ~~adjacent building Façade~~ ***exterior finishes listed in guideline d.*** The Streetscreen may be replaced by a hedge or fence by Warrant. Streetscreens shall have openings no larger than necessary to allow automobile and pedestrian access.
- ~~c. All openings, including porches, galleries, arcades and windows, with the exception of storefronts, shall be square or vertical in proportion.~~
- ~~c.d.~~ Openings above the first Story shall not exceed ~~540%~~ ***540%*** of the total building wall area, with each Façade being calculated independently.
- ~~e. Doors and windows that operate as sliders are prohibited along Public or Private Frontages.~~
- ~~d.f.~~ Pitched roofs, if provided, shall be ~~symmetrically sloped no less than 5:12, except that porches and attached sheds may be no less than 2:12.~~ The exterior finish material on all Public Façades shall be limited to ***masonry brick***, wood siding, cementitious siding and/ or stucco.
- ~~e.g.~~ Flat roofs shall be enclosed by parapets a minimum of 42 inches high, or as required to conceal mechanical equipment to the satisfaction of the CRC.
- ~~f.h.~~ Balconies and porches shall be made of wood.
- ~~g.i.~~ Fences, if provided at the First Layer, shall be painted. Fences at other Layers may be of wood board or chain link.

Section 21-500.4.5 of the Lawrence SmartCode is proposed to be amended as follows:

**21-500.4.5 ~~Architectural Standards~~ Design Guidelines(T4)**

***Objective: The General Urban Zone consists of a mixed-use but primarily residential urban fabric. It has a wide range of building types: single, sideyard, and rowhouses. Setbacks and landscaping are variable. Streets typically define medium-sized blocks. Buildings in this Transect shall respond to this urban environment by ensuring they respect the residential urban fabric in relation to neighboring structures and respond positively to the pedestrian nature of the area.***

- ~~a. Building wall materials may be combined on each Façade only horizontally, with the heavier below the lighter.~~ ***When multiple building wall materials are combined horizontally they should be combined on each Façade in a manner that places the heavier material at the pedestrian level.***
- b. Streetscreens should be between 3.5 and 6 feet in height and constructed of a material matching the ~~adjacent building Façade~~ ***exterior finishes listed in guideline e.*** The Streetscreen may be replaced by a hedge or fence by Warrant. Streetscreens shall have openings no larger than necessary to allow automobile and pedestrian access.
- ~~c. All openings, including porches, galleries, arcades and windows, with the exception of storefronts, shall be square or vertical in proportion.~~
- ~~c.d.~~ Openings above the first Story shall not exceed ~~540%~~ ***540%*** of the total building wall area, with each Façade being calculated independently.

- ~~e. Doors and windows that operate as sliders are prohibited along Frontages.~~
- ~~f. Pitched roofs, if provided, shall be symmetrically sloped no less than 5:12, except that porches and attached sheds may be no less than 2:12.~~
- ~~d.g.~~ Flat (**low slope**) roofs shall be enclosed by parapets a minimum of 42 inches high, or as required to conceal mechanical equipment to the satisfaction of the CRC.
- ~~e.h.~~ The exterior finish material on all Facades shall be limited to masonry, ~~brick~~, wood siding, cementitious siding and/or stucco.
- ~~f.i.~~ Balconies and porches shall be made of wood or metal.
- ~~g.j.~~ Fences, if provided within the First Layer shall be painted. Fences at other Layers may be of wood board or masonry ~~chain-link~~.

Section 21-500.5.5 of the Lawrence SmartCode is proposed to be amended as follows:

21-500.5.5 ~~Architectural Standards~~ **Design Guidelines(T5)**

***Objective: The Urban Center Zone consists of higher density mixed-use building types that accommodate retail, offices, rowhouses and apartments. It has a tight network of streets, with wide sidewalks, steady street tree planting and buildings set close to the frontages. Buildings in this Transect shall respond to this highly urban environment by ensuring they respect the urban fabric in relation to neighboring structures and respond positively to the pedestrian nature of the area.***

- ~~a. Building wall materials may be combined on each Facade only horizontally, with the heavier below the lighter.~~ ***When multiple building wall materials are combined horizontally they should be combined on each Facade in a manner that places the heavier material at the pedestrian level.***
- b. Streetscreens should be between 3.5 and 8 feet in height and constructed of a material matching the ~~adjacent building Facade~~ ***exterior finishes listed in guideline f.*** The Streetscreen may be replaced by a hedge or fence by Warrant. Streetscreens shall have openings no larger than necessary to allow automobile and pedestrian access.
- ~~e. All openings, including porches, galleries, arcades and windows, with the exception of storefronts, shall be square or vertical in proportion.~~
- ~~c.d.~~ Openings above the first Story shall not exceed ~~54~~40% of the total building wall area, with each Facade being calculated independently.
- ~~d.e.~~ The Facades on Retail Frontages shall be detailed as storefronts and glazed with clear glass no less than 70% of the sidewalk-level story.
- ~~f. Doors and windows that operate as sliders are prohibited along Public and Private Frontages.~~
- ~~g. Buildings may have flat roofs enclosed by parapets or sloped roofs. Pitched roofs shall be symmetrically sloped no less than 5:12, except that porches and attached sheds may be no less than 2:12.~~
- ~~e.h.~~ Flat (**low slope**) roofs shall be enclosed by parapets a minimum of 42 inches high, or as required to conceal mechanical equipment to the satisfaction of the CRC.
- ~~f.i.~~ The exterior finish materials on all Facades shall be limited to ***masonry, stone, brick concrete, cementitious siding*** and/ or stucco.
- ~~g.j.~~ Balconies, galleries and arcades shall be made of concrete, ***masonry, stucco***, painted wood or metal.
- ~~h.k.~~ Streetscreens shall be located coplanar with the Frontage Line as shown in Table 16D.

Section 21-500.6.5 of the Lawrence SmartCode is proposed to be amended as follows:

~~21-500.6.5~~ **Architectural Standards (T5-5)**

- ~~a. Building wall materials may be combined on each Facade only horizontally, with the heavier below the lighter.~~
- ~~b. Streetscreens should be between 4 and 8 feet in height and constructed of a material matching the adjacent building Facade. Streetscreens shall have openings no larger than~~

- ~~necessary to allow automobile and pedestrian access.~~
- ~~c. All openings, including porches, galleries, arcades and windows, with the exception of storefronts, shall be square or vertical in proportion.~~
  - ~~d. Openings above the first Story shall not exceed 50% of the total building wall area, with each Facade being calculated independently.~~
  - ~~e. The Facades on Retail Frontages shall be detailed as storefronts and glazed with clear glass no less than 70% of the sidewalk level story.~~
  - ~~f. Doors and windows that operate as sliders are prohibited along Frontages.~~
  - ~~g. Buildings may have flat roofs enclosed by parapets, or sloped roofs. Pitched roofs shall be symmetrically sloped no less than 5:12, except that porches and attached sheds may be no less than 2:15.~~
  - ~~h. Flat roofs shall be enclosed by parapets a minimum of 42 inches high, or as required to conceal mechanical equipment to the satisfaction of the CRC.~~
  - ~~i. The exterior finish materials on all Facades shall be limited to stone, brick and/ or stucco.~~
  - ~~j. Balconies, galleries and arcades shall be made of concrete, painted wood or metal.~~
  - ~~k. Streetscreens shall be located coplanar with the Frontage Line as shown in Table 16D.~~