



# TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY PLAN COMMISSIONS

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THOMAS C. GIBBONS, DIRECTOR



DATE: January 10, 2020

REF: M-20-16

TO:            President Matt Cherry and Members of Council, City of Toledo

FROM:        Toledo City Plan Commission, Thomas C. Gibbons, Secretary

SUBJECT:     Text Amendment to modify TMC§1109.0500 Building Façade Materials  
and Color

The Toledo City Plan Commission considered the above-referenced request at its meeting on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at 2:00 P.M.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Subject

Request	-	Text Amendment to modify TMC 1109.0500 Building Façade Materials and Color
Applicant	-	Toledo City Plan Commission One Government Center, Suite 1620 Toledo, OH 43604

### Applicable Plans and Regulations

- Toledo Municipal Code, Part Eleven: Planning and Zoning Code

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The request is a Text Amendment to the Toledo Municipal Code Chapter 1109 *Design Standards*, pertaining to Section 1109.0500 *Building Façade Materials and Color*. Additionally, a minor text amendment is required to Section 1109.0100 *Multi-Dwellings and Duplexes*.

The purpose of this proposed text amendment is to update and simplify the building materials and colors which are permitted for multi-family, commercial, mixed use, institutional, and large-scale retail developments. The existing code does not provide regulations for some modern building materials, including metal panels and architectural concrete masonry units. The existing code is more subjective than would be desired, leaving the approval of multiple materials solely to the Planning Director. Additionally, the existing code does not clarify what is meant by “subtle, neutral, or earth tone” colors and does not identify a percent threshold that these colors must meet.

## STAFF ANALYSIS (Cont'd)

The proposed text amendment will create a simplified matrix of Major (80%), Minor (20%) and Prohibited building materials and building colors. Major building materials include those which have historically been approved as predominant materials, such as brick, stone, and glass, as well as up-and-coming materials such as architectural metal panels. Minor building materials include a variety of options such as wood and siding, architectural concrete masonry units (CMU), and exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS), subject to more specific standards. Stucco is also being demoted to a minor building material. The major building color section better defines subtle, neutral, and earth tone. Nearly any color is permitted as a minor building color, allowing for creativity and branding in architecture. Materials and colors which are unsafe or would create unsightly nuisance conditions are prohibited. A note has been added to acknowledge the continued development of new products in the future, and allow them with proper vetting and analysis.

### Research with Design Professionals in Toledo

Since 2016, Plan Commission staff has hosted a series of meetings with architects, planners, and developers to gather input on new and up-and-coming building materials and best practices for using and regulating building facade colors. Based on input from these meetings, architectural metal panels are a popular feature in modern architecture and should be permitted. Clarification of the definition of “glass” was desired, and if the material is required to be transparent. Concerns regarding the durability of stucco were also raised. Stucco is best suited for dry, arid climates and does not hold up well when exposed to excessive moisture. Toledo’s humid continental climate provides a significant amount of moisture which can damage the material. Stucco also has a similar appearance to EIFS, leading to confusion and potential deception in the site plan approval and inspection process. Lastly, the existing code section has been deemed subjective in interpretation because it leaves the approval of multiple building materials solely to the Planning Director, and because it does not clarify a threshold of what “building trim and accent areas” may permit brighter colors.

### Research of other cities in Ohio

Cities across Ohio are beginning to move towards stronger form-based requirements. Columbus and Cleveland both have building form standards for specific districts. Youngstown also has standards for façade treatment and encourages the use of masonry, wood, plaster, stucco, stone, brick, marble, and terra cotta. Additionally, metal facades are discouraged and new infill is required to compliment existing adjacent structures. In regards to building color, Youngstown’s Standards for Development state that “neutrals, earthtones and natural materials in subdued shades are encouraged. Bold, vibrant colors or color schemes, including fluorescents and neons, may not add to the quality of a project and shall be subject to stringent review.”

## STAFF ANALYSIS (Cont'd)

### Research of other cities nationwide

When researching best practices for regulating building materials and color, staff found form-based codes across the country that offered a threshold of “major” materials and “minor” materials, or similar language. Burlington, VT; South Salt Lake City, UT; St. Louis Park, MS; and Boulder Pass, CO all use the threshold of at least 80% major materials and less than 20% minor materials. These form-based codes allow for the same major materials which staff is proposing in this text amendment including brick, stone, glass, and in multiple cases, architectural metal panels. Minor materials allowed by other cities include architectural CMU, fiber cement, architectural metal, and EIFS. Many cities also use language such as “subtle, neutral, and earth tone” to describe permitted major colors, with other colors permitted as accents.

### Use Regulations

The existing code already permits the majority of the proposed materials. Additionally, the current language states that “facades should be low-reflectance, subtle, neutral, or earth tone colors,” and that “building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors.” This proposed text amendment will expand the list of permitted materials to include metal composite materials, insulated metal panels, architectural CMU, and more. The amendment will also create a clear and uniform threshold for façade breakdowns of both materials and color.

The existing Building Materials and Color regulations pertain to TMC§1109.0100 *Multi-Dwellings and Duplexes*; TMC§1109.0200 *Commercial, Mixed Use and Institutional Design Standards*; and TMC§1109.033 *Large Scale Retail Projects*. An amendment to TMC§1109.0100 is being proposed to change the wording of the section heading from “Multi-Dwellings and Duplexes” to “Multi-Dwellings.” Duplexes are a low-medium intensity residential use that can be found within many residential neighborhoods of Toledo; they do not need to be regulated like apartment complexes and commercial buildings. The Plan Commission has not historically reviewed the design of duplexes and does not intend to review them after the adoption of this proposed text amendment.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendment in order to update which façade materials and colors are permitted, and simplify how the code section is written.

## PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission recommends that the Toledo City Council approve the text amendment regarding Building Façade Materials and Color, amending TMC§1109.0500 as shown in Exhibit "A" and TMC§1109.0100, as shown in Exhibit "B" for the following reason:

1. The proposed text amendments meet the challenge of a changing condition where up-and-coming building materials are not currently permitted. The proposed text amendment also corrects an inconsistency in the zoning code where the Plan Commission does not review the design of duplexes. (TMC§1111.0506(A) Review and Decision-Making Criteria).

Respectfully Submitted,



Thomas C. Gibbons  
Secretary

ML  
Exhibit "A" Follows  
Exhibit "B" Follows

CC: Lisa Cottrell, Administrator  
Matt Lascheid, Associate Planner  
Dana Doubler, Planner

**Exhibit “A”**  
Existing Code Section

**1109.0500 | Building Façade Materials and Color**

This section establishes façade materials and colors to be used with building design standards unless otherwise stated.

**Façade Materials**

Predominant exterior building materials shall be high-quality materials. For facades visible from the public right-of-way, predominant materials must comprise at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the total wall area of the façade. These include, but are not limited to:

brick;

wood;

natural stone, cut stone, field stone, cast stone;

glass;

stucco; and

exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) or equivalent product when 36 inches above grade and not within an entryway, and comprising less than fifteen (15%) of the façade;

materials with a brick-like appearance such as “Founders Brick” or similar material.

The Planning Director may approve:

prefabricated metal panels;

colored, fluted and textured concrete block as a building trim or accent area;

tilt-up masonry panels; and

vinyl siding.

Predominant exterior building materials shall not include the following:

concrete blocks;

smooth-faced tilt-up concrete panels; and

wood sheet goods.

(Ord. 26-07. Passed 1-2-07.)

**Façade Colors**

Facade colors shall be low-reflectance, subtle, neutral or earth tone colors. Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors, including primary colors subject to the approval of the Planning Director.

Façade colors within Commercial Storefront (CS) districts shall be harmonious with the overall appearance, history and cultural heritage of the area.

**Exhibit “A”**  
Proposed Code Section

**1109.0500 | Building Façade Materials and Color**

This section establishes façade materials and colors to be used with building design standards. The following standards apply to:

- A. Multi-dwellings (as outlined in Sec. 1109.0100)
- B. Commercial, Mixed Use, and Institutional buildings (as outlined in Sec. 1109.0200)
- C. Large-Scale Retail Projects (as outlined in Sec. 1109.0300)

Building material standards apply to all facades that are visible from the right-of-way. Building color standards apply to all exterior elevations regardless of right-of-way visibility. Percentages apply to each façade individually.

	Building Material	Building Color
<b>Major (At least 80%)</b>	Brick [1] Stone [2] Glass [3] Metal Composite Materials [4] Insulated Metal Panels [4] Concrete Cladding [5]	Subtle, neutral, and earth-tone (browns; tans; grays; and colors which are desaturated or gray-toned) [10] [11]
<b>Minor (Less than 20%)</b>	Wood [6] Ornamental Metal Cement-Based Stucco Architectural Concrete Masonry Units [7] Fiber Cement Board [8] EIFS [9] Vinyl or Composite Siding Glass Block	Any color, except for colors which are prohibited (see below) [12] [13]
<b>Prohibited</b>	Unfinished Concrete Masonry Units Wood Sheet Goods	Neon / Fluorescent Colors [14] Lead-Based Paints

1. Brick shall be fired and subject to standards outlined by the American Society for Testing and Materials. Thin brick is permitted. Other brick-like masonry, such as Founder’s Brick, is permitted, limited to a height of 4 inches and subject to the approval of the Director. Masonry shall be tinted by integral colors; the painting of brick and masonry requires indefinite upkeep and is discouraged.
2. Natural stone, cut stone, field stone, and cast stone are permitted.
3. Glass, when located between 2 feet and 10 feet at grade from the base of the subject elevation, shall permit views of the building’s interior to a depth of at least 4 feet. Window signage is limited to the ground floor and may cover up to 25% of ground floor glass.
4. Metal composite materials and Insulated metal panels shall meet the following standards:
  - a. Exterior surface shall be smooth flat or flat embossed. Striations, planking, ribbing, or variations in height or depth are discouraged and subject to the approval of the Director.
  - b. Insulated panels shall have a minimum 22 gage face sheet.
  - c. Exposed structural fasteners or seals shall be kept to a minimum.
  - d. Corner trim shall be extruded metal or mitered panels.
  - e. Metal composite materials shall provide a solid, polyethylene, fire-retardant core.
  - f. Materials shall provide at least 70% resin paint finish with a 20 year warranty.
5. Concrete may be cast-in-place or pre-cast cladding. Tilt-up panels are not permitted.

6. Wood shall be primed and painted, or stained, and maintained as such indefinitely for weatherproofing. Wood may be permitted as a Major Material, subject to the approval of the Director.
7. Architectural Concrete Masonry Units include split-faced block and other concrete masonry units which are textured and tinted by integral colors.
8. Fiber Cement Board shall only be located at least eight feet above ground level, measured from the base of the subject elevation.
9. Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS) shall only be located at least eight feet above ground level, measured from the base of the subject elevation.
10. Exceptions
  1. If the property lies in one of the Overlay Districts (See TMC§1103), then the more restrictive regulations shall apply.
  2. Façade colors within Commercial Storefront (CS) districts shall be harmonious with the overall appearance, history and cultural heritage of the area.
11. Property owners are encouraged to choose colors that compliment and are in character with the existing neighborhood.
12. Each building is limited to three (3) different minor colors.
13. Property owners are encouraged to select a lighter minor color when accompanying a shaded major color.
14. Fluorescent colors reflect ultraviolet light as visible light. These create nuisance conditions for neighboring properties and may distract passers-by.

The Plan Commission acknowledges the continued development of new building products and is open to the acceptance of new materials, with proper vetting and analysis to the satisfaction of the Director.

### Exhibit "B"

Proposed deletions are shown in strikethrough text

#### **1109.0100 | Multi-Dwellings and Duplexes**

##### **Orientation**

Where a principal building has a wall facing a street or place, that wall must be parallel to:

the street or place if the street or place is essentially straight; or

the tangent, with the point of tangency at the midpoint of the front lot line between the side lot lines, if the street or place is curved.

##### **Entranceways**

At least one main entrance within each building must face the street, place, or the main access drive within the development. Entrances must include architectural elements that emphasize the entrance, including but are not limited to front porches, transom and sidelight windows, decorative trim and moldings, and arches.

##### **Connecting Walkways and Pedestrian Connections**

Connecting Walkways must be provided for internal pedestrian circulation within the site to connect to street or place sidewalks and to connect parking spaces with the main building entrance. Connecting walkways may cross parking aisles or driveways if distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of durable, low maintenance surface materials such as pavers, bricks, scored concrete or scored and painted asphalt to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort. Raised walkways may be installed if elevated 6 inches with tapered side slopes and meet ADA standards.

Sidewalks must be provided along the street or place property line, pursuant to Sec. 1107.1300. To the maximum extent feasible, provision must be made in the design of developments for connections with existing or future pedestrian systems on adjoining properties, including but not limited to connections to existing or future sidewalks, bikeways and walkways.

Where vehicles extend into or overhang any walkway a 5-foot walkway shall be installed. Other walkways may be 4 or 5 feet in width depending on location and usage.

The on-site pedestrian circulation system must be illuminated to a level where the system can be used at night by residents and visitors.

**1101.0101** See also Sec. 1105.0600 **Error! Reference source not found.**

**1101.0102** See Sec. 0 1109.0500 | Building Façade Materials and **Color** (Ord. 90-15. Passed 03-03-15.)