



Date: August 25, 2026
Department: Planning and Zoning
Presenter: Gina Corson, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Subject: Proposed Exposed Foundation Wall Treatment Standard

Purpose

To obtain Commission direction on whether foundation or basement walls exposed more than an agreed-upon distance above final grade should receive a durable decorative finish. This is a policy-direction item; it is not a public hearing or final adoption of code language.

Background

The LUDC does not clearly address the appearance of exposed concrete or concrete-masonry foundation and basement walls. On sloped sites and walkout-basement designs, these walls can become prominent exterior building surfaces even when the construction complies with applicable structural and building-code requirements.

Staff proposes a combined 12-inch/50-percent test. If more than 50 percent of the horizontal length of any exterior building elevation has more than 12 inches of foundation or basement wall exposed above adjacent final grade, the full exposed foundation area on that elevation would receive an approved durable architectural finish. Plans would identify the treatment, and compliance would be verified after final grading and before final approval or issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Recommended Action

Staff recommends approving the general policy framework so it can be incorporated into the LUDC redesign. Approval would not resolve the remaining implementation matters, including the final threshold, measurement method, applicability to different elevations and building types, approved materials, treatment of paint or coatings, technical exceptions, review authority, and enforcement. Those items would return for additional technical review and Commission consideration.

Fiscal Impact

No immediate fiscal impact is anticipated from providing policy direction. The final standard would primarily affect applicant design, material, inspection, and documentation costs.

Strategic or Community Impact

A defined finish standard would improve architectural consistency, provide predictable requirements for applicants, and allow foundation treatment to be reviewed before construction rather than addressed after final grading.

Attachments

- Proposed Exposed Foundation Wall Treatment Standard
- Attachment A — Exposed Foundation Thresholds and Materials Discussion Guide

Suggested Motion

I move to direct staff and the LUDC consultant to develop regulations substantially consistent with the proposed Exposed Foundation Wall Treatment Standard, requiring an approved durable architectural finish when more than 50 percent of any exterior building elevation has more than 12 inches of foundation or basement wall exposed above final grade, with the remaining implementation details returning to the Commission for further consideration.