

# **City of Columbus Zoning Code Rewrite**

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**Plan Commission  
May 14, 2026  
Historic Preservation Discussion**



# Today's Discussion

- Last Meeting (March 12)
  - Parking
- Today (May 14)
  - Present draft Historic Preservation Code sections and review key policy questions or changes with the Plan Commission

# Code Organization

## Proposed Reorganization of the Zoning Code

- Article 1: Introduction
- **Article 2: Establishment of Zoning Districts**
- Article 3: Land Use Regulations
- Article 4: Bulk Regulations
- Article 5: Nonconforming Situations

- Article 6: Performance Standards
- **Article 7: Exterior Building Design Standards**
- Article 8: Landscaping Requirements
- Article 9: Signage
- **Article 10: Administration and Procedures**
- Article 11: Definitions

Historic Preservation Overlay District  
DMU District

DMU District – Downtown Design Standards

← Part 2

Downtown Design Review

# Existing Code Outline

- Zoning Code Division 9 – Historic Sites and Structures
- Section 114-173 through 114-187 includes:
  - purpose and intent
  - HLP Commission composition
  - HLP Commission powers and duties
  - Designation criteria
  - Designation procedures
  - Regulated work
  - Certificate of appropriateness procedures
  - Certificate of economic hardship
  - Misc. provisions
- Basically, a standard CLG (Certified Local Government) code

# Applicability of Existing Ordinance

- Only applies to **designated** local landmarks (structures, sites, neighborhoods, districts)
- Must be formally designated via ordinance procedures
  - Must follow nomination process
  - Current code has HLPC as final decider
- All alterations must receive certificate of appropriateness
  - Reviewed against historic preservation plan
  - HLPC approval within 45 days
  - Appealed to Council

# New Ordinance Approach

- Keep Historic Preservation Overlay (CLG) for formally designated local landmarks
- Add new Downtown Design Standards for DMU zoning district
  - Achieve community character goals in the downtown
  - Protecting community character doesn't necessarily require a formally designated downtown historic district

# Downtown Design District

- New ordinance creates downtown design standards applicable in the DMU (downtown) district
- Not an overlay, but:
  - Has standards specific to that zoning district
  - Has signage standards specific to that zoning district
  - Requires downtown design or alterations review (not a certificate of appropriateness)
  - Approval authority can be Plan Commission
    - Can have HLPC recommendation or not
    - PC action would be similar to site plan review in different districts
  - Doesn't apply to any historic resources outside of the DMU

# Example Standards

- Design theme:
  - Historic, pedestrian oriented development pattern... mixed-uses... minimal setbacks... on street parking... architectural styles popular at the time... Storefront facades... horizontal and vertical patterns... regularly spaced windows and doors...
- Setbacks
  - from DMU district
- Building mass
  - proportionate height and width from theme shall be maintained...
- Façade articulation
  - Required every 40 feet (recesses or projections – may be vertical or horizontal, may be achieved with materials, or structural breaks)

# Example Standards

- Materials
- Colors
  - Period-appropriate color palette examples include the Sherwin Williams historic exterior collections

# Historic Preservation Overlay

- Can keep the basic function of the existing ordinance
- Applies to designated properties, not to the downtown unless designated as such
- Unlocks certain state resources
  - grant for architectural survey, etc., tax credits for property owners
- Comes with added layer of governance
  - may be desired in some cases and not in others

# Policy Questions

- Keep Historic Preservation Overlay for use with designated landmarks?
- Use DMU Design Standards for downtown character?
- PC approval authority for downtown design review or add HLPC recommendation?