



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES STAFF MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 12, 2026  
**TO:** Mayor and Board of Trustees  
**FROM:** Emily Weber, Contract Staff - Planning Department  
**SUBJECT:** **LEGISLATIVE** – Ordinance 01-2026 – Board of Trustees discussion and decision on the proposed Town Code text amendments regarding the Central Business District and applicable design standards.

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### **Overview and Analysis**

At the direction of the Board of Trustees, staff prepared language for the Central Business District (CBD) Design Standards guidebook. The guidebook is intended to be a supplemental resource to reinforce the language in the Town Code related to the historic western character of Grand Lake. To support the guidebook, staff proposes text amendments to the Town Code that modify the boundary of the CBD and reference the design standards.



*Proposed Central Business District Boundary*

The proposed text amendments and guidebook establish clear, actionable design standards that ensure new development and redevelopment are compatible with Grand Lake’s unique identity while supporting development feasibility. The guidebook enhances existing code language and further emphasizes the desired character. Additionally, the guidebook provides a more precise definition of “historic western” character in the context of Grand Lake by identifying common architectural elements that contribute to this identity.

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## **Background**

The proposed text amendments and guidebook have been discussed in multiple forums over the past several months. Feedback was gathered during regular public hearings, a Board workshop in September, and through general Planning Commission and Board of Trustees discussions at public meetings. The proposed design standards reflect a compilation of all input received throughout this process.

On October 22, 2025, the Planning Commission and Board of Trustees held a joint work session to review the intent and details of the proposed design standards language. Based on feedback from that discussion, staff revised the language and presented it to the Planning Commission for consideration on December 3, 2025. The Board of Trustees then reviewed the Planning Commission's recommendations and discussed changes to the proposed design standards at their December 8, 2025 meeting. Key discussion points from that meeting included:

- The Board discussed removing metal, stone, and stucco as primary exterior building materials and prohibiting corrugated metal in all forms. They also discussed adding a definition for corrugated metal. Other metal types are to remain as acceptable accent materials, provided they meet existing Town Code criteria.
- Clarification that the maximum setback should be measured from the property line to the building wall, excluding covered overhangs or structures.
- The Board supported changing a connectivity design standard to allow one of three options: a structured cover over the boardwalk, a covered entrance, or a recessed entrance. This provides design flexibility while maintaining pedestrian amenities and protection from the elements.
- Ensuring an exemption from constructing commercial parking spaces or paying a fee in lieu when the Town does not permit parking within the adjacent right-of-way.
- The Board supported removing "excessive variation" per the Planning Commission's recommendation and discussed requiring pitched roof elements, either as part of the overall roof design or as an accent feature.
- The Board discussed removing the mullion requirement for windows.
- A general request was made to remove subjective language throughout the standards.

## **Summary of Guidebook**

The proposed Central Business District Design Standards guidebook is intended to supplement the Town Code by providing clear guidance on key design elements that define Grand Lake's unique character. These standards draw inspiration from the Town's historical and existing structures and are organized into six main categories: color and material selections, ground level interest, connectivity, parking, rooflines, and windows.

The guidebook's purpose is to clarify and reinforce elements already addressed in the Town Code. In some cases, the standards build upon existing provisions. For example, the street wall standard. Where the Town Code allows for discretion, the guidebook introduces a maximum setback to maintain a consistent street wall along Grand Avenue. Additionally, for areas where the Code is suggestive or subjective, the guidebook expands on architectural elements and includes supporting visuals to aid interpretation. In situations where prescriptive standards may not be appropriate, the intent is to guide design decisions in a way that preserves and enhances the character of Grand Lake. The full guidebook is provided as an attachment to this staff report.



**Proposed Town Code Text Amendments**

1. Section 12-2-26 (A) of the Municipal Code of the Town of Grand Lake with the addition of the **bold underlined** language as follows:

(A) *Mixed-Use Regulations for the CT, C and RST Districts.*

1. Mixed-use developments in the above listed districts will be subject to the following supplementary regulations. These regulations are minimum requirements and will also apply to Planned Developments within these districts.
2. Multiple family dwellings may be constructed above commercial uses provided:
  - (a) Access to dwelling units is not through commercial establishments.
  - (b) Trash, service and loading areas shall be screened from view from the dwelling units and from street entrances to dwelling units.
  - (c) Outdoor lighting associated with commercial uses within the structure, including lighting for parking, service and loading areas, shall be designed and located such that the direct source is not visible from any dwelling unit within nor shall there be any glare.
  - (d) At least two (2) means of ingress and egress from each floor of dwelling units shall be provided and that all other regulations as may pertain to fire protection be met.
3. Mixed-Use projects shall conform to the following schedule of (Private) Open Space Land Area Requirements:

Group	Gross Square Footage of Floor Area Of Structure or Land Use Area	Land Use or Floor Area	Minimum Open Space Land Area Required
I.	75%—99%	Commercial (C.)/ Office (O.)	20%
	25%—1%	Residential (R.)	
II.	50%—75%	C. & O.	25%
	50%—25%	R.	
III.	25%—50%	C. & O.	35%
	75%—50%	R.	
IV.	10%—25%	C. & O.	45%
	90%—75%	R.	
V.	1%—9%	C. & O.	50%
	99%—91%	R.	

4. In all applicable districts, the developer shall submit a proposal for the Open Space Land Area Required for Mixed-Use projects. The Open Space Land Area Requirement is to be provided on-site, in accordance with the Section 12-2-6 Definitions.
5. **When a mixed-use development is located within the Central Business District, it must comply with all applicable design standards outlined in the Central Business District Design Standards guidebook.**

2. Section 12-7-2 - Purpose of the Municipal Code of the Town of Grand Lake with the addition of the **bold underlined** language as follows:

An historical perspective is extremely important to the Town, therefore it is the intent that new materials and innovations will strengthen and be harmonious with the "historic western" feel of the



Town. A creative and rigorous approach to the best selection and application of building materials will generate a more inviting, vibrant and harmonious appearance to the Town.

As Grand Lake becomes more densely built, there is a need to create a symbiotic relationship between buildings and public and open spaces. The Town of Grand Lake seeks to preserve the historical, rustic, and unique western small-town character of Grand Lake while also integrating its preservation with new and pioneering creative designs. Intending to help enhance quality and strengthen visual continuity while preserving historically significant properties, allowing innovation and encouraging creativity, the purpose of these standards is to stimulate creative design solutions for individual properties while promoting and preserving a sense of cohesiveness among the entire Town of Grand Lake.

A successful project will combine the design elements of composition, scale, proportion and rhythm in proposed materials, surfaces and massing, designing buildings, open and public spaces that are timeless and in character with our Town and harmonious to the human eye. In addition, materials, surfaces and massing create a sense of entry and a desirable sense of place.

The provisions of this Article shall apply to any structure, including temporary facilities, within the Town limits on or after the effective date of the Ordinance for the following:

- (A) New construction of any building.
- (B) Exterior remodeling or painting of any existing building, even if a Town of Grand Lake Building Permit is not required.
- (C) Re-roofing, enlargements, expansions of or additions to any existing building.

**Where a property is located within the Central Business District and meets the above criteria, both the design standards in this Article and those in the *Central Business District Design Standards* guidebook shall apply. If a conflict arises between the provisions of this Article and the *Central Business District Design Standards*, the more stringent shall apply. Where the *Central Business District Design Standards* guidebook is silent, the provisions of this Article shall apply.**

3. Section 12-7-3 - Definitions of the Municipal Code of the Town of Grand Lake with the removal of the ~~striketrough~~ language and the addition of the **bold underlined** language as follows:

**Central Business District**— Commercially zoned, or commercial transitionally zoned lots **generally located Hancock Street on the east to Broadway Street on the west, and from Park Avenue on the north to the shoreline of Grand Lake on the south. The boundary also includes properties along Lake Avenue and curves around the Grand Lake Yacht Club before returning to Hancock Street. Properties within the CBD are subject to the *Central Business District Design Standards*, a supplemental guidebook that establishes specific design requirements and development goals for this district. The guidebook also provides a map identifying the exact boundaries of the Central Business District.** ~~on or between Hancock Street and Haskell Street, on Grand Avenue, and between Hancock Street and Vine Street on Park Avenue, and between Hancock Street and Ellsworth Street on Lake Avenue.~~

4. Section 12-7-3 (C) (3) (e) of the Municipal Code of the Town of Grand Lake with the removal of the ~~striketrough~~ language and the addition of the **bold underlined** language as follows:

(e) **Infill/building additions in the central business district.**

1. When a new use (infill)/addition is proposed to an existing commercial development the newly constructed portion of the building should appear as an originally conceived part of the design.



The new additions should match the scale and reflect the proportions of the original structure where they adjoin or are adjacent. New construction of a different height and bulk, than that of the original structure, should not occur abruptly.

2. New additions should match the existing approved architecture of the existing central business district. See for example, Figures 1 and 2 below. Such matching approval shall be in the sole discretion of the Town. The extension of canopy elements, lighting, boardwalks, planting areas, fenestration (window) patterns, structural rhythms, and use of materials should exhibit a seamless transition between existing and new construction.
3. Large setbacks from the street rights-of-way should be discouraged for new building construction.
4. New construction should not incorporate precise replication of town center architecture but utilize similar colors, materials, textures, pattern, repetition, rhythm, and proportions to achieve architectural unity.
5. **All properties within the Central Business District shall meet the standards established in the Central Business District Design Standards guidebook.**

#### **Board of Trustees Consideration**

The Board of Trustees of the Town of Grand Lake, Colorado, pursuant to Colorado statute and the provisions of the Grand Lake Municipal Code, is vested with the authority to make amendments to the Town Code. Board members are encouraged to review and evaluate the proposed text amendments and supplemental design guidelines, taking into account the Planning Commission's recommendations and public comments received during the public hearing. In doing so, the Board should consider the implications of these amendments and guidelines and proceed to make an appropriate motion.

#### **Sample Board of Trustees Motions**

##### Approval with or without conditions

I move to approve Ordinance 01-2026, amending Town Code Sections 12-2-26, 12-7-2, 12-7-3, and 12-7-4 regarding the Central Business District and Applicable Design Standards.

##### OR... with the following conditions:

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##### Denial

I move to deny Ordinance 01-2026, amending Town Code Sections 12-2-26, 12-7-2, 12-7-3, and 12-7-4 regarding the Central Business District and Applicable Design Standards, based on the following factors:

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#### **Attachments**

- Draft Central Business District Design Standards Guidebook
- Ordinance