



**AGENDA**  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION – WORK SESSION  
November 4, 2019 7PM

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1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
3. DISCUSSION
  - A. Form Based Code initiative
4. PUBLIC REMARKS
5. ADJOURNMENT

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact: Principal Planner Peter Menser, 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 or 517.853.4576 - Ten Day Notice is Required.  
Meeting Location: 5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864 Township Hall

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**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Peter Menser, Principal Planner

**Date:** September 20, 2019

**Re:** Form-Based Code – Part 4. Building Code Standards

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The Planning Commission discussed the Form-Based Code (FBC) draft at a work session prior to the regular meeting on October 28, 2019. Since the meeting staff has made most of the changes identified at the last work session, with some exceptions related to the ordering of sections as the formatting of the current document from the consultant team doesn't lend well to wholesale reshuffling of sections and insertion of new text. Staff will work to address the formatting/file issues in a future draft.

**Attachments**

1. Draft form based code ordinance revised November 1, 2019.
2. Chair Scott-Craig comments dated October 29, 2019.

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# Part 1. Purpose and Intent

## 101. Overview

The purpose of this Form-Based Code (FBC) district is to create a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-supportive mixed-use environment along the Grand River Avenue corridor that aligns with the goals and objectives of the Meridian Township Master Plan. In order to maintain or create traditional urban design and to preserve and enhance community character, this district places a primary emphasis on placemaking (physical form and character) and a secondary focus on land uses. The **Grand River Avenue Overlay** Form District is an optional **???** corridor overlay; either the new FBC standards or the underlying zoning district may be selected at the time of (re)development. This optional overlay FBC provides flexibility to development through parking and dimensional requirements, height bonuses when certain amenities are included, and is overall more efficient through the development submittal process. Additionally, the Grand River Avenue Design Form District Guidelines was created as a companion document to the Form-Based Code district. These guidelines serve as a design tool for redevelopment to ensure that the standards and intent of the form district are met regarding architecture, signage, lighting, streetscaping, landscaping, and street design.

## 102. Form District Components

This district includes the following sub-sections:

### A. Administration

*Part 2. Administration* covers those aspects of the application and approval process that are unique to developing in this Form District. These standards form an optional corridor overlay district, where either these standards or the underlying zoning district may be selected at the time of (re)development. If this optional overlay is selected, all aspects of these district standards apply.

### B. Regulating Plan

*Part 3. Regulating Plan* is the application key for the Form District. Comparable to the zoning map, this plan provides specific information on the development parameters for parcels within the districts based on street frontage. The general parameters for the Regulating Plan are between the Township's western boundary along Grand River Avenue to **Park Lake Road** ~~the railroad~~ to the east. However, the district boundaries may be expanded in the future by Meridian Township or by the request of a property owner into the future expansion area as shown on the Regulating Plan.

### C. The Building Form Standards

*Part 4. Building Form Standards* establishes the development standards for parcels within the Form Districts and includes building height bonuses if certain amenities are provided.

### D. Parking and Loading Standards

*Part 5. Parking and Loading Standards* provide goals and requirements to promote a "park once" pedestrian-friendly, multi-modal environment within these districts.

## E. Building Use Standards

*Part 6. Building Use Standards* establishes the broad range of uses allowed in the districts.

## F. Definitions

*Part 7. Definitions* covers certain terms that are used in these district regulations in very specific ways, often excluding some of the meanings of common usage. Defined terms are shown in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

# 103. How to Use this Form District

### ***I want to know what is allowed for my property:***

Look at the Township Zoning Map and determine if property in question is located within a Form District.

#### ***If yes:***

1. Look at the REGULATING PLAN. Note the color of the fronting STREET-SPACE—this determines the applicable BUILDING FORM STANDARD (see the key located on the REGULATING PLAN).
2. Find the applicable building form standard in *Part 4. Building Form Standards*. (Note the *General Standards* in *Part 402* that apply to all properties in the Form Districts.) The BUILDING FORM STANDARD will tell you the parameters for development on the site in terms of height, placement, elements, and use.
3. Additional regulations regarding parking requirements, building materials, and permitted building uses are found in the following sections: *Part 5. Parking and Loading Standards*; and *Part 6. Building Uses*. See also Section 86-367 of the Township's *Code of Ordinances* for information on plans for the public rights-of-way.
4. See *Part 2. Administration and Application Process* for information on the development review process.

#### ***If no:***

1. ***I want to modify an existing building:*** *If one of these districts is applicable to your property, determine whether your intended changes would trigger a level of code compliance by looking at the Part 2, Table 202 Applicability Levels. If yes, follow the process delineated therein (and the indicated portions of steps 2-4, above).*
2. ***I want to establish a new use in an existing building:*** *Find the property on the REGULATING PLAN and determine the applicable BUILDING FORM STANDARD. Determine whether the use is allowed by looking at the Permitted Use Table in Part 6. Building Uses. Also, determine whether your intended changes would trigger a level of code compliance by looking at the Part 2, Table 202 Applicability Levels.*
3. ***I want to change the Regulating Plan regarding my property:*** *See Part 302, Amending a REGULATING PLAN.*
4. ***I want to subdivide my property:*** *Property can only be subdivided in accordance with the procedures of Chapter 62 of the Township's Code of Ordinances. Any such subdivision of a property within a Form District shall also meet the Form District standards.*

## Part 2. Administration

### 201. Application of Regulations

Within the Grand River Avenue Overlay all requirements of the Meridian Township Zoning Ordinance shall apply, except as modified by this Section. When applying the regulations of the Form Districts, if regulations elsewhere within this ordinance conflict or appear to conflict with the regulations in this Section, the regulations of this Section shall apply.

### 202. Applicability

#### A. Grand River Avenue Overlay Form District

Properties located in the Grand River Overlay Form District, as designated on the Zoning Map, ~~may elect to~~ shall follow the requirements of this district as outlined in this Article. ~~If this Article is elected, d~~Development proposals shall comply with all applicable provisions of this Article, unless otherwise modified by the Township Board. Refer to Part 3. Regulating Plans and the maps therein to determine the applicability of the FBC.

Table 202 indicates when the FBC overlay and sections of the code are applicable based on different development scenarios, including new construction, expansion of a building and/or parking area, change in use, and façade changes.

<b>Table 202: Applicability Levels</b>	<b>Building Form Standard: Height</b>	<b>Building Form Standard: Siting</b>	<b>Building Form Standard: Elements</b>	<b>Building Form Standard: Uses</b>	<b>Architectural Standards: Dooryard and Private Open Space</b>	<b>Architectural Standards: Materials</b>	<b>Architectural Standards: Signs</b>	<b>Public Realm Standards</b>	<b>Parking: Location</b>	<b>Parking: Quantity</b>
<b>New Construction</b>	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	X
<b>Expansion of Gross Floor Area:</b>										
0%-25% of gross floor area						O	O			
26% - 50% of gross floor area	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	
51% or more of gross floor area	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	X
<b>Changes in Use:</b>										
Does not require additional parking or building additions				X						
Requires additional parking or expand the parking lot by more than 10% from the approved site plan			X	X	O	O		O	X	X
<b>Expansion of Parking Area</b>		X	X		O	O		O	X	
<b>Façade Changes</b>			X		O	O	O			

**Note:** Improvements to nonconforming sites, structures and uses are also subject to review according to *Article V, Division 6: Nonconforming*.

**X:** This is a required provision

**O:** This is an encouraged optional provision

## 203. Plan Review

### A. Site Plan:

1. Development requiring Site Plan Review shall follow the Site Plan Review process set forth in *Article II, Division 5: Site Plan Review* and shall meet the standards described in Part 4. Building Form Standards. For traffic impact studies, certain cases may reduce the requirements per Section 203.B.
2. Provide information available on any existing or foreseen environmental issues per *Section 86-156 Review Criteria*. Building placement requirements may be reconfigured by staff if the presence of a flood plain or wetland on the parcel prohibits development envisioned by the code.
3. In addition to the Site Plan Review process, for redevelopment projects, or those seeking height bonuses where a public hearing is not required the applicant is encouraged to host a public workshop with adjacent neighbors or neighborhood to provide information on the proposed development and seek input. This should typically be held before submittal of an application, but following a preapplication meeting to obtain input from the Community Planning & Development Director.
4. Approvals are obtained from the Planning Commission, Township Board, or Community Planning & Development Director, depending upon the nature of the proposed construction or use. Where Township Board approval is required, it shall be based upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission. Where the Ordinance allows the Township to grant modifications to a specific requirement, the approval authority shall be the body with the authority to grant the associated modification or waiver, based upon the standards provided in that section. Variances may only be granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) per *Article II*.
5. Activities and uses that are exempt from site plan approval still require a building permit. All construction or building modification is subject to Township building permit requirements of the Building Division.

### B. Traffic Impact Study:

1. The Zoning Ordinance requires a traffic impact study when a use including when there is a change in a use or expansion, is expected to generate 100 or more directional trips in a peak hour, based on the current edition of the ITE Trip Generation Manual. The typical study includes an evaluation of site access points and nearby signalized intersections including current conditions, impacts associated with the development, and the mitigation needed to address those impacts.

The Community Planning & Development Director shall make a determination if a development or redevelopment under this Form-Based Code may reduce the extent of the traffic analysis required to just the operations at the site access points in consideration of the following:

- a. The development includes a mixture of uses to reduce traffic trips (refer to the methodology for trip reduction factors in the ITE Trip Manual and Handbook).

- b. Non-motorized amenities are provided to promote travel options as an alternative to driving a vehicle such as:
  - Upgraded bike parking beyond what is required (such as covered or indoor parking, bicycle repair station, showers for commuters, etc.).
  - Transit amenities, such as shelters or seating, endorsed by CATA.
  - The employer offers a program to encourage non-automotive travel such as bus passes to employees or incentives to walk, bicycle, or use transit.
- c. Existing nonconforming driveways are closed to improve safety for all types of travel.
- d. Other site amenities or programs similar to the above.

## 204. Deviations from Approved Site Plan

Upon application and payment of the fee in the amount established in the schedule of fees adopted by the Township Board, modifications to an approved site plan may be granted by the Director of Community Planning and Development, provided that such changes conform to the provisions of this chapter and all other Township, county, state, and federal laws and regulations.

For building height, the following modifications are permitted to be granted by the Director of Community Planning and Development. For additional height increases, please refer to 402.B Height Bonuses:

### A. Height

1. Up to five percent for any cumulative increase (or decrease) in building height, as long as it does not exceed the maximum (or minimum) allowed building height in feet.
2. Finished floor elevation – up to six inches.



## Part 3. Regulating Plans

### 301. Purpose and Intent

- A. A REGULATING PLAN is the controlling document and principal tool for implementing the Form Districts. It is a subset of the zoning map.
- B. The REGULATING PLAN makes the Form District development standards place-specific by:
1. identifying the boundaries of the district;
  2. laying out a specific street and BLOCK configuration, including new streets; and
  3. designating the BUILDING FORM STANDARDS for each STREET-SPACE (BUILDING FORM STANDARDS are regulated in *Part 4. Building Form Standards*);

### 302. Expanding District or Amending Regulating Plan

- A. Amendments to the adopted REGULATING PLAN are permitted as follows:
1. An expansion of the Regulating Plan into the future expansion area as identified on the Regulating Plan (303).
  2. Additional adjustments may be allowed subject to the process and procedures enumerated in *Part 2. Administration*.
  3. Any other changes to an adopted REGULATING PLAN shall meet all the criteria of this chapter and will require a rezoning.

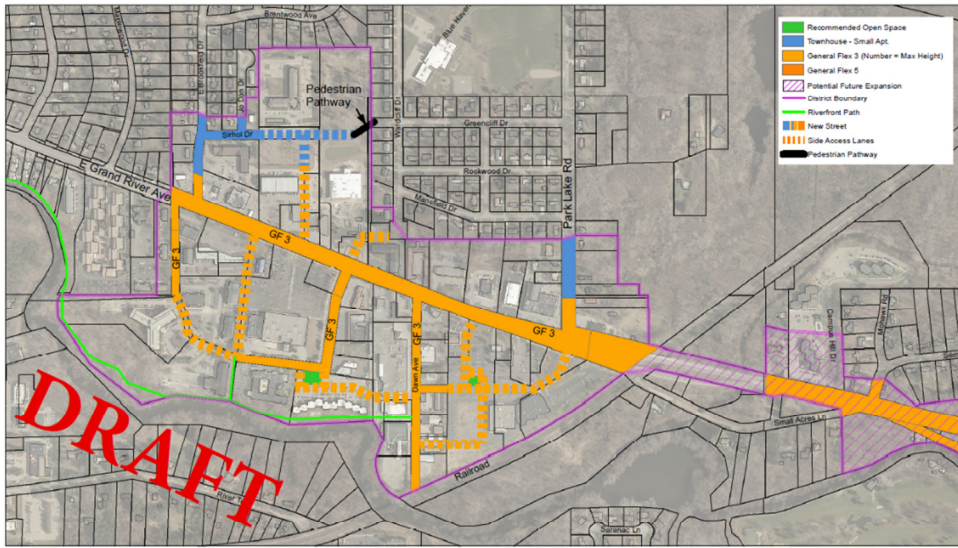
### 303. Regulating Plan Configurations

#### A. Streets

A high level of connectivity is desired in the Form District to provide people with ample opportunity to walk, bicycle, or travel by vehicle within the district without a need to drive along Grand River Ave. for short trips. As sites redevelop, this connectivity shall be provided through an internal transportation network that links to the existing or planned non-motorized systems, and to existing local streets. New connections between sites should be provided as shown on the Regulating Plan including new streets, rear service drives, links between parking lots, and non-motorized pathways. The locations shown are flexible and may be aligned in a different manner provided the goal for connectivity is met. These street connections may be public streets that meet the standards of the Ingham County Roads Department or private roads that meet the requirements of Meridian Township.

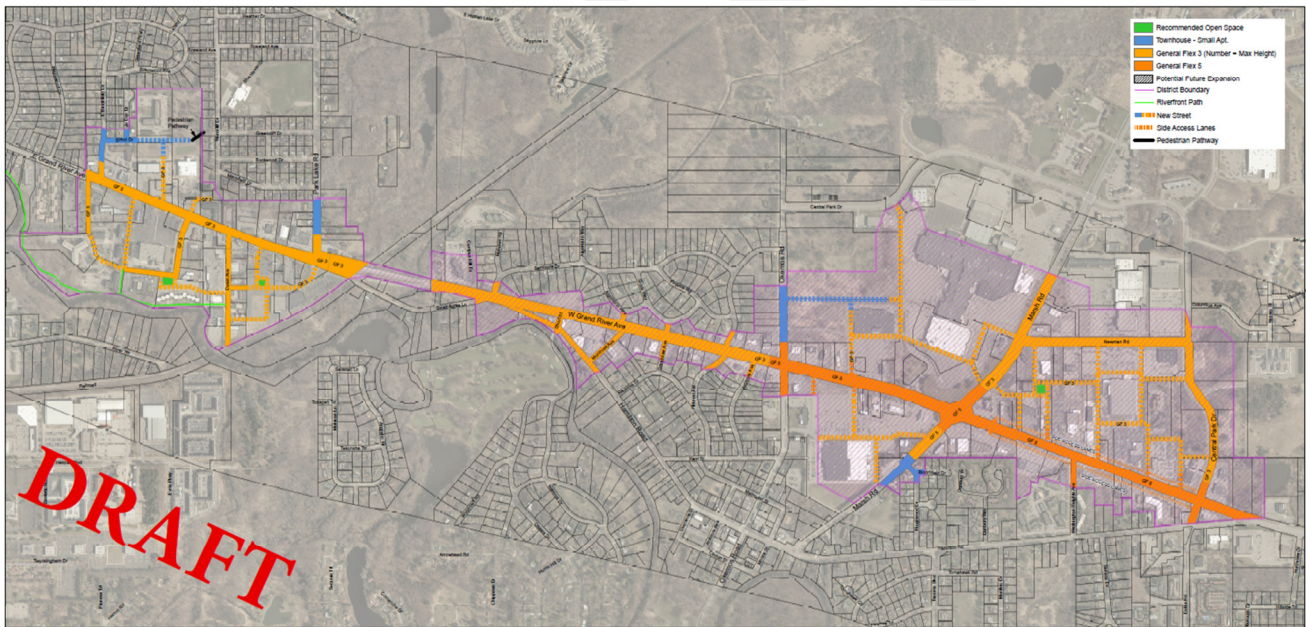
### 3034. The Regulating Plans

The following is a small-scale reproduction of the REGULATING PLAN prepared for the Avenue Form District and a future expansion area of the REGULATING PLAN. Digital versions of this plan are available from the Township



SHAPING THE AVENUE DRAFT REGULATING PLAN FOR MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN, ON GRAND RIVER AVENUE Not to Scale  
UNIQUE PLACES AND COMMUNITY SPACES JUNE 2019 DRAFT

Grand River Avenue Regulating Plan



SHAPING THE AVENUE DRAFT REGULATING PLAN FOR MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN, ON GRAND RIVER AVENUE Not to Scale  
UNIQUE PLACES AND COMMUNITY SPACES JUNE 2019 DRAFT

Grand River Avenue Future Expansion Regulating Plan

## Part 4. Building Form Standards

### 401. Purpose

A. The BUILDING FORM STANDARDS establish the rules for development and redevelopment on private lots.

B. The BUILDING FORM STANDARDS set the basic parameters governing building form, including the building envelope (in three dimensions) and certain required or permitted functional elements, such as FENESTRATION (windows and doors), STOOPS, BALCONIES, and FRONT PORCHES. A REGULATING PLAN identifies the applicable BUILDING FORM STANDARD(s) for all parcels within a Form District.

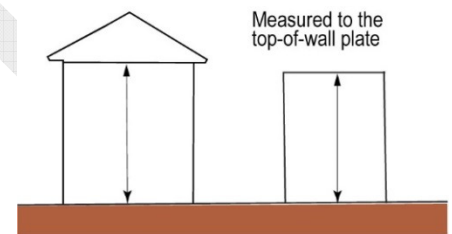
C. The goal of the BUILDING FORM STANDARDS is the creation of a vital and coherent PUBLIC REALM through the creation of good STREET-SPACE. The form and function controls on building frontages work together to frame the STREET-SPACE while allowing the buildings great flexibility behind their FAÇADES.

### 402. General Provisions

The following apply throughout the Form Districts, to all BUILDING FORM STANDARDS, unless expressly stated otherwise within an individual BUILDING FORM STANDARDS or otherwise designated on the REGULATING PLAN.

#### A. Height

1. The height of all buildings is measured in STORIES, with an ultimate limit in feet, measured from the average fronting sidewalk elevation to the top of the wall plate. (See figure 402.A)
2. The required minimum building height designated in each BUILDING FORM STANDARD shall be satisfied at the front building FAÇADE back to a minimum depth of 30 feet.
3. The GROUND STORY finished floor elevation requirements are measured from the average fronting sidewalk elevation at the front building FAÇADE.



402.A Height measurement relative to the fronting sidewalk illustration

#### B. Height Bonus

7. ~~The Township may permit an increase in height up to four stories (or not to exceed 52.5 feet, whichever is less) and up to five stories (or not to exceed 60 feet, whichever is less) if at least the following is provided in addition to amenities prescribed in 402.B.2:~~
  - ~~• The site plan contains a higher level of amenities to support walking, bicycling and transit travel that is required by this overlay, emphasizing a minimum of conflict points between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists. All of the following would need to be included: a designated pedestrian system throughout the site that connects to the Township's pedestrian/bicycle system identified in the Township's Greenspace Plan, additional bicycle amenities beyond what is required, and design features that support transit use that are endorsed by CATA.~~
2. ~~An additional~~ **Three amenities from the following list** are required to permit an increase in height up to four stories (or not to exceed 52.5 feet, whichever is less) and ~~additional~~ **5 total** amenities are required to permit an increase in height up to five stories (or not to exceed 60 feet, whichever is less):

- Parking is provided within the footprint of the building, provided that access to this parking shall be from the side or rear, and that parking is not placed along the front building façade. Any parking within the building shall be designed to match the materials and architecture of the remainder of the building.
- Residential units must have a variety of bedroom counts. No more than 50% of total units shall be comprised of a single bedroom count.
- Inclusion of design features that support and encourage transit use by public or private providers such as enhanced bus stops, designated scooter parking, or designated ridesharing (Taxi/Uber/Lyft) pick up and drop off curb space.
- Provision of electric car charging stations at a ratio of one station per 10 residential units.
- Minimize environmental impact by using green building and site development techniques such as alternative energy systems, green roofs, and pervious ground materials.
- Provide public realm STREET-SPACE improvements such as benches, street lights, planters, public art, covered bike racks, and street trees as described in the Streetscape section of the Grand River Avenue Design Guidelines.
- Open space, such as pocket parks or community gathering spaces, accessible and visible to the public shall be provided as described in the “Squares and Civic Greens” section of the Grand River Avenue Design Guidelines and public art at 1% of the project cost designed to withstand natural elements and reasonable public contact for at least 10 years to be approved by the Township and is provided in a location visible to the public.
- The number of pre-existing curb cuts shall be reduced by at least one.
- A minimum of 25% of the residential units must be either owner-occupied, designated 55 or older, or affordable housing as defined by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA).
- ~~Streetscape elements are provided including street trees and amenities, as described in the Streetscape section of the Grand River Avenue Design Guidelines.~~
- ~~Incorporate quality building materials and site design as described in the Grand River Avenue Design Guidelines, related to facades and architecture, signage, and lighting.~~
- ~~Existing driveways are closed or consolidated to bring the site into greater conformity with the Access Management Standards of Meridian Township and MDOT’s standards.~~
- ~~Minimize environmental impacts by using green building and site development techniques, such as an alternative energy system, green roofs, electric car charging stations, significantly increased pervious surfaces, etc.~~
- ~~The site contains a complementary mix of uses, such as residential with commercial or office.~~

- ~~For residential, some dwelling units are specifically designed to accommodate those with physical disabilities (consistent with "Universal Design" standards).~~

## C. Placement

1. Front, side and rear lot setbacks, where required, are specified in the individual BUILDING FORM STANDARD.
2. No part of any building may be located forward of the minimum front setback except overhanging eaves, AWNINGS, SHOPFRONTS, BAY WINDOWS, STOOPS, steps, or BALCONIES. STOOPS and steps shall not be located within a 5' minimum CLEAR SIDEWALK area. Handicapped ramps, approved by the Community Planning & Development Director, may be located within the DOORYARD.
3. ~~The maximum building footprint is specified in the individual BUILDING FORM STANDARDS. Publicly accessible parking structures built according to this Code are not included in the calculation of the maximum building footprint.~~

## D. Elements

### 1. Fenestration

- a. FENESTRATION is regulated as a percentage of the FAÇADE between floor levels. It is measured as glass area (including MUNTINS and similar window frame elements with a dimension less than one inch) and/or open area within the wall.
- b. Blank lengths of wall exceeding 25 linear feet are prohibited on all FAÇADES below their 3rd STORY.
- c. At least one functioning entrance shall be provided along each GROUND STORY FAÇADE.
- d. Windows shall not direct views into an adjacent private lot where the COMMON LOT LINE is within 20 feet.

### 2. Façade Projections

- a. GROUND STORY AWNINGS shall have a minimum 9-foot CLEAR HEIGHT above the sidewalk and a minimum five-foot depth, measured from the FAÇADE. The maximum depth is to back-of-curb or the TREE LAWN edge, whichever is less.
- b. BALCONIES:
  - i. Shall not be located within 2 feet of any COMMON LOT LINE and shall not encroach into the public right-of-way.
  - ii. BALCONIES may be a single level or multiple BALCONIES stacked vertically for multiple STORIES.
- c. BAY WINDOWS shall have an interior clear width of between four and eight feet at the main wall and shall project no more than 42 inches into the setback.
- d. STOOPS and FRONT PORCHES:
  - i. Shall not encroach into the CLEAR SIDEWALK.
  - ii. FRONT PORCHES may be screened (insect screening) when all architectural elements (columns, posts, railings, etc.) occur on the outside of the screen facing the STREET-SPACE
  - iii. Finished floor height shall be no more than 8 inches below the first interior finished floor level of the building.

## E. On-Site Vehicle Parking and Location

1. Vehicle parking shall be located, at minimum, behind a front parking setback of 8 feet behind the front building FAÇADE.
2. Parking may occur forward of the parking setback if:
  - a. Interior: It is completely within the building envelope; the floor level is at least five feet below grade; and FENESTRATION is not greater than 20%.
  - b. Exterior: The required parking setback may be reduced to 5 feet behind the front building FAÇADE if a minimum 3 ft. tall masonry GARDEN WALL is provided.
3. Any portion of a parking structure within 30 feet of a building constructed under this code shall not exceed that building's primary ridge or parapet height.
4. Refer to Part 5. Parking and Loading Standards for additional regulations, including parking minimum requirements and special parking standards.

## **F. Civic Buildings**

~~CIVIC BUILDINGS are exempt from the BUILDING FORM STANDARD provisions except those that relate to single-family detached dwelling districts.~~

## **G. Pedestrian, Bike, and Transit-Friendly Design**

1. Emphasis shall be placed on enhancing the overall walkability and safety of the area through appropriate pedestrian, bike, and transit accommodations and streetscape improvements. Refer to the Grand River Avenue Design Guidelines for guidance on the design of the streetscape, landscaping, transit amenities, streets, and open space areas.
2. A pedestrian crosswalk and sidewalk of a minimum of 5 feet wide (min 7 feet when adjacent to parking to accommodate vehicle overhang) shall be provided in parking lots that provides a direct connection from the street side non-motorized path or sidewalk to the entrance of the building.
3. The crosswalk or path within a parking lot shall be clearly delineated with striping or use of other non-slip materials that contrast with parking lot's primary material.
4. Appropriate yield, crosswalk markings or traffic calming design elements shall be provided to indicate where pedestrians are crossing vehicular aisles in a parking lot.
5. Bus stops and/or connections and amenities that support use of transit, are encouraged with the endorsement of CATA. Any bus stops shall be located at a place that provides a convenient pedestrian crossing of Grand River Ave. (refer to Pedestrian Crossing Guidelines in the Design Guidelines).
6. All sites shall meet the Bicycle Parking standards per Section 86-760 of the Zoning Ordinance.

## **H. Access Management**

1. As redevelopment occurs, existing driveways that do not meet current standards should be removed or redesigned, to the extent practical, as determined by the Township. These changes should be a site improvement priority to improve safety for all types of travel, traffic flow, and the overall appearance of the district. In particular, elimination of access points are a priority where close to signalized intersections or where there is a poor offset spacing from driveways on the opposite side of Grand River Ave. Shared access may be required with adjacent sites where the driveway spacing standards cannot be met. Additionally, if there ~~is there~~ is a rear access drive located on an adjacent lot, ~~then~~ the development ~~should~~ **shall** provide a connection to that rear drive. Easements shall be provided for shared access with adjacent sites or cross circulation between adjacent parking lots.
2. Access points for new driveways shall meet the Township's standards described in Section 86-441 Grand River Avenue Corridor Access Management Overlay District along with the standards of the MDOT (for Grand River Ave.) or Ingham County Road's Department (for all other streets).

DRAFT

## 403. General Flex Avenue

### ILLUSTRATIONS AND INTENT

*Note: These photos and statements are provided as illustrations of intent and are advisory only. They do not have the power of law. Refer to the standards on the following pages for the specific prescriptions and restrictions of the BUILDING FORM STANDARD.*

This is the basic urban STREET-SPACE FRONTAGE. It fully defines the street edge and accommodates a range of uses, including residential, office, institutional, and retail. This frontage is in the most intense areas, generally along the Avenue. It is anticipated that there will be significant pedestrian traffic along this frontage.

The maximum height varies by location and is designated on the REGULATING PLAN.

*Retail buildings fronting onto the street  
New development with parking behind the building*



*Retail buildings with DOORYARD*



*Residential buildings with raised DOORYARDS*



*Buildings with DOORYARD, sidewalk, TREE LAWN*





## A. General Flex Avenue: Building Form Standards

### (1) Height

Minimum (GF 3)	1 story, 16 ft.
Maximum (GF 3)	3 stories, 45 ft. max. height
Maximum (Height Bonus or Future GF 5)	5 stories, 60 ft.
Ground Floor Elevation - Residential Units (min.)	3 ft.
Second Floor Finished Elevation (min.)	18 ft.

### (2) Placement

Front Setback (minimum)	Grand River Ave: 15 ft. from ROW <sup>1</sup> All other streets: 5 ft. from ROW
Front Setback (maximum)	Grand River Ave: 25 ft. from ROW <sup>1</sup> All other streets: 15 ft. from ROW

Buildings shall be placed between 72' to 75' from ROW where Side Access Lanes are required on the Regulating Plan. Placement may be adjusted in coordination with the Community Planning & Development Director at time of development review; access lanes shall align on adjacent parcels.

Front yard parking	Not permitted (see 402.E)
Parking front yard screening	A 8' min. landscape buffer shall be provided; may be reduced to 5 ft. with a min. 3 ft. masonry GARDEN WALL
Parking rear yard screening	A 20' minimum landscape buffer if adjacent to residential or 15' minimum landscape buffer if adjacent to non-residential
Side Setbacks (min.)	0 ft.
Rear Setback with SHARED DRIVE (min.)	10 ft.
Rear setback with no SHARED DRIVE (min.)	25 ft.
Adjacent single-family setback (side and rear)	Setback equal to the rear setback of adjacent district
Adjacent single-family screening (side and rear)	6 ft. opaque screenwall or fencing within 1 ft. of common lot line
Building footprint (max.)	15,000 sq. ft.

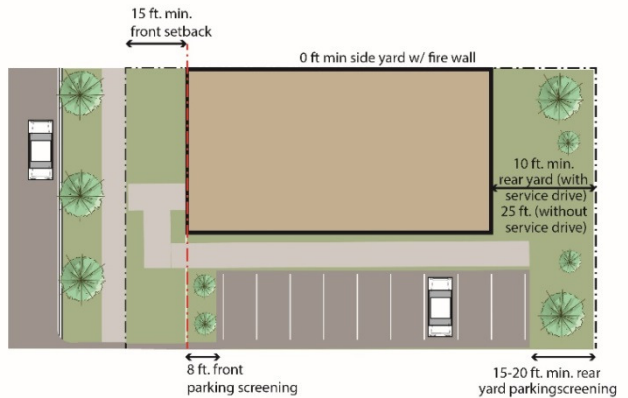
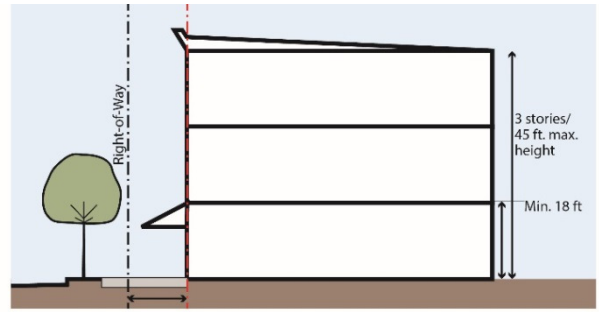
### (3) Architectural Elements

GROUND STORY FENESTRATION	40 to 90%
Upper Story FENESTRATION	25 to 80%

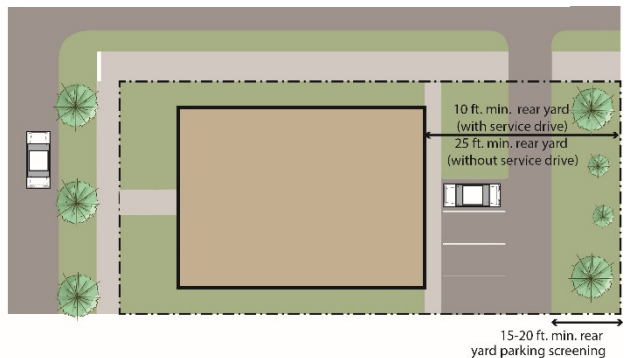
Buildings greater than 3 stories shall be designed to reduce apparent mass by including a clearly identifiable base, body, and top, with horizontal elements defining these components.

Blank walls exceeding 25 linear feet are prohibited.

Elevations facing a street shall contain a minimum of 75% masonry such as brick or stone



Side Yard Parking Option



Rear Yard Parking Option (Preferred)

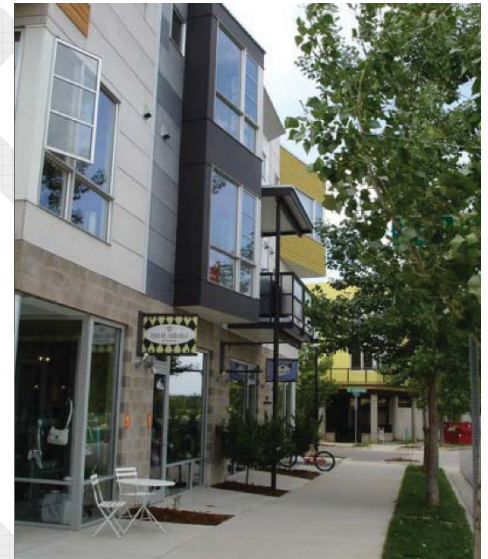
## 405. Storefront SECTION TO BE REMOVED

### ILLUSTRATIONS AND INTENT

*These photos and statements are provided as illustrations of intent and are advisory only. They do not have the power of law. Refer to the standards below and on the previous pages for the specific prescriptions and restrictions of this BUILDING FORM STANDARD. Where photos or statements may be inconsistent with the regulations, the regulations prevail.*

Where Storefront Frontage is designated on the REGULATING PLAN, the General Flex BUILDING FORM STANDARDS (previous pages) apply, except that the GROUND STORY configuration shall be that of a SHOPFRONT with uses limited to COMMERCE (RETAIL included).

- A. Single panes of glass shall not be permitted larger than 11 feet in height by 6 feet in width.
- B. GROUND STORY windows may not be made opaque by window treatments (excepting operable sunscreen devices within the conditioned space). A minimum of 80% of the window surface shall allow a view into the building interior for a depth of at least 15 feet.



ELEMENTS	
SHOPFRONT FENESTRATION	60 to 90%
FAÇADE: Max door to door <sup>1</sup>	60'
AWNING CLEAR HEIGHT Min	10'

#### Notes:

1. On the FAÇADE of an individual building. Applicants with phased projects must satisfy this rule for each phase of their project.



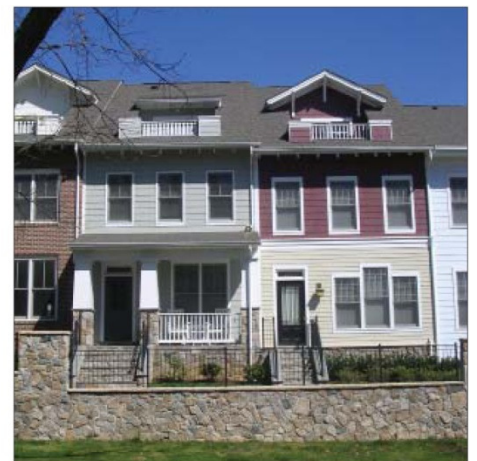
## 406. Townhouse/Small Apartment SECTION TO BE REMOVED

### ILLUSTRATIONS AND INTENT

*Note: These photos and statements are provided as illustrations of intent and are advisory only. They do not have the power of law. Refer to the standards on the following pages for the specific prescriptions and restrictions of the BUILDING FORM STANDARD.*

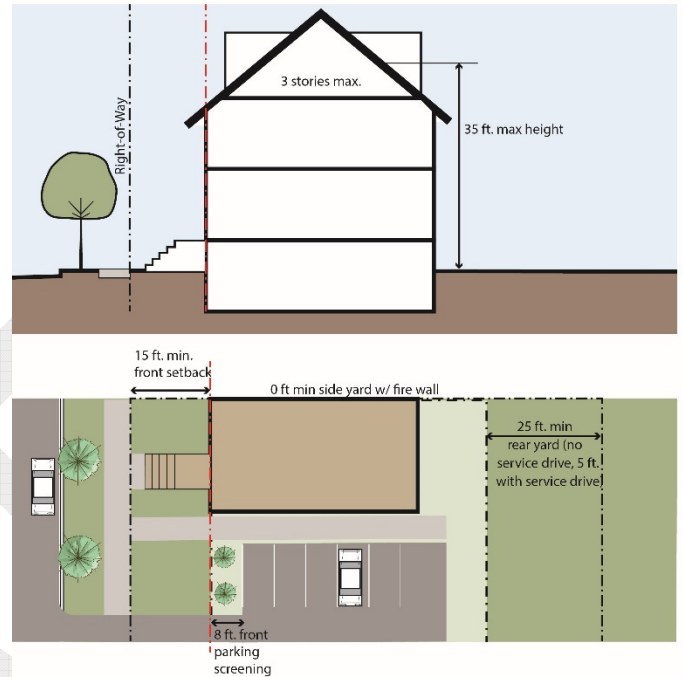
The Townhouse/Small Apartment frontage is of moderate intensity, created by a series of smaller structures—configured as single-family residential or stacked flats. This BUILDING FORM STANDARD has regular STREET-SPACE entrances, as frequently as 18 feet. The character and intensity of this frontage varies depending on the STREET-SPACE and the location of the front building line—the buildings may be placed up to the minimum setback line with STOOPS, or further back with gardens and/or FRONT PORCHES.

Similar in scale to the townhouse and rowhouse, a small apartment is of limited size and can also be used to transition from the more intense form of the Avenue to adjacent single-family neighborhoods.



## A. Townhouse/Small Apartment: Building Form Standards

<b>(1) Height</b>	
Minimum	2 stories, 25 ft.
Maximum	3 stories, 35 ft.
<b>(2) Placement</b>	
Front Setback (min.)	5 ft. from ROW
Front Setback (max.)	15 ft from ROW
Front yard parking	Not permitted (see 402.E)
Parking front yard screening	A 8' min. landscape buffer shall be provided; may be reduced to 5 ft. with a min. 3 ft. masonry GARDEN WALL
STOOP Placement	A STOOP may occur forward of the Front Setback; a 5' min CLEAR SIDEWALK area shall be maintained
Side Setbacks (min.)	0 ft.
Rear Setback with SHARED DRIVE (min.)	5 ft.
Rear setback with no SHARED DRIVE (min.)	25 ft.
Adjacent single-family rear setback	Setback equal to rear setback of adjacent residential district
<b>(3) Architectural Elements</b>	
All Stories FENESTRATION	25 to 70%
Blank walls exceeding 25 linear feet are prohibited	
Elevations facing a street shall contain a minimum of 75% masonry such as brick or stone	



## Part 5. Parking and Loading Standards

### 501. Intent

These Form District standards are intended to:

- A. Promote a “park once” environment with walkable nodes that will enable people to conveniently park and access a variety of commercial, residential, and civic enterprises in pedestrian-friendly environments by encouraging SHARED PARKING.
- B. Reduce fragmented, uncoordinated, inefficient, reserved single-purpose parking.
- C. Provide flexibility for redevelopment of sites.
- D. Increase visibility and accessibility of publicly available parking.

### 502. Minimum Parking Requirements

Parking requirements in the Grand River Avenue Overlay Form District shall be regulated by *Sec. 86-755* but with the following specific departures from that section. These parking reductions are based on an anticipated shift from single-occupant vehicle travel to walking, bicycling, transit, and car share services often associated with the mixture of uses within compact walkable areas consistent with the code.

- A. If SHARED PARKING is provided as described in *86-753*, the combined amount of parking required is reduced by up to 20% as determined by the Township based on a demonstration by the applicant that the combined peak hour utilization of the uses will not exceed 85-90% of the parking supply on a typical day.
  1. This percentage may be increased by up to 40% if the applicant provides information to demonstrate a maximum 85% of parking available is expected to be occupied during peak periods and the development features the elements described in B below.
  2. The Township may require a parking study by a qualified professional using accepted sources and methodology.
  3. In addition, the Township may require some additional parking area be “banked” for future use if the anticipated SHARED PARKING is inadequate or if a use change to one that requires significant additional parking is made.
- B. The Township may reduce the required parking further, as noted above, if the applicant demonstrates that on-site parking demand will be reduced through amenities and programs that will shift travel from single occupant vehicles to other modes of travel such as:
  - Provision of a bus stop with amenities such as a shelter, shade trees and other design features endorsed by CATA.
  - Incentives for employees to use transit, such as free transit passes or other programs endorsed by CATA.
  - Site design elements that promote walking and bicycling, such as bike racks by building entrances, indoor parking and other facilities for those who travel by bicycles.

C. Parking Requirements by Use:

Residential:

1. 1.25 parking spaces shall be provided per multiple family unit (Grand River Avenue) with an additional 0.25 space per unit available for visitor and public use.
2. Required parking per unit may be reduced if the development provides a “car-share” system for use by residents.

Commercial centers and general retail:

1. 3.5 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. (minimum) and 4.0 spaces (maximum<sup>1</sup>) for buildings with a gross floor area less than 25,000 sq. ft.
2. 4.0 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. (minimum) or 5.0 spaces (maximum<sup>1</sup>) for buildings with a gross floor area over 25,000 sq. ft.

Restaurants, taverns & bars, nightclubs, distilleries and brew pubs, Grand River Avenue:

1. 1 space per 100 sq. ft. of usable floor area.

For uses not specifically listed above, the minimum parking requirements in the Township Zoning Ordinance shall apply.

## 503. Achieving Parking Requirements

- A. Parking requirements may be met either on-site or within an 800-foot walking distance of the development. The required parking must all be on the same side of Grand River Avenue however parking on the opposite side may be included if within 660' (1/8 mile) of a designated pedestrian crosswalk
- B. Parking shall be located in compliance with the parking standards in *Sections 504*, below.
- C. Bicycle Parking shall be provided as required by *Sec. 86-760*.
- D. All other parking standards of *Article XIII Off-Street Parking & Loading* shall apply.

## 504. Special Parking Standards

### A. Joint Parking

Sites abutting one another shall physically connect their surface parking areas at the lot line to create connecting drive aisles. Where such surface parking areas lie within 50 feet of one another, a mutual access easement acceptable to the Community Planning & Development Director shall be executed. Parking lot configurations existing (insert effective adoption date) are exempt from this requirement.

### B. On-Street Parking

If on-street parking is provided along building frontage, public street frontage, or approved alongside access lanes, those spaces may be counted towards parking requirements for the specific use.

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<sup>1</sup> Maximum standards only apply to surface parking lots, not structured or underground parking.

### **C. Off-Street Parking**

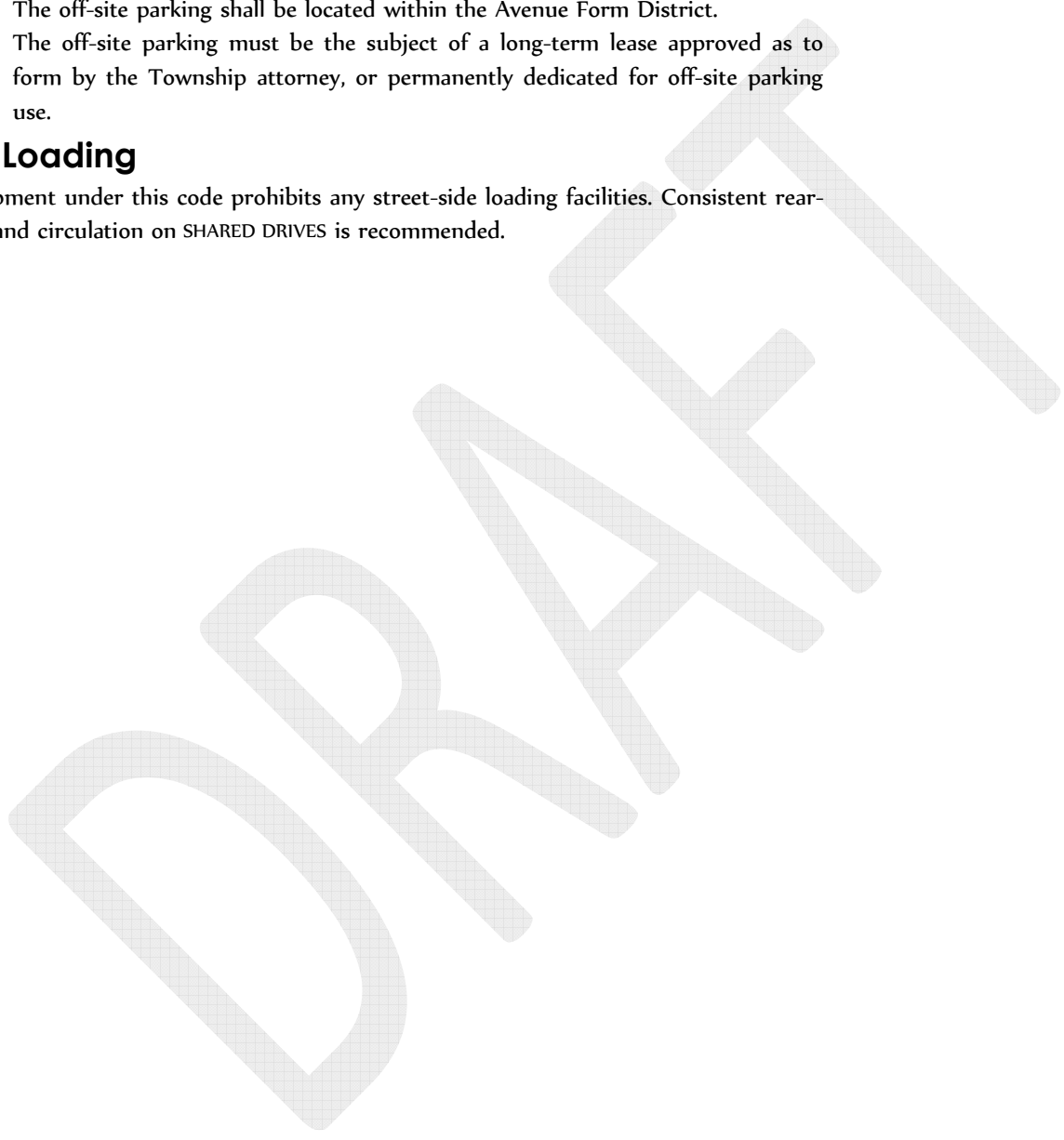
Off-street parking shall be located in compliance with the parking setback regulations for the site on which it is located, as indicated in the BUILDING FORM STANDARDS.

### **D. Off-Site Parking**

1. Off-site parking must be located within a walking distance of 800 feet from the site it is serving.
2. The off-site parking shall be located within the Avenue Form District.
3. The off-site parking must be the subject of a long-term lease approved as to form by the Township attorney, or permanently dedicated for off-site parking use.

### **505. Loading**

Development under this code prohibits any street-side loading facilities. Consistent rear-access and circulation on SHARED DRIVES is recommended.



## Part 6. Building Uses

### 601. General Provisions

#### A. Permitted Uses

Uses are grouped into broad categories. Permitted uses by BUILDING FORM STANDARD are shown in *Section 602*. The categories in the use table are listed in *Section 603*.

#### B. Use Determination

1. The Community Planning & Development Director is responsible for categorizing all uses. If a proposed use is not listed in a use category but can be said to be reasonably similar in impact on a Form District to a listed use, the Director shall treat the proposed use as a use under that category. If a proposed use is not listed in a use category, and is fundamentally different from any other listed use, the use shall be prohibited.
2. Special Use Permit: If the site has an approved Special Use Permit, than no additional Special Use Permit is required for an additional use or building on the site, unless a new use is classified as a Special Use in Table 602 or if the existing use is proposed to change to another special use (refer to Article VI Special Use Requirements and Restrictions).
3. Uses not specifically listed: When determining whether a proposed use is similar to a permitted use, the Director shall consider the following criteria:
  - a. The actual or projected characteristics of the proposed activity in relationship to the stated characteristics of each use.
  - b. Types of vehicles used and their parking and or loading requirements.
  - c. The likely impact on surrounding properties.
  - d. The intent of the Form Districts.



## 602. Use Table

The use table identifies the uses allowed in the respective BUILDING FORM STANDARD frontages.

		General Flex	Townhouse / Small Apt	
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	Household Living (including one, two, and three-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings)	■	■	
	Supported and Assisted Living (Group Homes and Senior Housing)	■	■	Section 86-654 of the Township's <i>Code of Ordinances</i>
<b>COMMERCE</b>	Office	■		
	Hotel	■	□	
	Recreation/ Entertainment	■		
	Day Care (adult and child)	■	■	children: Section 86-403 (d)(1) adults: Section 86-403 (d)(2) of Township's <i>Code of Ordinances</i>
	Retail Sales & Personal Services <sup>1</sup>	■		
	Restaurant/Bar/Microbreweries <sup>1</sup>	■		
	Vehicle Service/Gas Station <sup>2</sup>	□		
	RESEARCH and Laboratory Facilities	□		Sec. 86-434
	Office	■		
<b>CIVIC</b>	Police, Fire, Municipal	■	■	

■ Permitted    □ Special Use Permit    Blank Box: Prohibited

Footnotes to 602. Use Table:

- Outdoor eating areas for restaurants shall be allowed in General Flex and/or Storefront frontages, subject to the Township's "outdoor displays and cafes" ordinance (see Section 86-403 (c)(6) of the Township's Code of Ordinances). A RETAIL SALES use or restaurant is permitted in the second STORY of a Storefront or General Flex site provided it is an extension of that GROUND STORY use, with equal or less floor area.
- Gas stations shall be subject to the standards in the Township's Code of Ordinances per Section 86-403 (e)(5).

## Part 7. Definitions

### 701. Defined Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of the form districts. Terms not defined here may be defined elsewhere in the zoning ordinance. In such case, the definition contained in the zoning ordinance shall be used. Certain terms in these districts are used in very specific ways, often excluding some of the meanings of common usage. Where there is an apparent conflict or contradiction, the definition herein shall prevail.

**AWNING.** A cantilevered, projected or suspended cover over the sidewalk portion of the STREET-SPACE, or a roof like covering, usually of canvas, metal, or similar material and often adjustable, placed over the sidewalk, windows, or doors to provide protection from sun and rain. It is distinguished from a canopy because it is not permanent, nor a structural portion or architectural feature of the building and does not support substantial weight.

**BALCONY.** An exterior platform attached to the upper floors of the building FAÇADE.

**BAY WINDOW.** Generally, a U-shaped enclosure extending the interior space of the building outward of the FAÇADE (along its STREET-SPACE side).

**BLOCK.** An increment of land comprised of lots, COMMON DRIVES, and tracts circumscribed and not traversed by streets (PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS excepted). BLOCKS are measured at the REQUIRED BUILDING LINE (RBL).

**BUILDING FORM STANDARDS (BFS).** The part of these district standards that establish basic parameters regulating building form, including: the envelope (in three dimensions); placement on the lot; and certain permitted and required building elements, such as storefronts and BALCONIES.

**CLEAR HEIGHT.** Within a structure, the habitable distance between the floor and ceiling. For entrances and other external building features, the unobstructed distance from the ground/sidewalk to the lowest element above.

**CLEAR SIDEWALK.** An area within a STREET-SPACE, the portion of the sidewalk that must remain clear of obstructions and allow public passage. In the Avenue Form District area, the CLEAR SIDEWALK width shall be 5' minimum.

**COMMERCE.** See USE, COMMERCE.

**COMMON LOT LINES.** Lot lines shared by adjacent private lots.

**CONSERVATION LANDS.** Areas that are not developable due to environmental constraints or easements, such as floodplains, wetlands, steep topography, wildlife preserves, etc.

**DOORYARD.** The area within the STREET-SPACE, extending across the entire width of the lot, between the FAÇADE of the building and the CLEAR SIDEWALK portion of the sidewalk, which may be paved or planted, depending on the *Street Type Specification* designation.

**FAÇADE (Building Face).** The building elevation facing the STREET-SPACE. Building walls facing private interior courts, COMMON LOT LINES, and SHARED DRIVES are not FAÇADES (they are elevations).

**FENESTRATION.** Openings in a wall, including windows and doors, allowing light and views between the BLOCK and/or building interior (private realm) and sidewalk

and/or street exterior (PUBLIC REALM).

**FRONT PORCH.** The ground floor platform attached to the FAÇADE side of the main building.

**GARDEN WALL.** A masonry wall defining a property line or delineating a private area. (For height and gate specifications, see the BUILDING FORM STANDARDS.)

**GROUND STORY.** The first habitable level of a building at or above grade. The next STORY above the GROUND STORY is the second floor or STORY.

**MUNTIN.** A strip of wood or metal separating and holding panes of glass in a window, less than 1" in thickness. MUNTINS divide a single window sash or casement into a grid system of small panes of glass.

**PRIVACY FENCE.** An opaque fence along COMMON DRIVES, pedestrian pathways, and COMMON LOT LINES. See the *Building Form Standards* for height and placement specifications and *Architecture* for material and configuration standards.

**PUBLIC REALM (STREET-SPACE).** All space between fronting building FACADES, including streets, squares, plazas, parks, pedestrian pathways, sidewalks, parks)—including transit service operator passenger platform—but not within GARAGE ENTRIES or COMMON DRIVES.

**REGULATING PLAN.** The implementing plan for development within the form districts. REGULATING PLANS designate the BUILDING FORM STANDARDS. The REGULATING PLAN also shows how each site relates to adjacent STREET-SPACES, the overall district, and the surrounding neighborhoods.

**SHARED DRIVE.** The public right-of-way or easement for vehicles and pedestrians within a block that provides service access to the rear or side of properties, vehicle parking (e.g., garages), loading docks, utility meters, recycling containers, and garbage bins.

**SHARED PARKING.** Automobile parking that is visible and accessible to the public for a minimum portion of each day.

**STOOP.** An entry platform on the FAÇADE of a building. (See the BUILDING FORM STANDARDS for specifications.)

**STORY.** That space within a building and above grade that is situated between one floor level and the floor level next above, or if there is no floor above, the ceiling or roof above.

**STREET-SPACE (PUBLIC REALM).** All space between fronting building FACADES, including streets, squares, plazas, parks, pedestrian pathways, sidewalks, parks)—including transit service operator passenger platform—but not within GARAGE ENTRIES or COMMON DRIVES.

**TREE LAWN.** A continuous strip of soil area—typically covered with grass, other vegetation, bridging pavement, or sometimes porous pavers—located between the back of curb and the CLEAR SIDEWALK and used for planting street trees and configured to foster healthy street tree root systems.

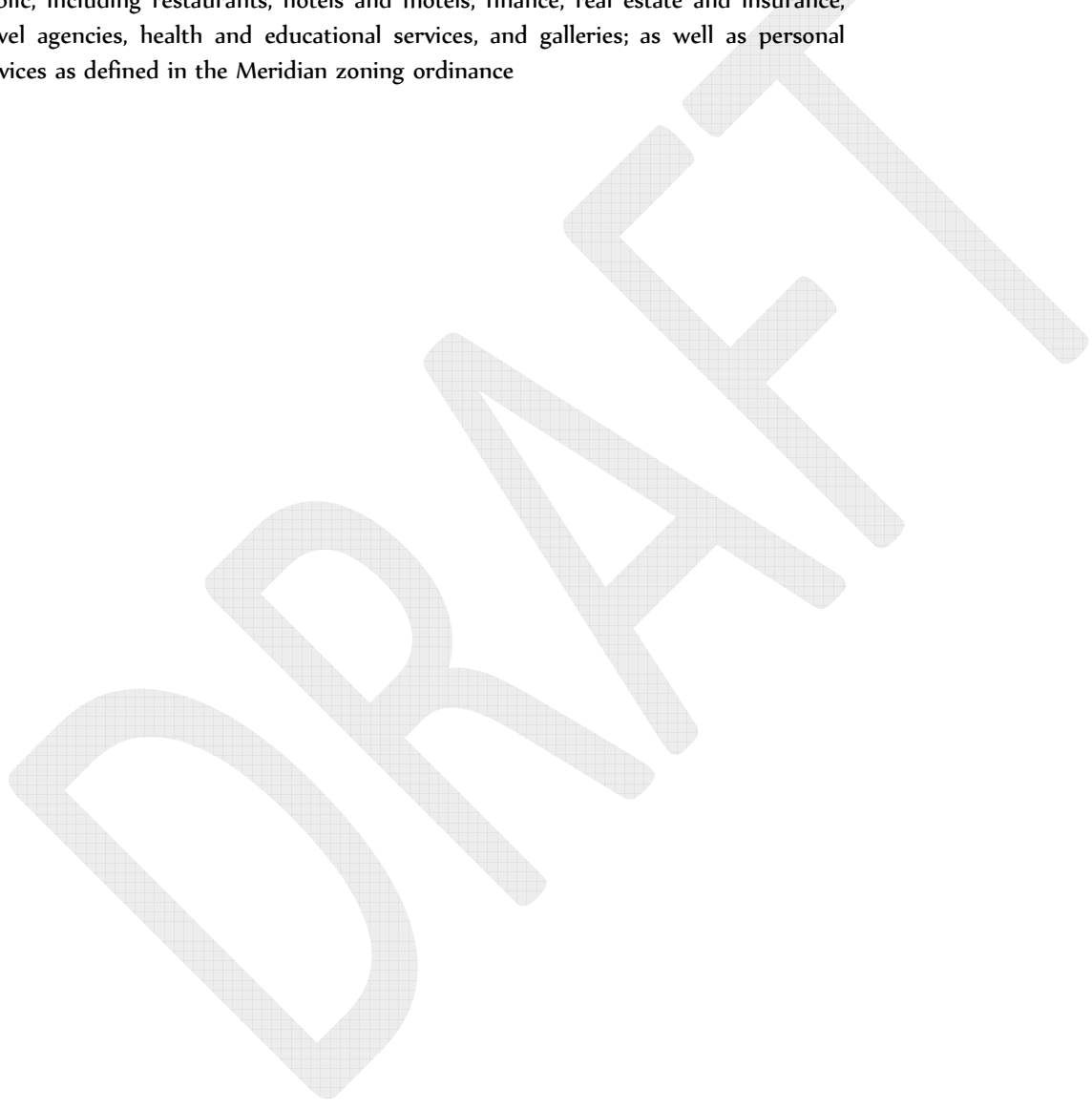
**USE, COMMERCE.** For the purpose of these form districts, COMMERCE USES shall be considered to encompass all of the by-right and conditional uses permitted in the following Meridian zoning districts: Commercial (C1-3), Professional and Office (PO), and Research Park and Office Park (RP), unless expressly prohibited herein, and all of the CIVIC USES defined above, except transit centers.

USE, RESIDENTIAL. RESIDENTIAL USES shall be considered to encompass all of the uses allowed by-right and with a conditional use permit in the residential zoning districts as defined in the Meridian zoning ordinance.

USE, RETAIL. Includes the following:

RETAIL SALES. Establishments wherein the primary use is the sale of merchandise for use or consumption by the immediate purchaser.

RETAIL SERVICE. Establishments providing services, as opposed to products, to the general public, including restaurants, hotels and motels, finance, real estate and insurance, travel agencies, health and educational services, and galleries; as well as personal services as defined in the Meridian zoning ordinance



## Comments on draft of Form-based Code Overlay District (10-29-19)

### Overall format issues:

- (1) At the Work Session on 10/28/19 it was discussed that this addition to the Code of Ordinances would become Section 86-445 and might be called “Form-Based Code Overlay District”. Section 86 Division 4 Other Districts contains a number of Overlay Districts and the one that most closely “resembles” what we are drafting seems to be 86-441 (Grand River Avenue [M-43] Corridor Access Management Overlay District). This part of the code contains sections labelled as follows: a. Findings, b. Purpose, c. Applicability, d. Additional submittal information, e. Access Management Standards, f. Non-motorized pathways, g. Application to existing sites and modification of standards. While we will have different topics to cover, it seems that we might consider keeping to a similar listing of the sections. What we have in the draft are divisions labelled “Part” with subsections 101, 102 and beneath these “A., B. C.”. This should not be too difficult to fix if conforming with the formatting in the Meridian Code of Ordinances seems appropriate.
- (2) The current section labels in the draft seem odd to me. I think the label for Part I should be “Overview” followed by sections labelled as “101. Purpose and Intent”, and “102 Table of Contents (not Form District Components)”. The first sentence under 102 is “This district includes the following subsections” – isn’t this introductory part of the FBC ordinance being written for all Form Districts, current and future? Should references to “this Form District” be changed to “a Form District”?
- (3) Part 1, Section 103 is a mystery to me and I question both its content and its placement. It is called “How to Use this Form District” and instructs the reader to “look at the Township Zoning Map and determine if property is located within a Form District”. Then it has a section labelled “If yes:” with details about looking at various parts of the ordinance (e.g. the Regulating Plan, the Building Form Standards). It then has a section labelled “If no:” followed by a description of various possible ways an owner might want to modify property. But if the property is not in a Form District, none of the FBC ordinance applies! So what is the “if no” section really about? I think this section is meant to be a quick guide to the remaining parts of the FBC ordinance but as written it is confusing.
- (4) Nitpicks – (a) The names of the “Parts” should not contain periods, a dash would better? When the name of a Part occurs in mid-sentence (see Page 2, 103. “If yes”, #2) it appears to be a full stop and make the sentence hard to read (even with the italics). (b). The Parts are singular entities and so the following verbs should be appropriate (102. D., should be “provides”).
- (5) In Part 2 – Administration, 201. The text begins with a reference to the Grand River Avenue Overlay, but will not these conditions apply to all Form Districts? In Section 202. Applicability the language in “A. Grand River Avenue Form District” is specific to that Form District and is not general to all Form Districts. Will future sections B. C. etc. be added for each new Form District that is created? If so the title “Applicability” should be changed to reflect this. Also, in the text of “A” it states that “Development proposals shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Article, unless otherwise modified by the Township Board”. It is not clear what is being modified, is it the proposal or the ordinance?

- (6) Table 202. Applicability Levels. Some minor details. (1) in the Expansion of Gross Floor Area section the limits need to be fixed. As written there are gaps between 25% and 26% and between 50% and 51%. (2) It is unclear how the "Changes in Use:" additional parking requirement interacts with the "Expansion of Parking Area". Expansion seems to be required in some cases under one category but not required under the other (compare Building Form Siting and Building Form Uses). Also, "X" and "O" are defined, what does an empty box mean?
- (7) 203, Plan Review (1) In Section A. 1. Why is the second sentence included? Traffic impact is covered in B. (2) A.2. should begin with a noun. (3) A. 2. What does the phrase "prohibits development envisioned by the code" mean? What exactly can that staff do? (4) A. 3. "the applicant is encouraged to host a public workshop" means that it is not required? Should it be? (5) in B. 1. Would it be clearer if it read "when a use, a change in use or an expansion is expected ...". In the second sentence replace "including" with "with regard to". (6) The language in B.1. d. seems far too open-ended. Who determines what would be similar enough to qualify for reduced traffic analysis?
- (8) Part 3. Regulating Plans (1) 301. A. The Regulating Plan is called a "subset of the zoning map". Is subset the correct word? In FBC the Regulating Plan "replaces" or "modifies" the zoning map? Not sure what word or phrase would be best. (2) In 302.3. the text says that some changes in a Regulating Plan "will require a rezoning". Does this mean the current process involving the PC and the Township Board?