Ordinance No. ___-20

Ordinance regarding architectural design

The City of St. Louis Park does ordain:

Section 1. The city council has considered the advice and recommendation of the planning commission (Case No. 20-17-ZA) for amending the zoning ordinance Section 36-366.

Section 2. Chapter 36, Section 366 of the St. Louis Park City Code is hereby amended by adding underscored text and deleting the strike through text. Section breaks are represented by ***.

***

(b) Standards.  
(b)(1) Building Design. Buildings shall be designed to enhance the attractiveness of the city's streetscape by minimizing monotonous structures and long, blank walls. Additionally, buildings shall, through use of architectural details and scale, have architectural features and patterns that provide visual interest from the perspective of the pedestrian. The following techniques shall be incorporated into building design in order to accomplish such requirements.

(1)a. Architectural design elements that will be considered in the review of building and site plans include building materials, color and texture, building bulk, general massing, roof treatment, proportion of openings, facade design elements and variation, window and openings. Site plan design elements that will be considered in the determination as to whether site plan design is superior include quantity, quality, variation, compatibility and size of plant materials, landscape berms and screening walls. Also considered will be the overall order, symmetry and proportion of the various elements within the site and within the larger context of the area or corridor.

(2)b. The height, bulk, general massing, roof treatment, materials, colors, textures, major divisions, and proportions of a new or remodeled building shall be compatible with that of other buildings on the site and on adjacent sites.

(3)c. Building wall deviations are required where the unbroken building wall length to wall height ratio meets or exceeds 2:1. The minimum depth of each building wall deviation at the 2:1 ratio shall be two feet. The unbroken wall length to wall height ratio may be increased to 3:1 if the depth of the building wall deviations is increased to three feet. The unbroken wall length to wall height ratio may be increased to 4:1 if the depth of the building wall deviations is increased to four feet. The building wall deviations must extend from the grade to the roof, or top of the parapet.
(4)d. No building may display more than five percent of any elevation surface in bright, pure accent colors.

(5)e. The development must locate the noise-producing portions of the development, such as loading docks, outside storage and outside activity away from adjacent residential areas.

f. All exterior finishes for one- and two-family dwellings and accessory structures shall be installed within one year from the issuance of the building permit.

(6)g. All developments shall consider the effect of sun angles and shade patterns on other principal buildings. All new multiple-family and nonresidential buildings and additions thereto shall be located so that the structure does not cast a shadow that covers more than 50 percent of another principal building wall for a period greater than two hours between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. for more than 60 days of the year. This section will not prohibit shading of buildings in an industrial use district, two or more buildings on the same lot in the Mixed Use zoning district, or as approved for buildings covered by the same PUD, CUP, or Special Permit. Shading of existing public spaces and outdoor employee break areas shall be minimized to the extent reasonable and possible.

(7)h. Interior and exterior bars, grills, mesh or similar obstructions, whether permanently or temporarily affixed, shall not cover any exterior door or more than ten percent of any individual window or contiguous window area.

(8) Ground floor transparency. The following façade design guidelines shall be applicable to all ground floor street-facing facades in the C-1, C-2, and MX Districts, and retail, service, and restaurant uses in O and BP Districts:

a. Window paintings and signage shall cover no more than 10 percent of the total window and door area.

b. Visibility into the space shall be maintained for a minimum depth of three (3) feet. Display of merchandise is allowed within this three (3) feet.

c. Interior storage areas, utility closets and trash areas shall not be visible from the exterior of the building.

d. No more than 10 percent of total window and door area shall be glass block, mirrored, spandrel, frosted or other opaque glass, finishes or material including window painting and signs. The remaining 90 percent of window and door area shall be highly transparent, low reflectance windows with a minimum 60 percent transmittance factor and a reflectance factor of not greater than 0.25.

e. For all new buildings constructed after January 1, 2019, and existing buildings which expand the gross square footage of the building by more than 50 percent, the minimum ground floor transparency shall be 50 percent on the front façade, and 20 percent on all other ground floor street facing facades.

f. The city acknowledges a degree of flexibility may be necessary to adjust to unique situations. Alternatives that provide an increase in pedestrian vibrancy and street safety including but not limited to public art and
pedestrian scale amenities may be considered and may be approved by the Zoning Administrator, unless the development application requires approval by city council, in which case the city council shall approve the alternate transparency plan.

(c)(2) Building Materials. Exterior surface materials of buildings shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the adopted building code and the manufacturer’s specifications and shall be subject to the regulations listed below. Following regulations: Products listed as “integral colored” shall continue its surface color consistently through the depth of the product as opposed to being colored, painted or stained on the surface only.

(1)a. Classes of materials. Materials shall be divided into class I, class II and class III categories as follows:

i. Class I. Brick, marble, granite or other natural stone, textured cement stucco, copper, porcelain and glass are class I exterior building materials on buildings other than those used as dwellings which contain four or fewer dwelling units. Wood, vinyl siding, fiber-reinforced cement board and prefinished metal are class I materials on residential buildings containing four or fewer dwelling units in addition to the other class I materials listed in this subsection. Wood is a class I material on park buildings under 3,000 square feet. Clear acrylic that is high impact, double-skinned, non-yellowing, and a minimum of eight (8) millimeters thick may be classified as a Class I material for greenhouses. If a minimum of two other Class I materials are in use, clapboard and shake-style fiber-reinforced cement board with a minimum thickness of ¼ inch may be used as a Class I material for up to 10 percent of the façade on residential buildings with more than four (4) units. “Smooth” finish fiber-reinforced cement board is not permitted as a Class I material.

a. Class I. The following materials are considered class I materials as specified:

1. Brick
2. Marble, granite or other natural stone
3. Integral colored cast stone (the stone is colored consistently through
4. Textured cement stucco
5. Architectural wall cladding (Nichiha, Equitone and similar brands) Material must be through colored and at least 5/8 inches thick.
6. Copper
7. Porcelain
8. Glass
9. Residential buildings containing four or fewer dwelling units may utilize the following additional materials:
   i. Wood
   ii. Vinyl siding
   iii. Fiber-reinforced cement board
   iv. Prefinished metal
10. Residential buildings containing five or more dwelling units may utilize the following additional materials:
i. Up to 10% of the required class I materials may be finished with clapboard and/or shake-style fiber-reinforced cement board with a minimum thickness of \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch.

11. Park buildings under 3,000 square feet may utilize the following additional materials:
   i. Wood.

ii. **Class II.** Exposed aggregate concrete panels, burnished concrete block, integral colored split face (rock face) and exposed aggregate concrete block, cast-in-place concrete, artificial stucco (E.I.F.S., Drivit), artificial stone, fiber-reinforced cement board siding with a minimum thickness of \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch, and prefinished metal.

b. **Class II.** The following materials are considered class II materials as specified:
   1. Exposed aggregate concrete panels
   2. Burnished concrete block
   3. Integral colored split face (rock face) and exposed aggregate concrete block
   4. Cast-in-place concrete
   5. Insulated exterior wall panels (E.I.F.S., Drivit and similar brands)
   6. Fiber-reinforced cement board siding with a minimum thickness of \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch
   7. Prefinished metal.
   8. Integral colored concrete panels other than smooth finished.

iii. **Class III.** Unpainted or surface painted concrete block (scored or unscored), unpainted or surface painted plain or ribbed concrete panels, and unfinished or surface painted metal.

c. **Class III.** The following materials are considered class III materials as specified:
   1. Unpainted or surface painted concrete block (scored or unscored)
   2. Unpainted or surface painted plain or ribbed concrete panels
   3. Unfinished or surface painted metal
   4. Smooth finished concrete panels
   5. Brick, stone, or integral colored material which has been painted

(2) **b. Minimum class I materials.** At least 60 percent of each building face visible from off the site must be of class I materials except as permitted by subsection (b)(6)c, (d)(4)c. of this section. Not more than 10 percent of each building face visible from off the site may be of class III materials. Portions of buildings not visible from off the site may be constructed of greater percentages of class II or class III materials if the structure otherwise conforms to all city ordinances. The mixture of building materials must be compatible and integrated.

(3) **c. Buildings in I-G and I-P districts.**

a. i. **Not on major streets and not near residential.** For buildings in the I-G and I-P districts which are not located on a principal arterial, minor arterial, major
collector, or adjacent to or across from any residentially zoned property, class I materials may be reduced to a minimum of 25 percent provided that the remaining materials are functionally and durably equal to a class I material as certified by the architect or manufacturer.

b.ii. On major streets or near residential. For building walls in the I-G and I-P districts facing on a principal arterial, minor arterial or major collector, or adjacent to or across from any residentially-zoned property, class I materials may be reduced to a minimum of 25 percent provided that the remaining materials are functionally and durably equal to a class I material as certified by the architect or manufacturer and that the architectural design and site plan are superior quality as determined by the zoning administrator. The architecture and site plan shall meet the following minimum criteria to be considered superior quality:

1. The exposed height of the building wall shall not exceed 15 feet.

2. The number of required plant units shall be increased by 20 percent or the size of 20 percent of the overstory trees installed shall be increased to 3 1/2 caliper inches.

3. A minimum of ten percent of the building facade must be windows or glass spandrels.

(3) Ground floor transparency.

a. The following façade design guidelines shall be applicable to all ground floor street-facing facades in the C-1, C-2, and MX Districts, and retail, service, and restaurant uses in O and BP Districts:

i. Window paintings and signage shall cover no more than 10 percent of the total window and door area.

ii. Visibility into the space shall be maintained for a minimum depth of three (3) feet. Display of merchandise is allowed within this three (3) feet.

iii. Interior storage areas, utility closets and trash areas shall not be visible from the exterior of the building.

iv. No more than 10 percent of total window and door area shall be glass block, mirrored, spandrel, frosted or other opaque glass, finishes or material including window painting and signs. The remaining 90 percent of window and door area shall be highly transparent, low reflectance windows with a minimum 60 percent transmittance factor and a reflectance factor of not greater than 0.25.

v. For all new buildings constructed after January 1, 2019, and existing buildings which expand the gross square footage of the building by more than 50 percent, the minimum ground floor transparency shall be 50 percent on the front façade, and 20 percent on all other ground floor street-facing facades.
vi. The city acknowledges a degree of flexibility may be necessary to adjust to unique situations. Alternatives that provide an increase in pedestrian vibrancy and street safety including but not limited to public art and pedestrian scale amenities may be considered and may be approved by the Zoning Administrator, unless the development application requires approval by city council, in which case the city council shall approve the alternate transparency plan.

(d) General provisions.

(1) All exterior finishes for one- and two-family dwellings and accessory structures shall be installed within one year from the issuance of the building permit.

(2) Additions and accessory structures. The exterior wall surface materials, roof treatment, colors, textures, major divisions, proportion, rhythm of openings, and general architectural character, including horizontal or vertical emphasis, scale, stylistic features of additions, exterior alterations, and new accessory buildings shall address and respect the original architectural design and general appearance of the principal buildings on the site and shall comply with the requirements of this section. Clear acrylic that is high impact, double-skinned, non-yellowing, and a minimum eight (8) millimeter thick may be classified as a Class I material for accessory greenhouses.

(3) Screening.

a. The visual impact of rooftop equipment shall be minimized using one of the following methods. Where rooftop equipment is located on buildings and is visible from the ground within 400 feet from property in an R district, only the items listed in subsections 1 and 2 shall be used.

1. A parapet wall.

2. A fence the height of which extends at least one foot above the top of the rooftop equipment and incorporates the architectural features of the building.

3. The rooftop equipment shall be painted to match the roof or the sky, whichever is most effective.

b. Utility service structures (such as utility meters, utility lines, transformers, aboveground tanks); refuse and recycling handling; loading docks; maintenance structures; and other ancillary equipment must be inside a building or be entirely screened from off-site views utilizing a privacy fence or wall that is at least six feet in height. A chain link fence with slats shall not be accepted as screening.

c. All utility services shall be underground except as provided elsewhere in this chapter.
Parking ramps. All new parking ramps shall meet the following design standards:

a. Parking ramp facades that are visible from off the site shall display an integration of building materials, building form, textures, architectural motif, and building colors with the principal building.

b. No signs other than directional signs shall be permitted on parking ramp facades.

c. If the parking ramp is located within 20 feet of a street right-of-way or recreational trail, the facade facing the street shall be subject to the same requirements for exterior surface materials as for buildings.

Awnings and canopies.

a. Design parameters. Awnings and canopies shall be designed, installed and maintained to meet the following criteria:

1. Awnings and canopies shall have noncombustible frames. If an awning can be collapsed, retracted or folded, the design shall be such that the awning does not block any required exit.

2. Awnings and canopies less than 25 feet in width may extend into the public right-of-way up to two feet from the face of the nearest curb line measured horizontally.

3. All portions of any awning and canopy shall provide at least eight feet of clearance over any walkway and twelve feet of clearance over a driveway or private roadway.

4. Canopy posts or other supports located within a public right-of-way or easement shall be placed in a location approved by the city engineer.

b. Permit required. A building permit shall be issued prior to the installation of any awning or canopy. In addition to the building permit, an encroachment agreement shall be issued by the city engineer prior to the installation of any awning or canopy that extends into, upon or over any street or alley right-of-way, park or other public property. The encroachment agreement shall include provisions that hold the owner of the awning or canopy liable to the city for any damage which may result to any person or property by reason of such encroachment or the removal of such encroachment. Additional conditions may be imposed on encroachment permits to protect the health, safety or welfare of the public or to protect nearby property owners from hardship or damage or to protect other public interests as determined by the city engineer.

c. Submission requirements. The following information shall be submitted prior to the installation of an awning or canopy.
1. Application form and fee. A separate fee shall be required for the building permit and encroachment agreement.

2. Dimensioned and scaled site plan and building elevations.

3. Four sets of drawings for each awning or canopy proposed.

d. Projections to be safe. All such projections over public property shall be structurally safe, shall be kept in a safe condition and state of repair consistent with the design thereof and repaired when necessary in the opinion of the city engineer or building official by and at the expense of the person having ownership or control of the building from which they project.

e. Removal upon order. The owner of an awning or canopy, any part of which projects into, upon, over or under any public property shall upon being ordered to do so by the city engineer remove at once any part or all of such encroachment and shall restore the right-of-way to a safe condition. Such removal and restoration of the right-of-way will be at the sole expense of the property owner. The city may, upon failure of the property owner to remove the encroachment as ordered, remove the encroachment, and the reasonable costs of removing such encroachment incurred by the city shall be billed and levied against the property as a special assessment.

(e) Appeal. In any instance where the zoning administrator denies a permit or a request for preliminary approval of building materials or building design, the applicant may submit an appeal to the interpretation, based upon the plans and other papers on file in the office of the zoning administrator, to the city council without payment of additional filing fees of any kind.

(1) Permit. A permit for an appeal shall be filed as required by Section 36-30.

(2) Process. A request for an appeal will be considered by the Board of Zoning Appeals as outlined in this chapter. The city council will act as the board of zoning appeals for appeals made in conjunction with a conditional use permit or planned unit development. The planning commission shall hold the public hearing on the appeal, review the appeal along with the conditional use permit or planned unit development, and report its findings and recommendation to the city council.

Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect November 13, 2020

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<th>First reading</th>
<th>October 5, 2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Second reading</td>
<td>October 19, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of publication</td>
<td>October 29, 2020</td>
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<td>Date ordinance takes effect</td>
<td>November 13, 2020</td>
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Reviewed for administration:

Adopted by the City Council (October 19, 2020)

Thomas K. Harmening, city manager

Attest:

Jake Spano, mayor

Approved as to form and execution:

Melissa Kennedy, city clerk

Soren Mattick, city attorney