

CHAPTER 16 BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 16.10 INTENT

A. INTENT

Building design requirements are intended to ensure that exterior building materials are of high quality, attractive, and consistent with other buildings within the same zoning district, and to ensure that architectural features and patterns that provide visual interest and reduce massive aesthetic effects are incorporated into designs. These requirements are intended to ensure:

1. Context-sensitive and compatible infill development in existing neighborhoods;
2. Architectural diversity to avoid repetitive styles of buildings;
3. High-quality and lasting buildings that will add value to the community;
4. A pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment; and
5. A human-scale built environment.

SECTION 16.20 GENERAL RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

A. APPLICABILITY

This section applies to all residential buildings unless otherwise specified. This section does not apply to dwellings within approved manufactured home communities.

B. BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

1. **Building Code.** Dwellings shall comply in all respects with the Building Code, including minimum heights for habitable rooms. Where a dwelling is required by law to comply with any federal or state standards or regulations for construction and where such standards or regulations for construction are more restrictive than those imposed by the Building Code, then, and in that event, such federal or state standards or regulations shall apply. Any exterior addition shall be of the same construction and materials as the original structure.
2. **Foundations.**
 - a. Every dwelling shall be firmly attached to a permanent foundation constructed on the site in accordance with the Building Code and shall have a wall of the same perimeter dimensions of the dwelling and constructed of such materials and type as required in the applicable building code.
 - b. All foundations outside of manufactured housing communities need to be full perimeter and frost-protected, such as full basements, crawlspaces, or slab-on-grade homes. Piers for porches, decks, and sunrooms up to 500 sq. ft are allowed without this perimeter requirement.
 - c. In the event that the dwelling is a mobile home, such dwelling shall be installed pursuant to the manufacturer's setup instructions and shall be secured to the premises by an anchoring system or device complying with the rules and regulations of the Michigan Mobile Home/Manufactured Home Commission and shall have a perimeter wall as required above.

3. **Primary Siding Material.** Durable materials and quality materials shall be used for siding on all residential buildings, including the following:
 - a. Brick;
 - b. Stone;
 - c. Cementitious material;
 - d. Wood siding;
 - e. Vinyl (as certified by the Vinyl Siding Institute or minimum thickness of 0.44 mm, whichever is greater);
 - f. Glass;
 - g. Metal; and
 - h. Other materials approved by the Planning Commission.

C. PRINCIPAL DWELLINGS IN BASEMENTS PROHIBITED

The use of any basement, as defined in Chapter 35, as a principal dwelling unit is prohibited. An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is allowable in a basement.

D. MANUFACTURED HOMES AS SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DWELLINGS

1. **Zoning Compliance.** All manufactured homes shall meet the same zoning and building requirements as single-family detached homes.
2. **Equipment for Mobility.** As applicable, all towing devices, wheels, axles, and hitches must be removed prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Additionally, no dwelling shall have any exposed towing mechanism, undercarriage, or chassis.

E. ATTACHED GARAGES

Attached garages shall not exceed 50 percent of the ground floor area of the entire residential building.

F. SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED DEVELOPMENT VARIETY

1. **House Models.** A single-family detached residential development shall have a variety of house models. Table 16.20 F indicates the minimum number of different types of house models for developments of various sizes.

TABLE 16.20 F: MINIMUM NUMBER OF HOUSE MODELS	
Size of Development	Minimum
2-20 Buildings	2
21-30 Buildings	3
31-40 Buildings	4
41 or More Buildings	5

2. **Characteristics.** Each house model shall have multiple characteristics that clearly distinguish it from the other house models, such as different exterior materials, rooflines, garage placement, architectural style, number of stories, and/or building face.
3. **Adjacency.** No more than two (2) of the same house model can be located adjacent to one another in developments that require three (3) or more house models.

SECTION 16.30 SR REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTACHED DWELLINGS

A. APPLICABILITY

This section applies to all single-family attached dwellings in the Suburban Residential (SR) zoning district.

B. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ATTACHED DWELLING UNITS

In residential developments (plat, site condominium, and conventional condominium) with 11 or more units, no more than 10 percent of dwelling units shall be single-family attached dwellings.

C. LOCAL ROAD OR PRIVATE STREET ACCESS

Driveway access to roads classified by the Kent County Road Commission as “county primary roads” is prohibited.

SECTION 16.40 VR & MFR REQUIREMENTS FOR DETACHED DWELLINGS

A. APPLICABILITY

This section applies to all single-family detached dwellings in the Village Residential (VR) and Multiple Family Residential (MFR) zoning districts.

B. ORIENTATION AND PLACEMENT

1. **Established Patterns.** The orientation of the primary entry and building facade shall be consistent with the established pattern along the same side of the block.
2. **Placement.** Buildings shall not be constructed diagonally or skewed on the lot.

C. BUILDING MATERIALS AND DESIGN

1. **Entry and Connection.**
 - a. All residential units shall provide a pedestrian door facing the front lot line accessing the first story. The front door may be elevated.
 - b. Required pedestrian entry doors must feature a stoop, covered entry, portico, or porch, along with a paved walkway connecting to the sidewalk.
2. **Window Transparency.** A minimum of 10 percent of a building façade shall be transparent glass. Garage door windows do not count for transparency requirements.
3. **Exterior Walls.**
 - a. All street-facing façades must consist of exterior-rated brick veneer, stone veneer, wood, fiber cement, or similar siding.
 - b. Non-street facing façade wall materials shall be visually divided by the use of belt coursing, awnings, windows, or similar treatments to avoid large expanses of monotonous walls.
4. **Eaves.** Eaves must be a minimum of 12 inches in depth. An eave is the distance between the side wall of the structure and the fascia, not including the gutter.
5. **Gable Ends.** Gable ends must be a minimum of eight (8) inches in depth.

6. **Front Porches.** Each unit's front elevation must feature a street-facing porch five (5) feet in depth minimum, and the porch(es) will be a minimum 40 percent of the total length of the street-facing building façade.
7. **Garage Doors.** If a garage door is located on a building façade, it must be set back five (5) feet from the building foundation line and feature a pent roof, or other projecting decorative element (e.g., awning, trellis, balcony, etc.) extending the width of the garage door(s). A single-bay door shall be a maximum of nine (9) feet wide, and a two (2) bay door shall be a maximum of 16 feet wide. If two (2) doors or more doors are present, they must be divided by a minimum one (1) foot wide column. Garages facing to the side or rear, or detached rear yard garages, are not subject to this requirement.

SECTION 16.50 VR REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTACHED DWELLINGS

A. APPLICABILITY

This section applies to all single-family attached dwellings in the Village Residential (VR) zoning district.

B. ORIENTATION AND PLACEMENT

1. **Established Patterns.** The orientation of the building facade shall be consistent with the established pattern along the same side of the block and include at least one (1) entry facing the primary street frontage.
2. **Placement.** Buildings shall not be constructed diagonally or skewed on the lot unless approved otherwise by the Planning Commission.

C. GARAGES

1. **Attached Garages.** Attached garages shall not face the primary street frontage.
2. **Detached Garages.** Detached garages shall be placed in the rear yard.
3. **Access.** Garages shall be accessed by a rear alley or a driveway that extends to the rear yard of the property from one side of the building.

D. BUILDING MATERIALS AND DESIGN

1. **Entry and Connection.**
 - a. All residential units shall provide a pedestrian door facing the street/front lot line accessing the first story (front door may be elevated), except end or second-story units, which may face other yards. In the case of two-unit buildings, at least one shall face the street/front lot line.
 - b. Required pedestrian entry doors must feature a stoop, covered entry, portico, or porch, along with a paved walkway connecting to the sidewalk.
2. **Window Transparency.** A minimum of 10 percent of a building façade shall be transparent glass.
3. **Exterior Walls.**
 - a. All street-facing façades must consist of exterior-rated brick veneer, stone veneer, wood, fiber cement, or similar siding.
 - b. Non-street facing façade wall materials shall be visually divided by the use of belt coursing, awnings, windows, or similar treatments to avoid large expanses of monotonous walls.

4. **Eaves.** Eaves must be a minimum of 12 inches in depth. An eave is the distance between the side wall of the structure and the fascia, not including the gutter.
5. **Gable Ends.** Gable ends must be a minimum of eight (8) inches in depth.

E. DEVELOPMENT MIX

Residential developments (plat, site condominium, and conventional condominium) with 11 or more units in the VR zoning district shall include a mix of housing types in accordance with Table 16.30 E.

TABLE 16.30 E: VR DEVELOPMENT MIX	
Type	Minimum Percentage of Units
Single-Family Detached Dwellings	60%
Single-Family Attached Buildings	20%

SECTION 16.60 MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOMES

A. APPLICABILITY

This section applies to all multiple-family residential buildings and nursing homes in all zoning districts in which they are allowable.

B. ORIENTATION AND PLACEMENT

To the maximum extent feasible, the primary entrance and façade of individual buildings within a multi-family development shall be oriented towards the following:

1. Primary, internal, or perimeter streets; or
2. Common open space, such as interior courtyards, parks, or on-site natural areas or features with a clearly defined and easily accessible pedestrian circulation system.

C. GARAGES

1. **Location.** Garage entries shall be internal to the property in building groupings and located away from street frontages unless accessed using an alley.
2. **Doors.** Garage doors shall not face public or private streets unless located behind the rear building line of the building which it serves.

D. BUILDING MATERIALS AND DESIGN

1. **Entry and Connection.** At least one pedestrian entry door shall feature a stoop, covered entry, portico, or porch, along with a paved walkway connecting to the sidewalk.
2. **Window Transparency.** A minimum of 10 percent of a building façade shall be transparent glass. Garage door windows do not count for transparency requirements.
3. **Exterior Walls.**
 - a. All street-facing façades must consist of exterior-rated brick veneer, stone veneer, wood, fiber cement, or similar siding.
 - b. Non-street facing façade wall materials shall be visually divided by the use of belt coursing, awnings, windows, or similar treatments to avoid large expanses of monotonous walls.

4. **Eaves.** Eaves must be a minimum of 12 inches in depth. An eave is the distance between the side wall of the structure and the fascia, not including the gutter.
5. **Gable Ends.** Gable ends must be a minimum of eight (8) inches in depth.

E. MASSING AND FORM

For the purpose of reducing the overall bulk and mass of individual buildings, one (1) or more of the following techniques shall be incorporated into the building design:

1. **Step Backs.** Breaking up the mass of the multi-family building by stepping back the façade (minimum two feet deep and one foot wide) for every 30 feet of building frontage so that the building appears from the street to be separate homes;
2. **Organization.** Organizing units around a central courtyard that maintains the impression of the traditional side yard setback between units along the street frontage; or
3. **Arrangement.** Designing the family building so that the massing, arrangement of architectural elements, and use of exterior materials give the appearance of a large single-family home or townhomes.

F. FOUR-SIDED DESIGN

Although the front facade of a building is expected to be the primary focal point in terms of the level of architectural character and features, all sides of a residential building shall incorporate architectural detailing that complements the front facade and provides visual interest. Blank walls void of architectural detailing are prohibited. Five (5) architectural features listed below shall be incorporated into the overall design on each side of the building.

1. Covered porches;
2. Balconies;
3. Prominent entry features;
4. Windows;
5. Door openings;
6. Distinct variations in color (not a slight variation of a similar hue, such as beige or pastel);
7. Variations in materials;
8. Variations in building height;
9. Variation in roof form;
10. Dormers;
11. Projected or recessed building walls; or
12. Another architectural feature as approved by the Planning Commission.

SECTION 16.70 GENERAL NON-RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

A. APPLICABILITY

This section applies to all non-residential buildings in all zoning districts.

B. ARCHITECTURAL ARTICULATION

1. **Applicability.** All building facades shall have horizontal and vertical architectural articulation if exceeding the widths noted below. Architectural articulation is a repeating pattern in accordance with Section 16.70 B.2.
 - a. Over 32 feet in residential districts, commercial districts, and mixed-use districts.
 - b. Over 50 feet in industrial districts.
2. **Repeating Pattern.** Building facades shall include a repeating pattern that shall include no less than three (3) elements listed below. These elements shall be integral parts of the building fabric and not superficially applied trim or graphics. At least one (1) of these elements shall repeat horizontally:
 - a. Color and texture change;
 - b. Material change;
 - c. Step backs;
 - d. Change in building, parapet, or roofline height. If used to comply with this standard, the minimum change in roofline shall be two (2) feet;
 - e. Porches, roof overhangs, awnings, canopies, or marquees extending at least four (4) feet beyond the building face; and
 - f. Expression of architectural detail through a change of plane no less than 12 inches in width, such as an offset, reveal, or projecting rib.

C. ROOFTOP EQUIPMENT

1. **Design and Screening.** Roof-mounted equipment shall be an integral part of the building's overall architectural design and shall be screened from view to the extent practicable from public rights-of-way, residential land uses, public parking areas, and/or adjacent properties using parapet walls or other means of screening.
2. **Review.** When reviewing the type and amount of screening, the Zoning Administrator shall consider the following:
 - a. The proximity of the development to surrounding residential land uses and the visual impact that roof-mounted equipment may have upon those surrounding residential land uses.
 - b. The number and size of roof-mounted equipment. The greater the number and/or size, the more screening may be warranted.
3. **Color and Finish.** Roof-mounted equipment shall be neutral earth-toned colors that have a matte finish and are compatible with the primary building façade. In no case shall rooftop mechanical equipment be galvanized, shiny, white, off-white, or other light colors that can be observed from a distance.

SECTION 16.80 NC REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

A. APPLICABILITY

This section applies to all mixed-use and non-residential buildings in the Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning district.

B. BUILDING MATERIALS

1. On the first story of the street facing façades, wall materials must consist of brick, stone, wood, or fiber cement siding. Vinyl siding is permitted above the first floor/first story.
2. Buildings must have a minimum of one (1) functional entry for every 60 feet of façade along the front lot line and 100 feet of façade along side lot lines, or a fraction thereof, along sidewalks.
3. Any ground-floor building façade along a street must exhibit 33-80 percent clear glass windows on the ground floor.

SECTION 16.90 DEVIATIONS

A. ARCHITECTURAL DEVIATIONS

Deviations from the requirements of this chapter may be authorized by the Planning Commission.

B. CONSIDERATIONS.

In determining if a deviation is warranted, the following shall be considered:

1. The proposed architectural design and/or building material is equal or superior to these requirements as it relates to achieving the character desired by this section.
2. The proposed architectural design and/or building material better fits the character of the area than when it strictly conforms to the requirements of this section.
3. The deviation has no significant visual impact or distinction from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties.
4. The applicant shall demonstrate that conformance with the requirements is impractical due to complexity, but this factor shall not by itself be the reason for granting a deviation.

C. CONDITIONS

The Planning Commission may attach conditions necessary to uphold the intent of this chapter.