



Saginaw Boulevard Overlay District FAQ Sheet

What is an overlay district?

An overlay district is a specific area within a community that has been assigned special zoning provisions in addition to those already required within that area. Overlay districts are used as a zoning tool to thoughtfully plan for future development by means of protecting and enhancing growth via legal restrictions and allowances.

What properties are included in the Saginaw Boulevard overlay district under consideration?

The Saginaw Boulevard overlay district includes all properties zoned Office Professional, Neighborhood commercial, and Community Commercial, with frontage and/or access (either direct or through cross access easements) to Saginaw Boulevard from East Industrial Boulevard on the south, the railroad on the east, and the northern city boundary.

What are the overlay terms that are different from City requirements imposed on development anywhere else?

There are seven items addressed in the Saginaw Boulevard overlay district draft. These include:

1. Permitted and Prohibited Uses
 - a. Prohibited uses will include automotive sales, building material sales, cargo containers, landscape services, machinery sales or repair, mini-warehouses, motorcycle sales, non-depository financial institutions, recreational vehicle rental, rental yard for commercial and heavy equipment, and stone monument sales.
 - b. Uses requiring a special use permit will include convenience stores with fuel sales, automotive car washes, **automotive paint and body shops (previously not allowed by right or special use permit at all in the existing zoning ordinance)**, automotive rentals, automotive service stations, contractors, exterminating services, greenhouses or plant nurseries, home improvement stores, and small engine repair shops.
2. Setbacks
 - a. New buildings under 60,000 square-feet in size and with no parking or drive aisles between the building and the street will have a landscaped setback of 20 to 25-feet with parking in the rear.
 - b. If parking is provided in the front, new buildings under 60,000 square-feet in size will have a maximum **100 (increased from 80)**-foot, landscaped setback with some parking in the front and some on the sides or in the rear.
 - c. New buildings over 60,000 square-feet in size may exceed the **100**-foot maximum setback and have parking in the front with an added 15-foot landscape buffer.
3. Landscaping
 - a. Same as existing requirements except for buildings with a 25-foot maximum setback from the right-of-way.
4. Screening
 - a. Trash enclosures cannot be chain link with vinyl slats and must have solid gates if facing a public street.
 - b. Rooftop mechanical units on buildings must be screened.
5. Building Materials and Design
 - a. Existing requirements are for buildings to be constructed with 100% masonry. Under this overlay, new buildings have more flexibility in material options, with a minimum of 75% of materials required to be masonry or glass, but the remaining up-to-25% as metal, EIFS, etc.
 - b. New buildings will be required to meet specific horizontal and vertical articulation standards, based on the size of the building.
 - c. Flat roofs are ~~not~~ permitted – must have a cornice cap or other detail with vertical dimension based on building height.



6. Signage
 - a. Pole signs are prohibited.
 - b. Window signs may not exceed 25% of a window surface.
 - c. Freestanding signs must be monument signs with a maximum height of 12 feet and maximum size of 90 feet.
 - d. Single tenant properties are limited to one freestanding sign per street front.
 - e. Shopping centers and multi-purpose tenant centers should have one multi-tenant monument sign not to exceed 12 feet in height and a maximum of 225 square-feet in size.
 - f. Murals are allowed for exterior building walls but may not contain logos or names of any specific business entity.
7. Light Standards
 - a. Parking lot lights may not exceed 32 feet in height and should be of square or shoebox design.

What does this mean for new developments that will occur along Saginaw Boulevard?

New developments will be required to conform to the terms of the overlay district. This means when new buildings are built or major rehabilitation of existing buildings occurs, the overlay district, along with other existing zoning regulations and laws, will apply in the same way that development is already subject to regulations and laws put in place by the City. These kinds of requirements are common for new development and overlay districts are widely used to tighten up development along influential corridors or areas of special concern. For new developments along Saginaw Boulevard, these regulations won't be unique at all.

What about properties that already exist within the overlay?

If you own property on Saginaw Boulevard that already has development (buildings, parking lots, signage, etc.), don't worry! Your property will not be affected by the overlay district requirements UNLESS it requires a substantial renovation (50% or more of total building square-footage), you would like to expand your building (20% or more of existing building square-footage), you completely redevelop your site, or you are seeking new tenants which are considered prohibited uses under the terms of the overlay district. Properties that are not in compliance with the terms of the overlay will be considered "legally non-conforming." This means that these properties will be held to the same standards as all other legal non-conforming uses in the City. There will be an amortization period of 10 years, as to USES only, wherein a property owner must bring their use into compliance, or petition the Board of Adjustment to verify they have not recouped their investment during the time the use was considered lawful. Additional time to come into compliance may be authorized through an appeal. For most properties along Saginaw Boulevard, however, maintaining a legal non-conforming use simply means that you have 10 years to address use issues. Property owners are invited to contact the City Building Official directly at any time and schedule a meeting to discuss if and how their property may not meet the overlay district terms, as well as what remediation of these issues may mean.

What happens at the end of the amortization period?

Prohibited uses that have been able to recoup their investment during their operation will be required to cease operations. Uses requiring a specific use permit (SUP) will be required to obtain an SUP in order to continue operating on Saginaw Boulevard. For amortization purposes, only the uses will require remediation for existing properties.



What happens if a building or sign is damaged or in need of major repair within the amortization period?

Any substantial remodel, renovation, rebuild, or expansion of 20% or more of the size of the existing building, requires that structure be brought into compliance with the terms of the overlay district, even during the course of the 10-year amortization period. This means that if there is a structure fire, flooding, natural weather event, etc. that causes damage up to 50% of the replacement cost of the structure or 50% of its square footage, the structures must be rebuilt or rehabilitated in a manner in congruence with the overlay district.

What happens if my nonconforming use is discontinued during the amortization period?

If I cease to engage in my legal nonconforming use for a continuous period of six months, my right to recommence that use is lost. Any use then put into place must conform to the permitted uses within the overlay district regulations.

May I enlarge/expand my nonconforming use, building or sign, etc.?

Nonconformities typically may not be enlarged upon, expanded or extended, by up to 20% of the existing building square footage without needing to bring the entire building into compliance with the overlay standards. unless they are brought into conformity with the overlay district regulations.

How can I bring my property into compliance with the overlay?

If you are unsure if your property is in compliance with the terms of the proposed overlay district, you can contact the City Building Official to set up a meeting to discuss what may not be in compliance and what remediation of these issues may mean. For property owners looking to enhance their building facades, landscaping, lighting, screening, parking lots, tenant interiors, and a host of other issues that will help to beautify and enhance their property along Saginaw Boulevard, the City will be rolling out Council has recently approved something BIG! That's right, the Saginaw Building Improvement Grant (BIG) Program will be made available to all property owners and can supply matching funds for site renovations, upgrades, and repairs that add value into our community. More information about the BIG Program will be coming to you in the next few months new year and is a great way the City wants to partner with you to make commercial development in Saginaw successful.

What are the benefits of having an overlay district in place?

There are many reasons why having an overlay district on Saginaw Boulevard can be beneficial. From a community perspective, parts of the Boulevard are "tired," "run-down," "ugly," and "dirty." These are words that our residents have used to describe our main street – the heart of our community – and the City has been tasked with making changes that matter to bring new life and beauty to the area. That starts with making sure future development on the Boulevard is in line with the goals and objectives of the community, that the future uses allowed are those that will enhance life in the City of Saginaw, and that we empower property owners to set high standards for the quality of future development. That is the goal of an overlay district. For existing properties, the City is committed to assisting property owners in beneficial renovations, beautification projects, and being able to enhance the value of their investments to the highest degree. Quality, updated properties with quality, upgraded neighbors results in higher lease and sell rates, steady and diverse tenancy interest, and larger consumer traffic. Our residents, including our commercial residents, deserve the best and here in the City of Saginaw, we want to make sure that future development is reflective of that while ensuring our existing properties have the tools they need to showcase themselves and remain competitive as the City grows.



Are we listening?

Absolutely! Following feedback received at the November 1st public town hall meeting regarding the overlay, some of the standards were reconsidered and changed. You'll note these changes above, in red. We also want to be clear that existing businesses will not be required to bring their properties into conformance with the building regulations noted in the overlay unless more than 50% of the building has to be renovated. The 10-year amortization period only applies to the uses listed above as prohibited or requiring a special use permit. Of the current businesses along Saginaw Boulevard, only four would be subject to the possibility of being considered a non-conforming use if still in operation in 10 years following any approval of the overlay. Approximately 15 existing businesses will require a special use permit by the end of 10 years. For those 15 businesses in need of obtaining a special use permit (primarily convenience stores, car washes, and auto repair garages) the City is committed to assisting these businesses directly through that simple process. Again, no existing business will be required to get a use permit at any time within the next 10 years unless they want to. Requiring a special use permit for these types of businesses means that existing businesses won't have to worry that each new development coming into the Boulevard will bring competition for them; instead, we can help to preserve the success of our existing businesses by making sure they remain valuable long-term in the heart of our community. As always, we hope to hear from our public about the overlay and other ways we are working to make Saginaw a great hometown for everyone.

Public hearings will be conducted at the Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting held on December 11th at 6:00 pm at City Hall (333 W McLeroy Blvd) and again at the City Council Meeting held on December 18th at 6:00 pm at City Hall. If you have additional questions, please contact:

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