

Guide | Urban Commercial Overlay

CITY OF COLUMBUS-DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT-PLANNING DIVISION

Overview. The Urban Commercial Overlay (UCO) is a zoning tool to encourage a walkable built environment reflecting the development pattern of late 19th and early 20th century commercial corridors. It was first established in 1999 and is found in city code in section 3372.

Applicability. The UCO only applies to retail, restaurant, office and medical office uses.

Standards. The UCO applies design standards that address the location and design of new buildings (and additions to existing buildings), parking lot placement and related development standards. It does not address land use. Examples of standards include:

- Buildings are placed no further back from the right-of-way than 10 feet; up to 50% of the building frontage can be set back an additional 5 feet to provide a public-private space, such as an outdoor dining area.
- Buildings are to have a minimum width of 60% of the lot width.
- Front doors are placed on the building primary elevation.
- At least 60% of the front elevation between 2 and 10 feet in height must be clear tinted window glass.
- Off-street parking is not permitted between the building and the street.
- Drive-thru windows are placed to the side or rear of the building.

When Does the UCO Apply? In general, the UCO applies when certain code-specified improvements occur, such as new construction of a building or parking lot, expansion of an existing building, and new signage.

When Does the UCO Not Apply? For existing development, the city's non-conformance standards apply. But specific to the UCO, such things as routine maintenance, replacement of in-kind material, restriping/reconfiguration of existing parking lots don't fall under UCO requirements.

Parking Reductions. Most retail uses are allowed a 25% parking reduction, with some specific uses that are not parking intensive receiving up to a 50% parking reduction.

Design Review. Unless a property is located in a historic district or under the University Area Review Board, there are no design review requirements.

On-Line Resources. For a complete list of UCO locations, including maps and code references, please visit: www.columbus.gov/planning/commercialoverlays.

Staff Contact. Please contact the Building and Zoning Services Department, Zoning Clearance staff, to discuss the applicability of the UCO to a property (614-645-8637).

Adoption. If your neighborhood is interested in proposing the UCO to a particular commercial corridor, please contact the Planning Division / Neighborhood Planning Section at 614-645-6823.

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
MICHAEL B. COLEMAN, MAYOR
DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT

Entities that have built in the UCO

BW3
Campus Partners
City of Columbus
Columbus Metropolitan Housing
Authority
CVS
Get Go (Giant Eagle)
Kemba Financial Credit Union
Kroger Co.
Metropolitan Partners
Skilken Company
Subway
Taco Bell
Turkey Hill (Kroger Co.)
Walgreen's



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