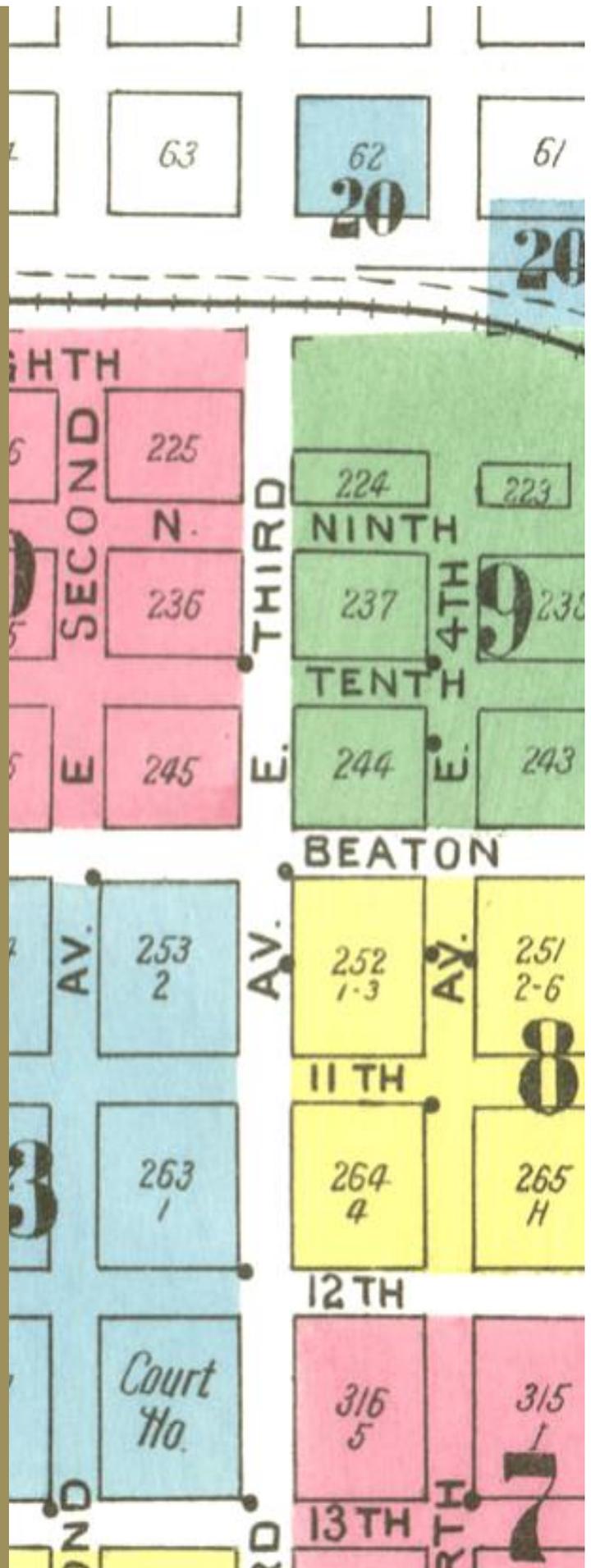


# HISTORIC DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

## OVERLAY & DESIGN GUIDELINES

### CITY OF CORSICANA, TEXAS

A Guide for Property Owners



## Historic Downtown District Overlay & Design Guidelines City of Corsicana, Texas

### Sec. 12.701 Statement of Purpose

The Historic Downtown District encompasses approximately 25 blocks of historic commercial buildings near the geographic center of the community. The rows of commercial buildings in the district generally exhibit similar scale and materials. Built along a uniform setback line, the continuous frontage of historic commercial buildings defines a uniform street space. The historic buildings were primarily erected between 1880 and 1925 to house retail concerns. Most fall into the classification of 1-part or 2-part commercial blocks, with load-bearing brick construction methods predominating.

Renewed economic prosperity in the 1920s fostered a cycle of new construction and remodeling that resulted in an eclectic mix of commercial architecture influenced by the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Classical Revival styles typical in Texas during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A few historic institutional buildings, service stations, warehouses, lumberyard facilities, docks, and depots contribute to the district's character, with surviving brick streets weaving the properties into a cohesive whole. Therefore, it is the intention of these guidelines to:

- **Preserve** the historic character and visual identity within the district. In all development activities within the district, the previously built fabric should be restored, renovated, and maintained.
- **Promote infill** of remaining vacant properties and encourage adaptive re-use of existing buildings while maintaining the historic character of the downtown core.
- **Enrich** the street as a place for pedestrian comfort, beauty, and convenience.
- **Revitalize** investment interest in the District, encouraging greater retail, service, and commercial activity within the district.

Architectural design guidelines shall apply to work not begun before the effective date of this Ordinance and shall apply to exterior work done on an existing building or new commercial development respectively, which is located within the Historic Downtown District. The Historic Downtown District is defined by the Main Street Project boundaries map as found in Appendix A.

### Sec. 12.702 Street Interface Guidelines

1. Decorative Landscaping: Landscaping for any premises is limited to pots and planters that do not encroach upon the sidewalk space more than 3 feet, unless those planters are used to define the area of encroachment for restaurant activities. Where encroachment serves a restaurant, it cannot cause the operational portion of the sidewalk space to be reduced to fewer than 4 feet in width. Plants that are no longer alive cannot remain in such condition for more than 7 days and must be replaced with healthy plants within 7 days of property owner notification. The placement of other street furniture and fixtures such as newspaper boxes, planters, benches, mailboxes, and telephones, shall be reviewed by the City of Corsicana to determine safety and appropriateness.
2. Sidewalk Restaurants: Sidewalk Restaurants are allowed in the Historic Downtown District and shall be permitted as such by the Planning and Zoning Department. Sidewalk Restaurants within or encroaching upon the sidewalk space can only be spatially defined at the corners. No fences, railing, or barriers that would subdivide the sidewalk shall be permitted within the sidewalk space. Encroachment cannot cause the operational portion of the sidewalk to be reduced to fewer than 4 feet in width. When sidewalk, retail, or restaurant activity is located within a building offset and outside of the public sidewalk, a railing of wrought iron or material architecturally appropriate to the period of the building as approved by the Landmark Commission.

3. Displays: Outdoor retail displays should be neatly displayed, clean, safe, and properly merchandised. Merchandise may be displayed during store business hours and must be removed from the sidewalk at the close of every business day. Merchandise may be displayed within a 32 square foot area for every 25 linear feet of storefront and must not leave fewer than 4 feet of sidewalk width devoted to pedestrian traffic. Compliance with this paragraph will be reviewed by the Main Street Advisory Board.
4. Parking Lot Screening: When a parking lot is being installed, a landscaping plan shall be submitted for review by Landmark Commission
5. Parking: On-street parking in the Historic Downtown District should be maximized to attract retail investment with Beaton and Collin Streets currently designated as “Two Hour Customer Parking” and is effective during week days from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. *Temporary Storage*, overnight businesses, and residential vehicle parking will require permission through the Planning and Zoning Department. The Department will assign vehicle stickers designating their status. A semi-trailer, truck tractor, bobtail truck, towable recreational vehicle, or large delivery vehicle is prohibited from parking on any public street, public right-of-way, private lot, parcel or easement within the Historic Downtown District at any time, except for the purposes of loading or unloading, or by Special Permit through the Planning and Zoning Commission. With regard to the definitions of various vehicles mentioned in this section, the definitions found in §541.201 of the Texas Transportation Code are hereby incorporated by reference.
6. Loading: Front-service loading is permitted during off-peak hours (typically mid-morning and mid-afternoon). New construction of loading doors, bays, and docks, as well as other features used for loading that affect the architectural appearance of a street-facing side of a building, are prohibited on the building planes of Beaton, Main, and Collin Streets. Modification or replacement of existing loading doors, bays, and docks and other loading features that affect the architectural appearance of a street-facing plane will require review and approval by the Corsicana Landmark Commission.
7. Accessory Buildings: Storage buildings separate from the main structure will not be permitted in the Historic Downtown District.
8. Rooftops: Rooftop structures, signs, antennas, water tanks, water towers, solar panel arrays, clothes lines, or similar installations, visible to a person of average height, standing on a sidewalk (or at the curb where a sidewalk is not provided) on the opposite side of the street (the “Street View”) are subject to the Historic Downtown District Overlay & Design Guidelines (“Overlay & Design Guidelines”) and any modification, replacement, rehabilitation, or demolition of such structures that affects their Street View will require review and approval by the Corsicana Landmark Commission. No provision in this paragraph shall be construed in such a way that it conflicts with Texas Property Code, Title 11, Chapter 202, Section 202.010 “REGULATION OF SOLAR ENERGY DEVICES.” Texas Property Code, Title 11, Chapter 202, Section 202.010 is hereby incorporated by reference. Portions of rooftops and parapet walls not visible from the Street View are not subject to this paragraph but may be subject to other parts of the Overlay & Design Guidelines as well as local, state, and federal building and energy codes.

### **Section 12.703 Architectural Design Guidelines - Alterations, Additions, and Adaptive Use**

The Historic Downtown District contains a significant number of structures that are important to the original and historically layered fabric of the community. Special consideration should be given to the

preservation of these buildings. Utilization of historic buildings often required additions and alterations to adapt a particular structure to a current use. Alterations, Additions, and Adaptive Use should be carefully undertaken so as not to significantly alter the exterior appearance of the structure and shall be subject to review by the Corsicana Landmark Commission before any work commences. Historic buildings located in the Historic Downtown District have been granted the designation “Landmark” by the City of Corsicana and before any exterior construction, rehabilitation, alteration, restoration, relocation, or modification is commenced, a “Certificate of Appropriateness” must be approved by the Corsicana Landmark Commission.

1. **Storefronts & Windows:** Windows and doors are important character-defining features of historic commercial buildings. They give scale and proper proportion to the building and provide visual interest to pedestrians by affording views to goods and activities inside the building. Original entries, doors, transoms, and display windows should be maintained where they are found. Original materials of construction should be maintained when possible, such as: employing wood mullions rather than aluminum. When replacement windows are required, replacement windows must fit the original opening in the building. For instance, where a round topped window was original, installing a rectangular or square window into the opening and using masonry or wood to fill the space around the window will not be permitted. Mill finish (silver) aluminum windows are prohibited on all street-facing building planes. Other acceptable window fabrications are iron-industrial and metal clad-wood framed. Alternative window fabrications may be submitted for consideration.
2. **Canopies and Arcades:** Every building fronting the street in the Historic Downtown District is encouraged to provide either or both of the following:
  - a. A **canopy** projected from the building between the first and second floor, supported by tension rods or chains anchored to the structure above. This feature should extend at least 6 feet out from the building. Building materials should be appropriate to the age and style of the building. Fabric awnings may also be used when appropriate and should be well fitted to the building’s openings. Fabric colors should be consistent with the District’s color palette.
  - b. An **arcade** that dedicates a portion of the first-floor space to sidewalk use and that is greater than 5 feet in depth.
3. **Lighting:** Storefronts within the Historic Downtown District are strongly encouraged to illuminate the interior side of the storefront system to facilitate window shopping and for security purposes at night.
4. **Signage:** Signs should be located above the awning or canopy between the first and second floors and attached flush to the building. The height of the sign should be no greater than 32 inches and should not extend past the width of the awning. In addition, one pendant sign is recommended at pedestrian level suspended from the awning. There should be a clearance of no less than 80 inches from the bottom of the pendant sign to the ground level. Lettering featuring the name of the current or historic residing establishment may be applied to the glass panels of the storefront. Signs that are backlit or edge lit, using LEDs only for illumination of a static, physical sign (e.g. a printed or painted sign), may be permitted by the Planning & Zoning Department upon review and approval of the Corsicana Landmark Commission, but LED Display Signs shall not be permitted in the Historic Downtown District except as necessary for the operation of a Marquee Sign and then only as permitted by the Planning & Zoning Department and upon review and approval of the Corsicana Landmark Commission. Any additional permanent signage, including novelty signs that depart from the specifications outlined in this paragraph, must be permitted by

the Planning & Zoning Department upon review and approval by the Corsicana Landmark Commission.

Marquee signs, lighted sign structures mounted and projected vertically from the building façade, are allowed where suitable if an historic marquee or evidence of documented historic signs exist. Existing marquee signs, or historic lighted signs should be preserved and maintained. Other styles of lighted signs including backlit and edge lit signs may be considered but must be reviewed by the Landmark Commission. LED Display Signs necessary for the operation of a Marquee Sign may be allowed as permitted by the Planning & Zoning Department and upon review and approval of the Corsicana Landmark Commission.

Sandwich boards as temporary signage maybe used in the Historic Downtown District during regular store business hours and removed to inside the store at the close of each business day. Sandwich signs must not cause the operational portion of the sidewalk to be reduced to fewer than 4 feet in width.

5. Appropriate Materials: The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material shall closely match the old in composition, design, color and texture. 36 CFR, Section 68.3, “Standards.”
6. Appropriate Colors: Distinctive materials, features, finishes, colors, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the era during which a particular structure was constructed- including appropriate historical layering, will be preserved. If approved to paint the exterior, the paint color will be selected from the historic architectural style of the buildings found in downtown Corsicana, which were rich dark reds in the late 1890’s and lighter tan bricks in the early 1900’s. Color choices will be from the historic collections in shades of reds, browns, clay, and blonde. If the applicant can supply evidence of other colors used on a historic building, other colors may be considered. Before any repainting or recoating is commenced, a “Certificate of Appropriateness” must be approved by the Corsicana Landmark Commission.
7. Coatings Applied to Masonry and Brick: In the context of historic preservation, the use of coatings presents unique and interesting challenges. For example, existing coatings on historic structures may be inherently significant — e.g., murals, stencils, historic color schemes — or nonoriginal and not appropriate to the historic character of the structure. They may be remarkably intact, or they may be deteriorated and fragile. In accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards of Treatment of Historic Properties, unpainted masonry and brick features on buildings located in the Downtown Historic District should not be painted. A previously painted or coated structure may be repainted or recoated only in the same or a substantially similar color. When presented with a Certificate of Appropriateness involving the application or repair of coatings, the handout on “Coatings Applied to Masonry and Brick should guide consideration by the Corsicana Landmark Commission. The HPO will provide the handout to the applicant upon request.
8. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: In Addition to the Architectural Design Guidelines, the Corsicana Landmark Commission adopts, by reference, in its entirety, as guidelines, 36 CFR Part 67 and 36 CFR Part 68, “*The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*” pursuant to the National Historic

Preservation Act (NHPA), which gives guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, restoring, & reconstructing historic buildings.

#### Sec. 12.704 Architectural Design Guidelines - New Commercial Development

New commercial development and new infill construction should relate to existing historic buildings found in the Historic Downtown District. The use of traditional building materials, architectural elements, and building size and mass should be continued and evident in all new construction. All new commercial development, new construction, and storefront reconstruction shall require design approval by the Corsicana Landmark Commission. An approved "Certificate of Appropriateness" is required before construction may commence.

1. **Storefronts:** Newly constructed storefront systems used within the Historic Downtown District should harmonize with and emulate existing historical storefronts in the Historic Downtown District or historic storefronts that previously existed in the Historic Downtown District. Where possible, construction of a historically appropriate storefront system is required, employing wood mullions rather than aluminum. Where a new development is proposed in a recognized historical style and the characteristics of that recognized historical style conflict with this paragraph, the proposed design shall be reviewed by the Corsicana Landmark Commission and an approved "Certificate of Appropriateness" is required before any construction may commence.
2. **Canopies and Arcades:** Every building fronting the street in the Historic Downtown District is encouraged to provide either or both of the following:
  - a. A **canopy** projected from the building between the first and second floor, supported by tension rods or chains anchored to the structure above. This feature should extend at least 6 feet out from the building. Building materials should be appropriate to the age and style of the building. Fabric awnings may also be used when appropriate and should be well fitted to the building's openings. Fabric colors should be consistent with the District's color palette.
  - a. An **arcade** that dedicates a portion of the first-floor space to sidewalk use and that is greater than 5 feet in depth.
3. **Building Height:** The maximum permitted height of buildings facing the street in the Historic Downtown District is 45 feet including towers, rooftop structures, and any rooftop installations. Proposed structures taller than 45 feet shall require design approval by the Corsicana Landmark Commission. An approved "Certificate of Appropriateness" is required before construction may commence.
4. **Lighting:** Storefronts within the Historic Downtown District are strongly encouraged to illuminate the interior side of the storefront system to facilitate window shopping and for security purposes at night.
5. **Signage:** Signs should be located above the awning or canopy between the first and second floors and attached flush to the building. The height of the sign should be no greater than 32 inches and should not extend past the width of the awning. In addition, one pendant sign is recommended at pedestrian level suspended from the awning. Lettering featuring the name of the current or historic residing establishment may be applied to the glass panels of the storefront. Any additional permanent signage, including novelty signs that departs from the specifications outlined in this paragraph, must be permitted by the Planning & Zoning Department upon review and approval by the Corsicana Landmark Commission.

Marquee signs, lighted sign structures mounted and projected vertically from the building façade, are allowed where suitable if an historic marquee or evidence thereof exists. Existing marquee signs, or historic lighted signs should be preserved and maintained.

Sandwich boards as temporary signage maybe used in the Historic Downtown District during regular store business hours and removed to inside the store at the close of each business day. Sandwich signs must not cause the operational portion of the sidewalk to be reduced to fewer than 4 feet in width.

6. Elements of Style: The prevalent architectural styles in the Historic Downtown District are commercial style renaissance, predominantly evidencing Romanesque, Classical, or Italianate detailing. All restoration, reconstruction, and new development in the Downtown Historic District should harmonize with and emulate existing historical structures and/or historic structures that previously existed in the Historic Downtown District. New development in any other recognized historical style will require design approval by the Corsicana Landmark Commission. An approved “Certificate of Appropriateness” is required before construction may commence.
  - a. Materials: 100% of any street-facing façade shall be brick, excluding windows, doors, and storefronts, consistent with all respective guidelines contained herein. The architecturally-enclosed portion of any arcade or recessed entry is excepted from the use of brick, if it is veneered in a decorative tile. Any variations from these materials must be consistent with a recognized historical style and will require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Corsicana Landmark Commission.
  - b. Color Palette: Brick and paint color will be selected from the historic architectural style of the buildings found in downtown Corsicana, which were rich dark reds in the late 1890’s and lighter tan bricks in the early 1900’s. Color choices will be from the historic collections in shades of reds, browns, clay, and blonde. Storefront colors were traditionally chosen in a contrasting shade lighter or darker than the primary building color. Paint colors should pull together all building elements, including the cornice, upper façade, windows, storefront, and doors. Limit trim paints to three compatible shades chosen from the historic color palettes. Any variations from these colors must be consistent with a recognized historical style and will require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Corsicana Landmark Commission.
  - c. Openings: Fenestration or the arrangement of windows and doors on the street-facing planes of buildings in the Downtown Historic District should harmonize with and emulate existing historical storefronts in the Historic Downtown District and/or historic storefronts that previously existed in the Historic Downtown District. Bare aluminum or “mill finish” (silver) aluminum windows may not be use in any street-facing openings.
  - d. Parapets and Cornices: All flat roofs shall be concealed behind a standing parapet that is at least 18 inches above the roof membrane. The street-fronting portions of the parapet shall have offsets in the cap profile that give greater visual articulation of corner, entry, and decorative elements of style. The top of all parapets must be capped by a decorative mold or brick detail that projects out from the exterior wall plane at a minimum of 1 inch.

- e. Roofs: All roofs for any structure over one story that is not a residential structure shall be flat with 1:12 pitch to alley. One-story stand-alone residential structures may have a pitched roof.
- f. Horizontal Expression: It is typical that the distribution of openings and decorative detail maintain a horizontal expression. Therefore, decorative window heads and sills should align horizontally. Floor separations should be expressed by horizontal belt courses and canopies should maintain a constant horizontal reference from one building to another unless such alignment is prevented by grade changes.
- g. Edges: Building corners, whether actual or established by a shared lot line, must have visual expression by one of the following means: Pilaster columns, Columns, Quoins, Fluting Panels/Coffers Common Vertical Reference

Any building that is wider than the building width typical to the block in which it is located must have designed building corners that modulate the street façade by creating architectural elements that give the appearance of building edges spaced consistent with the block modulation. Other edges are opportunities for decorative expression and should be incorporated into the building design typical of a Commercial Romanesque style; opportunities for articulation of edges include windows, parapets, frieze, and projections. In every street-facing façade, the window heads must be decoratively expressed as a minimum compliance with this guideline.

- h. Entries: New storefronts should place the building entry in the middle of the front façade, or sometimes at the corner when the façade is on a corner lot. The entry is reinforced by a vertical continuity with the second-floor openings, an architectural form or element, and a canopy. Corner entries on corner lots must be reinforced by a canopy that visually articulates the location of entry apart from other canopies along the block. The doors used for entries must be compatible with the storefront system, be an actual historic commercial door restored for re-use, or be a reconstruction of a door that likely existed on the premise.

The area bound by the railroad to the east, south by 5th Avenue, west by 9th Street, and north by 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, will be given special consideration as an industrial area. Alternate industrial building design and materials will be allowed in this area. Industrial buildings constructed in the area should reflect design features of surrounding industrial buildings.

These guidelines shall apply to all work not commenced before the effective date of this Ordinance. It shall apply to all exterior work done on an existing building, or a new commercial development, respectively, which is located within the Historic Downtown District.

#### SECTION V: Appeals Process

Decisions of the Planning & Zoning Department, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, and the Corsicana Landmark Commission may be appealed to the City Council.

## SECTION VI: Definitions

**Accessory Building** means a subordinate or secondary building or structure on the same lot as the main building and devoted exclusively to an incidental or ancillary use.

**Arcade** means an outdoor area of the first floor of a building that is protected by projecting the upper floor or roof. Building means a structure for the support or shelter of any use or occupancy.

**Building Line** means a line marking the minimum distance a building may be erected from a street, alley, or lot line.

**Canopy** means a projected cover that extends from the building façade, usually over a portion of the public sidewalk.

**Floor Area** means the total square feet of floor space in a building measured to the outside faces of exterior walls or to the omitted wall lines.

**Floor Area Ratio** means the ratio of floor area to lot area. (Note: A 1:1 FAR is stated as “1.0,” 2:1 is stated as “2.0,” 2.5:1 is stated as “2.5,” etc.)

**Frontage** means the length of property along one side of a street between property or lease boundary lines.

**Height** means the vertical distance measured from grade to:

- a. for a structure with a gable, hip, or gambrel roof: the midpoint of the vertical dimension between the lowest eaves and the highest ridge of the structure;
- b. for a structure with a dome roof, the midpoint of the vertical dimension of the dome; and
- c. for any other structure: the highest point of the structure.

**Interior Lot Line** means a lot line not adjacent to a street or alley.

**LED Display Signs** means LED sign displays that utilize an array of light-emitting diodes as pixels to create a flat panel video display.

**Lot** means a building site that fronts on a public or private street, except that in the case of a planned development district, the building site may front on an access easement, and in the case of a shared access development, the building site may front on a shared access area.

**Lot Area** means the total square feet contained within lot lines.

**Lot Depth** means the average distance between the front and rear lot lines.

**Lot Line** means a property line bounding a lot, excluding any street or alley dedicated in fee simple.

**Lot Width** means the distance between side lot lines measured along the front setback line. Main Building means a building on a lot intended for occupancy by the main use.

**Occupancy** means the purpose for which a building or land is used.

**Opening** means any penetration of a building wall for windows, doors, or storefront.

**One-Part Commercial Block** means a single-story commercial building, often found with display windows (and possibly transom windows above) flanking a central entrance, with a parapet wall above the storefront that might contain signage, a marquee, as well as supports for an awning or canopy over the sidewalk.

**Outside Display** means the placement of a commodity outside.

**Parking** means the standing of a vehicle, whether occupied or not. Parking does not include the temporary standing of a vehicle when commodities or passengers are being loaded or unloaded.

**Party Wall** means a wall built on an interior lot line used as a common support for buildings on both lots.

**Person** means any individual, firm, partnership, corporation, association, or political subdivision.

**Right-of-Way** means an area dedicated to public use for pedestrian and vehicular movement.

**Right-of-Way Line** means the dividing line between a right-of-way and an adjacent lot.

**Screening** means a visual barrier.

**Setback Line** means a line marking the minimum distance a building may be erected from street, alley, or lot line (also called the “building line”).

**Story** means that portion of a building between any two successive floors or between the top floor and ceiling above it.

**Street** means a right-of-way that provides primary access to adjacent property.

**Street Level** means, in a multi-level building, the level having the floor closest in elevation to the adjacent street; if the floors of two levels are equally close in elevation to the adjacent street, the level with the higher elevation is the street level.

**Street View** means areas on the street facing planes of a building that are visible to an individual of average height, standing on a sidewalk (or at the curb where a sidewalk is not provided) on the opposite side of the street.

**Structure** means that which is built or constructed, an edifice or building of any kind, or any piece of work artificially built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner.

**Temporary Storage** means a non-permanent, unfixed enclosure or edifice for the purpose of housing merchandise associated with a particular business.

**Two-Part Commercial Block** means a structure of two to four stories, characterized by a horizontal division or belt course, into two distinct zones. The two-part division often reflects differences in use inside. The single-story lower zone, at street level, indicates public spaces such as retail stores, a banking room, insurance office or hotel lobby, while upper zone suggests more private spaces, including offices, hotel rooms or a meeting hall.

CORSICANA LANDMARK COMMISSION

