

PLAN COMMISSION

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE – FENCES, AC UNITS, METAL-SIDED BUILDINGS

January 26, 2026

Title

PC 26-02

Petitioner

Village of Lombard
255 E. Wilson Avenue
Lombard, IL 60148

Property Location

Village-wide

Approval Sought

The petitioner, the Village of Lombard, is requesting text amendments to Village Code Chapter 155 (Zoning Code) as it relates to fence materials, side yard setbacks for AC units on single-family residential properties, and metal-sided buildings in Office and Business Districts.

Prepared By

Anna Papke, AICP
Planning and Zoning Manager

DESCRIPTION

The Community Development Department periodically reviews the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that Lombard's land development regulations reflect the priorities of the Village as well as best practices. Following a recent review, staff proposes three amendments. Proposed amendments include: regulations for fence construction materials; amended regulations to reduce the required interior side yard setback for central air conditioning units on single-family residential properties; and regulations prohibiting metal-sided buildings in the Office and Business zoning districts. The three amendments are being advanced in an omnibus petition.

APPROVAL(S) REQUIRED

The petitioner, the Village of Lombard, is requesting text amendments to Village Code Chapter 155, Zoning Code, and any other relevant sections for clarity and consistency. Proposed amendments include the following:

1. Amend Section 155.205 of the Village Code, Fences, wall, and hedges, to incorporate regulations for fencing materials.
2. Amend Section 155.212 of the Village Code, Permitted obstructions in required yards, to reduce the side yard setback for new central air-conditioning systems.
3. Amend Chapter 155, Article III of the Village Code, General Provisions, to incorporate regulations pertaining to metal-sided buildings in Office and Business Districts.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW

Building Division:

The Building Division has no comments regarding the proposed text amendments to the Village Code.

Fire Department:

The Fire Department has no comments regarding the proposed text amendments to the Village Code.

Private Engineering Services:

Private Engineering Services has no comments regarding the proposed text amendments to the Village Code.

Public Works:

The Department of Public Works has no comments regarding the proposed text amendments to the Village Code.

Planning Services Division:

1. *Fence materials*

Proposed amendments to Section 155.205, Fences, wall, and hedges, will add language that explicitly lists the permitted materials for fences in Residence, Business, and Office districts. The current ordinance has some provisions to limit chain link in front yards and electrified fences generally but is otherwise silent on fence construction materials. The proposed amendments will clarify that fences may be constructed of decay-resistant wood, vinyl/PVC, wrought iron/aluminum, and masonry. Chain link is prohibited in front and corner side yards in the residential districts.

In conjunction with the proposed amendments to the fence requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, staff is proposing amendments to the Building Code to establish fence construction standards (e.g. depth requirements for post holes). The proposed Building Code amendments will be considered by the Board of Building Appeals in February. The combined Building Code and Zoning Ordinance amendments will provide clarity to property owners and ensure fences are well-constructed with acceptable materials.

2. *Central air conditioner setbacks for single-family residences*

Currently, regulations for central air conditioning units prohibit new AC units from being placed in the required side yard setback (replacement AC units may be installed in the side yard setback if they are in the same location as the previous unit). For most single-family residences in the Village, the effective setback for new central AC units is six feet from the interior side yard lot line.

Staff has received feedback from the Building Division that residents have requested the ability to place new AC units in side yard setbacks. Residents would like to avoid placing AC units behind the house where there may be a patio or other area in active use by the resident. Building staff has advised that advances in AC technology have resulted in quieter models, reducing concerns that units in side yard setbacks will create noise impacts for neighboring properties. Therefore, staff recommends reducing the side yard setback for AC units on single-family residential lots from six feet to four feet. This will provide increased flexibility for homeowners while ensuring there is adequate space between the unit and the property line for maintenance and replacements.

The proposed changes would impact single-family residential properties only. Setbacks for AC units on multifamily and non-residential properties would remain as-is. Note that AC units could not be placed in an easement.

3. *Metal siding on buildings in Office and Business Districts*

Staff proposes a new section in the General Provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit metal siding on buildings in the Office and Business Districts. Recently, staff has received several inquiries from individuals considering constructing prefabricated metal buildings (pole barns, Quonset huts) along commercial corridors in the Village. Staff believes the increased interest in these types of buildings is due to changes in construction and materials costs as well as marketing efforts by building manufacturers.

Examples of these types of buildings are shown below. Staff notes that these metal-sided buildings are not consistent with the existing aesthetic characteristics of the Village's major commercial corridors, particularly St. Charles Road and Roosevelt Road. Adopting regulations to prohibit this type of building façade in the Office and Commercial Districts will promote new construction that complements and enhances existing development in these districts.



Examples of buildings that would be prohibited in Office and Business Districts.

EXISTING & PROPOSED REGULATIONS

The proposed text amendments are as follows. Additions are denoted by **bold and underline**. Deletions are denoted by a ~~striketrough~~.

1. Fence materials

Proposed fence regulation amendments are in the attached document.

2. Central air conditioner setbacks for single-family residences

§ 155.212 - Permitted obstructions in required yards.

Type of Structure or Use Obstruction X = Permitted Obstruction	Front and Corner Side Yard	Side Yards	Rear Yard
Central air-conditioning systems, new			Must meet footnote F
<u>Central air-conditioning systems, new, for single-family residences</u>		<u>Must meet footnote H</u>	<u>Must meet footnote F</u>
<u>Central air-conditioning systems, new, not for single- family residences</u>			<u>Must meet footnote F</u>
Central air-conditioning systems, replacement	Must meet footnote E and F	Must meet footnote E and F	Must meet footnote F

- A. Open terraces and decks not over three feet above the average level of the adjoining ground, provided that a minimum two-foot side yard setback is maintained.
- B. Open terraces and decks attached to single-family residences not more than one foot above the established top of the foundation height at the front of the residence, provided that a minimum 25 foot rear yard setback is maintained.
- C. Bay windows projecting three feet or less into the yards.
- D. Bay windows, which are not supported by a foundation, are no more than ten feet wide, and project no more than two feet into the yard provided that the bay window does not encroach into any easement area.
- E. The unit shall not further encroach into the requisite yard than the previous unit.
- F. The unit shall not encroach more than ten feet into the requisite yard.
- G. The structure shall not encroach more than two feet into the side yard.
- H. **The unit shall maintain a minimum setback of four feet from the interior side lot line and shall not encroach into any easement area.**

3. *Metal siding on buildings in Office and Business Districts*

NEW SECTION

§ 155.229 – Restrictions on metal siding on buildings in Office and Business Districts.

Metal siding, including but not limited to, steel, aluminum, copper, and zinc siding, is prohibited on building facades in the Office and Business Districts.

STANDARDS FOR TEXT AMENDMENTS

For any change to the Village Code, the standards for text amendments must be affirmed. The standards are noted below:

1. *The degree to which the proposed amendment has general applicability within the Village at large and not intended to benefit specific property;*

Fences: The proposed text amendment is applicable to all properties in the Residence, Office, and Business Districts. Existing standards specific to the B5 (Downtown) District will not change.

AC units: The proposed text amendment is applicable to all single-family residential properties.

Metal siding: The proposed text amendment is applicable to properties in the Office and Business Districts.

2. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the objectives of this ordinance and the intent of the applicable zoning district regulations;*

The proposed text amendments is consistent with the objectives of the Village Code. The stated purpose of the Zoning Code is to promote health, safety, and the general welfare. More specifically, the Zoning Ordinance seeks to encourage a beneficial arrangement of structures and other improvements on individual lots, and to recognize aesthetics as a value and standard throughout the village. The proposed amendments advance this purpose.

3. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would create nonconformity;*

Staff is not aware of any nonconformities that would be created as a result of the text amendments.

4. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would make this ordinance more permissive;*

Fences: The proposed amendment clarifies permissible fence materials. It is neither more nor less permissive than the current fence requirements.

AC units: The proposed amendment will reduce the required setbacks for AC units on single-family residential properties from six feet to four feet.

Metal siding: The proposed amendment would make the ordinance less permissive by prohibiting metal siding on buildings in the Office and Business Districts.

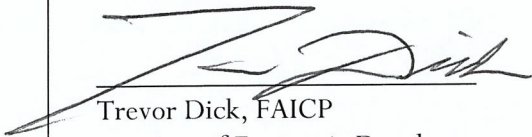
5. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan; and*
Staff finds that the proposed amendments would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
6. *The degree to which the proposed amendment is consistent with village policy as established in previous rulings on petitions involving similar circumstances.*
The Village has a history of amending the Village Code to address changing circumstances or to provide clarity. The proposed amendments are consistent with established Village policy in this regard.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee has reviewed the petition and finds that it meets the standards required by the Village Code. As such, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee recommends that the Plan Commission make the following motion recommending approval of this petition:

Based on the submitted petition and the testimony presented, the requested text amendments **comply** with the standards required by the Village of Lombard Zoning Ordinance; and, therefore, I move that the Plan Commission accept the findings and recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Report as the findings of the Plan Commission and I recommend to the Corporate Authorities **approval** of PC 26-02.

Inter-Departmental Review Committee Report approved by:



Trevor Dick, FAICP

Director of Economic Development and Planning

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§ 155.205 Fences, walls, and hedges.

(A) *Fences and walls.*

(1) *Fences or walls in residential districts.*

- (a) *Fence or wall materials.* Fences or walls in residential districts shall not include the use of barbed wire or other material intended to maintain security by means of bodily injury. Electrified fences shall not be permitted in residential districts. Materials for fences or walls in the clear line of sight area shall meet the requirements of subsection 155.205(A)(1)(e) of this Chapter.

(i) Fences or walls in residential districts shall not include the use of barbed wire or other material intended to maintain security by means of bodily injury. Electrified fences shall not be permitted in residential districts.

(ii) Materials for fences or walls in the clear line of sight area shall meet the requirements of subsection 155.205(A)(1)(e) of this Chapter.

(ii) Fences and walls in front yards and corner side yards shall be constructed of materials which are designed and intended for use in fence installations and shall be limited to the following: masonry, wood, chemically treated or naturally resistant to decay; wood composites; vinyl/PVC; and wrought iron or aluminum.

(ii) Fences and walls in rear yards and interior side yards shall be constructed of materials which are designed and intended for use in fence installations and shall be limited to the following: masonry; wood, chemically treated or naturally resistant to decay; wood composites; vinyl/PVC; wrought iron or aluminum; and chain link.

- (b) *Permitted locations.* Fences or walls may be erected, placed, or maintained along a lot line or within a required yard on a residentially zoned property, except as otherwise restricted by subsection 155.205(A)(1)(e) of this Chapter. Fences or walls may be erected in public utility easements and drainage easements, except that fences or walls erected in said easements shall not impede drainage flow.

(c) *Permitted height.*

- (i) Fences or walls in any residential district shall not exceed six feet in height, except that where a lot in a residential district abuts railroad right-of-way or property(ies) in a business, office, or industrial district, the height of the fence or wall along the property line adjoining such railroad right-of-way or business, office, or industrial district on the residential lot may reach, but not exceed, eight feet in height.
- (ii) Fences or walls in required front yards shall not exceed four feet in height. ~~Fences in required front yards shall not be constructed of chain link (with or without slats).~~
- (iii) Wherever the rear yard of a lot abuts the front yard of an adjacent lot, the maximum height for any fence or wall within the required rear yard shall be four feet.
- (iv) On a through lot within the R0, R1 or R2 Single-Family Residence District that takes driveway access from the same right-of-way as both adjacent properties, the lot line opposite the access right-of-way shall be treated as a rear lot line and allowed a maximum fence height of six feet. This provision shall not apply if either of the adjacent properties takes driveway access from a right-of-way other than that accessed by the subject property.

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- (v) Maximum height, as prescribed by this section, shall be permitted to vary by up to ~~three~~ six inches to allow for grade changes; clearance under fences for maintenance, footers or other obstacles customary to the use intended to be fenced; or reasonable human error. Fence posts or decorative finials may not cause the fence to exceed the maximum height limitation by more than ~~three~~ six inches.
 - (d) *Fence installation.* When fences are located in the required front yard or corner side yard, the finished or decorative side of the fence shall face the adjacent property(ies) or street.
 - (e) *Fences or walls in the clear line of sight area.* No fences or walls more than two feet in height shall be located within the clear line of sight area, as defined in § 155.802 of this Chapter, unless it meets all of the following criteria:
 - (i) Fences or walls are of open construction, such as ~~chain link without slats~~, wrought iron and aluminum, ~~cyclone~~, picket, or split rail fences.
 - (ii) Fences or walls are not of solid construction, such as board on board, solid wood, brick, concrete, or chain link with slats.
 - (iii) Deciduous trees around or adjacent to the fence are free of foliage and branches from ground level to eight feet above ground level. All other plant materials which are around, adjacent to, or through the fence are no greater than two feet in height.
 - (iv) Supporting members are no greater than six inches in width.
 - (v) Fences adjacent to private residential driveways that intersect with an alley shall be permitted to be of solid construction.
 - (2) *Fences or walls in business and office districts.*
 - (a) *Fence or wall materials.* ~~The use of barbed wire shall be permitted only around approved outside storage areas and only at a height greater than six feet and less than eight feet above the ground. No electrified fences shall be permitted. Materials for fences or walls in the clear line of sight area shall meet the requirements of subsection 155.205(A)(2)(e) of this Chapter.~~
 - (i) The use of barbed wire shall be permitted only around approved outside storage areas and only at a height greater than six feet and less than eight feet above the ground. No electrified fences shall be permitted.
 - (ii) No electrified fences shall be permitted. Materials for fences or walls in the clear line of sight area shall meet the requirements of subsection 155.205(A)(2)(e) of this Chapter.
 - (iii) Fences and walls shall be constructed of materials which are designed and intended for use in fence installations and shall be limited to the following: masonry; wood, chemically treated or naturally resistant to decay; wood composites; vinyl/PVC; wrought iron or aluminum; and chain link.
 - (b) *Permitted location.* Fences or walls may be erected, placed, or maintained along a lot line or within a required yard in business or office district, except as otherwise restricted by subsection 155.205(A)(2)(e) of this Chapter. Fences or walls may be erected in public utility easements and drainage easements, except that fences or walls erected in said easements shall not impede drainage flow.
 - (c) *Permitted height.*
 - (i) No fence or wall shall be erected, placed, or maintained to a height exceeding eight feet in any business or office district.

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- (ii) Fences or walls in the required front or corner side yard shall not exceed four feet in height.
 - (iii) Wherever the rear yard of a lot abuts the front yard of an adjacent lot, the maximum height for any fence or wall shall be four feet.
 - (d) *Fence installation.* When fences are located in the required front yard or corner side yard, the finished or decorative side of the fence shall face the adjacent property(ies) or street.
 - (e) *Fences or walls in the clear line of sight area.* No fences or walls more than two feet in height shall be located within the clear line of sight area, as defined in § 155.802 of this Chapter, unless it meets all of the following criteria:
 - (i) Fences or walls are of open construction, such as chain link without slats, wrought iron, cyclone, picket, or split rail fences.
 - (ii) Fences or walls are not of solid construction, such as board on board, solid wood, brick, concrete, or chain link with slats.
 - (iii) Deciduous trees around or adjacent to the fence are free of foliage and branches from ground level to eight feet above ground level. All other plant materials which are around, adjacent to, or through the fence are no greater than two feet in height.
 - (iv) Supporting members are no greater than six inches in width.
 - (f) *Fences or walls in the B5 District.* In addition to the provisions listed in subsection 155.205(A)(2) above, all fences and walls located within the B5 District shall meet the following additional provisions:
 - (i) *Fence or wall materials.* All fences in the B5 District shall be constructed of the following materials:
 - a. Open fences. Aluminum, wrought iron, cast iron, welded steel, wood or PVC; pillars may be constructed of masonry materials.
 - b. Solid fences. Brick, masonry, pre-cast materials, wood or PVC with the decorative side facing the exterior of the property in which it is located.
 - c. Chain link fencing shall only be permitted for construction fencing purposes, as required by Chapter 150 of the Village Code.
 - d. Landscape hedgerows shall be permitted within the B5 District.
 - e. Barbed wire or razor wire is expressly prohibited.
 - (ii) *Permitted location.* Fences or walls may be erected, placed, or maintained along a lot line or within the property. Walls or fencing of parking spaces within parking lots shall only be permissible if said spaces were granted a conditional use, as set forth within subsection 155.418(C)(14) or (15) of the zoning ordinance.
 - (iii) *Permitted height.* No fence or wall shall be erected, placed, or maintained to a height exceeding six feet in the B5 District.
 - (3) *Fences or walls in industrial districts.*
 - (a) *Fence or wall materials.* The use of barbed wire shall be permitted only around approved outside storage areas and only at a height greater than eight feet and less than ten feet above the ground. No electrified fences or walls shall be permitted. Materials for fences or walls in the clear line of sight area shall meet the requirements of subsection 155.205(A)(3)(e) of the Chapter.

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- (b) *Permitted location.* Fences or walls may be erected, placed, or maintained along a lot line or within a required yard in the industrial district, except as otherwise restricted by subsection 155.205(A)(3)(e) of this Chapter. Fences or walls may be erected in public utility easements and drainage easements, except that fences or walls erected in said easements shall not impede drainage flow.
 - (c) *Permitted height.*
 - (i) No fence or wall shall be erected, placed, or maintained, to a height exceeding ten feet.
 - (ii) Fences or walls in a required front or corner side yard shall not exceed four feet in height.
 - (iii) Wherever a rear yard of a lot abuts the front yard of an adjacent lot, the maximum height for any fence, wall, or hedge shall be four feet.
 - (d) *Fence installation.* When fences are located in the required front yard or corner side yard, the finished or decorative side of the fence shall face the adjacent property(ies) or street.
 - (e) *Fences or walls in the clear line of sight area.* No fences or walls more than two feet in height shall be located within the clear line of sight area, as defined in § 155.802 of this Chapter, unless it meets all of the following criteria:
 - (i) Fences or walls are of open construction, such as chain link without slats, wrought iron, cyclone, picket, or split rail fences.
 - (ii) Fences or walls are not of solid construction, such as board on board, solid wood, brick, concrete, or chain link with slats.
 - (iii) Deciduous trees around or adjacent to the fence are free of foliage and branches from ground level to eight feet above ground level. All other plant materials which are around, adjacent to, or through the fence are no greater than two feet in height.
 - (iv) Supporting members are no greater than six inches in width.
- (4) *Fences or walls in the CR Conservation/Recreation District.*
- (a) *Fence or wall materials.* Fences or walls in the CR Conservation/Recreation District shall not include the use of barbed wire or other material intended to maintain security by means of bodily injury. Electrified fences shall not be permitted in the CR Conservation/Recreation District. Materials for fences or walls in the clear line of sight area shall meet the requirements of subsection 155.205(A)(4)(e) of this Chapter.
 - (b) *Permitted location.* Fences or walls may be erected, placed, or maintained along a lot line or within a required yard in the CR District, except as otherwise restricted by subsection 155.205(A)(4)(e) of this Chapter. Fences or walls may be erected in public utility easements and drainage easements, except that fences or walls erected in said easements shall not impede drainage flow.
 - (c) *Permitted height.*
 - (i) Fences or walls within 30 feet of an improved public right-of-way shall not exceed four feet in height.
 - (ii) Fences or walls within 30 feet of a property line, other than property lines shared by an improved public right-of-way, shall not exceed six feet in height.
 - (d) *Fence installation.* When fences are located in the required front yard or corner side yard, the finished or decorative side of the fence shall face the adjacent property(ies) or street.

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- (e) *Fences or walls in the clear line of sight area.* No fences or walls more than two feet in height shall be located within the clear line of sight area, as defined in § 155.802 of this Chapter, unless it meets all of the following criteria:
 - (i) Fences or walls are of open construction, such as chain link without slats, wrought iron, cyclone, picket, or split rail fences.
 - (ii) Fences or walls are not of solid construction, such as board on board, solid wood, brick, concrete, or chain link with slats.
 - (iii) Deciduous trees around or adjacent to the fence are free of foliage and branches from ground level to eight feet above ground level. All other plant materials which are around, adjacent to, or through the fence are no greater than two feet in height.
 - (iv) Supporting members are no greater than six inches in width.
 - (5) *Application for permits.* Effective March 17, 2000, permits for the erection, relocation, or placement of fence or wall shall be required. Application for a fence or wall permit shall be made to the Director of Economic Development and Planning upon a form provided by the Director of Economic Development and Planning and the permit application shall include the following information:
 - (a) Property owner's name, address, and phone number;
 - (b) The name, address, and phone number of the installer of the fence or wall;
 - (c) Address of the property on which the fence or wall is being located;
 - (d) Plat of survey for the property, showing all site improvements including driveways;
 - (e) Type of fence or wall (e.g. wood, brick, wrought iron, chain link, etc.);
 - (f) Site plan showing the location of fence or wall on the property and in relation to all adjacent properties and driveways;
 - (g) Height(s) of fence or walls; and
 - (h) Such other information as may be required by the Director of Economic Development and Planning to show full compliance with this and other applicable ordinances of the village.
 - (6) *Permit issuance.*
 - (a) *Review of applications.* It shall be the duty of the Director of Economic Development and Planning and Director of Building, upon the filing of an application for a fence or wall permit, to examine such plans and specifications and other data related to the proposed erection or placement of the fence or wall. It appears that the proposed fence or wall is in compliance with all the requirements of this Chapter, the permit shall then be issued.
 - (b) *Denial and revocation of permit.* When a permit is denied by the Director of Economic Development and Planning and/or Director of Building, a written notice shall be given to the applicant along with a brief statement of the reasons for denial. The Director of Economic Development and Planning and/or Director of Building may revoke or suspend a permit for any false statement or misrepresentation.
 - (7) *Permit fees.* Every application, before being granted a fence or wall permit under this Chapter, shall be subject to a fee, as is established in § 150.141 of the Code of Ordinances.
- (B) *Hedges.*
- (1) *Permitted locations.* Hedges may be placed or maintained along a lot line or within a required yard in any zoning district, except as otherwise restricted by subsection 155.205(B)(3).

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- (2) *Permitted height.* The maximum allowed height for a hedge shall be the same maximum allowed height for a fence or wall in the zoning district in which said hedges are located, except as otherwise restricted by subsection 155.205(B)(3).
- (3) *Hedges in the clear line of sight area.* Hedges in the clear line of sight area as defined in § 155.802 of this Chapter shall not exceed two feet in height.

(Ord. 4698, passed 9-2-99, Ord. 4933, passed 2-15-01; Ord. 5653, passed 6-2-05; Ord. 6360, passed 8-20-09; Ord. 6539, passed 10-21-10; Ord. 6569, passed 1-20-11; Ord. 6736, passed 6-21-12; Ord. 6853, passed 8-15-13; Ord. No. 6910, § 1, passed 1-16-14; Ord. No. 7172, § 1, passed 1-21-16; Ord. No. 7579, §§ 2, 3, passed 9-20-18; Ord. No. 7927, § 1, passed 3-4-21; Ord. No. 8024, § 1, passed 1-20-22; Ord. No. 8148, § 1, passed 4-20-23; Ord. No. 8347, § 1, passed 3-20-25)