
Sec. 5.8.02. Downtown Height Overlay District (OD-DH).

A. Purpose.

1. The purpose of the Downtown Height Overlay District (OD-DH) is to allow a variety of building heights in the areas within and surrounding what is generally recognized as Grand Rapids' Downtown. In addition, certain qualifying development incentives are provided in recognition of the need to provide for a suitable mix of residential, retail, employment centers, and urban open space that is essential for the creation of an attractive, pedestrian-friendly, vibrant, and economically sustainable central business district.
2. In addition, these incentives promote an environment that enhances property values, contributes to quality of life and sustains the Downtown as a regional asset. To this end, the Downtown Height Overlay District provides for certain incentives that permit building heights above the permitted base building heights to encourage certain development characteristics the City has deemed of value in creating highly livable, walkable, and vibrant environments.
3. The District is further intended to recognize the need to have varying intensities of development from the densest levels of development in the city core to the edges of commercial area that begin to transition into less intensely developed areas and residential neighborhoods. To this end, the District establishes certain subareas to account for height and incentive differences.

B. Applicability. Map A of the Zoning Map depicts the boundaries of the area covered by the Downtown Height Overlay District and its subareas. The height requirements of the Height Overlay District are in addition to the requirements of the Zone District in which an individual property is located. All other applicable requirements of each district remain in effect.

C. Downtown Height Overlay Subareas.

1. As noted in Table 5.8.02.D., the Height Overlay District establishes two (2) subareas, each of which has height regulations applied. Additional bonus height provisions are available for properties that fall within the Grand River Overlay District of Section 5.08.03.
2. *Purposes.* A series of density incentives, provided through variations in building height, are provided to help describe a smooth transition from the most intensively developed core of the downtown to the residential neighborhoods with a transition that steps down building heights from the core to these neighborhoods.
 - a. *DH-1.* The purpose of this subarea is to permit the greatest intensity of land use to create a core of development density for a wide variety of uses that are mutually supportive and serve regional needs, including hotels, restaurants, employment centers, medical centers, entertainment venues, and others. These uses are also intended to create an active, vibrant core.
 - b. *DH-2.* This subarea largely surrounds the core and near-core downtown areas, including areas on the west side of the Grand River, with a number of cultural and institutional uses important to the city and region. It is intended as a transitional area between the more intense development of DH-1 and the edges of downtown and nearby neighborhoods. While still relatively intensively developed, the lower building heights provide transition from the core. The subarea is divided into two zones, DH-2(a) and DH-2(b), to help reinforce the transition of building heights.

- D. *Permitted Height.* Table 5.8.02.D. describes the minimum and maximum permitted heights for buildings within each Height Overlay Subarea, including potential bonuses as described in Section 5.8.02.G. Heights are measured in stories as provided in Section 5.8.02.E., below.

Table 5.8.02.D. Building Heights			
Subarea		Permitted Height (stories)	
		Minimum	Maximum
DH-1		3	None
DH-2	zone (a)	3	20
	zone (b)	3	10

- E. *Story Heights.* (See also Section 5.2.06.)

1. Table 5.8.02.E.1 provides for the height of each story of the main building. Unless otherwise specified, story height is measured in feet from the floor of a story to the floor of the story above it.

Table 5.8.02.E.1. Building and Story Heights				
Subarea	Permitted Story Height (ft.)			
	Ground Floor		Upper Floors	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
CC, TCC	12	24	-	14
All others	12	18	-	14

2. For the uppermost story, story height shall be measured from the floor of the story to the eave line on pitched roofs and to the tallest point of the roof deck on parapet and flat roofs.
3. Story height requirements apply only to street facing façades, however, no portion of a story of the building shall exceed the maximum permitted story height.
4. A building incorporating both a half story within the roof and a visible basement shall count the height of the two and one-half (2½) stories as one (1) full story.

(Ord. No. 2023-26, §§ 4, 5, 7-11-23)