

Draft Ordinance: Henri de Tonti Boulevard Overlay District (350-Foot Overlay) – City of Tontitown, Arkansas

Section 1. Title & Purpose

1.1 Title

This ordinance shall be known as the *Henri de Tonti Boulevard Overlay District* (“Overlay District”) for the City of Tontitown.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Overlay District is to ensure development along Henri de Tonti Boulevard in Tontitown:

- Enhances the aesthetic character, architectural identity, and visual coherence of the Boulevard.
 - Encourages three-sided façade quality for buildings visible from public vantage points.
 - Strengthens landscaping, buffering, and screening to improve environmental quality and reduce negative visual impacts.
 - Regulates signage—size, placement, materials, lighting—to balance visibility with attractive public realm.
 - Promotes safe, orderly access and lighting consistent with Tontitown’s standards.
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Section 2. Jurisdiction & Applicability

2.1 Geographic Limits

- Applies to all property lying within **350 feet** of the centerline of Henri de Tonti Boulevard (or from the edge of right-of-way, whichever is greater), on both sides of the Boulevard, within the corporate limits of Tontitown.

2.2 Applicability

- All **new construction**, or exterior expansions/renovations of existing buildings where **façade area altered exceeds 50%**.
- New signage or replacement of existing signage visible from Henri de Tonti Boulevard.
- New parking lot construction or expansions; major site redevelopment.

2.3 Relation to Tontitown’s Existing Codes

- Tontitown has provisions for **Overlay and Special-Purpose Districts** in its Zoning Regulations. § 153.085 authorizes adopting such overlay/special districts with design standards for landscaping, buffering, signage, lighting, setbacks, building form.

- Existing **Sign Regulations** in Tontitown’s Code (Chapter § 153.184 “Sign Regulations by District”, etc.) will continue to apply, but may be modified or supplemented by this Overlay District.
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Section 3. Façade / Building Form Standards

3.1 Visible Sides Requirement

- At least **three (3)** sides of any building that are visible from Henri de Tonti Boulevard, a public right-of-way, or adjacent properties shall meet the standards below.

3.2 Materials

- On each required visible façade, **at least 70%** of the area shall be constructed of primary, high-quality materials (brick, stone, architectural concrete, decorative metal, quality glass, etc.).
- Up to **30%** may be secondary materials (fiber cement panels, metal decorative panels, etc.), provided detailing and color are compatible.
- Plain, unadorned concrete block or simple sheet metal walls (without relief, texture, or architectural detailing) shall be avoided or treated via design (e.g. murals, relief panels).

3.3 Articulation & Massing

- Any façade longer than **50 feet** must include articulation every **25-30 feet** (recesses/projections, bays, awnings, canopies, roofline changes).
- Roof parapets or decorative cornices required to break up flat roof forms.
- Mechanical, rooftop equipment must be screened to be not visible from Henri de Tonti Boulevard or adjacent public vantage points.

3.4 Transparency & Openings

- Ground floor façades facing Henri de Tonti Blvd: minimum **40% glazing** (transparent windows/glass) between 2’ – 10’ above grade.
- Side façades that are “visible” from public roads or adjacent streets: minimum **20% glazing**.
- No more than two contiguous blank wall sections longer than **20 feet** without windows, door openings, or architectural detailing.

3.5 Rooflines and Form

- Rooflines should include variation (pitched roof, gables, parapets, or decorative coping).
- Flat roofs permitted only with parapets or decorative screening; rooftop equipment screened or located away from view.

Section 4. Landscaping & Buffering Standards

4.1 Street Frontage Buffer

- Minimum landscaped buffer of **25 feet** from property line abutting Henri de Tonti Boulevard. This area to include canopy trees spaced no more than **30 feet on center**, shrubs, groundcover, and where appropriate understory trees/ornamental trees.

4.2 Side / Rear Buffering

- Where the side or rear of development abuts residential or less intensive zoning: buffer zone of **15 feet minimum**, with evergreen trees/shrubs sufficient to achieve year-round screening (for example, evergreens 6 feet tall planted at 10-12 foot spacing) or equivalent combination of planting + berm + fence if needed.

4.3 Parking Lot Landscaping

- Internal landscape islands within parking lots: required at least every 10 to 15 parking spaces.
- At least **5%** of total parking lot area must be landscaped.
- Perimeter facing Henri de Tonti Boulevard: parking screened by continuous landscaping, berm, wall, or combination, to minimum height of **3 feet**.

4.4 Tree & Planting Standards

- Street trees minimum **2.5 inch caliper** at planting. Native or climate-adapted species favored.
- Shrubs/groundcover appropriate to local soil, water availability.
- All landscaping to be maintained; replacement of dead/dying plant materials within two growing seasons.

4.5 Stormwater & Integration

- Landscape features should, where feasible, double as stormwater management: bioswales, rain gardens, infiltration strips.
- Existing natural vegetation preserved where possible, especially on slopes or topographic features.

4.6 Visibility / Sight Traingles

- Planting in sight triangles at intersections, driveways: shrubs under **30 inches**; taller plantings further from corners to maintain clear sightlines.
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Section 5. Signage Standards

5.1 Monument / Freestanding Signs

- Maximum height: **20 feet** from ground to top of sign.
- Maximum sign area: e.g., **1.5 square feet** of sign face per linear foot of street frontage, up to a cap (for example, **150 sq ft**) — to be confirmed locally.
- Setback: minimum **10 feet** from property line or right-of-way, with landscaping around base of sign (at least 50% of sign perimeter planted or landscaped).

5.2 Building-Mounted Signs

- Building mounted signs on required visible façades: maximum **10-15%** of façade area per side.
- Signs should align with architectural elements (bays, windows, rooflines) and not obscure façade detailing.
- Illumination: down-lighting or back-lighting preferred; no harsh glare or off-site brightness; shielded fixtures.

5.3 Digital / Electronic Signs

- If permitted, digital signage limited to a proportion (for example up to **25%** of allowable area of a monument sign).
- Brightness automatically dimmed after sunset; limited hours of changeable message, no rapid animation.

5.4 Prohibited Signs

- Roof-mounted signs that extend above roofline unless part of architectural design.
- Pole signs above 20 feet, or exceeding area caps.
- Flashing, rotating, or excessively animated signs (unless specifically approved).

5.5 Sign Materials & Design

- Materials/colors to harmonize with building façades. Signs should be integrated architecturally, not just “bolt-on.”
- Plastic “can box” signs discouraged except custom design and scaled properly.

Section 6. Other Site & Access, Lighting, Maintenance

6.1 Driveway Access / Curb Cuts

- Limit number of curb cuts along Henri de Tonti Blvd: ideally one per **200 feet** of frontage, or as per traffic engineer’s determination.

- Encourage shared driveways / shared access points among adjacent parcels.
- Minimum spacing between driveways: **150 feet** or per local traffic standard.

6.2 Lighting & Glare

- Exterior lighting fixtures must be full-cutoff, downward directed, shielded.
- Parking lot poles not exceed **25 feet** in height (or match local base zoning maximum if lower).
- Light trespass onto adjacent properties / public rights-of-way limited to **0.5 foot-candles** at property line (or local code equivalent).

6.3 Maintenance

- Building façades must be maintained: no peeling paint, broken windows, damaged siding, etc.
- Signage maintained; broken or nonfunctional signs repaired or removed within **90 days** of notice.

Section 7. Design Review, Compliance & Variances

7.1 Design Review Process

- All projects within the Overlay District (new builds, renovation exceeding threshold, signage, etc.) must go through City of Tontitown Planning & Zoning review. Submittals to include site plan, all visible façades, materials samples, lighting plan, landscaping plan, and signage plan.

7.2 Compliance

- Certificate of Occupancy (or equivalent) withheld until all required improvements (façades, landscaping, signage) are in place and inspected.

7.3 Variances

- Variance from any standard may be granted if strict compliance causes undue hardship due to lot shape, topography, or other physical constraints.
- Any granted variance must still meet the intent: attractive façade, buffering, minimal visual disruption, compatibility.

Section 8. Effective Date & Phasing

8.1 Effective Date

This ordinance shall take effect on [insert date here] after adoption by Tontitown City Council and publication as required by law.

8.2 Phasing / Grandfathering

- All existing lawfully built structures/signs existing as of the effective date are legal non-conforming.
- However, any major renovation (façade changes over 50% area, full signage replacement, major site redevelopment) shall require compliance with this Overlay.