

# Old Town Justin, Texas Form-Based Code

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## Section 1: Introduction and Purpose

### *Statement of Purpose*

Old Town Justin is historic and iconic, having served as the city's economic hub since its establishment in the 1800s. The original town center was platted in a traditional grid, oriented towards the railroad, a critical mode of transportation at the time. Due to the area's historical and cultural significance, new development or redevelopment within this area is very different from that in other areas that were not part of a historical settlement.

The Old Town Justin Form-Based Code ("OTJ FBC") is crafted to preserve and reinforce the unique historic character, pedestrian orientation, and architectural heritage of Old Town Justin. Public input has clarified that residents want to keep the authenticity of the Old Town area of Justin while understanding that significant growth pressures will continue. The OTJ FBC aims to foster **walkability**, promote a mix of uses, and maintain architectural cohesion appropriate to Justin's small-town Texas legacy. The code establishes predictable, place-based standards that will revitalize Old Town Justin as a vibrant, resilient community center, balancing effective historic preservation with the evolving needs of businesses, residents, and civic life.

### *Intent*

The Old Town Justin Form-Based Code provides a **comprehensive, locally tailored zoning and urban design framework** that safeguards the area's rich history while enabling a thriving, walkable, and economically resilient future. By integrating clear standards for building form, frontages, public spaces, uses, and architectural character, Justin will retain its unique small-town Texas charm while fostering **mixed-use infill, enhanced walkability, and architectural harmony**.

Modeled using specific elements of downtown codes within the region but scaled to Justin's context, this code offers prescriptive yet flexible regulations, a path for engaged

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community stewardship, and a strategic blueprint for the future growth of Old Town as the heart of the Justin community. The consistent use of clear standards, proactive engagement, and a focus on preservation ensures Old Town Justin remains both a living museum and a modern, connected place to live, work, and gather for generations.

*Vision for Old Town:* The vision for Old Town is derived from the community-led engagement process that establishes three guiding principles for development in Old Town:

- Preserve historic character while adding complementary development and a walkable shopping, dining, and entertainment district.
- Establish an Old Town Vision to guide development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation toward connected and flexible outcomes.
- Maintain traditional neighborhoods and a rural feel through clear transitions between commercial and residential areas.

*Relationship with the Imagine Justin Comprehensive Plan and the Old Town Small Area Plan:* The application of these Regulations seeks to encourage community development in accordance with the Imagine Justin Comprehensive Plan and the Old Town Small Area Plan.

*Implementation:* This effort represents a step toward implementing an element of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan states, “Initiate an Old Town Master Plan in coordination with the business community and adjacent neighborhoods to improve pedestrian connectivity to Old Town and link it to the new Town Square.”

### *Legal Framework & Authority (Reference UDC)*

The code applies to all parcels designated within the Old Town Justin Regulating Plan. The standards govern new construction, exterior renovation, additions, and site development. Where conflicts arise with other sections of the Justin Code of Ordinances, the provisions of the OTJ FBC shall prevail within the Old Town area.

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## Section 2: Applicability and Administration (If needed)

*Applicability to other sections of the UDC*

- Development and Design standards within the UDC do not apply to this Old Town District except where referenced explicitly within this article.

## Section 3: Regulating Plan and Subdistricts

*Context*

The Regulating Plan divides Old Town Justin into place-based subdistricts that reflect its unique history, land use patterns, development context, and scale.

*Subdistricts:* The following subdistricts are established as the zoning districts within the Old Town District.

### OLD TOWN SUBDISTRICTS



**Old Town Core:** The commercial and mixed-use core within the historic context of Old Town that also incorporates historic scale and design standards for community design context in the area.

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**Rural Mixed-Use:** Areas for mixed use that will retain a rural feel but be more flexible on uses appropriate within a new development context, versus Old Town Core's focus on scale and design-specific regulations.



**Neighborhood Edge:** Density, scale, and use transition zone between Old Town Core and Traditional Residential Subdistricts.



**Traditional Neighborhood:** The traditional neighborhood homes and homesteads within the Old Town district. This area is intended to allow infill of residential homes without substantially changing the rural residential character of the subdistrict.

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## Street Frontage Types

### OLD TOWN STREET FRONTAGE TYPES



**Pedestrian-Oriented Street:** A street type that includes maximum accommodation of pedestrian movement, and limits conflicts with vehicular driveways, parking lot edges, or blank walls on buildings.



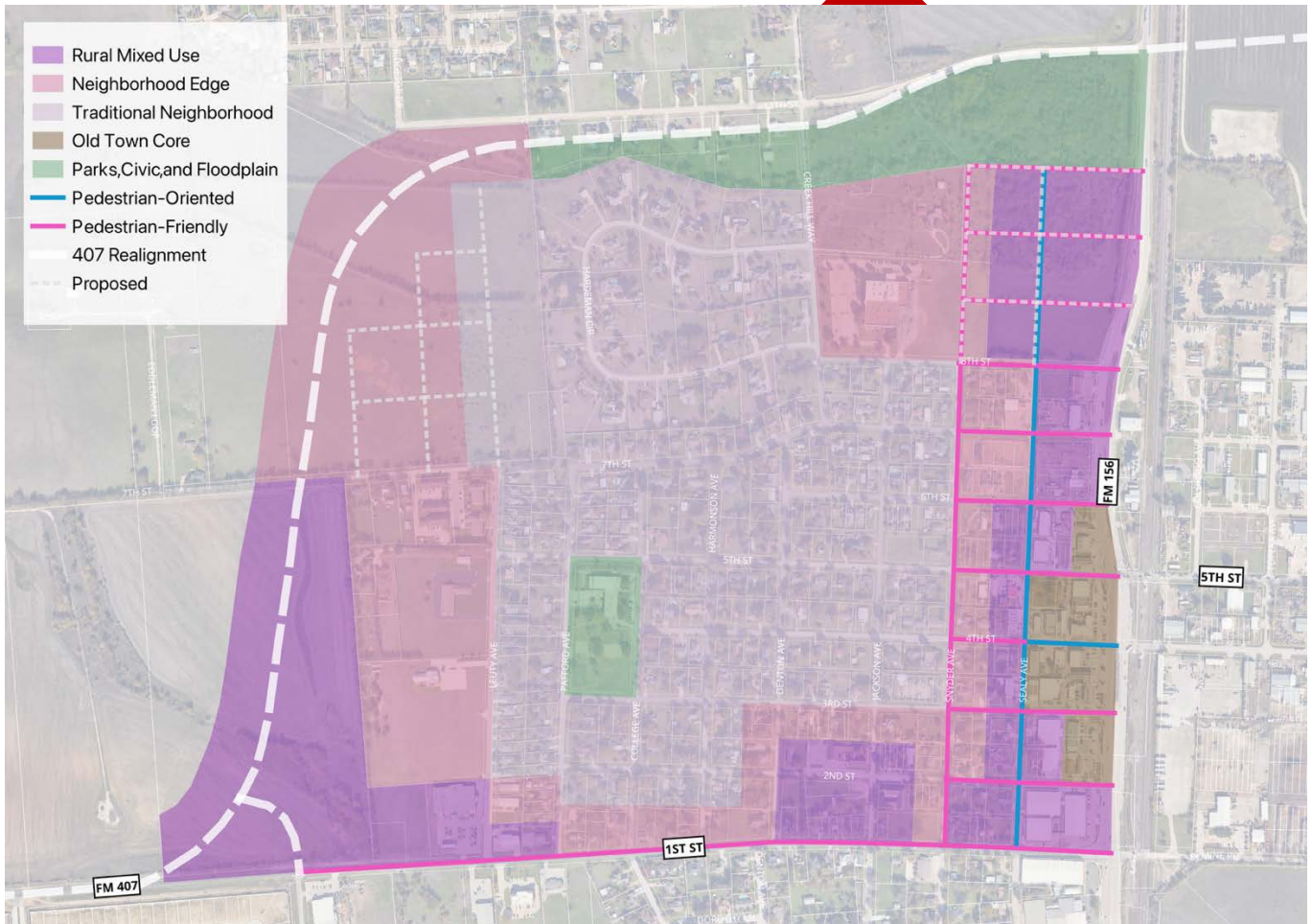
**Pedestrian-Friendly Street:** A street type that prioritizes pedestrian movement and limits conflicts with vehicular driveways, parking lot edges, or blank walls on buildings. Allows for some vehicular interruptions when no other option is available.



**General Street:** A street type that accommodates necessary services and vehicular access, while still accommodating pedestrian movement.

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## REGULATING PLAN



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## Section 4: Building Form Standards

### Overview


Form standards establish the shape, size, and placement of buildings to protect Justin’s historic streetscape, encourage compatible infill, and ensure a walkable, human-scaled environment.

### Building Frontage Intent



The “built-to-line” requirement for the Historic Core maintains the traditional Main Street character with storefronts flush to the sidewalk, while the Neighborhood Edge provides for additional relief and landscaping. Maximum height and length controls prevent out-of-scale new development and retain legibility of Justin’s historic urban form.

Historic forms such as cottages, two-part block commercial buildings, and modest Victorian elements are strongly encouraged; monolithic “big box” buildings and non-historic façade modulation are discouraged.



### Key Building Types Permitted:

		Permitted Subdistricts
	<p>Detached single-family homes A residential building designed to accommodate one household or family, providing private living spaces without shared walls or common areas with other units.</p>	Traditional Neighborhood, Neighborhood Edge


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	<p>Attached townhomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Structure:</b> A multi-story home that shares one or more walls with adjacent units but has its own separate entrance.</li> <li>• <b>Ownership:</b> Typically, the homeowner owns both the interior and exterior of the unit, including the land beneath it (unlike condos).</li> <li>• <b>Layout:</b> Often 2–3 stories, with living spaces on the ground floor and bedrooms above.</li> <li>• <b>Density:</b> Higher than detached single-family homes but lower than apartment complexes.</li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Edge, Rural Mixed-Use</p>
	<p>Missing Middle Residential</p> <p>A range of multi-unit or clustered housing types that fit between single-family homes and large apartment buildings in terms of scale, density, and form. These housing types are designed to provide more affordable, walkable, and community-oriented living options while maintaining compatibility with traditional neighborhoods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scale:</b> Human-scaled, typically 1–3 stories, similar in size to single-family homes.</li> <li>• <b>Density:</b> Higher than detached houses but lower than mid-rise apartments.</li> <li>• <b>Types Include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duplexes;</li> <li>• Triplexes and;</li> <li>• Fourplexes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Edge, Rural Mixed-Use</p>

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	<p>Cottage Court</p> <p>A cluster of small, detached homes arranged around a shared central courtyard or green space. It is designed to promote community interaction while maintaining privacy for individual units.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Configuration:</b> Multiple small homes (often 4–12 units) oriented toward a common courtyard rather than the street.</li> <li>• <b>Scale:</b> Typically single-story or one-and-a-half-story homes, smaller than standard single-family houses.</li> <li>• <b>Shared Space:</b> A landscaped courtyard serves as a communal area for residents, enhancing social interaction.</li> <li>• <b>Access:</b> Homes often have front doors facing the courtyard, with parking located at the rear or along the perimeter.</li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Edge</p>
	<p>Main Street (shopfront) mixed-use buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Street-facing façade:</b> Large display windows for retail visibility.</li> <li>• <b>Entrances:</b> Direct access from the sidewalk to encourage walkability.</li> <li>• <b>Scale:</b> Usually 1–3 stories, maintaining a human-scale streetscape.</li> <li>• <b>Architectural Style:</b> Varies by era and region (e.g., Art Deco, Victorian, Craftsman, Modern).</li> </ul> <p><b>Mixed-Use Potential:</b> Often includes residential units on upper floors in traditional downtowns.</p>	<p>Rural Mixed-Use, Old Town Core</p>

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	<p><b>Accessory Building</b></p> <p>A secondary structure located on the same lot as a primary dwelling, designed to support or complement the main residence. It is not intended to serve as the primary living space but provides additional functionality.</p>	<p>Traditional Neighborhood, Neighborhood Edge, Rural Mixed-Use, Old Town Core</p>
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**Table 1: Building Form Standards**

Standard	Old Town Core	Rural Mixed-Use	Neighborhood Edge	Traditional Neighborhood
Lot Area	n/a	n/a	3,000 square feet minimum	7000 square feet minimum
Minimum Lot Width (ft)	n/a	n/a	30	70
Minimum Lot Depth (ft)	n/a	n/a	100	100
Front Setback (ft) - General	0 minimum 10 maximum	0 minimum 25 maximum	0 minimum 25 maximum	10 minimum, OR Within 5 ft of the adjacent structures
Front Setback (ft) – FM 156	20 minimum 75 maximum	20 minimum 75 maximum	n/a	n/a
Minimum Side Setback (ft)*	0 minimum	0 minimum	0 minimum 5 ft when adjacent to TN District	5 ft minimum
Maximum Height (stories)**	2 (with 3rd step back)	3 (with 4th step back)	2	2

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Maximum Height (ft)	45	55	35	35
Minimum Transparency, Ground Floor (%)	60	60 – comercial 40 - residential	10	10
Max Building Length (ft)	150	150	n/a	n/a
Blank Wall Length (ft)	20 maximum	20 maximum	n/a	n/a
Block Length	300 ft			

\*Zero-lot-line permitted for party-wall/row buildings or attached historic forms.

\*\*Third story must be set back at least 15' from principal facade in Historic Core.

### Frontage Types

#### Overview

Frontage regulations ensure that buildings meet the public realm and shape the walkable character of streets. They determine both allowable architectural expressions and the relationship between private space and the sidewalk.

**Table 2: Frontage Type Summary**

Frontage Type	Allowed in	Design Features
Shopfront	Old Town Core, Rural Mixed-Use	60% transparency, recessed entries, awnings/canopies, direct sidewalk access
Stoop	All zones	Elevated entry 12-18 in. above grade, steps, small garden

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Porch	Neighborhood Edge & Traditional Residential	Covered entry, minimum 6' depth, open on 2+ sides
Forecourt	Old Town Core, Rural Mixed-Use	Courtyard area recessed into the building frontage allowing for multiple ground floor spaces to be accessed from the forecourt or the sidewalk edge
Gallery (optional)	Old Town Core, Rural Mixed-Use	Covered, open-air "arcade" or colonnaded walk

### *Design Standards and Regulations*

**Shopfronts:** Building frontages must align with the pedestrian zone. Ground-floor glazing must comprise at least 60% of the width between two and ten feet above grade; doors must open directly to the sidewalk. Recessed entries no greater than 5 feet are permitted to provide weather protection.



**Porches and Stoops:** Porches must be usable outdoor spaces, not merely decorative; a minimum clear area of 6 feet wide by 8 feet deep. Stoops should be set back a minimum of 5 feet (can encroach 5 feet in setback) from the property line and oriented to the sidewalk.



**Forecourts and Galleries:** Allowed at corner or prominent sites, these frontage types encourage flexible placemaking for public activities, farmers markets, and community events.



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## Section 5: Public Realm Standards and Guidelines

### *Intent*

Strong public realm standards are critical in reinforcing walkability, preserving Old Town’s character, and supporting a safe, comfortable, and convivial pedestrian environment. These guidelines regulate sidewalks, crosswalks, civic spaces, on-street parking, lighting, landscaping, and furnishings, modeled on comparable Texas towns.

### *Streetscape and Sidewalk Standards*

**Table 3: Public Realm Requirements**

Element	Historic Core	Rural Mixed-Use	Neighborhood Edge	Traditional Neighborhood
Sidewalk width (min)	6 feet	6 feet	5 feet	None Required
Tree spacing (feet)	Average 40 feet per block face	Average 40 feet per block face	Average 40 feet per block face	None Required
Lighting (fixture height, ft)	12	12	12	None Required
Bench spacing	Two per block face	Two per block face	None Required	None Required
Bike Parking*	None Required	1 bike rail per 40 parking spaces	None Required	None Required
*CH52-401 Bike Parking standards shall apply to the design and construction of required bike parking				

**Crosswalks:** Are required for Historic Core, Rural Mixed-Use, and Neighborhood Edge intersections. These crosswalks shall comply with ADA requirements, enhance pedestrian visibility, and provide appropriate signage to support driver awareness.

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**Alleys:** Alleys may be used for services to homes, parking access, and as public access trails, as determined by the Administrator or designee.

**Parking:** Shared parking is encouraged within the Old Town District based on on-street, public, and offset hours of use management.

- On-street parking permitted and encouraged along pedestrian streets
- Off-street parking minimum requirements for residential uses only at 1 space per dwelling unit.
- Off-street parking maximum is 1 space per 300 sq ft within the Old Town District.

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### Section 6: Architectural Cohesion and Style Guidelines

#### *Intent*

Design standards in Old Town Justin assure architectural cohesion, supporting both **preservation and compatible new construction** that respects the area's Victorian, early 20th-century, and vernacular Texas Main Street heritage. The standards encourage repair and adaptive reuse of historic structures, and ensure that infill and new buildings "fit" within the established context<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Standards and Guidelines*

- **Windows and doors:** Vertically proportioned, multi-paned (except original storefront windows, which may be horizontal).
- **Roofs:** Gabled or hipped, with allowable flat roofs for commercial buildings screened by historic-style parapets or cornices.
- **Facade articulation:** Buildings must be divided into visually identifiable "modules" (max 30'-40' each) via pilasters, in-sets, or other architectural massing.




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- **Storefronts:** Maintain or replicate recessed entries, transom windows, and traditional signage bands. Modern cladding, mirrored glass, or illuminated/cabinet signage is not permitted.
- **Porches, stoops, and awnings:** Encouraged on most residential and commercial building types; construction must be consistent with historic examples.
- Attachments (balconies, galleries, overhangs) are allowed where historically documented.

### Inappropriate Treatments:






- Franchise “look” architecture (generic corporate prototypes)
- Large, blank facades or “false front” massing
- Faux historicism with inaccurate or overly ornate features

### Commercial Recommended Styles


<p><b>Art Deco</b></p>	<p>Bold geometric shapes, strong vertical lines, and a sense of lavish, modern luxury. Key features include the use of rich and modern materials like stucco, chrome, and glass, ornamental motifs such as chevrons, sunbursts, and zigzags, and streamlined, symmetrical designs often with setbacks and flat roofs.</p>	
<p><b>Western</b></p>	<p>False front style for commercial buildings (a decorative facade hiding a simple structure), the use of natural materials like timber and stone in styles like the Craftsman style, and the integration of landscape in styles like the Prairie School.</p>	
<p><b>Small Main Street</b></p>	<p>Common designs for small businesses are one or two-story buildings, sometimes with living quarters above the storefront. Often a rectangular, three-bay-wide, 3 . story building with a gable roof.</p>	

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## Residential Historic Styles

<b>Cottage</b>	Steep, pitched roofs with multiple gables, charming small windows, mixed natural materials, prominent chimneys, and front porches.	
<b>Craftsman</b>	Low-pitched roof with wide, overhanging eaves, visible rafters, a large porch with tapered columns, and built-in features.	
<b>Farmhouse</b>	A simple, practical design with elements like pitched gable roofs, an asymmetrical facade, and large, covered porches.	
<b>Mission</b>	Curvilinear parapets, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails, and deep, simple shapes, reflecting a blend of simplicity and grandeur.	
<b>Tudor</b>	Steeply pitched roofs, decorative half-timbering on stucco or stone exteriors, prominent gables, tall, narrow windows, and ornate, elaborately decorated chimneys.	

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<b>Victorian</b>	Heavy ornamentation, asymmetrical designs, towers or turrets, and vibrant colors.	
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## Section 7: Signage

**Table 1: Permitted Sign Types in Old Town Justin District Core**

Sign Type	Description & Use	Illumination	Typical Materials
Monument Sign	Low, ground-integrated, masonry base, business or district identity	External/Indirect	Brick, stone, wood, metal
Wall Sign (Flush-Mounted)	Lettering and logos affixed parallel to façade	Internal/External	Painted wood/metal, hand-lettered
Projecting/Blade Sign	Perpendicular to façade, oriented for pedestrians	External/Indirect	Wood, metal, painted finish
Awning/Canopy Sign	Graphics/lettering on valance/skirt of awning/canopy	Internal/External	Canvas, wood slats (painted)
Window Sign	Painted or applied graphics on glass	None/Indirect	Paint, etched/frosted glass
Historic Marker/Plaque	Informational plaque designating historic site or event	None	Cast/etched metal
Temporary or Removable Banner/Poster	Short-term, cloth/vinyl, business sandwich boards, only for daily use or special events	None	Fabric, vinyl, sandwich board

### Prohibited or Restricted Sign Types:

- Rotating/animated/flashing signs
- Internally illuminated cabinets

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- Pole signs (unless historical precedent is documented)
- Billboards, off-premises advertising

Sign Type	Placement Requirements	Minimum Height/Setback	Maximum Projection
Monument Sign	Minimum 5 ft from right-of-way (ROW), 25 ft from adjacent properties, not in visibility triangle	Not in visibility triangle, max 10 ft height	N/A
Wall Sign	On façade, not above roofline or parapet, one per frontage	Not above parapet	1 ft from wall, no ROW overhang
Projecting/Blade Sign	Mounted at corner or above principal entry; perpendicular to façade	Min 8 ft above sidewalk; Not above 2nd story	3 ft from façade, not over vehicular ROW
Awning/Canopy Sign	On face/valance or skirt of awning/canopy	N/A	3 ft from awning edge/2 ft from curb
Window Sign	On interior/exterior glass, not obscuring architectural details	Max 20% of window area	N/A
Directional/Wayfinding	As needed (at corners, major entries, intersections); never interfering with traffic sightlines	Min 3 ft, not in ROW	N/A
Historic Plaque/Marker	Wall-mounted (preferred) or post-mounted in landscape buffer	3-5 ft above grade (wall)	N/A
Temporary Banner	On building wall only, not on roofs, poles, fences, trees	N/A	N/A

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**Table 3: Approved Materials and Illumination by Sign Type**

Sign Type	Approved Materials	Illumination Type (if any)	Restrictions
Monument Sign	Brick, stone, natural wood, mortar, painted/baked enamel metal	Indirect (ground uplight); shielded goosenecks	No glare, no spill, face-focused only
Wall/Blade Sign	Painted/engraved wood, painted metal, cast metal, frosted glass	Indirect, shielded, or halo	No internal plastic cabinets, no exposed conduit
Awning/Canopy	Painted canvas, duck cloth, period-correct metal	Indirect/halo/internal by approval	Internal only if visually subdued
Window Sign	Paint, etched glass, vinyl film (temporary only)	None/indirect only	No internal lighting
Historic Plaque/Marker	Cast bronze/brass/aluminum, engraved metal, routed wood	None	N/A
Directional/Wayfinding	Painted steel, cast bronze/brass, routed wood	None/indirect	N/A

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## Section 8: Murals

**Table 1: Permitted Mural Standards in Old Town Justin District Core**

Title	Description	Standard	Approval Body
Content	The subject matter, message, meaning, or narrative depicted in the artwork.	No hate speech, obscenity, or clear advertising.	Staff Administrator
Location	The specific physical site and its surrounding environmental, social, and cultural context.	Side/rear walls of buildings, respecting historic context.	Staff Administrator
Size	The physical, measurable dimensions (height and width) of the artwork, as well as its scale in relation to the surrounding environment and the human body.	Up to 50% of individual facade wall surface.	Staff Administrator
Materials	The substances and media used by an artist to create the artwork directly on a permanent surface like a wall, ceiling, or floor.	Use exterior-grade paints and sealants resistant to weather, UV, and graffiti.	Staff Administrator
Maintenance	The routine, regular inspection and care of the artwork to preserve its condition, protect its value, and ensure its long-term viability.	Property owners are responsible for upkeep; neglected murals can become a public nuisance.	Staff Administrator
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All mural submissions that are outside of these standards shall be independently reviewed for approval with the Justin City Council.</li> <li>2. All murals require a permit for approval.</li> </ol>			