



**DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT – DESIGN GUIDELINES UPDATE
AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP MEETING**

Summary

November 16, 2017

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions. Those present included:

Advisory Group:

Rod Sherry
Brandon Marshall
Tim Reynolds (HPRC Commissioner)
Pat Donaghue
Bendrew Jong

Public:

Toni Haughey (HPRC Commissioner)

Staff:

Shawna Brekke-Read – Community Development Director
Suzanne Thorsen – Principal Planner
Adrian Lopez – Assistant Planner

2. Background & Overview of Project.

Staff provided background about the Downtown Historic Conservation Plan and explained that the two primary goals of the project are updated design guidelines for the downtown historic district and recommendations on design review procedures. The project is funded through a CLG grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation, and a consultant will be hired to complete the work. The scope of the project is fixed and will not be expanded. Due to the grant requirements, the design guidelines must be completed and adopted by the City Council no later than September 30, 2018.

Participants inquired about the possibility to address issues related to the form-based code/Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan. Staff clarified that these would be outside the scope of this project.

3. Purpose & Format of Ad Hoc Advisory Group.

The purpose of the ad hoc advisory group is to obtain feedback from individuals in the design profession – often involved on the “front end” of a project and relaying the potential costs, city’s requirements and other feasibility considerations – to a client. The group’s focus is to discuss, comment and provide generalized feedback on the usability of the design guidelines. Often, the feedback of the design community is received after a plan or set of guidelines is already adopted. The meetings will be open to the public; the format of the meeting is generally conversational.

Participants inquired about how feedback from this group will be used. Staff clarified that feedback from the group will be shared with the consultant and the community; the group’s feedback will be a part of overall commentary on the project. Gaps or areas of disconnect identified by the group will assist in ensuring that the guidelines provide helpful and complete information to the community.

4. Discussion Topics.

The advisory group was provided a series of discussion prompts on the agenda for this meeting. The group’s discussion did not follow the discussion prompts in order but did address the areas identified on the agenda. The themes of the discussion are summarized below.

- a. *If you were starting a project, or project concept, in the downtown (1st Street or within 1-2 blocks of 1st Street), where would you go for information?*

Participants expressed general consensus that they would begin a project by checking the Downtown Mixed Use Master Plan (DMUMP). City staff would be contacted to seek clarification if necessary. Most agreed that the DHCP guidelines may be referenced at later stages in the design process, to determine how to make a client’s vision work or when preparing an application for design review.

The participants spoke about the multiple layers of regulation associated with the downtown – the need to reference the DMUMP, Zoning Ordinance, DHCP and other codes in addition to

the Secretary of Interior Standards. One participant commented that the guidelines that would apply to any specific project are not necessarily overwhelming (the example of a residential project was provided). Another participant commented that the best way to determine what is required is to apply for a permit since that is where the rubber meets the road. There was general support for reducing the need to reference multiple planning documents and to provide streamlined information, such as a matrix.

- b. *Do you have experience with projects involving historic buildings or sites in other communities? Did you consult guidelines? How was your experience?*

All participants present discussed prior projects involving historic buildings. Discussion focused on approval processes, review and availability of information. Two participants spoke regarding experience with other historic design guidelines, in one instance, the guidelines did not sufficiently address ambiguities that resulted in project delays.

- c. *Have you used the DHCP design guidelines? How was your experience?*

Participants focused on the role of the DMUMP relative to the design guidelines. The need for better guidelines about common improvements such as windows, roofs, lifting a house were discussed. One participant noted that the DHCP had more prominence in the design process prior to adoption of the DMUMP.

Past projects were discussed. For example, a property owner had to obtain a zoning variance from the DMUMP in order to comply with the guidelines. In other instances, property owners have been required to obtain design review approval

- d. *Is there any design-related topic you wish the DHCP guidelines would cover that they currently do not?*

The topics of alternate materials and lifting a house for a new foundation or crawl space were identified. Participants also accessibility modifications (ADA), stormwater management, Title 24, seismic, green building technologies and ADU's; acknowledging that all of these may not be appropriate to address through guidelines. Staff clarified that technical appendices may be provided where appropriate.

- e. *What is your idea of a useful design guidelines document? Are there examples that you would recommend we review?*

No examples were provided. The group reiterated a preference for simple, concise guidelines and a 1-page handout or “streetmap” for processes associated with permits and design review in the downtown. One participant noted that the city has created a brochure that provides an overview for homeowners. A generalized concern about the lack of awareness in the community about the Secretary of Interior Standards was also discussed.

5. Public Comments (9:15 a.m.)

No public comments were provided during this period. Ms. Haughey attended as a member of the public and provided comments throughout the discussion, which are summarized in Item 4.

6. Adjourn (9:30 a.m.)