



**AGENDA ITEM**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION**  
**MEETING DATE – APRIL 26, 2018**  
**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**TO** : Historic Preservation Review Commission

**SUBJECT** : **DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The City is updating the Design Guidelines within the Downtown Historic Conservation Plan (DHCP) to provide user-friendly guidelines for the treatment of historic properties, alterations to non-historic buildings, and the design of new infill structures within the historic district, as well as to update design review procedures. A public review draft of the design guidelines is now available for review and comment.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Hear a presentation from the consultant, accept public comments, and provide initial feedback on the public review draft of the Downtown Design Guidelines.

**BACKGROUND:**

The design guidelines for the Downtown Historic District were established in 1990 with the adoption of the DHCP. Opportunities to improve the downtown design guidelines have been identified by staff, the HPRC, and community members. The updated design guidelines will ensure consistency in the design review process, reinforce the character of the historic district, and provide the basis for clear and fair decision-making in the district.

Information relating to the Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines is available to the public on the project webpage, [www.ci.benicia.ca.us/downtowndesign](http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/downtowndesign).

**GENERAL PLAN:**

Goal 3.1: Maintain and enhance Benicia's historic character

- Policy 3.1.4 Promote the preservation and enhancement of historic neighborhoods, commercial areas and governmental districts.
- Policy 3.1.5 Permit new development, remodeling and building renovation in historic districts when consistent with the policies of the applicable Historic Conservation Plan.

**INFORMATION**

*Public Review Draft*

The public review draft of the design guidelines was posted on the project webpage on April 9, 2018. Postcards were mailed to property owners and occupants in the downtown area to notify

them of the available draft and the Design Guidelines Open House on April 25, 2018. The guidelines carry over some aspects of the current DHCP and provide additional information about planning a preservation project as well as guidelines for all projects; historic structures; new construction and non-contributing structures; environmental sustainability; and signs.

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

**Which Chapters Apply?**

Use this chart to determine which chapters of the design guidelines apply to a proposed improvement project. Some projects will include work in more than one track: in this case a combination of chapters will apply.

PROJECT TRACK		CHAPTER TO USE:					
		1. Introduction	2. General Design Guidelines for All Projects	3. Design Guidelines for Historic Structures	4. Guidelines for New Construction and Non-Contributing Structures	5. Guidelines for Environmental Sustainability	6. Sign Design Guidelines for All Projects
Preservation Track <i>Historic Property: Contributing or Landmark</i>	Rehabilitation of a Historic Property	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Addition to a Historic Property	✓	✓	✓		✓	
New Building Track	Improve a Non-contributing building	✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Construction of a new building	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Other Improvements Track	New Site Work, Mechanical, Service, Signs, etc.	✓	✓	✓ +	✓	✓	

(+) Guidelines could apply to some projects in this category.

*Project Schedule*

The first round of public workshops was completed in January, 2018 with feedback received from a range of community participants as reflected in the attached meeting summaries. Since that time, staff has provided monthly updates to the HPRC, maintained an up-to-date project webpage, and conducted two meetings with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group.

A public review draft of the guidelines was released in early April, 2018 and a community open house was conducted on April 25, 2018.

The first public hearing on the design guidelines is tentatively scheduled for the HPRC meeting of June 28, 2018. In accordance with the grant agreement for this project, the City Council must adopt the design guidelines by the end of September, 2018.

*Design Review Procedures*

The new guidelines document is intended to provide improved information to the community and ensure consistent review standards. The city anticipates that design review requirements will be updated concurrently or shortly following adoption of the guidelines. To this end, the scope of work for the design guidelines includes recommendations from the city's consultant regarding procedural improvements, which will be developed based upon community feedback.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group met on March 16 and April 20, 2018 to discuss design review procedures using a discussion prompt that reflects the current requirements. Additional sources of community feedback include an online survey (Peak Democracy) and the Design Guidelines Open House. A summary of community feedback and the consultant's procedural memorandum will be placed on the commission's agenda for discussion in May, 2018.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Public Review Draft of Downtown Design Guidelines

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