

AGENDA ITEM
HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING
DATE – DECEMBER 21, 2017
BUSINESS ITEMS

DATE : December 8, 2017

TO : Historic Preservation Review Commission

FROM : Suzanne Thorsen, Principal Planner

SUBJECT : **STATUS UPDATE – DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City has been awarded a Certified Local Government (CLG) grant from the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) to partially fund an update to the Design Guidelines within the Downtown Historic Conservation Plan (DHCP). The objective of the project is 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. 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. This project is expected to bring Benicia into alignment with historic preservation “best practices” and streamline design review procedures.

RECOMMENDATION:

Review status update and accept the report.

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.

BACKGROUND:

On September 19, 2017, the City Council adopted a resolution approving an agreement with the State Office of Historic Preservation for a Certified Local Government Grant in the amount of \$40,000, to update the Historic Design Guidelines within the DHCP, authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement on behalf of the City, and allocating funds in the FY2017-18 Budget.

On October 26, 2017 the HPRC designated Chair Tim Reynolds to serve on the ad hoc advisory group for the design guidelines project. The advisory group has met on one occasion and provided feedback on the existing guidelines (see Attachment 1).

The city has selected the consulting firm of Winter & Company to prepare the design guidelines and procedural recommendations. This firm has worked extensively with the California Preservation Foundation in the past and has been approved to complete the work by the Office of Historic Preservation. Winter & Company has worked with communities throughout California on historic preservation topics, including the communities of Truckee, Sausalito, Vallejo, Healdsburg, Sacramento and San Diego. A brief profile is included as Attachment 2.

INFORMATION:

In accordance with the city's grant agreement with OHP, the design guidelines must be adopted by September, 2018. A general timeframe for milestones toward completion of the project is provided below for the commission's reference:

January 2018 (specific dates to be announced)

Community workshops
Stakeholder outreach
HPRC orientation

March 2018

Public Review Draft of Design Guidelines

April 2018

Community Open House

May 2018

Design Review procedural recommendations (memo)

June 2018

Final Draft of Design Guidelines
HPRC public hearing

July 2018

Planning Commission public hearing

August-September 2018

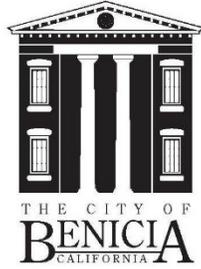
City Council public hearing/adoption

Final Design Guidelines distributed/posted

Monthly updates on the progress of the design guidelines will be agendaized for HPRC discussion. Up-to-date information about the project can additionally be found online at www.ci.benicia.ca.us/downtowndesign.

Attachments:

1. Ad Hoc Advisory Group meeting summary, November 2017
2. Winter & Company profile



**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.)

ORGANIZATION QUALIFICATIONS

Winter & Company consults nationally with local historic preservation programs, in crafting preservation system strategies, writing design guidelines and conducting training in design review. Client cities range from small communities of less than 1,000 residents to the nation’s major cities, including Los Angeles, Denver, New York, Boston, Memphis and San Antonio. The firm has produced preservation guidelines for more than 100 communities, and many of these have now been in place for twenty to thirty years, with proven results that serve as a basis for other communities to learn from in their consideration of new guidelines. Updates to existing guidelines is a specialty.

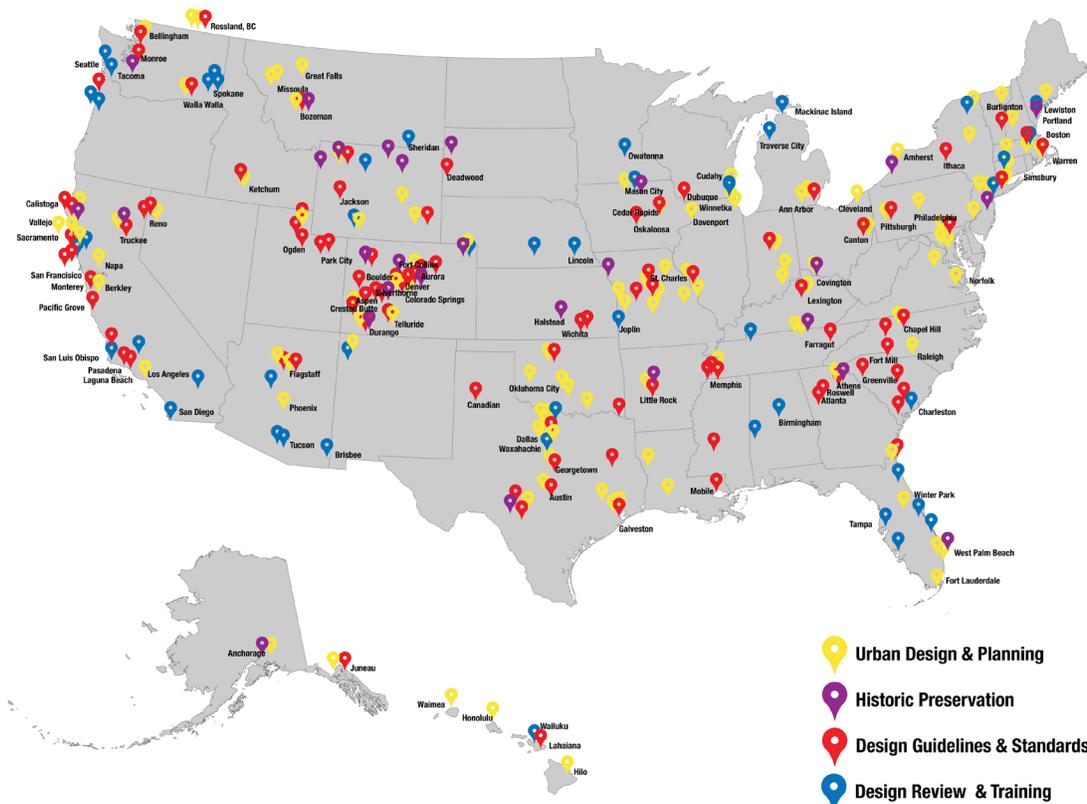
Winter & Company will serve as prime consultant for the Benicia guidelines project. We serve as primary contact with the client, lead all community workshops and supervise document production. Noré Winter and Julie Husband both meet professional qualification requirements of the National Park Service.

Winter and Company Staff assigned to this project:

Noré Winter: Principal in Charge

Julie Husband: Project Manager and day-to-day contact

Marcia Klopf: Jr. Planner





Education:

B. Architecture, Tulane University
M. Architecture and Urban Design, UCLA

Noré Winter - Role: Principal in Charge

Noré Winter, Principal and Owner of Winter & Company, is an urban design and planning consultant with more than thirty years experience nationwide. He focuses on design strategies that promote the distinctive characteristics of individual communities and neighborhoods while enhancing economic vitality, sustainability and heritage conservation. Services consist of vision plans, master plans, design standards and guidelines, and character-management strategies.

Winter's urban design work includes downtown plans for Bellingham, Washington; Boulder, Colorado; Flagstaff, Arizona; Bloomington, Indiana; Monroe, Washington; Monterey, California and Walla Walla, Washington. He also developed corridor plans in Mammoth Lakes, California; Bozeman, Montana; Durango, Colorado; and Lexington, Kentucky.

Recently, he has supervised a form-based code character analysis and visioning process in Arvada, Colorado. Other projects involving form-based standards were Boulder, Colorado; Denver, Colorado; Galveston, Texas; West Palm Beach, Florida; Athens, Georgia; and Raleigh, North Carolina.

He has developed design guidelines for many special design review overlays, historic districts and conservation areas. Guideline projects that address new development in established communities are in San Antonio, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Bellingham, Washington; Monterey, California and Ann Arbor, Michigan. Smaller communities he has served include Brattleboro, Vermont; Dubuque, Iowa; Juneau, Alaska; Ste. Genevieve, Missouri; Lahaina, Hawaii and Oysterville, Washington.

Mr. Winter is frequently a featured speaker at conferences and conventions, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Service and the American Planning Association. He also has conducted special seminars for the APA and the National Trust on design management systems and guidelines.



Education:

B. Arch
Montana State University

Julie Husband – Role: Project Manager

Julie Husband, Director of the Urban Design Studio, offers twenty-five years of experience in architecture, urban design, historic preservation and related fields. She has worked for Winter & Company for the past twenty years on urban design, historic preservation, design review, and architectural rehabilitation projects. She has recently completed the Old Town Neighborhood Design Guidelines for Fort Collins, CO, the Downtown Heritage District Design Guidelines for Plano, TX and the Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines for Fort Mill, SC.

Past projects include: Design Guidelines for Camden, SC; Citywide Design Guidelines for Roswell, GA; Design Guidelines and Form-based Code for Olde Town Arvada, CO; Historic District Design Guidelines for Pittsburgh, PA; Citywide Historic District Design Guidelines for Dubuque, IA; Neighborhood Context Studies for West Palm Beach, FL; Downtown Design Guidelines for Athens, GA and Saint Anthony Falls Historic District Design Guidelines, Minneapolis, MN.



Education:

B.A. in Studio Art and Pre-Architecture, with a Latino Studies concentration, St. Olaf College

Master of Urban Planning, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Marcia Klopff – Role: Jr. Planner

Marcia recently joined Winter & Company after completing her Master of Urban Planning in May 2016. Before joining Winter & Company, she gained planning experience through work in the public and non-profit sectors. She has been involved with the research of historic downtowns and the history of a city's influence on planning future development for a variety of communities throughout the country. She has also been part of a variety of urban design projects including feasibility studies for active transportation planning, site analysis for green development, transportation planning for sprawl, and the design of a Main Street parklet. Marcia has written historic district design guidelines for local historic districts, resource books for historic district property owners, surveys regarding historic resources for property owners and updated historic preservation ordinances for local governments.

Recently completed projects include a guidebook titled, "Understanding Certified Local Governments in Colorado" for the State of Colorado; Design Guidelines for Local Preservation Districts and Individually Listed Landmarks in Louisville, KY; and a Heritage Preservation Commission Training Manual for the State of Minnesota. She is just finishing Citywide Design Guidelines for Healdsburg, CA and Historic District Design Guidelines for Lowertown in St. Paul, MN.

The table below identifies our current project workload. We have adequate time in our schedules to complete the project by the September deadline.

Team Member	Current Project Assignments
Noré Winter: Principal-in-charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapel Hill, NC - Downtown & Ephesus Corridor Design Guidelines - Lead firm (On-schedule-completes Fall 2018) • Missoula, MT - Design Excellence Project - Lead Firm (On-schedule-completes Spring 2018) • Denver, CO - National Western Center Placemaking Study-Subconsultant (Extended schedule to better align with other Team tasks - completes early 2018)
Julie Husband: Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denver, CO - National Western Center Placemaking Study-Subconsultant (Extended schedule to better align with other Team tasks - completes early 2018) • St. Paul, MN - Lowertown Design Guidelines-Lead Firm (Modified schedule to address staff overload, completes December 2017) • Plano, TX - Heritage Preservation Plano Update (Begins early 2018)
Marcia Klopff: Preservation Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berkley, MI - Design Guidelines-Lead Firm (On schedule-completes Spring 2018) • Plano, TX - Heritage Preservation Plan Update-Lead Firm (Begins early 2018)

We Provide Before and After Examples!

Appropriate Storefront Rehabilitation Projects



Before: moderately altered historic building



After: rehabilitation of historic building with reconstructed cornice, new windows and simplified interpretation of historic storefronts.



Before: moderately altered historic building



After: rehabilitation of historic building with a simplified interpretation of historic storefronts, new awnings and paint.

Example page from the Fort Mill Historic District Design Guidelines showing appropriate rehabilitation examples