



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 640.02

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: December 13, 2011

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Planning Division, Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Adoption Of Updated Design Review General Guidelines And Meeting Procedures For Design Review Boards

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara to Approve Revised General Design Guidelines and Meeting Procedures for the Historic Landmarks Commission, Architectural Board of Review, and Single Family Design Board.

DISCUSSION:

Update Process

The Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), Architectural Board of Review (ABR) and Single Family Design Board (SFDB) each have an existing document including general design guidelines and meeting procedures which need to be updated. The existing 1995 HLC document is severely outdated and does not include the extensive information provided in the existing ABR and SFDB documents. The ABR Guidelines were last updated in 2007. The SFDB Guidelines were most recently updated as part of the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update review in April 2010. The need to update the HLC document resulted in the decision to simultaneously thoroughly update all three guideline documents. The proposed updated documents now cover a similar range of topics and have consistent formats. The guideline documents reflect the most recent city zoning and state law changes and current City administrative procedures.

The ABR, HLC, and SFDB each reviewed an updated draft of their respective guideline document in 2010. A subcommittee of the HLC worked with staff primarily on the administrative staff approval standards. Staff responded to comments from the HLC, ABR and SFDB and incorporated revisions into final documents. At their 2011 hearings (SFDB 3/28/11, ABR 4/4/11, and HLC 4/13/11), all three hearing bodies unanimously voted to recommend that Council adopt the updated general guidelines and meeting procedures. Staff met with the landscape experts from the design review hearing bodies in August 2011 and received a comment that they would like ABR review to be

triggered for substantial landscape changes in publicly visible areas when there are no plans with landscape plans previously approved. This suggestion is beyond the scope of guideline updates as it would require an amendment to Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 22.68 and would require additional public input from affected property owners. Staff does not support making a change to expand purview of the review boards given limited City resources.

Throughout the remainder of 2011, staff responded to a series of comments on the draft guidelines from the City Attorney's Office. Coordination with the City Attorney's Office led to the decision to amend provisions of Chapters 15.24 and 22.11 of the Municipal Code. These amendments will be presented to the Ordinance Committee in 2012. Accordingly, some of the references to the Municipal Code in the ABR, HLC and SFDB Guidelines have been generalized in order to be consistent with planned code revision proposals.

Summary of Changes

Areas where substantial changes were made to the existing ABR and SFDB documents have been formatted with gray shading. The HLC document is essentially "new" and so shading is not indicated in that document.

General

- The documents were all renamed to have similar titles, for example "HLC General Guidelines and Meeting Procedures". The word "rules" was intentionally omitted from the new title, as usually rules are associated with standards found in the Municipal Code.
- Edits were made to the goals section to address the topic of landscaping.
- A new goal was added which reads: "to ensure that the review process is fair and consistent both in policy and implementation to allow all who are involved to benefit from the process".
- The documents do not have illustrations due to budget constraints. Staff plans to provide an on-line photo library of completed project buildings and architectural details. The photos will serve as good examples that are consistent with guidelines in the documents. The library will be similar in concept to the El Pueblo Viejo District Design Guidelines on-line photo library.

Part I: Architectural Design Guidelines

- Relationship of the guideline documents to the general plan and descriptions of other design guidelines updated.
- “Green building” phrase replaced with “sustainable building and site design”.
- “Administrative Staff Review Standards” revised, especially in response to HLC comments. New consideration for structures of potential historic significance was added. Revisions were made to approval criteria for door alteration, chimney, lighting, trellis, wall, fence, tree removal, and minor additions. Also, some project category types were removed from administrative staff review purview: manufactured homes, trash enclosures and all commercial and multi-family porches subject to HLC review. In general, HLC administrative staff review standards for commercial and multi-family projects are the most stringent.
- New definitions added: “publicly visible” and “highly visible to the public”.
- Cost consideration language for affordable housing projects made consistent in HLC and ABR documents.
- Procedures for zoning modification comments clarified.

Part II: Landscape Design Guidelines

- Changes were made to implement recent amendments to the Municipal Code regarding tree removals and landscape maintenance requirements.
- Landscape plan exemptions and landscape architect licensing requirements clarified for consistency with the California State Business and Professions Code.
- New tree root barrier guideline included in the plans.
- High fire hazard area landscape design guideline term “vegetation modification zone” replaced with “defensible space.”

Part III: Meeting Procedures

- Website agenda and minutes posting timing information revised.
- Agenda organization clarified (e.g. announcements and subcommittee reports).
- Jurisdiction and findings information revised.

Council Agenda Report

Adoption Of Updated Design Review General Guidelines And Meeting Procedures For
Design Review Boards

December 13, 2011

Page 4

- Quorum, abstention on continued items, reconsideration, project denial, Brown Act meeting and chair election procedures clarified.
- Member compensation information updated for consistency in each document. Note: Due to budget constraints, currently members receive no compensation.
- More comprehensive visual aid option descriptions, including story poles, added to HLC document.
- Revised documents reflect recent ordinance changes involving: preliminary approval time extension procedures, approval time limits, "project design approval" language, and compatibility review criteria.
- Recent changes to plan check procedures included.

NOTE: Copies of the General Design Guidelines & Meeting Procedures documents for the HLC, ABR, and SFDB have been provided to the Mayor and Council and are available for public viewing at the City Clerk's office. For comparison, the existing guideline documents to be updated are available on-line at: www.santabarbaraca.gov/Resident/Home/Guidelines/

PREPARED BY: Heather Baker, AICP, Project Planner

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Community Development Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office