




# STATUS REPORT

## PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

**DATE:** Friday, February 29, 2008  
**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Richard Mitchell, Director of Planning and Building Services   
**SUBJECT:** Status Report on Merger of the Planning Commission and Design Review Board

### STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:

The City Council directed staff to establish a process and modify the language of all related ordinances to merge the design review function of the present Design Review Board into the Planning Commission's duties. The status of this process is summarized below.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION:

No action. This is a status report on an item that will be noticed and presented to the City Council at its regularly scheduled meeting of March 18, 2008.

### COMMITTEE ACTIONS

This matter has been informally discussed with the Planning Commission and Design Review Boards during the periods reserved for announcements/information from staff.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATION:

This action has no direct financial impact on the City.

### DISCUSSION:

Following Council direction, staff has been preparing modifications to procedures and to the related ordinances that would incorporate the design review function of the present Design Review Board into the activities or duties of the Planning Commission. In order to support this merger, staff has developed the attached process matrix and flowchart that would reflect new thresholds for various levels of design review based upon Council direction and detailed architectural design guidelines presently under development. Architectural consulting firms that have experience designing very high quality in-fill projects, would be retained to assist the design review subcommittee of the Planning Commission in making design related decisions.

## **STATUS UPDATE**

### **Draft Ordinance:**

A draft of the modified ordinance is currently under review by the City Attorney's Office and will be ready for City Council Review on March 18<sup>th</sup>, and could potentially be adopted by the second Council meeting in April.

### **Design Guidelines – General Criteria for All Design Review:**

In addition to presenting a recommended process for residential, commercial, industrial, office and retail project design review, citywide design review criteria, principles and basic standards are being developed to be included in the Design Guidelines to ensure that all development projects, expansions of or new structures are designed based on best design practices.

### **Design Guidelines – Heritage neighborhoods:**

**Opticos Design**, of Berkeley has nearly completed architectural characterizations and design guidelines for homes and design types found in Richmond's 'Heritage' neighborhoods. These guidelines with accompanying text will be presented to the City Council at the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting or in early April.

### **Design Guidelines – Main Street and Commercial Districts:**

Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. is preparing a "Place Based Zoning Code" that will establish height, setback and density criteria for activity nodes that have been identified through the General Plan update. This Code will guide corridor development and will be supported by architectural characteristics that will be refined by Opticos Design.

### **Third Party Review:**

Staff is assembling a list of Architectural and Design firms that will assist with evaluation of project proposals relative to these new standards. Assisting firms must demonstrate a background in new urban design, traditional neighborhood design, the Portland Principles, CPTED, LEED Certification and other recently established design criteria for evaluation of development projects. The selected firms will be identified prior to final adoption of the revised ordinance.

### **NEXT STEPS:**

Staff will present the draft ordinance revisions at the March 18, 2008 City Council meeting.

### **DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:**

Proposed Design Review process matrix and flowchart

# Proposed Design Review Processes

Use	Exempt Projects	Staff Level Design Review	Zoning Administrator Design Review (Public Hearing Required)	Design Review Subcommittee (Public Hearing Required)
<p>Except for projects or improvements involving any exterior modification of a structure or specific site listed on the National Register of Historic Places...</p>	<p>1. Interior improvements.</p> <p>2. Except for structures built prior to 1960, all painting, siding, roofing, doors, windows, and other maintenance and replacement of items with like or equivalent materials and colors.</p> <p>3. Accessory structures meeting all placement requirements which do not exceed 120 square feet nor twelve feet in height.</p> <p>4. Decks and similar structures in which the platform is less than thirty (30) inches above grade at all points.</p> <p>5. Skylights or solar panels which do not exceed a twelve (12) inch projection above the roof surface.</p> <p>6. Change of message on an existing sign, except where the sign is part of an approved Master sign program.</p> <p>7. Replacement or reconstruction of existing equipment and appurtenant facilities, where the new equipment and facilities are equivalent in size, design, and appearance to the equipment or facility being replaced.</p>	<p>Except for projects or improvements involving any exterior modification of a structure or specific site listed on the National Register of Historic Places...</p> <p>1. Decks greater than six (6) feet above existing grade at any point.</p> <p>2. Residential projects creating four or fewer units.</p> <p>3. New single-family residences and additions less than 3000 sq. ft. and more than 15 feet in height above existing grade.</p> <p>4. Accessory structures of more than 500 sq. ft. but less than 750 sq. ft. in area.</p> <p>5. Single-family dwellings included in the "Infill Housing Initiative Pattern Book" on sites whose natural grade does not exceed five percent (5%) slope</p> <p>6. Hill side development where the slope of the project site does not exceed 15%.</p>	<p>Except for projects or improvements involving any exterior modification of a structure or specific site listed on the National Register of Historic Places...</p> <p>1. Decks greater than six (6) feet above existing grade at any point.</p> <p>2. Residential projects creating four or fewer units.</p> <p>3. New single-family residences and additions less than 3000 sq. ft. and more than 15 feet in height above existing grade.</p> <p>4. Accessory structures of more than 500 sq. ft. but less than 750 sq. ft. in area.</p> <p>5. Single-family dwellings included in the "Infill Housing Initiative Pattern Book" on sites whose natural grade does not exceed five percent (5%) slope</p> <p>6. Hill side development where the slope of the project site does not exceed 15%.</p>	<p>1. Any exterior modification of a structure or specific site feature listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register, or any local list or register of historic resources, or identified as a contributing structure to a historic district.</p> <p>2. All mixed use projects.</p> <p>3. All residential projects that create five (5) or more units.</p> <p>4. New residences and residential additions of more than 3,000 sq. ft. in gross floor area.</p> <p>5. Accessory structures of more than 750 sq. ft. in area.</p> <p>6. Projects on sites with an average slope exceeding fifteen percent (15%).</p> <p>7. Single-family dwellings that conform in full to the patterns and development standards of the "Infill Housing Initiative Pattern Book", but do not comply with a portion of the regulations for the district in which the site is located.</p>

## Proposed Design Review Processes

Use	Staff Level Design Review	Zoning Administrator Design Review (Public Hearing Required)	Design Review Subcommittee (Public Hearing Required)
Commercial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial additions and improvements to building or site surfaces of less than 1,500 sq. feet, not abutting residentially zoned property.</li> <li>Temporary (placed for 2 years or less) sales office or construction trailer less than 15 feet in height and less than 750 sq. ft. not abutting residentially zoned property, nor located in required landscaped or parking areas.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial additions and improvements to building or site surfaces between 1,500 sq. feet and 20,000 sq. ft., not abutting residentially zoned property.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any exterior modification of a structure specific site feature listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register, or any local list or register of historic resources, or identified as a contributing structure to a historic district.</li> <li>All mixed use projects.</li> <li>New construction or additions that exceed 20,000 sq. ft. in gross floor area.</li> <li>Master sign programs.</li> <li>Any variance of the Sign Ordinance.</li> <li>Projects on any site within a Resource Management Overlay District.</li> </ol>
Industrial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industrial additions or improvements to building or site of less than 3,000 sq. ft., not abutting residentially zoned property.</li> <li>Temporary (placed for 2 years or less) sales office or construction trailer less than 15 feet in height and less than 750 sq. ft. not abutting residentially zoned property, nor located in required landscaped or parking areas.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industrial additions or improvements to building or site between 3,000 sq. ft. and 20,000 sq. ft., not abutting residentially zoned property.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any exterior modification of a structure specific site feature listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register, or any local list or register of historic resources, or identified as a contributing structure to a historic district.</li> <li>All mixed use projects.</li> <li>New construction or additions that exceed 20,000 sq. ft. gross floor area.</li> <li>Master sign programs.</li> <li>Any variance of the Sign Ordinance.</li> <li>Projects on any site within a Resource Management Overlay District.</li> </ol>



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# Design Review Processes

