



DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, May 21, 2015 – 6:30 P.M.
Neutra House
181 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, California

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Committee members present: Thomas Barton, Anita Kay Enander, Hillary Frank, Deb Hope (arr. 6:55 p.m.), Edward Infante, Par Marriott, Susan Mensinger, Teresa Morris, Jane Reed

Committee members absent: Denis Salmon, Nancy Nealon See

City Council: Megan Satterlee, Facilitator

City staff: Marcia Somers, City Manager

1. Approve minutes from April 16, 2015 meeting

The Committee reviewed the notes and materials from the April 16, 2015 meeting and accepted them by consensus.

2. Review Brown Act procedures

Councilmember Satterlee provided an overview of key elements of the Brown Act and what constitutes a meeting of the group, which the Committee members will follow as they work on their subcommittee assignments.

3. Review recent building developments in CD/R3 and DC zones

The Committee generally discussed 100 First Street, 396 First Street, 343 Second Street and 240 Third Street and made suggestions regarding what elements should be evaluated and criteria utilized to ensure future quality and compatible development occurs in downtown.

4. Review 2012 Downtown survey results/key conclusions and 2015 Downtown survey topline results

The Committee provided individual observations regarding the questions and partial results of 2015 Downtown survey.

5. Review proposed themes/ideas for discussion (prepared by Committee member Marriott)

The Committee identified a list of potential themes and then organized them into related groupings to form the basis to establish subcommittees.

ATTACHMENT A

6. Establish subcommittees

The following subcommittees were established:

- Quality of materials; curb appeal; landscape; access to light/ air/views (H. Frank, T. Morris)
- Height; tower; setback; variances; public benefit (T. Barton, A. Enander, E. Infante)
- Application of guidelines (D. Hope, P. Marriott, S. Mensinger, J. Reed)

Absent Committee members Salmon and See will select their subcommittee assignments at a later date.

7. Identify future meeting agenda topics

The Committee determined that the June 18 meeting agenda would include reports from each of the subcommittees as well as full Committee discussion regarding development application process and procedures, developer presentation requirements and public engagement opportunities.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
June 9, 2015**

DISCUSSION ITEM

Agenda Item # 7

SUBJECT: Receive a presentation of results from Godbe Research regarding the community survey on Downtown, and direct staff accordingly

BACKGROUND

On October 28, 2014, the City Council approved conducting a community survey related to Downtown. This survey was intended as a follow up to a survey conducted in 2012.

EXISTING POLICY

None

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

August 26, 2014; September 23, 2014; October 28, 2014 and November 25, 2014

DISCUSSION

Bryan Godbe of Godbe Research will present the results of the 2015 Downtown community survey to the Council at the June 9, 2015 meeting.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact at this time; however, costs may be incurred depending on Council direction.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not applicable

RECOMMENDATION

Receive a presentation of results from Godbe Research regarding the community survey on Downtown, and direct staff accordingly

ALTERNATIVES

No viable alternatives have been identified

Prepared by: Jon Maginot, City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager

ATTACHMENTS: None



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 18, 2015

TO: Downtown Buildings Committee

FROM: Zachary Dahl, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Commercial/Multi-Family Design Review Process

This memo is intended to provide an overview of the City's design review process for commercial, multi-family and mixed-use projects. Any project that includes a new building or a major addition that adds over 500 square feet is required to get a design review approval through the public review process before a building permit can be issued.

The first two sections of this memo (Design Review Findings and Zoning Design Controls) outline the zoning requirements that form the basis for how a design review application is reviewed. The following sections provide an outline of the review process, starting with initial submittal through City Council action.

Design Review Findings

As outlined in Chapter 14.78 of the Zoning Code, in order to approve a design review application, the Planning and Transportation Commission and the City Council must make the following positive findings:

- A. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the general plan and any specific plan, design guidelines and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area.
- B. The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design.
- C. Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies.
- D. Exterior materials and finishes convey quality, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, body, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements.

- E. Landscaping is generous and inviting, and landscape and hardscape features are designed to complement the building and parking areas, and to be integrated with the building architecture and the surrounding streetscape. Landscaping includes substantial street tree canopy, either in the public right-of-way or within the project frontage.
- F. Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions.
- G. Mechanical equipment is screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing.
- H. Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

These findings also require the compliance with the General Plan, Downtown Design Plan, Downtown Design Guidelines and other specific plans (e.g. Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan, Loyola Corners Specific Plan).

Zoning Design Controls

In addition to the design review findings, each of the City's commercial zone districts include site standards (height, setbacks, parking, etc.) and required conditions that a project must comply with. Each zone district also includes design controls that reinforce the design review findings and provide more specific direction for design expectations within that commercial district. For example, the Downtown core, which is zoned for Commercial Retail Sales (CRS), includes for following design controls:

- B. Reduction of apparent size and bulk:
 - 1. As a general principle, building surfaces should be relieved with a change of wall plane that provides strong shadow and visual interest.
 - 2. Every building over twenty-five (25) feet wide shall have its perceived height and bulk reduced by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components by:
 - i. A change of plane;
 - ii. A projection or recess;
 - iii. Varying cornice or roof lines;
 - iv. Providing at least one entrance for every twenty-five (25) feet of building frontage; or
 - v. Other similar means.
 - 3. The proportions of building elements, especially those at ground level, should be kept intimate and close to human size by using recesses, courtyards, entries, or outdoor spaces along the perimeter of the building to define the underlying twenty-five (25) foot lot frontage.

- C. The primary access to the ground floor for all buildings shall be directly to the street or parking plazas, with the exception of arcade or interior courtyard spaces.
- D. Consideration should be given to the relationship of the project and its location in the downtown to the implementation of goals and objections of the downtown urban design plan. Evaluation of design approval shall consider one or more of the following factors:
 - 1. The project location as an entry, edge, or core site;
 - 2. The ability to contribute to the creation of open space on-site or in designated areas;
 - 3. Enhancement of the pedestrian environment through the use of pathways, plantings, trees, paving, benches, outdoor dining areas or other amenities;
 - 4. Building facade improvements including, paint, signage, service areas, windows and other features;
 - 5. On or off-site improvements; and/or
 - 6. Public or private landscape improvements.
- E. Opaque, reflective, or dark tinted glass should not be used on the ground floor elevation. Sixty (60) percent of the ground floor elevation should be transparent window surface.
- F. Courtyards should be partially visible from the street or linked to the street by a clear circulation element such as an open passage or covered arcade.
- G. Rooftop mechanical, venting, and/or exhausting equipment must be within the height limit and screened architecturally from public view, including views from adjacent buildings located at the same level.

Staff reviews projects to make sure that they comply with the required zoning standards and meet the intent of the district's design controls. Overall, the design review findings and specific zone district requirements are what form the basis for staff when initially reviewing a project, providing comments to the applicant and providing a recommendation to the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC).

Pre-application Study Session

As outlined in the Zoning Code, a pre-application study session before the PTC is strongly encouraged, but not required, for all commercial, multi-family and mixed-use projects that require design review approval. This study session is an opportunity for an applicant to present conceptual architectural design drawings of their proposed project at a public meeting and receive preliminary feedback from the PTC. The intent of the study session is to focus on architecture and site design only. This feedback will help guide the applicant as they prepare detailed architectural and engineering plans for the formal design review application submittal.

Submittal and Staff Review

To ensure that design review application submittals are complete and include all the necessary information for project review, staff has prepared a submittal requirements handout. The submittal requirements provides a specific list of the information that needs to be included in the architectural plans, engineering plans and technical reports (e.g. traffic analysis, arborist report). A copy of the submittal requirements for a Commercial/Multi-Family Design Review application is attached with this memo.

Once an application is submitted, staff has up to 30 days to review the project. In addition to Planning review, the project plans are routed to the Fire Department, Public Works and Building for review and comment. Other departments, such as Economic Development or Police, are also notified if appropriate. Outside agencies, such as the Santa Clara Valley Water District or Santa Clara County Roads and Airports, are notified if a project has the potential to affect an amenity for which they have jurisdiction.

Planning staff evaluates the application for compliance with all applicable zoning code requirements, consistency with the General Plan, Downtown Design Plan, Downtown Design Guidelines and other applicable plans and policies. Staff will also coordinate with the other reviewing departments and agencies to understand their issues and receive all comments. At the end of the 30 day review period, staff will determine whether or not it can support the proposed project. This determination is based on compliance with the General Plan, Zoning Code, design review findings, etc. A letter will be provided which deems the application either 1) complete and ready for public review, or 2) incomplete, with a list of comments and issues that need to be addressed. If deemed incomplete, the applicant will need to address the comments and resubmit updated plans for a second round of review.

It should be noted that staff support and being deemed complete are not the same thing. An application is deemed complete when it has submitted all of the necessary technical information to be reviewed by the public (architectural plans, grading and drainage plans, 3D renderings, traffic analysis, etc.). Staff support means that an application has been designed in a way that staff can make positive findings related to compliance with the General Plan, zoning, design review findings, etc. and can recommend approval to the Planning and Transportation Commission. An application can be deemed complete without having staff support.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission Review

Once the project design has been accepted by staff, it will be scheduled for a public meeting before the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC). The goal of this meeting is to take public comment and evaluate the bicycle and pedestrian aspects of a project. Following the discussion, the BPAC will make a recommendation on the project for consideration by the PTC.

Planning and Transportation Commission Review

Following BPAC review, and once the application is deemed complete; it will be scheduled for a public meeting before the PTC. The goal of this meeting is to take public comment and evaluate the project comprehensively (General Plan and zoning compliance, environmental review, etc.). Staff will prepare a report that analyzes all aspects of the application and make a recommendation on if the project should be approved, denied or continued for additional evaluation. If staff is unable to make a positive recommendation to the PTC, this will be communicated to the applicant before the meeting is scheduled in order to give them a chance to address staff concerns.

In addition to evaluating the project for compliance with the design review findings and the other criteria outlined above, the PTC will also review environmental impacts per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and any other applications that are associated with the project (use permit, subdivision, rezoning, etc.).

Once the PTC has heard the staff recommendation, received a presentation from the applicant, taken public comments and discussed the project, they will take action and make a recommendation to the City Council. In order to make a positive recommendation, the PTC needs to find that the project meets the City's design review findings. The action can include recommending approval of the project as proposed, recommending approval with additional conditions and/or design changes, or recommending denial with a finding that the project does not meet the design review findings. The PTC can also recommend that the project be continued and include specific direction that needs to be addressed in order to make positive design review findings. This would require the project to come back to the PTC for a second meeting before it can go before the City Council.

It should be noted that the PTC will consider the staff recommendation, but will ultimately make its own recommendation based on what a majority of Commissioners determine is appropriate for the project. Once the PTC takes action and makes a recommendation, it replaces the staff recommendation that moves forward with the project.

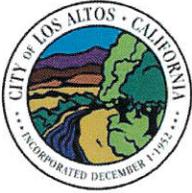
City Council Action

Following the PTC meeting, the application will be scheduled for a public meeting before the City Council. The City Council has final authority over all design review applications that follow this process. Following the same steps for review as the PTC, the Council will consider the application and then vote on whether to approve, deny or continue the project.

Overall, the City's design review process for commercial, multi-family and mixed-use projects is very involved, includes at least four public meetings and usually includes many design iterations before the final architectural design is approved. The process generally takes at least six to nine months, and in the case of larger projects, can often take over a year. However, this process does thoroughly vet a project and the result is an architectural design that is almost always better than when it started.

Attachment:

A. Submittal Requirements for Commercial or Multi-Family Design Review



SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS COMMERCIAL OR MULTI-FAMILY DESIGN REVIEW

APPLICATION FORM, FEE & OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS

All items are required at time of submittal. The project will not be scheduled for a public meeting until the application has been reviewed by a planner and is deemed complete.

1. Completed General Application form.

2. Filing fee:

Application	\$ _____
Environmental Review	\$ _____
Other: _____	\$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Make checks payable to the City of Los Altos. Fees are not refundable.

3. Materials Board: Provide color photos showing roofing material, siding, applied materials (e.g. stone, brick), trim, etc., and identifying manufacturer and product specifications.

4. Public Notification: two sets of blank postage paid postcards (Post Office approved size).

5. Technical Studies: Depending on the nature of the project, technical studies, such as a traffic impact assessment or acoustical analysis, may be required.

6. Architectural Design Plans:

a. Initial submittal: Five (5) full-size sets (24" x 36") and five (5) half-size sets (11" x 17").

b. Once application deemed complete: 14 additional half-size sets of plans and a digital copy in .pdf format on a CD, a USB data key or emailed to the project planner.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PLANS

1. **Cover Sheet**

- Vicinity Map (clear and legible)
- Table of Contents
- General Project Information (project description, general plan, zoning, property owner, design professionals, etc.)
- A summary of land development calculations including, but not limited to, site area, lot coverage, setbacks, impervious surfaces, building floor area, parking stalls (required and proposed), and when appropriate number of beds, students and/or dining seats
- Rendering or graphic of proposed project

2. **Site Plan** (1/8" = 1' scale)

- Subject property showing all property lines and adjacent streets
- Location of all structures on subject property

- Location and dimensions of parking, driveway, and loading areas (indicate surfacing material)
 - Location, size, type and proposed disposition of all existing trees over four-inches in diameter
 - Landscape areas, walkways, fences, retaining walls, utility areas, and trash facilities
3. **Floor Plans** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)
- Show existing and proposed development
 - Identify details such as balconies, roof gardens, cabanas, etc.
NOTE: Floor plans for single-story buildings may be shown on the site plan.
4. **Floor Area Calculation Diagram** ($\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$ scale)
- Gross floor area is measured to outside edge of wall and includes all space enclosed by walls (habitable space, non-habitable space, accessory structures, basements)
 - Net floor area excludes all inner courts and/or shaft enclosures (stairwells, elevator shafts, etc)
 - Existing floor area of structures to be removed
5. **Building Elevations** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)
- Building materials and design details
 - Roof pitch
 - Roof-mounted equipment
 - New signage being proposed
 - Height
 - Color(s)
 - Fencing
7. **Building Cross-Sections** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)
- Provide at least two (2) cross-sections, taken from the highest ridge, showing existing and proposed grades, finished floor levels, wall plates, and building height to existing grade.
8. **Roof Plan** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)
- Roof pitch
 - Existing roof to remain and new roof area
 - All rooftop mechanical equipment and screening location(s)
9. **Landscape Plan** ($\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'$ scale)
- A conceptual planting plan that identifies all existing and proposed trees and plants
 - Color photos of proposed trees, plants and other landscape features
 - Hardscape, walkways, fences and retaining walls
 - Utility areas and trash facilities
 - A calculation showing:
 - Total hardscape area
 - Total softscape area

10. **Grading and Drainage Plan** ($\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'$ scale)

NOTE: The Grading and Drainage Plan shall be prepared by a registered civil engineer or a licensed architect.

- Location and elevation of benchmarks
- Elevation at street and neighboring property lines
- Pad elevation
- Finished floor elevation
- Tree location(s)
- Lot drainage pattern
- Existing and proposed contours
- Stormwater management measures to retain stormwater on site in accord with the Best Management Practices
- All existing and proposed underground utilities lines, meters and adjacent infrastructure

11. **Construction Management Plan**

Prepare a preliminary construction management plan that identifies anticipated truck routing and staging, construction worker parking plan (on-site and off-site) and pedestrian routing (sidewalk closures, detours, etc.). *See Construction Management Plan handout for more specific direction.*

12. **Color Renderings**

Provide a sufficient number of perspective color renderings of the proposed structure, photosimulated within the context of the built and natural surroundings, to represent how all elevations of the building will appear at a pedestrian scale/level.

13. **Streetscape Elevation**

Render proposed structure(s) in relation to development on adjoining properties. In the case of a corner lot, a streetscape of each street is required.

PUBLIC MEETING NOTIFICATION

1. **Mailed Notices** – All properties within 500 feet of the project site will receive a mailed notice of the public meeting 10-14 days before the meeting. The Planning Division will provide an area map showing all properties within a 500-foot radius. The applicant must provide two sets of blank stamped postcards (post office approved size) for all properties within the 500-foot radius.

NOTE: Notification for Commercial Districts, by City Council resolution, requires notification of all commercial tenants within the 500-foot radius area. The applicant is responsible for providing a name and address list of all businesses within the notification area. Additional blank stamped postcards for this address list will also be required

2. **On-Site Posting Requirement** – In addition to the mailed notices, a public notice billboard (four feet by six feet) with color renderings of the project will need to be installed at the project site 10-14 days prior to the first public meeting date. Specifications for the public notice billboard are available on a separate handout.

CITY ACTION

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission will hold a public meeting to provide a recommendation the project's bicycle and pedestrian amenities. Following this meeting, the Planning and Transportation Commission and the City Council will each hold a public meeting to consider the design review application. In order to approve the application, they must make specific findings on each of the following issues:

1. The proposal meets the goals, policies and objectives of the Los Altos General Plan and any specific plan, design guidelines and ordinance design criteria adopted for the specific district or area.
2. The proposal has architectural integrity and has an appropriate relationship with other structures in the immediate area in terms of height, bulk and design.
3. Building mass is articulated to relate to the human scale, both horizontally and vertically. Building elevations have variation and depth, and avoid large blank wall surfaces. Residential or mixed-use residential projects incorporate elements that signal habitation, such as identifiable entrances, stairs, porches, bays and balconies.
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6. Signage is designed to complement the building architecture in terms of style, materials, colors and proportions.
7. Mechanical equipment is screened from public view and the screening is designed to be consistent with the building architecture in form, material and detailing.
8. Service, trash and utility areas are screened from public view, or are enclosed in structures that are consistent with the building architecture in materials and detailing.

SUBMITTING MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION

These instructions will be modified in the event that the project includes more than one application (e.g. use permit, subdivision, zoning map amendment). If the project requires multiple applications, it is recommended that the applicant work with Planning staff to better understand the City's submittal requirements.