



Planning Commission Report

Planning Commission Meeting: October 07, 2020

Agenda Item: 9-A

To: Planning Commission
From: Jing Yeo, AICP, City Planning Division Manager
Subject: Resolutions of Intention to Amend Sections of the Santa Monica Municipal Code to Modify Architectural Review Board Processes and Thresholds for Streamlining Purposes

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the following Resolution declaring its intent to consider recommending to the City Council amendments to the text of the Zoning Ordinance, Downtown Community Plan, and Bergamot Area Plan to modify Architectural Review Board processes and thresholds to reduce timelines for applicants and workload for City staff.

Background

The City Council has prioritized economic recovery efforts to assist businesses and the community after the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has also had a severe impact on the City's budget. These deficits have resulted in reduction of staff and a need to restructure City services to streamline processes to both reduce timelines where possible to assist businesses and right-size efforts to the reduced workforce.

Council's adoption of the FY21/22 budget included direction to staff to substantially restructure the Architectural Review Board (ARB) process. On September 8, the City Council adopted changes to the ARB process to expand administrative review of certain projects. This Resolution of Intention represents the initiation of the next step in the process to revise Architectural Review Board process and thresholds to reduce project timelines and staff workload.

Discussion

The proposed amendments include, but are not limited to, consideration of the following:

- Revise the Architectural Review Board process to streamline review
- Modify thresholds for review by the Architectural Review Board
- Explore revisions where ARB has authority to modify certain development standards

The attached Resolutions of Intention represent the formal commencement of the process to consider recommending to the City Council the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance including all sections with reference to ARB, the Downtown Community Plan, and the Bergamot Area Plan, to modify the Architectural Review Board processes and standards. This resolution does not represent the final content of the proposed amendments as draft amendments will need to be further studied based on staff research, Architectural Review Board and Planning Commission recommendations, community input, and Council direction on the substantive provisions of these amendments.

Prepared by: Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP,
Design and Historic Preservation Planner

Attachments

- A. Planning Commission Resolution of Intention (Zoning Ordinance)
- B. Planning Commission Resolution of Intention (Bergamot Area Plan and Downtown Community Plan)