



Planning Commission Report

Planning Commission Meeting: February 17, 2021

Agenda Item: 8-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 Processes and Thresholds for Streamlining Purposes

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the attached Resolutions declaring its intent to consider recommending to the City Council amendments to the text of the Land Use and Circulation Element of the General Plan, 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 process. On October 13, 2020, the City Council adopted Ordinance Number 2651 (CCS), which took the first step towards restructuring by amending Santa Monica Municipal Code Chapter 9.55 to expand administrative review of certain projects that are limited in scope or routine in nature.

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 amendments to the LUCE, Bergamot Area Plan, Downtown Community Plan, and Zoning Ordinance, to modify the City's architectural review 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.

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Attachments

- A. Planning Commission Resolution of Intention (Land Use and Circulation Element, Bergamot Area Plan and Downtown Community Plan)
- B. Planning Commission Resolution of Intention (Zoning Ordinance)