



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 11/9/2016

ALL

Item Creation Date:

PLN - Ordinance Amending Ordinance 2015-967 Pertaining to Design Guidelines

Agenda Item#: 18.

Background:

Planning and Development recommends that City Council amend Chapter 33 Section 266(c) of the Code of Ordinances to extend the deadline for historic districts design guidelines in the Heights East, Heights West, and Heights South historic districts to August 2017 and add a provision for an interim Strategy Paper by February 2017.

In October 2015, City Council approved amendments to Chapter 33 Section 266(c). These amendments were the result of a 13-month community process that included 13 committee meetings. The amendments included the requirement for the Planning & Development Department (P&D) to "present design guidelines to city council for consideration for the Heights East, Heights West, and Heights South historic districts within sixteen months of the passage of Ordinance No. 2015-967."

The 16-month timeframe set a deadline of February 2017 for presentation of guidelines. This deadline was based on staff's experience with three previous processes of developing historic district design guidelines. After securing the best qualified professional services firm for the project, however, the project team determined that an extension of this timeframe is necessary to adequately engage the community and provide a quality product. P&D recommends providing City Council an interim Strategy Paper within the 16-month timeframe and a final set of guidelines in no more than an additional six months. The Strategy Paper will include, at the least:

- an outline of the design guidelines,
- a summary of key issues,
- data analysis and findings,
- building types and case studies,
- recommended alternatives that address compatibility, and
- a preliminary strategy for review and consideration of applications.

This approach ensures that the City Council receives a project update within the originally anticipated project schedule while also enabling a broader community engagement and a higher quality, more useable final document. Based on discussions with the professional services provider and the public, it has become clear that the community needs more detailed guidelines that include clear quantitative parameters for appropriately scaled new construction and additions to contributing structures. The additional time will also ensure additional public engagement, including public workshops, smaller focus group meetings with specific stakeholders, an Advisory Committee, and a community-wide visual survey. Usability testing of the final product to ensure it meets user needs is also part of the engagement.

Planning & Development presented this proposal, as well as an update to the overall design guidelines process, to the Quality of Life Committee on September 28, 2016. Planning & Development recommends approval of changes to Chapter 33, allowing for an extension in the project schedule, including presenting to Council a Strategy Paper in February 2017 and the final guidelines to City Council for approval by August 2017.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Walsh'.

Patrick Walsh, P.E

Director

Planning and Development Department

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ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Public Engagement Activities

Type

Signed Cover sheet