



**AGENDA**  
**CITY OF SANTA ROSA**  
**DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS**  
**JOINT MEETING OF THE DESIGN REVIEW AND**  
**CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD**  
**June 15, 2017 | 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM**

**I. INTRODUCTIONS (5 minutes)**

M-Group will provide a summary of the project status, highlight feedback received through various stakeholder meetings to date, and set out next steps for the project.

**II. OVERVIEW OF PROJECT AND GOALS (5 minutes)**

A brief synopsis of project goals to be provided by staff.

**III. DISCUSSION**

The discussion will focus on the Joint Concept Review and Joint Preliminary Design Review/Landmark Alteration processes, as well as a review of the City's adopted Design Guidelines that overlap with the purview of the two Boards. M-Group is seeking input on areas to focus on when identifying regulatory or policy refinements to improve the permitting process. It is not necessary to identify specific solutions at this stage. The discussion will be organized into three components:

**1. OVERVIEW OF DESIGN REVIEW PROCEDURES, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES (15 minutes)**

For this discussion, M-Group will summarize the specific responsibilities of the DRB and CHB during Concept Review, Preliminary Design Review/Landmark Alteration, and Final Design Review to provide all members with a background on existing code language regarding the functions that each Board is designed to serve and the desired collaboration between the DRB and CHB. M-Group will then lead a discussion on the efficacy and efficiency of each stage in the process to identify bottlenecks and opportunities to clarify procedures.

**2. MEETING STRUCTURE (15 minutes)**

This discussion will be focused on managing and facilitating constructive review of projects with a 14-member Joint Review panel. The roles and responsibilities of staff, the CHB, and the DRB will be explored to identify how to manage meetings more efficiently, improve transparency and consistency, and engender more constructive feedback for applicants.

**3. DESIGN GUIDELINES AND PROCESSING REVIEW PROCEDURES (15 minutes)**

Santa Rosa Design Guidelines Sections 2.4 and 4.7 provide direction on evaluating project design when located within designated Preservation Districts or on properties with designated landmark structures. In addition to these two sections, the City's Processing Review Procedures for Historic Structures provide further guidance. Both

documents are applicable to the Joint DRB-CHB Preliminary Design Review/Landmark Alteration process. M-Group will lead a focused discussion on these chapters of the Design Guidelines to identify ways to improve the language of the documents, improve their application to project review, and clarify vague or conflicting language.

IV. **ADJOURNMENT (5 minutes)**

M-Group will provide a summary of meeting comments.

## SPECIFIC QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. **Joint Concept Review.** Design Review is required for any project of 5,000 square feet or larger within the -H combining district. Joint Concept Review by the DRB/CHB is required prior to application submittal; the purpose of CHB review is for the Board to *"identify for the applicant the character defining elements of the historic district and adjacent neighborhood."* The purpose of the DRB review is to provide the applicant with the Board's *"preliminary feedback on the general design concept of a proposed project."*
  - Describe how the CHB identifies character-defining elements to provide this feedback, the usability of existing surveys and other documentation to highlight these elements, the desired role of staff and/or the applicant in this initial feedback loop, and how useful this aspect of the concept review is to subsequent Design Review phases.
  - Describe how the DRB has evaluated projects with respect to achieving "superior" design as defined in the City's Design Guidelines, how areas of improvement are communicated in terms of specific Design Guidelines, and the challenges that the Board faces in reaching a consensus on how best to achieve "superior" design.
2. **Joint Hearing-Roles.** Following Concept Review for projects subject to CHB and DRB review, a project moves to joint Preliminary Design Review/Landmark Alteration. The purpose is to *"focus on how successfully project design integrates with the historic district and neighborhood. The character defining elements identified by the CHB in concept review will be used as evaluation criteria."* Describe the roles that the DRB and CHB serve during a Joint Hearing. What is the role of staff in managing Joint Hearings?
3. **Joint Hearings-Scope.** Discuss how the Boards deal with projects with entitlements for which the DRB/CHB do not have purview (e.g. parking, Conditional Use Permits, land entitlements, signage where sign permits are deferred, etc.)
4. **Joint Hearings-Staff Support.** Discuss opportunities for staff to assist with managing and conducting meetings. Specific examples include, cataloguing conditions/comments and crafting language to provide direction, flagging conflicting or hanging comments, etc.
5. **Staff Reports.** Do staff reports and presentations provide the necessary information to conduct an appropriate review of a project? How can staff reports be improved to assist in a smooth joint Preliminary Design Review/Landmark Alteration hearing?
6. **Joint CHB/DRB Meetings.** What steps could be taken to make the joint CHB/DRB meetings more efficient (both concept DR/LMA, and Preliminary DR and LMA)?
7. **Changes to Approved Projects.** Are there opportunities to streamline the process for reviewing changes to an approved project? Would it be appropriate to allow for administrative review of changes when the change involves a reduction in project scale or scope, even when the reduction addresses an aspect of the project that is a trigger for Board or Commission review? What kind of project or scale of change should not be returned to the Boards?
8. **Design Guidelines.** How do Chapters 2.4 and 4.7 relate to the Processing Review Procedures for Historic Properties document? Are there conflicts?
9. **Design Guidelines.** Are there consistent challenges with interpreting Design Guidelines Chapters 2.4 and 4.7 relating to Historic Structures?

10. **Compatibility/Adjacency.** What additional materials or information are needed to improve the Boards' ability to assess a projects compatibility and appropriate interaction with the adjacent or surrounding historic environment?