

IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title: Adopt the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District Design Guidelines (Ordinance)

Contact name: Brandon Spencer-Hartle, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Contact phone: 503.823.4641

Presenter name: Brandon Spencer-Hartle

Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:

This ordinance will adopt design guidelines for the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District in Portland's Central City. The New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service on November 21, 1989. The historic district is bound by NW Glisan Street to the north, NW 3rd Avenue to the east, West Burnside Street to the south, and NW 5th Avenue to the west.

Alteration, addition, and new construction projects within the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District are subject to historic resource review, a land use review that is administered by the Bureau of Development Services and Portland Historic Landmarks Commission. The approval criteria that today apply to the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District are the Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines and River District Design Guidelines. These existing guidelines lack adequate approval criteria for the protection of historic district's character-defining architectural and cultural features. Furthermore, the existing design guidelines lack adequate examples, images, and background documentation to meet the City of Portland's format for land use approval criteria that apply to designated historic resources.

The New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District Design Guidelines provide clearer, district-specific design guidance and describe best practices for property owners, designers, and developers proposing changes to historic structures and new construction in the district. Following adoption, the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District Design Guidelines will replace the River District Design Guidelines as approval criteria within the historic district. The Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines will continue to also apply to the historic district.

The guidelines currently under review were developed by Prosper Portland and the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability in 2016 and 2017 with the assistance of a 10-member Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Following hearings on September 12 and 26, 2016, the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission on December 12, 2016, unanimously recommended City Council adopt the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District Design Guidelines as historic resource review approval criteria.

Adoption of the historic district design guidelines supports numerous Comprehensive Plan and Central City Plan policies calling for the preservation of historic resources, enhancement of neighborhoods with special character, and promotion of high-quality design in the built environment.

Financial and budgetary impacts:

This project is not expected to result in any significant budgetary impacts. Historic resource review, administered by the Bureau of Development Services, is already required for alteration, addition, and new construction projects within the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District. To the extent that district-specific historic resource review approval criteria reduce ambiguities and provide clearer guidance for applicants, City staff, and the Historic Landmarks Commission, the guidelines may provide for faster reviews, fewer appeals, and more certainty in the development process. These improvements could reduce costs and complexities for both the City and land use applicants.

Community impacts and community involvement:

The New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District Design Guidelines provide clearer approval criteria for alterations, additions, and new construction in a district already subject to historic resource review. Property owners, development teams, the interested public, City staff, and the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission will benefit from the increased clarity and certainty provided by historic district-specific design guidelines. The citizens of Portland will benefit from the new guidelines because they ensure that preservation, rehabilitation, and new development projects respect the district's historic character, honor authentic expressions of its Chinese and Japanese cultural significance, preserve the physical integrity of existing buildings, and contribute to New Chinatown/Japantown unique sense of place within the Central City.

The project included an extensive public involvement and outreach component, including a 10-member Stakeholder Advisory Committee, two open houses, meetings with community organizations, in-depth interviews with interested parties, collaboration with public agencies, management of a project website, extensive mailed notification, and numerous briefings, work sessions, and public hearings with the Historic Landmarks Commission. Staff responded to public and commission input with many revisions to the draft guidelines as they evolved through the planning process, culminating with a unanimous recommendation from the Historic Landmarks Commission.

The Historic Landmarks Commission, Old Town/Chinatown Community Association, and historic preservation stakeholders are expected to testify in support of the design guidelines at City Council. There is no known community opposition, however, one development team did testify in opposition to the guidelines at a Historic Landmarks Commission hearing.

Budgetary Impact Worksheet**Does this action change appropriations?**

☐ **YES:** Please complete the information below.

☒ **NO:** Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount