

IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title: Adopt the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District Design Guidelines (Ordinance).

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Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:

This ordinance will adopt revised design guidelines for the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District in Portland's Central City. The Skidmore/Old Town Historic District was designated by the City of Portland and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. It was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the United States Secretary of the Interior in 1977, one of only two such National Historic Landmark districts in Oregon.

The guidelines will serve as required approval criteria for historic resource reviews in the district, including proposals for alterations and additions to historic buildings and new construction. The existing guidelines, adopted in 1987, are out-of-date, lack adequate examples and images and do not follow the current preferred format for design guidelines in the City of Portland. The updated, expanded and refined Skidmore/Old Town 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.

The guidelines currently under review were first developed in 2008 and were recommended for adoption by the Historic Landmarks Commission. City Council reviewed the guidelines as part of a package of amendments that included a proposal to increase maximum building height limits in parts of the historic district. Due to the controversy around the proposed height increases, City Council did not take action on the code amendments or revised design guidelines at that time.

The West Quadrant Plan, adopted by Resolution No. 37115 on March 5, 2015, calls for the review, revision and adoption of the updated draft guidelines prepared in 2008. Beginning in late 2015, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability staff worked with the Historic Landmarks Commission to review and revise the 2008 draft guidelines. On January 25, 2016 and February 8, 2016, the Historic Landmarks Commission held public hearings on the revised guidelines and unanimously recommended that City Council adopt the Skidmore/Old Town Historic District Guidelines, as amended.

Adoption of the updated 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 have any significant budgetary impacts. Historic resource reviews, administered by the Bureau of Development Services, are already required within the

Skidmore/Old Town Historic District. To the extent that the revised guidelines reduce ambiguities and provide clearer guidance for both applicants and City staff, they may provide for faster reviews, fewer appeals and more certainty in the development process. This could reduce costs for both the City and applicants.

Community impacts and community involvement:

Because the revised guidelines provide clearer design guidance, property owners and applicants with development proposals in the historic district will benefit from more clarity and certainty in the development process. The citizens of Portland will benefit from the new guidelines because they encourage contextually sensitive development and will help ensure that preservation, rehabilitation and new development projects respect the district's historic character, preserve its integrity and contribute to its unique sense of place.

The project included an extensive public involvement and outreach component, including a Community Working Group, open houses, meetings with community organizations, public agencies and individuals, project web sites, mailings and notices, and numerous briefings, work sessions and public hearings with the Historic Landmarks Commissions. Staff responded to public and commission input with many revisions to the draft guidelines as they evolved through the planning process, culminating with the unanimous support of the Historic Landmarks Commission.

The Old Town/Chinatown Community Association, Restore Oregon, and the Architectural Heritage Center support the revised guidelines and are expected to testify at City Council. There is no known community opposition.

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