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Chapter 19.710

DESIGN REVIEW

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19.710.010 Purpose.

The City Council finds, determines and declares that the application of the design review procedures are necessary to preserve and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community by achieving the following purposes:

- A. To protect and preserve the value of properties and to encourage high quality development thereof in areas where adverse effects will result from excessive uniformity, dissimilarity, poor exterior quality and appearance of buildings and structures, and from inadequate and poorly planned landscaping, and from failure to preserve where feasible natural landscape features, open spaces and the like, and will result in the impairment of the benefits of occupancy and use of existing properties in such areas;
- B. To recognize the interdependence of land values and aesthetics and to provide a method to implement this interdependence in order to maintain the values of surrounding properties and improvements, and to encourage excellence of development of property, compatible with the general plan for, and character of, the City, with due regard to the public and private interests involved;
- C. To ensure that the public benefits derived from expenditures of public funds for improvement and beautification of streets and public facilities shall be protected by the exercise of reasonable controls over the character and design of private buildings, structures and open spaces;
- D. To ensure the maintenance of high design standards in the vicinity of public buildings and grounds for the preservation of the architecture and general appearance in the areas of the City containing the buildings and grounds and to preserve the property values in the areas;
- E. To promote the maintenance of high design standards adjoining thoroughfares of Citywide importance to ensure that the community benefits from the natural growth and vegetation as much as possible, and from the natural terrain, and to preserve and stabilize the architecture and general appearance of buildings and grounds adjoining the thoroughfares; and to preserve and protect the property values in the areas; and

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- F. To ensure the design of landscaping and irrigation that shades paved areas, buffers or screens undesirable views, complements building architecture and that implements the purposes of Chapter 19.570 (Water Efficient Landscaping and Irrigation).

19.710.020 Applicability.

- A. The design review procedures set forth in this Chapter shall apply to the following:
1. All new buildings, structures and signs, and enlargements of existing buildings, structures and signs in the RC – Residential Conservation, ~~Multiple-Family Residential~~, Commercial and Office, Mixed-Use, Industrial and Downtown Specific Plan Zones, except as exempted in B and C below.
 2. Any project reviewed and approved via the conditional use, planned residential development permit or site plan review permit processes.
 3. Establishment of any manufactured dwelling on the lot. The Design Review process shall apply only to the approval of foundation, roof material, roof pitch, roof overhang, siding material and any structures attached to the dwelling.
- B. The Design Review procedures set forth in this chapter shall not apply to any restoration, rehabilitation, alteration, development, construction, demolition, removal or appearance change of any landmark, landmark structure, landmark site or any structure or site within a preservation district. Said structures are subject to [Title 20](#).
- C. The following types of projects are exempt from Design Review, however, the Planning Division will review them for compliance with the Zoning Code and consistency with the Citywide Design Guidelines during the building permit plan check process:
1. Infill development consisting of a single-family residence or new residences and structures within an approved conventional residential subdivision (unless otherwise specified in the project specific conditions of approval).
 2. Minor exterior modifications or renovations that do not expand the size of the building.
 3. Accessory Buildings and Structures.
 4. Outdoor dining areas (not including outdoor food preparation).
 5. Minor site improvements or landscape modifications or renovations that are not subject to the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance and/or do not require a Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP).
- D. To facilitate the development of affordable housing throughout the City, consistent with California Government Code Section 65580, an administrative Design Review application for standalone multi-family residential building(s) shall be reviewed by the

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Community and Economic Development Director or his/her designee when the proposed development complies with all of the following criteria:

1. Development standards and regulations of the Riverside Municipal Code, including but not limited to, Title 7 (Noise), 16 (Building & Construction), 17 (Grading), 18 (Subdivision), 19 (Zoning) and 20 (Cultural Resources);
2. Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP) requirements;
3. No other discretionary review is required to approve the development proposal, such as, but not limited to, a variance, rezoning, specific plan amendment or general plan amendment;
4. Is consistent with the County's Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP), when applicable;
5. Mitigation measures of the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) certified for the City's 2014-2021 5th Cycle Housing Element (SCH # 2017041039); and
6. Implements all recommendations of a Traffic Operations Assessment prepared for and reviewed by the City of Riverside Public Works Department; or is not required to prepare a Traffic Operations Assessment because the development does not result in any of the following:
 - a. Generates 100 or more new peak hour vehicle trips;
 - b. Does not conform with the City of Riverside's Access Management Guidelines; or
 - c. Is located within 1,000 feet of a roadway or intersection, or closest intersection if not within 1,000 feet, where three or more reported vehicular accidents in a 12 month period, or five or more reported vehicular accidents in a 24-month period have occurred, and where the installation of traffic controls could reduce vehicular accidents.

This Administrative Design Review process ensures compliance with California Housing Element law. The multi-family housing permitted pursuant to RMC Article V – Permitted Use Table - 19.150.020(A) shall be a “permitted use by right”, as defined by Government Code Section 65583.

19.710.030 Approval Required.

- A. Where applicable, no new building, structure or sign or exterior alteration or enlargement of an existing building, structure, sign or new landscaping and irrigation shall be commenced or installed until Design Review approval has been granted pursuant to this Chapter.
- B. The restoration, rehabilitation, alteration, development, construction, demolition, removal or appearance change of any landmark, landmark structure, landmark site or any structure or site within a preservation district requires the granting of a permit by the Cultural Heritage Board or the City Council on appeal (see [Title 20](#)).

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19.710.035 Review Responsibilities of Planning Commission or Development Review Committee and Community & Economic Development Director.

- A. The Development Review Committee or Community & Economic Department Director or his/her designee, as applicable, may approve in full or in part, conditionally approve in full or in part, modify or deny:
 - 1. The plot plan and building elevations for all projects in zones requiring Design Review approval, that are not subject to separate approval by the Planning Commission.
 - 2. Sign plans in accordance with Citywide Design Guidelines.
 - 3. The landscape and irrigation plans for all projects that are subject to Design Review approval. An application will not be considered complete unless required Park and Recreation Department fees are included with the submittal.
 - 4. The plot plan, building elevations, landscape plans and irrigation plans for accessory buildings in zones requiring Design Review and for cargo container accessory buildings in any zone where they are permitted.
- B. The Planning Commission shall approve in full or in part, conditionally approve in full or in part, modify or deny:
 - 1. Plot plan and building elevations for projects related to a planning case subject to their separate approval including conditional use permits, planned residential development permits, and site plan review permits. This does not apply to cases involving only a legislative action, including rezoning or General Plan amendment.
- C. The Community & Economic Development Director or Development Review Committee, as applicable, may refer any Design Review application to the Planning Commission.

19.710.040 Design Review Standards.

- A. In addition to the general purposes set forth in Section 19.710.010 (Purpose), the Design Review procedures established by this Chapter shall be applied according to and in compliance with the following standards, when applicable:
 - 1. Sites shall be graded and developed with due regard for the aesthetic qualities of the natural terrain and landscape, and trees and shrubs shall not be indiscriminately destroyed.
 - 2. Buildings, structures and signs shall be properly related to their sites and consistent with the character of the neighborhood and surrounding sites, and shall not be detrimental to the orderly and harmonious development of their surroundings and of the City.
 - 3. Open spaces, parking areas, pedestrian walks, signs, illumination and landscaping (including water efficient irrigation facilities) shall be adequately related to the site and arranged to achieve a safe, efficient and harmonious development.

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4. Sites shall be developed to achieve a harmonious relationship with existing and proposed adjoining developments, avoiding both excessive variety and monotonous repetition, but allowing, when feasible, similarity of style or originality of design.
5. When feasible, electrical and similar mechanical equipment, and trash and storage areas shall be effectively screened from public view. The use of harmonious or related colors and materials shall be encouraged.
6. The design review process shall endeavor to eliminate the ugly, the garish, the inharmonious, the monotonous, and the hazardous, and shall endeavor to ensure that proposed improvements will not impair the desirability of investment or occupancy nearby; but originality in site planning, architecture, landscaping and graphic design shall not be suppressed.
7. Review shall include exterior design, materials, textures, colors, means of illumination, signing, landscaping and irrigation.

19.710.050 Citywide Design Review Guidelines.

All applicable development shall comply with the City Council adopted Citywide Design Guidelines.

19.710.060 Drawings to Be Approved - Alterations to Be Approved.

- A. No building permit for a new building, structure, or sign, and no building permit for an exterior alteration or enlargement of an existing building, structure, or sign, that is subject to design review as provided in this Chapter shall be issued until the drawings required by Section 19.710.065 (Drawings to Be Submitted) have been approved pursuant to this Chapter, and no certificate of occupancy shall be issued unless the construction and property comply with said approved drawings. Said buildings, structures, or signs shall be maintained thereafter in substantial conformance with said approved drawings.
- B. If alterations to approved drawings are desired by the applicant, said drawings shall be resubmitted and processed according to the procedures established in this Chapter for approval of the original drawings.

19.710.065 Drawings to Be Submitted.

The drawings submitted as part of the Design Review application shall be provided in accordance with the latest Design Review submission checklist available at the Planning Division, which is updated from time to time.

Any other drawings or additional information necessary, as determined by the Community & Economic Development Director or their designee, to adequately consider the drawings set forth herein above and to determine compliance with the purposes of this Chapter shall be provided.

19.710.070 Appeals.

A. Appeals

1. Appeal of the Community & Economic Development Director or Development Review Committee Decision: - Any person aggrieved or affected by a decision of

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the Community & Economic Development Director or their designee or the Development Review Committee, as applicable, in granting or denying a Design Review application may appeal to the Planning Commission at any time within ten (10) calendar days after the date upon which the Community & Economic Development Director or their designee or the Development Review Committee, as applicable, makes a decision. An appeal to the Planning Commission shall be taken by filing a letter of appeal, in duplicate, and the appropriate fee with the Planning Division. Such letter shall set forth the grounds upon which the appeal is based. Upon such appeal the matter shall be placed on the next available agenda meeting of the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission decision is final unless appealed to the City Council.

2. Appeal of the Planning Commission Decision: - Any person aggrieved or affected by a decision of the Planning Commission in granting or denying a Design Review application may appeal to the City Council at any time within ten (10) calendar days after the date upon which the Planning Commission makes a decision. An appeal to the Planning Commission shall be taken by filing a letter of appeal, in duplicate, with the Planning Division. Such letter shall set forth the grounds upon which the appeal is based. Upon such appeal the matter shall be placed on the next available agenda meeting of the Land Use Committee of the City Council. The Land Use Committee may continue the matter for more information and upon review of that information shall consider the appeal and make a recommendation to the City Council for consideration at the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting. Any items that, because of scheduling irregularities of the Land Use Committee, cannot be heard by the Land Use Committee within twenty (20) business days of the appeal deadline, shall be referred directly to the City Council unless the applicant requests or consents to a continuance to allow Land Use Committee review. The City Council may affirm, reverse or modify the decision of the Land Use Committee or Planning Commission.