

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



To: Jim Scholl, City Manager
Through: Thaddeus Cohen, Planning Director
From: Enid Torregrosa-Silva, Historic Preservation Planner
Meeting Date: May 17, 2016
RE: Proposed revisions of HARC Guidelines for New Construction.

ACTION STATEMENT:

Request: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION'S GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AS REFERENCED IN SECTION 90-142 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF INCONSISTENT PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Location: Key West Historic District.

BACKGROUND:

During the past months the historic architectural review commission (HARC) initiated modifications to the Historic Architectural Guidelines to clarify and strengthen the review process when a citizen submits a Certificate of Appropriateness application that proposes new construction within the historic district. The new proposed guidelines for "*New Construction in the historic districts*" provides informative guidance to citizens and general public on the appropriateness of proposing new construction within the historic districts without affecting the character and surrounding neighborhood.

The proposed guidelines were presented in a workshop on December 9, 2015. Since 2002, the HARC Guidelines are incorporated by reference into the Land Development Regulations, Section 90-142, and therefore are regulatory tools. Any amendment to the Guidelines must follow the same process as an amendment to the Land Development Regulations.

Previous City Actions:

Planning Board Approval	April 21, 2016
HARC Recommendation of Approval	February 23, 2016

Planning Staff Analysis:

The new guidelines are an educational tool for anyone that references them, as they clearly explain the objectives and goals for each regulation. These proposed guidelines are more comprehensive than the actual ones and they provide vast and clear information as to the importance of understanding the urban context to which new construction is proposed. New construction in the historic district can adversely affect the character and integrity of the surrounding context, therefore precise and clear guidelines will help not only the citizens to understand HARC's main objectives, but will make the review process more effective.

It is the intent of the Commission to create guidelines for new construction that are based on national preservation principles and that can be applied to all building types; commercial, residential, governmental or institutional. Current regulations for new construction are open to interpretation and subjective opinions. The new proposed guidelines are specific to each regulation, which creates an objective review for each new proposed project within the historic district.

Options/Advantages/Disadvantages:

Option 1: Approve the proposed changes to guidelines for New Construction.

- 1. Consistency with the City's Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission:** This action would provide clear regulations that promotes and protects the historic character and quality of the historic district, which is consistent with the mission and vision of the City.
- 2. Financial Impact:** There will be no direct finance impact. Nevertheless, the approval of the proposed ordinance will improve the efficiency of staff and the HARC members when reviewing an application, which will streamline the City's plans review process.

Option 2: Do not approve the proposed change to guidelines for New Construction.

- 1. Consistency with the City's Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission:** This action would not be consistent with the City's strategic plan, as the current new construction guidelines lacks of specific and objective regulations much needed when reviewing proposed new construction within the historic district.
- 2. Financial Impact:** There will be no direct finance impact. Nevertheless, by not approving the proposed ordinance, the city will not solve current problem HARC members and staff are dealing when reviewing applications with vague and subjective regulations pertaining new construction.

Recommendation

The Planning Department recommends, Option 1, **approval** of the proposed Ordinance setting the proposed changes of New Construction guidelines.