

**TABLE of DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Prepared by the DBC May 2016

Implementation and Notes provided by Jon Biggs 8-18-17

\*\*\*\*\* *My comments in bold italics.* \*\*\*\*\*

DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	IMPLEMENTATION	NOTES
1. A. Revise the Design Guidelines.	In-Process	<p>Committee and Staff have developed a series of edits and modifications to this document. Also, an element of Downtown Vision Process and final edits pending outcome of this effort.</p> <p><b><i>The rewrite of current guidelines was completed when the DBC turned in its final report in May 2016. All that remained was formatting. If the visioning process produces changes, they can be added, but why wait?</i></b></p> <p>Funds approved to facilitate Document modification.</p> <p><b><i>What sort of modification requires funding?</i></b></p> <p>Review and Approval process to be determined as existing design guidelines adopted by City Council.</p> <p><b><i>The guidelines were adopted by Council years ago. What "Review and Approval" process is suggested here?</i></b></p>
1. B. Revise and update existing planning documents to ensure consistent terminology throughout.	On-Going	<p>Cautiously updating – terminology in documents has been found to have a specific intent and carefully selected to make intent clear.</p> <p><b><i>DBC understood the importance of specific intent. Committee found instances where it was not clear, which is what prompted this recommendation. Is there a list with highlights of what's been updated?</i></b></p>
1. C. Discard obsolete documents and keep all documents current.	Complete / On-Going	<p>Initial document review conducted and those found obsolete have been taken out of service or updated. On- going effort to update as codes/policies and practices change.</p> <p><b><i>List in the DBC report (Exhibit 1.1) showed 38 documents. Current list on website shows 44:</i></b></p> <p><a href="https://www.losaltosca.gov/communitydevelopment/page/forms-and-handouts-0">https://www.losaltosca.gov/communitydevelopment/page/forms-and-handouts-0</a></p> <p><b><i>Which have been updated?</i></b></p>

1. D. Make zoning code the single source for explicit, measurable requirements. Don't duplicate requirements across multiple documents.	Implemented as it relates to Zoning Code requirements	Note - there are numerous regulatory documents that provide measurable requirements – note Housing Element and Land Use Element – each of which provide measurable requirements such as densities and affordable housing unit numbers. <b>Agree. But which will be modified and when?</b>
1. E. Make more use of illustrations and diagrams in all documents.	On-Going	Updating documents as opportunities present themselves and where illustrations and diagrams enhance guidance – accessory structure handout an example. <b>Will we wait for “opportunities” or update what needs improving now? Completion date?</b>
1. F. Put all documents online and make them interactive with links to each other and relevant city codes	Documents are on-line & on-going	Contract for new permit tracking software has been recently executed – this provides best opportunity for linking of documents related to development process. Staff is in the early stages of the application and implementation of this software for City systems. <b>As of 2-14-18, it's not yet implemented. What's the due date?</b>
2. A. Revise the existing planning page on the city website to include all steps in the process and provide links to relevant documents ...	To Be Finalized	This will be an element of the City's Webpage refresh. Some modifications to the existing web page have been completed. <b>New planning page at</b> <a href="https://www.losaltosca.gov/communitydevelopment/page/development">https://www.losaltosca.gov/communitydevelopment/page/development</a> <b>Does not show the recommended steps in the planning process for new projects, e.g., 4846 El Camino had a study session before Council and the PTC on 1-16-18. There's no indication of that.</b> <b>No place to show Planning Commission or Council review dates for “under review” projects.</b> <b>Links to projects approved or under construction are only to project plans, not any staff reports. One would want to know, for example, if there are any exceptions on a project.</b>
2. B. As a long term goal, provide the means for developers to make submissions online.	An element of permit tracking software	Contract signed - staff is in the early stages of the application and implementation of this software for City systems.
3. A. Provide detailed checklists for developers at every step of the planning process for consistency and accountability.	Completed – additional updates pending given code amendments under consideration	Checklists for different types of development projects available – will also update with new permit tracking software capabilities. <b>Where are these checklists?</b>

3. B. Attach the completed Design Guidelines checklist to each staff report.	Completed	Requiring applicants to complete the checklist as an element of their early planning for a project. <b><i>The DBC produced a developer checklist based on current Downtown Design Guidelines. It is not part of the submittal documents.</i></b>
3. C. Create a standard template for staff reports	Completed & On-Going	The agenda reports will be going through another series of changes in the near future. <b><i>What changes have been made and which will be made? Council noted at 1-20-18 retreat that history of meetings on any given subject had been removed from staff reports and only recently added back.</i></b>
3. D. Require an early stage design review for new commercial and multi-family projects and major remodels in the downtown triangle. This design review to be done with consulting professional having specific expertise, paid for by the developer.	Implemented	Staff has implemented. Architectural consultant hired to review and provide comment on recent project. On-going implementation as projects come forward. Staff is evaluating success or concerns with process. <b><i>The one time this was implemented was on the 40 Main development, which was in its final presentation. The project architect was not included in the discussion. Staff claimed this was done to conform with DBC recommendations. But the DBC advised a review <u>with</u> the developer's team at the <u>very beginning</u> of the application process.</i></b>
3. E. To ensure that Council-approved DBC recommendations are implemented in a timely way, create a workplan with measurable milestones for each to track progress.		<b><i>This important item was in the original list approved by Council, but is not in the 8-18-17 tracking report. No workplan with measurable milestones, has been done.</i></b>
4. A. Amend the height limits for the CD and CD/R3 zones so that commercial and mixed-use structures do not exceed 30 feet in height and entirely residential projects do not exceed 35 feet in height.	Completed	
4. B. Adopt an ordinance establishing a temporary moratorium on new construction in the CD and CD/R3 zones that does not meet the height limits recommended above, pending completion of the process needed to act on and implement the zoning changes.	Implementation Not Approved by City Council	
5. A. Amend 14.66.240 (A) and (E) to group structures that are related to building design, equipment or mechanical screening separate from other structures (e.g. flag pole and antennae). Make the maximum height for such structures 8 feet instead of 15.	Completed	

<p>5. B. Remove language in guidelines and plans that encourage towers (Downtown Design Plan p. 11, 22, 35). Direct staff to prepare and add definition for “penthouse” and “tower” to the general definitions at 14.02.070. Specify that penthouse is not a habitable or commercial space but is intended to provide an architecturally pleasing cover to stairwells, elevator equipment, etc.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p><b><i>On November 8th, 2016, Staff erroneously changed the code to allow 12-foot parapets. This only came to light in the 6-15-17 PTC discussion of the 40 Main Street project.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>No action has been taken to correct this.</i></b></p>
<p>6. A. Amend Design Control to require articulation for every building over 50 feet wide and require changes of plane in the horizontal and vertical aspects.</p>	<p>Underway</p>	<p><i>Part of Design Guidelines Update and Downtown Visioning Process</i></p> <p><b><i>Design Guidelines provided updates. This is about good design, regardless of what comes from Downtown Visioning.</i></b></p>
<p>6. B. Through development requirements and guidelines, encourage variation in building-entrance configuration <u>and other aspects</u> of the front of the building, upper levels, and roofline, to avoid a “tunnel” that would result from having all buildings constructed to the minimum setback. Instruct Staff and the PTC to encourage creative articulations at street level rather than building to the minimum setback.</p>	<p>On-Going and Part of the Downtown Visioning Process</p>	<p><i>Staff has included code language to achieve this in some ordinance amendments and recommendations on specific projects.</i></p> <p><b><i>What changes? Where can they be seen? Which ordinances? Which projects?</i></b></p>
<p>7. A. Require minimum sidewalk width of 6 feet that is generally clear of all obstructions such as signage and utility poles (consistent with streetscape plan previously implemented for the north end of First Street).</p>	<p>On-Going and Part of the Downtown Visioning Process</p>	<p><i>Evaluating with Engineering Division and in the Downtown Vision Effort</i></p> <p><b><i>Should be required regardless of visioning.</i></b></p>
<p>7. B. Where sidewalks are not more than 6 feet wide, prohibit walls or any obstructing hedges or similar plantings within the first two feet of setback. This is advisable because pedestrians avoid the 24 inch area next to a wall of any height and also avoid 18 inches near the curb. This effectively leaves only 18 inches of a 5-foot wide sidewalk for walking. (See EXHIBIT 7.2.)</p>	<p>Under Review</p>	<p><i>Evaluating with Engineering Division and in the Downtown Vision Effort</i></p> <p><b><i>Due date? How long after final vision scenario approved?</i></b></p>
<p>7. C. Where code currently requires side or rear setback of 2 feet where property adjoins public right of way, change language to require setback of at least 2 feet and as much as 5 feet if needed to create safe pedestrian walkways, supplemented with suitable landscaping.</p>	<p>Under Review</p>	<p><i>Evaluation with Engineering Division and in the Downtown Vision Effort</i></p> <p><b><i>Due Date? How long after final downtown vision scenario is approved?</i></b></p>
<p>8. A. When full landscape plans are submitted for city review, city staff should convene a small group composed of a landscape designer or architect, arborist (if plan involves trees), and city maintenance employee with plant-care expertise to review the plan and provide input to the planning staff and subsequent reviewers.</p>	<p>Convening of Small Group Under Review</p> <p><b><i>What small group? All staff or outside experts, as recommended?</i></b></p>	<p><i>Landscape Plans provided to Public Works – Engineering and Maintenance for review, feedback, recommendations and conditions.</i></p> <p><b><i>Due Date?</i></b></p>

<p>8. B. Task the city arborist to develop a list of recommended trees and minimum sizes for each.</p>	<p>Completed – Also Need to Develop an Appropriate Tree – Site Constraints Selection Guide</p>	<p><i>Tree size depends on species.</i>  <b>Where is the list of recommended trees? The online Submittal Form just asks for a list of trees planned.</b>  <i>Site constraints selection guide (table) is an item staff is exploring.</i>  <b>Due date?</b></p>
<p>8. C. Require that plans for care and maintenance be submitted along with landscaping plans.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>In addition, staff is working on replacement plan for landscape plantings that do not survive – bond requirement for on-going landscape maintenance being explored. PTC is interested and has requested review as well.  <b>Due date?</b></p>
<p>8. D. Implement companion plantings that will contribute to the desired Downtown Guideline that recommends an appearance of abundant and substantial landscaping.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>An element of project review  <b>Yes, but where is the list of recommended plants?</b></p>
<p>8. E. Enforce current Design Guidelines (Section 3.1.2a) that recommend “use [of] abundant landscaping” for wall covering and store front landscaping. Provide “now” and “later” (+5 years) landscaping photos plus photos of desirable landscapes and those that are unattractive.</p>	<p>Complete and On-going</p>	<p>Projects in Downtown must provide landscape plans to reflect this guideline and future appearance of proposed project with landscaping.</p>
<p>8. F. Increase landscaping in the front of buildings. (Also refer to Recommendation 7B.).</p>	<p>Completed and On-Going</p>	<p>This is an issue brought up with developers in the early contact stage of project evaluation.</p>
<p>8. G. Create a list of suggested plants for the developer to consider when creating the landscape design. The suggested list should be developed by the city arborist and gardening staff, with experience derived from caring for plantings in downtown.</p>	<p>Street Tree List Available – See 8 B. above as well</p>	<p>Minimum tree size dependent on species – Also an element of the Downtown Design Guidelines update  <b>Where is the list? List referenced in 8B doesn't exist.</b></p>
<p>8. H. Incorporate requirements for amenities and landscaping in the setback and along building fronts in any future streetscape plan for First Street between Main and San Antonio, and encourage additional setbacks for landscaping</p>	<p>On-Going</p>	<p>An Element of the Downtown Design Guidelines update</p>
<p>9. A. Modify the required finding as follows:  “Exterior materials and finishes <u>convey high quality</u>, integrity, permanence and durability, and materials are used effectively to define building elements such as base, boy, parapets, bays, arcades and structural elements. <u>Materials, finishes, and colors used serve to reduce perceived appearance of height, bulk and mass, and are harmonious with other structures in the immediate area and in the downtown village.</u>”</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p><b>This was not modified in the Findings section of the Submittal Form for Commercial and Multi-Family design review as revised 2-16-17.</b></p>

9. B. Amend “Submittal Requirements Commercial or Multi- Family Design Review, item 7 Color Renderings and 3D Model” and/or the Design Guidelines to require that proposed buildings in the Downtown district be modeled using 3D and other forms of digital simulation that depict the Materials Board and allow for closer consideration of proposed colors and textures of exterior finishes in context.	Completed & On-Going	<b><i>This was not modified in the Findings section of the Submittal Form for Commercial and Multi-Family design review as revised 2-16-17.</i></b>
9. C. Require submission of a physical Materials Board of samples of colors, materials and finishes in the submission requirement checklist.	Completed & On-Going	
9. D. Require submission of larger scale samples and/or examples of uses of the materials and finishes in prior projects for materials and finishes not in common use in the Downtown district.	Completed & On-Going	<b><i>Where was this done?</i></b>
10. A. As neither staff nor PTC have such expertise, the city should engage a specialist with knowledge of standard practice for evaluating daylight/shadow impacts in a commercial setting. Scope of work should include identifying the tools and recommending a process for evaluating the impact of proposed developments on the streetscape, sidewalks, adjacent/opposing buildings, and landscape plans. Create a process for including such evaluation in the decision making process.	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort – Downtown Building Committee’s Recommendations have been provided to the Downtown Visioning consultant. <b><i>What is our expectation as to what RRM will provide on items 10 A through 11 B?</i></b>
10. B. Generalized modeling should be done of the light and shadows for the downtown area as currently built and at full build-out under specified zoning. (See Section 12, Physical and Digital Models.)	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort
10. C. If warranted based on the full-city model, establish light plane guidelines for commercial development. [Note: There are light plane guidelines in place for residential buildings.]	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort
11. A. Make preservation of existing views of the surrounding hills and downtown tree canopy a part of the Design Review process for buildings in the Downtown triangle.	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort
11. B. Specify views to protect, with emphasis on the foothills as seen from Southbound San Antonio Road and treescape from State and Main. Document the selected views in the design guidelines and include photographs. Specify how submittals should address the issue of views.;	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort
12. A. Undertake a project to identify 3D modeling software.	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort <b><i>The 3D models showed at the November presentation by RRM on Downtown Visioning were not helpful.</i></b>

12. B. Develop digital and physical model of the downtown triangle using parameters specified by Council.	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort. <b><i>What can we expect?</i></b>
12. C. Require developers to provide data necessary to model their proposal to the digital system described above.	On-Going	An element of the Downtown Visioning effort and at completion of that effort <b><i>Too many things are pushed onto the visioning effort without any indication of who/how/what will be done and who's responsible for each piece.</i></b>