



Agenda Item

Orange City Council

Item #: 8.1.

10/28/2025

File #: 25-0563

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THRU: Jarad Hildenbrand, City Manager

FROM: Russell Bunim, Community Development Director

1. SUBJECT

Public hearing to consider introduction and First Reading of an ordinance amending Title 12, Title 6, and Title 17 of the Orange Municipal Code modifying the duties and responsibilities of the Design Review Committee. Ordinance No. 18-25.

2. SUMMARY

The proposed Ordinance amends certain provisions of Title 12 (Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Places), Title 16 (Subdivisions), and Title 17 (Zoning) of the Orange Municipal Code to focus the purview of the Design Review Committee (DRC) on projects in historic districts, or involving historic structures outside of a district, in order to streamline the review process and ensure timely decision-making for projects subject to design review.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Conduct and close the public hearing.
2. Introduce and conduct First Reading of Ordinance No. 18-25. An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Orange amending Title 12, Title 16, and Title 17 of the Orange Municipal Code to update duties and responsibilities of the Design Review Committee.

4. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 2: Enhance Economic Development and Achieve Fiscal Sustainability.

Objective 2.2: Improve Design Review Process

Objective 2.12: Update Zoning Ordinance for process clarity and improve efficiency for new businesses

6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

The City of Orange Design Review Committee (DRC) (formerly the Design Review Board) was established in 1974 by Ordinance No. 4-74 for the purpose of upholding community aesthetics by reviewing the architectural design for new buildings and structures. The DRC currently provides discretionary review and approval for certain development projects and acts in an advisory capacity to the Planning Commission and City Council.

On August 12, 2025, the City Council directed staff to prepare an Ordinance that modifies the current purview of the DRC to focus its review on projects involving historic resources. The subject Ordinance accomplishes that direction, focusing DRC review on the following types of projects:

- Properties located within an historic district;
- Properties listed on the City's historic inventory;
- Properties over 50 years old and determined by staff to be historic; or
- Demolition of an historic resource.

Under the proposed Ordinance, all other projects subject to design review would be reviewed through the Administrative Design Review (ADR) process, actionable by the Community Development Director, including:

- All new development, including major modifications to existing structures;
- All signs for new or existing businesses; and
- Demolition of a non-contributing structure in an historic district.

To accomplish these amendments, staff is proposing changes to elements of Orange Municipal Code Title 12, Title 16, and Title 17. The draft City Council Ordinance outlining each text modification is included within Attachment 1.

The Ordinance is in response to direction from the City Council, and provides key benefits, including:

- Streamlined development review process to support economic development.
- Reduced time and cost burdens for the most common types of new development
- Balances the goals of historic preservation with the need for efficient review processes.
- Efficient administration of the design review process while maintaining the integrity of historic districts and resources.

The proposed amendments are consistent with the City's General Plan and applicable state law and are intended to balance the goals of historic preservation with the need for an efficient review process.

Planning Commission Action

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the proposed ordinance on September 15, 2025. During the public hearing, six community members addressed the Commission, with one commenter supporting the proposed ordinance as a balance of interests, and five commenters advocating for preserving the current scope of the DRC as necessary to ensure that new development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods, whether located within an historic district or not.

Following the public hearing, the Commission discussed the scope of the proposed Ordinance and language amendments. Chair Vejar made a motion to recommend approval of the draft Ordinance to the City Council with the direction to identify the threshold of historic significance using a more concise terminology, which was seconded by Commissioner Leslie. By a vote of 5-1-1 (McCormick -

No, Maldonado - Absent), the Planning Commission recommended approval with modifications to the City Council.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Ordinance No. 18-25 (Clean)
- Attachment 2 Ordinance No. 18-25 (Redlined)
- Attachment 3 Planning Commission Staff Report, September 15, 2025
- Attachment 4 Draft Planning Commission Minutes, September 15, 2025