

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

May 9, 2022



PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Legistar File ID # [70641](#), Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance
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Introduction

The Landmarks Ordinance Review Committee undertook work to amend the portion of the historic preservation ordinance that addressed standards for reviewing exterior alterations in our designated historic districts in 2017. After 15 public meetings (3 in each historic district), the committee met 35 times to craft the new ordinance language. The committee's process concluded with 3 additional virtual public meetings focused on different stakeholder groups: all district meeting, contractors and developers, and new construction. Subsequent to its introduction to Common Council, Alder Halverson referred the ordinance to the Economic Development Committee and the Housing Strategy Committee to discuss the proposed language for how we measure 200 feet in historic districts for assessing visual compatibility. The Economic Development Committee voted no comment and recommended that the ordinance be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission as the subject-matter experts. The Housing Strategy Committee voted in support of the proposed ordinance changes with the finding that this would benefit housing in our historic districts.

Proposed Ordinance

After the last combined meeting of LORC and the Landmarks Commission, staff made some additional edits to the text based upon feedback of both of those bodies and then after feedback from the final public meetings. The text needs to find a balance between providing enough guidance to make compliance with the standards clear and predictable without being so prescriptive that they are unwieldy. Please review the text as proposed and the case studies that staff used to vet the draft ordinance. Please also review the drafter's comments on the legislation and the supplemental drafter's analysis for a description of all of the areas with proposed amendments to the existing ordinance.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Landmarks Commission recommends to Common Council to adopt the ordinance as proposed.