



## PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

January 14, 2020

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Legistar File ID #**            [56918](#), Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance, Parking Lot Issues  
Memo #1: Code Required Work, Period of Significance

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### **Background**

At the December 17, 2019, LORC meeting, the committee asked staff to prepare materials for the committee to discuss items from the “parking lot” issues, specifically code-required work and period of significance. Staff has gathered additional code language for the committee to consider.

### **Code Required Work**

The National Park Service (NPS) has numerous educational resources online. Their information on “[Codes and Regulatory Requirements for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings](#)” provides discussion of ADA, fire and life-safety, hazardous materials, and seismic retrofits. In [Preservation Brief 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible](#), they state: “The goal in selecting appropriate solutions for specific historic properties is to provide a high level of accessibility without compromising significant features or the overall character of the property.” In most cases, we found that either the building code or the proposed new ordinance language covered the circumstances related to possible code-required elements for a building. Where building code adequately covers a topic, it is unnecessary to duplicate those requirements and language. However, when there is the need for additional nuance or guidance in how to accomplish compliance with building codes, then staff recommends that there should be language in the preservation ordinance. As such, staff recommends the following language be included in the Alterations and Additions sections:

#### **Requirement**

- Whenever possible, access to historic buildings should be through a primary building entrance.
- Barrier-free access requirements shall be complied with in such a manner that the historic building’s character-defining exterior features and features of the site and setting are preserved or impacted as little as possible.
- Utilize solutions to meet accessibility requirements that minimize the impact of any necessary alteration on the historic building, its site, and setting, such as compatible ramps, paths, and lifts.

#### **Guideline**

- A gradual slope or grade to the sidewalk may be added to access the entrance rather than installing a ramp that would be more intrusive to the historic character of the building and the district.

Staff will prepare a visual presentation to show the impact of sensitive and insensitive code-compliance alterations to historic resources.

### **Period of Significance**

Currently each district has a period of significance, which is primarily used to identify which historic resources to use when determining if new construction or exterior alterations are in keeping with the character of the historic district. However, part of the discussion of the committee has included a discussion of whether to have different requirements for structures outside of the period of significance. Most historic districts in other municipalities have the same requirements for every property. There are some limited examples of historic districts that require buildings outside of the period of significance only meet the standards for new construction.

Some guiding questions for the committee's discussion:

- Should buildings outside of the period of significance be held to a lesser standard for exterior alterations?
- Do we run the risk of creating a segmentation of our history by having higher standards for historic resources vs. those outside of the period of significance?
- Would lesser standards prevent those structures from being included in a possible expanded period of significance in the future?
- Would the new construction standards suffice for evaluating exterior alterations to structures outside the period of significance?
- How much do structures outside of the period of significance impact the character of the historic district?
- Is the goal of the standards to make any changes to such a structure compatible with itself or to make them more conforming to the larger assemblage of buildings within the period of significance?