



REPORT TO COUNCIL

City of Sacramento

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Staff Report
 November 6, 2007

Honorable Mayor and
 Members of the City Council

Title: Citywide Residential & Commercial Design Review (M06-048; 049)

Location/Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Review and comment.

Contact: Luis R. Sanchez, AIA, Senior Architect (916) 808-5957; William Crouch, AIA, FRAIA, NCARB, Urban Design Manager (916) 808-8013; David Kwong, Current Planning Manager (916) 808-2691

Presenters: Luis Sanchez, AIA, and William R. Crouch, AIA, FRAIA, NCARB

Department: Development Services

Division: Current Planning

Organization No: 4885

Description/Analysis

Issue: Staff is reporting back to City Council on how to achieve Citywide Design Review for residential and commercial projects.

There are a total of fourteen (14) established Design Review Districts within City boundaries where residential and commercial projects are subject to Design Review to ensure compliance with established guidelines.

Current review of residential projects outside established Design Review Districts is accomplished through the Residential Design Review Checklist, or the Expanded North Area Design Review District, and the additional overlay of our two 'McMansion Ordinances', namely the East Sacramento Design Review Ordinance and the North Sacramento Alternative Development Standards.

There is no checklist for Commercial projects which fall outside of Design Review Districts and large areas of the City lack any formal design review for commercial projects including a number of Commercial Corridors.

Staff has developed information for City Council review related to those areas not having formal Design Review, and has provided relevant statistics and estimated staffing impacts should the Council choose to recommend future expansion of Design Review to these areas. Staff is reporting on the current Design Review

process for residential and commercial project review, opportunities and constraints in implementing Citywide Design Review, and a proposed plan and timeline for implementation.

Policy Considerations:

Residential Review Process

Currently all 1 and 2 family new construction has some form of design review. In Design Review Districts, all residential projects receive standard discretionary design review that includes notification of the review process (see map, page 10). In the Expanded North Area Design Review District, both new construction and additions/remodels are reviewed with the ministerial checklist process. The rest of the City falls within the Residential Design Review Checklist area and only newly constructed 1 and 2 family homes are subject to this checklist process (see map, page 11). Multi-family projects are also reviewed at staff level, at Design Director Hearings, or by the Design Commission in standard Design Review Districts (see map, page 12).

There are a number of key issues related to Citywide Residential Design Review that need to be discussed:

1. Verify desired levels of residential design review citywide and consider potential impacts to the current process.
2. Establish a process for Citywide Residential Design Review to provide all projects in non-Design Review Districts with an upgraded checklist and standard review for projects not in compliance with the checklist. Modification of the current residential checklist to include a more comprehensive ministerial review in non- Design Review Districts.
3. Discuss estimated staffing impacts of a citywide residential review process.
4. Establish a process for updating current residential check list in North, South and Central areas of the city.
5. Verify how residential projects in PUD's would be reviewed under Citywide Design Review.

Commercial Review Process

Staff has developed information for City Council review related to areas that do not currently have Design Review for Commercial projects / corridors, and has provided relevant statistics and estimated staff impacts should the Council choose to recommend expansion of Design Review to provide comprehensive review of all commercial projects and corridors.

There are a number of key issues related to expanding Design Review for all commercial projects and corridors:

1. Establish applicable design guidelines and method of project review.
2. Discuss estimated staffing impacts of expanding Design Review to all major commercial projects / corridors in the City for a citywide review process.

3. Develop a process for Commercial projects that includes Staff and Design Director Review where Design Director can elevate to Design Commission based on established criteria.

Committee/Commission Action: There has been no committee or commission action on this issue.

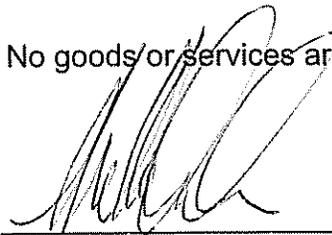
Environmental Considerations: The Environmental Services Manager has determined that expanding Design Review to additional areas in the City does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment and is therefore exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Categorical Exemption Section 15061(b) (3), and Section 15378(b) (5) - "organizational or administrative activities of governments that do not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment." However, subsequent actions or decisions made on proposed projects reviewed in the any expanded Design Review areas may be required to undergo CEQA review.

Rationale for Recommendation: Staff has provided information to the City Council on current status of design review of residential and commercial projects in non Design Review Districts and is proposing that the residential citywide checklist be implemented first, followed by a process for commercial projects and corridors that would be phased in later. This is to provide a comprehensive method for Citywide Design Review.

Financial Considerations: This project has no fiscal considerations, unless follow-up steps are taken by the City Council after this report back to recommend increased staffing and/or training of City staff to achieve Design Review Citywide.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): No goods or services are being purchased under this report.

Respectfully Submitted by:



F012

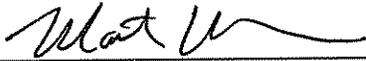
David Kwong
Planning Manager

Approved by:



William Thomas
Develop Services Director

Recommendation Approved:



Ray
Ray Kerridge
City Manager

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Attachment 1 - Background

Background Information:

One year ago Staff provided Council with an overview of the residential and commercial Design Review process. Currently Staff is reporting back on options for achieving Design Review Citywide. This staff report is outlining what current issues should be resolved and outlining the opportunities and challenges.

A. Current Residential Project Review**1 and 2 Family Projects**

Within the 14 existing Design Review Districts in the City, all residential new construction as well as additions and remodels are reviewed with standard Design Review process, including posting of site, notification of neighbors, etc. In the Expanded North Area, a ministerial checklist process is utilized to review 1 and 2 family new construction as well as additions and remodels visible from street view. In addition multi-family projects in the Expanded North Area and commercial projects in the Northgate SPD are reviewed. In the rest of the City outside of Design Review Districts and Expanded North Area, only new construction of one and two family homes is reviewed with the ministerial checklist. The ministerial checklist process is a pass/fail approach. If the applicant cannot meet the design criteria on the checklist, the project is then subject to the standard design review process, including posting of the site, and notification of adjacent property owners. At this point the project is a discretionary action handled by Design Review staff. Approximately 310 to 350 one and two family new construction projects are processed per year with a checklist process, with about 80 to 90 requiring standard staff level Design Review, equating to about 25%.

Multi-Family Projects

Multi-Family Projects are subject to Design Review District standard review unless they are in a PUD or SPD. Multi-family projects in the Residential Design Review Checklist area that request a planning entitlement are subject to the Multi-Family Residential Design Principles and this is reviewed by Current Planning staff, sometimes with assistance from Design Review staff on design issues (see map, page 12). All other Multi-family projects outside of standard Design Review or the Expanded North Area are not subject to any form of design review. If a more comprehensive review of multi-family projects is desired citywide, the rest of the City that is not within the standard Design Review Districts could adopt the same process of standard staff level design review.

Other Forms of Review

There are multiple layers of residential design review, accomplished in many forms, including the use of Codes, Covenants and Restrictions, condominium and homeowner associations reviewing projects per their standards, as well as Planning Commission and City Council call-ups, etc. With a comprehensive checklist process for projects not within standard DR Districts, city staff can provide consistent, predictable project reviews. This would be in line with a streamlined approach that is more effective and

efficient administering one code and one process.

Data on Building Permits per Council Districts and Design Review Districts for Period of (1/1/2007 to 9/30/2007)

Staff has developed information for the City Council to review regarding which Council Districts and Design Review Districts have the most building permits. This information can assist in evaluating which areas of the city have the greatest development activity by analyzing total permits approved and by total valuation of projects. Currently the Council Districts that have the greatest number of Building Permits issued are District 1 (45%), District 3 (11%), and District 8 (10%). The Council Districts that have the greatest valuation for the number Building Permits issued are District 1 (56% of total valuation), District 8 (13% of total valuation), and District 2 (9% of total valuation) (see spread sheet, pages 14 and 15). These statistics show that the greatest amount of development activity occurs in Council Districts 1, 2, 3, and 8. The Design Review Districts that have the greatest number of Building Permits issued are the Expanded North Area Design Review District (40%), the Residential Design Review Checklist (37%), North Sacramento Design Review District (11%). The Design Review Districts that have the greatest valuation for the number Building Permits issued are Expanded North Area Design Review District (50% of total valuation), the Residential Design Review Checklist (27% of total valuation), and North Sacramento Design Review District (14% of total valuation) (see spread sheet, pages 16 and 17). These statistics show that the greatest amount of development activity occurs in the Residential Design Review Checklist Area and the Expanded North Area Design Review District and the North Sacramento Design Review District.

Proposed Residential Citywide Checklist

The purpose of the proposed Checklist is to provide consistent design review to all residential projects citywide. The benefit of this checklist is that it would create one process for the design review of residential projects that are outside the Design Review Districts. The checklist would be an improvement from the current process in non Design Review areas, in that all residential review in the proposed Checklist area would be reviewed for massing, scale, architectural style and detail, and neighborhood context at the ministerial level. This new checklist would incorporate design concepts of the East Sacramento Design Review Ordinance (the "tent ordinance"), North Sacramento Alternative Development Standards (the "wedding cake ordinance"), the Expanded North Area Design Review District and the current Residential Design Review Checklist.

Options for the Residential Checklist

There are options for how to establish the boundaries for the Residential Checklist. One option is to consolidate all non-Design Review areas into one district and apply one residential checklist to this new area. Another option is to consolidate all residential review in the entire city to one checklist process so that all residential review for 1 and 2 family homes would be conducted at the ministerial level with a more comprehensive checklist. If the residential project is not in compliance with the checklist it would be elevated to Staff Level for additional review based on established Design Guidelines.

The adoption of this new process would focus residential review to two areas, one for the 14 Design Review Districts and the other for the proposed Citywide Checklist area.

Benefits:

1. This process would allow a more efficient and streamlined approach.
2. This process would allow a more consistent and comprehensive residential review for all non-Design Review Districts.
3. Staff is proposing one comprehensive checklist for residential design review in all areas of the City. Currently there are multiple design review processes for residential construction in the City.
4. A more comprehensive Checklist would eliminate the need for creating additional piecemeal ordinances that address scale and massing in individual neighborhoods.

Challenges:

1. Training current staff to administer a more in depth review for residential design, which will take some time.
2. May need additional Design Review staff to administer review Citywide.
3. How will PUDs be reviewed in the Checklist areas and how will residential remodels in PUDs be addressed? One option is to stipulate that all PUDs in the Checklist area be reviewed at the staff level. Another option is to have the Planning Director Review PUDs as long as the land use is allowed. In regards to residential remodels and additions in PUDs, these project reviews can be covered by the proposed Checklist.
4. How should SPDs in Design Review Districts be reviewed? Should the SPD specify particular DR principles from the Design Review Guidelines?
5. Would Council accept a Citywide checklist for all residential review?

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends standardizing the process so all one and two family homes not reviewed within Design Review Districts are reviewed the same way (this excludes Special Planning Districts and Planned Unit Developments), i.e., both new construction and additions/remodels visible from street view would be subject to the proposed checklist.

Additional staff should be allocated to administer the proposed Checklist citywide. Current planning staff can also be trained to administer the Checklist to review residential projects. Developing a higher standard checklist will take time.

B. Current Commercial Project Review

Currently, approximately 20% of the City has full Design Review with Staff, Design Director and Commission Level review of residential and commercial projects that includes notification of adjacent property owners, affected community groups, and posting of the site. Since the establishment of the Design Commission effective January 1, 2007 new thresholds have been developed for commercial project review.

Currently, all commercial projects located in a Design Review District, including new construction, additions and rehabilitation, that are over 40,000 square feet of floor area outside the Central City District and over 75, 000 square feet of floor area inside the Central City District are reviewed at the Design Commission Level. Also commercial projects that exceed 4 stories or exceed 60 feet in height are reviewed at the Design Commission Level. Commercial projects under these thresholds are reviewed at the Design Director Level. If commercial projects at the Design Director Level are in substantial compliance they can be reviewed at the Staff Level.

Commercial Corridor Revitalization Strategy

In October of 2003, City Council adopted the Commercial Corridor Revitalization Strategy (M02-008) which provided development standards, land use review, and design principles for projects needing planning entitlements in major commercial corridors in the city. With the level of detail and direction provided, they can be used as the basis for project reviews in the commercial corridors not already in a Design Review District. Of the 19 corridors identified, 11 corridors are already within Design Review Districts. Of those not in a Design Review District, the Northgate Boulevard corridor falls within the Expanded North Area Design Review District, and requires only staff level review of commercial projects proposed. The other 8 corridors include: Folsom Boulevard West, Folsom Boulevard East, Franklin Boulevard, Freeport Boulevard, Fruitridge Road, Florin Road, 65th Street, and Mack Road. See map, page 13, for areas currently subject to Design Review and with commercial corridors overlaid.

Staff identified approximately 25 commercial project activities within the commercial corridors in 2005, and with the General Plan updates, and incentives for development in commercial corridors, staff is projecting increased activity in these areas.

Adding the eight corridors to the Design Review workload will require outreach to these new areas requiring review, as well as additional staff time in coordination of projects and working with applicants. Additional staff should be allocated to administer the proposed Commercial Corridor Project review. Current planning staff can also be trained to administer the Commercial Corridor Project review. Staff is continuing to review this information to improve the process and fine tune resource needs.

Proposed Commercial Project Review

Staff is proposing that Commercial Corridor Design Review Guidelines be developed. Staff is proposing that projects in Commercial Corridors be reviewed at staff level (unless not in compliance in which case the review would be elevated to Design Director or Design Commission). Staff is proposing that multi-family and industrial projects in Commercial Corridors also be addressed in the Commercial Corridor Design Review Guidelines. The Commercial Corridor Design Review Guidelines would be phased in after the Residential Checklist is implemented.

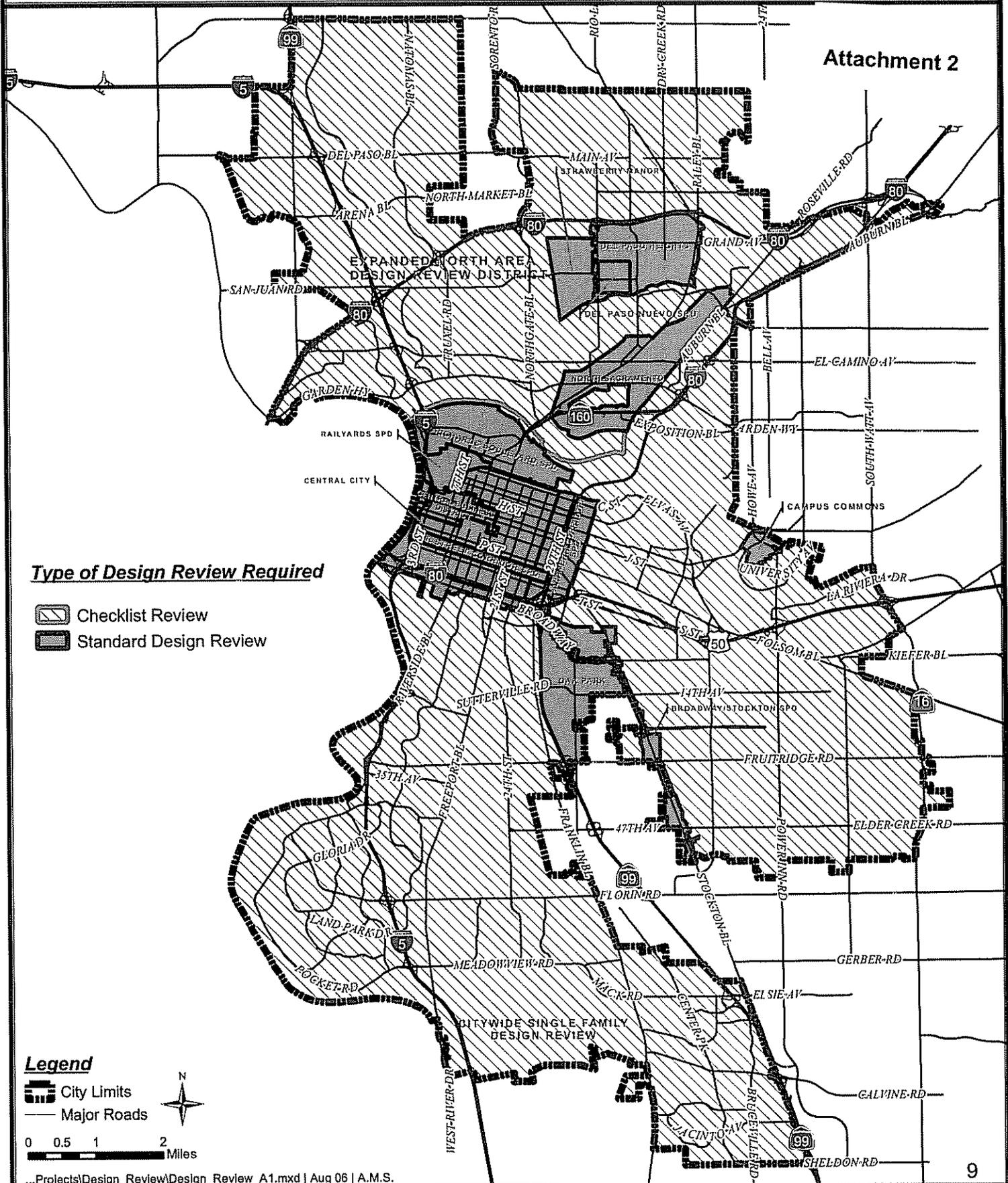
DESIGN REVIEW

One and Two Family Homes

New Construction



Attachment 2



Type of Design Review Required

-  Checklist Review
-  Standard Design Review

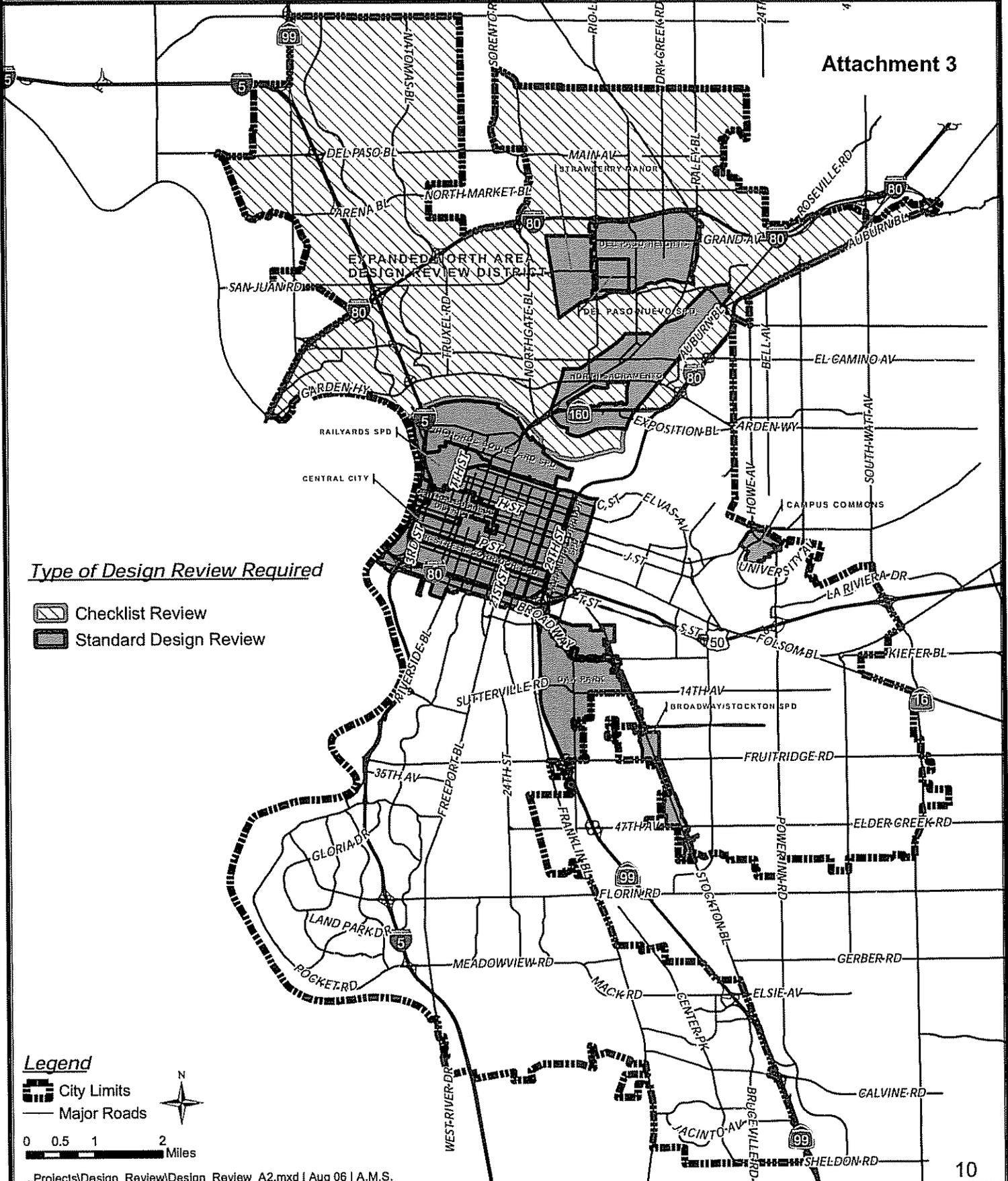
Legend

-  City Limits
 -  Major Roads
- 0 0.5 1 2 Miles

DESIGN REVIEW

One and Two Family Homes Remodels And Additions

Attachment 3



Type of Design Review Required

-  Checklist Review
-  Standard Design Review

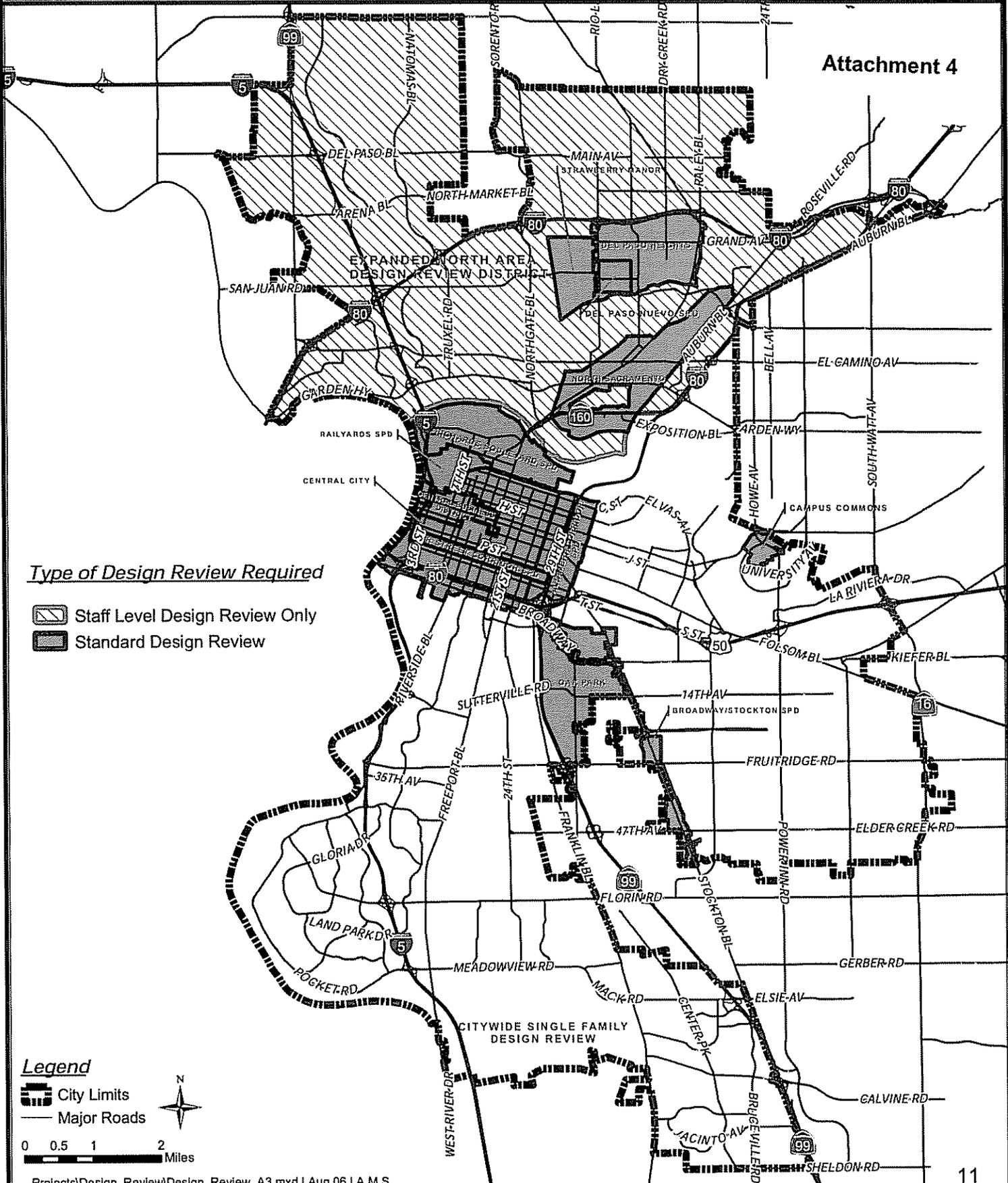
Legend

-  City Limits
 -  Major Roads
- 0 0.5 1 2 Miles

DESIGN REVIEW Multifamily Projects (+ 3 Units)



Attachment 4



Type of Design Review Required

-  Staff Level Design Review Only
-  Standard Design Review

Legend

 City Limits

 Major Roads

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

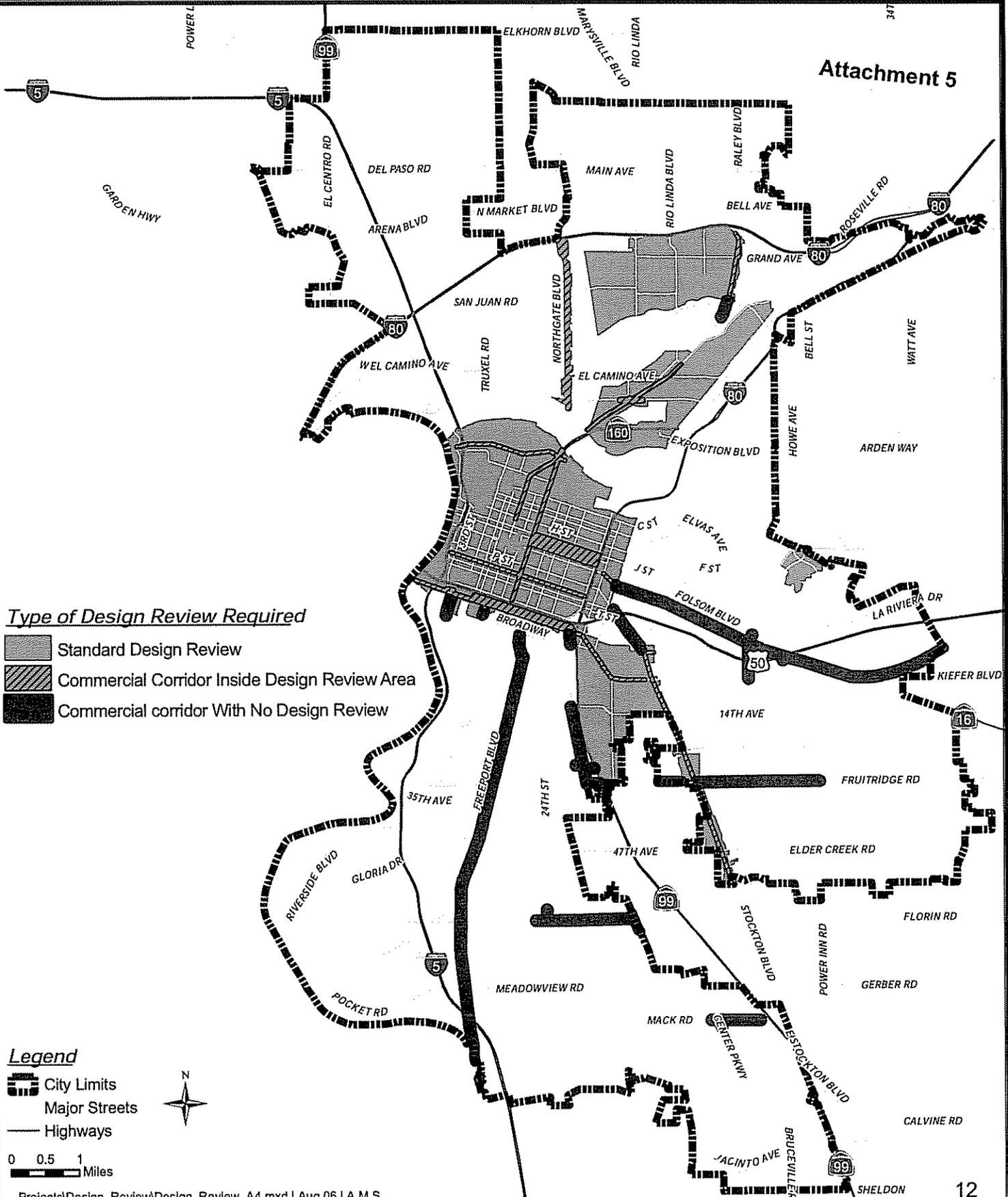


DESIGN REVIEW

Commercial Projects Subject to Design Review And Commercial Corridors



Attachment 5



Type of Design Review Required

- Standard Design Review
- Commercial Corridor Inside Design Review Area
- Commercial corridor With No Design Review

Legend

- City Limits
- Major Streets
- Highways



0 0.5 1
Miles

Permits, Valuation and # of Units for 1, 2 and Half-Plex by Council District from 1/1/2007 to 9/30/2007												
Council District	Single Family			Half Plex			Duplex			Grand Total # Permits	Grand Total Valuation	Grand Total # Units
	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units			
Total for District 1	733	110553428	647	5	689957	5	2	169052	1	740	111412437	653
Total for District 2	126	15484307	90	0	0	0	9	1595783	10	135	17080090	100
Total for District 3	170	9925788	67	4	715837	4	14	1387958	14	188	12029583	85
Total for District 4	141	9090125	47	1	10905	1	9	1159401	7	151	10260430	55
Total for District 5	80	5217358	31	0	0	0	10	1811431	15	90	7028789	46
Total for District 6	79	6447090	34	0	0	0	2	181018	1	81	6628108	35
Total for District 7	88	7914513	43	2	127382	1	0	0	0	90	8041895	44
Total for District 8	162	24966655	134	2	212733	2	1	244620	2	165	25424008	138
Grand Total	1579	189599264	1093	14	1756814	13	47	6549263	50	1640	197905340	1156

Permits, Valuation and # of Units for 1, 2 and Half-Plex by Council District from 1/1/2007 to 9/30/2007 (Percent of Total)

Council District	Single Family			Half Plex			Duplex			Grand Total # Permits	Grand Total Valuation	Grand Total # Units
	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units			
Total for District 1	46%	58%	59%	36%	39%	38%	4%	3%	2%	45%	56%	56%
Total for District 2	8%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%	19%	24%	20%	8%	9%	9%
Total for District 3	11%	5%	6%	29%	41%	31%	30%	21%	28%	11%	6%	7%
Total for District 4	9%	5%	4%	7%	1%	8%	19%	18%	14%	9%	5%	5%
Total for District 5	5%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	21%	28%	30%	5%	4%	4%
Total for District 6	5%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%	2%	5%	3%	3%
Total for District 7	6%	4%	4%	14%	7%	8%	0%	0%	0%	5%	4%	4%
Total for District 8	10%	13%	12%	14%	12%	15%	2%	4%	4%	10%	13%	12%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Permits, Valuation and # of Units for 1, 2 and Half-Plex by Design Review District from 1/1/2007 to 9/30/2007												
Design Review Area	Single Family			Half Plex			Duplex			Grand Total # Permits	Grand Total Valuation	Grand Total # Units
	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units			
Total for Alhambra Corridor	40	2894335	31	0	0	0	1	55966	1	41	2950301	32
Total for Central City	53	5432143	37	0	0	0	8	830484	6	61	6262627	43
Total for Citywide	691	56697197	299	8	1055952	7	26	3423283	27	725	61176432	333
Total for Del Paso Heights	39	4312202	29	0	0	0	2	490643	3	41	4802845	32
Total for Expanded North	767	111240536	632	8	1026183	8	13	2015172	15	788	114281891	655
Total for North Sacramento	208	31344424	201	0	0	0	3	277253	3	211	31621677	204
Total for Oak Park	39	3922203	23	0	0	0	1	203945	2	40	4126148	25
Total for R Street Corridor	36	4238070	36	1	10905	1	0	0	0	37	4248974	37
Total for Railyards	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	75000	1	1	75000	1
Total for Strawberry Manor	7	1168761	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1168761	5
Grand Total	1880	221249871	1293	17	2093040	16	55	7371746	58	1952	230714656	1367

Permits, Valuation and # of Units for 1, 2 and Half-Plex by Design Review District from 1/1/2007 to 9/30/2007												
Design Review Area	Single Family			Half Plex			Duplex			Grand Total # Permits	Grand Total Valuation	Grand Total # Units
	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units	# Permits	Valuation	# Units			
Total for Alhambra Corridor	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Total for Central City	3%	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%	15%	11%	10%	3%	3%	3%
Total for Citywide	37%	26%	23%	47%	50%	44%	47%	46%	47%	37%	27%	24%
Total for Del Paso Heights	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	4%	7%	5%	2%	2%	2%
Total for Expanded North	41%	50%	49%	47%	49%	50%	24%	27%	26%	40%	50%	48%
Total for North Sacramento	11%	14%	16%	0%	0%	0%	5%	4%	5%	11%	14%	15%
Total for Oak Park	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Total for R Street Corridor	2%	2%	3%	6%	1%	6%	0%	0%	0%	2%	2%	3%
Total for Railyards	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Total for Strawberry Manor	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

