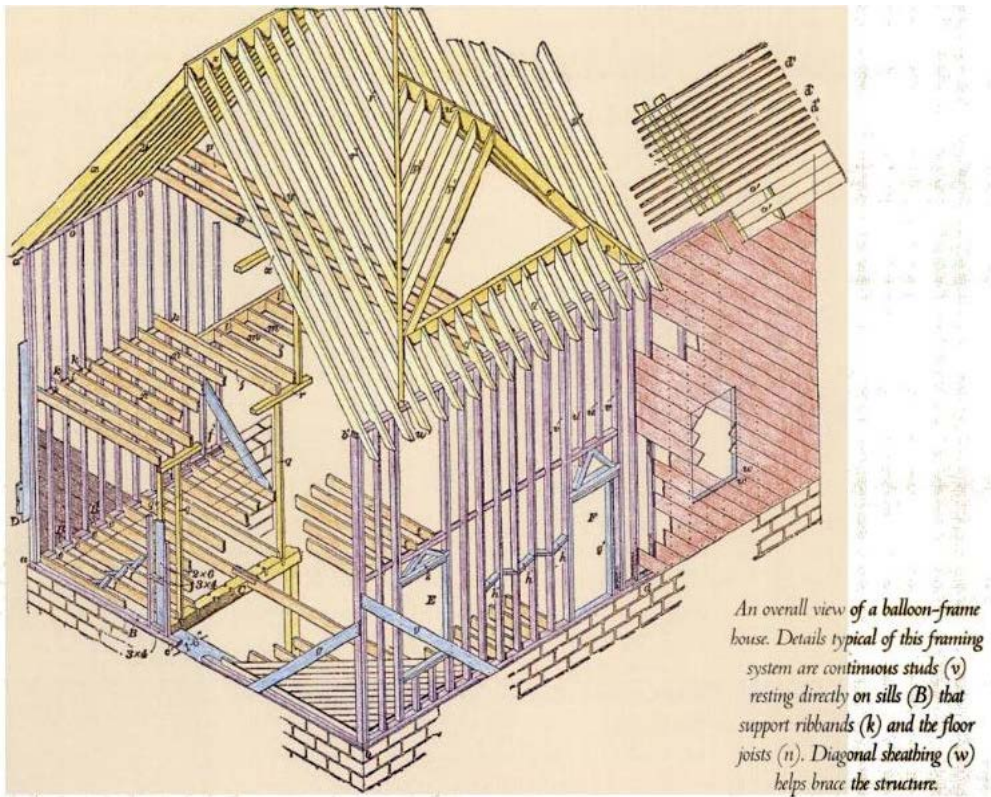


### 3. Exterior Features (Section 33-201)

Sketch of a typical balloon framed structure. In Houston, the material identified as Diagonal Sheathing (w) is typically applied in a horizontal manner and is on the interior of the structure. In either application, the sheathing provides stability to the structure.

According to the International Building Code (IBC), Shiplap is defined as: wooden sheathing in which  $\frac{3}{4}$ " boards are rabbeted so that the edges of each board lap over the edges of adjacent boards to make a flush joint. Shiplap in balloon framed structures is necessary to:

- Transfer loads from above door and window openings to adjacent structural members. (2006 IBC 2304.3.2)
- Stabilize studs against racking when the walls carry vertical loads. (2006 IBC 2304.6)
- Provide a nominal ability to transfer lateral forces from the roof or floor deck to the sill. (2006 IBC 2304.6)





## SECTION C

### CREATING AND USING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Role They Play

Design guidelines provide:

- A basis for making fair decisions
- Consistency in design review Incentives for investment
- Property value enhancement
- A tool for education

*The above is an excerpt from the "Benefits of Design Review" by Noré Winter. Alliance Review, July/August 2001.*

**Local review of work proposals.** In the design review process, owners of locally designated landmarks and districts must get approval from a locally appointed historic preservation commission or architectural review board for major exterior alterations, additions, and new construction. Commission approval is in the form of a "certificate of appropriateness." To be approved, an application must meet the design review criteria within the preservation ordinance that a community has adopted. Both the terminology and process may vary somewhat, depending upon the ordinance.

**Clarifying the role of the guidelines.** The topic of local design guidelines always needs to be understood within its relationship to the local preservation ordinance. The ordinance is a law and the design review criteria are part of the law. Design guidelines are not, in and of themselves, mandatory like the ordinance and should not be confused with the ordinance. In most cases, guidelines are just that—helpful, interpretive, explanatory recommendations. Consisting of written and graphic information in a printed, book format, they are key support materials for administering design review and may be used to advantage by commissions, boards, and applicants alike in the review process.

The philosophical principles in *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* have been proven to be important in the successful administration of historic districts. Sometimes they are cited within a preservation ordinance as part of the design review criteria. Sometimes they are referenced in the ordinance as the required basis for development of a local design guideline. While some preservation ordinances state that design guidelines "shall be adopted," others state that design guidelines "may be adopted." A few districts may use the Standards for Rehabilitation by themselves—as a general guideline—without creating a specific local design guideline. It can be confusing. The ordinance can remove confusion by specifying which categories of information must be used (e.g., review criteria) and which are only advisory (e.g., guidelines).

**PLEASE NOTE note if you plan to apply for Federal income tax incentives for historic preservation:** Following a local ordinance and local design guidelines—especially if the goal in your historic district is to "restore" historic buildings to an earlier appearance—may be in conflict with the federal "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation" (36 CFR 67) used to review federal tax credit applications. The expressed goal of rehabilitation is to update historic buildings for continuing and new uses while preserving character-defining features. Be sure to ask your State Historic Preservation Office for guidance early in the planning stages of any Federal income tax incentives project.

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### CREATING AND USING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### What They Can and Cannot Do

Although it is very important to develop and use design guidelines to help administer the local preservation ordinance, understanding their usefulness and limitations at the outset can help prevent misunderstandings down the road. Take this summary to heart!

#### Guidelines CAN

- Explain, expand, and interpret general design criteria in the local preservation ordinance.
- Help reinforce the character of a historic area and protect its visual aspects.
- Protect the value of public and private investment, which might otherwise be threatened by the undesirable consequences of poorly managed growth.

- Indicate which approaches to design a community encourages, as well as which it discourages.
- Serve as a tool for designers and their clients to use in making preliminary design decisions.
- Increase public awareness of design issues and options.

#### **Guidelines CANNOT**

- Serve the same legal purpose as the design review provisions of the ordinance. An ordinance is a law, but local design guidelines are typically not laws.
- Limit growth, or regulate where growth takes place. Guidelines address only the visual impact of individual work projects on the character of a local historic district. Growth itself is a separate issue that must be separately addressed through zoning ordinances and preservation planning.
- Control how space within a building is used. They usually deal only with the exterior, publicly visible portions of buildings, not with how interior space is laid out or used.
- Guarantee that all new construction will be compatible with a historic area or the guarantee creativity that is essential to the best sorts of sensitive design.
- Guarantee "high quality" construction. Since materials are generally not specified in the design guidelines, the final visual results, again, cannot be guaranteed.

*What Guidelines Can and Cannot Do For Your Historic District.* Excerpted and adapted from Design Review for South Carolina Historic District Commissions by Winter & Co., 1988.

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#### ***This is SECTION "c"***

### **CREATING AND USING DESIGN GUIDELINES**

#### **Accepted Principles & Practices**

"Accepted practices of historic preservation provide the theoretical foundation for the guidelines." *Noré V. Winter, Developing Design Guidelines for Historic Districts, 1993*

**A firm foundation.** The work we do today in our historic neighborhoods and on local landmarks is firmly connected to accepted historic preservation principles and practices of 19th century Europe. From the past, we inherit the idea of a hierarchy for work, from the "least intervention to the greatest." These are a few of the well-known ideas. We "maintain rather than repair." We "repair rather than replace." We "preserve rather than restore." We "restore rather than reconstruct."

**Development of Federal Standards in the '70s.** Based on accepted principles and practices, the National Park Service created The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects. This document contained general Standards for all projects and specific Standards for acquisition, protection, stabilization, preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The early Standards were used to measure the appropriateness of project work where federal grant-in-aid funds were sought. Also in the 70s, the Standards for Rehabilitation were singled out as requirements for a brand new federal program that offered a 20% tax credit for certified rehabilitation work—the Federal Preservation Tax Incentives Program. By adopting the Standards in regulation, the federal government made them requirements for those programs.

**Ongoing use in the '80s and '90s.** During two decades of ongoing use within the NPS' Federal Preservation Tax Incentives and Grant-in-Aid Programs, the Secretary's Standards were updated with public input to keep pace with the times. The Standards for Rehabilitation were revised in 1990 through their adoption in regulation (36 CFR 67) for the Tax Incentives Program. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects were revised in 1983 and again 1992, when they were re-named *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* through their adoption in regulation as 36 CFR 68. They remain in use today within the HPF Grant-in-Aid Program.

**Into the 2000s.** Without a doubt, Rehabilitation is the most frequently applied approach to work in our nation's communities today and the Federal Preservation Tax Incentives Program is as popular as ever. But the Standards for Rehabilitation have tended to overshadow the more inclusive conceptual package, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The Standards for Rehabilitation are often applied where the project goal is Preservation or Restoration. If a historic district applies work other than Rehabilitation—in particular, Restoration—then other Standards should be considered, adopted, and applied as well. Read on to learn more about the basic differences between the four treatments

and the importance of choosing the best approach for work in your historic district or on a local landmark!

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## CREATING AND USING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### The Secretary's Standards and Local Guidelines

*Until fairly recently, historic district commissions and review boards adopted the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to administer the local preservation ordinance without local design guidelines. If yours is one of them, please consider two important points:*

**Why you need specific local design guidelines.** The Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation are very broad, general philosophical principles developed by the federal government for reviewing project work on individual buildings receiving federal grant funds and tax credits. But a historic district is a collection of buildings, sites, and settings that share a common history, appearance and special meaning in time and place. Typical work projects in historic districts have a visual impact on the distinctive character of adjacent structures, streetscapes, and the larger setting. It makes better administrative sense to create a local—specific—design guideline based on principles of the Standards than use the Standards by themselves to review a work proposal for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**Better still, include all four approaches to work in your guidelines.** A second, even more important, issue is calling all work in historic districts "rehabilitation" when the work is, in fact, preservation or restoration—or even reconstruction. **It can't all be rehab, can it? The answer is "no."** For instance, if project work is proposed to restore a landmark building for public interpretation, then the Standards for Restoration should be used from start to finish.

If work in your district is not all rehabilitation, then your ordinance should reflect broader criteria and the local design guideline you develop should include additional interpretive guidelines. The model you can easily use locally is *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.

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## CREATING AND USING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Steps in Writing Local Guidelines

"Local Design Guidelines are a part of a longstanding tradition of balancing the welfare of the general public and the interests of individual property owners. Local preservation ordinances, zoning laws, and building codes are other tools traditionally used to maintain this balance. They are not intended to prevent property owners from making changes to their property. They are meant to ensure that those changes enhance the historic qualities that are enjoyed by all members of the community and which make an area a special place in which to live and work. Depending on the powers outlined in the ordinance and the particular needs of the district, design guidelines can range from recommended design approaches to compulsory standards. Of course, there are many intermediate levels in between..." ***This web page adapted from an Information Sheet: Historic District Design Guidelines, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1985.***

**First, think about how you are going to use the design guidelines.** Remember—the ordinance is a law and the design review criteria are part of the law. Design guidelines are not, in and of themselves, mandatory like the ordinance and should not be confused with the ordinance. In most cases, guidelines are just that—helpful, interpretive, explanatory recommendations. Recognize that if you call it a "guideline," you should not deny a work proposal just for failing to meet the guideline. A guideline is advisory. If you wish to describe a basis for denying an application, call it a criterion, standard, or some other term that makes clear that it is a requirement and make it part of your ordinance.

**Who should be on your writing team?** The first order of business is to put together a *team* to draft your local design guidelines. Be sure to engage knowledgeable and committed people in your guidelines work group, e.g., preservationists, district residents, policy setting officials, and code inspectors. Architects, preservation consultants, urban planners, lawyers, and other professionals should be consulted and can provide invaluable ideas on the substance and effect of the proposed language.

**ONE / Analyze your district's character.** It is essential to have a clear understanding of the history of the district and how that history is reflected by its physical characteristics, such as the architecture, landscape, and street plan. Ideally, the buildings, streetscapes, and setting should be identified in the district's nomination package. Has the district evolved over time or does it represent one period in time? Decide exactly what it is that needs to be protected!

**TWO / Identify historic preservation goals and district needs.** Will buildings in the district be preserved, as is; or rehabilitated for new uses; or restored to an earlier appearance? Will different approaches to work be applied, depending upon the significance, use, and interpretation? In this section, identify the approach or approaches to work that will protect the

historical value and significant features of the district, e.g., preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration. Include general Standards or principles for all treatments for which guidelines will be written. Guidelines, however, should be custom-tailored to the particular history and characteristics of the district. For example, if a town has six districts and they differ in appearance and the kinds of work needed to protect them, then each one should have a specific set of guidelines.

**THREE /** *Review other district guidelines.* See how other historic districts have developed design guidelines in order to prevent "reinventing the wheel." Choose basic elements that apply to your own historic district and adapt them to yours. Especially note successful methods of illustrating preservation concepts.

**FOUR /** *Write specific guidelines for your district.* Design guidelines should address the special character of your district and the work needed to protect it. Draft an illustrated history that identifies significant characteristics and features of the district, such as buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes. The use of photos and drawings throughout to reinforce key points is strongly recommended. Information on materials maintenance, repair and replacement should be included, as well as guidance on new construction in the district. If restoration is a recommended treatment for the district, guidelines on those approaches should be included. Make guidance on the treatment of streetscape (including signage) and landscape features an integral part of the publication.

**FIVE /** *Review your design guidelines.* While in final draft, review the guidelines, asking a number of questions: Are they consistent with the provisions of the local ordinance? Do they achieve the original goals? Are there administrative problems? Do they conflict with the ordinance and other codes? If the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are used, do your guidelines agree with the principles in the Standards? Are they consistent with the particular needs of the district? Will the guidelines meet with community support? How do we want to use the guidelines? Are they truly advisory in nature or should we call them "standards" or "criteria" because we want to make them requirements? Answering questions like these can prevent problems that might otherwise arise later.

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## CREATING AND USING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Conducting a Successful Design Review Meeting

There are four basic factors that influence the quality of the review process:

- **The clarity of the design guidelines**
- **The operating style of the review committee**
- **Consistent review procedures**
- **Documentation of decisions and their rationale**

Within that framework, here are some excellent tips—presented as a series of steps—for making sure the meeting is clearly presented and that the design criteria in the ordinance and local design guidelines that have been adopted are precisely followed.

- 1. Remember that the purpose of the meeting is to make a decision!** Keep this objective paramount. Not only that, the decision should be made in a timely manner, and it should be stated clearly. The commission or review board should enter the review meeting with a willingness to discuss, but always within the context of the design review criteria and guidelines.
- 2. Focus on the big issues, not on personal biases or petty details.** This means that reviewers must distinguish between a design concept that they may dislike personally, but that meets the design criteria and guidelines, and a design that is objectively inappropriate because it clearly violates the design criteria and guidelines.
- 3. Remember that the ordinance and guidelines that were adopted represent a consensus** of residents, professionals, and political leaders, and that the commission's role is to administer them, not to draft new guidelines at every meeting.
- 4. Listen to the presentation by the applicant and his representatives.** This provides the applicant with the opportunity to describe the project objectives and to show the intended design.
- 5. Ask for clarity of presentation content.** Withhold design criticisms. First determine that everyone understands what has been presented. Ask questions about what the drawings mean, if necessary. Don't be embarrassed if technical information is not clear. It is your responsibility to be certain that you understand what has been presented.
- 6. Check to see that documentation for the proposal is complete.** If important drawings, models, or photographs are missing that are essential for the commission to make a determination, cut the review short before getting into design

criticism. Reviewing an incomplete application is a waste of time for everyone. It may also be a disservice to an applicant if a proposal is denied, simply because it is misunderstood.

**7. If the documentation is complete, critique the proposal following the design criteria and guidelines.** USE A CHECKLIST to see that you covered all the items, and ask for public comments as well. You should allow open discussion among the commission, applicant, and public, but keep it on track and avoid tangential issues that may be emotionally charged, but do not have direct bearing on the appropriateness of the design in terms of the criteria and guidelines.

**8. When the discussions seem to be over, ask these questions of yourselves.** First: "Have the criteria and guidelines been sufficiently met to merit an approval? You have two choices for an answer: "Yes" or "No." Second: "Which criteria and guidelines give you the basis for making this decision?" An approval or disapproval should be based on specific criteria in the ordinance, and you should be able to identify the critical ones. If you can answer these questions, you are ready for a vote!

**9. Once you have voted, summarize the outcome clearly.** Remember, you are not finished until you have a summary! Do not let the applicant leave without understanding what you have decided—approval, denial, a conditional approval, re-submission of a new design, etc.

**10. Finally, thank the applicant for participating in the process.** A successful design review meeting means that you have treated the applicant fairly by basing your decision—either way—squarely on the ordinance's design criteria, and the design guidelines written and adopted by your community.

Adapted from Making Judgments in the Review Process: A Guide for the Design Review Committee by Noré V. Winter, 1986.

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## CREATING AND USING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Problems Facing Historic District Commissions

Despite a rapidly growing body of law dealing with the powers of local historic preservation commissions, there are troubling hints that in many communities existing commissions do not (because they cannot) do an adequate job of protecting local resources. There may be several reasons for such a problem:

**ONE / A weak local preservation ordinance**, which prevents the commission from protecting local resources adequately. This weakness may be of two primary types: ambiguity in language (often resulting from a failure to define key terms) or unnecessary restrictions in basic commission powers. Although there are now several published "model" preservation ordinances, review of an existing local preservation ordinance should always be undertaken by someone familiar with the body of existing case law in a specific state but also aware of national trends in local historic preservation programs.

**TWO / Lack of staff support for the commission**, which makes it difficult for the commission to issue suitable minutes, to draft certificates of appropriateness and to monitor work on approved projects. Adequate local staff is essential in order for a commission to produce the routine administrative paperwork that any responsible local governmental agency needs to prepare as evidence that it has followed required procedures and reached a clear decision.

**THREE / An inadequate budget for the commission's work**, which prevents staff and commission members from attending training workshops, national or regional or statewide preservation conferences, and makes subscribing to basic materials which might help the commission in its work difficult or impossible. The National Park Service and National Alliance of Preservation Commission have sponsored helpful statewide and regional training conferences, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation routinely includes in the program for its annual preservation conference several sessions for preservation commission members.

**FOUR / Lack of support from a city or county attorney**, meaning that challenges to the commission are weakly defended and that basic legal advice to the commission chairman, members and staff about the commission's powers and proper procedures for conducting hearings is unavailable. In extreme cases, a local attorney may have a personal bias that makes it impossible for this individual to provide objective advice, which accurately reflects existing case law.

**FIVE / Political interference with the operations of the commission**, perhaps taking the form of poor appointments to the commission or a tendency for the city council to overrule the commission almost automatically whenever an owner files an appeal to the council from a commission decision.

**SIX/ The failure of commission members to understand the local preservation ordinance they administer** and the appropriate role of the commission on which they serve.

### **What can be done about these problems?**

The first approach to a solution is for local preservation leaders to assess the situation and try to identify the basic problem. (Some unfortunate commissions may exhibit all of the symptoms listed above, and help for these commissions will require some careful political groundwork over a period of many months or even years.)

- If a local ordinance is weak, it may be very difficult to strengthen the ordinance until the commission has shown that it can be a helpful player on the local scene. A city council is not likely to give additional powers casually to a commission, which has not yet proved its worth. Advice from the state Certified Local Government Coordinator can be extremely useful in alerting a commission to areas in which its ordinance is weak when compared to other ordinances in its state.
- Contacting a state Certified Local Government coordinator may also be a good way to learn about staffing and budgets for typical preservation commissions across a state. This statistical information can then be used locally to argue for stronger staffing and a more adequate budget for a commission.
- Commission members, local preservation leaders and representatives of the press should be aware that in many smaller communities the city or county attorney fills this role on a part-time basis and may work on a contract arrangement. Political leaders may be reluctant to permit an expensive outside consultant to devote scarce time to preservation questions until they understand the risks of not providing necessary legal advice to the local commission.
- A beginning preservation commission must bear in mind the importance of its educational activities. Local property owners, the city attorney, and members of the city council must be reminded frequently of the purposes of the new preservation ordinance and the importance to the community as a whole of identifying and protecting its cultural resources. The commission must learn not to be shy about emphasizing its good work and pointing to obvious achievements.
- Each new member of a local preservation commission should be given basic materials to help that member do a better job as a commission member. Some commissions develop notebooks containing copies of state enabling legislation, the local preservation ordinance and any rules of procedure or design guidelines the commission may have adopted. A set of minutes from the commission's previous year may help orient a new commission member. Every effort should be made to convince a new commission member that he or she has serious responsibilities that will need to be addressed in a thoroughly professional manner.

By Stephen Neal Dennis, Washington, DC. This material is based in part on a "Preservation Law Update" issued by the National Center for Preservation Law in 1989 (Update 1989-47, December 7, 1989).



*Steph McDougal is the founder of McDoux Preservation in Houston, Texas. With nearly 20 years of experience in marketing, training, and education, she now specializes in improving the effectiveness of organizations that own, manage, and advocate for historic resources.*

# How Much Do Design Guidelines Cost, and Why?

**by Steph McDougal**

Most state enabling legislation requires that local jurisdictions adopt design guidelines for the evaluation of historic area work permits. Historic Preservation Commissions (HPCs) use design guidelines to manage alterations, new construction, infill, and demolition within designated historic districts. As described by the National Park Service in “Creating and Using Design Guidelines,” these guidelines typically include a statement of the preservation goals for the district; a history of the district’s development over time; an illustrated description of the district’s physical features; and guidelines for maintenance, repair, material replacement, new construction, and demolition. Design guidelines cover individual buildings, and, if applicable, setting, streetscape, and landscape characteristics.

Many cities employ professional historic preservation consultants to help them develop design guidelines for historic districts, but consultant fees for these projects can vary widely. While working with a client city to develop a grant proposal budget for a preservation planning project that included design guidelines, I found a broad range of prices paid for design guidelines – some in the \$15,000–20,000 range and others up to \$100,000 or more – but no clear reason for the differences in cost.

With support from NAPC staff, I set out to determine the cost of hiring consultants to create design guidelines. This article is based on two surveys conducted in July and August 2011. The first survey asked HPC members and staff to share information about design guidelines projects in their jurisdictions and factors that might influence cost. The second survey asked preservation consultants,

who include design guidelines in their services, to rank those factors according to their influence on project costs.

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## Survey of City Staff and Commissions

This survey solicited input from NAPC members. We also posted the request for responses to National Trust for Historic Preservation Forum and on McDoux Preservation's *Facebook* page. HISTPRES, the jobs website for young preservation professionals, shared the request on their Facebook page as well. Over a two-week period, we received 57 responses; of those, one was a duplicate, two were for projects other than design guidelines, and two other respondents did not complete most of the survey. This left us with 51 usable responses.

The respondents' IP addresses indicated that they were from 24 different states across the country, mostly in the Midwest and on the Eastern Seaboard. The states with the most respondents included Georgia (9), Minnesota (5), and Illinois (5). Major cities and smaller ones were represented equally. Overall, the survey respondents were sufficiently representative of the nation as a whole, although their relatively small number would categorize this as anecdotal data and not sufficient for statistical confidence.

The survey asked ten questions, including: the year when the consultant was hired; number of properties in the design guidelines area; whether the consultant was developing new guidelines or revising/expanding existing ones; amount paid to the consultant; location of the consultant's office relative to the jurisdiction; number of in-person client meetings and public meetings attended by the consultant; whether the consultant did all of the revising of the guidelines document or if local staff did some of that work; the proportion of custom vs. standard content in the guidelines document; and the respondent's overall satisfaction with the value received for money spent.

The survey findings can be summarized as follows:

- Nearly 2/3 of the respondents (33 of 53) spent \$20,000 or less for design guidelines. The rest reported spending \$21,000–50,000 (9 respondents); \$51,000–75,000 (2 respondents); \$76,000–100,000

(3 respondents); and more than \$100,000 (4 respondents).

- Nearly 2/3 of the 51 respondent projects took place in the past five years, between 2006 and 2011.
- More than half of the projects covered areas with more than 250 properties.
- One-third of the projects were revisions or expansions of existing guidelines, while 2/3 created new guidelines.
- The consultant's location relative to the jurisdiction was evenly distributed between same city, nearby city, not a nearby city but within the same state, and in a different state. The consultant's distance from the city did not seem to make a difference with regard to cost.
- More than half of the projects included 3–5 in-person client meetings.
- More than 2/3 of the projects included 1–3 public meetings or workshops.
- The projects split nearly evenly in terms of who (consultant or staff) made revisions to the guidelines document. Comments from respondents revealed a wide range of HPC staff participation in the writing and revising of the guidelines document.
- Most of the design guidelines included in this survey used an approximate 50/50 ratio between custom content and standard text and images.
- The average satisfaction rating was 4.05, on a scale where 1 = extremely unsatisfied and 5 = extremely satisfied. Eighty-seven percent of respondents who paid more than \$20,000 reported feeling satisfied by the value they received for the money spent. That number was slightly lower (73%) for the under-\$20,000 projects.

An analysis of the survey data showed little or no correlation between many of these factors and the total cost of the consultant's time. However, three factors stood out.

1. These projects might have become more expensive over time. Out of the 16 projects that took place between 1995–2005, 75% cost less than \$20,000. In contrast, only 53% of the 39 projects completed after 2005 cost less than \$20,000. This could be attributable to several factors:

First, hourly rates have almost certainly increased over the past 15 years. For example, one consultant contacted for this article with 25 years of experience in developing design guidelines stated that the costs of

doing business (in particular, health insurance and travel) have increased significantly. A recent study revealed that the cost of health insurance premiums has more than doubled since 2001 (see: <http://facts.kff.org/results.aspx?view=slides&topic=3>).

In addition, the consultant noted that clients expect – and today’s computer software makes this possible – more detailed documents that include a greater number of photographs and illustrations in color, and this also drives up cost.

Finally, cities may be contracting more often with larger firms, which would likely have higher overhead costs and command a higher rate – due to collective experience and/or a more prominent regional or national profile – than a solo practitioner or small shop.

2. More meetings might equal higher costs. The most expensive projects (over \$100,000) involved more than six meetings with the client and more than six public meetings or workshops. However, many under-\$20,000 projects also had 6 or more meetings with clients and the public, and the combination of the consultant’s location and number of meetings do not correlate with a higher project cost.



*The most expensive projects involved several direct meetings with consultants*

3. The cost might be affected by the proportion of revisions to the document made by the consultant versus HPC staff. For projects in the \$51,000–\$100,000 range, all revisions were made by the consultant. In the two cases where \$100,000+ guidelines documents were revised by staff, one project continued to be revised, based on additional feedback from the public, after the consultant’s contract had expired; in the other case, HPC staff apparently did most of the initial writing and the consultant made revisions. According to the respondent, “The staff

worked extensively on the content, design and policy of the guidelines. It was very time consuming, much more than expected. It was almost as if the consultant was there just to organize and put on paper what we came up with.” In hindsight, perhaps this question also should have asked about initial content development, not just revisions.

## Survey of Consultants

It stands to reason that a consultant’s fee will be determined by the amount of work and/or number of hours that a project requires, but what drives that workload? With the first survey’s data in hand and questions still to be answered, I created a second survey just for consultants.

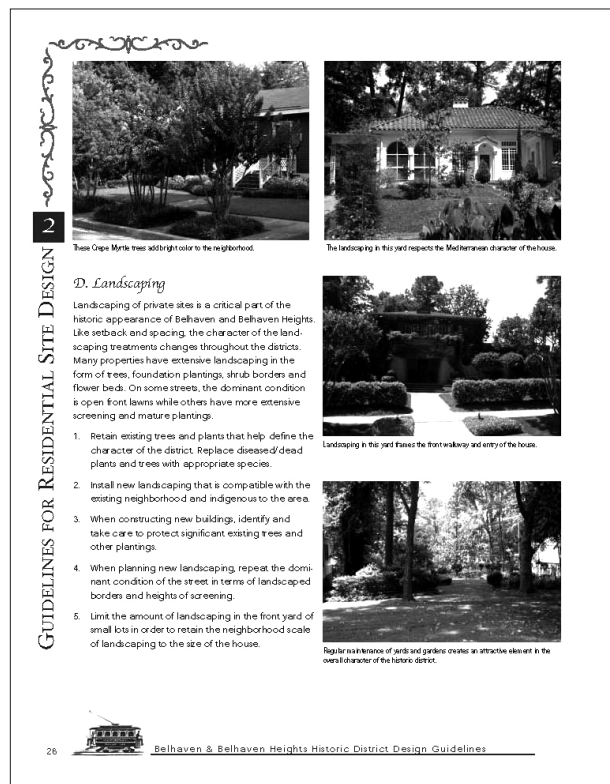
A link to this second survey was sent to a selection of 33 consultants, all of whom appear on one or another SHPO’s list of historic preservation professionals and who have been identified as providing design guidelines services. I tried to include consultants from around the country; firms of different sizes, including solo practitioners; and both architects and historians. Eight people responded, including several who provided follow-up detail via email.

This second survey asked the consultants to rank the same factors from the first survey, in terms of each factor’s influence on the cost of design guidelines. In addition, the survey asked how many employees were typically assigned to work on a design guidelines project (to establish whether team size made a difference in the cost), and how far the consultant travels for these projects.

According to the consultant survey, which – again – can only be considered anecdotal, only “number of properties” received two #1 rankings, and the only factor to not receive a #1 ranking was “number of presentations to commissions or city council.” With that said, adding the rankings resulted in a total score for each factor; those scores were, from lowest (most influential) to highest (least influential):

Amount of customization of content (26)
Amount of revisions expected to be completed by consultant (27)
Number of public meetings or workshops (27)
Number of in-person meetings with the client (30)
Number of presentations to commissions/council (32)
Distance from the consultant’s office to the client’s location (34)
Number of properties in the guidelines area (36)

While the amount of customization tops this list, if most surveys include approximately the same amount of custom content (50%), then that factor is probably not responsible for the disparities between project costs.



### *Customization of content can affect the total cost of design guidelines*

We can also assume that the number of presentations is likely to be the same for each project; for example, with one to the preservation commission at the beginning of the project and another at the end, and then one presentation each to the planning and zoning commission and city council. If this factor is fairly consistent from project to project, it also would not significantly affect project costs.

Taking those two factors off the list, we are left with the amount of revisions and number of public meetings as the items having the greatest influence on project cost, and the consultant's location and number of properties having the least influence. Those results echo the findings in the first survey.

The number of meetings with the city fell somewhere in the middle, and looking back on the first survey data, we can see that many of the projects included numerous meetings with city staff – the number of public meetings

or workshops was far fewer. Given the amount of preparation required for public meetings, it makes sense that those would have more weight, in terms of influencing project costs, than a meeting with city staff.

## **Conclusion**

Although the data collected so far clearly leaves some questions unanswered, cities may be able to control the cost of design guidelines by carefully defining and managing the scope of a consultant's work, in order to most effectively use their time. Some ideas for doing this include:

- Find alternative ways to disseminate information and gather public feedback that can be handled by city staff, so that fewer public meetings are needed.
- Use technology tools such as *Skype* or web conferencing to minimize the number of in-person meetings required (and, therefore, consultant travel time and associated costs).



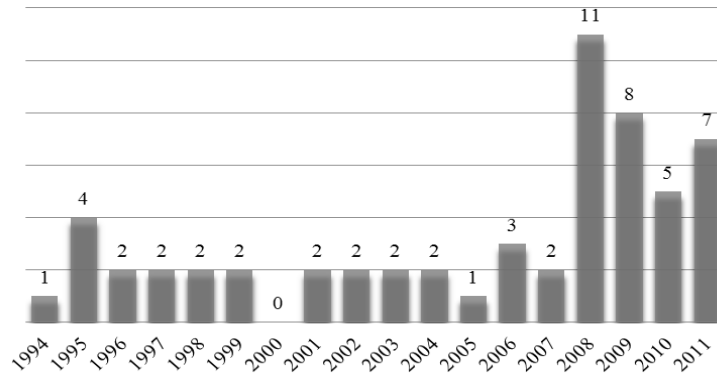
*Tools like webconferencing can cut down on the costs of travel for consultants to your community for client meetings and presentations*

- Actively manage the review and revisions processes so that someone at the city is responsible for collecting, collating, and organizing suggestions for changes to the document – and resolving any contradictory comments – before that information is forwarded to the consultant. Try to limit the number of rounds of revisions as much as possible.

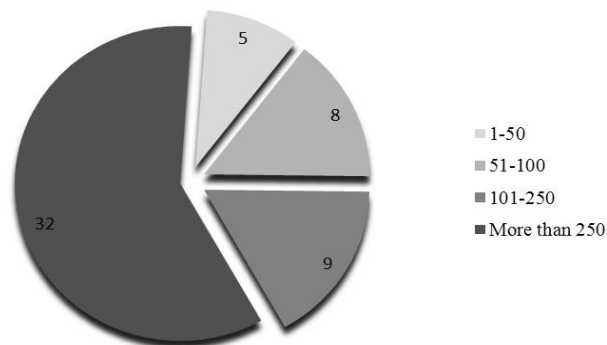
Design guidelines are a vital tool for managing historic districts and conserving their integrity and aesthetic appeal. Although the costs to create design guidelines have risen over the past 15 years, they remain affordable, and cities have the ability to actively manage those costs.

# Survey Results (Page 1/4)

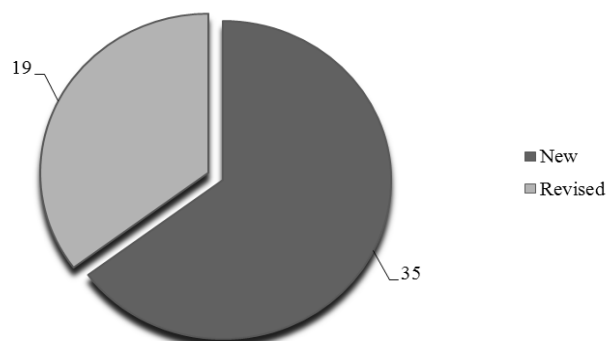
**1. In what year did your City hire a consultant to develop design guidelines for an area that included historic buildings?**



**2. Approximately how many properties were contained in the area affected by the design guidelines?**

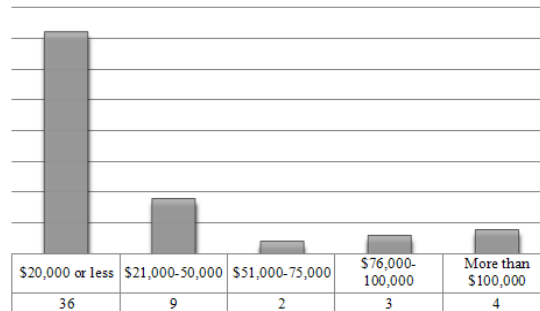


**3. Was the consultant hired to revise or expand existing design guidelines, or did they develop new design guidelines?**

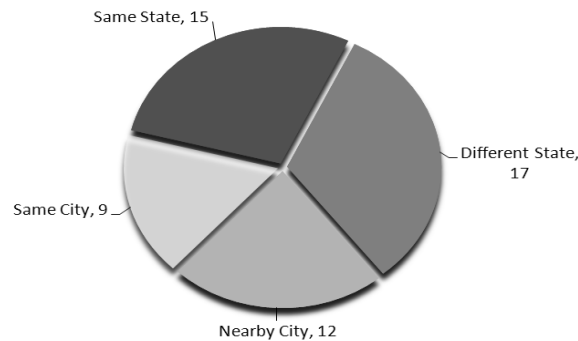


# Survey Results (Page 2/4)

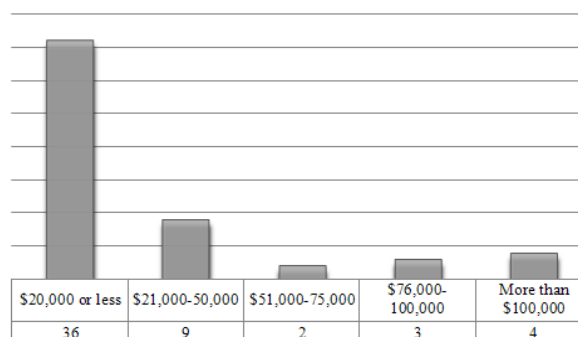
## 4. About how much did the City pay the consultant for the design guidelines?



## 5. The consultant's travel costs may have had an effect on the total price of design guidelines. Which of the following statements best describes the office location of the individuals who worked with your City?

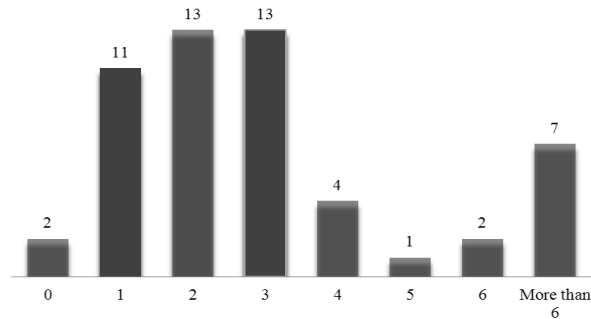


## 6. How many meetings with City Staff did the consultant attend in person? (Not via Skype, Web-based conferencing, or other electronic means)

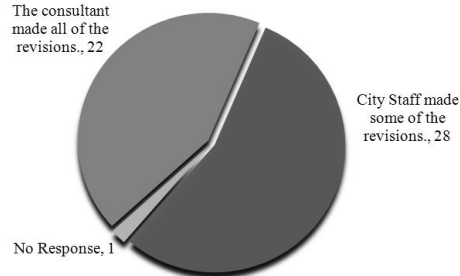


# Survey Results (Page 3/4)

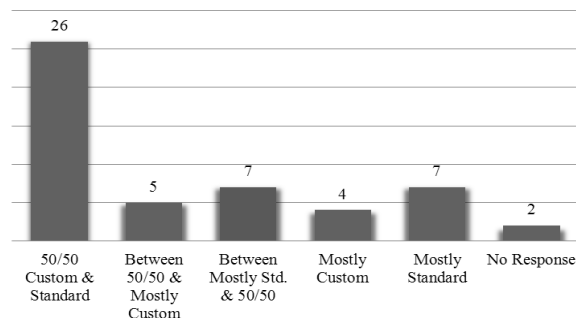
**7. How many meetings with the public did the consultant attend during the development of the design guidelines?**



**8. During this project, did the consultant make all revisions to the design guidelines document, or did City Staff make some of those revisions?**



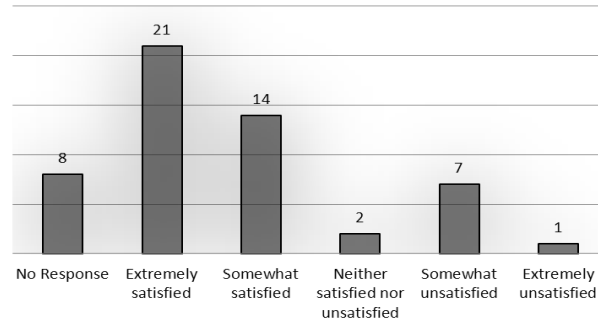
**9. Approximately how much of the design guidelines document was custom, rather than standard information?**





# Survey Results (Page 4/4)

## 10. How satisfied were you with the value you received for the money spent?



Survey results are also available on the NAPC web site: [www.uga.edu/napc](http://www.uga.edu/napc)

### RENEWING NAPC MEMBERS:

*continued from page 3*



**Kathy Helmer** (Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission - Medford, OR)  
**Lary P. Hesdorffer** (Vieux Carré Commission - New Orleans, LA)  
**Nancy Hiestand** (Historic Preservation Commission - Bloomington, IN)  
**William Iseminger** (Collinsville HP Commission - Collinsville, IL)  
**Jeanne Johnston** (Lexington Historic Commission - Lexington, NC)  
**Robert Kinney** (Sanford Historic Trust - Sanford, FL)  
**Michael Levanthal** (Arlington County Government - Arlington, VA)  
**Cynthia Linker** (City of Black Hawk - Black Hawk, CO)  
**Veronica Litterer** (City of Charles City HP Commission - Charles City, IA)  
**Jaclyn Ludowese** (Codington Co. Historical Society - Watertown, SD)  
**Autumn Rierson Michael** (Michael Preservation Group, LLC - Davidson, NC)  
**Christine Palmer** (City of Bothell Landmarks Preservation Board - Bothell WA)  
**Tim Paris** (City of Topeka Planning Commission - Topeka, KS)  
**Wanda Parrish** (Spotsylvania HP Commission - Spotsylvania, VA)  
**Linda V. Prescott** (Chelmsford Historical Commission - Chelmsford, MA)  
**Jennifer Pruitt** (Carson City Historic Resources Commission - Carson City, NV)  
**Glen Roberson** (Oklahoma Historical Society - Oklahoma City, OK)  
**William P. Rohe** (Historic Architectural Review Board - Sewickley Heights, PA)  
**Jennifer Schreck** (Steilacoom Preservation & Review Board - Steilacoom, WA)  
**Ray Scriber** (LA Division of HP/ Louisiana Main Street - Baton Rouge, LA)  
**Shari Thornes** (Brookings HP Commission - Brookings, SD)  
**Town of Concord Historic Districts Commission** (Concord, MA)  
**Stephanie Trueblood** (Town of Hillsborough - Hillsborough, NC)  
**Becky Weaver** (City of Hillsboro Texas - Hillsboro, TX)  
**Jeremy Wells** (Bristol, RI)  
**Anita Williamson** (City of Waxahachie - Waxahachie, TX)  
**Jim Wilson** (Clay County HP Commission - Vermillion, SD)  
**Alan Woodruff** (Incorporated Village of Bellerose - Bellerose Village, NY)