

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Ordinance 23-2021, **Version:** 2

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Agenda Date: 10/26/2021

Subject:

Ordinance 23-2021: An ordinance on second reading approving a downtown historic district designation

Prepared by: Andrea Mimnaugh, Senior Planner
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**PURPOSE:**

Review and decide upon an application to designate an historic district in Downtown Littleton.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**Staff Presenter(s):** Andrea Mimnaugh, Senior Planner

**Additional Presenter(s):** N/A

**SUMMARY:**

The Downtown Historic District application proposes an all-inclusive district to include 82 structures on 71 properties with frontage on Main Street, Alamo Avenue, and the portions of Prince, Nevada, Curtice, and the east side of Rapp Street that are between Main Street and Alamo Avenue.

**PRIOR ACTIONS OR DISCUSSIONS:**

During the August 4, 2020 study session, city council directed staff to explore an all-inclusive Downtown Historic District to ensure that significant historic resources in Downtown's core would be preserved. Over the next 12 months, the following actions and discussions occurred:

- Actions and Discussions - HPB Study Sessions, August 2020 - June 2021:  
Between August 2020 and June 2021, HPB assisted with research and analysis on the buildings within the proposed district needed to develop the application. Discussion and recommendations to staff occurred during the following seven study sessions:
  - June 21, 2021
  - April 28, 2021
  - March 18, 2021
  - February 17, 2021
  - December 21, 2020
  - September 21, 2020
  - August 17, 2020

On September 13, 2021, HPB unanimously recommended approval of the proposed Downtown Historic District (resolution attached).

- City Council Direction on Next Steps - Study Session, August 3, 2021:  
At their August 3, 2021 study session, city council directed staff to move forward with the Downtown Historic District application.
- Engagement Process - Ongoing:  
Outreach efforts to property owners within the proposed boundary began in May 2021 and continue through Council's scheduled public hearing on October 26, 2021.
- City Council first reading of proposed district

This ordinance passed on first reading on October 5, 2021

## **ANALYSIS:**

### Staff Analysis

The Littleton City Code lists two procedures for designation of historic districts: one with owner's consent and one without. As Council provided the direction to pursue an historic district, the process and criteria for designation without owner's consent must be met as outlined below. The attached staff report goes into more detail as to how the proposed district meets these criteria.

#### Section 4-6-8(A) and (B)

- The district exemplifies the political, economic, and social heritage of the community
- The district exemplifies an association with a notable person or the work of a notable person
- The district enhances sense of identity of the community
- The district is an established and familiar natural setting or visual feature of the community
- The district possesses such unusual or uncommon significance that the district's potential demolition or major alteration would diminish the character and sense of place in the community of Littleton
- District boundaries will be defined by visual changes, historic documentation of different associations of patterns of development, or evidence of changes in site type or site density as established
- The proposed designation is consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan
- Noncontributing buildings within the district will be evaluated for their magnitude of impact by considering their size, scale, design, location, and/or additional information potential

#### Section 4-6-11(B)1(a)

- Whether the property or district has overwhelming historic importance to the entire community

#### Section 4-6-11(A)3

- Application's relationship to the comprehensive plan

Please note, since the Unified Land Use Code adoption repealed Title 4 of the City's code it was determined that adding a definition of the Downtown Historic District to Title 4 was unnecessary. Section 4 of the ordinance has been changed to reflect this.

Council Goal, Objective, and/or Guiding Principle

Council Goal 4: Downtown, specifically Objective 2: Historic Structures.

Fiscal Impacts

If city council approves the designation of the Downtown Historic District, city council should consider expanding financial benefits for property owners in the district because several more properties will be eligible for tax rebates and grants. Staff would suggest a discussion on this issue in the first quarter of 2022 as part of the larger financial discussion when council evaluates the outcome of the November ballot issue, our sales tax trend post pandemic and the options with the federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Alternatives

Council may choose not to adopt Ordinance 23, which will leave the opt-in Main Street Historic District in place and will not create a new Downtown Historic District.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

In staff's opinion, the proposed Historic District Designation complies with the approval criteria in the Littleton City Code, as detailed in the staff report. Staff recommends approval of Ordinance 23-2021

*Historical Preservation Board Recommendation*

On September 13, 2021, the historical preservation board (HPB) held a public hearing to consider the proposed application for a Downtown Historic District. HPB recommended approval of the application by a vote of seven to zero with no conditions of approval. Details are included in the staff report regarding HPB's decision.

**PROPOSED MOTION:**

I move to approve Ordinance 23-2021 approving a downtown historic district designation.

**REFERENCES:**

Littleton Municipal Code - Historic Preservation

- <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/littleton-co-cc/doc-viewer.aspx#secid--1>  
<<https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/littleton-co-cc/doc-viewer.aspx>>

Comprehensive Plan

- <<https://www.littletongov.org/home/showpublisheddocument?id=21312>>

Downtown Historic Building Surveys

- <<https://www.littletongov.org/building-development/historic-preservation/historic-resources/-folder->

Survey Report for Historic Buildings Survey

- <<https://www.littletongov.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=11076>>

Commercial Modernism in the Greater West Littleton Boulevard Corridor 1950-1980

- <<https://www.littletongov.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=23752>>