



## **SEG 5 – Recommendation Number One Design Review Commission and Design Guidelines**

### **Background**

#### ***Single and Multiple Family Housing***

Many residents believe that homes are becoming too large or bulky for the lot and that modifications to current zoning regulations are necessary. The SEG conducted a best practices study and learned that many other prominent communities maintain appearance/architectural review boards for both commercial and residential development. Hinsdale does not conduct any type of design review for single family residential development. However, the Plan Commission does conduct appearance review for commercial and multiple family. Also, current state statutes do not allow non-home rule municipalities to make procedures like design review binding upon petitioners. Several communities including Glen Ellyn, Glencoe, Park Ridge, Lake Forest, Chagrin Falls, OH and Greenwich, CT use design review boards for such a purpose.

Architectural Review Boards (ARB) have been used in other communities to better insure that new homes are either in keeping with or additive to community character. A potential ARB comprised of residents and paid professionals (e.g. architects, landscape architects and preservationists) could administer a design review process in Hinsdale. Studies have shown that an aesthetic review process reviewing architecture and landscape architecture may in fact preserve and enhance property values in a community by keeping undesirable development from occurring and positively influencing new development and existing structure renovation. Through fees generated by development permits, objective and compensated professionals would develop a design guideline manual replete with text and graphics and influence development from an aesthetic, contextual and functional standpoint.

### **Key Findings**

#### ***Single Family Design Concerns***

A significant majority of the residents believe that some new homes are out of scale or character with the neighborhood and are too large and/or bulky for the lot. This fact is of particular importance given that thirty three percent (33%) of Hinsdale homes have been torn down and rebuilt in the last 15 years. Seventy six percent (76%) of residents believe that a residential design review process is appropriate for the Village and eighty nine percent (89%) believe that the design review process for multiple family and commercial should be enhanced. Residents also expressed concern over the proliferation of new houses whose garages are the predominant architectural feature (i.e. houses with front loading garages).

### ***Design Review***

During the early stages of discussion, SEG 5 members were split on the appearance review issue, but after investigating the issue over several months all agreed that such a process would substantially benefit the Village. When residents were asked their opinions, a surprisingly large percentage voted in favor (76% either supported or strongly supported), even without the benefit of the SEG's research and deliberations. An overwhelming eighty nine percent (89%) were in favor of design review for multiple family and commercial.

The SEG felt that the group should be named the Design Review Commission (DRC) as Architectural Review Commission was too limiting as the name may imply responsibility over architecture alone. The purview of a DRC would include landscape architecture, site design, building architecture and context of the project site as it relates to its neighbors. The DRC would take into consideration public comment. These meetings would be open meetings and neighbors (within 250') would be provided advance notice.

### **Recommendation**

#### **5-1a Implement an Aesthetic Design Review Commission for single family and multiple family housing**

#### **5-1b Fund the Drafting of Design Guidelines**

#### **5-1c Restrict FAR (building envelope) and use a bonus system to reward petitioner's use of the design review process**

*Definition:* An appointed group of professionals and residents meeting monthly (or as necessary) to review new construction applications and meet with potential petitioners. This group is responsible for reviewing all new and major renovation construction for single and multiple family development in the Village of Hinsdale.

*Critical Success Factors:* Factors apply to all recommendations above.

1. Design Review Commission – Given the fact that seventy six percent (76%) supported design review, the Village Board should appoint a DRC as soon as possible. It should be comprised of a group of professionals that do not practice locally, that are qualified, respected and represent a balance of potential competing interests. The DRC should be formed and active prior to the development of the guidelines (i.e. Greenwich, CT).
2. DRC Composition – The commission should include at a minimum, 2 at-large residents, 2 architects, 1 preservationist and 1 landscape architect. The priority should be given to qualified residents prior to paid professionals being used. Seven members should be appointed with all receiving voting privileges.
3. Design Guidelines for single and multiple family – The commission accepts as one of its early responsibilities the creation of design guidelines similar to what other communities have prepared. Primary responsibility for the guidelines is through the newly commissioned DRC which should direct a hired consultant to draft the guidelines.
4. Non-binding Discovery Meetings – The DRC encourages developers and property owners to present their project early in conceptual phase.

5. Single Family Bulk Ordinance - Reduce bulk ordinance significantly (currently F.A.R.) in the neighborhood of fifteen percent (15% to encourage involvement in the design review process early). The Plan Commission will then have the opportunity to receive input of the DRC for multiple-family projects and the developer does not expend funds unnecessarily in single family development.
6. Multiple Family –Presentation of plans to DRC is compulsory and the DRC's recommendation and comments will be forwarded to the PC for action.
7. Bonuses – DRC has right not to reward all square footage back to petitioners, but possibility must exist for petitioners to get all square footage back.
8. Commission Recommendations – Recommendations of the commission are advisory, chair signature required to obtain bonuses.
9. Residential Appeal Process – Petitioners may appeal to the ZPS Committee of the Village Board when they have been denied bonuses
10. Code Amendment – Current code does not recognize the directives and actions of a DRC and conflicts with the plan commission may exist. Zoning Code must be altered to permit the DRC to function smoothly with the plan commission.
11. Timeliness – Process is timely so as to be effective and manageable

*Funding and Cost Considerations:* Considerations apply to all recommendations above. Petitioner fee established to cover the cost of compensated commission members. At large members will not receive compensation. Design guidelines require financial support of the Village with the DRC having responsibility for managing the planning consultant.

*Implementation Considerations:* Considerations apply to all recommendations above. Adopt the ordinance governing funding and operation of the commission, identify and recruit participants, name the group, draft design guidelines and establish approval criteria, adopt ordinance governing funding and operation of Commission. Staff prepares operating procedures based upon best practices from other communities like Park Ridge, Glencoe, Lake Forest, Greenwich, CT, and Chagrin Falls, OH. DRC initiates operations with one of their first responsibilities being the creation of the design guidelines. Cases where mixed use developments are considered are referred to the Plan Commission for their aesthetic review.



## **SEG 5 – Recommendation Number Two Multiple Family Locations**

### **Background**

SEG 5 was charged with looking at multiple family locations in the Village. Multiple family is currently located in three primary locations: 1) North of Ogden, 2) South of 55<sup>th</sup> and 3) in and around the downtown area. Currently, twenty percent (20%) of the housing stock in the Village is considered multiple family.

### **Key Findings**

Many people have left the Village as suitable multiple family/empty nester housing options were not available to them. In addition, thirty one percent (31%) of residents report they intend to leave their single family home in the next five to ten years and thirteen percent (13%) of residents would prefer to stay in the Village if multiple-family housing were available. These same people suggest they would prefer to stay in the Village if multiple family housing were available.

Also, sixty eight percent (68%) of residents say that the Village should *consider* allowing townhomes in the buffer areas and seventy percent (70%) say condominiums should be *considered* above retail locations. Despite the support for additional multiple family in the Village shown in the survey, the SEG believes specifically that more study is necessary.

### **Recommendation**

**5-2 The Village should consider projects on an individual basis with special consideration and priority given to empty nester housing which is respectful of neighborhoods, overall charm and character and the wishes of residents**



## **SEG 5 – Recommendation Number Three Bulk Regulations**

### **Background**

SEG 5 was charged with investigating bulk regulation issues and their impact on Village character. Elements of individual single family structures such as lot dimensions, topography, landscaping, architectural enhancements, structure maintenance, and context of the structure in relation to neighboring structures contribute to the overall aesthetic quality of a neighborhood. Given the impact of each neighborhood’s appearance and character on the Village’s image as a whole, SEG 5 studied the affects of the current Zoning Code’s bulk regulations on individual homes, new construction and renovations in Hinsdale.

### **Key Findings**

In general, the survey and SEG deliberations were in support of significant amendments to the bulk regulations of the zoning code. Residents and the SEG are in strong agreement that changes should be made to promote desired architectural elements and restrict certain architectural and physical changes that have become prevalent throughout the Village.

In the Phase I Survey residents indicated that they believed the Village should do more to preserve existing homes. Fully 1/3 of the housing stock has been torn down and rebuilt in the last fifteen years. In the Phase II Survey, 3/4 of residents stated they believe Hinsdale is in danger of losing its charm if its physical appearance and housing changes too dramatically. A vast majority of residents (83%) indicated that they support the relaxing of side yard, garage and floor area restrictions for easier preservation, expansion and renovation of homes older than 50 years. There is also a moderate level of support for the creation of historic districts under the initiative of residents.

Strong support of the importance of changes in managing new single-family home construction and renovation are as follows as indicated by the Phase II Survey:

Reduce structure height (the height as seen from the street)	
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>51%</b>
Increase space between houses (side yard setbacks)	
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>76%</b>

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Reduce lot coverage (house footprint, driveways, decks and patios)

**Total Support 68%**

Reduce bulk (combination of height and width of home and lot dimensions)

**Total Support 74%**

Improve aesthetic relationship of house to neighboring houses

**Total Support 74%**

Improve the aesthetic context of the garage in relation to the house and the neighborhood (i.e., address the proliferation of homes with front-loading garages that are a predominant architectural feature)

**Total Support 76%**

In addition seventy six percent (76%) of residents indicated support for a design review process that ensures new homes are compatible with Hinsdale’s existing architectural character and well established, traditional charm.

### **Recommendation**

#### **5-3 The Village should draft a Zoning Ordinance Amendment that includes reductions to selected bulk regulations and policy updates**

*Definition:* An amendment to the current Zoning Ordinance updating (and possibly reducing) bulk regulations and certain development policies.

*Critical Success Factors:* The Village should investigate and establish a desired level of reduction in bulk regulation that achieves the goals of preserving historic structures and limiting unattractive new homes while respecting each neighborhood’s overall charm and character.

Investigation should cover the following topics:

#### Bulk Issues:

1. Adjusting mean roof height that still allows multiple styles of architecture
2. Establishing one height measurement criteria from average existing grade
3. Defining minimum side yards in percentages of lot width
4. Eliminating FAR and using lot coverage
5. Establishing permitting system for landscape improvements that cause substantial soil/drainage disturbances that includes staff review
6. Incorporation of separate house lot coverage numbers from hardscape lot coverage numbers

#### Policy Issues:

1. Garages and their placement shall be the charge of the DRC with emphasis being placed on their impact on the streetscape especially those homes whose garages are the prominent architectural feature
2. Requiring front door orientation changes to go before a to be established design review committee
3. Establishing architectural / aesthetic criteria that refers homes to a design committee
4. Use max eave-max ridge measurements to define building envelope

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*Funding and Cost Considerations:* The Village needs to establish a budget, refer to Plan Commission, Zoning Task Force or Consultant and determine a timeline for drafting and adopting the Amendment.

*Implementation Considerations:* The Village should conduct a study and adopt the recommended changes after deliberation on desired bulk limits and reductions. Policies that are working, such as detached garage incentives, graduated side yard V's and front porch encroachments should be identified and continued. New regulations should be made flexible enough to allow for creative improvements to all Village residences while at the same time adding to the aesthetic value and overall character of the community.



## **SEG 5 – Recommendation Number Four Historic Preservation**

### **Background**

SEG 5 was charged with determining the correct process and appropriate regulations to successfully manage the preservation and renovation of existing historic housing stock in the Village. The positive and negative impacts of bulk regulations on the renovation and teardowns of historic single-family structures were also explored. In the past few years Hinsdale has been experiencing an increase in teardowns of historic and older homes. Often, new structures are larger and cover more lot area than the older home they replace and detract from the overall charm of established neighborhoods in the Village.

### **Key Findings**

Through months of deliberation overall, the SEG was in support of amendments to bulk standards to better facilitate renovations of historic single family homes. All were in agreement that changes need to be made in order to limit unattractive architecture and physical changes to housing stock that have become prevalent throughout the Village.

Seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents to the Phase I Survey believe that Hinsdale is in danger of losing its charm if its physical appearance and housing changes too dramatically. Residents also indicated in the Phase I Survey that they believed the Village should do more to preserve existing homes. In the Phase II Survey a vast majority (83%) of residents expressed support to relax side yard, garage and FAR restrictions to facilitate the preservation, expansion and renovation of homes older than 50 years.

### **5-4 The Village should work to strongly encourage preservation of older homes through coordination of preservation programs, code amendments and incentives for renovations**

*Definition:* A comprehensive Village-wide policy of encouraging and making it more attractive to residents and builders to renovate historic homes instead of tearing them down and rebuilding.

*Critical Success Factors:* The Village should investigate and establish preservation standards that incorporate the following standards and policies:

1. Keep FAR breaks that were recently approved
2. Waive Building permit fees

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3. Look into a public relations campaign to educate the public on restoration and remodeling instead of teardowns
4. Establish different bulk standards for older homes such as a percentage reduction of new bulk standards
5. Create guidelines that are easily available to residents that outline restoration and remodeling ideas and recommendations
6. Include additions for historic housing in the DRC process
7. Codify remodeling to prevent 49% addition/remodeling and a few years later another 49% addition/ remodeling
8. Use a historic preservation timeline of 50 years instead of a fixed date
9. Look into lot coverage bonus for preservation work and/or remodeling
10. Look into tax incentives for restoration work over and above the 7 years presently in place

*Funding and Cost Considerations:* The Village needs to establish a budget, determine a timeline and fund the project.

*Implementation Considerations:* The Village should draft a comprehensive plan amendment officially incorporating preservation policy as a major goal in the Village.