What are form-based urban design standards?
Form-based urban design standards guide development by requiring that it:
• Is sensitive to the traditional neighborhood context and character
• Relates to the community’s traditional form of the built environment
• Relates buildings and development sites to each other and to the public spaces and streets on which they front.
• Incorporates physical features which are characteristic of the area, such as:
  • Minimum roof pitch, foundations elevated slightly above-grade, and parking to the side and rear of structures.

Form based urban design standards:
• Do not change land uses allowable by zoning
• Do not apply to existing homes or buildings unless there is a demolition.

Why are these standards proposed?
• Pensacola’s older neighborhoods expressed concern through public workshops, public meetings and open input sessions, over the years, that new construction does not always fit with the existing traditional character of the neighborhoods.
• The following adopted CRA plans and studies call for establishment of urban design standards to help protect and maintain the character of the CRA’s existing communities:
  • Urban Redevelopment Advisory Committee (URAC) Final Report (2012)
  • Urban Core Redevelopment Plan (2010)
  • Westside Redevelopment Plan (2005)
  • Eastside Neighborhood Plan (2004)
  • Belmont DeVilliers Land Use Plan (2004)

Proposed Changes as of September 28, 2018.
1. Exclude the area East of 9th Avenue and South of Cervantes Street from the overlay district boundaries.
2. Limit the overlay district’s applicability to new construction and demolition/rebuilds only.
3. Add language to clarify that the overlay standards will not supersede or replace any law pertaining to requirements for persons with disabilities.
Where would the standards apply?
- Neighborhoods within the City’s community redevelopment areas excluding the area East of 9th Avenue and South of Cervantes Street that are not currently under special review board standards.
- Including Belmont DeVilliers, Westside Garden District, Tanyard, and Eastside.
- A map of the proposed overlay district and all recommended changes is available on the City website: www.cityofpensacola.com/CRAOverlay.

How were the standards developed?
- The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) hired a very experienced architecture and urban design firm called DPZ CODESIGN to develop the standards.
- DPZ CODESIGN began work in early 2018 by studying the existing character of Pensacola’s neighborhoods, and then created standards for new construction that help to protect that character.
- The standards were developed with extensive public input that included multiple public meetings, public input sessions, a four-day long open meeting at Sanders Beach-Corinne Jones Resource Center, and workshops of the CRA, City Planning Board, and City Council.
- Throughout the process, a webpage has been maintained with all relevant project information including presentations, public input and outreach opportunities, boundary map, and the proposed overlay document. This webpage is available on the City website: https://www.cityofpensacola.com/CRAOverlay.

How would the proposed standards benefit neighborhoods?
- The standards will help to protect existing property owners by requiring that new development and reconstruction more closely match the traditional characteristics of these neighborhoods.
- The standards will help to protect the investment of owners and developers through consistent requirements for future development and construction.
- The benefits of implementation include enhanced resident and visitor attraction, community health and stable property values, amongst many others.

Are these types of standards in place in other cities?
- Yes. Hundreds of communities across the country have created standards such as these to help preserve a unique sense of place.
- They range in size from individual neighborhoods all the way to entire cities such as Miami and Baltimore. In our region, cities like Mobile, Montgomery, Chattanooga, and Charleston have all implemented form-based standards for all or part of their cities.
I am a homeowner located in the proposed overlay district, how would adoption of the urban design standards overlay impact me?

- The urban design standards are proposed to protect and strengthen the CRA neighborhoods.
- These standards serve to ensure that your neighborhood retains its unique character and urban function, and that development which occurs within your neighborhood is appropriate for its surroundings.

Will these standards increase the costs of new development?

There are elements of the standards that could increase costs, and others that could reduce them.

- For example, requiring the first floor of homes to be elevated 18” above the ground costs slightly more than building at ground level.
- But homes that are elevated above the ground are less vulnerable to flooding and can reduce the costs associated with flood recovery.
- Reduced parking requirements in the standards can help homeowners and builders save money on driveways and parking areas.

Who would review projects for compliance with the standards?

- One of the many benefits of implementing a form-based code is the ability to implement the standards through administrative procedures, as opposed to utilizing a review board.
- City staff will review projects for compliance as part of a request for a building permit.
- The specificity of the standards helps to guarantee the reviews are done objectively.
- There is no need to wait for a review board to meet, as is the case in other urban areas of the City under special review board requirements.

Are variance requests permitted under the proposed standards?

Yes, variance requests are permitted. These requests would follow the standard City procedure described under Section 12-12-2 of the City of Pensacola Land Development Code (LDC).
Are the proposed standards intended to be a stepping-stone for a special review board district or citywide form-based code?

- Redevelopment activities undertaken by the CRA are limited to the City’s adopted Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) Districts, which include the Urban Core, Eastside and Westside CRAs. Currently, no plans exist to expand the standards into areas outside of the proposed CRA Urban Design Overlay District boundaries.
- There is no intent to utilize a special review board, such as the Architectural Review Board (ARB), for review of the proposed standards.

Are there environmental elements of the standards?

- Yes. The standards require tree plantings along the public right-of-way.
- They also adopt State-adopted roadway standards for traditional neighborhoods, which specify street and sidewalk designs that encourage walking and bicycling by making it safer and more pleasant to do so.
- Finally, there are requirements that at least one-half of residential front yards be maintained in a previous material in order to minimize stormwater runoff.

For More Information
Visit the overlay district webpage: www.CityOfPensacola.com/CRAOverlay

City Of Pensacola
Community Redevelopment Agency
Phone: (850) 435-1695