

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS SURVEY

The survey was conducted to better understand the goals, regulations, public/private involvement and performance of selected Conservation District Programs throughout the nation. This understanding will help guide and evaluate the creation of Philadelphia's Residential Preservation and Revitalization District (RPROD) ordinance.

Seventeen national neighborhood conservation district programs were reviewed and their staff members queried to verify matrix information and to gain general feedback about the districts' performance. These programs were the subject of an earlier update, prepared by the Planning Department of San Jose, of the original matrix produced by the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia in 1992. Programs were organized as follows:

ADMINISTERED BY ZONING DEPARTMENT WITH BINDING REVIEW

Boise, ID
Lincoln, NB
Nashville, TN
Omaha, NB
Phoenix, AZ
Raleigh, NC
Roanoke, VA
San Antonio, TX

ADMINISTERED BY ZONING DEPARTMENT WITH ADVISORY REVIEW

Austin, TX

ADMINISTERED BY MUNICIPAL PRESERVATION AGENCY WITH BINDING REVIEW

Boston, MA
Dallas, TX
Memphis, TN
Napa, CA
Portland, OR
Riverside, CA

ADMINISTERED BY MUNICIPAL PRESERVATION AGENCY WITH ADVISORY REVIEW

Atlanta, GA

ADMINISTERED BY NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

Cambridge, MA

In addition to surveying these programs, two recent professional issues papers about Conservation Districts were reviewed. The first is an as-yet unpublished article in the *Preservation Law Reporter* of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the second was published in 1998 in *Cultural Resources Partnership Notes* by the Heritage Preservation

Services division of the National Center for Cultural Resources Stewardship and Partnerships within the National Park Service.

Very generally, Conservation District programs can be divided into two categories: “historic district-lite” and zoning/land use. Based on these types, the nomination of districts and the enforcement of guidelines are typically handled by a Historical Commission (or a neighborhood-specific review commission that includes knowledgeable City staff) or a Zoning Department, respectively. These two types of programs have in common the goal of encouraging neighborhood involvement and enforcing appropriate growth. They also have in common the involvement of the ultimate reviewing body from the outset of the district’s creation. Furthermore, after a public review process, City Councils almost always retain the final word in either an ordinance to create a district or an ordinance to allow an overlay zone.

The “historic district-lite” conservation districts often have nomination criteria and design guidelines that borrow from the National Register nomination process and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines. Although nominations might be initiated by neighborhood organizations facing development/blight/usage-change threats, criteria for a district’s actual creation usually stems from the quality and cohesiveness of a district. Design standards information is imparted by knowledgeable City staff members either through the creation and distribution of guidelines for creating Guidelines or through their involvement in the process, however it is usually the neighborhood organization that writes the standards.

These historic district-lite districts are then reviewed against standards that are similar to but more lenient than historic district-type standards, or are divided into contributing and non-contributing buildings. In this second (and much less common) type of district, contributing buildings are reviewed at the same level as historically designated buildings, and non-contributing buildings are reviewed on a more lenient standard. The key difference in this type of “lite” district is that it would not have met the full criteria to be created as, but had elements of, an historic district. Standards and guidelines are usually developed neighborhood by neighborhood.

Departments of Planning are typically involved in these districts only when their Landmarks or Historical Commissions are located within.

The conservation districts that regulate change through zoning are typically concerned with preventing wholesale demolition of properties, preserving the use character (residential, small commercial, etc.) of a neighborhood, and maintaining a certain scale of allowable construction. These are sometimes, but not frequently, enhanced by other overlay districts that regulate design. Some are regulated by the zoning overlay, and require a non-binding design review. These zoning overlay districts may be formed at the initiation of a neighborhood, and are frequently created as an implementation tool for Comprehensive Neighborhood Plans written by Planning Departments.

Following is a summary of these programs, organized by how they are administered and whether their guidelines are binding or advisory:

ADMINISTERED BY ZONING DEPARTMENT – BINDING REVIEW

1. **Boise, ID “Neighborhood Conservation District”** Enacted 2001

Activities Subject to Review: New construction, major alterations/additions

Who administers: Depends on ordinance adopted for each separate neighborhood

Nomination Criteria: Identifiable attribute in architecture, use, geography

Nomination Process: City Council-member, one resident, Planning Commission or Commission Staff may start process. After that, treated as a regular zoning change with public hearings at Planning Commission and at City Council. Ordinance to establish district approved by majority vote of City Council.

Design Standards/Guidelines: No (zoning overlay)

Historic Districts? Base zoning has design review; there is a separate design review overlay reviewed by a special Design Review Commission staffed within the Planning Department (started before conservation districts).

Effect on Staffing/Workload: So far, the conservation district itself has not directly increased workload. By disallowing certain types of projects that were becoming prevalent in the area, the district may have actually decreased workload somewhat since those applications are no longer being processed. No applications have yet been submitted for adaptive reuse of existing structures in the area, which the conservation district will allow and which will offer parking reduction incentives. “If it works properly, a conservation district should clarify what is allowed and what is not and possibly reduce the staff analysis process for individual applications.”

Incentives offered The only incentive that the CD ordinance offers is the reduction of parking standards (allowance for tandem parking) in cases where a developer agrees to adaptively reuse an existing structure rather than tear it down.

Notes & Comments: Near-North End District the only one so far, created to disallow surface parking and support residential because of threat. Not enough support to have historic district here. Demo allowed, but must replace homes with homes. There have been a couple of major controversies regarding the purpose and intent of the conservation district. They were very careful to not try to back-door historic preservation through this conservation district ordinance. Although there were initial requests that the CD ordinance directly address historic preservation (by regulating demolitions) City Council decided that such protection should occur only through the establishment of an actual local historic district for the area. Since there was not support at the time for such a district, the CD stuck to the most basic issues of disallowing noxious uses such as off-site surface parking lots, that would otherwise have been allowed by the base zone, and to allowing parking reductions for those who would voluntarily adaptively reuse a building. Unfortunately, there have been a couple of recent tear-downs for new residential projects (which are strongly supported by the CD ordinance) but have had to deal with misperceptions on the part of some community members that the CD does prohibit tear-down of historic buildings. Those misperceptions have caused considerable controversy at the city, and required additional staff time to clarify.

Contact: Hal Simmons, 208.384.3853, hsimmons@cityofboise.org

2. **Lincoln, NE “Residential Conservation District”** Enacted 1989
Activities Subject to Review: New construction of principal buildings
Who administers: Building Code Officials, Zoning Board
Nomination Criteria: Property maintenance, residential character, >50 years old
Nomination Process: Neighborhood
Design Standards/Guidelines: Uniform for all
Historic Districts? Standards adopted district by district; 10 historic districts.
Effect on Staffing/Workload: The earlier version of the program, with individually designated overlay districts, required a lengthy application that often involved considerable staff time to verify dates of construction of numerous houses. The current law applies the same Neighborhood Design Standards uniformly to the older areas of the city and eliminated the designation process. The broader area creates more reviews, but they only have about one to two dozen a year, so it's not too burdensome.
Incentives offered: None for conservation districts, other than some minor relief in setback and open space requirements. Not for districts, but individual landmarks offer "landmark special permits" that allow landmark owners to request any legal use in any zoning district. All B&B inns use this provision, as do some "white elephant" buildings (former church, schools, power plant) to set appropriate and feasible densities.
Notes & Comments: Do have historic districts; whole municipal code is on line. Noted that concentrating the reviews with one person, the historic preservation planner, has probably expedited reviews, rather than having each building official conduct infrequent and unfamiliar reviews.
Contact: Ed Zimmer, Preservation Planner, 402.441.6360, ezimmer@ci.Lincoln.ne.us <http://interlinc.ci.Lincoln.ne.us> government, city depts., planning. Chapter 2757 historic; conservation districts – 3 years ago could have directed me to residential conservation rc districts. Put in place in 1991, zoning overlay, application process. 4-5 areas gone through. Repealed in 2000 to be more broadly applied to all residential areas of corporate city limits of 1950. Design standards for Zoning regulations 3-75 design standards for neighborhoods. Broad overlay has eased departments' burden to catch the few cases to which it applies.

3. **Nashville, TN “Residential Conservation Overlay/Nbhd Cons. District”** Enacted 1985
Activities Subject to Review: New construction, demo
Who administers: Zoning Commission
Nomination Criteria: 70% historic, 60% approval of residents (same as historic, but requires less integrity and detail).
Nomination Process: Interested group; meetings with neighborhoods; nbhd petition requested; meeting in district - numbers presented. With good preparation of neighborhood, City Council typically approves districts
Design Standards/Guidelines: Unique but similar for each district re siding, porch columns. Developed by Commission staff in concert with neighborhood association after Commission surveys area and determines character of neighborhood
Historic Districts? Yes. Historic started prior to conservation. Conservation started in response to warehouse and trucking facilities development pressure in residential area.

Effect on Staffing/Workload: Conservation Zoning is more popular than Historic Zoning (where everything is reviewed). Most residents of a CZ never need to have any dealings with the commission, but enjoy the protection. “The reason that we have more workload is because more neighborhoods want this protection.”

The city response was to staff an office and hire a professional staff. Currently for 4 HZ Districts, 7 CZ Districts (2 more pending), and 15 individual landmark districts they have 7 staff members. Recommends that a city have at least 1 staff member as a dedicated inspector. This person would drive the districts, monitor current applications, and work on violations.

Incentives offered: None

Notes & Comments: Have 3 HD & 4 CD; people get the two confused. Real estate value in districts found to be an average of 13% higher.

Contact: George Gause, Tim Walker, 615.862.7970, george_gause@metro.nashville.org

4. **Omaha, NB “Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay”** Enacted 1987

Activities Subject to Review: Land Use

Who administers: Zoning Board (within Planning Department)

Nomination Criteria: Buildings older than 25 years, after a Neighborhood Comprehensive Plan created (not a requirement for an historic district). Purpose of conservation districts is to provide review and protection for neighborhoods not qualified as historic.

Nomination Process: Majority of property owners must support nomination at initiation of process, Planning Commission, City Council.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Created by Planning Department with Neighborhood input
Historic Districts? Yes

Effect on Staffing/Workload: Not known

Incentives offered: Not known

Notes & Comments: Conservation districts have really not been used, probably requirement that 51% of property owners support initiation of nomination process does not often happen. Have only one district.

Contact: Lynn Myer, 402.444.5208

5. **Phoenix, AZ “Special Conservation District”** Enacted 1978

Activities Subject to Review: New construction (for height, volume, setback)

Who administers: Planning Department

Nomination Criteria: Neighborhood self-selecting, usually in response to a threat.

Nomination Process: 50% of land owners, planning commission & council. Work with Planning staff to develop plan, then a survey is conducted; 70% of respondents must agree.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Created by Planning Department with neighborhood input.
“Village planning”

Historic Districts? Yes

Effect on Staffing/Workload: Before they had this planning process they had a lot of concerned residents demanding that something be done. They tried to work with them in different ways and some of that was also time consuming. Now they have a definite process when this type of thing comes up which saves time and reduces wasted effort.

It does take time to work on a plan and to go through the hearing process. But the process is difficult enough that neighborhood groups do not take it on lightly. They do have to do some of the work themselves that helps them limit staff time.

They assign one planner to work with the neighborhood group and act as project manager through the entire process. It has been taking about a year to work out the issues, write the plan, work with the larger neighborhood and go through the hearing process to final approval. The planner does this in addition to regular duties. Larger areas with more issues (or more contentious issues) take longer. If there is a lot a controversy and disagreement, it probably can't be done through this process. Originally the ordinance allowed more disagreement and it proved very costly in staff time. Now there is a petition process and a few other elements that require some consensus before the process can continue.

Incentives offered: There are no economic incentives for conservation districts unless you include the stability that usually comes from having an adopted city plan relating to how the area should develop in the future as well as a fairly organized group of people in the neighborhood who worked on the plan and want to see it succeed. However, the City of Phoenix does offer incentives to rehabilitate properties in historic districts. They have a grant/conservation easement purchase program that is funded by City Historic Preservation Bond funds. Information on the program is available online at <http://www.phoenix.gov/NBHDPGMS/histpres.html#HISTSUMM>.

Notes & Comments:

Contact: Jan Hatmaker, 602-261-8771 jan.hatmaker@phoenix.gov; Kevin Weight (Historic Preservation Officer) kevin.weight@phoenix.gov

6. **Raleigh, NC “Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay”** Enacted 1988

Activities Subject to Review: New construction (for height, volume, setback)

Who administers: Zoning

Nomination Criteria: Older than 25 years, larger than 15 acres, 75% of land developed

Nomination Process: Upon property owners request, Planning, or City Council. Nbhd task force created to advise planners - which dissolves at point of public hearing on developed neighborhood plan. Majority approval required.

Design Standards/Guidelines: No.

Historic Districts? Yes

Effect on Staffing/Workload:

Incentives offered:

Notes & Comments: Left messages

Contact: Todd, 919-890-3125, <http://www.raleigh-nc.org/planning/CP/Neighborhoods2.htm>

7. **Roanoke, VA “Neighborhood Preservation Districts”** Enacted 1987
Activities Subject to Review: New construction, demo, additions
Who administers: Architectural Review Board, Zoning Board
Nomination Criteria: Same as historic
Nomination Process: City Council
Design Standards/Guidelines: Optional for each.
Historic Districts? ??
Effect on Staffing/Workload:
Incentives offered:
Notes & Comments:
Contact: ??

8. **San Antonio, TX “Neighborhood Conservation District”** Enacted 2000
Activities Subject to Review: New construction, demolition, additions, alteration
Who administers: Planning Department, not as complicated as an historic district, Planning has 4 days to review. Guidelines written such that it’s not subject to interpretation.
Nomination Criteria: Neighborhoods define the criteria
Nomination Process: Neighborhoods apply to Planning Department with boundary justification; had 10-12 apply at outset. Have a core neighborhood planning team on staff. If mentioned in Neighborhood Plan, don't need 51%, if a neighborhood organization nominates, then need 51% support of property owners
Design Standards/Guidelines: Neighborhood with staff assistance writes guidelines
Historic Districts? Yes
Effect on Staffing/Workload: Added a position to write enabling ordinance, then added an assistant position. Takes a lot of work and community meetings to get them where they want. A couple of districts dropped out because they actually wanted different results. Neighborhood planners also get involved, especially when crafting a neighborhood plan.
Incentives offered:
Notes & Comments: Haven't completed any yet. Some are looking for zoning changes, but this is not set up for that. Christine Vina wrote the enabling legislation and has been working on the first 5 districts. Have historic districts. Spoke with Carol Haywood and Christine Vina
Contact: Carol Haywood 210-207-7395 chaywood@sanantonio.gov; Christine Vina, 210-207-7815, cvina@sanantonio.gov

ADMINISTERED BY ZONING DEPARTMENT – ADVISORY REVIEW

1. **Austin, TX “Neighborhood Plan Combining District”** Enacted 1998
Activities Subject to Review/Comment: Use, site development standards
Who administers: Director of Planning, Neighborhood Planning & Zoning Department
Nomination Criteria: Distinctive Architectural style, >30 years old
Nomination Process: Planning creates neighborhood land use plan and NPCD is implementation tool. Priority area w/in urban core is divided into 54 planning areas.

Neighborhood Conservation Districts Survey

Depending on that fiscal year's priority, will work on 4-6 neighborhood plans. Planning with assistance by HP staffer (in different department – Transportation Planning and Sustainability Department) develops districts. Majority approval not required.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Advisory, part of the neighborhood plan. Guidelines are for residential, regarding existing character and architectural features.

Historic Districts? Just now going through process of establishing historic districts (had individual designation capabilities already).

Effect on Staffing/Workload: In order to best utilize staff time, Austin requires that neighborhoods wanting to be a Conservation District must do the field work necessary to prove that their neighborhoods do have characteristics that need preservation. Staff will provide maps for the volunteers to use and will help them create a survey sheet where they take out to survey each structure. Once the information is collected and submitted to the City, they then begin discussion on those design standards they would like included in their conservation district. With agreed-to changes by the City, an ordinance is written for each District. Petition rights are explained to the group that individual property owners can opt out of the district. City staff try to make these districts as simple as possible. The more complex they become, the enforcement becomes a right issue.

Incentives offered: The level of protection they give neighborhoods are as follows:

1. Neighborhood Plan Combining District (NPCD)- this process allows for the City to rezone properties for conservation purposes. They currently have a process in which they are creating NPCD's all over the city. This district allows some smart growth incentives. For instance, allows small lots to be developed; reduces parking requirements on Mixed Use Buildings (if certain design standards are incorporated)
2. Neighborhood Plan Conservation District (NPCD)- this takes the level of regulation a bit further.

Notes & Comments:

Contact: Ricardo Solis, 512.974.3524

ADMINISTERED BY MUNICIPAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION AGENCY – BINDING REVIEW

1. **Boston, MA “Architectural Conservation District”** Enacted 1975

Activities Subject to Review: Major alterations. Activities regulated in Conservation Districts are identical to those in Historic Districts, but are given greater latitude.

Who administers: Landmarks Commission

Nomination Criteria: Distinctive citywide historical, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance. Landmark must have city plus state, regional or national significance

Nomination Process: For all nominations, petitions signed by at least 10 registered Boston voters (but typically more), within 30 days, preliminary hearing; Landmarks Commission votes whether to accept for further study; then goes on a list of pending designations (have no deadline, but triage performed based on threat and need). Make sure they have a lot of signatures at beginning. Study report done by Commission staff and interested community members/petitioners – have a formula for these studies to formulate the intent of the district. Designation hearing, 2/3 vote of Commission, Mayor

can overturn or pass within 15 days, Council can support, decline, or not act on designation within 30 days. Ordinance to establish district approved by majority vote of City Council. Professionals do history and significance part.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Same as Landmarks but more lenient in theory. In practice, the only way to draw a line is to go as far as they can go. Staff talks out the Secretary of Interiors Standards with the Study Committee

Historic Districts? Landmarks Commission was created in 1975 to handle both Historic and Conservation Districts. Has 8 local districts; 7 conservation and 1 landmark administered exactly the same way. Only distinction, one is significant at local level and one at local plus. Commission appointed for each district. Staff architect left for another job, and there's now a hiring freeze. Thinking to have Landmarks Commission

Effect on Staffing/Workload: State budget affects cities and towns, have a grant from Mass Historical Commission for some of the base reports and some part-time staffing; will be in file ready to go if they resolve staffing issues.

Incentives offered: City program for historic districts – anyone who has a house > 50 years old can take advantage of the HIP program; CDBG money handled by Neighborhood Development Program; Landmarks staff handles 106 review. Avail for exterior repairs Homeworks Program (Historic Homeworks specifically). Doesn't know what's going to happen with that. State is trying to push a state 30% tax credit for state NR districts, pilot program just income producing. Partner with a lot – State office, statewide advocacy, Boston Preservation.

Notes & Comments:

Contact: Ellen Lipsey, ED Boston Landmarks Commission 617.635.2510
ellen.lipsey@cityofboston.gov 617.635.3850

2. **Dallas, TX “Conservation District”** Enacted 1988

Activities Subject to Review: New construction, major alterations, demolitions, land use; like hist. dist. but more lenient

Who administers: Preservation Division of Planning & Development Department

Nomination Criteria: Distinctive character, stability, no age

Nomination Process: Begun with neighborhood group, City facilitates neighborhood meetings. Majority property owner approval of nomination required. Goes to City Planning Commission which supports or opposes. City Council usually listens to Planning but is not bound by it.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Yes, residents write the standards and guidelines and may choose to ignore staff input; however staff admin ordinance w/those guidelines

Historic Districts? Yes, Historic preservation ordinance in place since the late 1960s.

Effect on Staffing/Workload: Yes, conservation districts (CDs) have added to workload as they have become a very popular zoning tool. Suddenly, the interest in CDs has grown as more neighborhoods are being renovated. It is good to have preservationists and architects on staff to deal with CDs as many aspects of history and structures are discussed.

Incentives offered: Have not developed an economic incentive program for CDs. However, they have a tax abatement program for Historic districts.

Notes & Comments: Working very well. Have a lot of communities interested; the earliest part of the process is the most important – community meetings at the beginning of the process.

Contact: Nathaniel Barnett; 214/670-1497; www.dallascityhall.com; nbarnet@ci.dallas.tx.us

3. **Memphis, TN “Historic Conservation District”** Enacted 1988

Activities Subject to Review: New construction, demo, habitable additions, garages/fences. Only difference from historic district is lack of review of alterations.

Who administers: Historic Preservation Program; Bureau of Planning split into 2 groups a few years ago - current (Office of Planning & Development Review) and long-range. Current Planning has Historic Landmarks Commission with 2 functions quasi-judicial review (implementing regulations design, designation, demo review) and legislative in Bureau of Planning (long range one) (determining what regulations should apply to historic resources in city, etc.). In other words, plans created by the Bureau of Planning are implemented by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Nomination Criteria: Loosely based on Sec'y of Int w/ same categories, but looser.

Nomination Process: Neighborhood has a public meeting & notifies fellow neighbors with certain information about boundaries; submitted by application to Landmarks Commission and LC notifies property owners; if LC passes, goes to Land Use Board who notifies property owners; then Council who notifies owners. 65-72% support a comfort level of council; can go through with 51% property owner support. Had one district that had % of respondents rather than % of owners and it's a problem.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Yes - for each district, standards & guidelines developed by a Committee of people including a neighborhood architect or builder; given starter information by LC about standards & guidelines.

Historic Districts? Yes. Districts use the Secretary of Interior Standards when Districts don't have specialized design guidelines. A number of historic districts do have specialized guidelines, developed by city staff with public outreach or in partnership with a consultant office.

Effect on Staffing/Workload:

Incentives offered:

Notes & Comments: Fences have been a headache. One part being upgraded to preservation zoning, initiated by nbhd.

Contact: Nancy Jane Baker, 901-576-7170;

http://www.co.shelby.tn.us/county_gov/divisions/plann_dev/aboutus/index_new.htm#top

4. **Napa, CA “Neighborhood Conservation Ordinance”** Enacted 1999

Activities Subject to Review: New construction, demo, alterations, additions.

Who administers: Cultural Heritage Commission, within Planning Commission

Nomination Criteria: Familiar visual features, cohesiveness in design

Nomination Process: Nominated by Cultural Heritage Commission.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Standards in ordinance specific so as to avoid interpretation problems.

Historic Districts? 1 district, have lots of resources but don't offer incentives locally; but allows to use historic building code, makes state tax credits available,

Effect on Staffing/Workload: The conservation district requires a 1/2 time position. The Planning Department had to reallocate existing staff.

Incentives offered: None

Notes & Comments:

Contact: 707.257.9530 Scott Klingbeil sklingbe@cityofnapa.org

5. **Portland, OR** “Plan Districts” Enacted 1978

Activities Subject to Review: Major alterations. Activities regulated in Conservation Districts are identical to those in Historic Districts, but are given greater latitude.

Who administers: Historic Preservation Program; Bureau of Planning split into 2 groups a few years ago - current (Office of Planning & Development Review) and long-range. Current Planning has Historic Landmarks Commission with 2 functions quasi-judicial review (implementing regulations design, designation, demo review) and legislative in Bureau of Planning (long range one) (determining what regulations should apply to historic resources in city, etc.). In other words, plans created by the Bureau of Planning are implemented by the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Nomination Criteria: Significance, stability, community interest.

Nomination Process: Districts originally created in 1993 when blight, demolition and growth anticipated; districts created then with no owner consent. State subsequently stepped in and required 100% owner consent, effectively shutting down new nominations.

Design Standards/Guidelines: By state law must have a 2-track system: 1st track, most popular, is objective standard where discretionary review not required. 2nd track, based on Community Design Guidelines (Sec'y of Interior Standards basis).

Historic Districts? Yes. Districts use the Secretary of Interior Standards when Districts don't have specialized design guidelines. A number of historic districts do have specialized guidelines, developed by city staff with public outreach or in partnership with a consultant office.

Effect on Staffing/Workload:

Incentives offered:

Notes & Comments: Conservation districts have proven to be more hassle than they're worth; the difference between the two is confusing.

Contact: Cielo (Shello) Lutino, 503-823-6879; Liza Mickle, 503-823-7666;
www.ci.portland.or.us

6. **Riverside, CA** “Neighborhood Conservation Areas” Enacted 1996

Activities Subject to Review: Same as historic for contributing resources, non-contrib review less strict. Considered a level of hist. desig

Who administers: Staff of Cultural Heritage Board, within Planning Department

Nomination Criteria: Lighter requirements than HD; context, familiar visual city features, cohesiveness of design. Contributing resources measured against significance/character standards of historic.

Nomination Process: Usually by neighborhoods, w/ public hearing process at Cultural Heritage Board and City Council. Majority approval not required but is typically sought by Council.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Conservation areas contain contributing and non-contributing resources. Contributing are treated like historic resources, using historic property standards and guidelines. Non-contributing resources are measured by a more lenient standard, but restrictions exist to maintain area's character.

Historic Districts? Yes

Effect on Staffing/Workload: The creation of conservation districts happened at the beginning of the City's historic preservation program in the early 1980s, so it's difficult to say how it increased workload. In other words, it happened at the same time other aspects of the program were started so it's difficult to separate out. Staffing would depend largely on how many conservation districts are being created, how many properties they include, and what your process is for designation/determination. The time spent also depends on public willingness to designate (assuming you have a process for public participation as we do). Design guidelines (which may or may not be a part of the process) can also be time consuming.

Incentives offered: Their incentives are the same for conservation districts as historic districts. - - Designation is free - Neighborhood signage is free - Planning Department design review fees are waived - Currently implementing the Mills Act, which is state-enabled legislation in California which gives property owners a reduction on property taxes based on a rather complicated formula. The Mills Act one of the only incentives available for single-family property owners but is also applicable to income-producing properties. - They use of the California State Historical Building Code which can ensure retention of character defining features but also often saves money. This is for interior and exterior work - They use CDBG funds for low interest home improvement loans (\$10,000 at 3% interest)

Notes & Comments: Issue Certificates of Appropriateness

Contact: Janet Hansen, Cultural Resources Specialist, 909-826-5463
jhansen@ci.riverside.ca.us

ADMINISTERED BY MUNICIPAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION AGENCY – ADVISORY REVIEW.

1. **Atlanta, GA** “Conservation District” Enacted 1994

Activities Subject to Review/Comment: Major alterations

Who administers: Atlanta Urban Design Commission, Zoning Department

Nomination Criteria: Historical, architectural, cultural significance

Nomination Process: At least 10 neighborhood property owners submit nomination with required information. Notice of intent to nominate sent to all owners in neighborhood. Public meeting at Zoning Board. Ordinance to establish district approved by majority vote of City Council.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Advisory, based on Secretary of Interiors Standards

Historic Districts? Also has historic and landmark districts. Differs from hd's thru comment vs. binding.

Effect on Staffing/Workload: Only have one conservation district, which was put in place in 1994 and contains approximately 260 parcels. While the reviews that done in Conservation Districts are advisory only, they still prepare a staff report and each project is placed on the Commission's regular agenda and heard like all the other regulated, certificate of appropriateness applications. No additional staff was added in response to the designation of this Conservation District or the other districts where they have regulatory powers. Only this year, now that they do three times the number of reviews done 10 years ago, were they allowed to hire one additional person.

Incentives offered: They do not have economic incentives for conservation districts per se. The economic incentive that is available to existing conservation districts is based on it also being a national register district.

They have economic incentives available to historic districts -- have a tiered system so have Landmark and Historic Districts in addition to Conservation. Tax abatements for HDs and Landmark Districts, not Conservation Districts (CDs). For more information about all the economic incentives go to www.ci.atlanta.ga.us, then click on "city directory", click on "Atlanta Urban Design Commission", click on "more information" on the next two screens, then our main menu will appear, scroll down to "Economic Incentives" and click on it.

Atlanta is currently exploring the possibility of passing some legislation that might discourage people from tearing down older homes and putting oversized starter mansions in their place. It would stop short of the "architectural review" the Commission does now. This discussion is only in the preliminary stages.

Notes & Comments: Working well. A wealthy neighborhood has been only district created, in response to neighborhood concerns (wanted the opportunity to comment but didn't want hd restrictions). Only demos have been non-contributing structures, but there had been over-large replacements. Staff overloaded and not allowing any more dist of any type. " All I can tell you is that a staff of four doing 458 reviews a year (2002) is not the Titanic hitting an iceberg and going down in a couple of hours, rather it is a ship that sinks an inch or two every week."

Contact: Karen Huebner, ED; Doug Young; Susan Gwinner; 404.330.6200;
<http://www.ci.atlanta.ga.us/citydir/urban/urban.htm> khuebner@ci.atlanta.ga.us

ADMINISTERED BY NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP -- BINDING VS. ADVISORY DETERMINED BY NEIGHBORHOOD

1. **Cambridge, MA** "Neighborhood Conservation District" Enacted 1983

Activities Subject to Review: New construction, demo, additions, alterations - different for each (1st district didn't review alterations originally but later amended to do so.) Some districts are advisory and some are binding based on size of project, recog signif, extent of demo - specific guidelines about each type.

Who administers: Neighborhood Conservation District Commissions; nominations to serve on task force w/ certain prof quals, appointed by City Manager. Several districts recommend that 1 member be from Historical Commission for experience.

Nomination Criteria: Citywide significance.

Nomination Process: 10 registered voters or Landmarks Commission begin process. Study of merits by Landmarks Commission then ensues. If recommended by Landmarks Commission, goes to City Council where Ordinance to establish district approved by majority vote of City Council.

Design Standards/Guidelines: Yes - for each CD with exemptions; study committee created by City Manager to work with LC staff to develop standards & guidelines

Historic Districts? Landmarks Commission was created in 1975 to handle both Historic and Conservation Districts.

Notes & Comments: Spoke to Sarah Burks. Have 1 district admin by HC - last designated public felt more comfortable not residential mostly commercial and had several individually desig, the rest are admin by nbhd (4 others)

Effect on Staffing/Workload:

Incentives offered:

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www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~Historic/districts.html