Raleigh

HISTORIC DESIGN STANDARDS

PRESERVE OUR PAST. SHAPE OUR FUTURE.








PROJECT UPDATE TO RHDC

November 12, 2026



Engagement

THE LAKOTA GROUP.

Engagement Activities to Date

- Two Community Open House workshops, August 11 & 13
- 12 Listening Sessions, including:
  - Residents of each HOD
  - Design professionals
  - Preservation orgs
  - Owners of landmarks
- Community Survey: 166 responses



Themes







Expressed wishes for the new Design Standards

- Clarity, Predictability, and Ease of Use

  Design standards should be easier to understand and apply, with clearer definitions, more illustrations, and examples of acceptable and unacceptable changes.

  The review process was sometimes described as intimidating, costly, and unpredictable.

  There was interest in expanding administrative approval for some types of work, but no consensus on what should qualify.

Expressed wishes for the new Design Standards

- Clarity, Predictability, and Ease of Use
- Flexibility in Materials, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation

  Openness to substitute materials, particularly when original materials are unavailable, deteriorated beyond repair, or difficult to replicate.

  Windows, wood siding, and porch repairs emerged as recurring challenges.

Expressed wishes for the new Design Standards

- Clarity, Predictability, and Ease of Use
- Flexibility in Materials, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation
- Managing New Construction, Additions, and ADUs

  Support expressed for allowing historic neighborhoods to evolve while ensuring new development respects established character, scale, and massing.

  Desire for clarity regarding ADUs, their placement, size, character, and relationship to primary building.

Expressed wishes for the new Design Standards

- Clarity, Predictability, and Ease of Use
- Flexibility in Materials, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation
- Managing New Construction, Additions, and ADUs
- Recognizing District-Specific Character

  While each district has some unique attributes, most include diverse architectural styles. District-specific considerations might include development patterns, landscapes, histories, and cultural identities.

Expressed wishes for the new Design Standards

- Clarity, Predictability, and Ease of Use
- Flexibility in Materials, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation
- Managing New Construction, Additions, and ADUs
- Recognizing District-Specific Character
- Landscapes, Sustainability, and Adaptation

  Mature trees, setbacks, and other site features are important contributors to district character.

  Nevertheless, participants support flexibility for tree management, native landscaping, stormwater improvements, solar panels, and other resiliency measures.

Expressed wishes for the new Design Standards

- Clarity, Predictability, and Ease of Use
- Flexibility in Materials, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation
- Managing New Construction, Additions, and ADUs
- Recognizing District-Specific Character
- Landscapes, Sustainability, and Adaptation
- Public Education and Accessibility

  Design Standards update should be combined with increasing public awareness so property owners are aware of the differences in types of overlay districts and when a COA is required.

Other Topics







Tension between flexibility and specificity

Standards should address affordability of improvements (note regulatory constraints)

Standards should address maintenance and repair challenges

Public wants a yes/no rulebook

Should paint color be regulated? (It's reversible)

Clarify distinctions of Major & Minor works

Address how to regulate architectural style of new construction

A challenge for the Design Standards process:

We sought public input on individual district characteristics that the new district-specific Design Standards should address, but input was somewhat less robust than we had hoped.



What's next?

- Continue to identify district-specific issues
- Draft overall Design Standards
- Draft district-specific Standards
- Spring 2027 Community Open House + public engagement
- Staff, RHDC, and Community reviews and revisions
- Final draft
- Public presentation to RHDC


Questions?
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Thank you!