

How Are HPOZs Governed?

Each HPOZ is overseen by a board whose five members have a demonstrated knowledge and interest in the history and architecture of the HPOZ area. Three of the five must be owners or renters who live within the HPOZ. One of the members must have extensive real estate or construction experience and is appointed directly by the Mayor. The Council member of the District where the HPOZ is located appoints another board member (who must be a renter or owner in the HPOZ). Two members — one licensed architect and one HPOZ resident are appointed by the Cultural Heritage Commission. The final member of the HPOZ board is selected by a majority vote of the other four members, and also must be a resident of the HPOZ. Members of the HPOZ Board serve for a term of four years. Each HPOZ Board must schedule a minimum of two meetings per month.

What Does an HPOZ Board Review?

An HPOZ Board has oversight concerning exterior alterations only. Interior modifications, such as bathroom or kitchen remodeling, may proceed without HPOZ Board review. In general, exterior changes, such as additions to the structure, installation or removal of fencing, or window and door replacement, first need to be reviewed by the Board. The Board can recommend either an Exception or a Certificate of Appropriateness. An Exception is granted if a structure, landscaping, or natural feature is:

- 1) being restored to its original appearance under the approval of the HPOZ Board;
- 2) deemed hazardous by the Department of Building and Safety and is being monitored by the Board; or
- 3) enlarged with any addition of less than 250 square feet involving no increase in height and undertaken with approval by the HPOZ Board.

The majority of projects reviewed by the Board fall within this category.

Projects that do not fall within the Exception category as listed above are evaluated for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). A COA is an approved certificate for the construction, demolition, alteration, removal, or relocation of any structure, landscaping, natural feature or site within a HPOZ. Projects requiring a COA will be assessed a fee as required by the L.A. Municipal Code Section 19.01A (currently \$261). These proposed projects go to the Planning Department Staff for final review and approval. Decisions can also be appealed to the local Area Planning Commission.

Each HPOZ Board is guided in their decision-making process by a Preservation Plan. When an HPOZ is created, the Board, residents, and property owners create a set of design guidelines specific to the needs of their neighborhood. Until a Preservation Plan is adopted, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are used for project evaluation.

Residents and property owners do not face initial fees or annual dues because of an HPOZ designation. The HPOZ's regulations do not require or force residents to improve or "fix up" their property. Should a home be destroyed by a natural disaster, residents are not required to duplicate the previously existing structure. All residents are invited to public meetings and hearings with the five-member board and can participate to the extent they desire.

How Does a Community Become an HPOZ?

The HPOZ process may be initiated by the City Council, Planning Commission, Cultural Heritage Commission, or by the owner or renter of a property within the proposed HPOZ. Most communities begin by organizing neighborhood meetings to inform residents about the HPOZ process and to discuss the benefits of having an HPOZ established in their neighborhood. Frequently, community members ask the City Council representative for assistance; the Council member can introduce a City Council motion initiating the HPOZ process. However, without united and organized community support, there is little chance of the successful establishment of an HPOZ.

Before an HPOZ may be designated, a detailed cultural resource survey of the neighborhood must be completed, a process which also defines the proposed HPOZ's boundaries. This survey identifies the structures within the proposed HPOZ and identifies them as either "contributing" or "non-contributing". In general, structures identified as "contributing" are those buildings which are examples of the predominant styles of the area, built during the time period when the bulk of the structures in the HPOZ were constructed. "Non-contributing" structures are those which have been severely altered and/or were built after the majority of the historic structures and therefore do not contribute to the historic architectural fabric of the area. Landscaping and natural features can also be identified in the survey. The survey also includes an overview of the community's history and development, detailing the significance and context of the area history and its architecture. In addition, the survey contains photographs and a brief description of each structure.

The assembled HPOZ application, including the completed survey and letters of support from the community, is first sent to the Planning Department, then reviewed by the Cultural Heritage Commission and the City Planning Commission, before going to the City Council for final approval. The entire process generally takes six months to one year after applications are submitted.