



CITY OF DELRAY BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

100 N.W. 1ST AVENUE • DELRAY BEACH • FLORIDA 33444 • (561) 243-7040



1993 • 2001 • 2017

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD STAFF REPORT

Atlantic Avenue Historic District

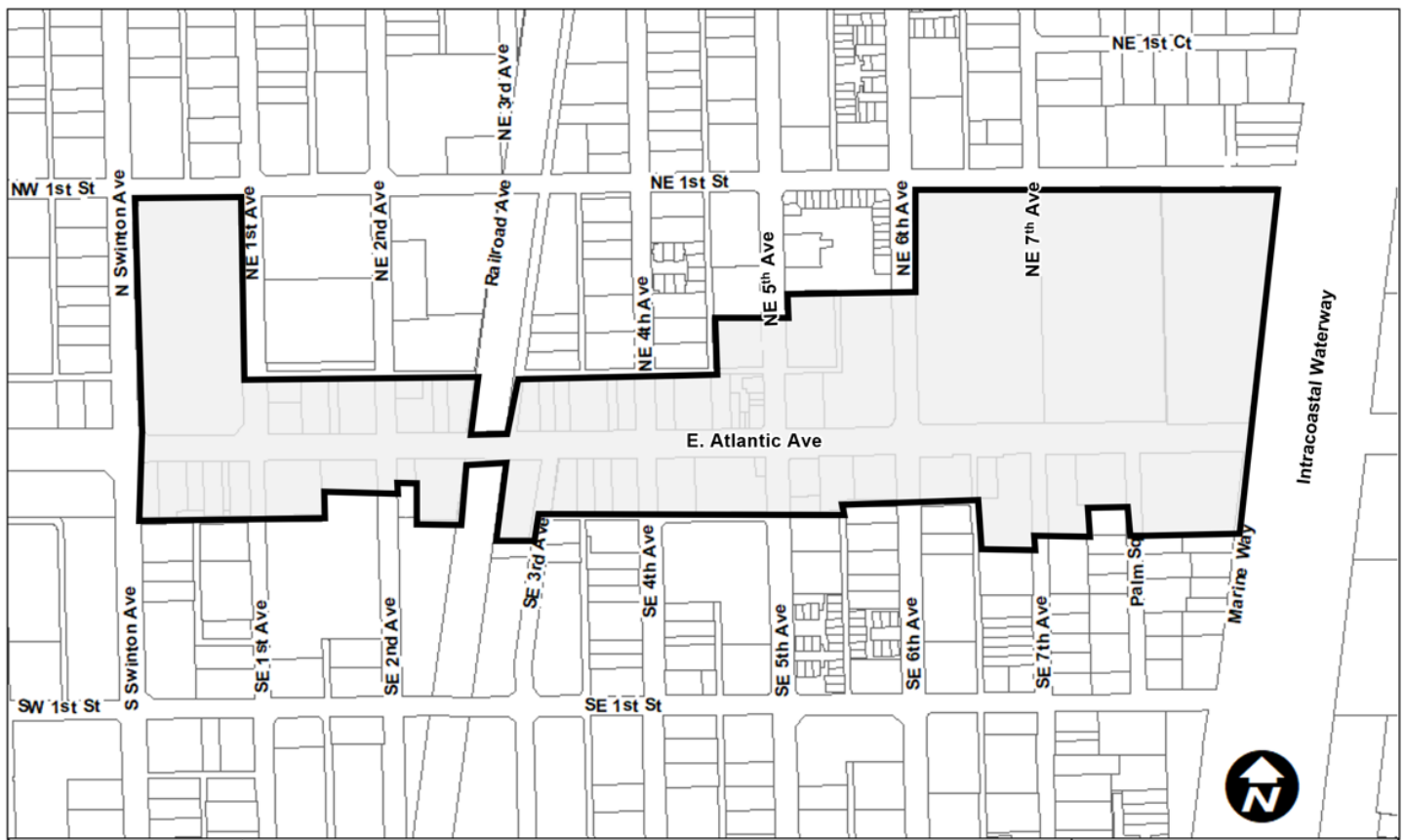
Meeting	File No.	Application Type
June 7, 2023	2021-278	Historic Designation

REQUEST

The action requested of the Board is that of making a recommendation to the City Commission regarding Ordinance No. 26-23 for the historic designation of the “**Atlantic Avenue Historic District**”, which is generally located along E. Atlantic Avenue from Swinton Avenue to the Intracoastal Waterway, pursuant to Land Development Regulations (LDR) Section 4.5.1(B) & (C), Designation Procedures.

GENERAL DATA

Location: Generally, along E. Atlantic Avenue from Swinton Avenue to the Intracoastal Waterway
Zoning: CBD (Central Business District), OSSHAD (Old School Square Historic Arts District), & OSR (Open Space & Recreation)
FLUM: CC (Commercial Core), HMU (Historic Mixed Use), OS (Open Space), & CF (Community Facilities)
Existing Land Uses: Commercial, Residential, Community Facilities, & Open Space



Project Planner:

Michelle Hoyland, Principal Planner, moylandm@mydelraybeach.com

Review Date:

June 7, 2023

Attachments:

1. Designation Report & Maps
2. Ordinance No. 26-23

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2015, the City of Delray Beach created the Historic Preservation Task Force, which was intended to explore options for strengthening Historic Preservation in Delray Beach. The Task Force presented their recommendations to the City Commission in 2017, which included creating three new historic districts, one of which was to study the potential for a new historic district along the Atlantic Avenue corridor. The City Commission accepted all of the recommendations of the Task Force and staff has been working to complete those recommendations.

In 2021, the City Commission directed staff to prioritize the study of the Atlantic Avenue corridor for potential historic integrity. The city engaged the services of Richard J. Heisenbottle Architects, Inc. (RJHA) to complete a Cultural Resource Assessment and Survey of the Atlantic Avenue corridor from I-95 on the west to Ocean Boulevard/State Road A1A on the east. The document, known as the "Atlantic Avenue Historic Resource Survey", was presented to the City Commission for review and direction.

On July 19, 2022, the City Commission directed staff to proceed with the historic designation of the Atlantic Avenue Historic District along E. Atlantic Avenue extending from Swinton Avenue east to the Intracoastal Waterway. On April 19, 2023, the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) reviewed the Atlantic Avenue Historic Resources Survey designation report and set a public hearing date for June 7, 2023.

The subject request is to make a recommendation on Ordinance No. 26-23 for the Historic Designation for the Atlantic Avenue Historic District.

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

To qualify as a historic site or historic district, the property or properties must fulfill one or more of the criteria set forth in LDR Section 4.5.1(B)(2) and/or (3).

(B) Criteria for historic designation of districts, sites, and buildings.

- (1) To qualify as a historic site, historic district, historic structure, or historic interior, individual properties, structures, sites, or buildings, or groups of properties, structures, sites, or buildings must have significant character, interest, or value as part of the historical, cultural, aesthetic, and architectural heritage of the city, state, or nation. To qualify as a historic site, historic district, or historic structure, the property or properties must fulfill one or more of the criteria set forth in subsection (2) or (3) below; to qualify as a historic interior the interior must fulfill one or more of the criteria set forth in subsection (2) and meet the criteria set forth in subsections (3)(b) and (3)(d).**
- (2) A building, structure, site, interior, or district will be deemed to have historical or cultural significance if it meets one or more of the following criteria:**
 - (a) Is associated in a significant way with the life or activities of a major person important in city, state, or national history (for example, the homestead of a local founding family);**
 - (b) Is the site of a historic event with significant effect upon the city, state, or nation;**
 - (c) Is associated in a significant way with a major historic event, whether cultural, economic, social, military, or political;**
 - (d) Exemplifies the historical, political, cultural, economic, or social trends of the community in history; or,**

- (e) Is associated in a significant way with a past or continuing institution which has contributed substantially to the life of the city.
 - (3) A building, structure, site, or district is deemed to have architectural or aesthetic significance if it fulfills one or more of the following criteria; except that to qualify as a historic interior, the interior must meet the criteria contained within subsections (3)(b) and (3)(d):
 - (a) Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by one or more distinctive architectural styles;
 - (b) Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, period, or method of construction;
 - (c) Is a historic or outstanding work of a prominent architect, designer, landscape architect, or builder; or
 - (d) Contains elements of design, detail, material, or craftsmanship of outstanding quality or which represented, in its time, a significant innovation or adaptation to the South Florida environment.
 - (4) A building, structure, site, interior, or district will be deemed to have historic significance if, in addition to or in the place of the previously mentioned criteria, the building, structure, site, or zone meets historic development standards as defined by and listed in the regulations of and criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, as prepared by the United States Department of the Interior under the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. A copy of these standards for the National Register is made part of this section as if fully set forth herein.
- (C) Procedures for historic designation.
- (1) Buildings, structures, archaeological sites, or districts which meet the criteria for historic sites or districts set forth in Section 4.5.1(B) may be designated as historic sites or districts, and listed on the Local Register of Historic Places.
 - (2) Nominations for historical site or district designation shall be made to the Historic Preservation Board on an application form developed and approved by the Board.
 - (a) Nominations for historic site status may be initiated by:
 - (1) The Historic Preservation Board;
 - (2) The City Commission; or
 - (3) The property owner.
 - (b) Nominations for historic district status may be initiated by:
 - (1) The Historic Preservation Board;
 - (2) The City Commission; or
 - (3) The property owner(s).
 - (3) A preliminary evaluation of the information provided on each nomination application shall be conducted by the Historic Preservation Planner to determine if it generally conforms with historic status criteria. A designation report shall then be prepared which contains the following:
 - (a) Proposed legal boundaries of the historic building, archaeological site, structure, or district;

- (b) Any proposed conditional zoning regulations designed to replace or complement existing zoning regulations with regard to, but not limited to use, floor area, density, height, setbacks, parking, and minimum lot size;
 - (c) Analysis of the historic significance and character of the nominated property; and
 - (d) Analysis of optional historic interiors for those buildings and structures with interior features of exceptional architectural, aesthetic, artistic, or historic significance.
- (4) A public hearing before the HPB shall be set, and notice of said hearing shall be made to the owner(s) of affected property at least ten days prior to the hearing by regular mail. Additional notice shall be given in the same manner as provided for a rezoning action [see Section 2.4.2(B)(1)(b)] and by notice published in the newspaper at least ten days prior to the hearing, provided, however, posting pursuant to 2.4.2(B)(1)(b) is not required.
- (5) After conducting the public hearing, the Historic Preservation Board shall vote on the designation. A majority of the entire Board, present and voting, must act in the affirmative to approve the designation. The City Commission shall consider the recommendation of the Historic Preservation Board through its standard ordinance adoption procedures.
- (6) The Board will issue an official "certificate of historic significance" to owner(s) of properties which are individually designated or classified as contributing to a historic district listed on the Local Register of Historic Places, as identified in Section 4.5.1(I).

The RJHA Atlantic Avenue Historic Resource Survey report contains sufficient information to meet the criteria stated in LDR Section 4.5.1(B)(2) & (3). The report documents the following:

"RJHA evaluated the integrity of all properties, 50 years or older, within the Atlantic Avenue commercial corridor, and classified them as contributing or non-contributing. Additionally, RJHA evaluated the corridor to provide recommendations for boundaries of a potential district. The National Register Criteria was utilized to determine whether a property was contributing or non-contributing. This resulted in a survey report that addresses the specific classifications, observations, and recommendations for that potential district.

After reviewing the results of the survey, it was determined that the best boundaries for a potential historic district along Atlantic Avenue would start at Swinton Avenue to the west, and run east to the Intracoastal Bridge. The proposed boundary would include the contiguous parcels on either side of Atlantic Avenue, north and south, and a few of the parcels just north of 445 East Atlantic. We included these properties off of Atlantic Avenue proper because they are an additional group of contributing buildings to a block that is mostly contributing structures.

It is preferable to have the highest percentage possible of contributing structures in a proposed district while maintaining continuity and thoughtfulness of boundaries, and we think these solutions do that. With this proposed boundary for the Atlantic Avenue district, there are 67 [70] buildings/properties in total, with 43 [44] contributing properties and 24 [26] non-contributing properties (and 1 surface parking lot). This means that well over 50% of the properties would be considered contributing.

Because of these strong numbers, we recommend that this be the district boundary for either a local district designation or for a National Register of Historic Places nomination. The Period of

Significance would be from 1903-1968. Though all properties previous to 1972 were surveyed, nothing was determined as contributing after 1968.”

After further review there are 70 properties total within the proposed Atlantic Avenue Historic District, 44 of those properties would be considered contributing resources and 26 properties considered non-contributing resources; thus, 63% of the properties are considered contributing.

The attached Atlantic Avenue Historic Resource Survey report demonstrates that the area qualifies as a historic district based upon both the National and Local Designation criteria; thus, the area qualifies for designation to both the Local and National Registers of Historic Places. Specifically, relating to the Local Register of Historic Places the area is deemed to have historical or cultural significance as it exemplifies the historical, political, cultural, economic, or social trends of the community in history; and, it is deemed to have architectural or aesthetic significance. Specifically, the area: (a) portrays styles and local interpretations of distinctive architectural styles; (b) embodies distinctive characteristics typical of those styles and period of construction; and, (c) is a historic or outstanding work of a prominent architect, designer, landscape architect, or builder.

The predominant architectural styles include Frame Vernacular, Masonry Vernacular, Mediterranean Revival, Mid-Century Modern, Minimal Masonry, Mission, Mixed, Streamline Moderne. Additionally, there are 2 properties that are considered historic landscapes (Veteran’s Park and Worthing Park), which are included as sites that contribute to the proposed district. The proposed Period of Significance is 1903-1968. The area contains structures that were designed by Samuel Ogren, Sr., Delray Beach’s most prolific architect. Finally, the area contains elements of design, detail, material, and craftsmanship of outstanding quality and that represented, in its time, a significant innovation or adaption to the South Florida environment.

While the subject request is for designation to the Local Register of Historic Places, the board could also nominate the Atlantic Avenue Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. Such requires a separate effort that includes preparation of an application to the Secretary of the Interior. The Atlantic Avenue Historic Resources Survey report can be utilized in that effort.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The city of Delray Beach Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2020 and is known as the Always Delray Comprehensive Plan. The update began with the creation of a Steering Committee, appointed by the City Commission. Community workshops were held at the outset to discuss and receive public input on the plan subjects and issues impacting the city. The community and Steering Committee input, along with the input of Subject Matter Experts, consisting of city staff, consultants, and community members, was utilized to formulate the elements. The Always Delray Comprehensive Plan guides future growth and redevelopment for Delray Beach regarding land use, mobility, housing, historic preservation, healthy community, education, open space and recreation, conservation, capital improvement, strategic partnerships, infrastructure, and coastal management. The Always Delray Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement is as follows:

“Delray Beach is a vibrant, award-winning “All-America City” composed of a charming downtown Village by the Sea and dynamic, diverse neighborhoods. We proudly celebrate our historic heritage and look forward to a bright future. Our goal is to provide a high quality of life that is healthy and welcoming for residents, visitors, and business owners.”

The Historic Preservation Element (HPE) of the Comprehensive Plan contains goals, objectives and policies that strengthen and support historic preservation practices and programs, which have been ongoing in Delray Beach since the late 1980's. The HPE notes the following:

"In 1989, the City of Delray Beach adopted the Comprehensive Plan, which "proposed a renaissance for the City, a revival in both economic and social terms, based on its unique history and culture". That renaissance has occurred with great success and the threatening decay of the historic downtown was successfully prevented. Delray Beach's downtown is now known nationwide as a bustling and desirable hub for business, culture and living.

It is important to recognize that the preservation, protection and enhancement of cultural and historic resources have public value, as they are visible and tangible reminders of the history and heritage of the city, state and nation; thus, creating a sense of place. Further, historic preservation has proven to be a significant economic driver for heritage tourism, a legacy industry, resulting in a positive and stabilizing impact on property values. Finally, conservation of historic resources is a bona fide form of sustainability as protection of finite and non-renewable resources, embodies the energy of those structures; hence, the most sustainable structure is the one already built.

Today, the City moves towards a focus on preventative maintenance, a need to ensure that the success the community worked so hard for be preserved for future generations. Historic preservation was at the center of that success and will continue to be an integral part of Delray Beach's ongoing success."

Below are the applicable HPE Goals, Objectives, and Policies:

GOAL HPE 1

PRESERVE, PROTECT, ENHANCE AND SUPPORT

SECURE FOR FUTURE GENERATION THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN THE UNIQUE HERITAGE OF DELRAY BEACH, AND PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, THROUGH PURPOSEFUL IDENTIFICATION, PROTECTIONS AND CONTINUED USE OF BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES AND DISTRICTS, WHICH EXHIBIT SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES OR ARE ASSOCIATED WITH IMPORTANT CULTURAL EVENTS AND/OR PEOPLE IN THE CITY'S HISTORY.

Objective HPE 1.2 Designated Resources

Maintain and increase the number of historic resources listed in the Local and/or National Register of Historic Places

Policy HPE 1.2.2

Continue to study and evaluate the eligibility of properties and potential historic districts for listing on the Local and/or National Register of Historic Places.

Policy HPE 1.2.3

Continue to expand the inventory of historic properties by preparing new Florida Master Site Files for documented and undocumented properties and by updating existing Florida Master Site Files for properties that have undergone alterations or demolitions.

Policy HPE 1.4.8

Conduct a Cultural Resources Survey Report of Atlantic Avenue from Interstate-95 to Ocean Boulevard for the purpose of identifying a qualifying area or areas where a historic district(s) may be established through the designation process identified in the Land Development Regulations. [Complete by 2022]

Below are the applicable Economic Prosperity (ECP) Element Goals, Objectives, & Policies:

GOAL ECP 6	ECONOMIC PLACEMAKING PROVIDE THE PROPER BUILT ENVIRONMENT, SPACE DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS TO PROTECT AND GROW DELRAY BEACH'S ECONOMIC BASE.
GOAL ECP 8	COMMUNITY LIFE CREATE AND SUSTAIN A DIVERSE, AFFORDABLE, VIBRANT, AND SAFE COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS THE NEEDS OF CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES AND ATTRACTS A CREATIVE CLASS OF WORKERS, BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS, AND VISITORS.

Objective ECP 6.6 Community Branding

Create a brand that supports economic growth and leverages existing historic, cultural, community and economic assets.

Objective ECP 8.1 Arts & Culture Amenities

Maintain and enhance the unique arts and cultural amenities of the City.

Policy ECP 6.6.1

Celebrate and support preservation of Delray Beach's historic and cultural resources in recognition that they have a vital role supporting tourism and the local economic base.

Policy ECP 6.6.3

Support the adaptive re-use of historic structures in commercial and mixed use districts in recognition of the economic benefits of historic preservation.

Policy ECP 8.1.2

Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of the City's historic building inventory and leverage such efforts in branding and marketing efforts.

Below is the applicable Neighborhood, Districts, and Corridors (NDC) Goal & Policy:

GOAL NDC 1	NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS, AND CORRIDORS ENHANCE THE QUALITY AND CHARACTER OF THE CITY'S NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS, AND CORRIDORS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY IN WHICH TO LIVE, WORK, PLAY, AND GROW.
-------------------	--

Policy NDC 1.3.8

Identify incentives that support and encourage the adaptive reuse of structures with a Commercial Core land use designation that are eligible for historic designation for the purpose of maintaining and preserving Delray Beach's historic fabric. [Complete by 2025]

Designation of the Atlantic Avenue Historic District will fulfill the policies noted above by preserving & enhancing the character of the Atlantic Avenue commercial corridor, promoting retention of the scale of the historic downtown, supporting adaptive reuse of existing structures, encouraging heritage tourism, and aiding to expand the economic base of the city.

The Atlantic Avenue Historic Resource Survey report notes that:

"...the City of Delray Beach has invested significant time and effort into these programs because it understands that preservation, and the activities that support it, provide many social, economic, and aesthetic benefits to a community and is a central building block for revitalization and growth. Historic preservation is an economic generator that enhances the community through job

creation, stabilizes property values, and enriches the cultural environment. All of these factors have been realized by Delray Beach and because of this, it has grown from a quiet, beachfront community into the vibrant, thriving city it is today.”

Historic preservation is an economic tool that ensures the future success of the community through stakeholders' investments in historic and cultural resources. For example, Old School Square, a former original school site built in 1913 and located in the center of downtown, was preserved due to the efforts of the community. The Palm Beach County School District had abandoned its use of the site and buildings as a school in the mid to late 1980's. This vacancy had a negative effect on the surrounding downtown area as many businesses were already struggling to keep their doors open; with the school shuttered up, many surrounding businesses followed suit. Many ideas of what to do with the site, how to redevelop it, were discussed, including building a bowling alley or new department store on the site. The community came together and started a movement to preserve the site as a cultural arts facility with the hopes of spurring revitalization of the downtown. These efforts were successful through a partnership with the city, which included the city purchasing the property. Old School Square was preserved, restored and is now known as the city's crown jewel of historic resources.

Subsequently, in the late 1980's the city undertook major strides in protecting its historic resources. The City adopted its first historic preservation ordinance, created the Local Register of Historic Places and established its first four historic districts. The City also adopted the first Comprehensive Plan which included policies addressing historic preservation in the community. Revitalization of the downtown began, and historic preservation set the stage for Delray Beach and its downtown, which in turn protected local historic and cultural resources. Additional factors fueling local success were downtown revitalization programs, such as, the Main Street program (a historic revitalization program). Introduced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980, the program includes strategies, plans and investments that have helped many struggling downtowns recover. The program was designed to build stronger communities through preservation-based economic development, such as the idea of “buying local”; a concept that was the foundation upon which Delray Beach was built, but that had become part of a bygone era in the 1970s and 1980s as commerce was directed to newly constructed shopping malls in the suburbs. The late 1990s and early 2000s marked Delray Beach's “Renaissance”, as the downtown had been reinvented, people were visiting day and night, property values in the city soared and tourism once again became integral to the economy. The commitment to the revitalization of historic downtown Delray Beach has earned the city praise from renowned planners and economists, describing it as a “world class community”. Delray Beach is a testament that historic preservation is a tool that preserves cultural landscapes and is a key component that is beneficial to the success of the local economy.

Finally, designation to the Local Register of Historic Places provides for incentives such as:

1. The Local Historic Ad Valorem Tax Exemption program, which provides for a property tax exemption for qualifying improvements and additions;
2. Some privately owned historic properties or businesses, may also be eligible for low-interest loans or grants available from the federal government, city or county government, or private advocacy organizations;
3. FEMA incentives such as finished floor elevation variances;
4. Exemption from the CBD Green Building requirements as historic structures have been exempted from inclusion in the regulations/requirements;

5. Vesting of existing, non-conforming conditions such as properties that lack required parking or exceed density/intensity requirements;
6. Relief (Waivers & Variances) from Land Development Regulations via approval from the Historic Preservation Board;
7. Should the area be nominated and approved for listing to the National Register of Historic Places, additional tax incentives are available for improvements and additions to properties, which include a 20% income tax deduction;
8. Economic benefits - Historic preservation activities in Florida, including rehabilitation of historic buildings, heritage tourism, the operation of history museums and activities generated by Florida Main Street programs contribute some \$6.3 billion annually to the state. These impacts include the creation of jobs, income to Florida residents, an increase in the gross state product, increased state and local taxes, and increased in-state wealth; and,
9. Conservation and sustainability principles - Historic preservation represents an original form of sustainability, through adaptive reuse of historic structures; thus, benefiting the environment through a reduction of resource and material consumption by protecting building materials and man-hours from the eminent waste of a landfill. Preventing climate change is no longer solely a goal of environmentalists; rather it is a goal for all.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

- A. Continue with direction.
- B. Recommend approval to the City Commission of Ordinance No. 26-23, amending Section 4.5.1, "Local register of historic places" of the Land Development Regulations for the historic designation of the "Atlantic Avenue Historic District", by finding that the amendment and approval thereof is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and meets the criteria set forth in Land Development Regulations.
- C. Recommend approval to the City Commission of Ordinance No. 26-23, amending Section 4.5.1, "Local register of historic places" of the Land Development Regulations for the historic designation of the "Atlantic Avenue Historic District", by finding that the amendment as amended and approval thereof is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and meets the criteria set forth in Land Development Regulations.
- D. Recommend denial to the City Commission of Ordinance No. 26-23, Ordinance No. 26-23, amending Section 4.5.1, "Local register of historic places" of the Land Development Regulations for the historic designation of the "Atlantic Avenue Historic District", by finding that the amendment and approval thereof is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and does not meet the criteria set forth in Land Development Regulations.

PUBLIC AND COURTESY NOTICES

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Courtesy Notices are not applicable to this request.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Notices were mailed 10 days prior to meeting. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public notice was published in the newspaper at least 10 days prior to the meeting. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda was posted on 05/31/23, 5 working days prior to meeting.
--	--

