The information provided in this handout is to provide an overview of the City’s Design Review Board process. All plans and reports submitted must be prepared by qualified, licensed professionals in their respective fields. All required stamps and signatures must be provided on all documents as appropriate.

The City’s design review process is located in Chapter 17.58 (Design Review) of the Goleta Municipal Code. The goal of the Design Review Board is to work in partnership with property owners and developers to help implement the City’s adopted plans and design guidelines as well as to identify and help resolve any design issues that may be of concern to the broader community.

The Design Review Board holds public hearings as part of the standard three-step process described below:

1. **Conceptual Review.** All development subject to review by the Design Review Board will be reviewed at the conceptual level.
   a. Conceptual Review provides an opportunity for the City to review and comment on a project’s concept or theme when it is still in the early stages of development before the applicant has committed to and significantly invested in a particular design.
   b. At Conceptual Review, the applicant and the Design Review Board discuss and consider only broad issues such as site planning, general architectural style, and the project’s relationship to its site and the surrounding neighborhood.
   c. Applicants may bring sketches and/or conceptual drawings, including schematic sections and three-dimensional renderings, and should have completed site studies that address various aspects of site design (e.g. general massing of buildings, grading, access, landscaping concepts, etc.).
   d. No formal action is taken by the Design Review Board at a conceptual level; however, comments may be offered that give the applicant general direction for future review. Additionally, the Design Review Board, the Director, or Planning staff may determine during the Conceptual Review that a site visit and/or story-poles will be required, and/or that the preparation of other plans will be needed in order to determine project compatibility with the neighborhood or compliance with applicable development standards (e.g., landscape, lighting, grading and drainage, etc.).

2. **Preliminary Review.** Preliminary Review is a formal review of an application in order to confirm that the proposed development complies with all applicable design standards. Fundamental design issues such as precise size of all built elements, site plan, floor plan, elevations, landscaping, and hardscaping are resolved at this stage of review. The Review Authority’s decision at Preliminary Review is the formal action for Design Review, which may be appealed. See Section 17.58.060 (B) Design Review Board Levels of Review for Design Review Accompanying Zoning Permits and Design Review accompanying Discretionary Actions.
3. **Final Review.** Final Review is the last level of Design Review of the completed working drawings for a project, excluding electrical, plumbing, mechanical and structural drawings, unless components of these plans would affect the exterior of the building or are requested earlier in the process by a Review Authority. See Section 17.58.060 (C) Design Review Board Levels of Review for details on the Final Review process. Plans submitted for Final Review must conform to those plans that received Preliminary Approval. An action of the Design Review Board to grant Final Approval is not subject to Appeal.

4. **Multiple Levels of Review at a Single Meeting.** The DRB may be asked to review and act upon applications for Conceptual/Preliminary/Final Design Review at a single meeting with appropriate for the project, all required information is submitted, and the project is properly noticed and agendized for such multiple levels of approval.

5. **CEQA Review.** Decisions by the DRB or any higher Review Authority at Preliminary Review are discretionary actions and are therefore subject to environmental review under the provisions of CEQA.

6. **Project Changes Requiring Additional Review.** Please refer to Section 17.58.070 (C) of the Goleta Municipal Code regarding the review process for projects that have already secured DRB approval.

7. **Required Findings and Conditions.** The DRB may only grant Final Design Review Approval if it is determined that the required findings can be made as outlined in Section 17.58.080 of the Goleta Municipal Code. The DRB may impose reasonable conditions on a Design Approval that is related and proportionate to what is being requested and as deemed necessary to ensure that the standards and requirements of the City are being met. Please refer to Section 17.58.090 for the type of conditions that could be imposed.

8. **Time Limits.** Design Review approval shall expire **one (1) year from the date of Preliminary Approval**, unless the project receives Final Approval. Design Review approval shall expire **three (3) years from the date of Final Approval** unless the associated Zoning Permit has been approved. The Director may grant extensions on these timeframes. Please refer to Section 17.58.100 of the Goleta Municipal Code for complete details.