



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**15-3342

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**Agenda Item Number:** 5.

**Agenda Date:** 5/20/2015

**In Control:** Governance Committee

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**Department:** DSD and OHP

**Council District(s) Impacted:** City wide

**SUBJECT:**

Potential amendments to City Code Chapters 6 and 35 related to the process for the review and consideration of “dangerous structures” to determine the feasibility of repair or demolition to abate safety hazards.

**SUMMARY:**

District 1 Councilman Roberto Treviño has submitted a City Council Resolution (CCR) to amend the process for how the Development Services Department (DSD), Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), the Building Standards Board (BSB) and the Historic Design and Review Commission (HDRC) review and determine the feasibility of repair or demolition of “dangerous structures”.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

City Code Chapters 6 and 35 currently outline the procedures for how DSD and OHP work with the BSB and HDRC to address structures that are defined as “dangerous buildings” due to significant structural and/or safety defects. City Code also outlines the required makeup of the BSB as well as how the BSB and HDRC are utilized to review “dangerous structure” cases involving designated historic structures to determine the feasibility of repair or demolition to abate the hazards. Under the current procedures, DSD and OHP work together to review dangerous structure cases and attempt to get the owner of the structure to repair the structure where feasible as demolition is regarded as the remedy of last resort.

Councilman Treviño’s CCR recommended three changes to the current process in order to help ensure that historic properties, their owners and the historic neighborhoods are afforded every opportunity to efficiently rehabilitate these designated structure while maintaining safety in these areas. In addition, as the HDRC is a recommending body while the BSB is a quasi-judicial body on these matters, one of the recommendations attempts to modify the interaction of the BSB and HDRC on those “structures having historical significance” by providing an additional BSB hearing to better protect historically, culturally, architecturally and archeologically significant structures while still ensuring the safety and general welfare of the public.

The three changes proposed include the following:

1. Creating a protected class of citizens including persons over the age of 65 years, veterans of the United States Military; persons who have owned or lived in their houses for 20 years or longer, and persons who have a serious chronic health condition.
2. Mandating modified educational and background requirements for appointees to the building standards board to ensure that each panel of the BSB includes an architect, a civil engineer, a general contractor, a social worker, a health care professional, a retired person (over the age of 64) and a veteran of the United States Military
3. Modifying the current City Code to require a full BSB meeting of the 14 members (i.e., both 7 member panels) to convene and consider “dangerous structure” cases for those structures designated “historically significant”.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Governance Committee refer this item to both the Quality of Life in June and the Infrastructure and Growth Sub-Committee in June for consideration and for Council consideration in August.