

# EXECUTIVE BRIEF REGULAR MEETING

**AGENDA DATE:** July 20, 2021

**DEPARTMENT:** Community Sustainability

**TITLE:**

Resolution No. 31-2021 – (continuance) an amendment to page 198 of the City's Historic Preservation Design Guidelines to allow Low-E coatings with a minimum visible light transmittance (VLT) of 60% for glazing in the historic districts

**SUMMARY:**

At the May 4, 2021 City Commission meeting, staff was directed to amend historic preservation requirements that limit Low-E coatings to a minimum 70% VLT. Members of the public expressed concern that the most widely available Low-E coatings do not satisfy the adopted VLT requirement. Lowering the VLT requirement to 60% increases the range of the Low-E coatings that are permitted for properties located within the City's historic districts. As a result, darker Low-E coatings, which cannot be considered visually similar to clear, will be permitted if the subject resolution is approved.

**BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:**

**Low-E Coatings in Historic Districts:** At the **January 15, 2019 City Commission Meeting**, the **LWB Historic Preservation Design Guidelines** were adopted via Resolution No. 03-2019. Page 198 of the Guidelines states the following for window replacements: "Windows historically utilized clear glass, and therefore clear glass is the most compatible type for historic structures. Windows with Low-E or Solarban coatings, applied tint, and mirrored finishes are not recommended."

In 2019, the City of Lake Worth Beach also published **Educational Guidelines** through a Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources small-matching grant (#19.HSM.300.087). The Educational Guidelines review steps towards energy efficiency, which can be applied to both existing homes and new construction. As indicated on page 11, "Low-E" is a non-reflective, non-tinted window film that greatly reduces heat gain through windows. It's available as a film applied to existing windows or in replacement windows. Tints and mirrored glass are typically not appropriate for historic structures and are not as effective as a 'Low-E' treatment."

At the **October 14, 2021 HRPB meeting**, the Board determined that Low-E coatings with a minimum 70% VLT are within the range of "clear glazing", which is the standard set by the LWBHPDG. Visible light transmittance (VLT) refers to the amount of light that passes through a glazing material. A higher (VLT) means there is more light is being transmitted. For impact glass, the VLT typically ranges from 80% for uncoated clear glass to less than 10% for highly reflective coatings on very dark tinted glass. The VTL is determined by the thickness of the frame and sash, coating or tint on the glass, and any grids or muntins as they block some of the light. The VTL representative of the center-of-glazing (COG) region only measures the amount of light that is being transmitted through the glass, not the entire window or door product.

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Pursuant to the City's participation in the **Certified Local Government program**, a notice of at least 30 days was provided to the Florida Department of State regarding a City Commission meeting (June 15, 2021) to review the amendment to the LWBHPDG. **The letter received by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, is included as an attachment.** The Florida Department of State Certified Local Government Coordinator, Mariah Justice, indicated that the proposed amendment to the LWBHPDG that allow Low-E coatings with a visual light transmittance of less than 70% is not in agreement with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: "retrofitting historically-clear windows with tinted glass or reflective coatings will negatively impact the historic character of a building..."

At the **June 9, 2021 HRPB meeting**, the Board reviewed the draft resolution and the recommendation provided by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. The Board recommended denial of the resolution as the proposed change is not recommended by the Division of Historical Resources as it is not in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and the Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

The item was continued by the City Commission at the June 15, 2021 meeting to the July 20, 2021 meeting.

#### **MOTION:**

Move to approve/disapprove Resolution 31-2021 amending page 198 of the City's Historic Preservation Design Guidelines to allow Low-E coatings with a minimum visible light transmittance (VLT) of 60% for glazing in the historic districts.

#### **ATTACHMENT(S):**

Resolution 31-2021  
HRPB Staff Report  
Florida Department of State Letter  
Design Guidelines Amendment Process Memorandum