

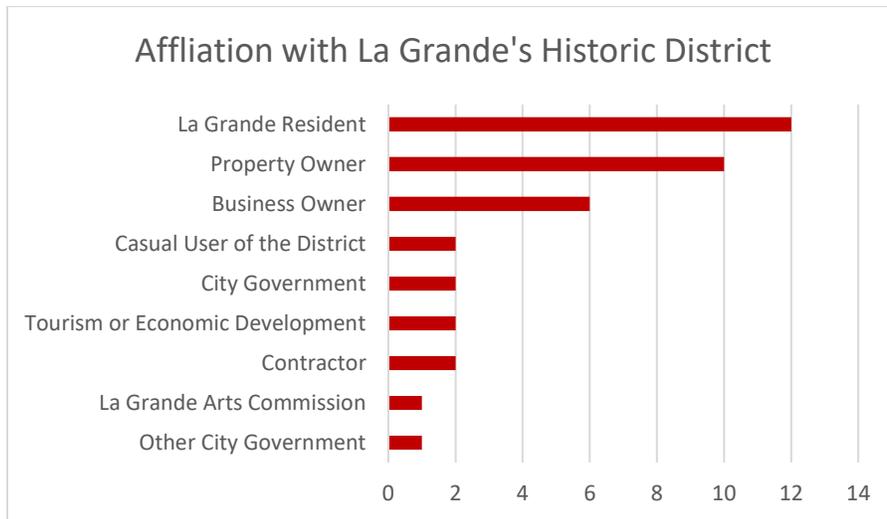


# Peter Meijer Architect, PC

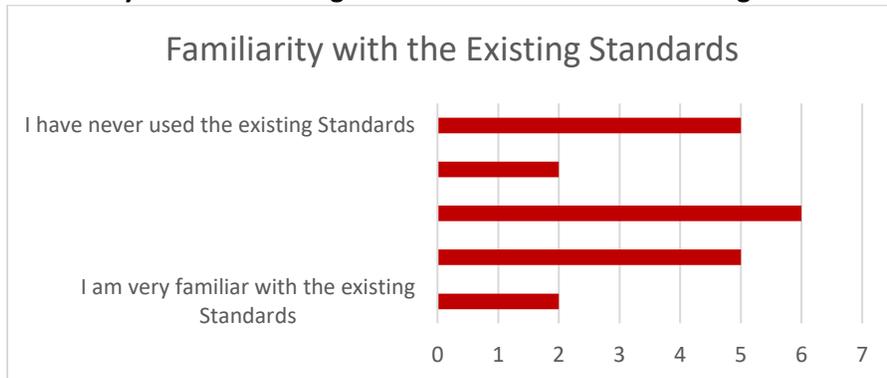
## Minor Planning & Design

**PROJECT:** La Grande Downtown Historic District Standards **DATE:** November 15, 2021  
 Preservation Code Update  
**PROJECT NO.:** 21-024 **LOCATION:** La Grande Historic District

### Demographics of Respondants



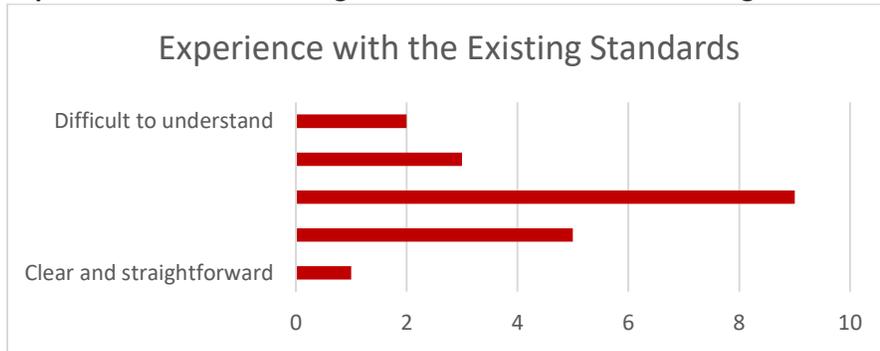
### Familiarity with the Existing Downtown Historic District Design Standards



### Additional information provided:

- My experience is that [applicants] don't read them or they don't understand the terminology. Sometimes [applicants] return 2 or 3 times before their application is complete.
- I have used the standards often to advise building and business owners seeking Facade Grants or doing other major renovations.
- Very confusing and often not applied with uniformity; no enforcement for violations.

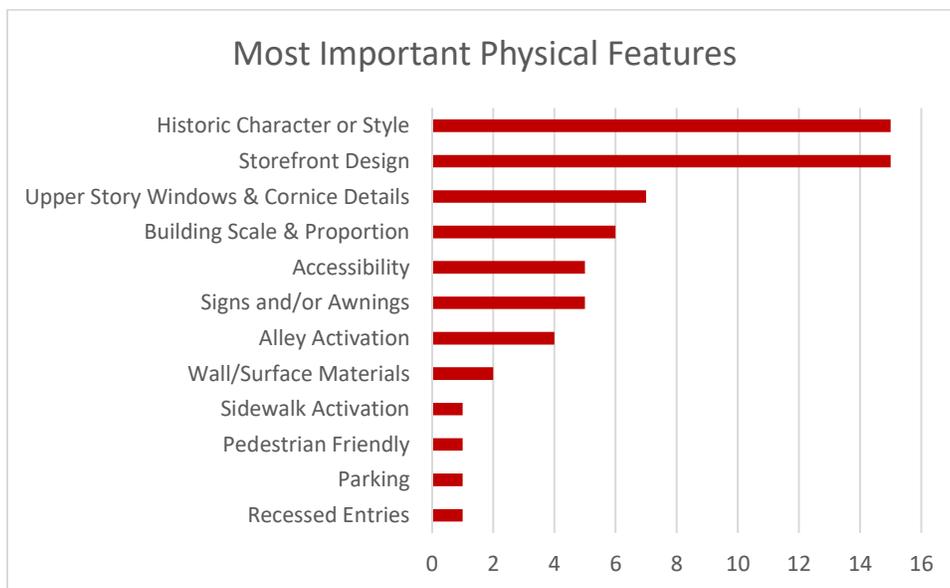
### Experience with the Existing Downtown Historic District Design Standards



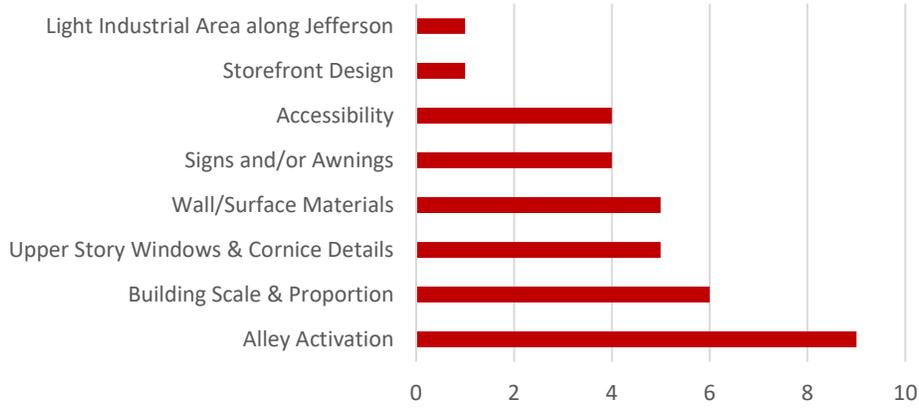
Additional information provided:

- With the Landmarks applications, customers don't understand that they are in the historic district and don't understand the meanings behind the categories. They also don't understand historic preservation. Pictures I have noticed are helpful for some.
- Some parameters can be quite vague and require further clarification to ensure adherence to the standards/historic preservation principles.
- I should not have to spend money to get some ones approval to fix the eye of the front of my building.
- The district seems dead set on enforcing historic standards, at the expense of updating and upgrading blighted properties.
- Too much room for interpretation with no image or actual building materials listed.
- The process was straight forward, the timing was reasonable.
- In most instances the Standards were quite clear but some were left open to interpretation.
- Mike Boquist explained the standards to me, which made them very easy to understand.

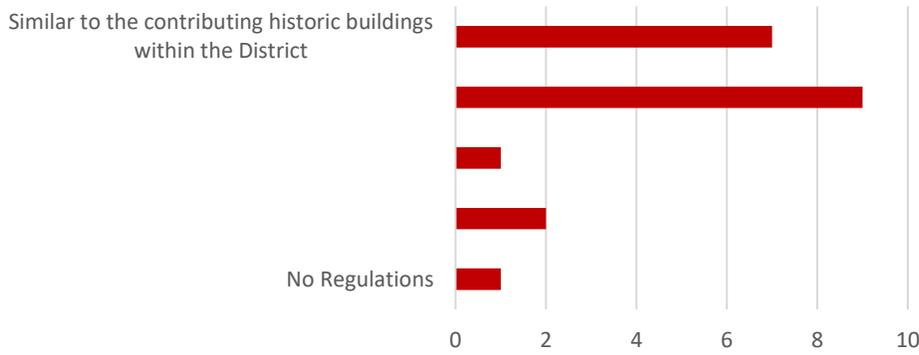
### Evaluation of Historic District Features



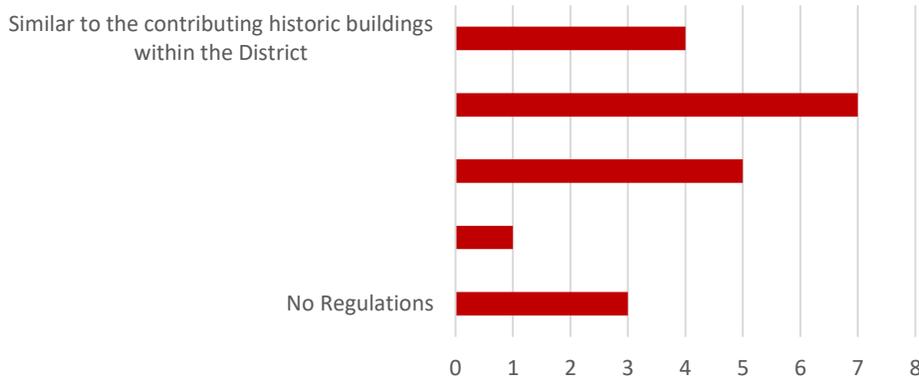
### Least Important Physical Features



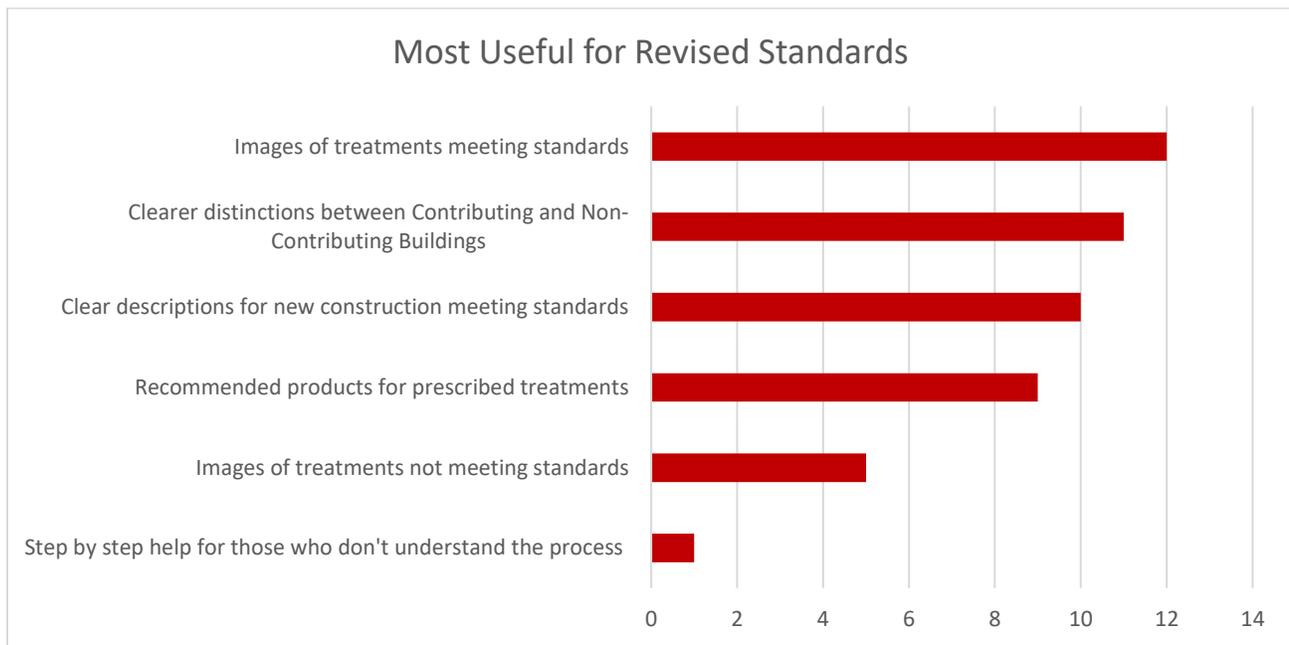
### Desired Regulation of New Construction



### Desired Regulation of Non-Contributing Buildings



## Elements to include in Revised Historic District Design Standards



### Other thoughts shared in the survey:

- In my opinion it's extremely important for non-contributing properties & new construction to fit in with the surrounding contributing properties just as it would have been 100+ years ago.
- I think the Historic District Design Standards impedes building and improvement within the community. Housing in the area is not in touch with the needs of the community.
- Maybe checklist within the code would be helpful for targeting the specific project someone is doing and citing the pertinent standards rather than giving them the whole design standards to read and pick through.
- While the history and charm of our downtown are important, the economic impact on our community of renovating blighted structures, which also allows for increased use of 2nd/3rd story apartments is more important. I feel as though the landmarks commission is more focused on maintaining 100+ year old design standards, for which they have no personal experience renovating, instead of the actual revitalization of the downtown district. The cost of meeting their design and material standards is a large obstacle to overcome, and typically a losing proposition to any real estate investor.
- Design standards need to be practical for this century to avoid unnecessary costs and/or material that is no longer easily attainable. E.g., a look and feel standard versus specifying exact materials for use in construction. Wood framed windows in large buildings are extremely expensive and not energy efficient, a simple wood trim should be sufficient.
- Current standards are reasonable and necessary. I would like to La Grande downtown transform into something like Walla Walla has done. The one way streets allowed them to widen sidewalks and make the core feel more people friendly.
- Standards should be made clearer utilizing pictorial examples of meeting and non meeting projects, and they should be applied the same throughout the district with room for variations when materials are not available to meet Standards.
- I feel like a lot of these questions are a bit over my head. I don't feel like I'm educated enough about historic district issues and design standards to contribute meaningfully to these particular questions. I'm operating at a broader (more layperson?) level--questions about what I enjoy or value would be more appropriate for someone like me than questions about which design features are important or not. Some things I would like captured: In a historic district, I like the idea of historic behavior patterns being

promoted like walking and biking and maybe using smaller scale public transit. I am charmed by how a building looks, and how it looks with its fellows, but equally important to me is whether or not the streetscape is activated on a human level.

- It takes a lot of time and money to revamp a building that has been left to rot. It is important to make it so the standards set do not prevent them from being a valuable asset in the community. An example is requiring parking for a building that has been in existence for over 100 years or not allowing double layer glass to make the area match the desired use qualifications.