NASHVILLE PLANNING

MEMORANDUM

TO: MEMBERS OF THE METRO PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: METRO NASHVILLE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION OF DOWNTOWN CODE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTTEE MEMBER

DATE: NOVEMBER 12, 2026

BACKGROUND

The Downtown Code Design Review Committee (DTC DRC) is established to review applications within the Downtown Code (DTC) zoning district. The DTC recognizes that deviations from the design standards of the Downtown Code from time to time require the exercise of judgment and that design and business representatives from within the community should inform the exercise of that judgment.

The DTC DRC is comprised of eight (8) voting members. One member shall be nominated by each of the following with confirmation by the Planning Commission: Chamber of Commerce, Civic Design Center, Downtown Partnership, and the Urban Residents Association. One member shall be appointed by each the following: Mayor, Vice-Mayor (on behalf of the Metro Council), Historic Commission, and the Planning Commission.

Members are familiar with the downtown area and have knowledge of development, design, and land use practices. Each member shall be a design professional, with a degree or several years of experience in architecture, landscape architecture, planning or urban design. The members nominated by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Nashville Downtown Partnership are exempt from this requirement. Where a nominating or appointing entity has responsibilities to both the DTC DRC and East Bank Design Review Committee (EB DRC), the same individual will serve in both capacities.

The Civic Design Center has nominated Gary Gaston to the DTC DRC for a new term, as required by the Downtown Code. Gary Gaston is the CEO of the Civic Design Center and serves as Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Tennessee Knoxville College of Architecture + Design. He received his Bachelor of Architecture from UTK, and a M.Ed. in Community Development and Action from Vanderbilt University. Gaston helped lead numerous planning and design efforts for the Civic Design Center during his nearly 25-year tenure, including its visionary *The Plan of Nashville: Avenues to a Great City* (2005). Gaston served as executive producer of the National Endowment for the Arts funded documentary film *Design Your Neighborhood*, and co-authored two books, including *Shaping the Healthy Community: The Nashville Plan*, published by Vanderbilt University Press in 2016.

The nomination satisfies the prerequisites to serve on the DTC DRC and staff recommends confirmation thereof.