



# Council Agenda Report

Item 6a

**Department:** Community Development  
**Cost Center:** 4006  
**For Agenda of:** 12/2/2025  
**Placement:** Public Hearing  
**Estimated Time:** 60 minutes

**FROM:** Timmi Tway, Community Development Director  
**Prepared By:** Brian Leveille, Principal Planner

**SUBJECT:** CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE AND RESOLUTION TO ADOPT UPDATES TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE AND HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT (CODE 0758-2025)

## RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Introduce an Ordinance entitled, "An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo, California, repealing Chapter 14.01 (Historic Preservation Ordinance) of the Municipal Code in its entirety and introducing and adopting a replacement Chapter 14.01 to include recommended updates and amendments as reflected in Attachment B - Exhibit A"; and finding that the project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15308, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment; and
- 2) Adopt a Resolution entitled, "Resolution of the City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo, California, adopting updates to the Historic Context Statement as reflected in the attached Attachment E - Exhibit A"; and finding that the project is categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15308, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment.

## REPORT-IN-BRIEF

An update of the Historic Resources Inventory was included as an implementation task of the City's Major City Goal for Cultural Vitality, Economic Resilience, and Fiscal Sustainability in the 2023-25 Financial Plan. In order to update the Historic Resources Inventory, the current effort (Phase 1) includes completion of an update of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement prior to proceeding with the update of the Historic Resources Inventory. The City has engaged with the architecture and preservation firm Page and Turnbull to assist with the effort.

The City's Historic Resources Inventory comprises all the City's identified historic resources including Contributing and Master List Historic Properties, as well as the City's five historic districts. The City's Historic Resources Inventory includes 760 listed properties and was initiated with major surveys in the early 1980's. Over time, the City's Historic Preservation Program has evolved with notable changes starting in 2010 with the adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance and then with the City's move to a more formal and structured historic preservation program with membership as a Certified Local Government in 2012. In 2013, the City adopted a Historic Context Statement which supplements the Historic Preservation Ordinance in making decisions on a property's historic significance.

As discussed further in this report, the Historic Resources Inventory has long needed a comprehensive review to determine the appropriate status of listed properties in light of these updates and due to the significant period of time that has passed since the majority of properties on the Historic Resources Inventory were listed. Therefore, the City Council prioritized this work as a work plan item for the Community Development Department. Once the Historic Resources Inventory update is completed, the City will have achieved an updated inventory providing certainty that listed properties meet currently adopted criteria, along with more clarity and information to guide decisions when reviewing proposed alterations on historically listed properties. This will result in reduced timeframes for review, more certainty for property owners on how to approach alterations, reduced costs and streamlined project review timeframes.

This item represents the first phase of the project to update the City's Historic Resources Inventory, and the recommended amendments provide an updated framework and guidance for the City's review of the current Historic Resources Inventory, future surveys, and for continued effective implementation of the City's Historic Preservation Program into the future. Once the recommended amendments to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement are completed, staff will initiate Phase 2 of the project, which will include the review of the current Historic Resources Inventory and investigation and surveys for potential new resources.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **General Plan**

Various policies and programs in the Cultural Heritage (Chapter 3) section of the Conservation and Open Space Element support the City's Historic Preservation Program, including the identification and preservation of historic resources. Land Use Element (LUE) Implementation Policy 12.4 also describes the intended use of the [Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) and [Historic Preservation Program Guidelines](#) by the City Council, Cultural Heritage Committee, and other advisory bodies in the review of projects within a historic district or on property with a listed historic resource to ensure protection of historic resources, with the Historic Context Statement also providing the information to support the identification and review of resources. The most relevant policies to the Historic Resources Inventory update effort are listed below:

- [Conservation and Open Space Element \(COSE\)](#) Goal 3.2: The City will expand community understanding, appreciation and support for historic and architectural resource preservation to ensure long-term protection of cultural resources.
- [Land Use Element \(LUE\)](#) Implementation Policy 12.4: Historic Preservation Ordinance and Guidelines are used by the staff, City Council, Planning Commission, Cultural Heritage Committee, and other advisory bodies in the review of projects within a historic district or on property with a listed historic resource to ensure protection of historic resources. The City's Historic Context Statement provides information to support the review and identification of resources.

### **Major City Goals**

An update of the Historic Resources Inventory, beginning with updates of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement was included as an implementation task of the City's Major City Goal for Cultural Vitality, Economic Resilience, and Fiscal Sustainability in the [2023-25 Financial Plan](#). Continued work to complete the Project was included in the [2025-27 Financial plan](#).

### **Municipal Code Chapter 14.01**

The Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 14.01 of the Municipal Code) implements General Plan policies for preservation and includes various provisions for the identification and protection of historic resources including significance criteria, historic classifications, review processes, and requirements that apply to proposed alterations to historic resources including the Secretary of Interior Standards and Historic Preservation Program Guidelines. For this project, various updates are focused on classifications, significance criteria, and review process for historic significance determinations to set the framework for upcoming update of the Historic Resources Inventory. Review procedures and standards applying to alterations to historic properties including additions, new construction, or rehabilitations to historic resources are not within the scope of this project.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Background**

The City's [Historic Resources Inventory](#) identifies properties that have been determined by the City to be important historical resources that should be preserved. The current Historic Resources Inventory comprises the City's identified historic resources, including Master List properties, Contributing historic properties, and five historic districts.<sup>1</sup> In order to implement the City's preservation policies<sup>2</sup>, proposed alterations and new construction on listed Historic Resources Inventory properties or on properties in historic districts are required to meet standards of the City's [Historic Preservation Ordinance](#)<sup>3</sup>. The City's

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<sup>1</sup> The City's Historic Districts include Downtown, Old Town, Mill Street, Chinatown, and Railroad.

<sup>2</sup> General Plan Conservation and Open Space (COSE) Policies 3.3.1 through 3.3.5 call for identification, and preservation of historic resources including historic districts through protections from demolition, relocation, and by ensuring alterations are consistent with Secretary of Interior Standards.

<sup>3</sup> The Historic Preservation Ordinance implements General Plan policies for the protection of historic resources through review for consistency with the Secretary of Interior Standards and the Historic Preservation Program Guidelines.

Historic Resources Inventory is also important because listed properties are categorized as historic resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)<sup>4</sup>.

The City's Historic Resources Inventory has been in place for over 35 years with most of the properties currently on the Historic Resources Inventory having been placed on the inventory as a result of major historic surveys in 1983 and 1987, and then through targeted surveys and individual property evaluations over the years. Currently, there are a total of 760 listed historic properties in the Historic Resources Inventory, comprised of 200 Master List properties<sup>5</sup> and 560 Contributing list<sup>6</sup> properties.

The City's Historic Preservation Program has evolved significantly over time with the most notable changes occurring in 2010, when the Historic Preservation Ordinance and amended Historic Preservation Program Guidelines were adopted. The Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Preservation Program Guidelines added statutory authority and an enforceable framework for the identification and protection of historic resources<sup>7</sup>. Following this, the City also became a Certified Local Government in 2012. Becoming a Certified Local Government made the City eligible to apply for historic preservation grants<sup>8</sup> from the California State Office of Historic Preservation. Certified Local Government status also provides public recognition that the City's Historic Preservation Program is being run consistent with state guidelines. Consistent with requirements from the State Office of Historic Preservation, Certified Local Government status carries a commitment to meeting ongoing certification requirements,<sup>9</sup> which are reported annually including the requirement to maintain a current inventory of historic resources meeting locally adopted criteria.

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<sup>4</sup> Properties included in a local register of historic resources or determined to be eligible for a local register are presumed historically significant and are historic resources for the purposes of CEQA (CEQA Guidelines 15064.5).

<sup>5</sup> Master List Historic properties are distinguished from Contributing properties as the "The most unique and important resources and properties in terms of age, architectural or historical significance, rarity, or association with important persons or events in the city's past, which meet one or more of the criteria outlined in Section 14.01.070." The Master List is the City's highest standard/designation of historic property listing and properties must be on the Master List in order to be eligible for the Mills Act historic preservation and tax incentive program.

<sup>6</sup> Contributing historic resources are described in the Historic Preservation Ordinance as properties that contribute to the historic character of a neighborhood, district, or the City as a whole. Contributing properties include those properties that by virtue of their age, design and appearance, contribute to and embody the historic character of the neighborhood or historic district in which they are located (SLOMC 14.01.050)

<sup>7</sup> Adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance implemented General Plan COSE Program 3.6.10

<sup>8</sup> In 2012, the City received a \$22,500 grant towards preparation of the Historic Context Statement.

<sup>9</sup> Certified Local Governments are required to maintain a historic preservation commission and to make preservation decisions based on adopted criteria of a local ordinance consistent with Secretary of Interior Standards. For the full list of Certified Local Government requirements see:

<https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1072/files/clgrequirements.pdf>

In 2013, the City adopted the Historic Context Statement. This was a key element needed to support the Historic Preservation Program. The Historic Context Statement is a reference document that describes broad patterns of historical development in the community, contexts, associated property types, and a thematic framework to help staff, the public, and decision makers understand and evaluate the City's historic resources. It is a best practice in historic preservation for local jurisdictions to use both the significance criteria (explained below) of an ordinance and the guidance of a context statement to make determinations of a property's historic status.

### **Need to Update the Historic Resources Inventory**

There are several reasons that the Historic Resources Inventory needs to be updated at this time. Since the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement include the significance criteria and guidance for the determination of what properties should be classified as historic resources, and most properties on the City's Historic Resources Inventory were listed over 35 years ago, the majority of currently listed resources have never been evaluated comprehensively for their ability to meet current criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement.

The main issue with the City's inventory and current supporting Historic Preservation Ordinance, continues to be that there is a lack of distinction in the properties on the Contributing list on whether they are contributors to an identified historic district or whether they also have individual significance as a resource. The distinction is critical since alterations to a property that is listed as a Contributor should be evaluated based on the property's ability to continue to contribute to the historic significance of the district it is located in. If the property is individually significant as a resource, such as with the City's current Master List of historic resources, there is a higher level of scrutiny and evaluation required to determine that any alterations will be compliance with [Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> The Secretary of Interior Standards include guidance for the appropriate treatment of historic resources and compliance with the standards is required by the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

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The current Historic Preservation Ordinance is essentially a two-tier system where both Master List and Contributing properties are classified as individual resources. While Master List or Contributing properties may or may not contribute to the significance of a historic district, or the City as a whole, there is no classification or ability to differentiate between individual resources and those that only contribute to the historic significance of a district. This means that since the adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, owners of both Contributing and Master list properties have had to demonstrate compliance with preservation requirements as if their properties were individual resources. Owners of historic properties (mainly Contributing) have often been left with the difficult choice of the uncertainty, cost, and delay associated with trying to appropriately plan an addition or new construction with outdated and minimal documentation on the property's historic status and reasons it was initially listed; or they can weigh the possibility that the property shouldn't be on the list altogether and consider the process of delisting the property<sup>11</sup>. This situation has also resulted in ongoing difficulties for staff and the Cultural Heritage Committee in effectively implementing the historic preservation program. The current scenario has been unnecessarily impeding opportunities for more housing and for property owners to make modifications for their growing family or changing circumstances.

As discussed further in this report, the recommended updates will set a framework to resolve the issues many owners of historic properties are experiencing as described above, by providing an updated significance criteria, clear distinctions between resource types, and by clarifying the definition and classification of Contributing properties as historic district contributors. At the initiation of Phase 2 of the project, when the inventory is updated, staff intends to prioritize review of the current list of Contributing resources to address the issues for many owners of these properties described above. Once the historic resources inventory project is complete in Phase 2, the City's Historic Preservation Program will be up to date where properties on the City's Historic Resources Inventory that remain on the list are correctly classified, based on current property condition, and shown to meet updated criteria based on findings and substantiated evidence.

The City Council has been receiving feedback on the outdated Historic Resources Inventory over the years from members of the public, including former members of the Cultural Heritage Committee, and numerous requests from the Cultural Heritage Committee in budget goal setting sessions to complete the needed update. The City Council included initiation of an update to the Historic Resources Inventory (the "Project") as an implementation task of the City's Major City Goal for Cultural Vitality, Economic Resilience, and Fiscal Sustainability in the FY 23-25 Financial Plan. Continued work to complete the Project was included in the FY 25-27 Financial plan.

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<sup>11</sup> This process requires a historic evaluation report from a qualified historic consultant, review by the Cultural Heritage Committee, and City Council approval.

The City made significant progress towards having an up-to-date historic preservation program consistent with “best practices” of preservation with adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement, and with membership as a Certified Local Government. It is an important next step to complete a comprehensive review of the Historic Resources Inventory along with the needed updated regulatory framework described above to correctly classify historic properties and determine which properties should remain on the list and which properties should be added based on updated criteria consistent with best practices of historic preservation. It is also an ongoing responsibility to property owners to ensure that preservation standards and review requirements are fairly and appropriately applied to properties that have been shown to qualify for listing as resources based on up-to-date information and current standards.

### **Approach to Updating the Historic Resource Inventory**

The City is approaching the Project in two phases, with Phase 1 (current) being updates to the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement. The inventory relies on the interconnected rules and guidance of these documents, and their update will provide the definitions, criteria, and themes/context to guide subsequent work in Phase 2 of the Project, which will be initiated once the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement are adopted. Phase 2 will consist of surveys for new candidate properties to be added to the historic inventory, and evaluation for potential reclassification and delisting of properties on the existing Historic Resources Inventory based on the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement updates made in Phase 1. Phase 2 will be initiated in mid 2026. Review of the current inventory and completion of initial surveys for new candidate properties is expected to take 12-18 months. The ongoing maintenance of the Historic Resources Inventory should continue to be conducted with surveys and reviews of listed resources periodically into the future<sup>12</sup>.

The most significant updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement are discussed below. For a more detailed summary of all changes to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement, see summary tables (Attachments C & F). To view the full text of recommended updates in their entirety, see Attachment B (Exhibit A-Historic Preservation Ordinance Legislative Draft Update) and Attachment E (Exhibit A-2025 Draft Historic Context Statement Update). Additional background documents and Project information can be found on the Project webpage at: <https://www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/community-development/historic-and-archeological-preservation/historic-resources-inventory-update>

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<sup>12</sup> It is a preservation “best practice”, and the State Office of Historic Preservation recommends updating surveys every five years to ensure that local planning and preservation decisions are based on the most current information available.

### **Historic Preservation Ordinance**

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance is the main regulatory document of the City's Historic Preservation Program. The Historic Preservation Ordinance includes definitions of resource types, historic resource designation procedures, historic significance criteria, and standards that apply to alterations. The Historic Preservation Ordinance also describes the roles, duties, and authority of the Community Development Director, Cultural Heritage Committee, and City Council related to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and program.

Main updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance include revisions to historic resource designations, and evaluation criteria for historic significance. The recommended updates generally follow an approach to be more consistent with guidance from the National Park Service and State of California Office of Historic Preservation for the definition and evaluation of historic resources<sup>13</sup>. Minor modifications are also recommended to provisions for the formation and adjustment of Historic Districts. More explanation of changes is provided below.

#### *Proposed Changes to Requirements for Historic Districts (14.01.080)*

This section of the Historic Preservation Ordinance includes provisions for applications to amend existing historic districts and to establish new districts. Historic Districts are designated in City Zoning with an "H" overlay, and amendments or new proposed historic districts constitute rezone actions which require review by the Planning Commission and final action by the City Council. The intent of historic districts is to identify and preserve geographic areas of the City possessing a concentration of historic resources that define a neighborhood's architectural character or sense of place. Recommended amendments included in the draft Ordinance revise submittal requirements to amend or establish historic districts to align with best practices in preservation by focusing on the proposed districts significance and its identified contributing elements. Certain existing submittal and review requirements for the establishment of historic districts are recommended for deletion as they have been deemed unnecessary, including requiring the applicant to provide preservation goals/concerns, design guidelines for the historic district, and review criteria. This information was not required for the City's current historic districts, and it is recommended to remove these requirements for new historic districts since in addition to being unnecessary and inconsistent with current historic districts, the requirements are onerous, as preparation of guidelines and review criteria would require significant expertise and resources that would dissuade property owners from initiating the formation of a district.

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<sup>13</sup> State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #14-Drafting Effective Historic Preservation Ordinances: A Manual for California's Local Governments

*Proposed Changes for Historic Resource Designations*

Current resource designations in the Historic Preservation Ordinance include “Master List” classified properties as the City’s most important and rare resources, and “Contributing” historic properties that meet one or more significance criteria and contribute to the historic significance of a historic district or the City as a whole. Besides the issue that most properties on the Historic Resources Inventory were listed before the City adopted the significance framework and guidance of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement, the current Contributing list does not distinguish between properties that could themselves be considered historic resources, and others which could only be found to contribute to the significance of a historic district. This presents a challenge when reviewing proposals for changes in historic status of a building, or when an alteration is proposed to a listed property. These situations often require professional evaluations and/or review by the Cultural Heritage Committee and extensive work with staff to determine what the historic status of the property should be based on current property condition and significance criteria and guidance of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement.

The updated Historic Preservation Ordinance will provide a framework for reevaluating previously listed resources and will revise classifications in the Historic Resources Inventory to “Landmark” (replaces the current “Master List” designation) and Contributing list resources will be classified as “Local Register Resources.” The City will also continue to have a “Contributing” status designation for properties that are found to be district contributors. The recommended updated classifications are intended to eliminate the current ambiguity in resource status by communicating a clear difference in significance between resource types and will set up the City up for the upcoming update the Historic Resources Inventory, and future survey efforts. In Phase 2, once surveys and review of the Historic Resources Inventory is initiated, the Local Register list (prior Contributing list resources) will be reviewed to determine the properties that should remain on the Historic Resources Inventory (that meet criteria for listing as an individually significant resource as Landmark or Local Register properties) and those that should be designated as district contributors (for their contribution to a historically significant district) or removed from a historic designation altogether.

**Evaluation Criteria for Historic Listing and Proposed Changes**

The Historic Preservation Ordinance outlines the evaluation criteria that is used in order to determine if a property meets historic significance criteria to be a listed historic resource. The current significance criteria are complex and unusual as they could require evaluations to address up to sixteen different potential aspects of significance (see Attachment H, current Historic Preservation Ordinance significance criteria). Recommended updates would also remove “Integrity” as its own significance criteria. Retaining sufficient integrity to convey historic significance is a minimum requirement that should apply to all resources and should not by itself be a qualifying criteria for historic significance.

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The current framework results in unnecessarily lengthy and complex evaluations which can result in significant expense and difficulty for property owners to find historic consultants available to complete this work. This is an issue that commonly arises as historic evaluations often must be completed for various projects involving alterations or new construction, or when a demolition or change in listing status is proposed. Historic evaluations are also commonly required for various CEQA related actions to provide findings and a sufficient evidentiary record for exemptions and cultural resource discussions in Initial Studies (IS-MND) and Environmental Impact Reports (EIR).

The recommended updates include a simplified set of criteria, which are more consistent with other Certified Local Governments and similar to the National Register and California Register. To maintain consistency with the City's Mills Act program, which also confers eligibility for the Mills Act tax incentive program to Master List properties, properties with the updated designation of "Landmark" would also be eligible for the Mills Act tax incentive program. Landmark properties would be distinguished from Local Register Resources<sup>14</sup> as those resources which meet one of the criteria below and that have a high degree of integrity and the greatest importance at the local, regional, state, or national in terms of age, architectural or historical significance, rarity, or association with important persons or events in the City's past<sup>15</sup>. The recommended updated historic resource designation section of the Historic Preservation Ordinance is included below:

### 14.01.050 Evaluation criteria for historic resource designation.

- A. In order to be eligible for designation, a Landmark, Local Register Resource, or Historic District shall be at least fifty years old (if less than fifty it must be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance), demonstrate significance under at least one of the following criteria, and retain integrity as defined in Section 14.01.020.28. Consult "National Register Bulletin No. 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" for guidance on determining significance.
1. *Events*. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
  2. *Persons*. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
  3. *Architecture*. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect or design professional of merit or possesses high artistic values.

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<sup>14</sup> Determinations of status for "Local Register" properties in the recommended update require a noticed public hearings and a recommendation by the Cultural Heritage Committee and action by the Community Development Director.

<sup>15</sup> Determinations for "Landmark" status in the recommended update require noticed public hearings and a recommendation by the Cultural Heritage Committee (CHC) and final determination by the City Council. Properties on the National Register and California Register also would be automatically included in the Historic Resources Inventory as Landmarks.

4. *Information Potential:* It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Amendments are also recommended to provisions on how a historic designation (listing on Historic Resources Inventory) can be initiated (Attachment B, 14.01.070). Similar to the current Historic Preservation Ordinance, the recommended updates provide for the property owner to file an application and for the Cultural Heritage Committee and City Council to initiate an application. Recommended Historic Preservation Ordinance updates would also formalize current practice and remove the Planning Commission and Architectural Review Commission from having the ability to initiate historic listings since these advisory bodies have no purview over individual property historic designations. Recommended updates also include adding the Community Development Director as having authority to initiate preparation of an application for historic designation as a Landmark or Local Register Resource.

### **Historic Context Statement and Proposed Changes**

The Historic Context Statement has been updated to provide better context for a more inclusive approach to preservation of the City's varied resources, and to align with the revised resource categories and significance criteria in the updated Historic Preservation Ordinance. The historical overview and context sections of the current Historic Context Statement, adopted in 2013, have largely retained their overall structure of time periods with associated subthemes<sup>16</sup>. Within this, the revised version reorganizes and expands discussion of minority and ethnic communities within San Luis Obispo to include their contribution as part of the major thematic groupings. In the revised Historic Context Statement, there are not separate "ethnic communities" themes within each temporal context; rather, the significant contributions of San Luis Obispo's Chinese, Japanese, African American, Filipino, and other communities are integrated into the relevant temporal and thematic contexts. This change recognizes members of these groups as significant contributors to the city's development whose social, economic, and cultural experiences are relevant to and reflect upon broader themes. The revised Historic Context Statement also includes a brief discussion of San Luis Obispo's LGBTQ communities. These updates provide a framework where LGBTQ associated properties can be understood as they become age-eligible (over 50 years), or older properties which may be identified in the future can be recognized for their role in these communities' histories. The revised Historic Context Statement additionally includes discussion of later 20<sup>th</sup>-century themes and property types which have recently or will soon become age-eligible for evaluation (over 50 years). Lastly, the evaluation criteria and integrity considerations have been revised to utilize the four basic significance criteria included in the Historic Preservation Ordinance update. Along with revisions to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, this change will make the process of evaluation more straightforward for property owners, consultants, and City staff, and the findings more comparable to that of other Certified Local Governments.

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<sup>16</sup> The Historic Context Statement is formatted with seven overall historical periods in San Luis Obispo's history ranging from the Early History to Early-Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Growth (1945-1980). Within each broad time period the following themes are discussed relative to the built environment: Residential and Commercial Development, Civic and Institutional Development, Agricultural and Industrial Development, and Transportation and Infrastructure related development

### **Next Steps**

Provided the Council approves the recommended actions to introduce the ordinance and approve a resolution for the updated Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement, a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading is scheduled for the Council's consideration to adopt the updated Historic Preservation Ordinance on January 13, 2025. If adopted, the ordinance will become effective on February 13, 2025. Staff will initiate Phase 2 of the project to review the current Historic Resources Inventory and survey for new potential resources in the mid 2026 timeframe.

### **Previous Council or Advisory Body Action**

#### **Cultural Heritage Committee Review**

The Cultural Heritage Committee has been providing guidance and feedback since the initial planning stages of the Project. The Cultural Heritage Committee appointed a subcommittee and provided early feedback on the consultant recommended two-phase approach on December 12, 2022. Staff also provided an overview of the recommended strategy to update the Historic Resources Inventory at the Cultural Heritage Committee special meeting of December 12, 2022, to confirm the recommended approach prior to submitting final Budget Goal Setting recommendations to the City Council, which included the two-phase approach to completing the Historic Resources Inventory update.

On February 27, 2023, the Cultural Heritage Committee reviewed the consultant recommended draft Preliminary Assessment and Recommendations Memorandum for the Project, which identified the main areas of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement that should be updated prior to beginning Phase 2. A [finalized memorandum](#) was prepared following the meeting on March 9, 2023.

On September 25, 2023, staff provided updates and requested any feedback from the CHC on the draft scope of work that would be included in Requests for Proposals (RFP) for assistance with the Project from qualified historic consultants.

The selected historic consultant, Page and Turnbull, held a study session with the Cultural Heritage Committee on April 22, 2024. The consultant provided a [presentation](#) with detailed overview of the main recommended updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement and received feedback from the Committee.

At the Cultural Heritage Committee meeting of November 18, 2024, a subcommittee was appointed to review administrative draft updates of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement. On May 20, 2025, a meeting was held with the Cultural Heritage Committee subcommittee to hear comments on the administrative draft updates and any needed revisions to be included in the final public review draft update documents.

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On [September 29, 2025](#), the Cultural Heritage Committee held a special meeting to review the draft updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement as part of Phase 1 of the Project. The Cultural Heritage Committee voted (5-0) to recommend the updates to the Planning Commission with the following modifications that have been incorporated into the current draft updates:

- Retain Historic Preservation Fund Section (14.01.130) of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- Make correction to reference in relocation section of Historic Preservation Ordinance to refer to required findings for demolition where structures are proposed to be relocated outside the City limits.
- Clarify Historic Preservation Ordinance section 14.01.060 (property owners' ability to object to Landmark listing).
- Correct references in the Historic Context Statement to accurately refer to "Cerro San Luis."
- Consider replacement of existing Mission lithograph in Historic Context Statement with alternative photograph options provided by Committee Member Ashbaugh.

### **Planning Commission Review**

The Planning Commission reviewed the recommended updates on October 22, 2025, and on a 4-0 vote, the Planning Commission recommended the City Council adopt the recommended updates. No changes were made to the Cultural Heritage Committee recommended updates (Attachment G, [Planning Commission Resolution No. PC 1111-2025](#)).

### **Public Engagement**

According to the Public Engagement and Noticing (PEN) manual, the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement updates fall under the inform/consult outreach category because it is an ongoing implementation effort of the Historic Preservation Program, which implements various policies of the General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, and has been included in the 2023-25 and 2025-2027 Financial Plan as a task of the Cultural Vitality, Economic Resilience, and Fiscal Sustainability Major City Goal. In collaboration with City Communications, a project landing page was created with key information, including a timeline, draft documents, and an interest form. The City Communications team also designed and mailed postcards with project details and a Cultural Heritage Committee meeting reminder to all property owners of all 760 historically listed properties in the City. Email notifications were also sent to relevant City News subscribers, meeting reminders and recaps on social media were sent and the main Historic Preservation webpage was updated to improve accessibility and clarity. Notification and opportunity to comment also occurred for Cultural Heritage Committee Meetings on April 22, 2024 (study session), September 29, 2025, and at the Planning Commission on October 22, 2025.

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In addition, at the initiation of the project, staff reached out to various groups recommended by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) specifically to gather information and collaborate on the Historic Context Statement update effort. Staff have also been following up with contacts who have expressed interest in the Project and provided notification of the draft updates to various contacts including local developers, engineers, and architects.

### CONCURRENCE

The recommended updates were reviewed by the City Attorney's Office and staff collaborated with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) for outreach on the Historic Context Statement.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The recommended updates to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement consists of actions by a regulatory agency authorized by the state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, or protection of the environment, and therefore, are categorically exempt from environmental review (Section 15308, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment).

### FISCAL IMPACT

Budgeted: Yes

Budget Year: 2023-26

Funding Identified: Yes

### Fiscal Analysis:

<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>Total Budget Available</b>	<b>Current Funding Request</b>	<b>Remaining Balance</b>	<b>Annual Ongoing Cost</b>
General Fund	\$250,000 Phase 1 and 2	\$0	\$182,289.78	\$0
State				
Federal				
Fees				
Other:				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 250,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$ 182,289.78</b>	<b>\$0</b>

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended actions of this report. The cost of the consultant services that were necessary for the update to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement were allocated through the budget process, as this was a Major City Goal workplan item for the Community Development Department. The allocated amount was for both phases of the project including Phase 1, which is the current update of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Context Statement (\$100,000) and Phase 2 which includes the update of the Historic Resources Inventory (\$150,000) which will be initiated in the 2026 timeframe.

## ALTERNATIVES

1. ***Council could continue review of the recommended updates.*** Council can continue the item for any additional information needed. An action to continue the item should include a detailed description of list of additional information or analysis required to make a decision so that staff and the consultant can be prepared with additional information.
2. ***Council could modify the recommended updates.*** The Council could make modifications to the recommended update with revisions introduced into the ordinance as revised by Council. For comprehensive modifications a continuance will be needed for staff to return with updated documents.
3. ***Council could decide not to adopt the recommended updates.*** Completion of phase 1 of the Historic Resources Inventory update would not be accomplished with this Council action.

## ATTACHMENTS

- A - Draft Ordinance introducing replacement updated Municipal Code Chapter 14.01 (Historic Preservation Ordinance)
- B - Exhibit A – Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance update Chapter 14.01 (legislative draft)
- C - Summary Table - Historic Preservation Ordinance Update
- D - Draft Resolution adopting updated Historic Context Statement
- E - Exhibit A – Draft Historic Context Statement Update
- F - Summary Table - Historic Context Statement Update
- G - PC Resolution No. 1111-2025 (2025 Series)
- H - Current Historic Preservation Ordinance significance criteria (14.01.070)