

City Planning Department

Preservation and Progress Package A

ITEM 1

Planning Commission

November 6, 2025

Goals of Preservation and Progress



Advance equity in preservation and prioritize protection of resources important to BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other historically marginalized communities.



Evaluate the Mills Act program to ensure the program is equitable and incentivizes the protection and restoration of important places in a fiscally responsible manner.



Identify and protect historical properties and districts that are important to the City's history and culture, with a focus on historic districts.



Reform permit processes to better encourage the adaptive reuse of historical buildings on their original sites.



Adopt design standards for historical properties and districts to provide clear, objective requirements and by-right approval for additions and new development.



Remove regulations that unnecessarily impact properties that lack historical or cultural importance.

Integrate Equity as a Core Value

Protect Important Places

Streamline Processes for New Homes

Preservation & Progress:

Package A

Amendments to:

- General Plan
 - Historic Preservation Element
 - Appendix F
- Land Development Code of San Diego Municipal Code
 - Amendments to the Appeal Process for Historic Designations
 - Clarifying Amendments to the Applicability of Complete Communities Housing Solutions in Emerging and Thematic Historic Districts
 - Other Minor Clean-Up Amendments
- Historic Preservation Fund to Advance Equity in Historic Preservation

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

Overview of Narrative Changes:

- Updated discussion regarding Native American resources and consultation to incorporate new laws
- Updated discussion of San Diego Municipal Code to remove discussion of regulatory requirements and permit processing
- Removed references to conservation areas and included language regarding identification, interpretation, and celebration of buildings and areas that are ineligible for designation but important to the community
- Minor updates to outdated language, terminology, and number of resources on the City's register

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- Overview of Policy Updates:
 - Tribal cultural resources and consultation with Kumeyaay Nation
 - Removal of conservation areas and replacement with language regarding celebration of properties that do not meet criteria for historic designation
 - Ensure preservation efforts recognize and celebrate the histories of all communities, including traditionally underrepresented groups
 - Use of objective design standards for historic resources
 - Added new policies regarding promoting use of sustainable materials and practices in restoring historic resources and developing mitigation strategies to address climate change impacts

Package A: Appendix F

General Plan

- Summary of San Diego History
 - Will be comprehensively updated once the Citywide Historic Context Statement is complete in next 2-3 years
 - Interim updates to better address:
 - Tribal cultural history and prehistory
 - Impact of past zoning and lending practices on segregation and lack of infrastructure investment (includes reference to Housing Element Appendix A)

Package A: Board Appointments and Terms

SDMC Section 111.0206

- Change Deadline for Mayor to Appoint a Chair from April 15th to April 30th
- Adds that if a qualified volunteer cannot be found to fill one of the five professional seats, that seat may be filled by a second professional from one of the other four historic preservation-related disciplines.
 - No more than two professional seats in the same historic preservation-related field.

Package A: Noticing & Time Limit for HRB Review

SDMC Section 123.0202

- Clean-Up to Noticing Language to be Consistent with Other City Noticing Requirements
 - Refer to “Record Owner”
 - Must be mailed 10 business days before hearing
 - Content of notice
- Clarifying amendment to clearly state that 90 days of Board review starts with the first HRB meeting in which the designation is considered

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

- Adds Finding that Would Allow City Council to Reconsider the Designation Itself
- Aligns Appeal Filing Requirements with Other City Appeals
- Requires Appeals to be Docketed within 180 Days After Filing

Change to Package A after HRB Review:

- No Longer Proposing Adding Ability to Appeal Board Decisions to Not Designate Property

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Grounds for Appeal

- Current Findings to Appeal Designation by HRB:
 - Factual errors in materials or information presented
 - Violations of bylaws or hearing procedures
 - New information
- Adds “Findings Not Supported” Finding, Consistent with Appeals of Development Permits



Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Grounds for Appeal

Existing Process Two/Three Appeal Findings:

- (3) Grounds for Appeal. A Process Two decision may be appealed on any of the following grounds:
- (A) Factual Error. The statements or evidence relied upon by the decision maker when approving, conditionally approving, or denying a permit, map, or other matter were inaccurate;
 - (B) New Information. New information is available to the *applicant* or the *interested person* that was not available through reasonable efforts or due diligence at the time of the decision;
 - (C) *Findings* Not Supported. The decision maker's stated *findings* to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the permit, map, or other matter are not supported by the information provided to the decision maker; or
 - (D) Conflicts. The decision to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the permit is in conflict with a *land use plan*, a City Council policy, or the Municipal Code.

Proposed Appeal Findings for Historic Designations:

- (a) The Historical Resources Board's action to designate a property may be appealed to the City Council by an *applicant* or an *interested person* on any of the following grounds:
- (1) Factual Error. The materials or information provided to the Historical Resources Board at the designation hearing were inaccurate; or
 - (2) New Information. New information relevant to the property's eligibility for historic designation is available to the *applicant* or the *interested person* that was not available through that person's reasonable efforts or due diligence at the time of the designation hearing; or
 - (3) *Findings* Not Supported. The Board's stated findings to designate in accordance with the City of San Diego Historical Resources Register historic designation criteria as specified in the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Manual and the Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria in the appendices of the Historical Resources Guidelines are not supported by the information provided to the Board; or
 - (4) Violation of bylaws. In making the designation decision, the Board or an individual member did not adhere to the Board's bylaws or hearing procedures.

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Appeal Filing Requirements

- Aligns Filing Requirements with Other City Appeal Processes
- Basic Appellant and Property Information and Grounds for Appeal

Docketing Deadline

- Adds Deadline to Docket Appeal within 180 Days of Appeal Filing

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0206

Clarification of Board Role in Reviewing National Register Nominations

- Clarifies roles consistent with National Historic Preservation Act and CLG roles and responsibilities.

Package A: Clarification to Complete Communities

SDMC Section 143.1002

- Clarifies that Complete Communities Housing Solutions is allowed in Thematic and Emerging Historic Districts if the property is not a contributing resource
- Does not change how Thematic and Emerging Historic Districts have always been regulated
- Consistent with District Procedures which state that only contributing resources are regulated.



Package A: Clarification to Complete Communities

SDMC Section 143.1002

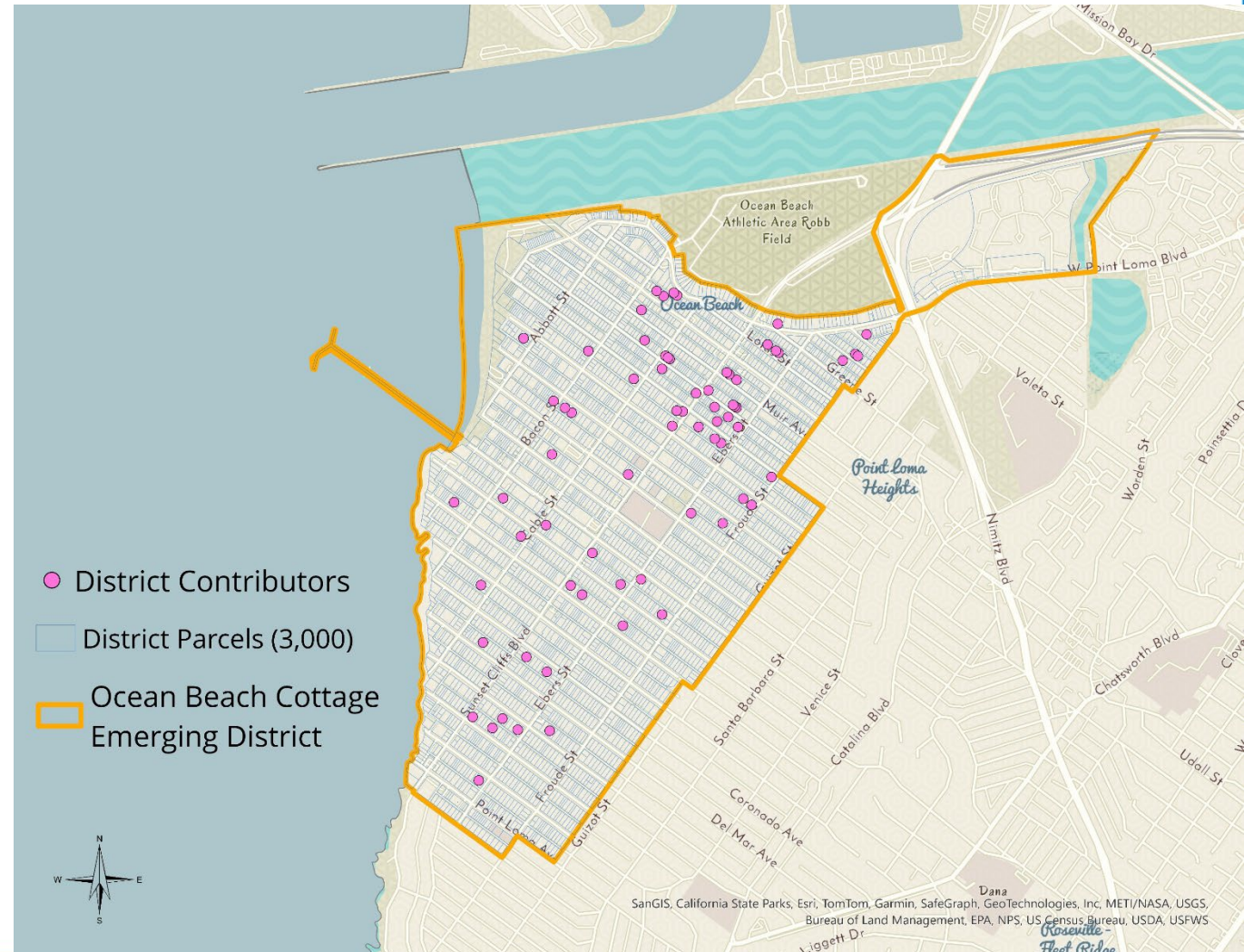
From Historical Resources Board Procedure on Establishing Historic Districts (2011):

“The Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District was established with only a context statement and period of significance to establish the significance of the district, as well as a few properties which fell within that context and period of significance that were eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F. A complete intensive survey was never completed, and therefore all eligible contributing properties are not known. Owners of properties which fall within the context statement and period of significance may bring their properties forward for designation as contributors to the district. **Only those properties identified and designated as contributors are currently regulated.** Because the Ocean Beach Cottage district does not have a full intensive survey, is based on a context statement and period of significance, **and is limited to those properties that fall within the context and period that are volunteered by the property owner for designation**, conversion of this district to a standard geographic district is not feasible. In addition, the district’s long history as a historic district precludes conversion to a Multiple Property Submission. Therefore, the district will continue to be regulated under the prior policy. Property owners may continue to bring properties forward for designation under the established context and period of significance, and **the district shall remain voluntary in nature.**”

Package A: Clarification to Complete Communities

SDMC Section 143.1002

- Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historic District
 - Boundary Encompasses Original Subdivision, which Includes 3,000 Parcels
 - 72 Properties are Designated as Contributing Resources (2.4%)
 - Properties that are Not Designated as Contributing Resources Have Never Been Regulated as Part of the District



Package A: Historic Preservation Fund

Repurpose to Advance Equity in Preservation

- Purpose/focus of the Historic Preservation Fund will be modified to advance equity in preservation through:
 - Funding efforts that support the identification and preservation of resources significant for their association with cultural groups and communities that are underrepresented in historic preservation
 - Direct financial assistance to very low income and low-income owners of historic properties to assist with maintenance and restoration.

Preservation & Progress: Package A

Public Outreach

- Policy Subcommittee in July, August and October 2025
 - Recommended ability to appeal actions to not designate be limited to the property owner.
 - Generally supportive of all other aspects of Package A
- Public Workshop on October 8, 2025

Preservation & Progress: Package A

Advisory Body Recommendations

- Historical Resources Board on October 23, 2025
 - Concluded without a Recommendation
- Community Planner's Committee on October 28, 2025
 - Voted to Oppose Preservation and Progress Package A with Recommendations



Preservation & Progress: Package A

California State Office of Historic Preservation

- As a Certified Local Government, the City is required to provide proposed amendments to the California State Office of Historic Preservation for review and comment.
- On October 23, 2025 the State Office of Historic Preservation confirmed that “OHP has no objection to the proposed changes and supports the City’s efforts.”

Preservation & Progress: Package A

Next Steps

- Upcoming Public Hearings:
 - December 11, 2025: Land Use & Housing Committee (Recommendation)
 - January 2026: City Council (Adoption)



Preservation & Progress: Package A

Recommendation

Recommend to the City Council adoption of Preservation and Progress Package A, which includes:

- **Amendments to the Land Development Code** related to Historical Resources Board appointments, noticing of designation actions, the appeal of decisions by the Historical Resources Board to designate historical resources, review of National Register Nominations, and clarifying amendments related to the application of Complete Communities Housing Solutions in Emerging and Thematic Historic Districts;
- **Amendments to the Historic Preservation Element and Appendix F of the General Plan; and**
- **Amendments to the purpose and intended use of the City's Historic Preservation Fund.**



Preservation & Progress:

www.sandiego.gov/preservationandprogress