

City Planning Department

Historical Resources Board October 23, 2025

ITEM 6: Preservation & Progress Package A

Kelley Stanco, Deputy Director

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
 - Updates 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

- “Legal Basis for Designation” section
 - 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
- “Certified Local Government” section
 - Updated discussion of San Diego Register of Historical Resources to remove listing of Designation Criteria and provide reference to their location
 - Updated the number of designated sites

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- A. Identification and Preservation of Historical Resources
 - Updated language in discussion section
 - 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.
- Policy HP-A.1
 - Updated policy language to reflect historic preservation workplan (which implements General Plan and Community Plan HPE policies) as the main guide of preservation efforts in future years

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- Policy HP-A.2
 - Removed reference 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

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- Policy HP-A.4
 - Revised context statement policy to specify the preparation of a Citywide context statement as well as subject-specific contexts
 - Added policies included in recent CPUs regarding Native American consultation and protection of tribal resources
 - Added policy to ensure preservation efforts recognize and celebrate the histories of all communities, including traditionally underrepresented groups
 - Added policy supporting local organizations in documenting and preserving neighborhood histories

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- Policy HP-A.5
 - Updated language regarding use of US Secretary of Interior's Standards to include objective design standards as well
 - Added policy included in recent CPUs regarding referral of significant archaeological and Native American cultural resources to HRB for designation
- Policy HP-A.6
 - 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: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- B. Historic Preservation Education, Benefits and Incentives
 - Updated discussion to include information regarding new State Tax Credit
 - Added reference to Council Policy 700-46 governing City's Mills Act program
 - Updated language regarding benefits of preservation and work of other preservation organizations

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- Policy HP-B.1
 - Updated policy language to include development of culturally-focused resources and protection of culturally significant resources
 - Added policies regarding:
 - collaboration with schools
 - hosting educational workshops and events
 - creation of repository of locations of importance to the community
 - development of GIS based tools to explore historic resources

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- Policy HP-B.2
 - Added policy regarding offering grants for adaptive reuse
 - Added policy to simplify permitting for adaptive reuse

Package A: Historic Preservation Element

General Plan

- Minor Updates in the October 21, 2025 Staff Memo

Amendments Distributed to the Board on October 10, 2025:	Updated Proposed Amendments:
Policy HP-A.4.c	Policy HP-A.4.c
<u>c. Conduct project-specific Native American consultation early in the discretionary development review process to ensure culturally appropriate and adequate treatment and mitigation for significant archaeological sites with cultural or religious significance to the Native American community in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations and guidelines.</u>	<u>c. Conduct Native American consultation to ensure culturally appropriate and adequate treatment and mitigation for significant archaeological sites with cultural or religious significance to the Native American community in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations and guidelines.</u>
Policy HP-A.4.g	Policy HP-A.4.g
<u>dg. Require the permanent curation of archaeological artifact collections and associated research materials, including collections held by the City, unless State or Federal law or consultation with a Native American Kumeyaay monitor specifies another treatment such as repatriation.</u> Support the permanent archiving of primary historical records and documents now in public institutions.	<u>dg. Require the permanent curation of archaeological artifact collections and associated research materials, including collections held by the City, unless State or Federal law or consultation with a Most Likely Descendant specifies another treatment such as repatriation.</u> Support the permanent archiving of primary historical records and documents now in public institutions.

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. However, no more than two professional seats should be filled by professionals in the same historic preservation-related field.

Package A: Board Appointments and Terms

SDMC Section 111.0206

(b) Appointment and Terms

- (1) The Historical Resources Board shall consist of 11 members, each appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the City Council. Each member shall serve a 2-year term without compensation and shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed. No member shall serve more than 4 consecutive terms. The members shall be appointed so that the terms of not more than 6 members will expire in any year. The expiration date of all terms of appointment shall be March 1. The Mayor may designate 1 member as Chairperson during March of each year. If the Mayor has not designated a chairperson by April 15³⁰, the Board shall elect a Chairperson from among its members.
- (2) At least one Board member shall be appointed from among professionals in each of the following five historic preservation-related disciplines as required to meet the “Certified Local Government” criteria of the State Office of Historic Preservation, as established by the National Historic Preservation Act: architecture, history, architectural history, archaeology, and landscape architecture. If a qualified volunteer cannot be found to fill one of the five professional Board positions, that Board position may be filled by a second professional from one of the other four historic preservation-related disciplines. However, no more than two professional Board positions should be filled by professionals in the same historic preservation-related field. Other Board members appointed may have experience or background in law, real estate, engineering, general contracting, finance, planning, or fine arts and should reflect diverse neighborhood representation and have demonstrated a special interest in historical preservation. No more than three owners of *designated historical resources* shall serve at any time.

Package A: Noticing

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

(b) Public Notice to ~~Owner~~Record Owner. ~~The owner of a property being considered for designation by the Historical Resources Board shall be notified~~ The City Manager shall mail a notice to the *record owner* of the property being considered for designation at least 10 *business days* before the Board hearing. Notice to the ~~owner~~ *record owner* shall contain information about the potential impacts of designation; the date, time, and place of the Board hearing; a brief description of the general procedures concerning the conduct of the Board hearing; the procedures and requirements for filing an appeal; and how ~~and a request to contact the Board’s administrative staff regarding information for making a presentation to the Board on the proposed designation. No action shall be taken by the Board to designate a *historical resource* except at a public hearing that provides all interested parties an opportunity to be heard.~~

Package A: Time Limit for Board Review

SDMC Section 123.0202

- Clarifying amendment to clearly state that 90 days of Board review starts with the first HRB meeting in which the designation is considered

- (c) Adequacy of Research Report. The decision on whether or not to designate a historical resource shall be based on the information in a research report, as specified in the Historical Resources Guidelines of the Land Development Manual. If the Board determines, either by public testimony or other documentary evidence presented to it, that the research report is not adequate to assess the significance of the historical resource, the Board may continue its consideration of the property for up to two regular meetings and direct that a research report be prepared by the *applicant* with specific direction from staff as to the inadequacies of the original report. The revised research report may be prepared by City staff or volunteers, with a copy provided to the *record owner* at least 10 business days before the next Board meeting at which the designation will be considered. If a final decision is not made within 90 calendar days ~~of receipt of a nomination for designation~~ from the first Historical Resources Board meeting in which the designation is considered, the consideration of the property for designation by the Board shall terminate unless a continuance has been granted at the request of the *record owner*.

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

- Adds Ability to Appeal Properties that Are Not Designated by HRB
- 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 After Filing

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

What Can Be Appealed

- Existing Language:
 - Only speaks to the Council's ability to "reject designation", which means only actions to designate may be appealed.
- Proposed Language

§123.0203 Appeal From Historical Resources Board Decision

A decision by the Historical Resources Board to designate or not to designate a property may be appealed to the City Council in accordance with this section. No other actions of the Board may be appealed.

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Who Can Appeal

- Actions to Designate (No Change):
 - **Applicant:** any person who has filed an application for a permit, map, or other matter and that is the record owner of the real property that is the subject of the permit, map, or other matter; the record owner's authorized agent; or any other person who can demonstrate a legal right, interest, or entitlement to the use of the real property subject to the application; including any person who has an approved and executed Disposition and Development Agreement with the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Diego.
 - **Interested Person:** a person who spoke at a public hearing from which an appeal arose or a person who expressed an interest in the decision in writing to that decision maker before the close of the public hearing

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Who Can Appeal

- Decisions to NOT Designate (New):
 - **Record Owner:** the owner of real property as shown on the latest equalized property tax assessment rolls of the San Diego County Assessor.

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Grounds for Appeal

- Current Findings to Appeal Designation by HRB:
 - The City Council may reject designation on the basis of factual errors in materials or information presented to the Board, violations of bylaws or hearing procedures by the Board or individual member, or presentation of new information
- For Actions to Designate: Adds “Findings Not Supported” Finding, Consistent with Appeals of Development Permits
- For Actions to Not Designate: Adds “Decision Not Supported” Finding

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 Actions to Designate:

- (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

Proposed Appeal Findings for Actions to Designate:

- (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.

Proposed Appeal Findings for Decisions to Not Designate:

- (b) The Historical Resources Board's decision to not designate a property, either through an action to not designate or through failure of a motion to designate, may be appealed to the City Council by the record owner of the property 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) Decision Not Supported. The Board's decision to not designate the property 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 is 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
- Consistent with Existing Process and Other City Appeal Processes, Requires Appeal Grounds to be Identified, but Does Not Require Submittal of All Appeal Documentation

- (d) An application for an appeal shall be submitted to the City Clerk in writing and contain the following information:
- (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the person filing the appeal and information that establishes the basis on which the appellant is an *interested person*;
 - (2) The name of the *record owner*;
 - (3) The name of the *applicant*;
 - (4) The decision being appealed and the date of the decision;
 - (5) The specific grounds, clearly identified, upon which the appellant is filing the appeal. All grounds must be specified in the appeal.
 - (6) Any information or exhibits supporting the appeal that are available at the time the appeal is filed.

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Docketing Deadline

- Adds Deadline to Docket Appeal within 180 Days of Appeal Filing
- Currently No Deadline and Appeals Can Sit Indefinitely
- Other City Appeals Docketed within 60 Days

(be) Upon the filing of the appeal, the City Clerk shall set the matter for public hearing ~~as soon as is practicable~~ no later than 180 calendar days after the date on which the application for appeal is filed and shall give written notice by mail to the ~~property owner~~ record owner and the appellant of the location, time and date set for the hearing; and a brief description of the general procedures concerning the conduct of the appeal hearing. Failure to hold the hearing within the time frames specified above shall not limit the authority of the City Council to consider the appeal. At the public hearing on the appeal, the City Council may by resolution affirm, reverse, or modify the determination of the Board and shall make written *findings* in support of its decision.

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.

- (a) Upon receipt of a request from the California Office of Historic Preservation, the Historical Resources Board shall review a nomination for inclusion of a resource in the National Register of Historic Places and shall provide a recommendation whether the nominated resource meets the criteria for listing in the National Register. The recommendation shall be provided to the City Manager for conveyance to the State Historic Resources Commission consistent with the City's obligations as a Certified Local Government and the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- (b) If a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources is prepared by the City of San Diego, the City Council shall may consider endorsing the nomination prior to submittal to the State Office of Historic Preservation of a historical resource for inclusion in the California Register of Historic Resources and the National Register of Historic Places upon recommendation of the Historical Resources Board.

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.
- (b) The regulations in this Division shall not apply to the following types of *development*:
- (1) through (5) [No change in text]
 - (6) *Development* located within a designated *historical district* ~~or~~ subject to the Old Town San Diego Planned District, with the following exceptions:
 - (A) *Development* on properties that are not designated as contributing resources to the Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District;
and
 - (B) *Development* on properties that are not designated as contributing resources to the Chinese Asian Thematic Historical District.
 - (7) *Development* that is subject to the Old Town San Diego Planned District.

Package A: Clarification to Complete Communities

SDMC Section 143.1002

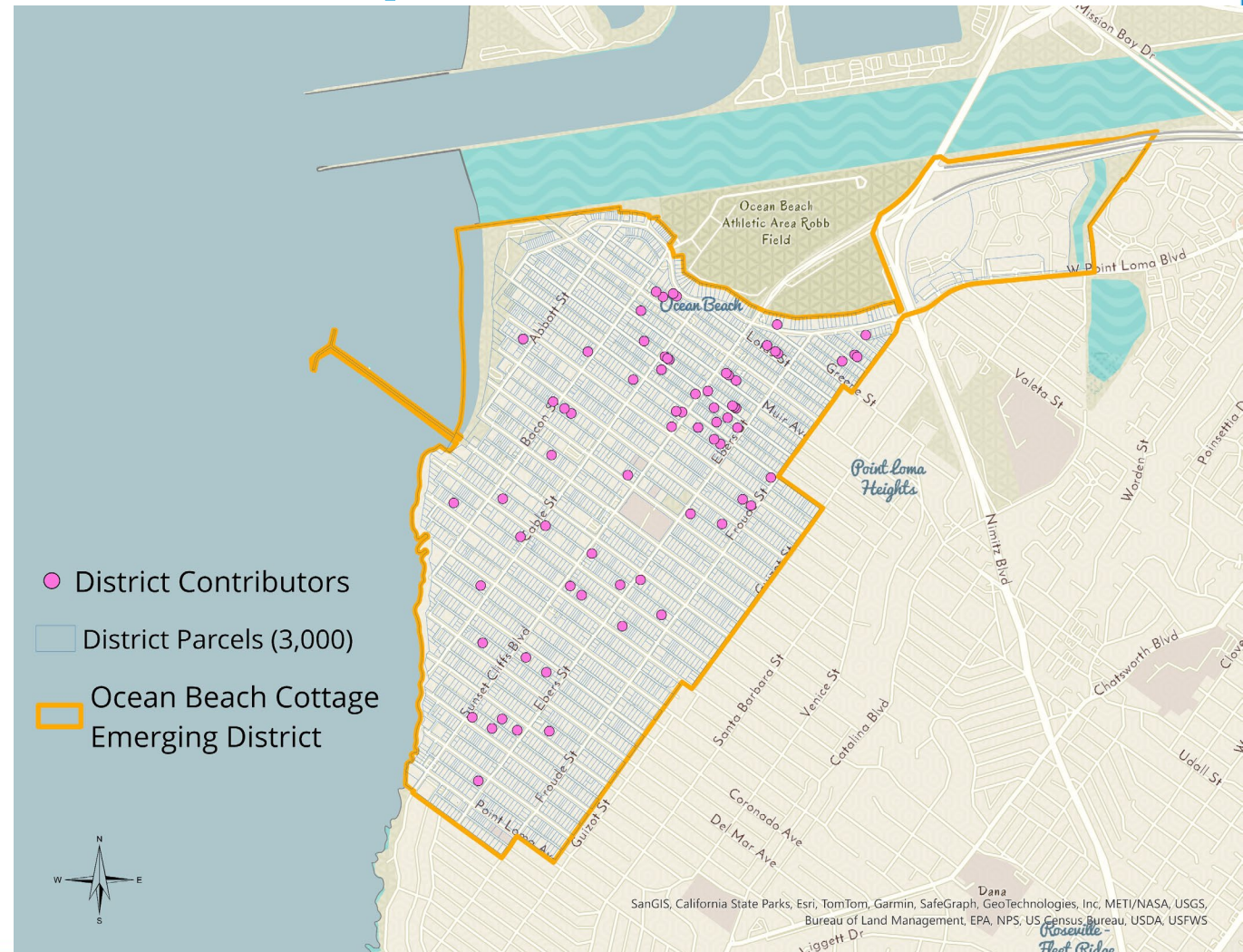
From Historical Resources Board Procedure on Establishing Historic Districts (2011):

“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: Clarification to Complete Communities

SDMC Section 143.1002

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- (b) The regulations in this Division shall not apply to the following types of *development*:
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 - (6) *Development* located within a designated *historical district* ~~or subject to the Old Town San Diego Planned District.~~ with the following exceptions:
 - (A) *Development* on properties that are not designated as contributing resources to the Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District;
and
 - (B) *Development* on properties that are not designated as contributing resources to the Chinese Asian Thematic Historical District.
 - (7) *Development* that is subject to the Old Town San Diego Planned 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

Next Steps

- Upcoming Public Hearings:
 - November 6, 2025: Planning Commission (Recommendation)
 - December 11, 2025: Land Use & Housing Committee (Recommendation)
 - January 2026: City Council (Adoption)

Preservation & Progress: Package A

Staff 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 and not 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, inclusive of the minor updates included in the staff memo dated October 21, 2025.**

Preservation & Progress:

www.sandiego.gov/preservationandprogress