

City Planning Department

Preservation and Progress Information Item

Policy Subcommittee
October 13, 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: Policy Subcommittee *Package A (End of 2025)*

July Policy Subcommittee Meeting

- ✓ Minor amendments related to Board appointments and terms
- ✓ Clean-up to language regarding noticing requirements
- ✓ Amending Complete Communities regulations to clarify that thematic historic district boundaries are limited to contributing resources
- Updates to the designation appeal process, including addition of de novo finding and the ability to appeal properties not designated

August Policy Subcommittee Meeting

- ✓ Minor updates to the Historic Preservation Element of General Plan
- Continued discussion of amendments to appeal process

Preservation & Progress: Policy Subcommittee *Package A (End of 2025)*

October Policy Subcommittee Meeting

- Minor amendments to Appendix F of the General Plan (San Diego History)
- Continued discussion of amendments to appeal process and review of proposed revisions

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: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Items raised previously at Policy Subcommittee:

- Ability to appeal when property is not designated should be limited to the property owner
- Concern that new “Findings Not Supported” finding was not appropriate in instances when the HRB does not designate the property, since no findings are made

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

Revised Appeal Process Presented to Policy Subcommittee:

- Ability to appeal when not designated limited to property owner
- Findings split, with “Findings Not Supported” for actions to designate and “Decision Not Supported” for actions not to designate
- Added 90 calendar limit for appellant to file information in support of the appeal, or right to appeal is forfeit

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMC Section 123.0203

New Revision Since Posting of Policy Subcommittee Materials:

- Clarified that the “Findings Not Supported” and “Decision Not Supported” must be based on HRB Designation Criteria and Designation Criteria Guidelines

Package A: Historic Designation Appeals

SDMIC Section 123.0203

New Revision Since
Posting of Policy
Subcommittee
Materials:

- (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

SDMIC Section 123.0203

New Revision Since
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Subcommittee
Materials:

(b) The Historical Resources Board's action 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: Next Steps

- October 23: Historical Resources Board
- November 6: Planning Commission
- December 11: Land Use and Housing Committee
- January 2026: City Council

Preservation & Progress:

