



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 21, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-046

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of July 28, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – San Ysidro Community Plan Update**

APPLICANT: City of San Diego

LOCATION: San Ysidro Community, Council District 8

DESCRIPTION: Review and consider the San Ysidro Historic Context Statement (Context Statement), San Ysidro Historic Survey (Survey), the Historic Preservation Element of the San Ysidro Community Plan update (HPE), the Historical Resources section of the San Ysidro Historic Village Specific Plan (Specific Plan), and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) related to Cultural/Historical Resources for the purposes of making a Recommendation on the adoption of the Context, Survey, HPE, Specific Plan and EIR to the City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to the City Council adoption of the San Ysidro Historic Context Statement (Context Statement), San Ysidro Historic Survey (Survey), the Historic Preservation Element of the San Ysidro Community Plan update (HPE), the Historical Resources section of the San Ysidro Historic Village Specific Plan (Specific Plan), and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) related to Cultural/Historical Resources.

BACKGROUND

A historic context statement and survey report were prepared in support of the San Ysidro Community Plan Updates (SYCPU). The information in these documents, along with the Cultural Resources Report (AECOM 2015) was used to identify locations in San Ysidro that may contain significant historical resources. In addition, these documents were used to shape the historic preservation element of the SYCPU. Once adopted, the community plan will implement the City's General Plan and will include the following elements: Land Use; Mobility; Urban Design; Economic Prosperity; Public Facilities, Services and Safety; Recreation, Conservation; Historic Preservation; and an implementation chapter that describes the necessary actions and key parties responsible for realizing the plan's vision.

ANALYSIS

San Ysidro is a long-standing community of Mexican heritage, encompassing 1,864 acres uniquely situated along the international border. The San Ysidro Land Port of Entry is one of the world's busiest land ports and directly impacts the community of San Ysidro. San Ysidro's urban form has been influenced by many factors over the past century. Following the short-lived Little Landers Colony, commercial districts formed along San Ysidro Boulevard and Camino de la Plaza focusing primarily on border users. A legacy remains of traditional storefronts uniquely suited to small and sole-proprietor businesses, particularly along the community's main street, San Ysidro Boulevard. Remnants of the original grid pattern streets and alleys enhances connectivity and promotes walkability in the old town. The community today contains a breadth of building types and architectural styles from development waves occurring since the early part of the twentieth century. This built environment, established through a rich cultural history, has helped make the community a dynamic asset to the region.

Historic Context Statement

The Historic Context Statement (Attachment 1), prepared by Page & Turnbull, provides a project overview; identifies previous surveys, studies and reports within the SYCPU; provides a historic context addressing the themes significant to development of the plan areas; and discusses property types that reflect those significant themes.

In support of the SYCPU, a records search revealed 9 cultural resources within San Ysidro that have been recorded by the South Coastal Information Center. Additionally, San Ysidro is home to one historic building listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Inspection Station/U.S. Custom House located on the U.S./Mexico border; as well as three other individual properties listed in the City of San Diego Register of Historic Resources. These include the El Toreador Motel at 631 San Ysidro Boulevard (HRB Site #236), the San Ysidro Public Library at 101-105 San Ysidro Boulevard (HRB Site #451) and the Harry and Amanda Rundell House, located at 123 East Seaward Avenue (HRB Site #820.)

Historic Context

The Historic Context Statement presents an overview of the history of San Ysidro, with a specific emphasis on describing the historic themes and patterns that have contributed to the community's physical development. It presents the history of San Ysidro's built environment from pre-history to the present in order to support and guide identification and evaluation of historic properties throughout the community, as well as to inform future planning decisions.

San Ysidro has had a long and varied history of development. The following outlines the pre-history and early history of San Ysidro:

Rancho Period and Early Border History (1822 - 1908)

The Ranch Period and Early Border History reflects the earliest period of Anglo settlement in the San Ysidro area, and included the brief existence of the first of American town (Tia Juana City) on the north side of the Tijuana River, as well as establishment of the first ranches. Of these ranches, the

Belcher homestead, a much-altered farmhouse extant on San Ysidro Boulevard, is the oldest surviving building in San Ysidro. In 1908, William E. Smythe, an agricultural reformer, selected the site of the Belcher Ranch as the location for a new agrarian community. Smythe purchased 550 acres of the ranch, and called his community "Little Landers Colony No. 1."

An Agricultural Community (1909-1964)

Little Landers was modeled after Smythe's principles of cooperative farming and agricultural utopian ideals, popular throughout the country in the early 20th century in response to the industrial revolution and cramped conditions of urban living. Smythe's concept included owning a residential town lot and at least an acre of agricultural land. The Little Landers Colony No. 1 Period (1909-1916) represents the earliest development of the present-day town of San Ysidro, including construction of the original neighborhood of Craftsman homes, many of which are still extant. The city park and a few early commercial buildings were also established during this period. The earliest infrastructure and transportation systems were established at this time, laying the basis for further property development in the town. The history of San Ysidro is intimately connected to the history of the U.S./Mexican border. As the utopian community of Little Landers waned, the community evolved with a new focus on border activity, entertainment, tourism, and civic development.

Development of a Border Town (1916-1956)

The Border Town Period addressed the needs of a growing population of both residents and tourists from California and Mexico. Americans were attracted into the area because of recreational gambling and horse racing just over the border in Tijuana, Mexico, while both Americans and Mexicans were attracted to agricultural employment opportunities in and around San Ysidro. Consequently, the era saw the further construction of single-family residences in the original platted neighborhood, as well as multi-family housing like the first small apartment buildings and bungalow courts. Commercial development also expanded greatly along San Ysidro Boulevard, and many of these commercial properties remain extant. Institutional facilities, such as the Customs House, public library, and churches were established to service the tourists and/or residents. The town was now a full -fledged city that supported the various economic, social, religious, and recreational needs of the residents and visitors.

Annexation to City of San Diego (1957-Present)

The Annexation Period represents the transition period from a small, relatively sleepy border town to a bustling community, which is today characterized by a heavy Mexican influence and primarily Mexican residents. The community voted for annexation to the City of San Diego in 1957 in order to obtain a better water system. Further expansion of the transportation infrastructure between San Diego and the border in the 1970s, namely Interstate 5 and Interstate 805, has encouraged the growth in the amount of travel between Mexico and California, but also cut through San Ysidro's older neighborhoods. Subdivisions and commercial areas were over-developed due to limited city planning controls in San Ysidro in the 1970s and 1980s, but were curbed in the 1990s. These developments are indicators of various cultural, economic, and political changes in the last fifty or so years that have promoted both commerce and residency on the U.S. side of the border.

Historic Survey Report

In April 2010, Page & Turnbull completed a reconnaissance-level survey of the San Ysidro Community Plan Area, which documented approximately 444 properties - all of which were constructed prior to 1970 (Attachment 2). This survey included digital photography and field notes. All survey results were entered into a Microsoft Access database, and a California Historic Resource Status Code was assigned to each property.

Based upon the historic context statement and the reconnaissance-level survey, Page & Turnbull and the City of San Diego identified twelve properties as potentially significant individual properties, and sixty-two properties as contributors to a potential historic district. However, additional work is needed to determine if this potential historic district is viable and meets national, state, and local standards for eligibility. In addition, the survey report recommended additional work to determine if a viable cultural landscape exists around San Ysidro Community Park.

Historic Preservation Element

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Element of the SYCPU (Attachment 3) is to guide the preservation, protection and restoration of historical and cultural resources within the CPU. The element includes goals and recommendations for addressing the history and historic resources unique to San Ysidro in order to encourage appreciation of the community's history and culture. These recommendations along with the General Plan policies provide a comprehensive historic preservation strategy for San Ysidro.

The following historic preservation recommendations have been developed for the SYCPU:

- 9.1.1 Conduct subsurface investigations at the project level to identify potentially significant archaeological resources.
- 9.1.2 Protect and preserve significant archaeological resources. Refer significant sites to the Historical Resources Board for designation.
- 9.1.3 Ensure adequate data recovery and mitigation for adverse impacts to archaeological and Native American sites at the project level. In order to determine ethnic or cultural significance of archaeological sites or landscapes to the Native American community, meaningful consultation is necessary.
- 9.1.4 Include measures during new construction to monitor and recover buried deposits from the historic period and address significant research questions related to prehistory.
- 9.1.5 Identify, designate, preserve, and restore historic buildings in San Ysidro and encourage their adaptive reuse.
- 9.1.6 Catalogue and preserve historic street lighting and furniture. Maintain and preserve other non- structural features of the historic and cultural landscape, such as sidewalk scoring and coloring, sidewalk stamps, and landscaping, to the extent possible.

- 9.1.7 Encourage the reuse of materials and the adaptation of historically significant structures to help sustain the community character.
- 9.1.8 Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural, or aesthetic value, to the extent possible.
- 9.1.9 Promote the preservation of buildings and features that provide continuity with the past.
- 9.1.10 Encourage new buildings to express a variety of architectural styles, but to do so with full awareness of and respect for, the height, mass, articulation, and materials of the surrounding historic buildings and culturally significant resources.
- 9.1.11 Encourage new buildings to express a variety of Look to historic buildings for design, architectural ideas, and inspiration.
- 9.1.12 Complete an intensive-level survey of the potential Little Landers Historic District to determine whether or not the area is eligible for designation as a historic district, either as proposed or in a modified form depending upon the results of the survey.
- 9.1.13 Complete an intensive-level survey of the potential San Ysidro Community Park Cultural Landscape to determine whether or the area is eligible for designation as a cultural landscape with specific focus on the influence of Mexican culture on the physical environment.
- 9.2.1 Promote San Ysidro's history through the distribution of printed brochures and walking tours, and the installation of interpretative signs, markers, displays, and exhibits at public buildings and parks. Conduct walking tours of historical resources and protect historical properties and cultural assets (also see Section 4.11).
- 9.2.2 Support the incorporation of public art and cultural amenities that commemorate San Ysidro's historical resources and character.
- 9.2.3 Promote the maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, and continued private ownership and utilization of historic buildings through a variety of financial and development incentives.
- 9.2.4 Continue to use existing incentive programs and develop new approaches, such as architectural assistance and relief from setback requirements, through a development permit process, as needed.
- 9.2.5 Expand cultural heritage tourism opportunities, such as the preservation of the San Ysidro Boulevard Village area, and encourage its use as a mixed-use entertainment venue.

- 9.2.6 Promote the installation of historic markers and/or plaques, signage and educational materials such as apps or printed brochures to commemorate and interpret the local and regional significance of Highway 101.
- 9.2.7 Partner with interested parties to promote conservation, restoration, educational programs/tours, stewardship, and create cultural tourism programs focusing on the community's heritage.

Specific Plan

The San Ysidro Historic Village Specific Plan has been developed to more precisely guide development within the historic heart of the San Ysidro community (Attachment 4). The Specific Plan includes a discussion of designated historical resources within the Specific Plan area, the importance of historic preservation within the Specific Plan area, and specific policies to guide new development in a manner that respects the character and rich cultural history of the area, as follows:

- 2.2.48 Design buildings that complement and enhance San Ysidro village character by:
 - a. Design buildings of compatible scale of character-defining buildings on the same block.
 - b. Articulate building facades by incorporating transitions between public and private space, such as enclosed patios, stoops, porches and alcoves.
 - c. Provide roof line variation, using roof lines that are simple in geometry and silhouette.
 - d. Utilize windows and doors of the same sizing and proportion to wall than those used in character-defining buildings on the same block.
- 2.2.49 Preserve and retain the existing character defining lot patterns within village. Support lot consolidations where building are sited in a way to emulate the defining lot patterns.
- 2.2.50 Maintain the prevailing front yard setbacks within Traditional Character neighborhoods in order to maintain the historical development patterns.

Environmental Impact Report

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared to address the significant effects of the proposed Community Plan Update and Specific Plan (Attachment 5), including potentially significant impacts to Cultural/Historical Resources as further detailed in EIR Section 5.7 Historical Resources (Attachment 6). The EIR concludes that because the proposed plan update area includes known historic and prehistoric resources and implementation of the plan update would facilitate future development, there is the potential for the project to significantly impact these resources. Goals, policies, and recommendations enacted by the City, combined with the federal, state, and local regulations, provide a regulatory framework for developing project-level historical resources mitigation measures for future development projects implemented in accordance with the Community Plan Update (CPU) and the Specific Plan.

Impacts from future development on historical and archaeological resources in the CPU and Specific Plan areas would occur at the project level. Any grading, excavation, and other ground disturbing activities associated with future development implemented in accordance with the CPU and Specific Plan that would affect significant archaeological sites or Traditional Cultural Properties would represent a significant impact to historical resources.

Impacts to resources associated with the built environment would include substantial alteration, relocation, or demolition of historic buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, and sites. Impacts from future development on the built environment would occur at the project-level. Any alteration, relocation, or demolition associated with future development that would affect historic buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, and sites would represent a significant impact to historical resources.

A Mitigation Framework has been incorporated into the EIR to address potential impact to archaeological resources and historic buildings, structures and objects from future development implemented in accordance with the CPU and Specific Plan. A project that would result in significant impacts to historical resources would be subject to a Mitigation Framework depending on the type of resource impacted.

Projects that would result in significant impacts to archaeological resources shall be subject to Mitigation Framework HIST-1, whereby the City shall require the following steps be taken to determine: (1) the presence of archaeological resources; (2) the significance of any archaeological resources encountered; (3) the appropriate mitigation for any significant resources which may be impacted by a development activity; (4) preparation of Archaeological Resource Management reports; and (5) curation. Sites may include, but are not limited to, residential and commercial properties, privies, trash pits, building foundations, and industrial features representing the contributions of people from diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Sites may also include resources associated with prehistoric Native American activities. This same Mitigation Framework would also be used in the unlikely event that build-out of the SYCPU and Specific Plan areas would impact religious or sacred places or human remains.

Projects that would result in significant impacts to historical, built environment resources shall be subject to Mitigation Framework HIST-2, whereby the City shall determine whether the affected building/structure is historically significant. The evaluation of historic architectural resources shall be based on criteria such as: age, location, context, association with an important person or event, uniqueness, or structural integrity, as indicated in the Guidelines. Preferred mitigation for historic buildings or structures shall be to avoid the resource through project redesign. If the resource cannot be entirely avoided, all prudent and feasible measures to minimize harm to the resource shall be taken.

Future development implemented in accordance with the SYCPU and Specific Plan that would potentially result in impacts to historical resources would be required to incorporate the Mitigation Framework measures adopted in conjunction with the certification of the EIR). Implementation of actions pursuant to Mitigation Measure HIST-1, combined with SYCPU policies promoting the identification and preservation of significant resources and compliance with CEQA and Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1 requiring tribal consultation, would reduce impacts to archaeological or tribal cultural resources to less than significant for future development.

Implementation of actions pursuant to Mitigation Measure HIST-2 would reduce impacts to historic buildings, structures, and objects. However, the ability of this measure to adequately protect significant historic structures cannot be assured at the program level. Thus, potential significant impacts to important historical resources are considered unavoidable at the program level.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the information provided in the historic context and survey report has been incorporated into the planning process for San Ysidro CPU and is reflected in the goals and policies of the Historic Preservation Element and the San Ysidro Historic Village Specific Plan. In addition, the EIR includes a mitigation framework for cultural and historical resources that would reduce impacts anticipated from future projects, although not below a level of significance for built environment resources. Therefore, staff recommends that the HRB recommend to the City Council adoption of the San Ysidro Historic Context Statement (Context Statement), San Ysidro Historic Survey (Survey), the Historic Preservation Element of the San Ysidro Community Plan update (HPE), the Historical Resources section of the San Ysidro Historic Village Specific Plan (Specific Plan), and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) related to Cultural/Historical Resources.



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Attachments:

1. San Ysidro Historic Context Statement (under separate cover)
2. San Ysidro Historic Survey Report (under separate cover)
3. San Ysidro CPU Historic Preservation Element (under separate cover)
4. San Ysidro Historic Village Specific Plan, Historic Resources section (under separate cover)
5. San Ysidro Environmental Impact Report (available online at: https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/sycpu_peir-reduced.pdf)
6. San Ysidro EIR Section 5.7, Historical and Cultural Resources (under separate cover)