



AGENDA

VALLEJO ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AND LANDMARKS COMMISSION

City Hall
Council Chambers
555 Santa Clara Street
Vallejo, CA 94590
www.cityofvallejo.net

NOVEMBER 18, 2021

6:30 P.M.

Brian Harkins, Chair
Peter Bregenzer, Vice Chair
Curt Harding
David McCandless
Angela McDonald
Brendan Riley

This AGENDA contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. The posting of the recommended actions does not indicate what action may be taken. If comments come to the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission without prior notice and are not listed on the AGENDA, no specific answers or response should be expected at this meeting per State law.

Pursuant to the Government Code Section 54954.3 (The Brown Act), members of the public shall be afforded the opportunity to speak on any agenda item of interest to them provided they are first recognized by the presiding officer. Members of the public wishing to be so recognized are requested to submit a completed speaker card to the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission prior to the consideration of the item or raise their hand via ZOOM: (<https://ZoomRegular.Cityofvallejo.net>), Option to join by phone: Dial (669) 900-6833. Enter Meeting ID: 914 0075 0676#. Press * 9 to digitally raise your hand from the phone. For additional instructions on how to speak remotely during public comment, please visit, www.cityofvallejo.net/publiccomment. In person speakers will be recognized first.

Those wishing to address the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission on any matter for which another opportunity to speak is not provided on the AGENDA but which is within the jurisdiction of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission to resolve may come forward in person to the podium or virtually during the "COMMUNITY FORUM" portion of the AGENDA.

Members of the public have the right to speak on any item on this agenda. Those wishing to address the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission 1) during the Community Forum are limited to three minutes pursuant to Vallejo Municipal Code Section 2.20.300; 2) on a Consent Calendar item are limited to three minutes pursuant to Vallejo Municipal Code Section 2.02.310; and an Action Calendar item are limited to five minutes pursuant to Vallejo Municipal Code Section 2.02.420.

Notice of Availability of Public Records: All public records relating to an open session item, which are not exempt from disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, that are distributed to a majority of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission will be available for public inspection at the City Clerk's Office, 555 Santa Clara Street, Vallejo, CA at the same time that the public records are distributed or made available to the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission. Such documents may also be available on the City of Vallejo website subject to staff's ability to post the documents prior to the meeting. Information may be obtained by calling (707) 648-4527, TDD (707) 649-3562.

Appeals: The applicant or any party adversely affected by the decision of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission may, within ten days after the rendition of the decision of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission, appeal in writing to the City Council by filing a written appeal with the City Clerk. Such written appeal shall state the reason or reasons for the appeal and why the applicant believes he or she is adversely affected by the decision of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission. Such appeal shall not be timely filed unless it is actually received by the City Clerk or designee no later than the close of business on the tenth calendar day after the rendition of the decision of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission. If such date falls on a weekend or City holiday, then the deadline shall be extended until the next regular business day.

Notice of the appeal, including the date and time of the City Council's consideration of the appeal, shall be sent by the City Clerk to all property owners within two hundred or five hundred feet of the project boundary, whichever was the original notification boundary.

The Council may affirm, reverse or modify any decision of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission which is appealed. The Council may summarily reject any appeal upon determination that the appellant is not adversely affected by a decision under appeal.



Vallejo City Council Chambers ADA compliant. Devices for the hearing impaired are available from the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission. Requests for disability related modifications or accommodations, aids or services may be made by a person with a disability to the City Clerk's office no less than 72 hours prior to the meeting as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. ROLL CALL**
- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - None
- 5. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**
- 6. SECRETARY'S REPORT**
 - A. Update on California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) grant
Christina Ratcliffe, AICP, Interim Planning and Development Services Director
This is an informational item, no action will be taken.
- 7. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**
- 8. REPORT OF THE CITY COUNCIL LIAISON**
- 9. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION**
- 10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**
- 11. COMMUNITY FORUM**
- 12. CONSENT CALENDAR AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
- 13. PUBLIC HEARING**
- 14. OTHER AGENDA ITEMS**
 - A. Repair of Alden Park Flagpole
Melissa L. Tigbao, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer
This is an informational item, no action will be taken.

15. ADJOURNMENT

I, Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch, Planning Manager, do hereby certify that I have caused a true copy of the above notice and agenda to be delivered to each of the members of the Vallejo Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission, at the time and in the manner prescribed by law and that this agenda was posted at City Hall, 555 Santa Clara Street, CA at or before 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 10, 2021.

Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch



**MEMORANDUM
PLANNING DIVISION**

DATE: November 18, 2021
TO: Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission
FROM: Christina Ratcliffe, AICP, Interim Planning and Development Services Director
SUBJECT: California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) grant

In October of 2020, Planning Division Staff applied for a grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), which was offering \$103,000 in unspent funds from the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to all Certified Local Governments (CLGs) that have submitted their annual CLG report for FY18-19. Vallejo submitted our report, so we were eligible to apply.

The funds were non-competitive and were divided evenly among all CLGs that responded. At the time the City applied, the actual amount we would receive was unknown. A 40 percent local match was required (staff time was acceptable). No proposal was required, and the criteria for the funds were very broad. The only grant product/reporting requirement was a final narrative report explaining how the grant funds were spent. Funds were required to be spent by September 30, 2021.

Staff originally requested \$10,000, however, OHP received many applications and the final awarded amount was \$5,000. Originally Staff had thought that the \$10,000 (plus ~\$6,000 in matching staff time) would be sufficient to produce limited historic design guidelines. However, the reduced monetary grant in conjunction with severe staffing shortages (less than 50% staffing levels) over the last year made that impossible.

In order to make use of the OHP grant in a manner that would further the goals of historic preservation within the confines of City staffing and OHP timeframes, City staff worked with two Architectural Historians at Rincon to produce a white paper that evaluates the City's historic preservation program. The goal of this white paper is to lay the foundation for future historic preservation efforts as well as future historic design review guidelines.

The white paper (attached) provides the City with a comprehensive informational document that includes:

- A broad review of the existing historic preservation program
- An assessment of the effectiveness of this program
- A review of best practices in the field, and
- Recommendations for changes that the City may implement to enhance the program's effectiveness

Moving forward, staff is anticipating returning to full staffing the first quarter of 2022. It is also anticipated that the Council will set goals for the next two years, with AHLC following with their own goals aligned with the Council's direction. The white paper will assist with implementation of improved processes for historic preservation.

Attachments: Vallejo Historic Preservation White Paper, 9/29/2021



Rincon Consultants, Inc.

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September 29, 2021
Project No: 21-11857

Jonathan Atkinson, Senior Planner
City of Vallejo, Planning and Development Services Department
555 Santa Clara Street
Vallejo, California 94590
Via email: Jonathan.atkinson@cityofvallejo.net

**Subject: Historic Preservation White Paper
City of Vallejo, Solano County, California**

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) was retained by the City of Vallejo to complete a white paper to evaluate the City's historic preservation program. The goal of this memorandum report is to provide the City with a comprehensive informational document that includes a broad review of the City's existing historic preservation program, provides an assessment of the effectiveness of the existing program, presents a review of best practices in the field, and finally suggests recommendations for changes that the City may implement to enhance the program's effectiveness. This report was completed using grant funds awarded by the California Office of Historic Preservation.

As part of this effort, Rincon conducted an extensive review of the City's existing historic preservation program that included an audit of the City's policies, ordinances, and operating procedures as they relate to historic preservation and the treatment of historic properties. Documentation was gathered from publicly accessible sources including the City of Vallejo's website and municipal code. Additional information such as program applications, surveys, and studies were provided to Rincon by the City of Vallejo Planning Division staff. The City of Vallejo's program was then evaluated against best practices in the field of historic preservation planning. Best practices were gathered from a spectrum of sources including guidance documents by the National Park Service and the California Office of Historic Preservation, as well as case studies of other proven successful historic preservation programs throughout the country and emerging trends in preservation planning. Finally, suggestions and recommendations were provided, offering a suite of options for methods to refine and advance the City of Vallejo's historic preservation program.

This memo report was prepared by Architectural Historian JulieAnn Murphy, MS. She has eight years of experience. Her work includes archival research, historic resource evaluations, and review of projects for the conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Her professional experience includes the preparation of nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Murphy has extensive experience preparing applications for the Federal Historic Tax Credit program as well as several state preservation incentive programs, including the Mills Act. Ms. Murphy has experience preparing documentation in support of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, NEPA, CEQA, and local ordinances. Supervision was provided by Senior Architectural Historian Steven Treffers, MHP. Ms. Murphy and Mr. Treffers meet the requirements in the Secretary of



the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in Architectural History and History. Rincon Principal Architectural Historian Shannon Carmack reviewed this memo for quality assurance and quality control.

Benefits of Historic Preservation Program

A comprehensive historic preservation program, in addition to providing local government with greater access to federal and state funding opportunities and leverage over federal projects that affect historic properties and areas, can also provide an element of certainty and consistency into the regulatory process for local development for City staff, project applicants, and stakeholders. Historic preservation programs foster compatible economic development, while providing avenues for identifying, preserving, and celebrating the community's historic and cultural values.

Additionally, comprehensive historic preservation programs enhance local preservation values, provide guidance for future impacts to historic resources, and inform the planning and design of future developments.

Model Preservation Programs

The following section summarizes the City of Vallejo's current historic preservation program and offers suggestions for refinements and improvements based on best practices within the field and those that have been demonstrated in cities across the country.

It evaluates the City's *policies*, or those directions codified in the City of Vallejo's long-range vision and planning and the accompanying decision-making documents. It also looks at the City's *ordinances*, or official legislation, related to historic preservation and the treatment of historic properties. Finally, it examines the City's *operating procedures*, or the tools, methods, and processes that are used to implement the goals and objectives of the City's historic preservation policies and regulations. Effective preservation programs are clear, effective, and flexible. The recommendations provided herein are aimed at improving the clarity, effectiveness, and flexibility of City of Vallejo's preservation program where appropriate.

Policies

Preservation programs should operate within a framework of broader community policies. In Vallejo's *Propel Vallejo: General Plan 2040*, these policies begin with Policy NBE-1.9 "Cultural Resources. Protect and preserve archaeological, historic, and other cultural resources." This is a very broad statement, but sets the direction for foundational preservation work, including a commitment to adhere to statewide regulatory requirements. The plan goes on to focus on historic resources with Policy NBE-1.10 "Historic Resources. Encourage the protection, rehabilitation, and reuse of historic buildings and structures." This policy includes directives for action related to survey updates, identification of resources, and participation in available incentive programs. Under Policy NBE-1.11 actions related to the City's historic districts are provided, including updating design guidelines and supporting rehabilitation projects. Finally, the General Plan provides Policy NBE-1.12 "Historic Preservation. Promote community awareness of the benefits of historic preservation." This is a broad policy that addresses the City's goal to work cooperatively with the community to promote the economic benefits of historic preservation as well as the commitment to continue the City's annual preservation awards program.

Policies are crafted by the City's guiding documents and administered by staff. The City's preservation policies are broad, yet clear and provide good guidance to inform the historic preservation program. There are important ways that staff can more effectively convey the City's historic preservation policies, such as including preservation staff in the development of subarea and specific plans, thereby balancing preservation goals with other development goals, as seen in more recent policy directives such as the Downtown Specific Plan and the Sonoma Boulevard Specific Plan. As discussed below in more detail, the City may also consider developing and providing additional trainings and educational material to staff, members of the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission, and the public at large.

Sustainability and historic preservation are natural partners. Preservation and reuse of historic buildings reduces resource and material consumption, puts less waste in landfills, and consumes less energy than demolishing buildings and constructing new ones. The City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) states that the second leading cause of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the city is commercial and residential energy use. The City's goal was to reduce GHG emissions 15% below baseline levels by 2020, including a 32% energy and renewable energy reductions. The CAP, though silent on the relationship between historic preservation and sustainability, acknowledges that the greatest opportunity for reducing energy demand through efficiency improvements and conservation is for existing buildings. The City should consider establishing a policy that recognizes and considers the role of conserving buildings as a sustainable practice when determining best approaches. The City could also explore establishing a technical assistance program for property owners to accomplish energy-saving retrofits, including a process for determining best practices for repair and replacement protocols for materials including windows and roofing that take sustainability into consideration and information on participating in voluntary green rating programs.

The City of Vallejo is a Certified Local Government (CLG), a program where local, state, and federal governments work together to help communities preserve historic resources. Jointly administered between the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), participation in the program provides access to benefits of the program including funding through the availability of grants and technical assistance through the SHPO with assistance with preservation programs. In order to retain the City's CLG status and continue to develop a more effective historic preservation program, the City may consider creating a comprehensive local historic preservation plan. The plan could follow the same general format as the statewide preservation plan and integrate the City's existing preservation goals and procedures. It should identify historic preservation issues in the City, establish a vision for the City's preservation priorities, identify preservation goals, and identify preservation partners to help establish the goals. Preservation programs continue to evolve to reflect broader trends in society that affect community planning and preservation planning. Once established the preservation plan could be updated regularly in order to respond to the City's changing preservation needs, thereby offering greater flexibility and adaptability for the City's historic preservation program.

Ordinances

Robust historic preservation ordinances are comprised of several key elements, including the following: state the purpose, identify the enabling authority, establish a preservation commission, provide procedures for designation of resources and actions for review, acknowledge economic effects of designation, describe appeals and enforcement provisions, and include a concise set of definitions. In Vallejo key ordinances include:

- **Chapter 2.48 – Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission**

Chapter 2.48, first adopted in 1987, provides for the creation of the architectural and landmarks commission, including qualifications of members, purpose, duties and powers, and rules and regulations.

- **Chapter 12.44 – Historical Building Code**

Adopted building codes include a special section for historic structures. The California Historical Building Code applies to qualified historical buildings and structures as defined by the State Historical Building Code.

- **Chapter 16.211 – Historic Districts and Landmarks**

This chapter establishes two overlay zoning districts, the “H” Historic District designation, and the “L” Landmark.

- **Chapter 16.614 – Architectural Heritage and Historic Preservation**

Adopted in 1985 and most recently updated in 2021, Chapter 16.614.01 establishes the purpose of the ordinance, designation criteria, procedures for designating landmarks and historic districts, the authority of the commission to complete architectural surveys and maintain a Historic Resources Inventory, classification of designations, the establishment of overlay districts, actions for review, the authority to develop design review standards, land use and property development guidelines, maintenance and upkeep guidelines, and procedures for variances and appeals.

The City’s historic preservation ordinances, when considered in conjunction, meet most of the key elements for a robust historic preservation ordinance and appear to provide the elements necessary for an effective preservation program. There are several different levels of review for historic properties presented in the ordinance, however they are not clearly defined, and it is difficult to ascertain which kind of review is applicable to certain project types. For example, Section 16.614.09 states that a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be required “prior to the construction, demolition, alteration, or relocation, or addition to, any main or accessory structure or other designated feature in a Historic District or on the property of a designated Landmark,” but Table 16.614-A notes that a “Structure on the HRI”¹ as well as a “Structure not on HRI but is reasonably likely to be a contributor to a Historic District or Landmark” are both subject to review by the Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission (AHLIC). The ordinance does not offer any clarification on what is reasonably likely to be a contributor to a Historic District or Landmark. The preservation review process could be clarified as part of a new companion guide to the code that helps the public understand the process, including simple flow charts and other visual aids to improve clarity and predictability.

There are also missing elements that could improve the clarity and flexibility of the historic preservation-related ordinances. First, definitions for aspects of the ordinance are provided piecemeal throughout the Chapter and are not repeated in Chapter 16.701 – General Terms. As a result, portions of the ordinance are difficult to discern, especially for a layperson looking for direction on how their property may be regulated. For example, Chapter 16.701 does not make a distinction between the Historic Resources Inventory and the Heritage Survey List. In an effort to provide clarity, the inclusion of a concise

¹ HRI refers to the City’s Historic Resources Inventory, as defined in Chapter 16.614.02 in the City’s Zoning Code. The HRI is a database maintained by the Planning Division containing building descriptions and evaluations of potential historic resources in the City of Vallejo. This does not refer to the Office of Historic Preservation’s (OHP) inventory, or Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD), formerly referred to as the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI).

definitions related to historic preservation would complement the Architectural Heritage and Historic Preservation Chapter and would be an effective way to identify and eliminate potentially conflicting uses of the same or similar terms. Many jurisdictions, in order to avoid potential confusion, use terms shared by the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and the California Environmental Quality Act guidelines. When the ordinance uses the same terms and definitions used in CEQA it facilitates environmental reviews and promotes better understanding among applicants, consultants, decision makers, and community members.

As building stock continues to age, a growing issue is promoting conservation in older residential neighborhoods that are not in existing historic districts or that are not appropriate for designation as historic districts. The City may want to consider expanding the ordinance to include options for neighborhood conservation districts that are less comprehensive than historic district designation. They would address mass, scale, and streetscape but not alterations to existing buildings. This measure would potentially improve the flexibility of the City's preservation program and allow for the protection of groups of historical resources that do not rise to the level of significance necessary for the creation of a historic district.

Operating Procedures

The City's municipal code clearly establishes the AHLC and describes the designation requirements and process for landmarks as well as historic districts. Other elements that are related to the historic preservation program are referenced in those documents but exist as separate standalone documents or resources such that they can be updated more frequently.

Providing Predictability and Consistency

The following operating procedures have been identified as those elements of the City's historic preservation program that could benefit from improved predictability and consistency for City staff, residents, applicants, and consultants, alike.

Development Application Form

The steps in a permitting process are a key part of operating procedures, and in the case of historic preservation, should be coordinated with other permitting and decision-making steps of the City to improve ease of use and clarity. In that regard, existing permit application forms that the city uses do not request information that could help facilitate review of historic buildings. The planning application asks for the zoning district and historic district but does not ask if the property is a designated City Landmark or included in the City's Historic Resources Inventory, which may require a Certificate of Appropriateness or review by the AHLC. This means that a property owner may not be aware that their proposed project is subject to review by the AHLC at the outset.

Having information about a property's potential historic significance at the outset helps property owners and applicants make informed decisions about improvements they may contemplate, including those who are considering purchase of a property. They wish to know if their property is historic. If it is historic, they want to know what the requirements, limitations, or benefits are. Finally, they want to easily determine what processes and reviews are required for proposed work. Providing all information in a centrally located clearinghouse, such as a webpage dedicated to the City's preservation program, as discussed in detail below, is a potential way to refine the development application process.

Communities continue to seek ways to streamline programs and accomplish core objectives in the most efficient and consistent ways. This includes methods to simplify design review and to limit some forms of permitting. Delegating decision making to staff and defining minimum standards that can be approved at staff level are operational methods some communities implement to simplify review, including Vallejo. In order to improve predictability and consistency, there are a few additional steps that the City may consider implementing, including providing more information to property owners in advance of development applications including information that highlights the flexibility that may come with design review, as provided for by the ordinance. The City may also produce guidelines for treatment of historic properties that provide clear examples of appropriate and inappropriate design treatments for historic properties to aide applicants and property owners in preparing accurate and complete development applications and improve application efficiency and review time, as described below in more detail. Additionally, the creation of a development application flow chart and/or checklist could provide a clear path for property owners and applicants to determine if their property is historic, understand the requisite development applications that may apply to a potential project, and provide information on which type of review authority is required, if any. The application form could also be updated to improve clarity and predictability.

Surveys and Historic Contexts

The City of Vallejo has undertaken some past historic resource surveys, including those done to establish the City's three National Register Historic Districts: Mare Island Historic District, St. Vincent's Hill Historic District, and Vallejo Old City Historic District (also referred to locally as the Architectural Heritage District).

The Vallejo Old City Historic District National Register nomination was prepared in 1972. Since the initial preparation of the National Register nomination, guidance for the preparation of historic district nominations has been updated to require more substantial documentation. According to guidance provided for in NPS National Register Bulletin 16 – *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, nominations should include the following:

- **Resource Count.** A count that outlines the number of contributing elements including buildings, structures, objects, sites, and the number of non-contributing elements. The resources should be listed and also identified on a sketch map.
- **Functions.** Functions should be noted for buildings, sites, structures and objects that are of outstanding importance to the district or represent a substantial number of the included resources.
- **Materials.** The major building materials visible in the district should be noted, placing the most prominent ones first.
- **Period of Significance.** Defines a length of time when a property or district was associated with important events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing.
- **Boundary Justification.** A brief and concise explanation of the reasons for selecting the boundary. Boundaries for districts should encompass the single area of land containing the significant concentration of buildings, sites, structures, or objects making up the district and should be determined by the district's historic significance and integrity.

It is recommended that the National Register nomination be updated to include the documentation outlined above. The updated nomination should also note changes to buildings that have taken place

since the nomination was prepared in 1972, including demolitions and new construction. Updating the nomination will provide the planning department and AHLC with appropriate information to inform decisions for recommended treatments related to the district's area of significance and period of significance, including potential additional acquired significance since the nomination was prepared nearly forty years ago. Additionally, the City should consider a comprehensive review of other past nominations to determine if updates that provide additional and amended information would aid in the management of historical resources.

In addition to the surveys completed to establish the City's three historic districts, a historic resource survey of the City's downtown was undertaken in conjunction with the Downtown Vallejo Specific plan, completed in 2005. As a result of that historic resource survey, several properties were identified as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. A recommendation of the report was to evaluate the potential to designate a six-block area around Georgia Street for as a National Register Commercial Historic District. The potential of a National Register Commercial Historic District designation should be further studied to determine the potential for establishing the City's fourth historic district.

Because many areas of Valley have not been surveyed, determinations of significance must be made on a case-by-case basis, often when projects are subject to environmental review as part of a development application. In many instances, determinations that happen at this stage of the permitting process can be frustrating for the applicant and add additional review time to the development application. If an extensive survey were completed, it would provide baseline information for City staff, property owners, and applicants to make informed decisions at the outset of project to determine if there are known or potential historic resources present, thereby improving the clarity and effectiveness of the City's preservation program.

The City does not have any adopted historic context statements, which establish a consistent framework for the evaluation of historic resources. As provided by the National Park Service in National Register Bulletin 15A *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, "historic contexts provide an organizing structure for interpreting history that groups information about historic properties which share a common theme, common geographical location, and common time period." It further explains, "the development of historic contexts is a foundation for decisions about planning, identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of historic properties, based on comparative significance."

As a prelude to surveying, the City should develop historic contexts related to a particular theme of development or a geographic area that is likely to have unrecorded historical resources. The historic context statements should describe the relationship of built resources to the social and cultural history of the city, identify typical property types that are likely to be captured, and suggest where these resources are most likely to occur. Historic contexts serve the basis for planning and predicting where historic resources are likely to be found and aid in setting priorities for historic surveys.

Many communities have implemented survey systems that are management oriented, based on preservation objectives. The City's preservation ordinance empowers the AHLC to undertake architectural heritage surveys and maintain a list of structures, objects, and areas that have a special historical, cultural, architectural, or aesthetic value. The ordinance further outlines a tiered level of significance that surveyed properties can be designated, thereby linked to different levels of protection and design review. The City should develop a historic property survey instrument with the objective of recording information that will be useful for ongoing property management and provide key information to help property owners make informed decisions about their properties.

As part of an efficient historic preservation program, a property's historic resource status should be easily identified through an interactive webmap or other easily accessible format. Survey information should be readily available to users, as discussed below in more detail.

Preservation Program Information

The City's historic preservation program is well-defined and integrated into the City's major goals and planning documents. A great deal of documentation, research, and evaluation has been undertaken since the establishment of historic preservation program in 1985. Since then, the City has further refined its ordinance, procedures, and tools overtime. However, information about the City's historic preservation program is not available in a central location and is not easily accessible for residents. The City should consider updating its website with a webpage dedicated to the historic preservation program. The website could include information about the preservation program and a GIS map of the city where property information, including survey, inventory status and potential historical significance could be linked. It could also provide links to applicable program application materials, related planning documents, and guides and educational materials related to the treatment of historical properties. Providing all the applicable information for the program in a central location would strengthen the City's historic preservation program by clarifying its role and providing up to date information for people to more easily engage with and participate in the program.

Providing Flexibility

Many aspects of historic preservation programs are structured to be objective and treat all similar resources equally. However, there are many policy-making tools that provide flexibility. The following operating procedures have been identified as those elements of the City's historic preservation program that could benefit from building in more flexibility for how historic properties are treated.

Tiered Designation Ratings

The City has established designation levels – city landmark, historic structure, structure of merit, and contributing structure – for the Landmarks Heritage Survey List. The levels, however, are not clearly linked to differing types of review and permitting, incentives, or benefits. The City should consider removing the tiered designation system or more explicitly identify the definitions of those designations and their respective levels of protection, incentives, and design review. This approach would offer greater clarity and ranges of flexibility and alternatives for mitigation for properties based on their level of designation.

Design Guidelines and Standards

Design guidelines and standards provide objective criteria for determining the appropriateness of proposed work affecting historic resources. Guidelines help inform a property owner in advance of the criteria on which their designs will be judged, and later applied by the City staff and the AHLC. As mentioned above, they provide greater clarity to project applicants and decision-makers alike and provide for a more efficient and consistent approach.

Effective guidelines provide clear examples of appropriate and inappropriate design treatments. They also define the range of flexibility that may be available for alterations and additions. Guidelines also help to identify which features are significant that should be preserved, and which features are less critical to the integrity of a historic resource and indicating where flexibility for change may be afforded.

As mentioned above, the City of Vallejo has three National Register Historic Districts. At present, there are Design Guidelines for the Mare Island Historic District. The Guidelines detail the regulatory framework for preservation, provide standards for treatment of resources, provide review criteria, and include recommendation actions for the treatment of different resource types. The other two historic districts, St. Vincent's Hill Historic District and Vallejo Old City Historic District, do not currently have design guidelines

Design guidelines and standards should be established for both the Vallejo Old City Historic District and the St. Vincent's Hill Historic District. Design guidelines shall be consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. The Guidelines offer general design and technical recommendations to assist in applying the Standards to a specific property. Together, they provide a framework and guidance for decision-making about work or changes to a historic property. The Standards and Guidelines should be the basis of the design guidelines and standards for both the Downtown Vallejo Design Guidelines and the St. Vincent's Hill Historic District but should be enhanced and tailored to each of the districts and the property types and architectural styles they contain. The design guidelines should be easy for residents and AHLC members to understand and include well-illustrated examples of appropriate treatments. In doing so they will provide clarity and predictability on acceptable treatments and alterations for properties within each historic district.

In addition to the Design Guidelines for the Mare Island Historic District, the City also established the Downtown Vallejo Design Guidelines, which provide development standards for the downtown area. The area of the Downtown Vallejo Plan Area is located in the area between the boundaries of the Vallejo Old City Historic District and the St. Vincent's Hill Historic District. The Downtown Design Guidelines are applicable to the five portions within the Plan area and ensure compatibility of new developments with the existing context and provides guidance on the treatment of building facades and details for shutters, cornices, frames, signs, lights, colors and textures, and landscaping. The Downtown Design Guidelines are helpful for providing general guidance and help to promote cohesive design elements downtown, but do not provide objective criteria for appropriate design treatments for historic properties. As previously described, though the area does not include a designated historic district, a six-block area was identified through an intensive survey as having the potential for listing in the National Register as a Commercial Historic District. The potential of a National Register Commercial Historic District designation should be further studied to determine the potential for establishing a historic district and companion Design Guidelines.

Incentives and Benefits

An effective historic preservation program also offers benefits to stimulate investment in historic properties, encourages property owners to follow appropriate rehabilitation procedures, and assists property owners keep up their historic properties. This may include financial assistance, tax relief, technical assistance, or regulatory relief.

The City of Vallejo participates in the Mills Act Program, an important and powerful economic incentive for homeowners in California to aide in the restoration of their qualified historic buildings. The Mills Act is administered by the City, which enters into contracts with qualified property owners for a period of ten years for a reduction in property taxes in exchange for undertaking rehabilitation, restoration, and maintenance of their historic building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The

City should consider more widely publicizing the program to potential participants. In addition to reaching out to eligible property owners at the outset of each application cycle, the City should make information about the program more easily available to encourage wider participation in the City's historic preservation program. The Mills Act program details, benefits, and applications could be available on the City's historic preservation webpage, as recommended above. The City should clarify which properties are eligible to participate in the program. Property owners should be able to easily access information that states if their property is eligible to apply for the program.

In Vallejo, regulatory relief is provided in Chapter 16.614 of the zoning ordinance which states that the AHLC may allow waivers and modifications in base district standards to identified historic buildings and landmarks. Relief could be granted for the following: setbacks, parking, fences and walls, lot coverage, height, and up to 25 percent of other development standards not listed. Furthermore, other sections of the zoning code also provide particular guidance for solar regulations, the height of fences, and sign permits for designated historic properties that could potentially provide more options for treatment of those project elements. Additionally, Chapter 12.44 of the municipal code offers relief from some aspects of the building code to qualified historical buildings and structures, allowing more flexibility in the treatment of historic properties to encourage their continued use. As previously discussed, the preservation review process could be clarified as part of a companion guide to the code that helps the public understand the process. In addition to providing clarity, the companion guide could also highlight the many benefits of having a designated historic property, including regulatory relief already provided in the City's zoning and building code.

The City also has programs that support preservation of a wide range of historic resources that are not necessarily designated. For example, the City's Economic Development Division offers small business grants through the Downtown Property Enhancement Program for downtown businesses and building owners to improve the visual appearance and condition of their storefronts. Though not an official part of the City's preservation program, it does encourage preservation-related activities. The City's Planning Department should investigate ways to work with the Economic Development Division to more widely advertise the program to potential benefactors. Additionally, the City should explore expanding the existing program to include additional incentives for those buildings are or could be designated historic buildings.

The potential National Register Commercial Historic District, previously described, in addition to encouraging the preservation of historic resources, could also result in more available incentives for commercial properties and further encourage the rehabilitation of buildings in Downtown Vallejo. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives programs provides a twenty percent income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic, income producing buildings. Establishing the National Register Historic District would be the first step in ensuring the buildings met the criteria for becoming "certified historic structures," a necessary element for program participation, thereby providing additional incentives to property owners for their participation in the historic preservation program.

Outreach, Education, and Training

Helping property owners learn how to maintain their historic properties as active, viable assets is also a key part of a successful preservation program. Many property owners willingly comply with appropriate rehabilitation procedures and develop compatible designs for new construction when they are well informed about preservation objectives. Well-written design guidelines and standards provide useful information and can also be educational. Once developed, they should be made easily available to

residents and community members. Workshops that provide helpful information about rehabilitation techniques and publications that build an understanding of historic significance are examples of education and outreach strategies that the City could facilitate to improve community participation in both the designation and the maintenance of historic properties.

Education and outreach are often a function of partner organizations, non-profit groups that promote history and preservation. Vallejo has several non-profit and partner organizations including Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum, Mare Island Historic Park Foundation, and the Vallejo Architectural Heritage Foundation. The City should continue to foster these relationships and work on partner programming and education activities.

Additionally, the City's AHLC has awarded a Preservation Award to projects in the past that demonstrate successful preservation projects. Since 2010, the award has typically been presented during the *Mad Hatter Holiday Festival* and *Grand Home Tours*, popular local events with widespread participation. The AHLC should continue the Preservation Award program and find additional ways to incorporate it with larger community events to raise awareness about the City's historic preservation program.

All planning staff should also receive a basic orientation to preservation principles such that they can better understand the program and better advise applicants on their options. Similarly, preservation staff should be engaged in orientation program directed on how they can take other planning objectives into consideration when developing policies for those areas. The City should also consider providing additional training for the AHLC. Training could include onboarding materials for new commissioners that provides an overview of the history of preservation in the City of Vallejo, explains the role of the AHLC and the variety of reviews it is responsible for, and lays out the available preservation incentives to property owners and applicants. The City may also consider providing ongoing training to the AHLC to introduce new planning procedures and tools that may affect AHLC reviews, such as the recently updated and adopted Zoning Code. The City should also explore the possibility of setting up periodic joint sessions that include Planning staff, the AHLC, the Planning Commission, and City Council to discuss the role of each body in the City's historic preservation program, providing the opportunity to share information that may improve historic preservation program.

As part of the CLG reporting requirements, each year the City submits an annual report to help the OHP track the City's preservation program's ongoing activities. Reports are necessary to compete for available CLG grants. The City should adopt a simple reporting form that helps to compare the magnitude of properties considered for historic significance with the total number of permits issued annually. This would be a supplement of the reporting requirements for the CLG program. It would be additional useful educational information for citizens interested in the City's historic preservation program.

Conclusion

The City of Vallejo's historic preservation program fosters compatible economic development, while providing avenues for identifying, preserving, and celebrating the community's historic and cultural values. Its policies, ordinances, and operating procedures have been established and continue to be refined as the program grows and as more buildings become eligible for historic designation. Through Rincon's analysis of the City's preservation program, we have identified a few key recommendations that could help to enhance and streamline the program for continued success, as discussed above. They are briefly summarized here.



Policies

The City should continue to include historic preservation program goals in larger planning documents and plans and consider creating a comprehensive historic preservation plan to identify the larger, ongoing goals of the City's historic preservation program.

Ordinances

The City should continue to update the refine the applicable ordinances related to historic preservation and consider providing key definitions and clarifying language on process. In order to enhance the existing preservation ordinances, the City may also consider expanding the ordinance to include an option for the creation of neighborhood conservation districts.

Operating Procedures

Several recommendations were made to improve program predictability and consistency including updating permitting documents and applications, updating existing building documentation and surveys, and making property and historic preservation program information more easily accessible through the City's website. Recommendations made to improve program flexibility included suggestions to review the City's tiered designation ratings, the potential development of additional design guidelines and standards, and increased effort to more widely inform people about the benefits of the historic preservation program through additional outreach and education.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with this white paper memo report. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 925-326-1159 or at jmurphy@rinconconsultants.com if you have any questions regarding this memo report or its recommendations.

Sincerely,

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Murphy", written in a cursive style.

JulieAnn Murphy
Architectural Historian Project Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Treffers", written in a cursive style.

Steven Treffers, M.H.P.
Senior Architectural Historian Program Manager



Item 14 A
MEMORANDUM
Public Works Department
Engineering Division

DATE: November 18, 2021
TO: Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission
FROM: Melissa L. Tigbao, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer
SUBJECT: Repair of Alden Park Flagpole

The Alden Park Flagpole is a character defining feature of park and has been in this location since October 3, 1854. It stands at 70 feet in height and consists of two masts, a main and a second mast. The mast material is wood and approximately 14" in diameter at the base. There are four steel guy anchors attached providing support from the ground to close to the top of the mast. Based on visual observations of significant deterioration, Public Works will schedule the temporary removal of the Alden Park Flagpole for further examination and repair.

Public Works engaged Mark Thomas & Company to conduct a third-party structural assessment, of the Alden Park Flagpole on Mare Island. On September 14, 2018, Mark Thomas issued a technical memorandum with their findings. Field assessments found that the metal base was corroded, and the existing painting system, estimated to be 20-30 years old and peeling, provides very little protection of the pole itself. One large split in the wood extends nearly the full height of the main mast, and approximately 20-30% of the total material at the base of the pole was observed to be completely decayed.

It is the City Engineer's recommendation to remove the mast as soon as possible as the pole is in poor condition and failure could occur without warning. The age of the pole, the current decay, and estimated limits of section loss, are of a concern for public safety. As this structure is posing an imminent threat to public health or safety, per the Mare Island Historic District Guidelines Section 5.3.4 Demolition of a Hazardous Structure, staff will remove the pole, store in a city-owned facility on Mare Island, where it will be protected from outside elements, examined further, stabilized, repaired and re-installed.

As this flagpole is a historic resource and the central organizing element of Alden Park, itself a cultural resource identified at the federal, state, and local levels, staff will work with an Architectural Historian for the most appropriate options to restore the pole. Staff intends to include the flagpole repair and rehabilitation in the City's Capital Improvement Program and will continue to communicate any actions and progress to the AHLC.