



SAN MATEO HERITAGE ALLIANCE

January 16, 2025

City Council
City of San Mateo
330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

SUBJECT: Support for Context Study and Historic Preservation Ordinance Update

Dear Mayor Newsom and City Council Members:

The San Mateo Heritage Alliance strongly urges the approval of the proposed scope of work to prepare a context study and to update our historic preservation ordinance. The current ordinance, dating back to 1993, and the outdated 1989 *Historic Building Survey* are no longer sufficient to meet the demands of our growing city while preserving its rich historical legacy.

The Importance of a Context Study

- **Economic and Efficient:** A context study is far more cost-effective than a detailed survey of each historic property, providing a broad understanding of our city's historical assets at a fraction of the cost.
- **Framework for Preservation:** It will lay down the groundwork necessary for a citywide historic resources understanding, informing not just preservation but also future development.
- **Policy Informed by Study:** The study will directly influence the updating of our preservation policies and ordinance, ensuring they reflect the current state and significance of our historical resources.
- **Strategic Planning:** By understanding the type, quantity, and location of our historic resources, we can make informed decisions that balance growth with preservation.

The Necessity to Update the Historic Preservation Ordinance

- **Cultural and Economic Benefits:** As noted in our current ordinance, preserving our history is not just about nostalgia; it's crucial for enhancing our community's economic, cultural, and aesthetic value.
- **Criteria for Preservation:** An updated ordinance will clearly define processes and criteria for designating and protecting local historic districts, something missing in our current framework. The current ordinance does not recognize or apply to the new Yoshiko Yamanouchi House Historic District or the pending Baywood Historic District.
- **Legal Clarity and Protection:** It will provide a robust legal framework to recognize, protect, and manage historic resources, ensuring they are considered in development reviews.

The Urgency of Action

- **Time is of the Essence:** Over three decades have passed since significant action was taken on historic preservation in San Mateo. Delaying further will only increase costs and risks losing more of our heritage.
- **Resource Allocation:** With budgets potentially tightening, acting now is prudent to leverage existing funds for maximum impact.

Balancing Historic Preservation with Housing Needs

- **Compatibility with Modern Needs:** Historic properties and districts can accommodate modern housing solutions like ADUs, expansions, and remodels, proving that preservation does not hinder but can complement urban development.
- **Selective Designation:** The criteria for historic designation are stringent, ensuring only truly significant structures or neighborhoods are protected, thus not broadly impeding new housing developments.

In conclusion, the time to act is now to safeguard San Mateo's historical narrative while fostering growth. Approving this scope of work will not only protect our past but also enrich our future. We urge you to ignore the misinformation and support this initiative for the benefit of San Mateo's cultural heritage and its residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laurie Hietter
President
San Mateo Heritage Alliance



Outlook

Against Historic District Designations

From Paul Dagnelie <[REDACTED]>

Date Wed 1/15/2025 1:02 PM

To City Council (San Mateo) <[REDACTED]>

Dear San Mateo City Council,

As a resident of San Mateo, I ask that you reject the proposal to establish new historic districts in any neighborhoods. San Mateo is a wonderful, vibrant city, but is suffering from serious housing affordability issues. Historic districts will make it harder and more expensive to build new homes, preventing us from making progress on this important issue.

At both the state and local level we have passed good housing laws, but historic districts would undermine both those laws (including Measure T, which just passed by ballot proposal) and our general plan. Please do not support any actions to establish more historical districts, and vote now on the Historic consultant RFP. The priority for San Mateo should be increasing housing, not restricting it.

Thank you for your time,
Paul Dagnelie

'Selling Off California' Exposes Corporate YIMBYs' Ties to Big Tech and Big Real Estate - Housing Is A Human Right

From [REDACTED]
Date Wed 1/15/2025 12:55 PM
To City Council (San Mateo) <[REDACTED]>

Please read this.

Their attempt to frame historical districts or suburban neighborhoods as threats to housing is beyond the pale.

Prometheus and Greystar have been named in the RealPage lawsuit and are active in San Mateo.

Housing has become a get rich quick scheme for the investor class and it needs to stop.

They come and say we can't put parking in this development because it doesn't pencil out, they build lowest first cost buildings with zero care for design or beauty.

I am sorry, but YIMBY has no credibility as housing advocates. Ask the Housing Justice people.

I stand with them.

Thank you.

Tom Lease
[REDACTED]

<https://www.housingisahumanright.org/selling-off-california-exposes-corporate-yimbys-ties-to-big-tech-and-big-real-estate/>

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: jeanne bosschart <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2025 3:54 PM
To: City Council (San Mateo) <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Study and update [REDACTED] on ordinance

To Mayor Newsom and the San [REDACTED] resident of San Mateo, I am concerned about preserving our history and our beautiful neighborhoods. I support the approval of the proposed scope of work to prepare a study and update our current outdated preservation ordinance.

Thank you.

Jeanne Bosschart

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

Historic designations - OPPOSE

From Mandy Pederson [REDACTED]

Date Wed 1/15/2025 9:32 AM

To City Council (San Mateo) [REDACTED]

Dear San Mateo city council,

Please reject the idea that we should establish new historic districts, in any neighborhoods. One of San Mateo's greatest liabilities is our high cost of living, and making it harder to build more homes will only make it more expensive.

We have worked to pass good housing laws, both at the state and local levels, and a historic district would undermine these laws, as well as our general plan and newly-minted Measure T. Please do not support any actions to establish more historical districts. Vote no on the proposed Historic consultant RFP. This is not a priority for San Mateo.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mandy Pederson



Outlook

Historic designations - OPPOSE

From Stephanie Reyes <[REDACTED]>

Date Thu 1/16/2025 3:14 PM

To City Council (San Mateo) <[REDACTED]>

Dear San Mateo City Council,

Please reject the idea that we should establish new historic districts, in any neighborhoods. One of San Mateo's greatest liabilities is our high cost of living, and making it harder to build more homes will only make it more expensive.

We have worked to pass good housing laws, both at the state and local levels, and a historic district would undermine these laws, as well as our general plan and newly-minted Measure T. Please do not support any actions to establish more historical districts. Vote no on the proposed Historic consultant RFP. This is not a priority for San Mateo.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Stephanie Reyes
[REDACTED]

Item 10 - Historic Designations Work - OPPOSE

From Nancy Schneider <[REDACTED]>

Date Thu 1/16/2025 4:23 PM

To City Council (San Mateo) <[REDACTED]>

Dear Members of the San Mateo City Council,

I am writing to you as a resident of San Mateo and a homeowner in the Baywood neighborhood. I oppose the designation of Baywood as an historic district for a multitude of reasons, primarily that I don't think the neighborhood should be exempt from policies to increase housing production in San Mateo. Every neighborhood should do its part.

I acknowledge that this agenda item is not concerned with Baywood specifically, but about hiring the consultant for the historic work and deciding on which option.

I urge you to pick Option 3 and not approve an appropriation Resolution or an agreement with Rincon Consultants and vote not to proceed with the historic policy update effort at this time. .

We have worked to pass good housing laws, both at the state and local levels, and a historic district would undermine these laws, as well as our general plan and newly-minted Measure T. Please do not support any actions to establish more historical districts. San Mateo has many more pressing concerns. The money allocated for this project could be put to better use.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input.

Nancy Schneider