



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

18-0964

Agenda Date: 3/7/2019

### 2019 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

**NUMBER**

CDD 16-14

**TITLE** Exploring Options for Establishment of a Plaque Program for Heritage Resources

**BACKGROUND**

**Lead Department:** Community Development

**Support Departments:** Office of the City Manager  
Office of the City Attorney

**Sponsor(s):** Heritage Preservation Commission

**History:** 1 year ago: Ranked, Below the Line  
2 years ago: Ranked, Below the Line  
3 years ago: Ranked, Below the Line

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

**What precipitated this study?**

The Heritage Preservation Commission duties are defined in the City Charter to advise the City Council in all matters pertaining to heritage resources, landmark sites and landmark districts and to implement the heritage preservation regulations of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code. While these duties typically focus on preserving heritage resources, the Heritage Preservation Commission also sees value in educating the community on history and heritage resources. This role of the Heritage Preservation Commission is further expressed in the General Plan:

**Goal CC-6 KNOWLEDGE OF SUNNYVALE 'S HERITAGE.** Promote knowledge of, and appreciation for, Sunnyvale's heritage and encourage broad community participation in heritage programs and projects.

The City has approximately 57 structures listed on the Heritage Resources Inventory, as well as a few neighborhoods and several trees; however, many community members may not know of most of those resources or their historical impact on the City of Sunnyvale. Creation of a plaque program could educate the community on specific heritage resources in the City as well as events and people famous to Sunnyvale.

**What are the key elements of the study?**

Within the overall category of historic resources, the City recognizes three levels of significance, ranked in descending order from most significant as follows:

- (1) Local landmark resource/local landmark district;
- (2) Designated heritage resource/designated heritage resource district; and
- (3) Heritage resource/heritage resource district.

Between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s the City installed plaques on 11 Heritage Landmark

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properties. This study would examine a new program associated with the remaining two tiers of heritage resources.

Exploration of establishing a plaque program may include:

- Survey of cities with plaque programs and the specifics of each program;
- Discussions with other City staff members on the effectiveness and receptiveness of such a program;
- Evaluation of costs associated with buying plaques and how those costs would be covered;
- Details and criteria for what resources would be eligible to receive a plaque and details on how the program would be established and maintained; and
- Standards for the plaque program with the objective to improve community education and awareness of Sunnyvale's historic resources.

**Estimated years to complete study:** 1 year

**FISCAL IMPACT**

**Cost to Conduct Study**

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost)	Minor
Funding Required for Non-Budgeted Costs	\$0
Funding Source	N/A

**Cost to Implement Study Results**

Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs, including capital and operating costs.

**EXPECTED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS**

Council-Approved Work Plan: No

Council Study Session: No

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Heritage Preservation Commission

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Support. This policy issue merits discussion at the 2019 Study Issues Workshop.

Staff considers the concept worthy of study, and it would be beneficial to increase community awareness of the City's heritage resources. However, the cost for a plaque program would need to be balanced with other funding priorities. Staff is aware of cities that require the owners of heritage resources to cover the costs of the plaques; therefore, a plaque program could potentially be created with minimal cost to the City.

Prepared by: Trudi Ryan, Director, Community Development

Reviewed By: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager

Approved By: Kent Steffens, City Manager