



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item

24-1011

Agenda Date: 2/13/2025

2025 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

CDD 18-02

TITLE Update and Review of the Heritage Resource Inventory

BACKGROUND

Lead Department:	Community Development
Support Departments:	Office of the City Manager
	Office of the City Attorney
	Finance Department
Sponsor(s):	Heritage Preservation Commission
History:	1 year ago: Deferred by Council
	2 years ago: Deferred by Council
Council Strategic Priority:	No
(At time of sponsorship)	

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What precipitated this Study?

The Heritage Preservation Commission identified a need to examine the City’s current Heritage Resource Inventory (“Inventory”) and explore whether additional properties, including non-residential development, should qualify based on adopted criteria for nomination.

The Inventory was created in 1979 and has been updated periodically. The most recent comprehensive study in 2007 included a citywide survey for consideration of new neighborhood districts and individual heritage resources. Two neighborhoods and five properties were identified and further evaluated in 2009. However, none of these properties and neighborhoods were ultimately added to the Inventory. Over the years, through requests by individual property owners, several properties have been approved for removal from the list once further study determined that they did not meet or were determined to no longer meet the City’s standards for heritage designation.

What are the key elements of the Study?

Similar to previous Inventory updates, the Study would identify potential properties for nomination both by visually surveying the City, and by conducting research to identify locations where prominent members of Sunnyvale’s history lived or where significant local historic events may have taken place. Outreach meetings would be conducted with affected and/or interested property owners and business owners, as well as the broader community. The Study would also examine the current list and the appropriateness of the specific designations.

The last citywide survey was conducted over 15 years ago. An updated comprehensive study would

be needed to further examine the condition of properties within the existing Inventory as well as identify new residential and non-residential properties that could be nominated. In 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, the Study Issue was deferred by Council. With the continual increase of redevelopment and evolving architectural design within the City, staff recognizes that an updated comprehensive survey of the existing building inventory is needed to help determine whether adequate preservation measures are in place and to identify new residential and non-residential properties that could be nominated. This Study is supported by the General Plan Community Character Chapter and its goals and policies to enhance, preserve, and protect Sunnyvale’s heritage.

Estimated years to complete study: 1-2 years

FISCAL IMPACT

Cost to Conduct Study

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost):	Moderate
Funding Required for Non-Budgeted Costs:	\$450,000
Funding Source:	Would seek budget supplement - General Fund

A consultant would conduct a survey of residential and non-residential developments as well as significant people and events and help evaluate individual properties for nomination to the City’s Heritage Resource Inventory.

Cost to Implement Study Results

Unknown. The Study would include assessment of potential costs.

EXPECTED CITY COUNCIL, BOARD OR COMMISSION PARTICIPATION

Council-Approved Work Plan: No
Council Study Session: No
Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Heritage Preservation Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Drop. This policy issue does not merit discussion at the 2025 Study Issues Workshop.

The Community Development Department (CDD) has many existing Study Issues to work on in addition to numerous Housing Element Programs that are mandated to be completed or our Housing Element could become out of compliance. There are also myriad new CDD-related state laws that require General Plan, Specific Plan, Municipal Code, and permit process revisions, follow-up activity on prior studies and evaluation of property owner requested general plan amendment applications. Some of these pending studies, including those that may increase the number of housing units that could be built could help further define the scope of the study.

Staff could incorporate this effort into a future work plan once relevant pending studies have been completed and as staff capacity permits. Targeting approximately 2027 would be roughly twenty years after the most recent comprehensive update.

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