



# MONROVIA

C A L I F O R N I A

## Memorandum

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
Building Neighborhood and Business Services  
Planning

DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2018  
TO: HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
FROM: JOHN MAYER, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER  
SUBJECT: **SUB-COMMITTEE SELECTION REGARDING MILLS ACT PROGRAM AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION INITIATIVES**

Staff is seeking the Commission's assistance through an Ad Hoc Sub-committee to evaluate the Mills Act incentive program which has been used to promote the designation of Historic Landmarks in Monrovia. The sub-committee will also be asked to consider future key initiatives for the City's long term Historic Preservation work program.

The Sub-committee will consist of three members of the Historic Preservation Commission who will: 1) evaluate the City's existing Mills Act Program and provide recommendations to ensure its financial sustainability and achievement of preservation goals; and 2) prioritize key initiatives for the long term Historic Preservation work program. Staff anticipates that the sub-committee's recommendations will be presented to the Commission in November; the Commission's final recommendations will be forwarded to City Council in early 2019.

### ***Mills Act Incentive Program***

The Preservation Ordinance offers the Mills Act Contract as one of several "participation incentives" that are meant to encourage property owners of historic properties to voluntarily seek landmark designation, or Historic District status. A Mills Act contract allows a tax reduction for a property owner who must do certain restoration and maintenance tasks over a specific period of time. Conditions of the contract are primarily aimed at securing health and safety, ensuring a public benefit, and preserving the property's historic character. Since 1996, the City Council has designated 146 Landmarks in the City and two Historic Districts. There are 138 Landmark properties that have a Mills Act contract.

There are concerns about the growing size of the current Mills Act program and the unknown sustainability of reduced revenue to the City in the future. Furthermore, each existing contract must be checked every two years to ensure that the historic property is well maintained and that the owners' obligations have been met. Ongoing monitoring and meaningful review of 138 contracts is challenging, especially for certain cases that require frequent follow up to gain compliance. Recent State Laws now require local jurisdictions to conduct on-site inspections, which increases the amount of staff time needed to administer the program. Staff will work with the sub-



committee to complete a comprehensive policy analysis of the existing program and identify appropriate measures to improve it.

***Historic Preservation Work Program Initiatives***

The sub-committee will also have an opportunity to re-evaluate previously identified topics for the City's long-term preservation work program. Now that the City has adopted the City-wide Historic Context Statement, the sub-committee will consider ways to encourage the preservation of unique properties that are not eligible for landmark status, but add value to the community. Discussion could also include educational and outreach efforts for the potential historic districts that were studied during development of the Historic Context Statement.

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the formation of a three member Ad Hoc sub-committee to assist staff in developing recommendations regarding the Mills Act program and key initiatives for the long term Historic Preservation work program. If the Historic Preservation Commission concurs then the appropriate motion is:

Appoint Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_, and Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_ to serve on the sub-committee.