

## McGill, Pam

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**From:** Cox, Robert [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 10, 2023 8:47 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Livable Mountain View Comment on item 3.1 Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Register Update

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Mayor Hicks, Vice Mayor Showalter, and Members of the Mountain View City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on item 3.1 Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Register Update.

First, let us thank you for your continuing work and outreach on this item. In particular, preserving the historic core of our downtown restaurant and retail district is a key goal of our organization. We are grateful that the city council has also made it a key priority this year.

Here are our recommendations on the questions staff has put to the council:

### **Question 1: Project goals**

We support all of the project goals: reflecting the community's preservation priorities, providing clarity and historic status and requirements, streamlining the process of determination and review, providing incentives that support preservation, maintenance, and integrity improvement, and creating local criteria for a Downtown Preservation District. Having the knowledge of the status of properties is to the advantage of the community as well as property owners. We strongly support incentives and recommend that council and staff put together a specific list of incentives that the owners of properties which are deemed historic can use for the benefit of maintaining those properties. We also strongly support taking steps to establish a Downtown Preservation District around our downtown restaurant and retail district. The Downtown Precise Plan states this "is the historic center and civic focus of the community and the "heartbeat" of the city".

### **Question 2: What feedback does Council have on the project deliverables, including the outreach plan?**

We believe staff has done an excellent job identifying the project deliverable and putting together an outreach plan. We at Livable Mountain View request and look forward to being a part of the dialogue with council and staff on the particulars of this Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Register Update.

### **Question 3: Which of the following scopes of intensive survey does Council wish to conduct? What direction or modifications does Council wish to provide on any of the scope options?**

**Scope A? (yes or no/modifications)—Staff Recommendation: Identify and analyze properties that are subject to development review and CEQA:**

We support this in its entirety. This implements the project's basic goals: proactively identifying historic properties to streamline their review and give property owners up-front knowledge of the requirements and incentives they can leverage to preserve their properties. Since this item does not expand any categories of historic properties, property owners need not be concerned that they would be forced to conform to new requirements.

**Scope B? (yes or no/modifications): Analyze previously identified historic properties that are at risk of being demolished**

This could be a worthwhile activity, but would need to be conducted sensitively. Again, the goal should be to provide property owners with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their properties.

**Scope C1? (yes or no/modifications): Develop a process for voluntary self-nomination of properties and districts.**

As this is a voluntary process, we support this, and ask for staff to provide detailed and complete instructions on what the process would be.

**Scope C2? (yes or no/modifications): Identify and analyze all single-family and duplexes Citywide, including potential districts.**

We believe a general analysis of all properties goes beyond the scope of what this current project should achieve. However, during outreach, staff could call for property owners to nominate their properties for review, and that review could be conducted as part of this project. Similarly, neighborhood leaders could nominate districts in their neighborhoods for historic evaluation. Staff should set a time window for the nomination of these properties and districts. After the window is closed and the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Register Update is complete, the process established by Scope C1 would be used.

**Question 4: Would Council like staff to move forward on a Downtown Preservation District for Area H?**

We wholeheartedly support this, and believe it should be a primary deliverable of this historic preservation council project.

**Downtown Approach**

We note that the Farmers and Merchants Bank Building (201 Castro Street, currently Red Rock Coffee House) and the Weilheimer Store (126 Castro Street, currently Oren's Hummus) were not included in the list of properties that staff believes should be eligible for inclusion on the California and National Historic Registers. We believe that that decision should be revisited.

The Weilheimer Store has not been altered as to size and placement and although it retains only some of its original facade, that facade is clearly identifiable in vintage photos and can be restored further. Also, consideration should be given per the legal criteria that it is identifiable with a family that significantly contributed to the culture, history and development of Mountain View. It was built in 1874 as part of the family businesses that began when the Weilheimer brothers arrived from Germany to the village of Mountain View in 1853, and is believed to be the oldest commercial building on the Peninsula still in use.

We believe an in depth history of the Weilheimer family and businesses would also determine that the Farmers and Merchants Bank (Red Rock Coffee) has an intact and identifiable façade. Furthermore, we know of a photo of Julius Weilheimer, who was an officer of the bank and investor, standing behind the same counter in use today. The history of the bank building also has links to another immigrant pioneer family, that of Isaias Hellman, who founded the bank and was known as the 'creator of California' for his (and his family's) funding of our water system, railroads, and cultural and educational institutions from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

Wikipedia article on Isaias Hellman

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaias\\_W.\\_Hellman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaias_W._Hellman)

Thank you for listening to our views on this important topic.

Robert Cox, Louise Katz, Maureen Blando, Hala Alshahwany, Leslie Friedman, Jerry Steach, Li Zhang, and Nazanin Dashtara

For the Steering Committee of Livable Mountain View

**McGill, Pam**

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**From:** regina@[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 9:45 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** concerning Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Register Update

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Dear Council members,

I see the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Register Update on the Council's meeting agenda for tomorrow evening.

Having lived in Mountain View for 20+ years I witnessed a lot of development and changes in Mountain View - from a quiet sleepy town to a vibrant lively multicultural one. Downtown is attracting people from the Bay area to its restaurants and events.

One of the aspects which make Mountain View a charming and livable city is its historic downtown with a lot of the original buildings still intact from its founding years in the mid-1800s.

Neighboring cities have historic ordinances in place protecting these buildings and their historic downtowns.

Unfortunately, Mountain View has lost a lot of buildings in the past to development because there is no ordinance in place protecting the historic elements of the city

I strongly support the Council in adopting the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Register Update for Mountain View .

Thank you!

Sincerely

Regina Sakols

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Waverly Park