

San Jose Envision 2020 Task Force  
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San Jose Envision 2040 Task Force:

The Historic Landmarks Commission wishes to congratulate the 2040 Task Force on the development of what promises to be an extremely thoughtful and effective new General Plan. While HLC Commissioners are also most grateful for the supportive treatment provided for historic preservation issues in the Draft Plan, we would like to call your attention to a few places where that support might be strengthened. We are providing illustrative language only as a convenience.

### **Chapter 1. Envision San Jose 2040**

An HLC concern from the beginning has been the relative absence of references to historic issues in Chapter 1, particularly in the Vision and City Concepts sections which set the stage for the entire policy document. We offer the following suggestions for your consideration:

General Plan Purpose and Use, Overall Purpose, Page 3, first sentence.

“San José has undergone many changes over the last 60 years. Before 1950, it was a relatively small community of farms and orchards and a remarkably urban Downtown and neighborhoods.”

Our Community, Page 5, second paragraph.

“San José has a growing population of over one million residents and a long history. Founded in 1777, it is the oldest civilian settlement in California and retains many remnants of it's evolution.”

The History of Planning in San Jose, Page 55, Historic Preservation, end of paragraph.

“The primary General Plan goal is to preserve historically and archaeologically significant structures, sites, districts and artifacts in order to promote a greater sense of historic awareness and respect, and to enhance community identity and the quality of urban living.”

Village Planning. Urban Character, Page 70

“As appropriate, the Village Plan should include consideration of streetscape and building frontage design, pedestrian facility improvements or other urban design actions necessary to successfully implement the Village concept.” Perhaps change to:

The Village Plan should incorporate high quality elements - for instance streetscape design, building design, preserved historic structures, circulation concepts, etc. - that may be drawn from the local community and will successfully implement the Village concept.

## **Chapter 4, Quality of Life**

### **Community Context and Identity, second paragraph, Page 3.**

“Many San José residents also strongly identify with San José’s neighborhoods. San José offers a wide range of housing choices that meet the needs of a diverse community: Downtown high-rises that lure residents to life in the City’s core; housing from a century or more ago as well as brand new, cutting edge housing; and over 210,000 single-family detached residences that provide outdoor space for gardening, barbeques and other activities.”

### **Vibrant Neighborhoods, Vibrant, Attractive and Complete Neighborhoods, Page 5**

*Add a new policy to acknowledge that historic neighborhoods are typically models of this ‘vibrant’ goal:*

**Policy VN- 1.12 Because neighborhoods composed primarily of historic homes are typically already vibrant, attractive and complete, the preservation of these neighborhoods is a priority.**

### **Villages and Corridors, Urban Design, Page 19**

CD-7.1 “Support intensive development and uses within Villages and Corridors, while ensuring an appropriate interface with lower-intensity development in surrounding areas and the protection of appropriate historic resources.”

## **Chapter 5, Land Use and Transportation**

### **Historic Preservation, Page 19**

LU-11.20. “Aggressively explore options and techniques for funding additional historic surveys in order to maintain and update the City’s inventory of historic resources. As funding permits, identify potential new districts and structures for the inventory by undertaking comprehensive surveys of the City.”

LU-11.19 “To highlight the importance of historic resources for the community, identify landmarks, landmark districts and Conservation Areas on the land use/transportation diagram as Areas of Historic Sensitivity.”

*This item is presented as an Action Item, apparently to be done later. It would be very useful to have this information on the original Envision 2040 Plan Map.*

Page 20, Historic Structures, LU-12.5. “Consider preservation of Structures of Merit and Contributing Structures in Conservation Areas a key objective in the development review process. As development proposals are submitted, evaluate structures, list qualifying structures on the Historic Resources Inventory, and consider the feasibility of incorporating structures and fabric into the development proposal. ~~If preservation is infeasible, offer said structures for relocation and salvage and complete non-Historic American Building Survey level documentation.~~”

*Delete the last sentence, making the policy statement stronger. These mitigations will be required in any case.*

Page 20, Historic Structures , LU-12. Add a new LU-12 Policy, perhaps LU-12.3:

A high priority is placed on the preservation of historic structures that are contributing to an informal cluster or a Conservation Area; have a special value in the community; are a good fit for preservation within a new project; have a compelling design and/or an important designer; etc.

*These kinds of 'eligibility' criteria should make decisions about the treatment of LU-12 structures (not landmarks) easier to achieve.*

Page 20, LU-12.4 "Continue and strengthen enforcement programs, such as those addressing vacant buildings, to promote the maintenance and survival ~~rehabilitation, and preservation of all classes~~ of the city's historic and cultural resources."

The HLC appreciates your patience, and your consideration of these suggested text adjustments. They are proposed in the interests of maximizing the clarity and effect of the City's positions on historic preservation.

Sincerely,



Patricia Colombe, Chair  
Historic Landmarks Commission