



HISTORICAL COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

**April 15, 2026 - 6:00 PM
Manzanita Room, Los Altos Community Center,
97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, CA**

IN-PERSON PARTICIPATION: Members of the public may participate in-person at the Los Altos Community Center in the Manzanita Room located at 97 Hillview Avenue, Los Altos, CA.

REMOTE MEETING PARTICIPATION: Members of the public may attend the meeting virtually via the link below, but will not be permitted to provide public comment via Zoom or telephone.

<https://tinyurl.com/bddkjz9j>

Telephone: 1-669-900-9128 / Meeting ID: 927 6340 8157 Passcode: 193704

PUBLIC COMMENT: Public comments can be made verbally, in-person at the public hearing, or submitted in writing prior to the meeting. Written comments may be emailed to HCpubliccomment@losaltosca.gov

Correspondence must be received by 2:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting to ensure distribution prior to the meeting. Comments provided after 2:00 p.m. will be distributed the following day and included with public comment in the packet.

Public comment will not be taken via Zoom or telephone.

AGENDA

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Members of the audience may bring to the Commission's attention any item that is not on the agenda. Please complete a "Request to Speak" form and submit it to the Staff Liaison. Speakers are generally given two or three minutes, at the discretion of the Chair. Please be advised that, by law, the Commission is unable to discuss or take action on issues presented during the Public Comment Period. According to State Law (also known as "the Brown Act") items must first be noticed on the agenda before any discussion or action.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. **Historical Commission Minutes**
Request to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 28, 2026

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. **Historic Preservation Award**
Request to consider nominations for the 2026 Los Altos Historic Preservation Award recognizing individuals, organizations, or projects that demonstrate excellence in historic preservation and

contribute to the understanding, preservation, and appreciation of the City's history. This item is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act.

3. **City of Los Altos - Margaret Thompson Essay Contest**

Receive an update on the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

STAFF UPDATES

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

SPECIAL NOTICES TO THE PUBLIC

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and California Law, it is the policy of the City of Los Altos to offer its programs, services and meetings in a manner that is readily accessible to everyone, including individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and require information or materials in an appropriate alternative format; or if you require any other accommodation, please contact department staff. Advance notification within this guideline will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility.



HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

6:00 PM – Wednesday, January 28, 2026

***Sequoia Room, Los Altos Community Center, 97 Hillview Avenue,
Los Altos, CA***

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

At 6:02 p.m. the Chair called the meeting to order.

ESTABLISH QUORUM

PRESENT: Commissioners Adams, Atkinson, Maguire-Negus, and Scussel

ABSENT: Commissioner Coe

STAFF: Senior Planners Sean Gallegos and Brittany Whitehill

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Jon Baer provided public comments.

CONSENT CALENDAR.

1. Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Approval of the DRAFT minutes of the Planning Commission's regular meeting of October 27, 2025

Public Comment

None

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Scussel to approve the Historical Commission minutes of August 18, 2025 with revision to correct last name for Commissioner Scussel under item 3, seconded by Commissioner Maguire-Negus

AYES: Adams, Atkinson, Maguire-Negus, and Scussel; NOES: None; ABSENT: Coe

The motion was approved (4-0).

PUBLIC HEARING

2. H25-0003 - Eric Liu, Orange Engineering - 125 Lyell Street

Request for a Historic Alteration Permit (H25-0003) for exterior modifications to an existing single-family home that is listed on the City of Los Altos Historic Resource Inventory. The project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15331 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Staff Presentation: Senior Planner Brittany Whitehill provided a presentation.

Applicant Presentation: Eric Liu of Orange Engineering, along with the project designer, presented the proposal.

Applicant Presentation: Property owner James Parivash provided a presentation in support of the request.

Public Comment: The following individuals provided public comment:

Jon Baer
Maria Bautista

Closed Public Comment

Commissioners discussed the item.

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Scussel, seconded by Commissioner Adams, approving the Historical Commission Historic Alteration Permit (H25-0003) for exterior modifications to an existing single-family house and finding the project exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15331.

AYES: Adams, Atkinson, Maguire-Negus, and Scussel. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. The motion Passed (4-0).

DISCUSSION ITEM

3. City of Los Altos - Certified Local Government (CLG) Annual Report

Request to review and approve the annual report to the State Office of Historic Preservation

Staff Presentation: Senior Planner Gallegos provided a presentation.

Public Comment:

Catherine Nunes provided comments:

Closed Public Comment

Commission Discussion:

Commissioners discussed incorporating the suggested revisions into the report.

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Scussel, seconded by Commissioner Maguire-Negus, the Historical Commission approved the CLG Annual Report with direction to staff to incorporate revisions discussed.

AYES: Adams, Atkinson, Maguire-Negus, and Scussel. NOES: None

The motion was approved (4-0).

4. Commission Work Plan

Discussion of Historical Commission Work Plan

Staff Presentation: Senior Planner Gallegos provided an overview.

Public Comment:

Catherine Nunes and Jon Baer provided comments.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioners discussed potential additions to the work plan, including inventory updates, public outreach, and preservation initiatives, which were incorporated into work plan.

Action: No action taken.

5. City of Los Altos - Margaret Thompson Essay Contest

Receive a status of the Mills Act Quinquennial Inspections.

Staff Presentation: Senior Planner Gallegos provided a presentation.

Public Comment:

No Public Comments.

Commission Discussion: Commissioners received the update.

Action: No action taken.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

None.

STAFF UPDATES

None.

POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Atkinson adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Sean Gallegos
Staff Liaison



HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: April 15, 2026

Subject: Historic Preservation Award

Prepared by: Sean Gallegos, Senior Planner

Staff Recommendation

Consider nominations for the 2026 Los Altos Historical Preservation Award

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Summary/Project Description:

The Historical Preservation Award is an award to recognize exemplary rehabilitation and preservation of historic properties, and individuals, groups or organizations in Los Altos. The commission considers nominees for the annual award at the meeting.

Fiscal Impact:

None

Background

The Los Altos Historic Preservation Award was adopted by City Council Resolution on March 13, 2012. The intent of the award is to recognize exemplary rehabilitation and preservation of historic properties, and individuals, groups or organizations in the community that exemplify the spirit of historic preservation in Los Altos. Nominees should demonstrate a dedication to historic preservation within at least one of the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of pioneering or innovative efforts in historic preservation or education.
2. Conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.
3. Public benefit received (educational, beautification, advocacy, etc.).
4. Impact to the City of Los Altos.

The purpose of the award is to encourage public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the City's past, and foster civic and neighborhood pride and sense of identity based upon the recognition and use of the City's historic resources. If the Historical Commission finds that none of the nominees meet the above criteria, the Commission is not obligated to grant the Preservation award.

Discussion/Analysis

As of the date of this report, no nominations have been received for the 2026 Historic Preservation Award. Nominations will continue to be accepted until April 15, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Any nominations received by the deadline will be presented to the Historical Commission for consideration at the April 15, 2026 meeting. The Commission will evaluate nominations based on the criteria listed above, including consideration of public testimony and submitted materials.

If nominations are received, the Commission should review the written materials and any public testimony prior to discussing how each nomination meets the criteria and determining whether to recommend an award recipient. If no nominations are received, or if none meet the criteria, no award will be granted for 2026.

If an award recipient is selected, the individual or entity will be recognized by the City Council through a Mayor's Proclamation at a future meeting.



HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: April 15, 2026

Subject: Margaret Thompson Essay Contest

Prepared by: Sean Gallegos, Senior Planner

Initiated by: City of Los Altos

Recommendation

Receive an update on the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest.

Background

Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest

The Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest is an annual program for students in grades three through six. Each year, students write essays responding to a designated historical theme, which are reviewed and scored by community volunteers, with prizes awarded in the spring.

For the 2026 contest, three winners will be selected at each grade level, with monetary prizes of \$50 for first place, \$30 for second place, and \$20 for third place. In addition to individual awards, the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest Trophy will be presented to the school or schools with the most winners.

2026 Essay Contest Theme

The 2026 theme is **“Your Heritage is Calling – Stories from Your Past.”** Students are invited to explore their personal and family history and to reflect on how heritage, cultural traditions, and everyday experiences contribute to the broader historical narrative. Students are encouraged to engage in conversations with parents, grandparents, or other relatives and to review family photographs or mementos that may spark memories and stories from the past.

The essay prompt emphasizes that history is not only shaped by well-known leaders or major events, but also by the lived experiences of individuals and families. Students are asked to select one meaningful story related to their heritage or cultural traditions and explain its significance, how it has influenced them, and whether it is something they wish to preserve for the future.

As an optional educational opportunity, students and families are invited to visit the Los Altos History Museum exhibition “10,000 Memories: Partition, Independence, and WWII in South Asia,” opening in late January 2026. The exhibition provides additional context on how personal stories contribute to collective history.

Students may enhance their essays with an accompanying drawing, painting, or photograph. While visual materials are encouraged, they are not required and are not scored as part of the essay rubric.

Evaluation Criteria

Essays were evaluated using the 2026 scoring rubric, for a total of 30 possible points. The rubric assessed the following:

- Clear identification and support of the essay prompt in the opening paragraph
- Strength, focus, and creativity of ideas
- Quality of expression, including vocabulary, sentence variety, and grammar
- Organization and logical flow, including a complete closing paragraph

Awards and Recognition

The City has received the results of the 2026 Margaret Thompson Essay Contest, which featured the prompt “Your Heritage is Calling: Stories from Your Past.” A total of 293 essays were submitted, reflecting strong participation and engagement across participating schools. Twelve student winners have been identified.

In recognition of all participants, 293 Participation Awards have already been distributed to the schools. The essays were evaluated with the assistance of three Historical Commissioners, Suzanne Negus, Gina Atkinson, and Karen Scussel, who joined the Los Altos History Museum Education Committee in the review process.

It is anticipated that notification letters to the student winners will be distributed during the week of April 13, following the Los Altos School District spring break. After letters are sent, teachers will be notified of the contest outcomes.

An Award Ceremony and Ice Cream Social is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, from 5:45 PM to 6:45 PM on the Los Altos History Museum patio. All student winners and their families will be invited to attend. Following the ceremony, students are expected to attend the City Council meeting at 7:00 PM to receive formal recognition and award checks.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this item is to provide the Historical Commission with an informational update on the status of the 2026 Margaret Thompson Essay Contest. No action is required.