



HISTORICAL COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

**May 27, 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 Ave., 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://losaltosca-gov.zoom.us/j/84746058434>

Telephone: 1-669-900-9128 / Meeting ID: 851 5538 0021 / Passcode: 941518

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 generalplanupdate@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 April 15, 2026

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 2. Study Session – Comprehensive General Plan Update – Community Visioning and Guiding Principles** - Discuss the community vision and guiding principles associated with Phase 1 of the Los Altos Comprehensive General Plan Update.

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 p.m. – Wednesday, April 15, 2026

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

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

At 6:00 p.m. the Vice Chair called the meeting to order.

ESTABLISH QUORUM

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

ABSENT: Commissioner Atkinson

STAFF: Senior Planner Sean Gallegos

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Historical Commission Meeting Minutes

Approval of the DRAFT minutes of the Historical Commission's regular meeting of January 28, 2026

Public Comment

None.

Action: Upon a motion by Commissioner Scussel to approve the Historical Commission minutes of January 28, 2026, as amended, seconded by Commissioner Adams, the motion was approved.

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

The motion was approved 3 to 0, with Commissioner Coe abstaining and Commissioner Atkinson absent.

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.

Staff Presentation: Senior Planner Gallegos provided a presentation and stated that no nominations were received for the 2026 Historic Preservation Award.

Public Comment: None.

Commission Discussion: Commissioners discussed the item.

Action: No action taken.

3. City of Los Altos - Margaret Thompson Essay Contest

Receive an update on the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest.

Staff Presentation: Senior Planner Gallegos provided an update on the Margaret Thompson Essay Contest.

Public Comment: None.

Commission Discussion: Commissioners received the update.

Action: No action taken.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

None.

STAFF UPDATES

None.

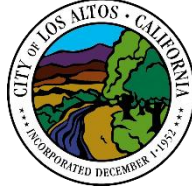
POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Maguire-Negus adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Sean Gallegos
Staff Liaison



CITY OF LOS ALTOS

HISTORICAL COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date May 27, 2026

Subject Comprehensive General Plan Update - Community Visioning and Guiding Principles

Prepared by: Brittany Whitehill, Senior Planner

Background

General Plan Overview

The Los Altos General Plan is the City's primary long range planning document and serves as a comprehensive blueprint for future development, preservation, and public investment. It reflects a shared community vision for what residents and businesses want Los Altos to be and guides decisions related to land use, housing, mobility, environmental resources, community design, and public services. State law requires every California city and county to adopt a general plan addressing eight mandated elements, and the City's Zoning Code must remain consistent with it. The General Plan applies citywide to both public and private property and provides the framework for decision making by Commissions and the City Council. As the City's policy "constitution" for land use and related public services, it establishes long-term goals and policies; designates the general distribution, location, and intensity of land uses; and provides a basis for coordinating investments in infrastructure and public facilities.

The General Plan is used to evaluate development proposals and land use actions for consistency; inform the City's annual budget and capital improvement programming by identifying needed facilities and priorities; and align related plans and implementation tools, including zoning, open space, transportation and circulation, and other functional and infrastructure plans, with adopted community goals. The City's Sphere of Influence identifies areas outside City limits that may be considered for future annexation, and these areas are also subject to the General Plan.

The General Plan provides a "10,000-foot" policy framework for long-term planning. It guides decision-making and the evaluation of future development proposals but does not approve specific projects, determine detailed designs, or commit the City to funding particular improvements. Implementation occurs through zoning, specific plans, design guidelines, functional plans, and the Capital Improvement and Major Maintenance Program.

The current General Plan was adopted in 2002 with a planning horizon through 2020. Although the Housing and Safety Elements have been updated to comply with state law, the plan has not been comprehensively revised in more than two decades and no longer reflects current conditions, emerging technologies, demographic shifts, or evolving community priorities. For these reasons, the City has initiated a comprehensive update to establish a renewed vision and policy framework to guide growth, investment, and decision making for the coming decades.

Project Initiation and Team

The Comprehensive General Plan Update is included in the City's Capital Improvement and Major Maintenance Program, the Development Services Department budget, and the Planning Commission's 2026 Work Plan.

The project is led by the Planning Division, with support from subject-matter experts across City departments and coordination with partner agencies such as Santa Clara County Fire, Cal Water, and Valley Water.

The City has retained Dyett & Bhatia, an experienced California planning firm, to prepare the General Plan Update and the associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) required under the California Environmental Quality Act. The consultant team includes specialists in community outreach and engagement, land use, economics, transportation, historic resources, utilities, and noise.

Project Timeline

The project began in January 2026 and is anticipated to conclude in late 2027. The update includes four major phases:

Phase 1 – Issues, Opportunities and Visioning: Identification of key issues and opportunities, culminating in a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that articulate shared community values and aspirations based on community engagement.

Phase 2 – Alternatives Exploration: Development and evaluation of land use and circulation alternatives, and selection of a preferred land use plan and key strategies informed by community engagement and the Vision and Guiding Principles established in Phase I.

Phase 3 – Draft Plan Preparation: Preparation of the draft General Plan based on the preferred strategy, along with the EIR analyzing potential environmental impacts and mitigation strategies.

Phase 4 – Adoption and Finalization: Public review of draft documents and formal hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council leading to adoption of the updated General Plan.



Figure 1: Tentative Project Timeline

Community Engagement

Community engagement is central to all phases of the General Plan Update and is a primary focus of Phase 1, particularly in developing the Vision and Guiding Principles. This early work sets the tone for the entire plan by identifying key themes and priorities and describing a shared vision for what Los Altos should be in 2050. The Vision and Guiding Principles are intentionally broad and aspirational, forming the foundation for the more detailed goals and policies that will follow.

The engagement strategy is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and welcoming, with an emphasis on helping residents feel comfortable, informed, and able to share their perspectives. Staff is making a concerted effort to reach community members who are not typically engaged in planning processes and to reduce barriers that can make participation feel intimidating or burdensome. Outreach methods are intentionally varied and include digital engagement, mailed materials, stakeholder interviews, school and community partnerships, and in-person events in familiar community settings. Outreach conducted to date to inform the Vision and Guiding Principles includes the following initiatives:

- Communitywide online survey on preferences and priorities offered in English, Spanish, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese (approximately 650 responses received).
- Paper version of the online survey provided to the Los Altos Senior Center and two independent living/skilled nursing facilities (The Terraces at Los Altos and BridgePoint Los Altos), based on feedback received at the joint commission study sessions.
- Outreach to schools and faith-based organizations, including collaboration with students from Los Altos High School.
- Stakeholder meetings with nonprofit organizations, developers, and downtown business representatives.
- Four community pop-up events: Adult 50+ Luncheon (February), Valentine's Choco Super Stroll (February), Family Dance Party at Woodland Branch Library (March), Spring Egg Hunt (April).
- Community open house at the Grant Park Community Center (April).
- Two citywide mailings to provide information on the General Plan Update and highlight opportunities for engagement.

Input from these efforts is being documented and synthesized to identify key themes that will inform the draft Vision and Guiding Principles. Engagement will continue throughout the project and be refined in response to community needs.

Prior Joint Commission Study Sessions

Because the General Plan is a broad citywide policy document, staff is seeking input from all commissions to ensure that the Community Vision and Guiding Principles reflect a wide range of perspectives. The Planning Commission will serve as the formal recommending body, consistent with California Government Code Section 65353; however, early input from all commissions is important to shaping a comprehensive and community informed plan.

Staff conducted a series of joint commission study sessions to gather input on the Community Vision and Guiding Principles for the General Plan Update. These joint meetings were intentionally structured to create a collaborative setting in which commissioners could hear and build on perspectives from other commissions. This format is especially well suited to the General Plan Update, which addresses broad, long-range issues that naturally overlap across topic areas such as land use, mobility, environmental sustainability, public facilities, culture, and quality of life. Bringing commissions together helps identify shared priorities, reinforces connections among related issues, and supports a more integrated discussion of the Community Vision and Guiding Principles. The joint format also benefits members of the public by providing a single opportunity to observe discussion across multiple commissions, making it easier to follow the broader conversation and participate in the planning process.

Two joint sessions have already been held; one on April 22, 2026, with the Complete Streets Commission, Financial Commission, and Planning Commission and a second on April 27, 2026, with the Parks, Arts, Recreation, and Culture Commission, Library Commission, Senior Commission, and Environmental Commission.

The Historical Commission was originally scheduled to participate in a joint session but was unable to do so due to lack of a quorum. This meeting serves as a makeup session, providing the Commission with the same opportunity to contribute as the other City commissions.

Discussion

This study session will follow the format used in the prior joint meetings. Staff will begin with a presentation on the General Plan, the update process, and the role of the Community Vision and Guiding Principles. The Commission will then have approximately 30 minutes for discussion, facilitated by staff and the City's consultant, Dyett and Bhatia. The meeting will comply with Brown Act requirements and will include time for public comment. Commission input is advisory and will be considered alongside broader community feedback.

Historical Commissioners are encouraged to review the following topics in advance and consider them in relation to the specific focus and responsibilities of their commission:

1. What defining features and characteristics of Los Altos should the General Plan seek to preserve and enhance?

2. What key challenges should the City plan for in the coming years?
3. What assets or opportunities should the City leverage for the benefit of the community?
4. What is your vision for Los Altos in the future?
5. What programs or projects could help advance that vision?

Next Steps

Following the study session, staff and the consultant team will prepare a draft Vision and Guiding Principles that reflect existing conditions, community outreach findings, and commission input. The draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles will be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council in early summer.

From: [Brittany Whitehill](#)
To: [Yvonne Dupont](#)
Subject: RE: Historic Preservation Element of General Plan [Study Session Comments]
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 8:54:28 AM

From: Tagfam <tagliofam@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 8:35 AM
To: General Plan Update <generalplanupdate@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Historic Preservation Element of General Plan [Study Session Comments]

Dear City of Los Altos,

I am writing with comments regarding today's meeting of the Los Altos Historical Commission. Preserving our unique past while building for the future is vital.

Historic preservation helps to maintain and enhance our community's sense of identity and cultural heritage, and thoughtfully preserving it is paramount to telling the story of Los Altos's past in a way that also informs our future.

As a Los Altos resident, I feel strongly that:

- Los Altos firmly needs a distinct Historic Preservation Element in the new General Plan.
- Historic preservation—of structures, landscapes, public lands, neighborhood features, and natural treasures such as trees —must remain visible, explicit, and properly resourced.
- Protecting village character, neighborhood identity, historic resources, and cultural landscapes is essential to the City's future vision.
- Preservation is not separate from livability, beauty, sustainability, or community character — rather it is foundational to them and should be treated as such.

Historic preservation is not nostalgia; it should be a core objective for our city, and a documented practice governed by standards. Making it a distinct part of our new General Plan is critical to retaining evidence of the past to educate, enrich our community identity, and ensure that historical landmarks and elements remain functional and relevant into the future as a valued part of our character.

Sincerely,
Valerie Taglio

From: [Maria Bautista](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#)
Subject: Historical Commission Study Session, May 27, 2026: Item #2 Comprehensive General Plan Update
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 10:41:18 AM

Dear Historical Commissioners,

As you discuss the vision and guiding principles that drive the General Plan update, the most important aspect to emphasize is maintaining and enhancing the Historic Resources Element.

The Historic Resources Element, currently combined with Community Design Element, has been and should be central to the Los Altos General Plan as we are both a Certified Local Government and a community that prides itself on our historic and cultural resources.

While California requires seven General Plan elements (circulation, housing, conservation, open-space, noise and safety), a Historic Resources Element is an optional element in general practice. However, the Historic Resources Element should remain a central and integral part of the Los Altos General Plan.

Historical and cultural resources are never recovered once altered or destroyed. And in order for historic preservation to be recognized as a legitimate land use concern, it is essential to include historic preservation in our General Plan. Because the elements of a General Plan must be consistent with one another, historic preservation as part of land use and planning policy ensures protection and promotion of our historic and cultural environment.

Petree A. Knighton's [A Path to Parity: Adopting a Historic Preservation Element to the General Plan](#) written for the CA Office of Historic Preservation concludes:

Having a separate element helps bring historic preservation into parity with other land use concerns in the debate. And while not all resources will be preserved, at least through a dedicated process and armed with emphasis by the community, preservation will have a seat at the table of discussion insuring that all avenues have been exhausted before the community loses a piece of their past.

One of the greatest community assets in Los Altos is our history as expressed through our the historic designations that define, and add character and value to Los Altos.

In addition to tonight's discussion, I urge you to add the General Plan to your commission Work Plan to ensure that priorities for historic preservation are formally checked as the General Plan proceeds. While individual commissioner opinions add value to the General Plan process, it is the formal recommendations from the Historical Commission that reflects the will of the Commission and the community. Please insists that the General Plan be part of your Work Plan.

The General Plan should include a robust historical overview that illustrates land use and development patterns in Los Altos from the historic period to the present, divided into comprehensive eras and districts.

Principles to include:

- To preserve significant historical, architectural, cultural and archeological features.
- To maintain and restore historical and cultural landscapes.
- To support and encourage thoughtful rehabilitation or reuse of historic structures.
- To promote and protect viewsheds and scenic resources
- To preserve historic natural beauty and ecological integrity

Thank you for your great work to make Los Altos history part of our experience today and into the future.

Best,

Maria Bautista

From: [PALLA Support](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#); [Public Comment](#)
Cc: pallalosalto@gmail.com
Subject: Public Comment: Study Session May 27 Historical Commission and Council re General Plan
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 12:01:57 PM
Attachments: [May 27 2026 Hist Commission General Plan Element Request Los Altos.pdf](#)
[Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Program Requirements Source CA OHP copy 2026.pdf](#)

Dear City of Los Altos, Historic Commissioners, Councilmembers, and Staff,

Attached please find a directed public comment letter for tonight's General Plan Study Session requesting the explicit development and inclusion of a distinct Historic Preservation (Resources) Element and introductory Heritage and Cultural Context framework within the Los Altos General Plan.

We, as residents, local businesses and neighbors, believe this is vital to preserving the historic character, village identity, environmental heritage, livability, and community pride that have long shaped Los Altos and continue to define its future vision.

Respectfully,

Members of the Preservation Action League Los Altos (PALLA)

Attachments:

-May 27 2026 Public Comment Letter From PALLA

-Copy of State of California Office of Historic Preservation OHP, Certified Local Government Program Requirements 2026. (link also included in letter)

May 27, 2026

RE: Historic Preservation Element and Heritage Context in the Los Altos General Plan

Public Comment, City of Los Altos, Study Session, May 27, 2026

Dear Historic Commissioners, Mayor, Councilmembers, and Plan Development Staff,

We are residents associated with the Preservation Action League of Los Altos (PALLA), writing to urge the City to retain and clearly identify a distinct **Historic Preservation (Resources) Element** within the new General Plan.

At present, the City's General Plan website and consultant materials identify only the eight State-required General Plan elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Safety, and Environmental Justice.

Notably absent is any identified **Historic Preservation Element** or development of the broader **Historical and Cultural Introductory Context section** recognizing the historic, cultural, and heritage framework of Los Altos.

This matters.

While Historic Preservation, Natural Element/Tree Preservation, and related heritage-focused elements are not among the minimum State-required elements, California cities are expressly permitted to adopt additional elements reflecting local priorities, identity, and community character.

Los Altos has historically and overwhelmingly made historic preservation, heritage character, and a leafy village identity central to its General Plan framework and long-range vision.

The City's historic and cultural heritage has long informed the vision, priorities, and direction of the General Plan and its various elements, and should continue to be clearly reflected through both a distinct Historic Preservation Element and an introductory Heritage and Cultural Context section within the new General Plan.

For decades, Los Altos' historic resources, cultural landscapes, heritage orchards, neighborhoods, civic spaces, and mature and heritage tree canopies have helped define the character and identity of the community. These are not secondary features of Los Altos — they are central to what residents value most about living here.

As a Certified Local Government (CLG), Los Altos has also historically maintained preservation planning and preservation as a requirement as part of its planning framework. The attached

Certified Local Government requirements document from the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) specifically references the adoption of “a historic preservation plan or a historic preservation element” as part of the General Plan framework for participation in the program.

We respectfully ask the City to:

- Clearly identify and maintain a distinct Historic Preservation Element within the new General Plan.
- Develop with public input the introductory Historical and Cultural Context section within the General Plan framework to include our history and its future in our vision.
- Ensure preservation policies remain explicit, visible, and properly supported.
- Recognize preservation as foundational to village character, livability, sustainability, and neighborhood identity.
- Continue Los Altos’ longstanding commitment and responsibilities as a Certified Local Government.

The historic character and heritage context of Los Altos should remain clearly reflected in the General Plan framework and vision now being presented to the public.

Respectfully,

Residents of the Preservation Action League of Los Altos (PALLA)

Attachment: State of California Office of Historic Preservation OHP, [California CLG Program Requirements PDF](#)

Requirements

(Excerpt from Appendix G, Certified Local Government Application and Procedures, August 1999, pp 41-47.)

Local governments may be certified to participate in the CLG program by complying with the following requirements:

- I Enforce appropriate state or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties:
 - A. State enabling legislation provides for local jurisdictions to enact appropriate historic preservation legislation. California Government Code Sections 65850, 25373, and 37361 enable city and county legislative bodies to provide for “the protection, enhancement; perpetuation, or use of places, sites, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects having a special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value.”
 - B. Local governments must adopt local historic preservation ordinances with provisions to enforce the designation and protection of historic and archeological resources.
 - C. The local legislation shall be consistent with the intent and purpose of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470).
 - D. The CLG will adopt a historic preservation plan or a historic preservation element for the local jurisdiction's General Plan, as authorized by the California Government Code, prior to or upon applying for a CLG grant.
 - E. The CLG commission will participate in the environmental review of specific federally sponsored projects, such as community development programs involving HUD Block Grant funds unless it is determined by OHP that the necessary expertise is not available to the local government. The CLG will establish programmatic agreements with the state agreeing to ensure compliance with Section 106 provisions of the NHPA.
 - F. The CLG commission will participate in the environment review of local projects in accordance with the requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The commission may review and comment on permit actions affecting significant listed historic properties and other resources eligible for listing, in accordance with local ordinance requirements and with CEQA. Procedural guidelines should include standards for demolition stays, design review criteria, anti-neglect requirements, and appeal strategies.
- II Establish an adequate and qualified historic preservation review commission by local law:
 - A. The commission shall include a minimum membership of five (5) individuals with all members having demonstrated interest, competence, or knowledge in historic preservation.
 - B. At least two (2) Commission members are encouraged to be appointed from among professionals in the disciplines of history, architecture, architectural

- history, planning, pre-historic and historic archeology, folklore, cultural anthropology, curation, conservation, and landscape architecture or related disciplines, such as urban planning, American studies, American civilization, or cultural geography, to the extent that such professionals are available in the community. Commission membership may also include lay members who have demonstrated special interests, competence, experience, or knowledge in historic preservation.
- C. A local government may be certified without the minimum number or types of disciplines established in state procedures if it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the state that it has made a reasonable effort to fill those positions, or that some alternative composition of the commission best meets the needs of the protection of historic properties in the local community.
 - D. Commission members shall be appointed by the chief elected local official, city council, or board of supervisors consistent with the provisions of the preservation ordinance. The appointing authority shall make interim appointments to fill unexpired terms in the event of vacancies occurring during the term of members of the commission. The appointing authority shall also act within sixty (60) days to fill a vacancy. Terms of office of the commission members shall be according to the local preservation ordinance.
 - E. The commission shall meet at least four times a year, with meetings held in a public place, advertised in advance, and open to the public, pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act (G.C. Section 54950 et seq.) for open meetings. Written minutes of commission meetings shall be kept on file, available for public inspection, and submitted to the state as a part of the CLG Annual Report.
 - F. Each commission member is required to attend at least one informational or educational meeting, seminar, workshop, or conference per year that pertains directly to the work and functions of the commission and would be approvable by the state. The CLG Regional Workshops sponsored by the OHP are important sources of information. The annual State Historic Preservation Conference generally provides special sessions devoted to the issues, objectives, and responsibilities of commissions. Commissions may also bring in professionals to provide training on site.
 - G. An annual report of the activities of the commission shall be submitted to the state at the end of each calendar year. The reports shall include, but not be limited to, such information as narrative summary of accomplishments, summaries of new and corrected survey activities, number of properties designated under local ordinance in relation to inventory for community, summaries of National Register applications reviewed, summaries of historical contexts prepared, number of federal tax certifications reviewed, number of properties on which design review was held, number of properties on which environmental project reviews were conducted, property owners of Mills Act contracts approved, summarization of local preservation activities, list of local landmark designations, description of public education activities, lists of commission members and resumes, list of staff and resumes, detailed listing of commission and staff training received, commission attendance

records, summary of changes in preservation laws, summary of adoption or updates of historic preservation plan or historic preservation element of your community's General Plan, commission meeting minutes and agendas, and other pertinent activities performed by the commission.

III Maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties:

The CLG shall be responsible for organizing, developing, and administering an inventory of cultural resources within the entire spatial jurisdiction of the CLG.

- A. The commission shall develop procedures for conducting an inventory of culture resources. Survey activities shall be coordinated with and complementary to the state program to ensure that survey results produced by the CLG will be readily integrated into the statewide comprehensive historic preservation planning process.
1. The CLG shall be responsible for overseeing the compiling, recording, and updating of inventory information on cultural resources within its jurisdiction. The information shall be based on comprehensive surveys conducted in conformance with state survey standards and procedures. Surveys completed prior to the certification of a local government may be re-evaluated in accordance with state standards and may be submitted for inclusion in the State database.
 2. As part of any ongoing survey effort, procedural requirements must allow for periodic update of survey results as buildings gain maturity and as new areas are incorporated or annexed by the CLG.
 3. The commission must adopt state guidelines for conducting its inventory of historic properties. State-approved inventory forms (DPR-523, A-L) and the OHP's Instructions For Recording Historical Resources shall be used to facilitate integration into the state electronic data system and for statewide comprehensive historic preservation planning purposes. Dimitri software is available for the DPR 523 forms.
 4. Standards for the evaluation of properties must be consistent with the National Register of Historic Places criteria.
- A. The commission shall establish internal procedures to facilitate the use of survey results in the planning process by the CLG officials and departments. The commission shall submit survey results to the local government for adoption, then forward to OHP. Copies of the survey should be on deposit at the local planning department, building and safety office, public works department, and redevelopment agency. Libraries, colleges, and historical societies should also receive copies. OHP will make copies available for the appropriate "California Historical Resources Information System" regional center. See IV(A)(2) below for public access requirements.

IV Provide for adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program:

- A The CLG shall provide opportunities for public participation in all responsibilities delegated to the CLG, in accordance with appropriate regulations, standards, and guidelines.

1. Public participation shall be fully encouraged at local commission meetings. Commission meetings shall be open to the public, with published agenda and minutes in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (G.C. Section 54950 et seq.) for open meetings. The published agenda shall be mailed in advance of meetings to individuals and citizen organizations interested in the commission's activities.
 2. Public participation shall be fully encouraged in the performance of the historic survey program at all levels of responsibility to identify and inventory significant cultural resources in the jurisdiction of the CLG. The public can serve as volunteers to assist in the survey effort. Survey results shall be of public record and on file at a public institution, except in the case of sensitive resources, e.g., archeological sites subject to vandalism.
 3. Public participation shall be fully encouraged in the nomination process for the National Register of Historic Places program. The CLG shall invite comments from the general public regarding National Register nominations.
 4. Public participation shall be fully encouraged in all public hearings on projects related to CEQA and Section 106 processes.
- V Satisfactorily perform the responsibilities delegated to the CLG:
- A. The CLG shall prepare a comprehensive local historic preservation plan which would identify preservation missions, goals, and priorities. The plan would also establish preservation strategies, programs, and time schedules.
 - B. The CLG will participate in the review and comment on historic preservation certification applications for tax incentives. The CLG and state may establish procedures for implementation of the investment tax credit program at the local level in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation.
 - C. Each CLG must have a local historic preservation plan prior to or upon becoming a CLG before any additional grant applications will be considered. The state shall monitor and evaluate the performance of the CLG for consistency with the identification, evaluation, and preservation priorities of the comprehensive state historic preservation planning process.
 1. Annual Review of CLGs:
The State shall conduct an annual review of CLGs to assure that each government continues to meet the minimal requirements and is satisfactorily performing its responsibilities. As part of this review, the state shall examine the annual reports submitted by the CLGs, records of the administration of funds allocated from the HPF, and other documents as necessary. The CLG shall make these records available to the state. A more thorough review and site visit to the Certified Local Government will occur at least once every three (3) years.
 2. Procedures for Decertification:
If the state evaluation indicates that the CLG no longer meets the minimal requirements or that in any other way a CLG's performance is not

satisfactory, the state shall document that assessment and recommend to the local government steps to bring its performance up to a satisfactory level. The CLG shall have a period of not less than 30 nor more than 180 days to implement improvements; If the state determines that sufficient improvement has not occurred, the state shall decertify the local government, citing specific reasons for the decertification. Performance shall be deemed unsatisfactory if one or more of the following conditions exist or is applicable: a) the commission fails to perform its delegated responsibilities within established time periods; b) the CLG fails to coordinate its responsibilities with the state; c) the commission substantially fails to maintain consistency of its design review decisions with the Secretary's Standards for Historic Preservation; d) the CLG fails to maintain a qualified historic preservation review commission membership; e) the CLG fails to enforce the provisions of the local preservation ordinance; f) the CLG fails to enforce its CEQA and Section 106 responsibilities; g) the CLG fails to adequately survey historical resources in its jurisdiction; and h) the CLG fails to comply adequately with proper fiscal management of HPF grants in accordance with the National Register Programs Guideline, OMB Circular A-128, and 43 CFR 12.

3. Decertification Appeal:

If the state recommends decertification, the local government may appeal to the NPS. The NPS has 45 days to respond to the appeal.

4. Decertification Without Prejudice:

CLGs may petition the OHP to be decertified voluntarily and without prejudice.

5. Financial Assistance Close-out:

The state shall conduct financial assistance close-out procedures pursuant to the National Register Program Guideline when a local government is decertified.

VI The CLG shall assume certain responsibilities for reviewing and recommending properties within its jurisdiction to the National Register of Historic Places.

A. The SHPO shall have the sole responsibility of nominating National Register properties directly to the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary).

B. The CLG shall establish local procedures for the National Register nomination process consistent with the requirements in the NHPA, Section 101(c)(2).

1. Before a property within the jurisdiction of a CLG may be considered by the state to be nominated to the National Register, the state shall notify the owner, the applicable chief elected local official, and the local historic preservation commission. The commission, after reasonable opportunity for public comment, shall prepare a report as to whether or not such property, in its opinion, meets the criteria of the National Register. Within sixty (60) days of notice from the state, the chief elected local official shall transmit the report of the commission and his/her recommendation to the state. After receipt of such report and recommendation, or if no such report and recommendation are received within sixty (60) days, the state

shall process the National Register nomination. The state may expedite such process with the concurrence of the CLG.

2. If both the commission and the chief elected local official recommend that a property not be nominated to the National Register, the state shall take no further action, unless within thirty (30) days of the receipt of such recommendation by the state, an appeal is filed with the state. If such an appeal is filed, the state shall follow the procedure for making a nomination pursuant to Section 101(a). Any report and recommendations made under this section shall be included with any nomination submitted by the state to the Secretary.

VII By mutual written agreement with the local governing body, the state may delegate additional responsibilities to the CLG. Local governments may be certified to participate in specific program activities under Programmatic Agreements.

- A. The CLG may develop educational programs promoting historic preservation at the local level such as, but not limited to, sponsorship of preservation workshops, publication of preservation information, organizing preservation fairs, conducting walking tours, preparing preservation curricula for schools, etc.
- B. Commission members may act in an advisory capacity to other officials and departments within the local government and act as a liaison on behalf of the CLG to individuals and organizations concerned with historic preservation issues at the local level.
- C. The CLG may participate in the Mills Act program or other economic incentive programs to provide property-tax relief for owners of historic properties.
- D. The CLG may participate in the Marks Historical Rehabilitation Act for issuance of tax-exempt industrial development bonds, providing that the commission shall serve as a part of the required citizen advisory board.
- E. The CLG may assume certain responsibilities of recommending National Register of Historic Places properties, identified in the CLG jurisdiction, directly to the State Historical Resources Commission.
- F. By mutual written agreement with the local governing body, the state may delegate additional responsibilities to the CLG.

From: [Cindy Andrews](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#); [General Plan Update](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: General Plan Session: Historic Commission
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 12:32:44 PM

To the Los Altos Historic Commission, Los Altos City Council, General Plan Review Committee,

I was honored to serve on the General Plan Review Committee in 1987. There were three major focuses of the General Plan: The Community Design & Historic Resources, Land Use and Economic Development.

My committee, the Historic Resources, was composed of community notables, such as Penny Lave, Kris Casto, Mark Sandoval, Abby Ahrens, Julie Rose, Jan Meyer, Mark Srebnik, Catherine Burk, Chris Graham, and more, who revered the history and character of our Los Altos home. Our goals, as stated in the General Plan Summary, were:

- *Preserve and enhance the identity and unique character of Los Altos.
- *Preserve archaeological artifacts found in Los Altos or mitigate disturbances to them, consistent with their intrinsic value.
- *Preserve and enhance historic and cultural structures or sites
- *Maintain and enhance the attractiveness of neighborhood shopping centers and businesses along Foothill Expressway.
- *Increase the attractiveness of Downtown to shoppers and pedestrians
- *Retain the character and natural appearance of the constructed environment.

Preserving the character and history of our hometown is the soul of what makes Los Altos unique and desirable. I hope we never lose site of this.....it should be located at the forefront of our new plan.

Cindy Langley Andrews

From: [Lizebeth Burch](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#)
Subject: Preserve the historic character of Los Altos!
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 12:40:09 PM

Re: HC Study Session, General Plan

We are unable to attend today's meeting. So, our comments:

As longtime residents of Los Altos, we are concerned that a separate and distinct historic resources element be retained in the overall vision and plan for our City.

Los Altos has a flavour and charm all its own, and no other mid-Peninsula City has its distinct blend of old and new. We are especially concerned about proposed changes to our historic Orchard, as well as the creeping encroachment of larger and taller buildings into our downtown area.

It is most important that the village atmosphere of Los Altos, and its character, be respected and preserved for future residents to enjoy. Merely the words "*community development*" send a ripple of concern through us. People choose to live here precisely because of the rather reminiscent village atmosphere. If this is tampered with, we will have a much less desirable and successful City.

Please keep this in mind when setting ANY future policies. It is essential to maintain our local character, while still continuing to move forward. If we fail to ensure this, we will lose precious elements in the long run, and these can never be restored.

Thank you for your attention.

Don and Lizebeth Burch
130 2nd Street

Sent from my iPad

From: [Catherine Nunes](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#)
Cc: [General Plan Update](#); [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Public Comment: May 27 2026 Historic Commission Study Session Re General Plan
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 1:27:09 PM

Dear City of Los Altos, Councilmembers, Historic Commissioners and Staff,

I am writing as an engaged advocate for Los Altos' historic and environmental character regarding tonight's Historical Commission General Plan study session discussion.

Having lived in Los Altos for more than 35 years and the SF Bay Area for even longer, I have seen how historic preservation, environmental stewardship, and historical context are essential to building strong neighborhoods, community pride, livability, and the leafy, semi-rural village character that residents and neighbors value so deeply, while also providing real and tangible public benefits.

Los Altos' historic resources, cultural landscapes, heritage and mature tree canopies, semi-rural neighborhood features, protected orchards and places, and village identity have long shaped the character of our community and should continue to help guide the City's long-range vision and policies.

It is essential and timely for the City to formally direct **a distinct Historic Preservation (Resources) Element in the new General Plan**, along with an **introductory Heritage and Cultural Context section**, helping inform the vision and priorities of the General Plan and all its elements as a whole. This was a vital component developed and exercised in past General Plans, and needs to be strengthened and not watered down in this version of our City's future.

I also urge the City Council to **properly task, budget, and resource the Historical Commission in 2026/27** so it can play a direct and meaningful role in shaping this work and the historical and cultural context framework. And properly budget and plan for those historic resources, with the oversight of the Historic Commission on public lands and under the City's direct stewardship. This goes beyond maintenance.

Additionally, resource a long-overdue, formal Historic Preservation Plan (CLG required) and an updated Historic Resources Inventory alongside the General Plan process and work plans. This will also fulfill the City's commitments to its status as a 'Certified Local Government with the State of California, which is needed.

Preservation is not simply about protecting our Los Altos past. It is about carrying forward the character, beauty, identity, and sense of place that continue to make Los Altos special.

Let's make sure historic resources and environmental preservation remain central to our planning vision of who we are and what brings value and public benefits to us all every day.

Respectfully,

Catherine Nunes

From: [Cheryl Herms](#)
To: [Public Comment - HC](#)
Subject: Protecting our Quaint Town
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 1:33:17 PM

Please keep our historic buildings, cultural landscapes, neighborhoods, public spaces, and heritage trees. They are central to the identity, beauty, charm, and livability of Los Altos and intentionally protected.

I live a 20 minute walk from the center of town for the last 13 years and go walking through town every week. Please preserve the town that I moved to for the reasons above. We plan to stay here forever. Not just passing though.

Cheryl H.

Los Altos