CITY OF LONG BEACH

**Memorandum**

Date: July 21, 2026

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager

From: Christopher Koontz, Director of Community Development

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **2025 Cultural Heritage Commission Annual Report**

In accordance with Long Beach Municipal Code Section 2.18.090, an annual report is required to be prepared for each Council-established advisory board, commission, or committee to present its activities to the Mayor and City Council. On June 30, 2026, the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) received and filed the Commission's 2025 Annual Report (Attachment A). The Annual Report recommends that the CHC should be continued due to its critical work supporting and encouraging historic preservation in the City of Long Beach.

While the work of the CHC is important, the Annual Report also provides options to be considered for potential modifications to how the commission runs, in order to reduce the costs of running commission meetings and maximize meeting value. These options include considering changes to the meeting day/time, reducing the frequency of regular meetings, requiring a minimum number of agenda topics, and working with other commissions such as the Planning Commission or the Economic Development Commission.

If you have any questions, please contact Alison Spindler-Ruiz, Planning Bureau Manager, at Alison.Spindler-Ruiz@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENT A - 2025 CHC ANNUAL REPORT

CC: DAWN MCINTOSH, CITY ATTORNEY
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CITY OF LONG BEACH

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# CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION
## Annual Report to City Council

The annual report of the City of Long Beach Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) has been prepared in accordance with Section 2.18.090 of the Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) for the period of January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025 as is required for all non-charter commissions in the city.

The CHC is created by LBMC Chapter 2.63. The CHC's is to recognize, protect and promote the retention, maintenance and use of Historic Landmarks and Historic Landmark Districts in the City in accordance with Chapter 2.63 LBMC. Said Commission shall consist of seven (7) members who are residents of the City who have manifested a knowledge and interest in the preservation of the City's cultural heritage.

Commission members are appointed from the disciplines of architecture, urban design, history, architectural history, urban planning, archeology or other historic preservation related disciplines, such as American studies, American civilization, cultural geography or cultural anthropology, to the extent that such professionals are available in the community. Commission membership shall also include lay members who have special interest or concern in, or who have demonstrated competence, experience or knowledge in historic preservation or related disciplines.

The term of office and the number of terms of office of the members of the Commission are in accordance with and pursuant to the provisions of LBMC Chapter 2.18.

In 2025, the seven members of the CHC were:

- Kevin McGuan, Chair
- Mark Grisafe, Vice Chair
- Tasha Hunter
- Amy Bodek
- Marco Pizzo
- Jocelynn Pryor
- Jacqueline Padilla-Perez

## Objectives and Functions

The objectives and functions of the CHC are the recognition, preservation, protection and use of cultural resources for social and cultural enrichment and general welfare of the people. The role of the CHC includes the following:

A. To recommend to the City Council that specific districts, buildings, structures, natural features, works of art, signs or similar objects having a special historical, cultural, archaeological, architectural, or aesthetic value as part of the heritage of the City, be designated as a Landmark or Landmark District;
B. To review any proposed modifications to Landmarks or to a contributing building or structure within a Landmark District, and to issue or deny a certificate of appropriateness thereon;
C. To encourage public interest in the preservation of cultural resources in the City;
D. To compile, maintain and update a local register of Landmarks and Landmark Districts and to publicize and periodically update the City's cultural resource survey;
E. To review and comment for advisory purposes only upon the conduct of land use, housing, redevelopment, public works and other types of planning and programs undertaken by any agency or department of the City, County, State or nation, as they relate to the cultural heritage of the City;
F. Upon authorization of the City Council, coordinate and cooperate with local, County, State and federal governments in pursuit of the Commission's purposes;
G. Subject to the consent of the City Council, recommend acceptance of gifts, grants and facade easement donations consistent with the purposes for which the Commission was established;
H. To make and adopt, and from time to time amend, rules and procedures governing the conduct of its business and provide for the administration of this Chapter consistent with Chapter 2.18 of this Code;
I. To assume whatever responsibilities and duties may be assigned to it by the State under certified local government provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; and
J. To perform any other functions consistent with the purposes herein that may be directed by the City Council.

**Reports and Recommendations presented to the City Council, Including Number of Subject Matters Referred by the City Council**

During 2025, the CHC made two recommendations to the City Council. The first recommendation was to approve a historic Landmark Designation of a property located at 149 Siena Drive also known as the Press-Telegram Model Home. The Spanish Colonial Revival house was built in 1929. It was one of the first houses to be built on Naples Island. To garner interest in the Naples Island neighborhood, the developers partnered with the Press-Telegram to feature weekly updates on the construction and unique craftsmanship of the house. This historic landmark designation was in conjunction with a requested Mills Act contract.

The CHC also made recommendations to approve 13 Mills Act contracts for historic properties to the City Council. The Mills Act Program is an important preservation incentive to encourage property owners to restore and rehabilitate historic buildings. These 13 Mills Act contracts ensure that the property owners are investing in their historic buildings, using local skilled labor for restoration and rehabilitation, and resulting in the public benefit of preservation in Long Beach's many historic neighborhoods.

**July 29, 2025** – The CHC made recommendations to the City Council to approve historic Landmark Designation of one property and made recommendations to approve thirteen Mills Act contracts for historic properties to the City Council.

**October 21, 2025** – The City Council took action to approve the recommendation by the CHC to approve the Landmark Designation and Mills Act contracts.

**Total Number of Meetings Held**

CHC meetings are typically held on the last Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. A total of eight CHC meetings were held during the reporting period. At each of the eight meetings, the CHC held one or more public hearings to review Certificate of Appropriateness applications to modify, restore and/or rehabilitate historic buildings that are designated historic landmarks or located within a historic district. All public hearings are duly noticed and held pursuant to the requirements in the LBMC. Members of the public can participate in-person at the meeting, virtually or in writing.

**The Amount of Money, if any, Expended in Support of Body:**

The Community Development Department supports all costs related to the CHC. Direct meeting expenses for 2025 include $2,631.47 for meeting materials and refreshments. The more significant cost relates to staff time to support each CHC meeting which is estimated at $2,273 to $2,530 per meeting.

Typical meeting staffing includes setup and meeting facilitation by:

- 2 City Clerk staff

- 2 staff from the Technology & Innovation Department who run the audio and video functions
- A Deputy City Attorney
- 1 Clerk Typist from Community Development
- 1 Senior Planner from Community Development
- 2 managers from Community Development
- 1-3 project Planners who are presenting cases before the CHC at that particular meeting.

## Attendance Records of All Members

The following is a table of all CHC meetings held during the reporting period. The table also illustrates attendance for each commissioner. Canceled meetings are noted below the table. All members consistently attend meetings, are conscientious about attending meetings, and have regular communication with City staff as needed regarding attendance. All absences noted below are excused absences.

| CHC 2025 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COMMISSIONER** | **FEBRUARY** | **MARCH** | **APRIL** | **MAY** | **JULY** | **AUGUST** | **OCTOBER** | **DECEMBER** |
| Kevin McGuan, Chair | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Mark Grisafe, Vice Chair | X | X | X | - | X | X | X | X |
| Tasha Hunter | - | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Amy Bodek | - | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| Marco Pizzo | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | - |
| Jocelynn Pryor | X | X | X | X | - | X | X | X |
| Jacqueline Padilla-Perez | X | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |

X = Attended
- = Absent

Meetings canceled: January 2025; June 2025; September 2025; November 2025

## City Personnel Who Regularly Assist the CHC:

CHC meetings were held in Civic Chambers or in other accessible public facilities. CHC meetings are hybrid and allow the public an opportunity to attend or comment remotely or in person. All meetings are streamed live and recorded meetings are accessible via the City's webpage. The following City personnel provide professional expertise in various subjects, including cultural resources, legal expertise, professional administrative support, audio and visual support, with managers to support and manage meetings.

- Alison Spindler-Ruiz, Planning Manager, Community Development, – Planning Bureau
- Alejandro Sanchez-Lopez, Long Range Planning Officer, Community Development – Planning Bureau

- Marissa Moshier, Environmental and Cultural Resources Officer, Community Development – Planning Bureau
- Erin Weesner-McKinley, Deputy City Attorney, Office of the City Attorney
- Alejandro Plascencia, Planner V, Community Development – Planning Bureau
- Felice Anaya, Clerk Typist, Community Development – Planning Bureau
- Vanessa Hall, City Clerk Specialist, Office of the City Clerk
- Alyssa Campos, City Clerk Specialist, Office of the City Clerk
- Erik Maitland, Communications Specialist II, Technology and Innovation
- James Allen, Business Systems Specialist VI, Technology and Innovation

**Recommendation as to Whether That Body Should be Abolished, Modified or Continued.**

The work of the CHC is critical to preserving the many unique historic buildings that define Long Beach and to recognizing places associated with notable historic events or people. Long Beach has a rich architectural history with buildings that range from Victorian style, Craftsman Style, Spanish Colonial Revival Style, Art Deco to Mid Century Modern buildings. A total of 18 Historic Landmark Districts in the city contain over 7,000 properties within the districts. Over 150 individual properties are designated as historic Landmark properties. Some are designated for architectural significance, while others are landmarked due to important historical events that took place there and/or notable people who lived there. The CHC is responsible for reviewing major modifications to historic buildings and the rehabilitation work that helps to preserve these unique historic buildings and important histories. The CHC has a critical role in reviewing appropriate and sensitive alterations to support residents and property owners in their efforts to recognize, restore and rehabilitate buildings. This work preserves the unique architectural history that makes up some of the City's distinctive neighborhoods.

The CHC has also completed work that takes a closer look at the City's history in a more equitable lens. In 2022, the Community Development Department – Planning Bureau completed the Race and Suburbanization Historic Context Statement which is a part of a larger citywide racial equity and reconciliation initiative in recognition of the history of racism within the nation and the city and its impact on residents and the development of the city. The Context Statement is a study of how discriminatory practices and the fight for fair housing in Long Beach intersects with development patterns in the post-World War II era. The document incorporates largely overlooked histories of Long Beach communities of color and the development patterns, including exclusionary practices, that played a significant role in the settlement and development of the City. The Context Statement is intended to foster a greater understanding of the influence of race and discriminatory practices on the built environment, provide background information on subsequent waves of immigration in Long Beach, and document an important layer of the City's history. The Commission's work in furthering these efforts, and more broadly continuing work with an equity lens in historic preservation, will continue to ensure preservation is more inclusive of diverse histories in the City.

However, given the City's fiscal challenges, high costs associated with running commission meetings, as well as an often small number of agenda items, certain changes may be helpful or appropriate. It may be worth considering various options for how commission meetings take place.

Some of those options for further exploration and consideration include:

- **Consider changing the meeting day/time**: Instead of hosting CHC on its own day and time, consider hosting CHC in conjunction with another related meeting. For example, CHC could be held the hour before a Planning Commission meeting, in order to make more efficient use of staff time and resources needed to set up and run each meeting.
- **Reduce the frequency of regular CHC meetings:** CHC meetings are cancelled on a fairly regular basis due to lack of agenda items. The City could move to have meetings every two months to ensure a more robust agenda.
- **Require a minimum number of agenda topics:** Some CHC meetings feature only one agenda item, typically a required public hearing for a proposed alteration or improvement to a property. City staff tries to balance meeting agendas by ensuring timely hearings and by providing a robust agenda when meeting; however, additional study sessions or community updates could be required for any agenda that only features one hearing item. For example, there could be a rotating update from different historic districts or preservation groups, and/or more study sessions on topics of interest.
- **Work more closely with other commissions:** To ensure each meeting is as worthwhile as possible, the CHC could work more closely with other commissions, such as the Planning Commission or the Economic Development Commission.

The work of the CHC and city staff is needed to manage the many unique historic buildings in Long Beach and to continue its work to both uplift local histories and reexamine history with an equity lens. The CHC is made up of commissioners with expertise in historic preservation, architecture, history, design, the arts, and personal knowledge and experience with Long Beach's historic buildings. Although modifications may be warranted as to the format and structure of commission meetings, the CHC is recommended to continue.