

# Historical Resources Element

## PURPOSE

The Historical Resources Element focuses on the identification, documentation, preservation, and celebration of historical resources.

## OVERVIEW

The Historical Resources Element focuses on the identification, documentation, preservation, and celebration of historical resources. Historic preservation is essential for preserving the unique character, culture, and identity of Newport Beach. By having systems in place to identify, preserve, and protect historical resources, the City is able to balance growth and development with the preservation of cultural and historical heritage while providing tangible benefits to the economy, environment, and the city's residents and visitors.

## GOALS, POLICIES, ACTIONS

### Identification of Historical Resources

Documenting and protecting archaeological and paleontological resources are crucial for preserving the evidence of human history and life forms of the distant past. These resources inform our understanding of ancient ecosystems and cultures. This stewardship fosters a culture of respect and responsibility, ensuring that future generations can continue to learn from and appreciate this history.

*Goal HR-1: A city that recognizes and protects historically significant landmarks, sites, and structures*

- Policy HR-1.1: Maintain and update, at least once every 10 years, the Newport Beach Register of Historical Property for buildings, objects, structures, and monuments having importance to the history or architecture of Newport Beach. (Imp. 9.1, 10.1, 29.2)
- Policy HR-1.2: Encourage local residents to research and nominate properties for review by the City and/or Newport Beach Historical Society. (Imp. 29.1, 29.2)
- Policy HR-1.3: Develop standards for the review of demolition, grading, and building permits prior to granting City approval based upon potential effects on historical resources. If demolition is granted, require photo documentation (in conformance with the standards outlined by the National Park Service Historic American Buildings Survey program) of inventoried historic structures prior to demolition. (Imp. 2.1, 8.1, 8.2)
- Policy HR-1.4: Encourage the preservation of structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and/or the list of California Historical Landmarks, and/or the Newport Beach Register of Historical Property. Provide incentives, such as waivers of application fees, permit fees, and/or any liens placed by the City for properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, State Register, or the Newport Beach Register of Historical Property in exchange for preservation easements, designation applications, and other related preservation incentives. (Imp. 8.2, 29.2)
- Policy HR-1.5: Complete a citywide Historic Context Statement to provide a consistent framework for evaluations and surveys. (Imp. 29.2)

- Policy HR-1.6: Every 5 years, complete and update a citywide historical resources survey to identify historical resources. Include community, neighborhood, cultural, and historic preservation groups; property owners; land developers; and the building industry in planning and implementing historical surveys. (Imp. 29.2)
- Policy HR-1.7: Consolidate all provisions and policies related to historical resources under one ordinance in the Municipal Code to facilitate consistent application of the regulations and easier staff review. This could include the following:
  - Establish the National Park Service Secretary of the Interior's Standards as the baseline City standard for project reviews, providing opportunity for certain projects to qualify for a categorical exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (Class 31 Categorical Exemption).
  - Define categories of major and minor changes that would be subject to review, the review required, and the assigned decision-making body responsible for the associated determination.
  - Revise, consolidate, and better define the City's classification system for historical resources to align with the Federal and State systems of classification. Streamline the process for how landmarks are considered for listing in the City's classification system. One decision-making body (preferably the Planning Commission or a newly established Cultural Heritage Commission) should be given authority to review, conduct hearings, and make recommendations to City Council on the adoption of the designation. (Imp. 8.1, 8.2, 9.1)
- Policy HR-1.8: Support the provision of staff resources to hire or train a preservation planner who meets the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Architectural History or who has a degree in Historic Preservation Planning to advise staff on matters related to historical resources. (Imp. 30.1)
- Policy HR-1.9: Consider taking the steps necessary to meet the requirements for becoming a Certified Local Government, including adopting a historic preservation ordinance, establishing a qualified preservation review commission, providing adequate public participation in the historic preservation program, and completing other responsibilities identified by the State. (Imp. 29.2)

*Goal HR-2: Well-documented and protected archaeological and paleontological resources*

- Policy HR-2.1: Allow access to historical records between local preservation and cultural groups and between City departments and County agencies to the extent legally permissible. (Imp. 29.2)
- Policy HR-2.2: Complete and regularly update a citywide Prehistoric and Ethnohistoric Context Statement to serve as a template for identifying, evaluating, and developing plans for the treatment of archaeological resources. (Imp. 29.2)
- Policy HR-2.3: Require that, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), new development protect and preserve paleontological and archaeological resources from destruction, and avoid and mitigate impacts to such resources. Through planning policies and permit conditions, ensure the preservation of significant

archaeological and paleontological resources and require that the impact caused by any development be mitigated in accordance with CEQA. (Imp. 11.1)

- Policy HR-2.4: As permitted by law, maintain sources of information regarding paleontological and archaeological sites and the names and addresses of responsible organizations and qualified individuals who can analyze, classify, record, and preserve paleontological or archaeological findings. Require a qualified paleontologist/archaeologist to monitor all grading and/or excavation where there is a potential to affect cultural, archaeological, or paleontological resources. If these resources are found, the applicant shall implement the recommendations of the paleontologist/archaeologist, subject to the approval of the City Planning Division. (Imp. 11.1)

### Preservation of Historical Resources

Preserving the city's history is essential for maintaining its unique identity and cultural heritage. By celebrating and safeguarding historically significant landmarks, sites, structures, and legacy businesses, the city can honor the stories and achievements of past generations. Further, by recognizing and celebrating those who have contributed to Newport Beach's past, present, and future, our storied history can be captured. The recognition and protection of history not only enriches a community's sense of place and continuity but fosters civic pride and can attract tourism.

#### *Goal HR-3: A city that celebrates, preserves, and protects its history*

- Policy HR-3.1: Encourage alternatives to demolition of historical sites or structures by promoting architecturally compatible rehabilitation or adaptive reuse. Provide incentives such as permit and application fee waivers, flexible building requirements, and free technical advice by person(s) qualified in historic preservation. (Imp. 8.2, 29.2)
- Policy HR-3.2: Require that proposed development located on a historic site or structure incorporate a physical link to the past within the site or structural design, if preservation or adaptive reuse is not a feasible option. For example, incorporate historical photographs or artifacts within the proposed project or preserve the location and structures of existing pathways, gathering places, seating areas, rail lines, roadways, or viewing vantage points within the proposed site design. (Imp. 1.1, 29.2)
- Policy HR-3.3: Require that, prior to the demolition of a historic structure, developers offer the structure for relocation by interested parties. (Imp. 8.2)
- Policy HR-3.4: Require that, prior to the issuance of a demolition or grading permit, developers of a property that contains a historic structure as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act retain a qualified consultant to record the structure in accordance with U.S. Secretary of Interior guidelines and submit this information (which includes drawings, photographs, and written data) to the Newport Beach Historical Society, Orange County Public Library, and City Planning Division. (Imp. 8.2)
- Policy HR-3.5: Consider the development of a local Mills Act program to offset the ongoing stewardship and care of historic properties through property tax savings. (Imp. 8.2)
- Policy HR-3.6: Develop a legacy business program that aims to recognize, honor, and support longstanding businesses within a community that have made significant

contributions to its history, culture, and identity. The program could include the promotion of legacy businesses and potential grants. (Imp. 8.2)

### *Celebrating Historical Resources*

Education is a key tool for enshrining the city's history and ensuring that future generations appreciate and understand this heritage. Integrating local history into programs and events sponsored by the City, library, and others and promoting it through various media can create a well-informed community that values its roots. This awareness not only enhances residents' connection to their city but also helps future generations value the past.

The foundational history of Tribal nations of the city's land provides unique insight into the importance of cultural places. Native American groups and individuals hold special interest in the protection of cultural places. Tribal views toward protection and preservation of cultural resources in the city should be respected, and the history of Tribal nations should be recognized and celebrated.

### *Goal HR-4: A city that enshrines its history through education*

- Policy HR-4.1: Encourage the placement of historical landmarks, photographs, markers, or plaques at areas of historical interest or value. Create a Landmark Plan that will recognize and designate culturally important heritage sites that are eligible for the placement of historical landmarks or plaques. The Landmark Plan will also identify funding opportunities to support the program, such as development fees, corporate or civic sponsorships, donations, or by utilizing General Funds. (Imp. 8.2, 9.1, 10.1, 29.2)
- Policy HR-4.3: Expand interest in and knowledge of local history through historic landmarks, photographs, markers, and plaques, or self-guided walking tours as a means to promote and celebrate historic preservation in the city. Publish such information on the City's website to encourage thoughtful conversation about the history of Newport Beach. (Imp. 1.1, 29.1, 29.2, 30.1)
- Policy HR-4.4: Coordinate with local preservation organizations, like the Newport Beach Historical Society, to research, conduct outreach, and develop programs and activities to encourage and support historic preservation and cultural tourism. (Imp. 14.16)
- Policy HR-4.5: Encourage collaboration with local educational institutions on preservation programs, activities, and exhibits/collections. (Imp. 14.2)
- Policy HR-4.6: Develop a program on local history and architecture for use in local classrooms, including age-appropriate materials that describe the importance of city history and historic preservation.
- Policy HR-4.7: Encourage local interested parties and historical societies to partner and to consolidate and share materials such as historical photographs, firsthand historical accounts and interviews, and any additional archival information. This could be done through the establishment of a City-recognized historical society or platform that welcomes representatives from various existing groups to share resources and collectively provide input to the City on historical resources. The City could do this through the establishment of an adequate and qualified Historic Preservation Commission or other qualified body.

- Policy HR-4.8: Leverage available outreach channels (such as local publications, TV channels, social media channels, etc.) to highlight and encourage visitation of historic landmarks.

*Goal HR-5: A city and community that celebrate Tribal Cultural Resources*

- Policy HR-5.1: Notify cultural organizations, including Native American organizations, of proposed developments that have the potential to adversely impact Tribal Cultural Resources. Allow representatives of such groups to monitor grading and/or excavation of development sites. (Imp. 11.1)
- Policy HR-5.2: Require new development to donate scientifically valuable paleontological or archaeological materials to a responsible public or private institution with a suitable repository, located within Newport Beach or Orange County, whenever possible. (Imp. 11.1)
- Policy HR-5.3: Foster government-to-government relationships with California Native American tribes in Newport Beach regarding issues of mutual concern. (Imp. 14.6)
- Policy HR-5.4: Encourage the use of foundational local history themes that celebrate California Native American tribes in public spaces. (Imp. 29.2)