

COUNCIL AGENDA: 4/18/06
ITEM: 2.4



Memorandum

TO: Rules Committee and City Clerk

FROM: Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM FOR APRIL 18,
2006 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: March 14, 2006

APPROVED:

DATE: March 14, 2006

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff bring forward for Council consideration at the April 18, 2006 Council meeting City Council resolution nominating a portion of the University Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) Area for designation as a City Landmark Historic District and directing the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement to initiate the required process and proceedings to establish the City Landmark Historic District.

BACKGROUND:

Staff has been working with the University Strong Neighborhoods Initiative NAC in the implementation of their Top 10 SNI list. In order to implement Action Item 9, the Council and staff have initiated a series of steps and the next step is consideration of a resolution nominating a portion of the area for designation as a City Landmark Historic District and initiating the process required to establish the City Landmark Historic District.

The attached memo, developed in partnership with Planning Staff, provides additional background regarding the proposed item.



Memorandum

TO: RULES COMMITTEE

FROM: Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: March 14, 2006

Approved

Date

March 14, 2006

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

SNI AREA: University

SUBJECT: City Council resolution nominating a portion of the University Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) Area for designation as a City Landmark Historic District and directing the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement to initiate the required process and proceedings to establish the City Landmark Historic District.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Council adopt a resolution nominating a portion of the University SNI Area for designation as a City Landmark Historic District and directing the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement to initiate the required process and proceedings to establish the City Landmark Historic District, including necessary outreach to community members and property owners.

BACKGROUND

The University Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) Planning Area surrounds San Jose State University, and is bordered by the San Jose State University campus and East Santa Clara Street to the north, Coyote Creek to the east, Interstate 280 to the south, and Downtown to the west. The area surrounding the University includes five individual neighborhoods: North Campus, East Campus, South Campus, Naglee Park and Paseo. The proposed City Landmark Historic District is located in the South Campus area.

This SNI area consists primarily of mid-to late 19th century Victorian homes and early 20th century craftsman-style homes. Many historic and architecturally significant homes were torn down in the 1950's and 1960's to make way for apartment buildings intended to serve the downtown and San Jose State University. Nevertheless, a significant number of historic and architecturally significant homes remain, including portions of the area where there are clusters of historic homes not fragmented by post World War II apartment buildings. The proposed City Landmark Historic District is one such neighborhood which remains historically intact.

The University community has identified the historic character and the remaining historic and architecturally significant structures as one of the area's biggest assets. Through the SNI process, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) identified exploring establishing Historic Districts to protect and enhance the historic character of the University neighborhoods as the ninth of its Top Ten priorities. Tying in with this priority action item is Top Ten Action Item number eight, the installation of historic streetlights.

In furtherance of implementing Top Ten Action Item Nine, a number of historic surveys and studies have been conducted. In November 2002, Architectural Resources Group (ARG) completed the *East Downtown Frame Historic Resources Survey* and identified structures of historic or architectural merit. The East Downtown Frame ranged from East Santa Clara Street on the north, and Highway 280 on the south, with South 4th and 11th Streets being the west and east boundaries, respectively. This survey resulted in the addition of a large number of properties to the San Jose Historic Resources Inventory. The second ARG study, the *University Neighborhood Character Study*, was completed in January 2004 as a guide to maintaining and improving the historic character of the area by identifying the buildings and features that contribute as well as detract from this character. This study was also designed to be a resource for the community, Planning staff and developers. The project boundaries were the same as the boundaries for the aforementioned East Downtown Frame study. Lastly, the City of San Jose hired Archives and Architecture in 2005 to: (1) conduct additional historic research on the South Campus area; (2) determine whether the area would qualify as a City of San Jose Landmark Historic District; and (3) determine the boundaries of the potential Historic District.

The study by Archives and Architecture, entitled *Historic District Study* concludes that an area identified within the University Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Area, and designated on the attached diagram, would meet the City's criteria for designation as a City Landmark Historic District due to its existing historic neighborhood character. The proposed Historic District area as a whole possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The *Historic District Study* was previously distributed to the South University Neighborhood (SUN), and presented and discussed at its September 20, 2005 meeting. At the same meeting, SUN unanimously adopted a motion to accept the *Historic District Study* and recommended that the City initiate the process to designate the portion of the University SNI Planning Area identified in the study as a City Landmark Historic District. The *Historic District Study* was also distributed to the UNC prior to its November 8, 2005 meeting at which UNC also unanimously adopted a motion recommending that the City initiate the process to designate the portion of the University SNI Planning Area identified by the study as a City Landmark Historic District. At its February 21, 2006 meeting, SUN voted unanimously to adopt the name Lowell for the Historic District due to the fact that the area around Lowell School continues to retain an earlier sense of time and place reflective of residential development within the original city limits between 1870 and 1935.

The next step to establish a City Landmark Historic District within the University SNI Area is for Council to nominate the area for designation as a Historic District in accordance with the process set forth in Section 13.48.120 of the San Jose Municipal Code and to direct Planning staff to initiate the Historic District designation process. As part of this designation process, the

Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement will notify all property owners within the proposed City Landmark Historic District of the proposed change. Furthermore, these property owners will be invited to a meeting to discuss and answer questions on the proposed Historic District. All public outreach on this proposal will be coordinated with SUN and UNC.

Once the public outreach on the proposed City Landmark Historic District is completed, the Historic District Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 13.48.120) requires the proposal to first be referred to the Historic Landmarks Commission and then to the Planning Commission for reports and recommendations to the City Council. The Landmarks Commission, Planning Commission and subsequent City Council meetings are public hearings requiring public notice (300 feet) and publication in a newspaper of general circulation. Finally, the City Council will hold a public hearing and by written resolution approve, conditionally approve, modify and approve, or deny the designation. The findings required by Sections 13.48.020.B and 13.48.120.H of the Municipal Code for the Council to designate a Historic District are to find that said proposed historic district is a geographically definable area of urban or rural character, possessing a significant concentration or continuity of site, buildings, structures or objects unified by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

CONCLUSION

The community identified exploring the establishment of Historic Districts to protect and enhance the historic character of the University neighborhoods as a Top Ten priority in the University Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Neighborhood Improvement Plan. The next step towards implementing this community's Top Ten Priority is for the City Council to adopt a resolution nominating the proposed portion of the University SNI Area for designation as a City Landmark Historic District and directing the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement to initiate the required process and proceedings to establish the City Landmark Historic District.

OUTCOMES

Adoption of the Council Resolution will initiate the process to consider establishment of a City Landmark Historic District in the University SNI area.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

At their September 20, 2005 meeting, SUN unanimously adopted a motion to accept the *Historic District Study* and recommended that the City initiate the process to designate the portion of the University SNI Planning Area identified in the study as a City Landmark Historic District. On

November 8, 2005, UNC also unanimously adopted a motion recommending that the City initiate the process to designate the portion of the University SNI Planning Area identified by the study as a City Landmark Historic District.

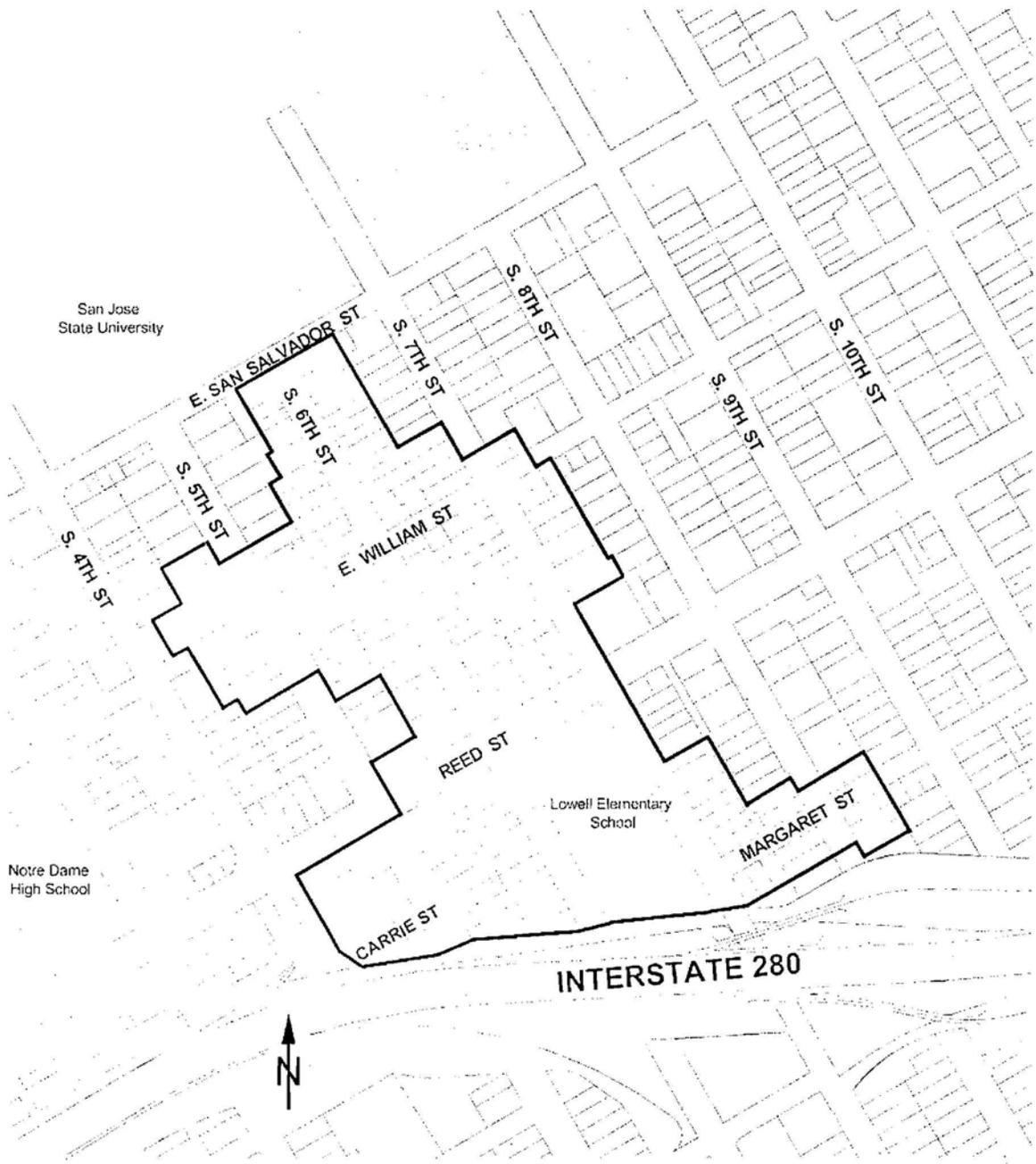
COORDINATION

This memo has been developed in cooperation with the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement and the City Attorney's office.

CEQA

Under the provisions of Section 15307 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), historic district nominations are exempt from environmental review.

*Attachment:
Proposed Historic District Map*



 Properties within the proposed City Landmark Historic District