

October 28, 2025
City Council Meeting

Written Public Comments

General Public Comments

Jennifer Connally

From: Janice Brownfield
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 5:23 PM
To: City Council Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment Agenda Items #1.4 and #3.3

John Thomas Moore did not seek recognition but we can all be thankful for his "tireless environmental stewardship and civic contributions" and his "enduring legacy of service and love for the natural beauty of Orange." He "dedicated himself to planting native species — especially oak trees — along the Santiago Creek." His carrying "gallons of water" for "week after week" for the trees ensures "future generations would enjoy a thriving natural habitat." His selfless labor also helps improve the air quality for all of us, potentially reducing respiratory problems. The large size and dense, extensive canopies of oak trees also provide shade, reducing ground and surface temperatures, which can lower energy needs for cooling homes.

The "utmost concern" of the community members interviewed for the Citywide Sustainability Plan is the need for more tree coverage to provide shade and cleaner, cooler air. Another concern cited in the plan is bike lanes. The plan, received last year, requires action to further improve our environment. One way can be with implementation of a Citywide Active Transportation Plan, including the City's Bikeways Master Plan. "The ATP will serve as a roadmap for identifying and prioritizing pedestrian and bicyclist safety improvements."

The company being considered to develop the plan and support the City in administering the project was previously selected by the City of Laguna Niguel to develop its ATP. An adopted ATP qualifies a city to receive additional State and federal grant funding toward transportation improvements. "Active transportation includes mobility by walking, bicycling, scootering, using a wheelchair, and other similar methods." Like Laguna Niguel, Orange can "enhance the safety of people using active transportation on City roadways and trails." The risk of bike accidents involving pedestrians has increased, including on the Santiago Creek Trail in Orange. There are reported safety concerns about fast-moving bicycles and high-speed electric bikes that an ATP can resolve.

Item 5.3
Historic Preservation
Ordinance
(Barrios & Gutierrez)

October 28, 2025

To: Orange City Council

From: Reggie Mundekis

Re: Agenda Item 5.3 Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance, October 28, 2025 City Council Meeting

Dear Mayor and City Council,

Agenda Item 5.3 Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance appears on the agenda due to a lack of respect for the process which is used to draft City ordinances. Ordinances are drafted by staff and City Attorney. Ordinances pertaining to land use, zoning and other planning functions can go to the Planning Commission for a hearing prior to being placed on a City Council agenda. This document is being brought forward without approval of either City staff or the City attorney. There has been no public review or input. It is not clear if this is the work of Orange Legacy Alliance and Old Towne Preservation Association.

Referring to this document as a hot mess is being kind. There is a lack of internal consistency and formatting errors in addition to more problems. The faux draft ordinance is presented without any context including relation to the City municipal code. What has happened here speaks to a self serving lack of integrity and respect for how our City operates and does not respect the rights of the public.

Rights of private property owners will be infringed and damaged as anyone can submit an application to designate a property as historic or a landmark or to form a historic district under this faux draft ordinance. Authority to request any type of historic designation or landmark must rest solely with the owner of the property. Residents of an area must request a block party permit, permit parking and other neighborhood issues. Historic designations must start the same way with the request of the residents who want the designation. Any owner must be granted the right to not have their property designated as historic, part of a historic district or as a landmark. No means no.

The City Council is requested to agendize recession of the Memorandum Of Understanding with Old Towne Preservation Association and Orange Legacy Alliance. A year has passed with no usable work product resulting. More time will not result in usable work product. It is time to end the agreement.

A discussion of the problems with this faux draft ordinance follows this letter.

Sincerely,

Reggie Mundekis

Problems in the Proposed Ordinance Referenced by Section

Objections noted here are not the only objections to this alleged “draft ordinance”. The right to bring for additional issues with this alleged “draft ordinance” continues.

This alleged “draft ordinance” is presented as a floating ordinance free of any attachment to or relation to any City ordinance or municipal code.

It is noted that the number of sections as “§9.56.xxx” places the alleged “draft ordinance” in Title 9 Public Peace, Morals, and Welfare of the Municipal Code. This would be a new section after Chapter 9.44 Nitrous Oxide.

Formatting of document is inconsistent and does not conform to formatting standards used by our City.

§9.56.010 Title

The text “101” appears which neither belongs nor adds meaning to the text.

§9.56.020 Enabling Authority

Gov. Code §66850 doesn’t exist. If it did exist, it would be in the section of the Gov Code dealing with Lake Tahoe planning and conservation matters. No idea how Lake Tahoe relates to what is being discussed.

The text “015” appears which neither belongs nor adds meaning to the text.

§9.56.030 Purpose

The text “020” appears which neither belongs nor adds meaning to the text.

§9.56.040 Definitions

The text “030” appears which neither belongs nor adds meaning to the text.

Character-defining Feature

Including landscaping is problematic because:

- Landscaping dies and must be replaced.
- Modernization of plant palette to choose plants which use less water is not allowed.
- Modification of landscaping for fire safety becomes a major project.
- Removing a dying tree turns into a major project to obtain permits before removal to prevent safety issues arise from a dying tree dropping on a person or property.

Including interior features makes no sense with private property where the public does not have access to the interior to allow them to see the interior features on a daily basis.

Exterior Features

Exterior features created decades earlier are locked in and cannot be changed. This can be problematic when exterior features such as siding no longer used, lack of insulation, and single pane windows, among other exterior features, must be maintained despite the features being obsolete, energy inefficient, and no longer widely used. This creates problems when new areas and properties are designated as historic and prevent property owners from modernizing their homes.

Historic Resource

A minimum age of 50 years makes much of our City eligible as historic resources. This is highly problematic.

Note that the list of definitions is presented alphabetically with this definition appearing between “Secretary of Interior Standards” and “Survey”.

Property

Property definition includes landscape features, plant life, lifeforms, and scenic conditions. This is overly broad and problematic. Including lifeforms and plant makes this into a conservation ordinance in addition to including plants and animals which die as part of their lifecycle. Including landscape features and scenic conditions will interfere with property rights of others who choose to use their property in different ways.

Survey

Unclear as to how property owners are notified that their property is being included in a survey. Unclear as to how the need for a survey is triggered, who participates in the survey, who conducts the survey, and how to contest information in a survey, among other issues. It is not clear if a property owner can opt out of the survey.

A portion of a sentence is included because of the copy and paste process from other documents.

§ 9.56.050 Orange Inventory of Cultural and Historic Resources

Not clear if property owners can opt out of being include on the inventory.

§9.56.060 Historic Resources

Determination and designation of a Historic Resource must be the sole purview of the property owner.

§9.56.070 Orange Register of Landmarks

Designation of Landmarks must be the sole purview of the owner of the property. Allowing anyone to file for Landmark designation forces a property owner to fight with the government for their private property rights.

§9.56.080 Historic Districts

Designation of Historic Districts must only start with the property owners of the area seeking Designation of Historic District. Allowing anyone to file for Historic District Designation forces a property owner to fight with the government for their private property rights.

It is ludicrous that a person outside the proposed Historic District can request a Designation of a Historic District while only property owners and residents can request permit parking in their neighborhoods.

§9.56.090 Heritage Commission

The powers of the proposed Heritage Commission require that no member of the commission owns property in a historic district, does not own or have a financial interest in a historic property or landmark in our City because such ownership or financial interest creates a conflict of interest.

Several proposed powers of the Heritage Commission are problematic, at best, as follows.

- Section B(D) states “*Make any preliminary or supplemental designations, determinations, decisions, as additions thereto, in order to effectuate the purposes of this Chapter.*” This is ambiguous, open ended, and will be problematic going forward.

- Section B(E) states “*Adopt, promulgate, amend, and rescind, from time to time, such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Chapter.*” This is ambiguous, open ended, and will be problematic going forward.
- Section B(H) states “*Certify and/or ratify applicable environmental documents, or when acting in an advisory capacity only, recommend certification or ratification of environmental documents, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or the National Environmental Policy Act.*” Authority to certify and/or ratify applicable environmental documents must be limited to portions of said documents specifically and narrowly dealing with historic resources.

§9.56.100 Certificate of Appropriateness and Certificate of Completion

This is a new document which must be entered into a tracking system. City staff must be in agreement on the creation of this new document.

- Section B(b) states “*The proposed work would not be incompatible with the exterior features of other properties within the Historic District, not adversely affect the character of the Historic District for which such Historic District was designated, or not be inconsistent with such further standards as may be embodied in the ordinance designating such Historic District. For any proposed work to any building or structure whose exterior features are not already compatible with the exterior features of other properties within the Historic District, reasonable effort shall be made to produce compatibility, and in no event shall there be a greater deviation from compatibility.*”

Use of double negatives makes this difficult to understand. Property owners are being told that they cannot update structures in Historic Districts which have incompatible exterior features because said building have always been that way unless compatible exterior features are added.

- Section C states “*A Certificate of Appropriateness may be issued subject to the making all the following findings:*
 - a) *That the structure does not embody distinguishing architectural characteristics valuable to a study of a period, style, method of construction or the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship and does not display such aesthetic or artistic quality that it would not reasonably meet the criteria for designation as one of the following: National Historic Landmark, National Register of Historic Places, California Registered Historical Landmark, or California Point of Historical Interest.*
 - b) *That the conversion of the structure into a new use permitted by right under current zoning or with a conditional use permit, rehabilitation, or some other alternative for preserving the structure, including relocation within the city, is not feasible.*
 - c) *The proposed work conforms with The Secretary of Interior's Standards.*”

This section makes no sense for the following reasons:

- Unclear why a Certificate of Appropriateness is needed if there are no “(a) . . . distinguishing architectural characteristics valuable to a study of a period, style, method of construction or the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship and does not display such aesthetic or artistic quality that it would not reasonably meet the criteria for designation as one of the following: National Historic Landmark, National Register of Historic Places, California Registered Historical Landmark, or California Point of Historical Interest.”
- Unclear why a finding that the structure cannot be used for a new permitted use by right must be made. This states our City can take away a right granted by zoning.

- Section (c) contradicts Section (a). These two things cannot occur at the same time. If the structure is not considered qualified for historic designation, Secretary of the Interior's Standards don't apply.

Section B states "*The proposed work would not detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect any interior feature of the resource.*" Unclear why there is concern with interior features in private property which is closed to the public. Emphasis has been on exterior features visible to the public.

Section C states "*In an effort to agree to a means of historically preserving a Historic Resource proposed for demolition (a): ". . . The negotiations may include, but are not limited to, acquisition by gift, purchase, exchange, condemnation, or otherwise of the Historic Resource.*" Our City cannot have a policy of purchasing property unless the property is for public use. Our City cannot have a policy of forcing property owners to sell, gift, or exchange their property. Our City cannot have a policy allowing our City to condemn a property to prevent a private property owner from exercising their private property rights.

Frankly speaking, if our City was going to exercise these authorities enumerated in Section C, exercise them with the Sears property by using eminent domain to take the property to be used for sales tax generation.

§9.56.120 Appeals

The inclusion of an Appeals section states Heritage Commission actions are determinative and not recommendations. This section includes procedures which may contradict those in the Municipal Code. Provisions in the Municipal Code regarding noticing, appeals, publication of findings, and other matters must conform to the Municipal Code and not be separately defined.

§9.56.150 Ordinary Maintenance

Ordinary maintenance needs the approval of our City under this proposed ordinance. The statement "*Nothing contained in this Chapter shall be construed to prevent ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior features of a Historic Resource, Landmark, property within a Historic District, or property protected by a deed restriction that does not involve any detrimental change or modification of such exterior features.*" Is contradicted by "*In such cases, the work must be approved by the Director or Heritage Commission, as applicable, and a Certificate of Appropriateness issued unless exempted.*"

§9.56.160 Public Spaces

Only the owners of the public spaces should be able to request Landmark or historic status.

§9.56.190 Waiver

Allowing waiver or variances for any provisions of the Orange building, electrical, housing, mechanical, or plumbing codes for historic preservation is unacceptable. Historic preservation building code must be followed and current building codes which apply must be followed. Historic preservation must not take precedence over sanity. This cannot be in the Municipal Code.

§9.56.210 Preservation Incentives

- *Section A Certificates of Appropriateness and Certificate of Completion Fees* proposes waiving fees for all Certificates of Appropriateness, Certificates of Completion, in addition to fees for alteration, restoration or construction to designated Landmark or contributing

buildings or structures located in a Historic District. This is a nonstarter. Fees must be paid for services rendered. This cannot be in the Municipal Code.

- *Section F Mills Act Historical Property Contracts* states “[. . .] *The City Council shall, by resolution, approve a historical property contract with the owner of a qualified historical property, [. . .]*” The term “shall” forces our City to approve a Mills Act Contract and prevents a denial of said contract. The statement must be changed to allow our City to approve a Mills Act Contract but cannot mandate approval.
- *Section G. Plan Check Processing* states “*Structures designated as Historic Resources, Landmarks or contributing buildings or structures to a Historic District shall receive priority Building Division plan check processing.*” No. Municipal Code cannot give priority for plan check processing to any group of properties.

Orange City Council

Meeting Time: 10-28-25 18:00

eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Orange City Council	10-28-25 18:00	38	88	36	45	0

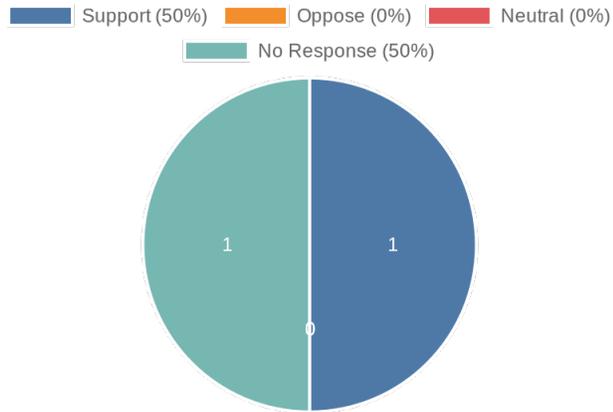
Orange City Council

10-28-25 18:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
5.2. Additions/Reforms to OMC Chapter 2.10 (Campaign Reform) to increase transparency and accountability to the public (Dumitru)	2	1	0	0
5.3. Historic Preservation Ordinance (Barrios & Gutierrez)	36	28	3	0
8.1. Public Hearing to consider introduction and First Reading of an ordinance amending Title 12, Title 16, and Title 17 of the Orange Municipal Code modifying the duties and responsibilities of the Design Review Committee. Ordinance No. 18-25.	49	6	42	0
9.1. Establishment of permit parking for the Downtown Commercial Core paid parking areas. Resolution No. 11642.	1	1	0	0

Agenda Item: eComments for 5.2. Additions/Reforms to OMC Chapter 2.10 (Campaign Reform) to increase transparency and accountability to the public (Dumitru)

Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:46am 10-27-25

Approved

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

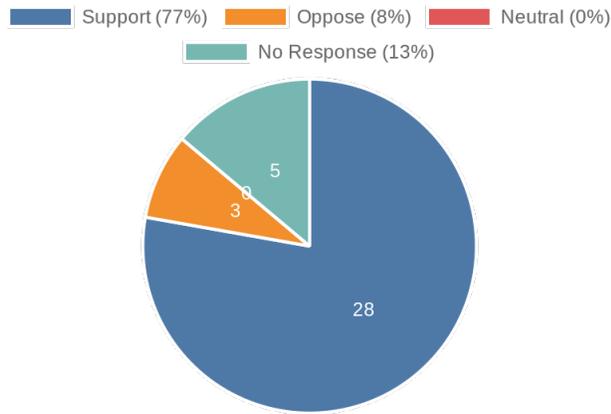
Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:25am 10-27-25

We want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Overall Sentiment



Tony Trabucco

Location:
Submitted At: 12:24pm 10-28-25

Last October, when the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the City and OTPA/OLA it seemed to represent an opportunity by the City of Orange to leverage the expertise of these two historic preservation groups to finally create a comprehensive historic preservation ordinance for the City. These two groups include not only serious preservationists, but also include architects, former DRC members, and former planning professionals.

The countless hours, time, and effort -- and all on a volunteer basis -- by these two groups seems to have been largely discounted by the somewhat sudden appearance of a proposed ordinance drafted by the City in its stead (item 8.1 on tonight's agenda).

Given the ongoing importance of historic preservation for the City of Orange, I would encourage the City Council to bring this ordinance, developed in collaboration with the City and qualified local historic preservation groups, forward for consideration.

Tony Trabucco
Old Towne Orange Resident

Adrienne Gladson

Location:
Submitted At: 12:03pm 10-28-25

Credibility: the quality of being trusted and believed in. I suggest the path to this night and any decisions on this matter will tell us the answer. As a committed student to Orange history and a credible witness in Orange for over 43 years, think before our new City Manager and Attorney were born, I have attached the detail record of the action, motion, and votes associated with the MOU from October 22, 2024. Best to do things correctly tonight and not create further ill will.

Ron Brown

Location:

Submitted At: 8:56am 10-28-25

I request that the council bring this forward for consideration and adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:06am 10-28-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 1:18am 10-28-25

I support bringing forward the adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. (Supported by someone who *has* built something. _)

Leslie Manderscheid

Location:

Submitted At: 12:18am 10-28-25

I enthusiastically support this proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance. City Council should bring this forward for immediate approval.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 11:01pm 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:40pm 10-27-25

Bring this forward for consideration

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:23pm 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 5:05pm 10-27-25

I support bringing this resolution forward. Thank you! - Resident of S. Grand Street

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 4:49pm 10-27-25

The adoption of this Historic Preservation ordinance is long overdue. This was included in the General Plan update many years ago as I was a member of the GPAC. As a board member of OTPA, (Preservation Chair), the absence of a Preservation Ordinance created a roadblock for the inclusion of potential historic resources and creates many other issues. This draft ordinance is well written and all inclusive and I fully support its adoption, Thank you,
Jeff Frankel

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 4:21pm 10-27-25

We want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption 5.3

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 3:38pm 10-27-25

The DRC will transform into a hyper-focused "Heritage Committee," giving a five-person voting body the power to stop any project in the City of Orange for any arbitrary reason involving a property over 50 years old (over 75% of properties in Orange). The City has been advised and even paid for an outside consultant to be told that the review process is too cumbersome and is deterring healthy development. If even half of this proposed ordinance goes into effect, no architect, builder, or business-minded person will ever look to develop in the City of Orange and will look elsewhere.

These decisions and proposals are being made by people who have NEVER BUILT ANYTHING.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 3:26pm 10-27-25

I support bringing this resolution forward for consideration for adoption. Historic preservation is the heart and soul of our city.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:48pm 10-27-25

I request that Council bring this forward for consideration for adoption. Let us join other cities demonstrating their care for preservation while allowing exciting, profitable new development such as Long Beach, Oakland, Pasadena, San Diego, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. A well-crafted historic preservation ordinance is not intended to hamper development, and this is seen in the ordinance in consideration here, which has been worked on collaboratively for months by the City and knowledgeable volunteers. The assertion by the opposing guest below is WRONG--no one will have any authority to "go inside your building" because of this ordinance, and there is nothing in the ordinance that will add to the City's deficit.

Susanna Branch, OPTA

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:09pm 10-27-25

Forgot to tic the box for support. Vickie Laughlin

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:07pm 10-27-25

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption. 5.3 is good for the historic preservation of all of Orange. Thank You. Vickie Laughlin -

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 12:47pm 10-27-25

I want the City Council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 11:34am 10-27-25

I believe historic properties in the Olive neighborhood, (especially in Orange city limits), El Modena and multiple early homes throughout the city contribute to the fabric of Orange and deserve oversight so they aren't

demolished or severely altered beyond recognition.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:31am 10-27-25

We want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Jeannette McClain

Location:

Submitted At: 10:30am 10-27-25

I want the Council to bring this forward for consideration and adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:27am 10-27-25

It's too much. Go enforce your ridiculous overreach on all of the Mills Act recipients, and give residents the ability to make improvements on their properties without having to jump through endless hoops, and unnecessary expenses

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:27am 10-27-25

I support this ordinance moving forward for consideration.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:16am 10-27-25

I am writing today to urge the City Council to bring forward the proposed historic preservation ordinance for adoption. The City of Orange has been a leader in the management of its historic districts for many years, and has a reputation for good preservation practice within the professional preservation community. Adoption of this ordinance will further the goals of the community to maintain the integrity of Old Towne and the character of Orange as a whole. Thank you.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:10am 10-27-25

I want the City Council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:46am 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Ashley Brodtkin

Location:

Submitted At: 9:39am 10-27-25

I want the City Council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:29am 10-27-25

This Preservation Ordinance Draft is horrific and gives unlimited power to a small group of hysterics. This is worse than the DRC issue as the scope defined within this ordinance goes outside of historic districts. This was not drafted in good faith for a balance of healthy development and preserving well established historic areas. This ordinance finally lets OTPA and the preservation whack-jobs inside your building to say what you can and cannot

change. This has been a dream of theirs for many years. Don't let this group bully and entire city into a deeper structural deficit.

You have to keep a straight face to say to a prospective business "Welcome to Orange, please lay down your roots here and invest in the community" and hand this Orwellian "Preservation Ordinance".

Barrios is on her way out and this is her last hurrah since she hasn't been able to get anything else done in 6 years due to her attitude.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:00am 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:57am 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Bruce Finn

Location:

Submitted At: 8:55am 10-27-25

I just traveled for 6 weeks in Europe and visit historic sites. We need to protect ours it gives the city of Orange character and identity.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:47am 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:58am 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:51am 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:38am 10-27-25

Today I urge your support for commitments you made in the MOU we entered into last October, accepting the pro bono work offer from your constituents with expertise in historic preservation. The Historic Preservation Ordinance developed for the city eliminates Design Review Committee entirely in lieu of a Heritage Commission as well as fulfilling commitments made 2010 Orange General Plan. It also satisfies the objectives in your strategic plan to adopt a preservation ordinance and reconfigure the DRC.

Hundreds of volunteer hours were spent researching preservation ordinances from dozens of other cities around the state and industry best practices. We delivered a comprehensive ordinance covering all the commitments from the Orange General Plan seven months ago. Five months ago we were asked for a shorter document based on the City of Santa Monica's ordinance, which was delivered to the city in June. The City has discontinued discussions since August.

The offer to undertake pro bono work for the city was made in good faith. The volunteers developing this

ordinance did so in good faith that the City would cooperate on this ordinance, per our signed agreement. We urge you to live up to the commitments you made as a Council in the 2010 General Plan, the city's Strategic Plan, and the MOU. The ordinance you have before you gives you the means to do so.

Maryanne Skorpanich, President
Orange Legacy Alliance

Guest User

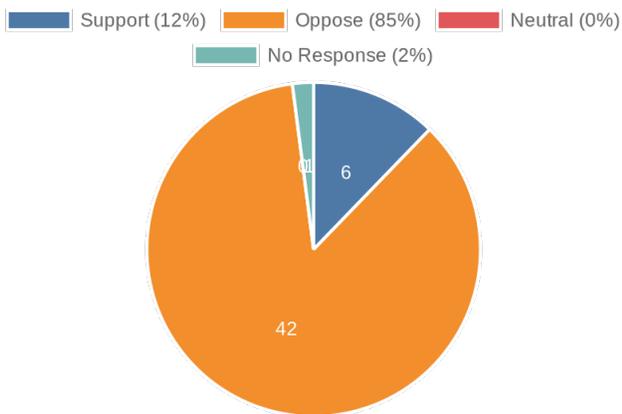
Location:

Submitted At: 7:31am 10-27-25

I want the council to bring this forward for consideration for adoption

Agenda Item: eComments for 8.1. Public Hearing to consider introduction and First Reading of an ordinance amending Title 12, Title 16, and Title 17 of the Orange Municipal Code modifying the duties and responsibilities of the Design Review Committee. Ordinance No. 18-25.

Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 4:37pm 10-28-25

I am super excited to see the council and City move in the direction of this item. Long overdue. when I served on the Planning Commission, the DRC was the biggest obstacle to any applicant coming through Orange. So much time wasted on staff reports and meetings arguing about paint pallets. I truly believe the DRC serves the old town preservation Association very well, but they do not need to be the voice for the rest of the city. No one group should have such control in a governance process. Thank you and look forward to seeing unanimous support.

Doug Hamilton

Location:

Submitted At: 3:52pm 10-28-25

I oppose this ordinance. It puts too much discretion with the office of the Community Development Director (CDD) who could be inappropriately influenced by city officials or developers. Orange benefits from well planned projects and additional review by experts who contribute critical thinking and a local understanding of neighborhood

issues and/or challenges. I attended the DRC meetings that related to the Katella/Cambridge small lot housing project and observed them make recommendations that resulted in a better outcome for both the developer and the neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Doug Hamilton
Orange Resident 39 years

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:33pm 10-28-25

October 28, 2025

FROM: Preserve Orange County

Santa Ana, California 92702
www.preserveorangecounty.org
info@preserveoc.org

TO: Orange City Council
300 E Chapman Ave.
Orange, CA 92866

re: Agenda item # 8.1: Scope of Design Review Committee

To the City Council:

Preserve Orange County urges the City Council to strengthen protections for the city's notable collection of historic structures from all chapters of Orange's history.

As Orange County's historic architectural advocacy organization, we are proud of the City of Orange's stewardship of historic resources over the decades. Not only do Old Town Orange, the Eichler Tracts, and other districts educate the public, they also provide a strong economic base and protections for vibrant, stable neighborhoods.

The Design Review Committee must have necessary jurisdiction over determining which projects support these historic resources and the recognized benefits they bring to the city. To do so, the DRC's oversight needs to be broad enough to assess not only individual buildings one at a time, but the broader context in which those projects sit.

For example, the overall consistency and appeal of Old Town Orange depends on the setting of its historic resources in a streetscape of many blocks of related structures. The DRC should have the ability to assess projects in their larger context, not on a piecemeal basis. This principle applies to the entire city and neighborhoods.

Ceding authority to determine the historic impact of certain individual projects to the Community Development Director would undermine the DRC's ability to determine and maintain the quality and character of a neighborhood or district as a whole.

Preserve Orange County joins with the Old Towne Preservation Association and Orange Legacy Alliance to oppose any action that weakens such local protections for historic resources across the city.

Sincerely,

Alan Hess

Board Chair
Preserve Orange County

Adrienne Gladson

Location:
Submitted At: 1:24pm 10-28-25

I am registering a vote of CON. It's a better word for my views than oppose because I do not oppose a fair refreshment of DRC's duties. Reminding Council, I voted in 2013 to give staff the review authority over an administrative design review process (outside of historic areas) of most projects in Orange (probably 90%). This change meant the DRC did NOT review the recent aesthetic changes for the Trader Joe's expansion at the Orange Mall, the Del Taco on East Lincoln Ave (Vons), or the work underway at the old White Tortilla/Bagel Me on East Chapman. Any delays or an "unfriendly business tag-line" lies with staff and the applicant for these projects and likely others I haven't researched. I agree with skipping our oversight for new commercial and industrial sites (it does come with the long-term general fund hit) when our objective design standards are followed, and review of sign programs and signs outside of historic districts or potentially eligible properties.

I do oppose taking away review of specific plans and tract maps, and giving authority to staff requests to demolish anything outside our current demolition zoning code language. Whether its a non-contributor/ing or a potentially qualifying resource (the bar is very high) as stated in the CC/PC staff reports and draft ordinance. Why? Staff themselves have stated on the record several times recently they are not qualified to make such calls. They relied the DRC as that backstop. We are the experts. That fact also means use of a CEQA exemption for this action is inappropriate. Also, I am not willing to give up wise efforts to refine the Mills Act program part of the MOU agreement nor will I violate our public promise to deliver a city wide preservation ordinance in 2010. If we don't do it, it stays in the hands of the state. Talk about giving up local control. I hope it not too late to do this correctly, all parts of this in one action, to retain some level of goodwill.

Adrienne Gladson AICP
Witness - 43 years

Tony Trabucco

Location:
Submitted At: 12:35pm 10-28-25

While I can appreciate the City wanting to streamline the approval process for business projects, it seems shortsighted to eliminate the Design Review Committee from the process.

Having attended many DRC meetings over the past 25 years, it's clear that in many cases, applicants submit incomplete plans, plans with errors (or both), or plans that are not consistent with the City's own Historic Preservation Design Standards. So a delay in the process is frequently not due to DRC's involvement, but rather with the sub-standard information being brought forward by applicants to the DRC.

My other issue is putting too much discretion into the office of the Community Development Director (CDD), regardless of its occupant. While an extreme example, one only has to look at the recent demolition of the historic East Wing of the White House to observe the implications of allowing a single point of decision-making on an issue that impacts literally generations of residents. It opens up the possibility that developers will put pressure on the Community Development Director's office to make a determination that a project is best suited to circumvent the Design Review process -- so projects may make it through the system more quickly, but not necessarily as better projects.

I oppose this ordinance and support OTPA / OLA's position on this ordinance.

Tony Trabucco
Old Towne Orange Resident

Ron Brown

Location:
Submitted At: 9:07am 10-28-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:07am 10-28-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 1:02am 10-28-25

As I recall, in the late 90's, those who opposed preservation of our oldest homes and commercial structures argued that it would reduce property values. I wish I could say 'I rest my case', but it seems this case must continually be made. Can we please look beyond the needs of the moment and think what would contribute more to the future of Orange? Surely it should be the expert's approach to our architecture and our history, rather than reducing oversight from our qualified DRC. We have artfully constructed buildings that have securely sheltered generations of families. And they are not just within the boundaries of the current historic district. There are hundreds of homes beyond it that have outlived four, five, six generations so far, and will outlive us. From what I have seen, the DRC is well able to weigh preservation concerns with adoption of modern convenience. My argument (as always) is to consider the long term versus the short, as those city representatives and residents did who came before us. We may be short-staffed at the moment, but I truly don't believe that will be a permanent situation. When I moved here in 1994 Orange County was bankrupt, but that didn't last. We've been given something irreplaceable to safeguard. It's my position that we should pay that gift forward and I oppose this measure, and hope to support instead the continuation of good stewardship that has given Orange its unique position in Southern California.

Respectfully, Andrea McCullough

Leslie Manderscheid

Location:

Submitted At: 12:12am 10-28-25

I am very much opposed to this Ordinance as it gives too much authority to the Community Development Director and staff, who lack adequate experience or qualifications for such review and approvals of building projects. The current DRC members are much more highly qualified for such reviews. The DRC has made numerous projects better than originally proposed. This Ordinance threatens the existence & recognition of historic properties throughout the entire City of Orange & weakens preservation protections. The complaint of DRC causing delays in land use plans is unfounded. Throughout the years, the majority of any delays in DRC approval were caused by incomplete/unacceptable plan applications and also delays in City staff reviews. Sections in this proposed Ordinance are non-compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This Ordinance is totally unnecessary and at the very least, it needs appropriate revisions to meet the function of ensuring land use proposals in all areas of the City are adequately reviewed. Why is this city trying to strip away historic & other land use protections? Are you pandering to developers?? OTPA noted this proposed Ordinance would conflict with the City's General Plan goals, policies and implementation measures that were adopted to ensure historic protections, preservation & reduce adverse impacts throughout our City.

I thought the City was above all of that now.

You should, however, approve the proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance proposed in Section 5.3.

Leslie Manderscheid

Location:

Submitted At: 12:12am 10-28-25

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You should, however, approve the proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance proposed in Section 5.3.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:51pm 10-27-25

Please stop proposed changes to the existing municipal code and return to the partnership outlined in the city's MOU with OTPA and OLA. To proceed with proposed changes diminishes the community, the history and does not comply with State Law. Preserve the historic and cultural resources of our city.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:51pm 10-27-25

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Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:41pm 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:53pm 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's position.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:25pm 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 5:27pm 10-27-25

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

As a long time resident of Orange as well as a past OTPA board member who has interacted with the DRC for many years I have only praise for the accomplishments of DRC since its inception. Limiting the DRC's purview and scope is a huge mistake and a gift to contractors and developers who want zero oversight on their projects. It is a massive disservice to the community to limit the DRC's review of projects citywide. The DRC consists of design professionals that have the knowledge and expertise to consistently ensure proposed projects are well designed and fit in well in their settings. Leaving the decisions to staff, planners, or Planning Commission will not guarantee quality, aesthetically compatible projects. City Council owes it to this community to make sure projects are compatible and meet the standards the community deserves. Without DRC's oversight and guidance, developers and contractors will not receive their guidance, which should be a requirement for proposed projects throughout the City of Orange. Please do not limit this important reviewing body's scope.

Thank you,

Jeff Frankel

384 S. Orange St.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 5:07pm 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this. - Resident of S. Grand Street. Thank you!

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 4:43pm 10-27-25

The DRC has been bad for the City of Orange's economic health, its residents, and the business community. Preservationists have little to no consideration of the long-term financial consequences we are now seeing. Bankruptcy is around the corner; it's time for the City of Orange to prioritize economic development and stop letting the preservation groups intimidate and browbeat them to get what they want.

"History is great as long as it does not hold you back from the future."

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 4:15pm 10-27-25

The Council is free to change to duties of the DRC but not at the expense of our Historic Buildings in Orange. I am completely opposed to this and hope The Council will adopt the historic preservation instead.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 3:39pm 10-27-25

I oppose this!

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 3:19pm 10-27-25

It was exactly five years ago, In October 2020, that the City Council agendized an item to change the scope of DRC. And here we are again, all over again.

Once again, the city created a set of edits to the Orange Municipal Code.

Once again, the city edits were created by in-house staff that had no knowledge of historic preservation principles, practices, and laws.

Once again, the city-drafted edits REMOVED current protections to historic resources.

Once again, the city staff lacked the knowledge and experience in historic preservation to understand HOW it was that their edits removed existing protections to our resources.

Five years ago, the public weighed in, submitting dozens and dozens of comments in opposition to the item.

Wisely, the City Council in 2020 voted to continue the item and it died a quiet death.

And, once again, here we are. The public is again urging you to uphold the protections we have and not approve the edits to the Municipal Code before you.

And here is where today is very different from October 2020.

The Council wants to change the scope of DRC. It has every right to do that. But not at the expense of our cultural heritage.

Unlike 2020, the City now has in its possession a historic preservation ordinance developed using local expertise by volunteers that implements the goals and mitigation measures of the Orange General Plan. They have had this ordinance since March of this year. It would accomplish what the Council's stated goal is to change the scope of DRC, and would, in fact, abolish the DRC entirely and create a Heritage Commission focused on historic resources exclusively. By doing so they would also fulfill commitments made 15 years during the adoption of the Orange General Plan.

The choice seems clear: on the one hand the Council could approve tonight's agenda item, change DRC's scope, but diminish protections for our historic resources and violate CEQA as pointed out by the legal expert earlier. On the other hand, the Council could adopt the historic preservation ordinance, eliminate DRC, fulfill legal commitments on their General Plan, and show they support historic preservation. The logic seems clear. The choice seems clear. Vote no on item #8.1.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:52pm 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:44pm 10-27-25

This is a common sense rebalancing between efficient government processes and historic preservation. Under the proposed ordinance, the Design Review Committee would still be responsible for approving designs for development projects involving historic properties and projects in a historic district. Design review and historic preservation in Old Towne, the Eichlers and designated historic properties will be unaffected, while bringing development and permitting processes outside those protected areas in line with other Orange County Cities.

The City faces imminent bankruptcy. It is time for City government to take affirmative steps to open the City to economic development opportunities rather than over-regulating and overburdening private property rights with unnecessary, costly and time consuming design reviews by an unaccountable committee with broad discretionary approval rights. Too frequently, these governmental processes are weaponized by anti-development groups and NIMBYs with the obvious results - the most jarring of which is the lack of sufficient housing putting the American promise of prosperity and homeownership out of reach of most everyone's children.

Some groups are mobilizing constituents with fear mongering about what this ordinance actually accomplishes. Do not let the loud voices of a special interest minority drown out the common sense of the silent majority that wants economic development and sane government. As lawmakers you must do what is right - not what special interests scream loudest for.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:14pm 10-27-25

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this. We need to keep the experienced architects and preservationist at the table to weigh in on these critical points. Thank you. Vickie Laughlin

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 1:00pm 10-27-25

I do not support the proposed ordinance being considered that would reduce the DRC's scope to only historic properties. DRC is made up of professionals that have expertise in architecture, site planning and landscape design. Their input makes projects better.

The ordinance, as written, gives the authority to determine if a structure meets the "Historic Threshold" to the Community Development Director. There is no historic preservation planner on staff, so that means the determination would be based off of the applicant-provided study, that is not peer-reviewed by experts from the City. At a recent DRC hearing, the Planning Manager deferred to DRC's expertise on whether a building was considered historic because planning staff does not have that expertise. Additionally, although the building was considered "non-contributing," there was not enough information on the inventory forms to determine why the structure was non-contributing. DRC was able to request additional information and stop the demolition of a potentially historic structure. If this ordinance passes, historic structures will be demolished because planning staff does not have the expertise to determine what makes a structure historic, and will have to depend on studies that were prepared by applicants.

Currently, Orange has no objective design standards for either residential, mixed-use or commercial projects outside the historic districts. Taking out the role of DRC will greatly impact the quality of projects that are developed in Orange. Developers are going to design what is cheapest to build, not with the public interest in mind. Planning Commission and Design Review have different functions, and by narrowing DRC's purview, the City will have no expert input on the design and landscape of future development projects. Before an ordinance like this is considered, the City should put in place strong objective design standards to ensure quality commercial, mixed-use and residential developments.

This ordinance would also remove the ability of Orange residents to provide input on projects. Often these projects only go to DRC, so by removing them from the process, you are taking away the ability for residents to provide meaningful input on projects.

If this ordinance passes, it will impact historic resources, reduce community input, and lower the quality of future developments in the City.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 12:53pm 10-27-25

I strongly oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this matter. Keep our City Charming and Historic!!

Hire qualified staff to handle the requests. Find economic development outside of Old Town!

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 11:39am 10-27-25

Let's give DRC guidelines, not eliminate them. With the changing nature of city employees, what one staff member's opinion about design guidelines carries too much weight. Better to have city residents who have a vested interest in what a project will look like at completion and 15 years later after a well meaning staff person is two or three employments down the line.

Jeannette McClain

Location:

Submitted At: 10:32am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA's stance on this. Keep the design review committee's responsibilities covering the entire City.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:29am 10-27-25

Make it easier on Residents and Business to make improvements. The DRC is slow moving and bad for business

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:29am 10-27-25

I am very much opposed to this revision of the DRC ordinance as it gives too much authority to the Community Development Director. What experience or qualifications does he have that is more than the sum of the DRC members? It also weakens historic preservation protections. Why is this city trying to strip away historic protections?

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:11am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:10am 10-27-25

I am writing in opposition to the proposed changes to the scope of authority of the Design Review Committee. The DRC serves a critical role in the review process for development within the city, ensuring integrity of design and adherence to the intent of the municipal code. It is through their efforts that the character-defining features of the historic districts are maintained, and how Old Towne in particular has evolved to be a uniquely beautiful, community-oriented downtown destination. All major decisions related to modification to historic structures, including demolition of structures, within the historic district should remain with the professionals of the DRC. The

design standards for Old Towne and the Eichler historic districts already include a number of decisions that can be made at the administrative level for minor projects. Furthermore, there is currently a lack of in-house preservation expertise in the Community Development Department to handle an increase in administrative workload to make these decisions. It is my request that the City Council make no changes to the review process within the historic districts until the City commits to staffing the historic preservation planner position to support the Community Development Director and staff to make these important decisions.

In addition, decision-making authority for properties outside of the historic districts should not be considered for change until there has been further discussion, and a plan in place, as to how to manage review. The City currently does not have objective design standards for commercial or mixed-use projects, and therefore relies on the expertise of the DRC to review projects for compliance with the findings in the municipal code, which ensures harmonious development within the city. Without the DRC, or objective design standards, the design review process for projects outside of the historic districts will become more opaque and subjective than the current process. Therefore, I ask the City Council to table this decision for future discussion and development of a comprehensive plan for streamlining of the design review process. Thank you.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:48am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:47am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:46am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:17am 10-27-25

The DRC, OTPA and the preservationist have overstepped the scope and purview for 15 years. These handful of people have gridlocked the city with bullying tactics and have stacked committees with their own members. While these groups preach "economic viability" they have not a clue the financial impact it causes when you cannot build/alter anything. Keep them in the downtown where preservation is appropriate, but gets them out of the rest of the city so there is a chance to develop modern commercial uses.

The members of these preservation groups are one foot in the grave and do not care the situation they leave for younger residents.

If you preserve everything with no chance of change ever, you are also preserving our economic situation. There is a place where you can't touch anything or change anything, and that's called a museum.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:02am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA'S STANCE ON THIS

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:59am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA'S STANCE ON THIS

Bruce Finn

Location:

Submitted At: 8:57am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPA/OLA's stance on this."

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:53am 10-27-25

I oppose this item and support OTPAs stance on this item

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:53am 10-27-25

Given the historic nature of our community and structures, I strongly oppose relinquishing the design and maintenance of Orange's charm and character to the Community Development Director and its auspices. I support OTPA's rationale and direction for the City of Orange.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 7:33am 10-27-25

I strongly oppose this item and support the OTPA's support on this

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 3:25pm 10-26-25

I am strongly opposed to this as it hands significant authority to the Community Development Director and fails to adequately protect our historic resources, while also reducing the public's ability to have a say. Once again the city council aims to sidestep appropriate channels.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:12pm 10-26-25

Orange is a charming city with important historic character and I oppose the design committee having any ability to remove protections that could negatively impact these sites and neighborhoods.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:33am 10-26-25

I strongly oppose the amendment limiting the Design Review Committee's ability to protect the historical preservation of Orange's unique characteristics.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:28am 10-26-25

We are requesting that no change be made do the historic district and are opposing this recommendation. Removing oversight will change the identity to which the City of Orange is known for and stands for. This is the charm and characteristics of Orange. Please find funds elsewhere.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:17am 10-26-25

There is no need to change the historical plan. Our historic resources are too valuable to our community to change the partnership already in place.

(Resident of 47 years)

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 5:47pm 10-25-25

This would reduce the protections currently in place for historic sites throughout our city. As a resident of Orange for over 40 years, I strongly oppose this.

Guest User

Location:

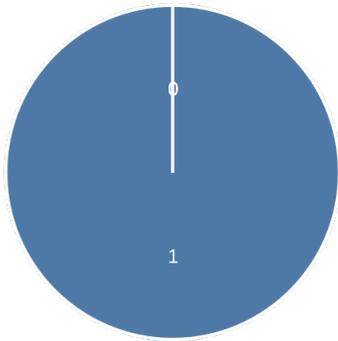
Submitted At: 4:19pm 10-24-25

Amending the municipal code should not diminish the Design Review Committee's authority as it relates to protections of historic resources. I ask that the Council stop with the proposed changes to the existing municipal code, and instead return to the partnership outlined in the City's MOU with OTPA and OLA.

Agenda Item: eComments for 9.1. Establishment of permit parking for the Downtown Commercial Core paid parking areas. Resolution No. 11642.

Overall Sentiment

Support (100%) Oppose (0%) Neutral (0%)
No Response (0%)



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:33am 10-27-25

Let's do it! Any person that comes out to complain about this is likely someone who has nothing to contribute to the city.