

MOTION

Economic incentives can play an essential role in making feasible the preservation of the City’s cultural and architectural heritage, including the places that reflect the histories of Los Angeles’s diverse communities. The Mills Act Historical Property Contract Program has been the City’s most significant economic incentive for owners of historic properties.

The City’s Mills Act Ordinance, based on State enabling legislation approved in 1978 and adopted by the Council in 1996, allows qualifying owners to enter into a revolving ten-year contract with the City, agreeing to restore, maintain and protect their property in accordance with historic preservation standards in exchange for a potentially significant reduction in property taxes. Qualifying properties include locally-designated Historic-Cultural Monuments and Contributing Properties in Historic Preservation Overlay Zones. The City has the largest Mills Act program in California on a parcel basis, with 951 contracts enrolled, including single-family, multifamily, commercial, industrial, and recreational properties.

With the City’s Mills Act program continuing to grow at a rapid rate, without additional staffing resources, the Planning Department saw the program’s 25th anniversary as an opportune moment to commission a comprehensive assessment of the City’s Mills Act program, aimed at enhancing the program’s long-term sustainability and equity outcomes.

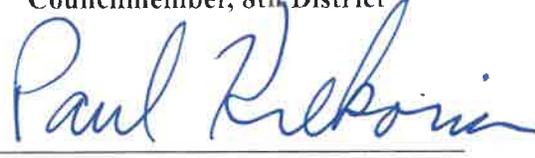
The assessment report, prepared by consultants Chattel Inc. and AECOM released in June 2022, analyzed staffing requirements, revenue streams to support the program, data management, and the allocation of property tax savings among existing contracts to inform a more equitable distribution of program participation across the City. Since last June, the Planning Department’s Office of Historic Resources has sought public input on the assessment report findings, through public workshops and community engagement sessions, with the significant involvement of the Cultural Heritage Commission. The City has not been accepting applications for new contracts while the program assessment has been underway, so there is urgency to address these issues.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council instruct the Planning Department to prepare a report with recommendations, amendments, and administrative changes to the Mills Act program, based on the recently completed assessment prepared by consultants Chattel Inc, and AECOM, and community input on the assessment, for review and consideration by the Cultural Heritage Commission.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Cultural Heritage Commission submit to the Council its report and recommendations regarding the Mills Act Historical Property Contract program, including proposed ordinance amendments to be prepared by the Planning Department, in consultation with the City Attorney, for consideration by the Council.

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PRESENTED BY: 
MARQUEECE HARRIS DAWSON
Councilmember, 8th District

SECONDED BY: 

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