

From: [REDACTED]
To: [commissionstreamlining](#)
Subject: Public Comment 11/19 Hearing
Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 3:45:42 PM
Attachments: [2025 11 19 Task Force Commissions ltrf101\[83\].docx](#)

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Please distribute this letter to the Task Force Members:

November 18, 2025

Ed Harrington, Chair
Commission Streamlining Task Force
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 263
San Francisco, CA 94102

Regarding: Item 5, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) – identify functions to move from Charter to Code and simplify seat requirements and qualifications

Dear Chair Harrington and Members of the Task Force:

I understand that the Task Force is considering a transition of some duties from city charter to city code for a class of commissions with the goal of greater efficiency in the future. I ask that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) be removed from this group.

The creation of the HPC was not simply a local effort. Establishing the commission meant San Francisco was part of a larger network of more than 2,000 Certified Local Governments nationwide operating in an established and consistent manner to protect historic and cultural resources in tandem with development. The City's original Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, created in 1967, was a relatively early preservation review body in the U.S., but by the late 1990s, the LPAB was anachronistic for a city the size and significance of San Francisco.

To attain CLG status San Francisco needed to:

- Adopt an historic preservation ordinance with very specific elements,
- Establish specific professional qualifications for Commission members
- Establish a permit process for the alteration of designated historic buildings
- Enforce appropriate state or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties
- Maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties

- Provide opportunities for public participation, among other requirements

Meeting the seat qualifications has not been an issue for the HPC. Specific areas of expertise are required but the expertise categories provide ample flexibility in meeting the standards. Given our size and diversity, San Francisco does not want for preservation architects, preservation planners, architectural historians and the like.

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program, brought expertise to the disposition of historic resources, thereby making planning and development review and decision making better informed and significantly more efficient.

In addition to efficiency and predictability, the CLG program affords yearly grant funding opportunities which San Francisco has benefited from for many years. Retention of the HPC and its duties under the city charter will reinforce the nearly 60 years of effort to ensure that San Francisco is on par with cities of our profile and caliber.

Sincerely,

Courtney Damkroger

Former member of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

Former Vice President of the Historic Preservation Commission

Former Historic Preservation Officer, City of San Jose

Former Lecturer San Jose State University, Planning Department, Historic Preservation Program

Former Assistant Regional Director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation