

February 19, 2026

Commission Streamlining Task Force
City Hall, Room 362
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(Via email: CommissionStreamlining@sfgov.org)



RE: THD COMMENTS – Commission Streamlining Task Force Recommendations for the Historic Preservation Commission

Dear Chair Harrington and Members,

On behalf of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers and its more than 500 members, we strongly SUPPORT retention of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and its technical authorities in the City Charter, as empowered by the voters of San Francisco.

In 2008, Proposition J amended the Charter to establish the HPC and gave it “authority over the historic preservation-related decisions in the City.” Placed on the ballot by a unanimous 11-0 vote of the Board of Supervisors, it was approved by 56% of the voters.

Among its technical authorities, Proposition J requires that: “The Historic Preservation Commission shall approve, disapprove, or modify certificates of appropriateness for work to designated landmarks or within historic districts.” It further states that: “For projects that require multiple planning approvals, the Historic Preservation Commission must review and act on any Certificate of Appropriateness before any other planning approval or permit review.”

On January 30th, the Commission Streamlining Task Force submitted its final report, including making specific recommendations regarding the HPC. In accordance with previous THD comments, the Task Force recommends keeping the HPC, instead of eliminating it. We support this.

However, the Task Force also recommends “moving most of the HPC’s technical duties from the Charter to the Planning Code.” We oppose this. We believe that this would weaken the HPC’s authority, making key parts of their responsibilities (including certificates of appropriateness) more vulnerable to politically motivated revision. While the Charter can only be amended by the voters, the Planning Code can be changed by just a majority vote of the Board of Supervisors.

Also, currently, HPC members can only be removed For Cause. The Task Force recommends that HPC members become subject to removal At Will. This change, too, would weaken the HPC and threaten its independence. We oppose this.

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We should NOT undermine this City's historic preservation strategy. The HPC and its technical authorities were established by a vote of the people. They have worked successfully for nearly two decades. They should not be undone by an appointed ad hoc task force.

RECOMMENDATION: We ask that the HPC and its technical authorities be retained within the City Charter, that member removal continue to be For Cause, and that draft implementing legislation memorializing Task Force recommendations be modified accordingly.

Sincerely,

Stan Hayes

Nancy Shanahan

Co-Chairs, Planning & Zoning Committee

cc: Chair and Members, Commission Streamlining Task Force Commission
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President and Commissioners, Historic Preservation Commission
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