

CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA
HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD

STAFF REPORT

To: Historic Resources Board Commissioners

Submitted By: Katherine Wallace, Associate Planner

Subject: Historic Context Statement Update

Recommendation: Receive update on the Historic Context Statement Update and provide feedback on the proposed topical outline.

Background/Summary: On April 4, 2022, the City Council authorized a contract with PAST Consultants to prepare an update to the City's Historic Context Statement. The City's current Historic Context Statement (attached) was first adopted in 1997 and was last updated in 2008. The 2008 update covered the period 1940 to 1965; the present twenty-year extension effort will cover the period 1966 to 1986. The project is funded with a \$30,000 grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation. The Context Statement is a vital tool in the City's preservation program, used to establish a baseline of information against which the potential historic significance of a property is evaluated. The Carmel General Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan state:

“Maintain an Historic Context Statement that documents the historic periods, themes, events, people, architects and builders who have contributed to the cultural and developmental history of the City. Use the Historic Context Statement to identify, document and understand the importance of historic resources. Exclusion from this document shall not preclude a finding of significance for any resource. The Historic Context Statement shall be updated at least every five years. Updates shall be submitted to the California Coastal Commission as LCP amendments.” (General Plan/Coastal LUP G1-4, O1-14, P1-85).

CMC 17.32.060 (Determining Eligibility for the Carmel Inventory) implements the goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan and quotes the National Park Service: “The significance of an historic property can be judged and explained only when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear.” (National Register Bulletin: “How to Apply the National Register Criteria For Evaluation,” p. 7).

Two Historic Context Statement Update Subcommittee members were appointed on April 14, 2022. Subcommittee members Erik Dyar and Kathryn Gualtieri met with City staff, Seth Bergstein of PAST Consultants, and consultant Kent Seavey on April 29 and June 10. On May 16, 2022, a Kickoff Workshop was held to introduce the project to the public. A presentation by City staff (attached) provided an overview of historic context statements generally and reviewed the format and content of the Carmel Historic Context Statement. Seth Bergstein and Kent Seavey introduced themselves and discussed their approach to the project. Comments from the Historic Resources Board and the public expressed support of the project and encouraged a

“Phase II” of the update effort, to involve a re-organization of the statement from a thematic format to a chronological format. The subcommittee members have also concluded a more comprehensive update is necessary. The fee and calendar deadlines associated with the current grant funding limit the present update effort to a relatively narrow scope. Staff is exploring options to secure funding for a “Phase II” once the current grant funding requirements are satisfied.

At the June 20, 2022 HRB meeting, PAST Consultants will provide a progress update and will seek input from the Board and the public on a proposed topical outline.

Fiscal Impact: The Historic Context Statement update has been included in the FY 2021-2022 Community Planning and Building Department budget. The project will be funded by a \$30,000 grant awarded to the City by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation.

Prior Council Action: The City Council first adopted the Carmel-by-the-Sea Historic Context Statement on January 7, 1997, and adopted an updated document on September 9, 2008. On April 4, 2022, the City Council entered into a Consulting Services Agreement with PAST Consultants to prepare the Historic Context Statement update.

Attachments:

Historic Context Statement

HCS Update Kickoff PowerPoint

PAST Consultants Topical Outline