



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2025

DEPARTMENT: SALINAS CITY COUNCIL

FROM: LISA BRINTON, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

THROUGH: GRANT LEONARD, PLANNING MANAGER

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TITLE: LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION AND APPROVAL OF MILLS
ACT CONTRACT: 14 LOS LAURELES AVENUE

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to approve a resolution designating 14 Los Laureles Avenue as a local historic resource and authorizing execution of a Mills Act contract for property restoration and maintenance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Salinas adopted the Mills Act Program to promote the preservation of historic properties. The owners of 14 Los Laureles Avenue have requested to designate their property as a local historic resource through a Mills Act application that outlines 10-year work plan for restoration and maintenance of the property. This designation will allow the property owners to enter into a Mills Act contract, which provides financial incentives through reduced property taxes in exchange for preservation commitments. The proposed improvements meet the Mills Act standards, and staff recommends approval of the contract to support the continued preservation of this historic resource.

BACKGROUND:

The Mills Act is a state-enabled program that allows cities to enter contracts with owners of designated historic properties. Under the Mills Act, property owners commit to restoring, rehabilitating, and maintaining their historic properties in accordance with preservation standards. In exchange, they receive a reduction in their annual property tax. Each Mills Act contract has a minimum term of ten (10) years and is automatically renewed each year unless a notice of non-renewal or cancellation is submitted by either party. The contract includes all required provisions under state law and is subject to local oversight and compliance.

The City of Salinas established its Mills Act Program in June 2024 to encourage the rehabilitation and long-term preservation of historic resources throughout the city. The program provides financial incentives to property owners to maintain and restore historically significant structures, aligning with the City's goals for historic preservation.

In the Salinas Municipal Code, a Historic Resource is defined as any building, structure, sign, site, place, area, or district that is:

- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places,
- Listed on the California Register of Historical Resources,
- Designated as a State Landmark, or
- Voluntarily nominated by the property owner and approved for designation by the Historic Resources Board and the Salinas City Council.

The City accepts Mills Act applications each year between May and July. This year the City received one application for 14 Los Laureles Avenue. The property is situated within the Maple Park neighborhood in south Salinas. Maple Park was designed in 1929-1930 as an exclusive residential neighborhood, incorporating elements of the Garden City planning concepts. The district is characterized by:

- Large lots with wide setbacks,
- Unified architectural design guidelines,
- Mature landscaping, and
- Early adoption of underground utility infrastructure.

The neighborhood originally featured the Spanish Revival architectural style, which was popular at the time. Over time, additional architectural styles were introduced, including French Normandy, English Tudor, Italian Villa, American Colonial Revival, and Cape Cod. This variety has contributed to Maple Park's rich architectural and cultural heritage.

Analysis

14 Los Laureles Avenue is a Spanish Revival property listed in the 1989 Salinas Historic Resources Survey. Properties listed on the 1989 survey are properties that were determined to be eligible to be registered as a historic resource at the local, State, or National level, and therefore qualify for the City's Mills Act Program.

As noted in the 1989 Historic Resource Survey, 14 Los Laureles Avenue is one of the first three homes built in the Maple Park neighborhood, constructed for Salinas Judge Henry G. Jorgensen, this two-story, L-shaped wood-frame residence features smooth cement stucco cladding and a mission tile roof. The front façade includes a one-story projection with an undulating eave and a recessed bay window framed by two turned posts. A segmentally arched porte cochere extends to

the east, while a small gabled projection marks the entrance, set behind a low stucco wall that encloses a patio. At the east end of the second story, a recessed Monterey-style balcony is supported by chamfered posts with decorative corbels and finished with a simple railing and turned balusters. The property's early construction and architectural integrity contribute to its historic value.

The current owners, Daniel Cardenas and Eric Wynkoop, have applied for a Mills Act contract along with a proposed 10-year work plan. The applicants propose to use the financial savings from the Mills Act to support the needed rehabilitation, restoration, and maintenance of the property. The proposed scope of work includes:

- Restoration of all wood-trim windows
- Restoration of original steel windows
- Re-roofing using Spanish clay tiles
- Waterproofing of the roof
- Replacement of garage doors
- Restoration of the driveway
- Complete exterior repainting of the residence

As part of the application review process, the City's Historic Resource Board held a public hearing on October 6, 2025 to consider the applicant's request to designate 14 Los Laureles Avenue as a local historic resource and enter into a Mills Act contract with the City. The Board reviewed detailed information on the Mills Act Program, the local designation process, and the applicant's 10-year maintenance and rehabilitation work plan for the preservation and restoration of the property and determined that the property meets the criteria for local historic resource designation and participation in the Mills Act Program. Based on its review and deliberation, the Historic Resources Board passed a resolution recommending that the City Council approve the local historic designation and Mills Act contract for 14 Los Laureles Avenue (Attachment 4).

The proposed work aligns with the standards of the Mills Act Program as the eligible improvements focus on preserving the property's historic character. If the City Council approves the application, a fully executed contract will be filed with the County of Monterey Records Office. Once the County Assessor recalculates the property tax assessment based on the contract, it will be the owner's responsibility to notify the Historic Preservation Office of the new contract address. The Mills Act contract will take effect on January 1st of the following calendar year. Following commencement of work, the property will be reinspected every five years, or as necessary. Finally, the owner must submit annual reports to the Community Development Department, documenting any completed projects related to the property.

CEQA CONSIDERATION

The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 includes the general rule that CEQA applies only to activities which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, therefore, the proposed designation and contract are exempt from CEQA review.

CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLIES:

Yes

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Approving the resolution to designate the property at 14 Los Laureles Avenue as a local historic resource and to enter a Mills Act contract aligns with the City Council's Vision and Strategic Goal for Economic Development by encouraging private investment in property rehabilitation and long-term preservation. In addition, the preservation of historic resources can enhance heritage tourism, and stimulate economic activity in surrounding commercial areas. This action also strengthens community partnerships by engaging local stakeholders in preservation efforts, while contributing to neighborhood character and potentially increasing property values.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

The Community Development Department coordinated with the City Attorney and Finance Departments on this item.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

While a single project will not significantly impact the General Fund, it is important to note that the property owner will receive a reduction in property taxes in exchange for the property-owner's commitment to specific repairs, rehabilitation improvements and satisfactory maintenance of the historic property through the Mills Act Contract. Residential property-owners typically receive a 40% to 60% percent reduction in property tax under the Mills Act. The actual property tax savings will vary based on the Monterey County Assessor's valuation of the property.

Property taxes equal 1% of the property assessed values and Salinas gets 14.17% of the property tax revenue. The table below illustrates the potential future impact to the City's revenue from approving the Mills Act application for 14 Los Laureles Avenue.

14 Los Laureles Avenue	Property Tax	Salinas Share (14.7%)
2025 without Mills Act	\$12,203	\$1,729
Under Mills Act (40-60% savings)	\$4,881 - \$7,322	\$692-\$1,038

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution
2. Mills Act Application
3. Mills Act Contract for 14 Los Laureles Avenue
4. HRB Resolution Recommending Approval
5. 1989 Historic Resources Survey DPR Form for 14 Los Laureles Avenue