



Historic Preservation Commission

Staff Report

November 6, 2024

SUBJECT: Mills Act Year-in-Review

PROJECT PLANNER: Geoffrey Starns, AICP, AIA, LEED AP, Planning Manager

This year we had 19 applications for the Mills Act. Last year we had 9 applications submitted.

In 2022 we changed the application process to make it easier to complete. Before these changes, we had 5 applications at most. We have had 40 in the last three years.

We had added or kept the following requirements for the 2023 year. They were:

1. Seismic retrofitting. We kept the requirement for seismic retrofitting bids. While we didn't require the retrofitting due to costs, a couple of applicants have chosen to do the retrofit as part of the Mills Act work plan.
2. Annual Work Plan. We wanted to provide an opportunity to highlight the normal maintenance that goes into each historic property. The annual work plan helps ensure that these properties are maintained even if no restoration work is planned for that year.

Staff proposes to remove the seismic retrofit bid requirement. Applicants had trouble getting a contractor to come out, and over the last two years we have seen that the cost is more than what most applicants will save.

We have also been asked to get a recommendation from the Commission on possible restrictions on the number of applications, or other potential restrictions to present to City Council. Staff found it very difficult to process 19 applications. We also will have 67 contracts costing the City over \$50,000.00 per year. We need to find ways to better manage a more popular program.

If Commissioners have suggestions for the 2025 Mills Act applications, please bring them forward at the meeting so we can make any changes to the Guide to the Mills Act.