

HPC RESOLUTION NO. 26-019

A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF POMONA, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE THE POMONA FAIRPLEX, LOCATED AT 601 WEST MCKINLEY AVENUE, AS A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF POMONA DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, the applicant, The City of Pomona Planning Division initiated the local historic designation of the Pomona Fairplex (HDD-000111-2026);

WHEREAS, the property was constructed generally from the 1920s-1940s;

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Pomona, has, after giving notice thereof as required by law, held a public meeting on April 1, 2026, concerning the Historic District Designation (HDD-000111-2026); and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has carefully considered all pertinent testimony and the staff report offered in the case presented at the public hearing.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Pomona, California, as follows:

SECTION 1. Based on the policies contained in the Pomona General Plan and Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Preservation Commission concludes as follows:

1. Preserving Pomona's diverse architectural styles reflecting phases of the City of Pomona's history and encouraging complementary contemporary development inspires a more livable urban environment;
2. Pomona's historic places should be preserved to build civic pride by promoting the understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the City's rich heritage and cultural resources;
3. Preserving Pomona's historic places enhances property values and increase economic and financial benefits to the City;
4. Preserving Pomona's historic places enhances the City of Pomona for residents, tourists and visitors thereby stimulating business and industry; and
5. Preserving Pomona's historic places conserves valuable material and energy resources by fostering ongoing use and maintenance of the existing built environment.

SECTION 2. The Historic Preservation Commission hereby finds and determines that the application requesting a local historic district designation (HDD-000111-2026) for the Pomona Fairplex, located at 601 West McKinley Avenue, provides sufficient documentation and information indicating that the subject property meets the following City of Pomona Designation Criteria as presented in Section 800.C.2. “Designation” of the Pomona Zoning and Development Code:

1. *It is a contiguous area possessing a concentration of eligible historic resources or thematically related grouping of structures which contribute to each other and are unified by plan, style, or physical development; and (b) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction; represents the work of a master; or possesses high artistic values (Criterion 4 in previous ordinance);*

As the site of the Los Angeles County Fair since 1922, the fairgrounds played a significant role in the agricultural and recreational history of Pomona and the surrounding region. The fair has also contributed greatly to the local economy and is the largest county fair in the nation. Despite the economic depression in the 1930s, the fair continued and even enjoyed a small construction/employment boom between 1937 and 1939 thanks to the WPA. During the war years of the 1940s, the fair temporarily ceased (1942–1947) as the grounds were taken over by the U.S. Army and used first as a Japanese-American assembly center, then as an ordnance depot, and finally as a POW camp that provided inexpensive and reliable labor to nearby farms. In the 1950s, the growth of the middle class, coupled with increased prosperity and leisure time, resulted in new demands for recreation and spurred the return of the hot rod and dangerous and illegal drag racing on local streets. Working with the local police and Wally Parks, the fairgrounds provided a drag strip where the first legally sanctioned NHRA race took place in 1953. Many of the buildings and features related to these historic events remain in place and retain at least a moderate level of integrity, which allows the Fairplex to convey its association with these important events in history. Therefore, the Pomona Fairplex appears to meet this criterion for significance at the regional level as a historic district with a period of significance from 1922, when the fair first opened, to 1961, which is currently the end of the historic period. Therefore, the Pomona Fairplex, meets this Criterion.

2. *It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of a park landscape, site design, or community planning (Criterion 9 in previous ordinance); and*

As discussed above, as the site of the Los Angeles County Fair since 1922, the fairgrounds played a significant role in the agricultural and recreational history of Pomona and the

surrounding region. It reflects the geographic growth of southern California, and is the only example of fairgrounds site design in the area. Therefore, the Pomona Fairplex meets this Criterion.

Meets at least one of Landmark Designation Criteria as follows:

Architecture / Physical Features

1. It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship (Criterion 3 in previous ordinance);

The fairgrounds embody the distinctive characteristics of a fairground such as the grandstand, and the exhibition halls. In addition, there are a number of buildings that are good examples of various architectural styles as adapted to fairground/exhibition hall uses. Many also relate to the Works Progress Administration during the depression. Therefore, the Pomona Fairplex meets this Criterion.

Person(s) and Events Important in Our History

1. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city of Pomona's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history (Criterion 1 in previous ordinance);

The fairgrounds are associated with events that are significant in local, state, and national history. As the site of the Los Angeles County Fair since 1922, the fairgrounds played a significant role in the agricultural and recreational history of Pomona and the surrounding region. The fair has also contributed greatly to the local economy and is the largest county fair in the nation. Despite the economic depression in the 1930s, the fair continued and even enjoyed a small construction/employment boom between 1937 and 1939 thanks to the WPA. During the war years of the 1940s, the fair temporarily ceased (1942–1947) as the grounds were taken over by the U.S. Army and used first as a Japanese-American assembly center, then as an ordnance depot, and finally as a POW camp that provided inexpensive and reliable labor to nearby farms. In the 1950s, the growth of the middle class, coupled with increased prosperity and leisure time, resulted in new demands for recreation and spurred the return of the hot rod and dangerous and illegal drag racing on local streets. Working with the local police and Wally Parks, the fairgrounds provided a drag strip where the first legally sanctioned NHRA race took place in 1953. Many of the buildings and features related to these historic events remain

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SECTION 3. In view of all of the evidence and based on the designation criteria contained in the staff report, the Historic Preservation Commission concludes as follows:

1. The property located at 601 West McKinley Avenue meets the criteria required to be designated as a local historic district; and
2. The Historic Commission recommends that the City council designate the property as a local historic district as shown in Exhibit "A".

SECTION 4. All documents described in Section 1 of Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 26-019 are deemed incorporated by reference as set forth at length.

SECTION 5. The Secretary shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution and forward the original to the City Clerk.

APPROVED AND PASSED THIS 1ST DAY OF APRIL, 2026.

BRITNEY GALLIVAN
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

GEOFFREY STARNES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
SECRETARY

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES)
CITY OF POMONA)

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Pursuant to Resolution No. 76-258 of the City of Pomona, the time in which judicial review of this action must be sought is governed by Sec. 1094.6 C.C.P.

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EXHIBIT "A"
POMONA FAIRPLEX DISTRICT MAP