



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Lesho *Jan Lesho*
County Administrator

Re: **Additional Information, Board of Supervisors March 4, 2025, Agenda Item #32 – Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission Zoning Code Text Amendment, Ordinance P22TA00003**

This memorandum provides background, and a summary of the updates included in the referenced Historical Commission Zoning Code Text Amendment.

Background

The Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission (TPCHC) has successfully fostered the preservation of historic properties since its initiation in 1974. The status of TPCHC as a joint commission had come into question in 2022 due to a directive issued by the National Parks Service (NPS).

On December 15, 2022, NPS revised its position, confirming that the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 302503) and its regulations neither require nor restrict a Certified Local Governments (CLG) from appointing a joint Commission, as long as the Commission has the legal authority to act within each jurisdiction, and members meet the membership requirements established in the statute, the regulations, the adopted State CLG procedures, and relevant State or local laws.

Since the last update I provided to the Board of Supervisors on November 14, 2024, staff have been in close coordination with the City of Tucson and preparing text amendments to update various sections of Title 18, Pima County Zoning Code.

Proposed Zoning Code Text Amendment

Recognizing the advantages of a unified approach that has been successfully operating since 1974, Ordinance P22TA00003 allows for the joint Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission to continue operating while establishing mechanisms to ensure that Pima County zoning cases are handled appropriately by county-appointed commissioners. The Text Amendment achieves this through reducing administrative redundancies and aligning with current best practices in historic preservation through:

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The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

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- Formally establishing the Historical Commission in Pima County Code - The ordinance formalizes the Historical Commission to provide expert oversight for historic preservation in Pima County.
- Creating Plans Review Subcommittees - Each jurisdiction (Pima County and the City of Tucson) will establish its own Plans Review Subcommittee under the Historical Commission. These subcommittees will independently review cases related to historic district zones and historic landmark zones originating from within their respective jurisdictions.
- Improving Engagement with Indigenous Communities - The ordinance now requires consultation with the Tohono O’odham Nation for projects impacting the San Xavier Environs Historic District Zone. This reflects the County’s commitment to honoring Indigenous heritage and integrating their perspectives into preservation efforts.
- Streamlining Review Processes - The county’s Plans Review Subcommittee will replace the Design Review Committee for handling historic zoning cases within unincorporated Pima County, ensuring decisions reflect local expertise and priorities.

Throughout the process, staff provided numerous ongoing opportunities for stakeholder review and comment through outreach, stakeholder meetings, a special study session with the TPCHC, requests for reviews on multiple drafts, and monthly updates to the TPCHC.

The text amendment was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission on January 29, 2025, and was approved unanimously.

Recommendation

I recommend the Board of Supervisors approve Zoning Code Text Amendment P22TA00003 related to the Tucson-Pima County Historic Commission.

JKL/anc

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Carla Blackwell, Director, Development Services Department
Kris Gade, Director, Conservation Lands & Resource