

**Ballot Simplification Committee
DRAFT for Consideration
Wednesday, August 6, 2008**

Creating an Historic Preservation Commission

THE WAY IT IS NOW:

The City's Planning Commission and Planning Department oversee land use planning and review proposed development projects in San Francisco. The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) advises the Planning Commission and Planning Department on issues related to historic preservation, but the Landmarks Board does not have final decision-making authority. The Landmarks Board consists of nine members appointed by the Mayor who serve four year terms. The Mayor may remove members of the Landmarks Board at his pleasure.

After reviewing the Landmarks Board's recommendations, the Planning Commission and Planning Department make decisions about permit applications for work on landmarks, buildings designated in downtown zoning districts, and

buildings in historic districts and conservation districts. With advice from the Landmarks Board, the Planning Commission also reviews and submits to the Board of Supervisors proposed designations of landmarks, historic buildings, historic districts, and conservation districts. The Planning Commission and the Planning Department are not required to follow the Landmarks Board's recommendations.

THE PROPOSAL:

Proposition ___ is a Charter Amendment that would create an Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The HPC would consist of seven members, nominated by the Mayor and approved by the majority of the Board of Supervisors. Six of the seven members would be required to represent specific professions related to architecture and historic preservation. One of the members would not be required to have any special expertise. Four members would serve an initial term of 4 years and three members would serve an initial

term of 2 years. After that, all of the members would serve 4 year terms.

Members could be removed only for cause.

The HPC would take over the duties of the Landmarks Board and also assume some duties currently performed by the Planning Commission and the Planning

Department. Specifically, the HPC would have the authority to:

- make recommendations directly to the Board of Supervisors about designation of landmarks, historic buildings, historic districts, and conservation districts;
- approve permits or certificates for work on designated landmarks and historic buildings, as well as buildings in historic districts and conservation districts;
- make recommendations directly to the Board of Supervisors about whether to approve, disapprove, or modify historic property contracts; and
- make recommendations about proposed ordinances and resolutions concerning historic preservation.

With limited exceptions, the Planning Commission would no longer have authority to review or approve designation of, or work on, locally designated landmarks, historic buildings, or buildings within historic or conservation districts.

The HPC would have this authority. In limited circumstances, the Planning Commission could reject or change HPC decisions by a 2/3 vote. The decisions of the HPC or the Planning Commission regarding historic preservation could be appealed to the Board of Appeals or to the Board of Supervisors.

The HPC would not have its own department head, staff or budget authority, and it would instead rely on Planning Department staff and budgeting.

A “YES” VOTE MEANS: If you vote "yes," you want to change the Charter to create a seven-member Historic Preservation Commission with authority over historic preservation-related decisions in the City.

A “NO” VOTE MEANS: If you vote “no,” you do not want to make this change to the Charter.

word count: 515 [suggested word limit: 300]