



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Brian Fullmer
Policy Analyst

DATE: March 5, 2024

RE: Yalecrest – Laird Heights Local Historic District
PLNHLC2023-00074

Item Schedule:

Briefing: February 6, 2024

Set Date: February 20, 2024

Public Hearing: March 5, 2024

Potential Action: March 26, 2024

BRIEFING UPDATE

During the February 6, 2024 briefing the Council discussed new construction in local historic districts (LHDs) and what can be built. Planning staff explained demolition of existing structures and new construction in LHDs requires Historic Landmark Commission approval.

There is flexibility when building in an LHD. New construction does not need to recreate historic structures but must be compatible with the streetscape. Buildings can be a variety of styles but use elements of historic buildings such as including a traditional porch, or window design. Planning staff noted the variety of building styles in the Capitol Hill neighborhood.

A Council Member mentioned his husband assisted residents with their efforts to establish this LHD. This was as a volunteer and there is no conflict of interest.

Council Members expressed appreciation for the community's work on this and for understanding the importance of preservation throughout the city.

The following information was provided for the February 6, 2024 Council briefing. It is included again for background purposes.

The Council will be briefed about the proposed Laird Heights Local Historic District (LHD) in the Yalecrest neighborhood. This will update the Council on progress since its May 2, 2023 briefing on initiating the Laird Heights and Princeton Heights LHDs, the required Planning Director's reports, and the LHD



creation process. (Note-the proposed Princeton Heights LHD transmittal will be sent to the Council for review in the coming weeks.)

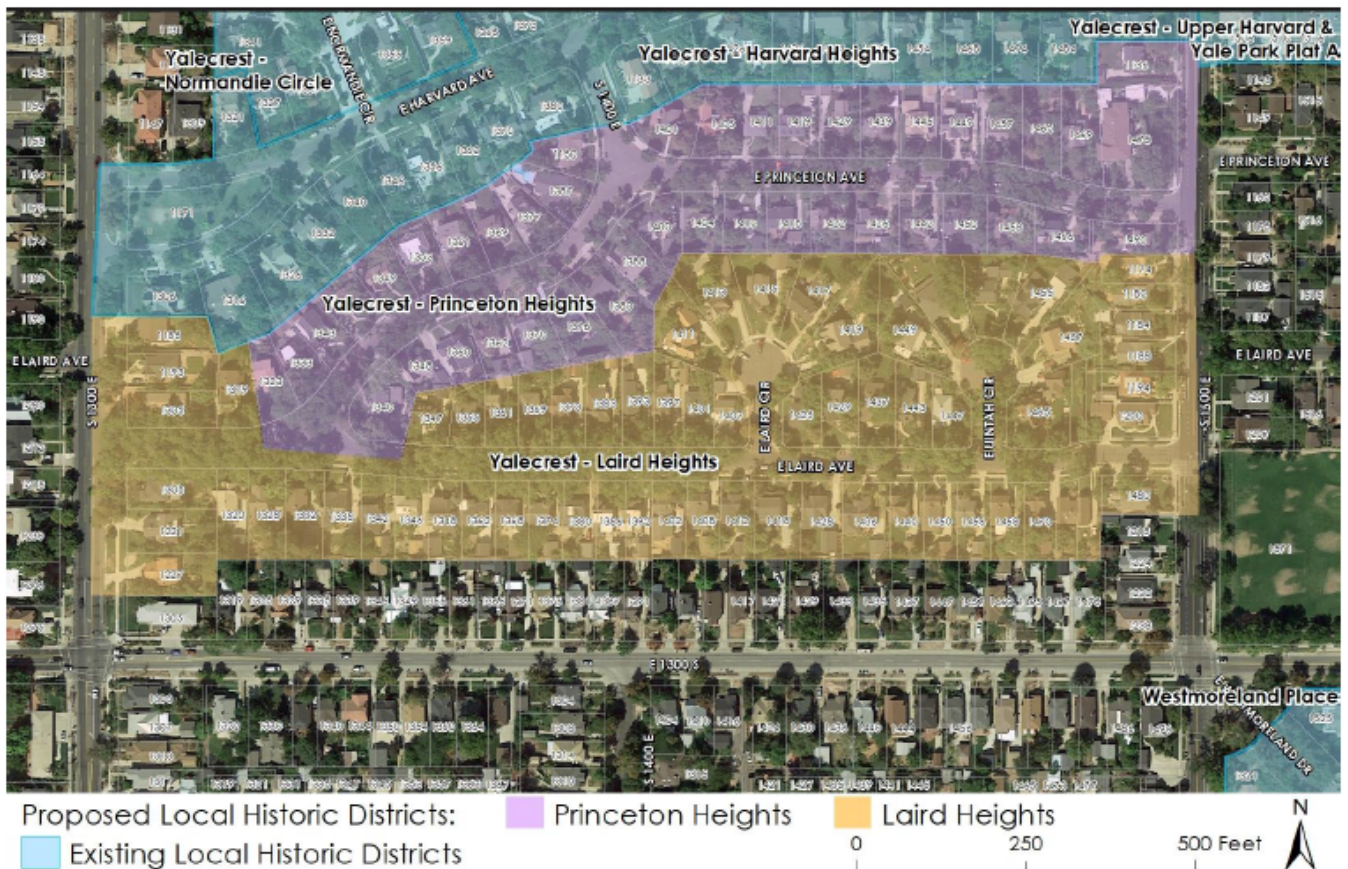
Creating an LHD amends the zoning map by applying the H-Historic Overlay District to the proposed area, which is a step that requires City Council approval. Council review, public hearing, and vote are the final steps in the process.

Boundaries of the proposed Laird Heights LHD are 1300 East to 1500 East including both sides of Laird Avenue, Laird Circle and Uintah Circle as shown in the map below. The proposed LHD boundaries include 66 parcels with homes and two vacant parcels.

There are several steps to LHD creation as outlined below and in a graphic at the end of this report.

LHD Creation Process

- Pre-application meeting.
- Initial letter mailed to all property owners within proposed district.
- Application submittal.
- Notice of application letter mailed.
- Planning Director's report to the City Council (May 2, 2023)
- Property owner meeting seeking input from and informing owners about the process and requirements.
- Open house seeking input from and informing immediate neighborhood and general public about the proposal.
- Historic Landmark Commission public hearing, review, and recommendation.
- Planning Commission public hearing, review, and recommendation.
- Property owner ballot to determine support of LHD creation.
- **City Council review, public hearing, and decision. (Current step)**



*Map of subject proposed Laird Heights (tan),
and Princeton Heights (purple (awaiting transmittal)) Local Historic Districts.
Existing Local Historic Districts are shown in blue.
Image courtesy of the Salt Lake City Planning Division*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A 2005 Reconnaissance Level Survey of the Yalecrest National Historic District area found all 66 homes within the proposed Laird Heights LHD were rated as contributing structures. Since that time, two homes had substantial exterior alterations, and one home was demolished, and a new home constructed on the property. Those three homes are now considered non-contributing structures.

Reconnaissance Level Surveys are the most basic approach for systematically documenting and evaluating historic buildings and are based on a visual evaluation of the properties.

For the creation of Local Historic Districts, the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) first reviews the proposals and forwards a recommendation to the Planning Commission. This included:

- The proposed Laird Heights LHD was reviewed at the HLC's September 7, 2023 meeting and a public hearing was held at which five people spoke in favor of the proposal. The Commission found the proposal meets criteria for LHD designation and voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council.
- In addition, the HLC forwarded a unanimous positive recommendation to the Council to adopt changes to the building ratings from the 2005 Reconnaissance Level Survey. The buildings' ratings changed from "contributing" to "non-contributing" based on changes to those homes since the 2005 survey. This recommended change is included in the draft ordinance.

The Planning Commission reviewed this petition at its September 13, 2023 meeting and held a public hearing at which four people spoke. Two were supportive, one expressed concern about affordable housing in the proposed LHD area, and one asked about limitations on property owners within the proposed LHD.

Planning staff stated that within the LHD, exterior modifications to a home, building or property would require City review for historic appropriateness. A Commissioner asked if an LHD would make it more difficult to increase housing units. Planning staff stated that only changes to the exterior of buildings are reviewed, so interior changes could be made to add dwelling units. Additional exterior units could also be constructed that met requirements.

The Commission voted 5-4 to send a *negative* recommendation on the Laird LHD to the Council citing inconsistencies with *Plan Salt Lake’s* housing, transportation and mobility, and air quality goals, *Housing SLC*, and *Thriving in Place*. (It is worth noting that at its November 8, 2023 meeting the Planning Commission voted to forward a *positive* recommendation to the Council on the other proposed LHD for Yalecrest – Princeton Heights. Two Commissioners who voted against the Laird Heights LHD voted in support of the Princeton Heights LHD. The two proposed LHDs are adjacent to each other and very similar.)

Following the Historic Landmark, and Planning Commission meetings, ballots required for LHD creation were mailed October 13, 2023 to all property owners within the proposed Laird Heights LHD. Owners were given 30 days to return their ballots indicating support of, or opposition to the proposal. The City Recorder issued the Official Canvas of the Property Owner Opinion Ballot November 20, 2023, which contained the following results:

Ballots in Support	49
Ballots Opposed	9
Did Not Vote.....	10
Undeliverable/Did Not Receive	0
Returned After Due Date.....	0
Total Ballots Received	58 of 68

Since the number of returned property owner opinion ballots (85%) exceeds the required two-thirds threshold of ballots mailed, and ballots in support (72%) represents more than 50% of the number of parcels in the proposed LHD, the City Council may designate the LHD by a simple majority vote. It should be noted that the Council is not bound by the property owners’ opinion ballot results.

Goal of the briefing: *To review the proposed local historic district, address questions Council Members may have and prepare for a public hearing.*

POLICY QUESTIONS

- 1. The Council may wish to ask for more information about whether establishing a Historic District will conflict with other Citywide policies, such as the recently passed Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance, or the upcoming multi-family residential overlay. If the Historic Districts create some obstacle to increasing density throughout the City, does the Council want to discuss whether density is appropriate citywide, or whether there are exceptions?
- 2. In the past, the creation of Historic Districts created some contention. The Council may wish to ask the Administration whether they have received any concerns or anticipate any substantive objections.

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

Below is a chronology for the proposed LHD with steps in the flowchart below indicated.

- December 22, 2022 – Pre-application meeting. *(Step 1)*
- January 5, 2023 – Letter sent to property owners within proposed LHD letting them know Planning was notified a property owner is interested in creating a new LHD. *(Step 2)*
- February 1, 2023 – LHD application submitted to Planning and assigned to Lex Traugher, Senior Planner. Property owner petition initiated. *(Step 3)*
- February 9, 2023 – Property owners within the proposed LHD sent notice of application, and “Local Historic District Pros and Cons” information letter indicating the Planning Division received an application, including the required number of signatures to initiate the designation of a new LHD. *(Step 4)*
- May 2, 2023 – Planning Director’s report to the City Council. The Council directed Planning staff to move forward processing the proposed new LHD. *(Step 5)*
- May 10, 2023 – Property owners sent notice for the required neighborhood information meeting to be held June 20, 2023. *(Step 6)*
- June 20, 2023 – Property owner meeting held at Carmen B. Pingree School. Approximately 16 property owners were in attendance. *(Step 6)*
- June 27, 2023 – Email sent to Yalecrest Neighborhood Council, East Liberty Park Community Organization, Wasatch Hollow Community Council, and KEEPYalecrest with online open house notification. *(Step 6)*
- June 29, 2023 – Property owners and residents within 300 feet of the proposed LHD mailed online open house notification. Open house ran from June 29-August 9, 2023. *(Step 6)*
- August 25, 2023 – Historic Landmark Commission public hearing notice sent to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the proposed LHD. Listserv notification of the Historic Landmark Commission’s agenda emailed. Agenda posted on the Planning Division and State websites. *(Step 7)*
- August 30, 2023 – Planning Commission public hearing notice mailed to all property owners and residents within 300 feet of the proposed LHD. Listserv notification of the Planning Commission agenda emailed. Agenda posted on the Planning Division and State websites. *(Step 7)*
- September 7, 2023 – Historic Landmark Commission briefing and public hearing. The Commission voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council. *(Step 7)*
- September 13, 2023 – Planning Commission briefing and public hearing. The Commission voted to forward a negative recommendation to the City Council on the proposed LHD. *(Step 7)*
- October 13, 2023 – Property Owner Opinion Ballot (Support Survey) mailed to all property owners within the proposed LHD asking if they support or are opposed to the proposed LHD. Ballots were required to be returned to the City Recorder’s Office or postmarked by November 15, 2023. *(Step 8)*

- November 15, 2023 – Planning staff requested ordinance from the City Attorney’s Office.
- November 20, 2023 – City Recorder’s Office released results of the survey. 49 property owners were in support, 9 were opposed, and 10 did not vote.
- November 30, 2023 – Planning received ordinance from the City Attorney’s Office.
- December 6, 2023 – Transmittal received in City Council Office.
- February 6, 2024 – City Council briefing. (Public hearing anticipated to be held February 20, 2024, and a potential Council vote March 5, 2024.) (*Step 9*)

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) DESIGNATION PROCESS



DESIGNATION PROCESS

06.2022 // PLANNING DIVISION

LHD Designation Process Flowchart
Image courtesy of Salt Lake City Planning Division