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Board Approves Historic Preservation Ordinance

Acting on a motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday to adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance that allows property owners to seek historic designation of their properties, to create historic districts in communities, and to designate landmarks within unincorporated communities.

Specifically, the new ordinance provides another means for property owners to be eligible for the Mills Act, a state law that authorizes cities and counties to forge contracts with owners, giving them a property tax discount on the condition that the savings be used towards the preservation, restoration and maintenance of their historically important property.

The properties must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register, or be located within designated historic districts in order to be considered. This new ordinance provides property owners with the most efficient way to be eligible for the property tax break.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas pointed out that unincorporated communities have many historically significant places, including the remnants of ranchos, the routes of early explorers, and the homes and businesses of prominent people who shaped local history.

“With the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the owners of these properties can become better stewards of their legacy,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “The County has not had a system in place to encourage the preservation of these assets and this program will strengthen community ties and support economic and cultural revitalization. This will

allow local communities to celebrate and showcase the County's rich cultural, social, political and architectural history."

The Los Angeles Conservancy also voiced support for the new ordinance.

"Communities have long waited for a tool like this to preserve and protect the historic places that matter to them," said the conservancy's advocacy director, Adrian Scott Fine.

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