HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR ZONING EXAMINER PUBLIC HEARING

DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2026

PROJECT NAME:	CITY HALL HISTORIC LANDMARK (HL) DESIGNATION/REZONING
LOCATION:	255 W ALAMEDA STREET (PARCEL #11720007A)
CURRENT ZONING:	O-3
PROPOSED ZONING:	HO-3
APPLICANT:	CITY OF TUCSON
STAFF CONTACT:	DESIREE ARANDA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

BACKGROUND

The City of Tucson proposes Historic Landmark (HL) designation/rezoning of Tucson City Hall at 255 W Alameda Street (parcel no. 11720007A), located south of W. Alameda Street and north of W. Pennington Street between El Presidio Plaza to the east and Granada Avenue to the west. Mayor and Council initiated HL designation/rezoning on November 5, 2025. This is a City-sponsored HL designation/rezoning.

SUMMARY OF PAST EVENTS

- The Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation (THPF) prepared the original HL nomination and obtained a formal Determination of Eligibility from the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office finding City Hall eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- On November 5, 2025, Mayor and Council initiated HL designation/rezoning of Tucson City Hall on the condition that the designation would apply only to the building exterior, and that the interior would be excluded from historic review.
- The City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office (CHPO) compiled and prepared the enclosed application. Historic Preservation staff find that the proposed HL designation meets the requirements for designation as set forth in UDC section 5.8.5 “Standards for Establishing and Amending HLs.”
- The Tucson Pima County Historical Commission’s Plans Review Subcommittee (PRS) heard the item on December 11, 2025 and February 2, 2026. PRS recommended approval of the HL designation/rezoning. The Legal Action Reports (LARs) for those meetings are enclosed.
- On August 31, 2026, the CHPO held the required Neighborhood Meeting per Unified Development Code (UDC) section 2-03.2.0. Required notice was given per UDC section 3.2.2, which included written mailed notice to property owners within 400 feet of the property, registered neighborhood associations within one mile of proposal, and the Council Ward offices where the project is located.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Built between 1961 and 1966, Tucson City Hall at 255 W. Alameda Street is individually eligible for listing at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for its important role in Tucson's political history as the local seat of government since 1962, and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a significant example of a twentieth century civic building designed in the brutalist architectural style by noted architectural firm, Friedman and Jobusch. The subject building is Tucson's fourth purpose-built and only remaining City Hall building. Executed in a restrained modernist style with regional desert adaptations, Tucson City Hall integrates horizontality with a commanding vertical tower, employing locally sympathetic materials and massing responsive to Tucson's desert climate.

PROPOSED HL BOUNDARIES
The boundaries of the HL overlay would match the boundaries of the parcel on which City Hall sits: Parcel no. 11720007A. The original Friedman & Jobusch design for City Hall, with a period of significance from 1961 to 1966, is located completely within the existing parcel boundaries. While surrounding parcels contribute to City Hall's setting today, they have been significantly redeveloped since the period of significance. The current design features of the parcels surrounding City Hall are not connected to the original design of the City Hall building and were built outside the period of significance for the proposed Historic Landmark.

SUMMARY OF CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES
The following exterior physical features contribute to the historic significance and integrity of the building:

- Irregular plan
- 10-story height
- Horizontally oriented one-story ground floor
- Vertically oriented rectilinear nine-story tower
- Steel beam framework
- Cast concrete construction
- Cast stone facing
- Stucco fascia
- Covered walkways with scored concrete floors at the ground floor
- Ground level lobby entrances at the north and south, and ground level entrance to the Mayor and Council Chambers at the east side
- Large glass plate windows with aluminum mullions at the first floor
- Horizontally oriented ribbons of smaller windows with metal mullions, located above the cast stone concrete at the first floor exterior
- Recessed glass windows with overhangs along all sides of the tower
- Wraparound balcony at the 10th floor featuring a decorative screen of gold-anodized aluminum rings arranged in a geometric grid
- Muted desert tones
- Concrete steps with metal railings leading up to the building at north, east, and south sides
- Exposed aggregate concrete planters and retaining walls

PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT
Public comment was received during the Neighborhood Meeting held August 31, 2026. Demion Clinco of the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation provided support for the HL designation, explaining that their organization has been advocating for HL designation for City Hall so that this architecturally and historically significant building will be protected for the future. Outside of the public meetings held for this designation/rezoning, which are described above, the Department has not received any additional public comments regarding the proposed Historic Landmark designation.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS
Staff find that the proposed HL designation/rezoning meets the stated purpose of the HL designation as outlined in UDC 5.8.1, which is described as follows:

> *The purpose of the HPZ and HL designation is to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the community and to ensure the harmonious growth and development of the municipality by encouraging the preservation and rehabilitation of significant historic districts, neighborhoods, buildings, structures, sites, objects, and archaeolocial resources. These designations are intended to ensure the preservation of significant historic and archaeological resources, and to keep them in active use or management tin their historic appearance, settings, andlocations. It is also intended that new or remodeled buildings or structures located within HPZs or HL properties be desined and construted to harmonize and be compabile with existing buildings and structures within the sites and development zones in order to preserve property values, provide for appropriate future development, and promote an awareness of the heritage of Tucson among both residents and visitors to the community.*

Further, staff find that the proposed HL designation meets the requirements for designation as set forth in UDC section 5.8.5, Standards for Establishing and Amending HLs.

At Mayor & Council's direction, the designating ordinance for this HL will need to specifically state that the designation applies only to the building exterior and that proposed interior changes will be exempt from local historic review, as UDC section 5.8.9.A requires that "alterations to the interior of a publicly owned Historic Landmark shall be reviewed."

NEXT STEPS
A Zoning Examiner Public Hearing is required per UDC 3.5.3, Zoning Examiner Legislative Procedure. Following the hearing, the Zoning Examiner prepares a report for Mayor & Council recommending approval or denial within 14 calendar days. Mayor & Council will then consider the application, Zoning Examiner recommendation, City Manager's Recommendation, and public comments. They may hold a public hearing or public meeting on the application. Mayor & Council may approve, modify, or deny the application or take other appropriate actions. Rezoning will become effective 30 calendar days after ordinance adoption.

ATTACHMENTS:
A. Parcel Map/Proposed HL Boundary
B. AZ Historic Property Inventory Form for Tucson City Hall
C. AZ SHPO Determination of Eligibility for City Hall
D. Legal Action Reports of the Tucson Pima County Historical Commission's Plans Review Subcommittee (PRS) for December 11, 2025 and February 2, 2026