MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 24, 2026
For December 10, 2026 Hearing

TO: James Mazzocco
Zoning Examiner

FROM: Koren Manning
Planning & Development Services
Director

SUBJECT: REZONING – PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT
TP-ENT-1026-00016, Designation of City Hall as Historic Landmark
O-3 to HL-O-3 (Ward 1)

Issue – This is a request by the City of Tucson Planning and Development Services (PDSD), Historic Preservation Office, to designate Tucson City Hall as an Historic Landmark. The Historic Landmark (HL) designation changes the zoning from O-3 Office to HL-O-3 zoning. City Hall is on a 1.55-acre site, addressed 255 W Alameda Street, located approximately 227 feet north of Congress Street and 287 feet east of Granada Avenue, in Ward 1. There is no proposed development associated with the Historic Landmark designation proposal.

Planning & Development Services Recommendation – The Planning & Development Services Department recommends approval of HL-O-3 zoning. No conditions are proposed.

Neighborhood Meeting – On August 31, 2026, the City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office held a neighborhood meeting on site. Two members of the public were in attendance, including Demion Clinco of the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation and a resident of El Presidio neighborhood. Mr. Clinco expressed his support for the HL designation, explaining that their organization has been advocating for HL designation for City Hall so the building is protected due to its architecture and historic significance. The meeting was noticed by mailers sent out two weeks in advance to property owners, within 400 feet, as well as to all registered neighborhood associations, within one mile of the property. The mailing labels were provided by the Planning and Development Services Department using Pima County Assessor's parcel data.

Background Information

Existing Land Use: Civic

Zoning Descriptions:

Existing:

O-3 Office – This zone provides for mid-rise, office, medical, civic, and select other uses, such as urban agriculture and renewable energy generation, that provide reasonable compatibility with adjoining residential uses.

Proposed:
HL-O-3 Historic Landmark Office – The Historic Landmark (HL) is an overlay zone that impose standards and procedures that are in addition to those required under base zoning standards. Where there is a conflict between the standards of the O-3 base zoning and the HL overlay district, the standards of the overlay will apply. The HL designation is intended to ensure the preservation of significant historic and archaeological resources, and to keep them in active use or management in their historic appearance, settings, and locations. It is also intended that new or remodeled buildings or structures located within HL properties be designed and constructed to harmonize and be compatible with existing buildings and structures and 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.

Surrounding Zones and Land Uses:

North: HC-1 Historic Commercial; Civic, Cultural (Tucson Museum of Art)
South: OCR-2 Office, Commercial and Residential; Civic (Pima County offices)
East: O-3 Office and C-3 Commercial; Recreation (El Presidio Plaza)
West: OCR-2 Office, Commercial and Residential; Civic (Federal offices)

Previous Cases on the Property: None

Related Cases: None

Planning Considerations – 2025 *Plan Tucson,* the 1978 *Plan for Downtown Tucson,* and the 1972 *Old Pueblo South Community Plan* provide policy direction for the rezoning site.

***2025 Plan Tucson* –** In *Plan Tucson*, the Future Growth Scenario Map designates the area of the amendment site within the Downtown Building Block. Downtown is Tucson's central business district, with a variety of entertainment destinations, government services, mixed of retail and commercial, office employment, adaptive reuse, and mixed housing options, including mid- and high-rise multifamily. *Plan Tucson* emphasizes the preservation of historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and significant landscapes, as well as cultural heritage preservation, adaptive reuse, and the formal documentation and recognition of local historic assets.

***1978 Plan for Downtown Tucson* –** The *Plan for Downtown Tucson* was created to guide the revitalization of downtown through a partnership between public and private developers. It defined downtown Tucson's boundaries and established its core role within the broader community. In its Future Land Use Assumptions map, the *Plan* identifies the rezoning site for Public use, indicating that any expansion of government office space will take place within the boundaries of the government complex. Related to Historic Preservation, the Plan specifies that remodeling of any

downtown structure should take into account the fact that design details from the past are highly valued by today's culture and should be preserved wherever possible rather than covered up by a "modern" facade. Furthermore, the *Plan* calls for Downtown's connection with the past is to be made more visible and marketable.

1972 Old Pueblo South Community Plan **–** The *Plan*'s overall goal is the revitalization of the neighborhoods within its boundaries. Although the *Plan* does not provide specific policies related to City Hall, it designates the rezoning site in its Generalized Land Use map as a Civic Center Major Functional Zone, and through its Community Facilities policies it establishes the development of a "web" of community facilities through open space, landscaped buffering, bike and pedestrian ways, parks and recreation, historic walks, and schools.

Project Background **–** 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 rezoning application for this designation was prepared by the City's Historic Preservation Office (HPO), and referred to the Tucson Pima County Historical Commission, Plans Review Subcommittee (PRS) to formally consider the nomination. The application was reviewed by the PRS on December 11, 2025 and February 2, 2026, and recommended approval of the proposed rezoning to HL-O-3.

Statement of Significance and Integrity – Tucson City Hall is compliant with the Unified Development Code (UDC) Section 5.8.5, *Standards for Establishing or Amending Historic Landmarks*.

Built between 1961 and 1966, Tucson City Hall, designed in the brutalist architectural style by noted architectural firm, Friedman and Jobusch, was built between 1961 and 1966. City Hall is individually eligible for listing at the local level of significance under two of the four evaluation criteria established by the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places: 1) 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 2) Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a significant example of a twentieth century civic building. The existing City Hall building is Tucson's fourth purpose-built and only remaining City Hall building. Executed in a restrained modernist style with regional desert adaptations, City Hall integrates horizontality with a commanding vertical tower, employing locally sympathetic materials and massing responsive to Tucson's desert climate.

Description of the Proposed Historic Landmark from the Nomination Proposal – The following exterior physical features contribute to the historic significance and integrity of Tucson City Hall:

- 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

Proposed Historic Landmark (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.

Conclusion – The proposed rezoning is consistent with, and supported by, the policy direction provided in 2025 *Plan Tucson,* 1978 *Plan for Downtown Tucson,* and the 1972 *Old Pueblo South Community Plan.* Subject to compliance with the attached preliminary conditions, approval of the requested R-2 zoning is appropriate. Designating City Hall as a Historic Landmark (HL) will protect and secure its long-term legacy as Tucson's civic, local government facility during the era of mid-century development in downtown Tucson. The building is also a significant local example of the brutalist architectural style designed by noted architectural firm, Friedman and Jobusch. The HL designation will require any future alterations to follow the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's

Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties; mandates review by the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission and will require approval from the Mayor and Council for any proposed demolition. Additionally, an HL status may open doors to preservation grants, public funding, and tax relief programs dedicated to maintaining historic public structures.

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."