

2015 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

"Sustaining San Francisco's Living History"



The policy report, *Sustaining San Francisco's Living History; Strategies for Conserving Cultural Heritage Assets* had its beginnings in a citywide community summit, hosted by San Francisco Heritage, to discuss concerns over the increasing displacement of legacy businesses, non-profits, and cultural institutions and neighborhoods that reflect the city's diverse cultural heritage. Summit participants' recommendations to address these concerns directly informed the strategies and solutions outlined in *Sustaining San Francisco's Living History*.

Nearly every community represented at the summit found itself in the midst of a cultural crisis purportedly due to San Francisco's hyper-speculative economy. Cultural institutions, events, buildings, and cultural corridors were particularly vulnerable to eviction and/or displacement due to skyrocketing rents. Summit participants' recommendations to address these concerns and promote the long-term sustainability of San Francisco's cultural heritage assets directly informed strategies presented in the report. The report outlined case studies of successful programs worldwide and presented solutions to help protect local businesses, non-profits and cultural institutions that reflect the city's history, culture, and people.

Publication of *Sustaining San Francisco's Living History* aimed to provide a common language and framework for reconciling and moving forward several

City- and Heritage-led initiatives to recognize and protect cultural heritage assets. Notable outcomes of the report include formation of the Cultural Heritage Assets Committee of the city's Historic Preservation Commission that holds monthly hearings to discuss topics related to cultural preservation. In March 2015, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed legislation establishing a Legacy Business Registry in San Francisco, the first of its kind in the country. The registry provides a framework for recognizing and sustaining significant community businesses and non-profits in operation for at least thirty years. Over the past year, the San Francisco Planning Department has worked on finalizing a Preservation Element for the city's General Plan. With advocacy from Heritage, the Element will include an entire section on cultural and social heritage. Heritage worked with Supervisor David Campos and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to establish the "San Francisco Legacy Business Historic Preservation Fund." The fund provides grants to help secure long-term lease commitments for Legacy businesses.

Published in September 2014, *Sustaining San Francisco's Living History: Strategies for Conserving Cultural Heritage Assets* has won praise locally and nationally for its "serious ideas...about how every city can keep its character in the face of rampant development." (Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation)

Learn more about [*Sustaining San Francisco's Living History*](#) and read the full report.