



Legislation Text

File #: 17-1160, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Attorney to prepare an ordinance and resolution to designate the VIP Records sign located at 1014 East Pacific Coast Highway as a Long Beach Historical Landmark.

(District 6)

On November 13, 2017, the Cultural Heritage Commission recommended that the City Council designate the sign located at 1014 E. Pacific Coast Highway as a local historic landmark (Exhibit A - Cultural Heritage Commission Staff Report). The roof-mounted sign is known as the VIP Records sign, and is associated with the VIP Records store and its proprietor, Mr. Kelvin Anderson.

The sign is located on the roof of a commercial strip mall located at the southeast corner of Pacific Coast Highway and Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, directly over the tenant space at 1014 E. Pacific Coast Highway, which is closest to the Pacific Coast Highway side of the property. A portion of the sign extends over the sidewalk and due to its height and design, is highly visible from Pacific Coast Highway.

In the 1980's, rap music saw huge growth in popularity throughout the country including Long Beach. Future rap artists such as Snoop Dogg, Warren G, and Nate Dogg were growing up in this area of Long Beach at the time. Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg, and Warren G purchased music from VIP Records, food from the fish market, and had their hair cut at the local barbershop, all of which were in the subject shopping center. VIP Records, owned by Mr. Kelvin Anderson, was expanding during the 1980's and 1990's when gang violence escalated in the area. Mr. Anderson purchased music-recording equipment, a drum machine and sampler with the assistance of acclaimed record producer Sir Jinx and built a recording studio and small stage within the rear of his store. He offered up the space to local youth as a way to help young people in the community escape gang violence.

The Cultural Heritage Ordinance contains four California Register criteria for designation: Criteria A - associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; Criteria B - associated with the lives of persons important to the City's past; Criteria C - embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or Criteria D - has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The VIP Records sign is eligible for Long Beach Historic Landmark designation under Criteria A and B. The sign is significant under Criteria A because it is an iconic symbol associated

with VIP Records and Mr. Anderson's contributions to the City's history, music history, and African American history. The sign has become famous worldwide for its association and growth of the West Coast Gangster Rap Music genre and for the success of several Long Beach-based artists that reached worldwide popularity at the height of the music genre. The sign meets Criteria A (association with events) for its association with the growth of rap music and African American history in Long Beach.

The sign is also significant under Criteria B because it is associated with the lifetime of contributions by Mr. Anderson to the Long Beach community and to the music industry. Mr. Anderson provided a haven for local youth to escape gang violence by setting up a recording studio for young people to record music. Mr. Anderson was an early advocate of the youth and many went on to worldwide fame who got their start at VIP Records. The sign meets Criteria B for its association with Kelvin Anderson and artists associated with VIP Records (association with significant persons).

The VIP Records store has since relocated into a separate building located at 1030 E. Pacific Coast Highway, but the sign remains at its existing location at 1014 E. Pacific Coast Highway. The Cultural Heritage Commission's recommendation includes a condition to allow removal, relocation, and restoration of the sign. The applicant's long-term goal is to relocate the sign to a permanent location in Long Beach near the original store. The future location is envisioned to have a retail store, a museum devoted to African American music and history, and education programs.

Staff has consulted with, and assisted, the sign owner regarding the benefits and regulations associated with this designation. Landmark status protects the structure from future demolition or alteration, and enriches the City's rich cultural and architectural history.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Linda T. Vu and by Budget Management Officer Rhutu Amin Gharib on November 28, 2017.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the 15331 Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), environmental review is not required for actions taken for the preservation or restoration of historic structures.

City Council action on this matter is not time critical.

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER