

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE RESCINDING THE DESIGNATION OF 725 CHESTNUT (SOUTHERN PACIFIC SWITCHING TOWER BUILDING AND SITE) AS A CITY LANDMARK THAT HAS SPECIAL HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, CULTURAL, AESTHETIC, OR ENGINEERING INTEREST OR VALUE OF AN HISTORIC NATURE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 13.48 OF THE SAN JOSE MUNICIPAL CODE

**FILE NO. HL26-001
APN: 259-09-049**

WHEREAS, Chapter 13.48 of Title 13 of the San José Municipal Code provides for the designation, amendment or rescission of structures and/or sites of special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of a historical nature as landmarks by the City Council of the City of San José (“City Council”); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.110, the City Council approved Resolution 64399 on February 23, 1993, designating 725 Chestnut Street (Southern Pacific Switching Tower Building and Site) as a landmark that has special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of an historical nature; and

WHEREAS, the landmark designation of the Southern Pacific Switching Tower was part of a greater preservation effort to relocate the structure along with a roundhouse (also a designated City Landmark HL91-56), turntable, trackage, water tower and steam cleaner located at 575 Lenzen Avenue to the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds for the purpose of establishing a railroad museum; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Pacific Switching Tower was significantly damaged by fire in 1996; however, despite the fire damage, Southern Pacific reaffirmed its commitment to relocate the structures to the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds; and

WHEREAS, a report prepared in 1998 to assess the feasibility of moving the round house and associated structures and to propose methods for accomplishing the work concluded that it was not feasible to move the Southern Pacific Switching Tower due to the fire damage, and methods were proposed to deconstruct and move all the associated structures; and

WHEREAS, the City of San José issued Historic Preservation Permit (HP99-11-012) on December 21, 1999 for two properties at Lenzen Avenue near Stockton Avenue and Asbury Street near Chestnut Street to dismantle the Southern Pacific Switching Tower, roundhouse, turntable and water tower for the purpose of reconstructing the structures at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds; and

WHEREAS, San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.130, subsection A, provides that a landmark designation may be rescinded or amended by the City Council through the same process as that for designation of a landmark; and

WHEREAS, the property owner, Union Pacific Railroad Company, submitted an application on March 2, 2026, to rescind the landmark designation, and the Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement initiated the procedure pursuant to Section 13.48.110, subsection C, for consideration of such landmark rescission for the building and site located at 725 Chestnut Street; and

WHEREAS, Section 13.48.110, subsection E, provides that before the City Council may rescind the designation of any property as a landmark, it shall hold at least one public hearing on such proposed rescission, and that before it holds said public hearing, the

Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement shall schedule a public hearing of said proposed landmark rescission before the Historic Landmarks Commission of the City of San José for its consideration and recommendation; and

WHEREAS, on May 6, 2026, the Historic Landmarks Commission conducted a public hearing and recommended approval of the rescission of the landmark designation for 725 Chestnut Street because the property no longer contains the Southern Pacific Switching Tower which was significantly damaged by fire, dismantled and the material removed from the property following the issuance of HP99-11-012; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the City of San José Historic Landmark Nomination File No. HL26-001 upon which such recommendation was made is on file in the Planning Division of the City of San José and available for review at 200 East Santa Clara Street, 3rd Floor, San José, CA, 95113, and on the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement webpage (www.sanjoseca.gov); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 13.48.110, subsection F, the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement duly noticed a public hearing on said landmark designation before the City Council for June 23, 2026, or as soon thereafter as said matter could be heard, where the City Council provided all persons a full opportunity to be heard and considered all evidence and testimony presented regarding 725 Chestnut Street (Southern Pacific Switching Tower Building and Site); and

WHEREAS, a legal description of 725 Chestnut Street (APN 259-09-049) is attached as Exhibit "A" and incorporated by reference;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE THAT:

SECTION 1. The foregoing recitals are incorporated into this Resolution.

SECTION 2. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 13.48 of Title 13 of the San José Municipal Code, the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City Council does hereby rescind the designation of 725 Chestnut Street as a landmark because the Southern Pacific Switching Tower no longer exists and no longer retains its special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature. Therefore, the City Council deems the landmark rescission to be in the public interest.

SECTION 3. Said designation was based on the following findings:

- Its character, interest, or value is part of the local, regional, state, or national history, heritage, or culture within the historic theme of Communication and Transportation within the Horticulture Era (1870-1918).
- Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique. One of only three remaining unmodified wooden interlocking towers in California, this structure is representative of a past engineering design. The switching function has become obsolete with the advent of computers.

As outlined in the above findings, the Southern Pacific Switching Tower was a physical embodiment of its history within the historical context of San José Communication and Transportation. The Southern Pacific Switching Tower provided a tangible link to how railroad traffic was managed during its 66 years of operation through interlocking control towers that centralized a group of signals controlled by an operator to coordinate the rail traffic. The Southern Pacific Switching Tower is no longer present on the property and there are no other historic structures on the site that contribute to the understanding of early twentieth century railroad operations; therefore, the property no longer maintains the special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of

an historical nature for which it was designated. In addition, Envision San José 2040 General Plan Historic Preservation Goal LU-13 (Landmarks and Districts) cannot be implemented without the presence of the Southern Pacific Switching Tower because the vacant land does not promote a greater sense of historic awareness about railroad operations, community identity or contribute toward a sense of place.

SECTION 4. The City Clerk is hereby directed to notify those persons designated in San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.110, subsection L, in the manner specified by said Section and to record a certified copy of this resolution, including the exhibits hereto, with the Office of the Recorder of the County of Santa Clara.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DISQUALIFIED:

MATT MAHAN
Mayor

ATTEST:

TONI J. TABER, MMC
City Clerk

EXHIBIT "A"

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION
FOR
725 CHESTNUT STREET
(SOUTHERN PACIFIC SWITCHING TOWER BUILDING AND SITE)
SAN JOSE, CA 95112**

**FILE NO. HL26-001
A.P.N. 259-09-049**

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Real property in the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara, State of California, described as follows:

PARCEL ONE:

BEING FRACTIONAL LOTS NUMBERED TWO (2) AND THREE (3) IN BLOCK NUMBERED TWENTY-NINE (29) ON THE MAP OF THE UNIVERSITY GROUNDS, AS SURVEYED BY J. J. BOWEN, COUNTY SURVEYOR, APRIL 1866, AND BOUNDED AND PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TO WIT:

COMMENCING AT THE WESTERLY CORNER OF POLHEMUS AND CHESTNUT STREETS THENCE RUNNING ALONG THE WESTERLY SIDE OF CHESTNUT STREET NORTHWESTERLY 400 FEET TO ASBURY STREET; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ALONG THE SOUTHERLY SIDE OF ASBURY STREET 165 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE SAN FRANCISCO AND SAN JOSE RAILROAD; THENCE ALONG THE NORTHERLY SIDE OF SAID RAILROAD SOUTHEASTERLY 416 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO POLHEMUS STREET; THENCE ALONG THE NORTHERLY SIDE OF POLHEMUS STREET NORTHEASTERLY 47 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, AND BEING THE SAME PARCEL OF LAND CONVEYED BY CHARLES DAUBERG AND JENNIE DAUBERG, HIS WIFE, TO SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY, A KENTUCKY CORPORATION, BY DEED DATED FEBRUARY 23, 1907 AND RECORDED MARCH 25, 1907 IN [BOOK 318 OF DEEDS, PAGE 250](#), SANTA CLARA COUNTY RECORDS.

EXCEPTING THEREFROM THAT PORTION GRANTED BY UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY, A DELAWARE CORPORATION TO PENINSULA CORRIDOR JOINT POWERS BOARD, A JOINT POWERS AGENCY CREATED UNDER CALIFORNIA LAW IN GRANT DEED DESCRIBED AS LEGAL DESCRIPTION - PARCEL SIX RECORDED OCTOBER 17, 2000 AS INSTRUMENT NO. [15425010](#) OF OFFICIAL RECORDS.

PARCEL TWO:

THE SOUTHEASTERLY 35 FEET, MEASURED AT RIGHT ANGLES, OF THAT CERTAIN PARCEL DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERLY LINE OF CHESTNUT STREET WITH THE NORTHWESTERLY LINE OF ASBURY STREET, SAID POINT BEING THE EASTERLY LINE OF LOT 2 IN BLOCK 30, AS STREETS, LOT AND BLOCK ARE SHOWN ON THE MAP ENTITLED "MAP OF UNIVERSITY GROUNDS" FILED AUGUST 25, 1866 IN [BOOK A OF MAPS, PAGE 80](#), SANTA CLARA COUNTY RECORDS; THENCE SOUTH 49° 17' 26" WEST, ALONG SAID NORTHWESTERLY LINE OF ASBURY STREET 186.22 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION THEREOF WITH THE NORTHEASTERLY LINE OF THE LANDS AND RIGHT OF WAY OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY; THENCE SOUTH 57° 04' 30" EAST, ALONG SAID NORTHEASTERLY LINE 72 FEET MORE OR LESS, OR TO THE INTERSECTION THEREOF WITH THE SOUTHEASTERLY LINE OF ASBURY STREET; THENCE NORTH 49° 17' 26" EAST, ALONG SAID SOUTHEASTERLY LINE, 170 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE INTERSECTION THEREOF WITH THE SOUTHWESTERLY LINE OF CHESTNUT STREET; THENCE NORTH 40° 42' WEST, ALONG THE PROJECTED LINE OF CHESTNUT STREET 70.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, AND BEING THAT PORTION OF ASBURY STREET, LYING BETWEEN BLOCKS 29 AND 30, AS SHOWN ON SAID MAP OF UNIVERSITY GROUNDS AND BOUNDED ON THE NORTHEAST BY THE SOUTHWESTERLY LINE OF CHESTNUT STREET AND THE SOUTHWEST BY THE NORTHEASTERLY LINE OF THE LANDS AND RIGHT OF WAY OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY.

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