



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Reuben McKnight, Historic Preservation Officer, Planning and Development Services
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution designating the Epworth LeSourd United Methodist Church as a City
Landmark and placing said property on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places –
December 8, 2015
DATE: November 24, 2015

SUMMARY:

This memorandum provides background information on a request for council resolution to place the following property on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places:

- Epworth LeSourd United Methodist Church (710 South Anderson Street)

On November 18, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to recommend inclusion of the above property on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, based upon written and oral comments received and the eligibility criteria listed in Tacoma Municipal Code 13.07.040.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.

By designating this property as a City Landmark, the City is promoting the preservation of our civic identity and encouraging sustainable development through the reuse of existing structures.

BACKGROUND:

The Epworth LeSourd United Methodist Church was nominated by Tacoma Musical Playhouse, the owner and operator of the building. The building was designed by noted Tacoma George Bullard and constructed in 1926, and is significant as an example of Bullard's designs, the Modified Gothic Revival Style, and as an established neighborhood feature.

This nomination comes at a time when many urban historic places of worship are challenged by declining congregations and deferred maintenance. Preservation of historic churches in Tacoma is a priority. The Tacoma Musical Playhouse intends to obtain a Historic Conditional Use Permit to convert the Epworth LeSourd United Methodist Church into a performing arts venue and educational space, if the historic designation is approved by Council.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission considered this nomination at its meeting on October 14, 2015 and held a Public Hearing on November 18, 2015.

ALTERNATIVES:

If the building is not added to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, future changes to the structure that negatively alter architectural character, including demolition, could take place without the discretionary review of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, provided that all land use and building code requirements were met. In addition, the owner would not be able to use the Historic Conditional Use Permit, and the planned historic adaptive reuse would not occur.



RECOMMENDATION:

Staff concurs with the recommendation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate the above property as a City Landmark, which will help to preserve this important structure for future generations.