



STAFF REPORT – HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMITTEE MEETING

TO: Honorable Chair and Committee Members

FROM: David Loya, Director of Community Development

PREPARER: Delores Freitas, Senior Planner

DATE: April 16, 2026

TITLE: Consider Approving the National Register Application for the Arcata Plaza

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Committee review a report from staff and the application preparer and provide feedback as appropriate, and recommend the application to the City Council.

INTRODUCTION:

The City of Arcata is interested in exploring a national historic register designation for the Arcata Plaza. The Historic Landmarks Committee is being asked to review the updated draft application responding to the edits the committee made in January, and provide feedback to staff and the cultural resources facility staff involved in preparing the application.

DISCUSSION:

The Arcata Plaza has long been recognized as a cultural center of the Arcata community and local is locally designated as an historic resource through General Plan policy outlined in the Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan 2045. As early as 2016, staff and the Historic Landmarks Committee have discussed the potential of pursuing a national landmark designation for the plaza, with the intent of supporting plaza businesses and encouraging historic education through designation of the plaza as a recognized historic resource.

In the past, an application was prepared and reviewed by the committee, but the consensus at the time was that the application was not complete, and not ready to be submitted. In 2025, an informal subcommittee was formed to revisit the application, consisting of one member of the Historic Landmarks Committee (Jeanette Cooper), one member of the Planning Commission (Dan Tangney), and one member of the City Council (Alex Stillman). As a result of this process, an updated application for National Register listing has been prepared by staff at the Cultural Resources Facility at Cal Poly Humboldt, facilitated by Jeanette Cooper.

A member of the Cultural Resources facility team, Patrick O'Rourke, has updated the application based on committee feedback (Attachment A). However, he voiced concerns regarding the direction to omit mention of contributing vs. noncontributing elements, noting he believes this to be a requirement of the process as outlined in relevant National Register Bulletins. He has requested the committee discuss this topic again before moving forward. If the committee wants to move forward

as directed previously, staff can ensure the edits are completed without coming back to the committee, if desired.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. National Register Application Form
- B. Application Exhibits