

Good morning, Chair Ronen and Members of the Committee.

My name is Lydia So and I am honored to be nominated to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission.

I moved to San Francisco from Portland, Oregon in 2000. My daughter and I have been living in the Mission for over 11 years. We enjoy one of the most vibrant, diverse and oldest neighborhoods in San Francisco, everyday we experience the rich history of this city and experience first-hand the dilemma between preservation and transformation.

As an immigrant from Hong Kong, I know what hard work means, Often it requires me as **an immigrant woman to work 500% harder just to demonstrate that I can do the job**. But this is a challenge that I accept and relish because I know that the future will be bright for my daughter and for my community.

I am nominated for Seat 2 of the HPC, which requires a licensed architect who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards. These Standards require either 1 year of graduate study in architectural preservation, American architectural history, preservation planning, or a closely related field; **OR**, at least 1 year of full-time professional experience on historic preservation projects. I meet and exceed these standards. I have much more experience working on historic preservation projects, preparing plans and specifications on historic buildings.

I have worked as a licensed architect for 15 years in San Francisco and nearly 20 years total in architecture. In San Francisco, nearly every building you work on will require interaction with some aspect of the City's historic preservation standards and guidelines if not the Secretary of the Interior's standards. It is a requirement that, as an Architect, I think is invaluable because architecture is fundamentally about creating **spaces that enhance the cultural and social environment**. A city thrives when the built environment blends the old and the new.

I chose a career in architecture because it is one of the few professions that require a combination of creativity and analytics. It is a profession that demands broad knowledge of both social and hard sciences. My course work at the University of Oregon architectural school required that I master not only the technical aspects of design and engineering but also understand history, sociology and psychology. Architecture in my opinion, provides opportunity to create living breathing spaces which lifts the human spirit and enhances **a sense of community**.

I would like to share with the Committee some examples of the work I've done as an architect that demonstrates my experience and knowledge of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

In San Francisco, I was the staff architect on preserving and revitalizing the Historical Baker & Hamilton Building at 601 Townsend Street for over a year. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. I worked meticulously to study and restore this building in accordance to and interpreting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Macromedia, which is now Adobe Headquarters.

In the category of BUILDING FEATURES AND SYSTEMS standards: I studied the site context, building facades, canopies and roof signage from historical footages to identify and interpret the best approach to preserve the character defining features of the building. I worked out the details to re-build in-kind of the roof signage and its support system. Windows and canopies were restored and replaced with custom materials that imitate its original look. The loading dock canopies were restored as canopies for new outdoor seating area.

For BUILDING EXTERIOR & INTERIOR standards: Exterior bricks were restored and repainted to its original color and shape. The original timber frame structures and load-bearing masonry brick walls were seismically upgraded and their features are exposed in the interiors.

For REVERSIBILITY: I designed the new canopy and ramp at entrance with independent support system to minimize impacts to the historic building facade. And should these new addition need to be removed, the facade can be easily reversed back to its original look.

Designing all of these components required me to understand and interpret the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Since I was not the principal of the firm or an attorney, I personally did not present in front of the HPC. It is the staff who prepares the research and materials and that work should not be discounted.

I also held a retail design management position at Apple. Before that, I was Senior Technical Architect Associate at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, where I designed skyscrapers and landmarks. Through my job as an architect at Bohlin, Cywinski, Jackson where I was honored to be involved in the adaptive reuse of the first nine Apple Stores in urban sites. For almost every one of these stores, we had to consider the

impact of a new structure on the surrounding “historical” environment. I was the architect on the first Apple Store on Stockton Street, a project that involved a historic building as well as the Downtown Preservation District, I worked on the Apple Store in SoHo New York, located in a historic Post Office, and the Apple Store on Regent Street in London, the World’s oldest retail shopping street. These projects all required me to apply the Secretary of Interior’s Standards with regards to materiality and storefront window and facade patterns. In 2016 the New York Landmarks Conservancy presented its Chairman’s Award to Apple for their work in adaptive reuse of these historic buildings. I am extremely proud of the work I did in making these historic buildings engaging to the public.

Most recently, as a parent of Presidio Knolls School, I serve on the Master Planning Committee and led the efforts to rehabilitate the rectory building. This building is a contributing structure to the historic landmark building next door, the St. Joseph’s Church building. This work involved applying the Secretary of Interior’s Standards to making decisions about retaining and replacing historic windows, rebuilding the historic cornice and creating a new entrance by interpreting the Standards.

I have worked on other projects with historical buildings throughout this country and in China. I understand that work outside the US might not include applying the Secretary of Interior Standards but I think this experience is important and provides context for the architectural historical work that happens in San Francisco.

As a Chinese American woman, I am so proud that the Chinese community has contributed so much to this city. Chinese helped build San Francisco and my community will continue to play an important role in its future. Fundamental to my culture is a respect for history and tradition while embracing change.

Three years ago I founded, SOLYD, an architectural design company. My work touches on historical site context and exterior treatments. Since I am familiar with the issues at hand, I offer design solutions that meet the requirements and with my client’s approval, creatively adopt plans and designs that are appropriate. Thus far, my projects have not needed to apply for a certificate of appropriateness or any other exceptions from the HPC.

In 2017 I was appointed by our late Mayor Lee to serve on the Arts Commission. My duties are to review and approve the design of all public buildings, to allocate fiscal funding and serve as liaison to MOHCD. I appreciate and have in-depth understanding of the complexities involved to get a building built purposefully. I frequently review civic

projects and urban master planning with historical landmarks as it relates to the history of the artwork work and the architectural elements, including how to appropriately restore them so that they are resilient to natural hazards.

Through my work with the Arts Commission I have been working with local communities to create cultural heritage districts. I worked with TNDC and other projects to ensure that their work complies with the Transgender Cultural District. I worked with project sponsors to ensure that the designs of Eagle Plaza met multiple city departments requirements and was consistent with the LGBTQ Leather District. I led the multiple design review process for Harvey Milk Plaza's redesign with multiple stakeholders, including the City, the CBD and the residents as well ensuring compatibility with the significant and landmark buildings at the Plaza.

This work may not be about architecture and buildings but it is critical to ensuring that the cultural heritage of San Francisco's communities are recognized going forward. The Cultural Heritage District work is incredibly important to me and another way in which I have found to make historic buildings and neighborhoods reflect the communities that live in and around them.

Through my work in San Francisco, as an architect and a Commissioner, I have found my calling to serve our beloved city and represent the women and minority voices that are often excluded in arts, architecture and preservation. When you are trained as a technical architect, as I am, you are trained to work in applying your skills to any and all technical guidelines, including historic preservation and the Secretary of Interior's Standards. I hope that I have demonstrated not only my technical qualifications but that I will bring compassion, advocacy and community representation to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Thank you for your time. I would be honored to serve on the HPC and give back to this city I love, I humbly ask for your support of my nomination.



Architecture/Planning/Interiors

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Tel: 415/863-8881 Fax: 415/863-8879 www.garygee.com

September 9, 2019

Supervisor Hilary Roden, Chair
Rules Committee
Board of Supervisors
City & County of San Francisco
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlet Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Endorsement of Lydia So for her appointment to the SF Historic Commission

Dear Supervisor Roden:

This letter is to express my support of the nomination by Mayor Breed for Lydia So to the San Francisco Historic Commission. Ms. So has served on the board and as the Vice President for the Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAAE). This non-profit organization serves the architectural and engineering (A/E) community creating public procurement opportunities and professional development. She has been a leader at AAAE in developing procurement policies which are presented to various public agencies for future procurement goals and policies. Her valuable contribution has been priceless to our AAAE organization and the A/E community.

As a fellow AAAE board member and practicing architect, I have observed the volunteer commitment and passion Lydia brings to any architectural or community based project. She has the ability to think analytically and critically when researching and listening to various ideas and positions. This skill allows her to identify abstract concepts and community concerns to develop a solution or decision which considers all the valuable and urgent parameters. Recently, she was key in assembling and organizing key note speakers at our annual AAAE dinner for 300 plus attendees.

Lydia also serves on the City of San Francisco Arts Commission and the Presidio Knoll School Master Planning Advisory Committee. These volunteer positions continue to reveal her commitment and passion for volunteer service towards non-profit community based organizations.

I recommend the Rules Committee for the Board of Supervisors approve her nomination to the City of San Francisco Historic Commission.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Gee', with a horizontal line drawn underneath.

Gary Gee, AIA

September 8, 2019

To: Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Rules Committee
Re: Endorsement of Commissioner Lydia So to Historic Preservation Commission

Dear Chair Ronen, Supervisor Mar and Supervisor Walton,

As President of the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC), it is an honor to submit a letter of recommendation for Commissioner Lydia So's consideration to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Since first appointed to the SFAC in 2016, Commissioner So has been an invaluable member of our commission working diligently to champion the arts as essential to daily life, especially in our work to enliven the urban environment.

I have no doubt that Commissioner So would have a tremendous impact in advancing the work of the HPC given her values, commitment and drive. During her tenure on the SFAC, Commissioner So has:

- Served as a member of our Civic Design Review Committee that ensures that civic architecture is at the forefront of design and sustainability. While on the committee, Commissioner So has worked tirelessly alongside her colleagues to conduct a three-phase review process of all new and renovated public construction projects. Leveraging her professional expertise as a licensed architect, Commissioner So has offered creative solutions to complex problems striving to balance and support multiple needs including sustainable design, community input and respect for the cultural context of each project. Commissioner So has also served as the SFAC's liaison to the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development working alongside our staff and community leaders to streamline the process of bringing more affordable housing to underserved and formerly homeless community members.
- Served on our Community Investments Committee that supports San Francisco artists, arts organizations and historically underserved communities through grantmaking. While on this committee, Commissioner So has advocated for the needs of artists and arts organizations representing San Francisco's most marginalized communities. She has made herself accessible to various city-owned cultural centers touring them to better understand how to improve investments and make recommendations based on the unique needs of each neighborhood and community. Commissioner So has also worked to support the art vendor program which certifies artists to sell their work in designated spaces in the city's most visited areas and that adjudicates disputes and violations of policies when they arise.
- Served on our Nominating Committee to elect our commission's leadership. Commissioner So has worked hard to understand and plan for the governance needs of our policy making body, and has worked collaboratively to obtain input from her colleagues prior to making her recommendations to the Commission as a whole.

I have been so impressed by Commissioner So's ability to build strong relationships across our commission. It is through her effective partnership-building that she is able to be such a strong leader. She is fair, respectful, diplomatic and an effective communicator with multiple stakeholders.



September 8, 2019

Rules Committee:

Supervisor Hilary Ronen, Chair

Supervisor Shamann Walton, Vice Chair

Supervisor Gordon Mar, Member

Re: Recommendation in Support of Nomination of Lydia So as Commissioner for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Dear Supervisors Ronen, Supervisor Walton, and Supervisor Mar,

I am writing to share my recommendation and support for the nomination of Lydia So for the Commissioner (architect seat) on the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

Lydia So is a California licensed architect with over 18 years of architecture practice. Lydia understands the critical and often sensitive role that an architect on design projects, especially for historic structures. This was well demonstrated in her projects that involved historic buildings on Regent Street in London, in the Soho in New York City, and the Baker Hamilton Building in San Francisco.

I am the President of the Board of Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAAE), and practicing California licensed Structural Engineer. I have worked alongside Lydia So for the past two years while she served as the Vice President and fellow Board member of the Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAAE). Lydia has shown a strong commitment to the local community through her work with AAAE, which involves outreach and business networking events that target LBE and SBE participation.

Lydia also had a significant contribution in coordinating the participation of the speakers at last year's AAAE annual gala event featuring our keynote speakers from local agencies SFO, SFPUC, SF Office of Resiliency, and Port of San Francisco, to discuss the topic of Resilience for San Francisco.

I feel strongly that Lydia So has the appropriate level of qualifications, the demonstrated care for historic structures, and commitment to our local community to serve as a Commissioner on the Historic Preservation Commission.

Best regards,

Ben Au, S.E.
President of AAAE

Sept 4, 2019

Supervisors of the Rules Committee
Historic Preservation Commission
City of San Francisco

Re: Lydia So Recommendation for Historic Preservation Commission

Dear Supervisors,

I have known Lydia So for the last 3.5 years as she has served on the Arts Commission where I have served as a commissioner for the last 6 years. Lydia and I both sit on the Civic Design Review so I have been working closely with her since she started on the Arts Commission. She is a very experienced and qualified Architect who is dedicated to the quality of life and environment in our City. I have found her to be very thorough and diplomatic at all times. She listens very carefully and asks strong meaningful questions during our meetings. She has a very respectful approach which allows her to make sure that her questions are fully answered and not deterred. She has been the Arts Commission representative to MOHCD, working diplomatically with that Dept. Lydia works hard to ensure that all voices have been heard before decisions are made. I know well the technical training and experience that she had at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM). When she was first appointed to the Arts Commission, I asked the Partners at SOM about her, and they all had glowing recommendations.

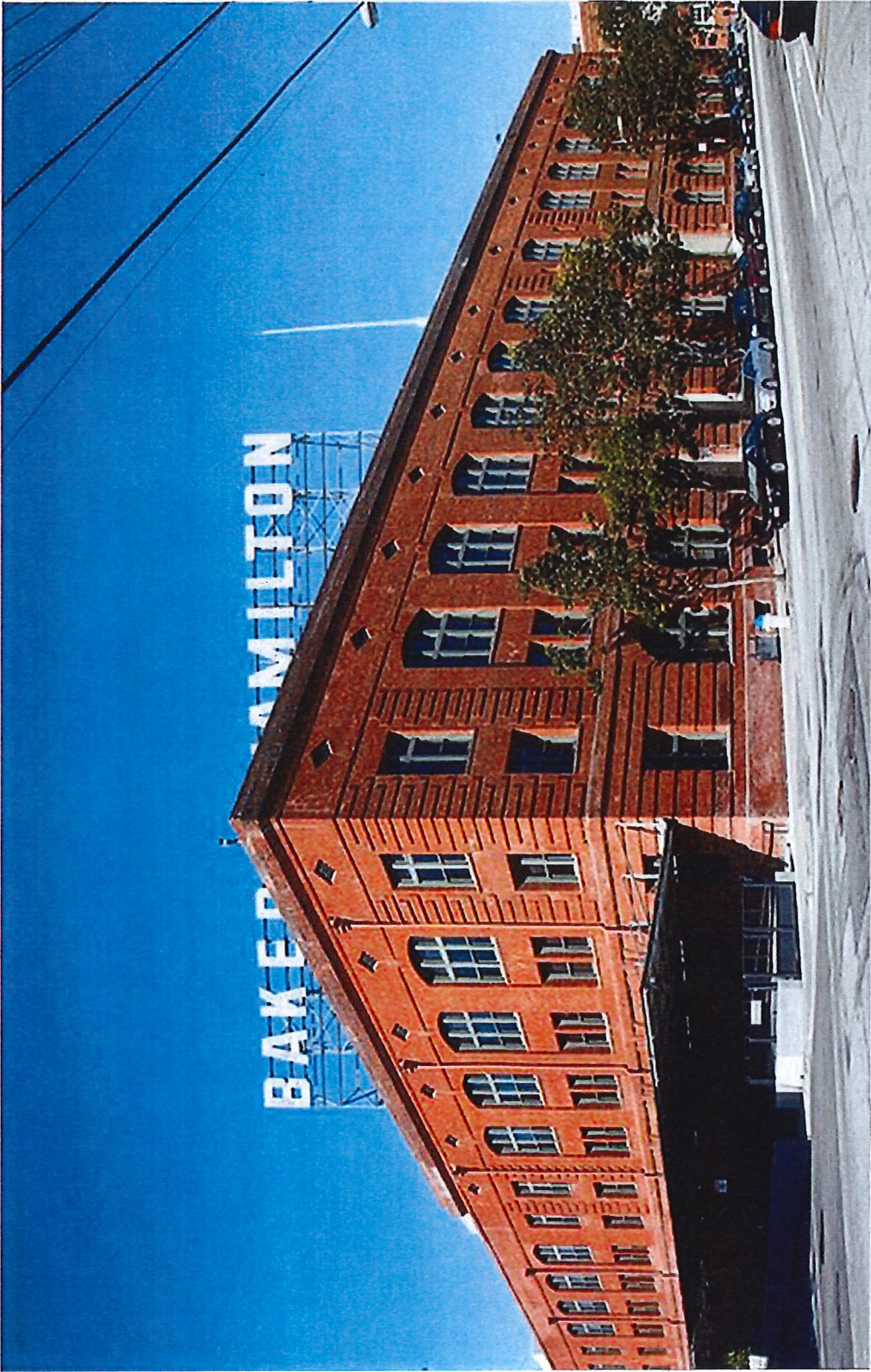
Personally, I have enjoyed getting to know her and admire her giving personality and strong work ethic. I do have to say that I will be extremely disappointed to have her leave the Arts Commission. However, I do recommend her wholeheartedly. I feel she can help to streamline the review process on projects that are jointly evaluated by both Historic Preservation and Civic Design Review.

Yours truly,



Abby Sadin Schnair

Cc: Supervisor Hillary Ronen, Rules Committee Chair
Supervisor Gordon Mar
Supervisor Shamann Walton
Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board
Kanishka Cheng, Mayors Director of Commission Affairs
Amy Beinart, Legislative Aid to Supervisor Ronen













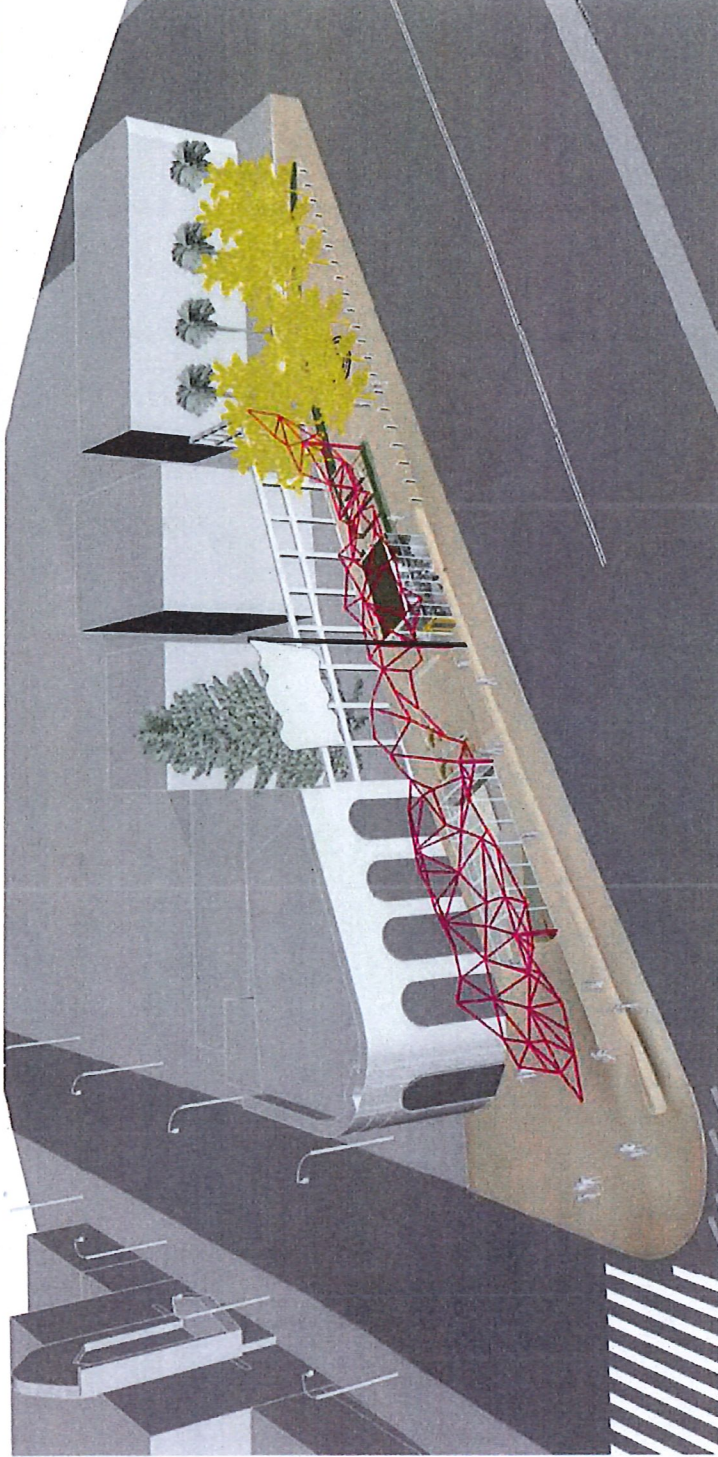
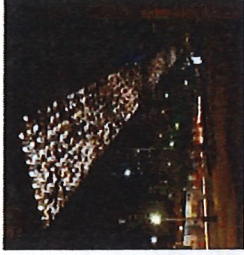


Concept Redesign

Freeform Canopy Framework

Aerial View

- Light, steel canopy framework
- Canopy framework supports commissioned art
- Minimal vertical structure
- Independent glass protection for escalator
- Security gate at stair entry to Castro Station (top & bottom)
- Simplified ground plane



September 8, 2019

To: Members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Rules Committee
Re: Endorsement of Commissioner Lydia So to Historic Preservation Commission

Dear Chair Ronen, Supervisor Mar and Supervisor Walton,

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I have no doubt that Commissioner So would have a tremendous impact in advancing the work of the HPC given her values, commitment and drive. During her tenure on the SFAC, Commissioner So has:

- Served as a member of our Civic Design Review Committee that ensures that civic architecture is at the forefront of design and sustainability. While on the committee, Commissioner So has worked tirelessly alongside her colleagues to conduct a three-phase review process of all new and renovated public construction projects. Leveraging her professional expertise as a licensed architect, Commissioner So has offered creative solutions to complex problems striving to balance and support multiple needs including sustainable design, community input and respect for the cultural context of each project. Commissioner So has also served as the SFAC's liaison to the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development working alongside our staff and community leaders to streamline the process of bringing more affordable housing to underserved and formerly homeless community members.
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I have been so impressed by Commissioner So's ability to build strong relationships across our commission. It is through her effective partnership-building that she is able to be such a strong leader. She is fair, respectful, diplomatic and an effective communicator with multiple stakeholders.

She is able to bridge ideas and solutions among a wide array of individuals including engineers, lawyers, planners, community leaders and contractors.

Commissioner So also demonstrates a deep commitment to racial equity, working alongside her colleagues, our staff, Director and myself to ensure that we were the first city department to adopt a racial equity statement and plan. Commissioner So also has also worked to make sure that women architects and engineers of various projects have a "seat at the table" to ensure that their voices and perspectives are taken into account in planning and problem solving.

Finally, Commissioner So's vast experience in reviewing infrastructure in Cultural Districts and Cultural Heritage Districts will be of great value as she works with her colleagues on the HPC to address complex design issues and to carry out historic preservation goals, policies and programs.

Although we would be incredibly sad to lose Commissioner So's service to the SFAC, I know that it will be a significant gain both to the City and County of San Francisco and the HPC to have Commissioner So serve in this new capacity. We look forward to working with her in this new role alongside her colleagues should her appointment be approved.

With much respect, I urge you to approve Mayor London Breed's nomination for appointment of Commissioner Lydia So to the Historic Preservation Commission.

With much appreciation for your consideration,

Roberto Ordeñana
President
San Francisco Arts Commission



September 8, 2019

Rules Committee:

Supervisor Hilary Ronen, Chair

Supervisor Shamann Walton, Vice Chair

Supervisor Gordon Mar, Member

Re: Recommendation in Support of Nomination of Lydia So as Commissioner for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Dear Supervisors Ronen, Supervisor Walton, and Supervisor Mar,

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I am the President of the Board of Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAAE), and practicing California licensed Structural Engineer. I have worked alongside Lydia So for the past two years while she served as the Vice President and fellow Board member of the Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAAE). Lydia has shown a strong commitment to the local community through her work with AAAE, which involves outreach and business networking events that target LBE and SBE participation.

Lydia also had a significant contribution in coordinating the participation of the speakers at last year's AAAE annual gala event featuring our keynote speakers from local agencies SFO, SFPUC, SF Office of Resiliency, and Port of San Francisco, to discuss the topic of Resilience for San Francisco.

I feel strongly that Lydia So has the appropriate level of qualifications, the demonstrated care for historic structures, and commitment to our local community to serve as a Commissioner on the Historic Preservation Commission.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben H. Au". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ben Au, S.E.
President of AAAE

Sept 4, 2019

Supervisors of the Rules Committee
Historic Preservation Commission
City of San Francisco

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Cc: Supervisor Hillary Ronen, Rules Committee Chair
Supervisor Gordon Mar
Supervisor Shamann Walton
Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board
Kanishka Cheng, Mayors Director of Commission Affairs
Amy Beinart, Legislative Aid to Supervisor Ronen


Young, Victor (BOS)

From: Somera, Alisa (BOS)
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2019 10:39 AM
To: Young, Victor (BOS)
Cc: Calvillo, Angela (BOS)
Subject: FW: Support for Lydia So

Victor... For 190864

Alisa Somera

Legislative Deputy Director
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102
415.554.7711 direct | 415.554.5163 fax
alisa.somera@sfgov.org

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**From:** Sarah White <[swhite@tndc.org](mailto:swhite@tndc.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 9, 2019 10:11 AM  
**To:** Calvillo, Angela (BOS) <[angela.calvillo@sfgov.org](mailto:angela.calvillo@sfgov.org)>  
**Cc:** [lydia@meetsolyd.com](mailto:lydia@meetsolyd.com)  
**Subject:** Support for Lydia So

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear Clerk Calvillio:

Hello, my name is Sarah White, I am Associate Director of Hosing Development with TNDC, and I am writing to support Lydia So's nomination to the Historic Preservation Commission. I've come to know Lydia through her work with the Arts Commission, and I most recently worked with her on an architect

selection process for a property we are developing in the Compton's Transgender Cultural District. In my interactions with Lydia, I've always been impressed with her technical skill in reviewing the proposals before her, but what has really stood out to me is her leadership skills- she is diplomatic, thoughtful, and I know she will listen to perspectives of all parties involved, balance competing interests, and build consensus around policies that will best serve San Francisco.

Lydia is committed to the city's goals to protect our heritage while ensuring that preservation is used as a tool to promote growth, revitalization, and the appreciation of our diverse neighborhoods. I think her knowledge and experience will meaningfully enhance this commission and I encourage you to approve her appointment.

Thank you,  
Sarah White

Sent from my iPhone

September 8, 2019

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President  
San Francisco Arts Commission





September 8, 2019

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Supervisor Shamann Walton, Vice Chair

Supervisor Gorden Mar, Member

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