



CITY of CALABASAS

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT**  
**MAY 1, 2024**

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**TO:** Members of the Historic Preservation Commission

**FROM:** Tom Bartlett, AICP, City Planner

**SUBJECT:** Follow-up Regarding Heritage Oak Trees in Old Town Calabasas.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Discuss conceptual proposal to install several informational panels about nearby heritage oaks in relation to various national, state, and local historical milestones; and, provide recommendations to staff.

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**BACKGROUND:**

Members of the Commission recently expressed interest in installing several informational markers to recognize the two heritage oak trees located on the Leonis Adobe Plaza property (address: 23556 Calabasas Road). The concept is to place several panels along the outer edge of the southern public sidewalk, at a location roughly midway between the two plaza buildings.

At the Commission's meeting on August 2, 2023, Staff provided information about the trees and the concept of installing several informational plaques or sign panels. The informational panels would identify and recognize the two massive trees (one Coast Live Oak and one Valley Oak), along with brief synopses of key periods and events in associated human / cultural history. The Commission requested that the fullest extent of applicable human habitation be represented, to include native peoples. A key next step mentioned at the time was consultation with the Leonis Adobe Association because the Association is the landowner. Staff agreed to consult the City's Public Works Department as well.



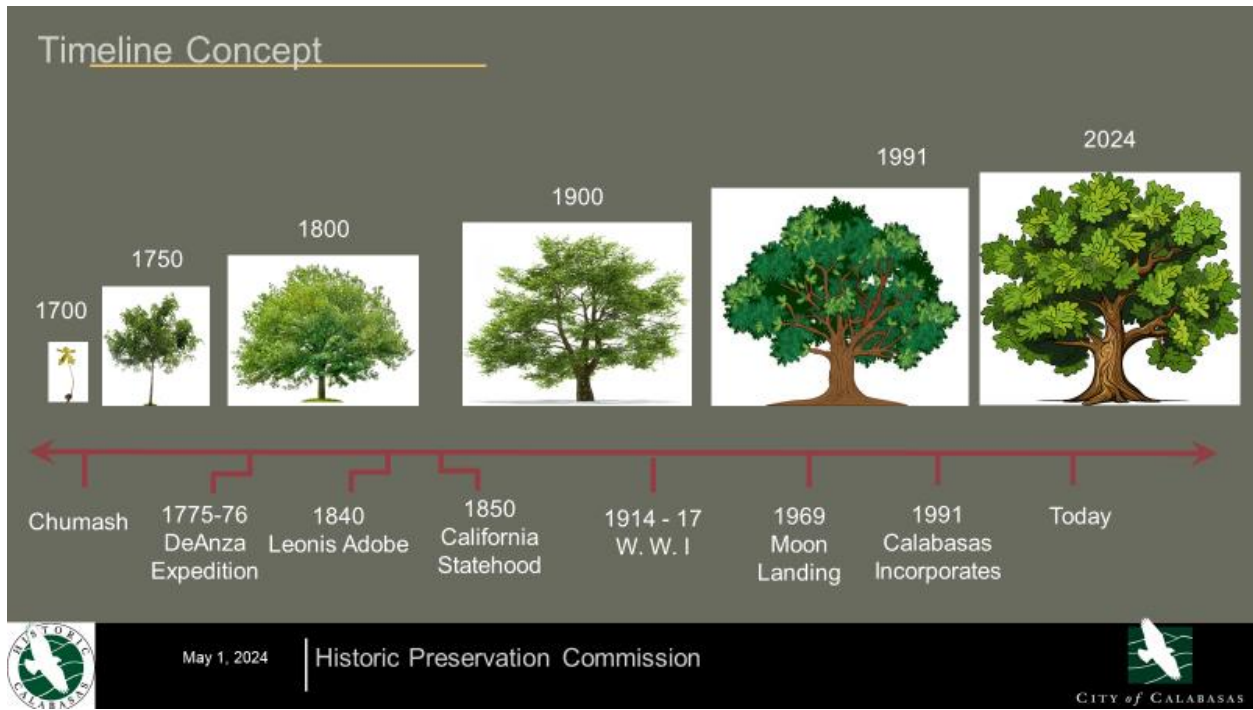
*This location offers the best vantage point while also avoiding impacts to pedestrians.*

### **STATUS UPDATE:**

Two or three panels are envisioned at the location shown in the illustration above. Planning Staff consulted with the City's Department of Public Works about possible use of the sidewalk at this location because the sidewalk is substantially wider and the markers would not impede the ADA path of travel. The Public Works Department is preliminarily supportive of the effort.

Although the informational panels would be installed within the public right-of-way, it is important to consult with the Leonis Adobe Association because the Association owns the property where the two oak trees are located. Preliminary feedback from the Association has been positive.

An illustrated timeline is envisioned for at least one panel. As previously discussed, the timeline would include basic information about the oak trees, as well as identifying various historical events and milestones. (See example on the following page.)



Pertinent illustrations and photographs could also be incorporated, such as the one below.



The recommended style is shown below – a cantilevered profile with two simple front-side posts and an angled resin panel face.

The contemporary design accomplishes two things:

1. Instead of taking on characteristics consistent with the 'old west' theme, the design disregards the Old Town Calabasas aesthetic. This allows passers-by to readily 'erase' the sign panels from their visual perspective of Old Town. The 'mind's eye' instantly recognizes the incongruence and ignores the sign panels in regard to the Old Town Calabasas backdrop. Persons approaching the sign panels would recognize them as a source of information, and would not perceive them to be integral to the surrounding landscape. (This aligns with the preferred approach for additions to historic structures, per the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines.)
2. With only two posts at the front side, and the panel face tilted away, toward the back, the sign panels could be installed easily along the sidewalk edge.



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