



KATHY HOCHUL  
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID  
Commissioner

**AGENCY DECISION  
AND STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

**Adoption and Implementation of the State Historic Preservation Plan**

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has prepared a Final State Historic Preservation Plan and Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) and issued a notice of completion on December 8, 2021.

By the authority vested in me by State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Law, I do hereby adopt the Final State Historic Preservation Plan/FGEIS.

This decision represents certification of the attached Findings Statement prepared in accordance with the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617.11, the regulations implementing Article 8 of Environmental Conservation Law - the State Environmental Quality Review Act. My decision is based on the Findings Statement and the content of the Final State Historic Preservation Plan/FGEIS.

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Erik Kulleseid  
Commissioner  
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

12/20/21

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW FINDINGS STATEMENT

December 20, 2021

Pursuant to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act – SEQRA) of the Environmental Conservation Law and 6 NYCRR Part 617, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), as the lead agency, makes the following findings. These findings consider the relevant environmental impacts, facts and conclusions disclosed in the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS); weigh and balance relevant environmental impacts with social, economic and other considerations and provide a rationale for the agency's decision.

**Name of Action:** State Historic Preservation Plan

**Description of Action:** Adoption and Implementation of the State Historic Preservation Plan

**Location:** Statewide

**Agency Jurisdiction:** Lead Agency under SEQRA  
New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law

**Final State Historic Preservation Plan/Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS)**  
**Filed:** December 20, 2021

### Findings:

1. The 2021-2026 New York State Historic Preservation Plan (Plan) was subject to a Generic Environmental Impact Statement process including a draft scoping document with public comment period and Draft GEIS with public meeting (webinar) and a public comment period.
2. Chapter 10 of the Final State Historic Preservation Plan/FGEIS contains the agency's responses to comments received on the Draft Plan/Draft GEIS.
3. The Final Plan guides preservation efforts at the local, regional and state levels. It serves as a blueprint for identifying and preserving New York's historic and cultural resources and is periodically updated to address current needs, issues, and opportunities. The Plan details resources that have the potential to support preservation and community development efforts. The Plan aims to further preservation activities by outlining a broad set of goals and objectives combined with specific strategies. The Final Plan/FGEIS can be found at: <https://parks.ny.gov/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>.
4. The preparation and implementation of a statewide historic preservation plan by the State Historic Preservation Officer is mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470) and necessary for New York State to receive appropriations from the federal Historic Preservation Fund. This function is housed in the OPRHP Division for Historic Preservation (DHP)/State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). OPRHP is the only state agency with the statutory responsibility to prepare the Plan.
5. The mission of the New York State Division for Historic Preservation is: *to create meaningful connections to the dynamic history of the state for all residents and visitors. Our commitment is to protect historic and cultural resources. The division strives to raise awareness of the value of*

*historic places for future generations and to expand the complex narratives in order to tell a more complete story that represents the diversity of the state's people, both past and present.*

6. The Plan was developed through a broad outreach effort and written for all preservation advocates and stakeholders in New York: historic property owners, museum guests and directors, historical societies, local and regional governments, Certified Local Governments, trade schools, nonprofits, libraries, the diverse array of architecture, design, real estate, planning, finance and preservation professionals, and people that visit and celebrate the historic and cultural spaces throughout the state and share what they learn with their communities.
7. The DHP maintains an inventory of New York's historic and cultural resources. These resources include archaeological sites, landscapes, traditional cultural properties, burial grounds and cemeteries, transportation resources, engineering landmarks, commercial and residential properties, farmsteads, houses of worship, schools, civic buildings, industrial complexes, and many more. The inventory includes more than 348,721 entries. Of these, 325,322 represent non-archaeological resources such as buildings, structures, sites, and objects. The remaining 23,399 entries represent archaeological sites and submerged resources. Within the state, there are 6,270 National Register of Historic Places listings, representing 120,000+ resources, including individually listed properties and resources in historic districts.
8. The DHP's flagship online resource is the New York State Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), which contains the inventory and supplies individuals and communities with information and tools to support the preservation and revitalization of New York State's rich heritage and culture.
9. The environmental setting for the Plan consists of the people and the natural, recreational, scenic, historic and cultural resources of New York State, as well as social and economic characteristics. The setting also includes the general public (residents and nonresidents) and preservation advocates and professionals. Resource categories that are likely to be impacted from implementation of the Plan include archaeological, historic, and cultural resources and community character.
10. The no action alternative was examined in the FGEIS. As the preparation and implementation of a statewide historic preservation plan by the State Historic Preservation Officer is mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470) and necessary for New York State to receive appropriations from the federal Historic Preservation Fund, this alternative is not a viable option. Also, not preparing the Plan would mean that there would be no statewide guidance based on current data of historical and cultural resources. Future implementation based on the previous Plan would not be responding to changing resource needs or based on updated goals and objectives. Failure by the agency to implement the Plan may result in the loss of opportunities to strengthen preservation efforts across the state, and adverse impacts to the historical and cultural resource environment could occur.
11. During the planning and development of the Plan, there was extensive outreach to the public and professionals in the field including a video presentation with feedback option, multiple questionnaires and surveys, personal interviews, and small group consultations. These interactions provided comprehensive input into the development of the Plan's goals and objectives.
12. The vision for preservation in New York State is that residents and visitors will be more aware of and appreciate the many narratives and cultural traditions that have shaped New York's natural and built environment; that they will understand the importance of preserving and interpreting the places where history happened; and that they will recognize the significant role New York and its people continue to play in the forming of America.

13. The goals of the Plan are presented under eight broad topics: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA); Survey and Designation; Economic Development and Recovery; Environmental Sustainability; Disaster Planning and Resiliency; Local Preservation; Partnerships; and Public Outreach and Education. The topics and associated goals reflect major issues and provide a larger context for enhancing existing preservation programs and activities across the state.
14. The 2021-26 Plan's topics, goals, and objectives are comprehensive and consistent with the state's desire to protect and preserve its cultural, archaeological, and historic resources and environment. They also provide enjoyable educational and interpretive opportunities, while enhancing the public's safety and welfare. Resource protection is balanced with other goals to achieve optimal levels of preservation services and programs.
15. For the Plan to be implemented, local, regional, and state level entities must develop strategies, translating topics, goals, and objectives into the delivery of preservation programs, policies, and services for the protection of cultural, archaeological, and historic resources. Implementation vehicles include private, local, state, and federal funding, such as the allocation of funds for preservation, education, and interpretation projects. Implementation will also require the development and enhancement of partnerships, particularly relating to improving cooperation and coordination in resource stewardship, protection, and promotion between all levels of government and the private sector. These partnerships play an increasingly important role in leveraging existing resources and talents, identifying new opportunities for preservation, and continuing thoughtful celebration and stewardship of the state's cultural heritage
16. Impacts associated with the implementation of the Plan and mitigation measures identified include the following:
  - The Plan aims to ensure activities dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage recognize and champion the responsibility to uphold and progress the principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access. Multiple positive benefits will be realized from this such as: ensuring that a wider diversity of the public and stakeholders are involved with, and have access to, cultural heritage programs; incorporating a larger and more diverse representation of communities and histories in programming; and protecting and expanding documentation of physical historic and cultural resources and enhancing meaningful connections to these resources, strengthening the sense of place and community character.
  - The goals and objectives related to surveying and designations will likely have indirect beneficial impacts to the historic preservation community, local communities, and resources. By gathering more data and better understanding existing resources, collaborating, managing resource information via online databases, and expanding the breadth of input from communities, analysis and planning for the future of heritage resources can be done in a more comprehensive, diverse, and inclusive manner.
  - Integrating historic preservation and cultural resource management efforts with economic development practices and policies by promoting awareness of, expanding training on, and strengthening preservation incentives will go a long way to increasing preservation efforts at all levels, including private landowners and businessowners, local community groups, municipalities and more. Expanding financial incentives for preservation of agricultural buildings and having municipalities adopt property tax incentives that benefit property owners who make substantial investments in historic resources could benefit both urban and rural communities. Reinvesting in existing built resources is generally considered a benefit to the environment.
  - Creating new programming, services, and place-based recreation opportunities at historic sites or within legacy communities can help bolster interest from new audiences and potentially create new jobs and sources of revenue. Any potential physical disturbance in



the form of developing new recreational facilities at these sites that may impact cultural resources will likely require consultation with the DHP. Projects should provide for the long-term protection of the cultural resources and any natural resources that may be impacted. This is accomplished through site specific review and coordination with appropriate resource and permitting agencies.

- The Plan aims to improve understanding of the effects of environmental change on cultural resources and implement energy-conscious practices in the stewardship and management of resources to promote just environmental and public health outcomes. Implementing such actions will increase the sustainability of historic resources and the communities in which they are located. Reducing our gas and carbon footprint can have a positive impact on the natural environment, bring greater sustainability to our cultural resources, and ideally result in cost-savings. Integrating sustainability measures into policy mechanisms, such as funding opportunities and tax assessment relief, and into building codes, to establish performance-based efficiency standards for historic structures, will more consistently and thoroughly ensure energy efficiencies are assimilated into preservation projects.
- The creation of a hazard mitigation, preparedness, recovery, and resiliency plan that considers impacts to historic and cultural resources will directly and indirectly help promote preparedness and resiliency in structures, services, and programming in light of potential disasters. A more connected and coordinated approach for development of recovery plans, and post-disaster assessment and treatment of damaged resources, will serve better to protect the hardscape resources and the communities they are in. Training and public outreach and education to promote protection and appropriate treatment of heritage resources, raising awareness about mitigation, response, and recovery tactics, and publicizing resiliency and recovery plans will strengthen the resolve and abilities of communities to respond to and engage in these efforts.
- Empowering and strengthening the process of preservation at the municipal, county, and regional levels by encouraging and offering expanded historic preservation services, activities, and collaboration will provide further protection to cultural resources, services, and programs. As people gain an appreciation for their local resources, they are more likely to be engaged and advocate for these resources. Adopting and incorporating preservation laws into local governments and policies will further empower the preservation process and ingrain it in local community undertakings.
- By strengthening existing partnerships and seeking new community partnerships, long-term support for historic and cultural resources can be nurtured. New training and educational opportunities provided in a variety of forms and platforms will encourage more meaningful and in-depth communication and coordination among various groups and stakeholders. Strengthening relationships with community groups whose work seeks to keep preservation relevant to sustainability issues (e. g., climate change, social justice) will provide more resilient communities, programs, and physical historic resources and enhance community character.
- Expanding public outreach and education initiatives will help to break down barriers to information and bring awareness about preservation to underrepresented and/or previously excluded communities to allow for more diverse public engagement. This may result in new insights into, and resources for, preservation activities at a local community level. A concerted effort to share information about preservation tools and best practices to more audiences, providing education workshops and training opportunities, and promoting participation in preservation conferences and workshops expands the diversity of the audience and can strengthen the preservation community and local communities' skills necessary for sustainable preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic structures.

17. The State Historic Preservation Plan was reviewed for consistency with coastal policies under the New York Coastal Management Program. The Plan advances the state coastal policy regarding historic resources: protect, enhance, and restore structures, districts, areas, or sites that are of significance in the history, architecture, archaeology, or culture of the state, its communities, or the nation.
18. The cumulative effects of applying the goals and objectives of the Plan in a systematic manner will be substantially beneficial. Existing preservation services to the public will be maintained and likely enhanced and expanded, while protection of cultural, archaeological, and historic resources will be ensured. The implementation of preservation, education, and interpretation programs recommended in the Plan substantially enhances the physical and psychological wellbeing—the quality of life—of the state’s residents and visitors.
19. Enhancing the quality and quantity of preservation services and programs has substantial beneficial effects on economic activity. Implementation of efficiently designed plans for community preservation and restoration often contributes to the attractiveness of a municipality for investment by businesses. Thus, the facilities and programs impacted by the Plan are an important adjunct to factors leading to economic recovery and development. In New York State, these existing and established centers generally stabilize existing investments and services.
20. Implementation of the Plan will promote reduced energy consumption in the provision of programs, services, and in the physical activities associated with preservation work.
21. Applying the goals and objectives of the Plan to the development of preservation services and programs requires a commitment of planning resources. Resources are committed to preservation activities through a variety of funding sources including state or federal legislative action, gift, grants, fundraising, or other opportunities. The Plan can help to determine the priority for use of these committed resources. Implementation of the objectives defined in the Plan will result in irreversible and irretrievable commitments of time, funds, and energy resources; but, overall, the benefits of preservation, stewardship, and providing interpretive and educational opportunities outweigh these commitments.
22. Since the Plan is a general plan, identification of program-specific or site-specific adverse impacts, including those which are unavoidable, will be accomplished during future planning and environmental review of specific programs and projects at a more local or regional level.

**Certification To Approve/Fund/Undertake:**

Having considered the Draft and Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement and having considered the preceding written facts and conclusions relied on to meet the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617.11, this Statement of Findings certifies that:

- The requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met; and
- Consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives available, the action is one that avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and that adverse environmental impacts will be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigative measures that were identified as practicable; and
- Consistent with the applicable policies of Article 42 of the Executive Law, as implemented by 19 NYCRR Part 600.5, this action will achieve a balance between the protection of the environment and the need to accommodate social and economic considerations.

Erik Kulleseid

Commissioner

Print or Type Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

Title of Responsible Officer



Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency

12/20/21

Date