

DRAFT SHPP 2021-26 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The New York State Historic Preservation Plan (SHPP) helps guide 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.

Intended outcomes of the SHPP are 1) to improve historic and cultural resource stewardship and protection, and 2) to help realize the larger vision for preservation in New York State: 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; will understand the importance of preserving and interpreting the places where history happened; and will recognize the significant role New York and its people continue to play in the forming of America.

Every five years, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Division for Historic Preservation (DHP)—which includes the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)—prepares the SHPP to provide policy direction and fulfill its mandate by the National Park Service for states to prepare this document for continued receipt of federal Historic Preservation Fund grant monies.

Process

Statewide plans are the product of collaboration within OPRHP and broad-based professional, partner, and public involvement from across the State. All OPRHP-led public engagement opportunities are designed to be open and accessible, inclusive, and meaningful in order to obtain relevant and timely input for plan development.

The SHPP's value lies in how it is used by a wide range of constituents—including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, developers, architects, homeowners, preservationists, and Native American tribal communities—to improve and protect the State's historic and cultural resources. To better understand the State's historic and cultural resource needs over the next five years, establish priorities for collective action over the next five years, and create an overall vision for preservation and cultural resource management in New York State, OPRHP has:

- collected more than 3,500 complete responses to a survey designed to solicit input from the general public in all 62 counties of the state on familiarity with historic resources, current issues, opportunities, and priorities for preservation and cultural resource management in the next five years;
- analyzed more than 800 responses to a survey of historic preservation professionals, colleagues, advocates, and stakeholders in all 62 counties of the state;
- surveyed State Historic Site Managers and State Historic Site Friends Groups;
- conducted more than 25 personal interviews with individuals/groups in New York State identified by nonprofit colleagues as having perspectives or interests historically underrepresented in preservation work and advocacy; as well as,
- undertaken other outreach efforts, as detailed in the final SHPP document.

Through this collaborative planning effort, a comprehensive list of preservation goals with discrete and ambitious, yet obtainable, objectives was developed. These goals and objectives are responsive to local,

regional, and statewide needs and priorities; they reflect an understanding of the diversity and complexity of preservation challenges across New York State.

Goals and Objectives

The SHPP's goals are presented under eight broad topics. These topics reflect overarching themes OPRHP encountered throughout the planning process—in public surveys, one-on-one interviews, colleague conversations, and other outreach efforts—and are illustrative of ongoing challenges preservation advocates and professionals encounter today, as well as those the field is likely to encounter in the years ahead.

Each topic has at least one goal statement. Goal statements are preceded by a series of objectives, which are measurable actions that will help to achieve the goal. Many objectives are cross-listed under other topics, emphasizing the interconnected, multidisciplinary qualities of historic preservation and cultural heritage. Plan objectives cut across topics and encourage collaboration and collective action in their implementation.

The eight topics and their associated goals are as follows. The multitude of objectives under each goal can be reviewed in the final SHPP document.

TOPIC: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA)

GOAL: 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.

TOPIC: Survey and Designation

GOAL (A): Assist in planning for the continued use and preservation of heritage resources for the benefit of future New Yorkers.

GOAL (B): Guide survey and designation efforts into a more collaborative dynamic process that ensures the stories of all people, past and present, are told and that cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is recognized.

TOPIC: Economic Development and Recovery

GOAL: Integrate historic preservation and cultural resource management efforts with economic development practices and policies to ensure resources are recognized as indispensable attributes of a competitive, sustainable, and equitable future.

TOPIC: Environmental Sustainability

GOAL: 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.

TOPIC: Disaster Planning and Resiliency

GOAL: Foster resiliency by creating the capacity to successfully respond to and mitigate the impacts of geological, weather-related, hydrological, fire-related, biological, and other disasters through the creation of a hazard mitigation, preparedness, recovery, and resiliency plan that considers impacts to historic and cultural resources.

TOPIC: Local Preservation

GOAL: Empower and strengthen the process of preservation at the municipal, county, and regional levels by encouraging and offering expanded historic preservation services, activities, and collaboration.

TOPIC: Partnerships

GOAL (A): Seek new community partnerships by forming relationships with individuals and groups to encourage resource awareness, appreciation, and protection in areas where preservation initiatives are lacking.

GOAL (B): Strengthen existing partnerships to encourage best practices in the field and support colleagues in growing and strengthening their local, regional, and statewide relationships and networks.

TOPIC: Public Outreach and Education

GOAL: Expand public outreach and education initiatives to strengthen, empower, and create meaningful dialogue between traditional preservation partners (preservation advocates, community stakeholders, and units of government) and the public to advance the shared values of the community at large.

Implementation

The SHPP is a shared guidance document intended to coordinate the efforts of preservationists across New York State in meeting local, regional, and statewide cultural, archaeological, and historic resource needs. It is meant to inspire successful collaborations across the state so that all New Yorkers can realize the benefits of historic preservation, to safeguard the resources that are meaningful to individual communities, and to support these efforts in whatever way is appropriate for them. In a state as large as New York, priorities will vary across geographic and political boundaries, and the DHP can help with prioritization processes.

Implementation vehicles include private, local, state, and federal funding, such as the allocation of funds for preservation, education, and interpretation projects. The reality that a full recovery from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic will take the lifespan of the SHPP (if not longer) complicates its implementation. The preservation community has, however, demonstrated time and time again resilience, resourcefulness, and creativity in challenging times and in the face of adversity. To overcome the hardships wrought by COVID-19 on the cultural heritage community, preservationists must deliberately strategize ways to sustainably deliver programs, policies, and services that support preservation activities despite ongoing public safety issues and concerns about the availability of funding. The pursuit and strengthening of partnerships will be fundamental to this recovery and implementation effort.

The SHPP goals and objectives will be revisited annually and progress assessed in several forums, including at the State Historic Preservation Conference, an annual event hosted by The Landmark Society of Western New York, the Preservation League of New York State, and OPRHP. The quarterly meetings of the State Historic Preservation Review Board may serve as a second forum in which to evaluate Plan progress and update strategies for implementation. Preservation partners across New York are also encouraged to create their own opportunities for evaluating SHPP goals and objectives, such as regular and regional colleague gatherings, community meetings, and other discussion events.

Funding

While the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted many parts of our lives, its financial toll on all preservation-related sectors of the economy has been significant. Thoughtful strategy building is necessary to remedy these difficult circumstances and may involve collaborative partnerships, affiliations, mergers, and other tactics to bolster or build a financial organization plan that will potentially overcome significant funding lapses.

The availability of funding for preservation and related initiatives will determine the pace and sequencing of actions recommended in this Plan. Funding availability is often defined by the size of an agency or organization's annual capital budget, the availability of staff, and the need to balance investments throughout its service region. While there are many statewide and regional funding initiatives available to preservation-related groups, organizations, and individuals, the production of a comprehensive list of funding sources is complicated by frequent changes and market volatility. Therefore, it is always advisable to think creatively and broadly when searching for funding sources to help implement Plan goals. In the final planning document, a list of active funding sources that may assist in the implementation of SHPP goals and objectives is provided. This list is not meant to be exhaustive or complete.

Environmental Impacts

The State Historic Preservation Plan (SHPP) document constitutes a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). The primary effect of the SHPP is to promote the topics, goals, and objectives identified within the Plan. Implementation of the SHPP will generally have a positive impact on the environment, specifically, regarding the protection of cultural, archaeological, and historic resources and enhancing and expanding preservation services to the public. The implementation of preservation, education, and interpretation programs recommended in the SHPP substantially enhances the physical and psychological wellbeing—the quality of life—of the state's residents and visitors. Additionally, enhancing the quality and quantity of preservation services and programs has substantial beneficial effects on economic activity.

Conclusion

New Yorkers across the state endeavor to protect and celebrate their rich heritage and care for the diverse range of places that make up the historic fabric of the state. These places are the focus of state and local pride and identity and are valuable assets that contribute to improving and reinvigorating our communities in significant and sustainable ways. This plan has been prepared to help all New Yorkers identify, preserve, enhance, and promote the state's historic and cultural properties as well as achieve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits associated with historic preservation. The Plan is based on the premise that preservation is in New York's best interests; it is a powerful yet underutilized community revitalization strategy that should be an integral part of the state's development and growth.

The goals and recommendations for action in this plan have been carefully considered. The objectives of the plan are accessible to all interested persons: the objectives are written so that any person—regardless of professional title, organizational affiliation, technical skill set or training—can support the Plan and envision a role for themselves in its implementation. Together, a more complex, multifaceted consortium of preservation stakeholders and partners can realize the thoughtful, exciting vision for cultural resource and heritage preservation in New York State in the years ahead.