



The Local Landmarker

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On the Cover: Kleinhan's Music Hall, Symphony Circle, Buffalo. Opened in 1940, this National Historic Landmark was designed by Eero Saarinen. It is the home of the Buffalo Symphony and a venue for many concerts and events. A landmark of Modern architecture, it sits on Symphony Circle, a recently restored street feature of Frederick Law Olmsted's plan for Buffalo. This building as well as other masterpieces of American architecture will be highlighted in this year's National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference, October 19-22.

From the Coordinator

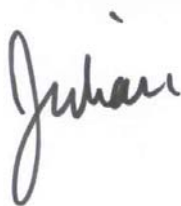
This issue

This issue of the *Landmarker* addresses the topic of Preservation Plans, and was written by one of our in-house preservation planners, Amy Facca. Amy prepared our own [Historic Preservation at a Crossroads: The 2009-2013 New York State Historic Preservation Plan](#) and has a great deal of experience working on plans and preservation issues with municipalities and organizations.

Preservation plans can help in allowing a community be more proactive about historic preservation opportunities and challenges. They can also help to continue the work of a local preservation commission as well as the work of the entire municipality in recognizing preservation as a tool for community pride and revitalization, as a sustainable activity, and an official policy of a municipality. It can act as a guidepost for decisions made both at the scale of a commission's individual Certificate of Appropriateness application review or a city's major investment in infrastructure and direction for its future.

National Trust Conference

There is still time to register for the National Trust for Historic Preservation's annual conference, held this year in Buffalo, October 19-22. There are very rich offerings directed towards local preservation programs as well as excellent and exciting tours of Buffalo's amazing architectural heritage which is on par with any city in the United States. You can look over the preliminary program at <http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npc/>.



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Local Historic Preservation Plans: Putting the Past to Work for the Future

The preparation of local historic preservation plans helps communities make their history, culture, heritage, and related assets strong building blocks for revitalization, improvement and growth. As has been widely noted, although many of New York's communities have suffered economic decline, population losses, and disinvestment for decades, their rich history, heritage, and highly desirable quality of life assets are largely intact. This is critically important because individuals, small businesses, and corporations are increasingly making decisions about where to live, go to college, raise a family, retire, travel, invest, or establish headquarters based on community character and quality of life. They evaluate communities on their authentic character, unique sense of place, safe and friendly neighborhoods, schools, health and human services, history, arts, culture, entertainment, recreation, overall vibrancy, and curbside appeal. They seek community engagement and places where their contributions and involvement will make a difference.

Historic preservation is a community catalyst and a powerful engine for economic growth. It stimulates pride and inspires residents to help themselves, brings neighborhoods and communities together, enhances community assets, attracts reinvestment, creates more jobs than new construction, and keeps labor earnings cycling through local economies instead of being reinvested outside the community. Its incremental, locally-oriented, and sustainable revitalization activities have been successful in good and bad economic climates in diverse communities across America for many years.

As our Certified Local Governments know, historic preservation encompasses the identification, protection, interpretation, enhancement and promotion of historic and cultural resources. Historic preservation tools include financial incentives such as grants, loans, and tax credits; legal tools such as façade easements, deed restrictions, local historic districts and neighborhood conservation districts; improvement programs such as downtown "main street" revitalization, residential and commercial rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse to name a few. However, although the range, breadth, and flexibility of historic preservation tools is great, most communities fail to utilize all but a few of the existing tools. Historic preservation planning helps communities understand and implement the full spectrum of available tools to make the most of their history, heritage, and historic and cultural resources.

What is historic preservation planning?

Like other forms of planning, historic preservation planning is a proactive process of data gathering, analysis, information sharing, visioning, goal setting, and development of implementing actions. It enables communities to step back and evaluate historic and cultural resources as well as any existing historic preservation activities, programs and services being carried out by the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors of the community.

The planning process provides the time and space in which community members can gain a better understanding of their historic and cultural resources as well as how these resources can become building blocks for community rebirth and growth. It provides a systematic means of integrating historic preservation activities with other community endeavors as well as a forum for discussion and agreement about how best to move forward. The planning process also helps communities learn more about the various historic preservation tools and strategies and decide which will work best for them.

What is a historic preservation plan?

Historic preservation plans are to communities what historic structure reports are to historic buildings: they document history and existing conditions, identify problems and opportunities, plot a course for future improvements, establish a solid foundation for decision-making and program development, and provide a framework and inspiration for strategic investment and growth.

Historic preservation plans are the end result of a community's historic preservation planning process. They provide a summary of preservation planning activities and a "blueprint" for implementing future historic preservation programs and services.

Historic preservation plans can be incorporated into other planning documents (such as a comprehensive plan, downtown improvement strategy, or waterfront revitalization plan) or developed as stand-alone plans. Historic preservation elements have been incorporated into funding-related planning documents such as Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs), HUD Consolidated Plans, and similar documents when communities have been creative in seeking funding for the revitalization and reuse of older and historic buildings. There is really no agreement about which format is best. It really depends on what a community wishes to achieve by developing a historic preservation plan.

In most existing planning documents prepared by or for communities in New York State, there is generally very little mention of history, historic and cultural resources, historic preservation, or heritage. Therefore, unless an existing community plan contains a strong historic preservation element, it is probably more effective to prepare a stand alone historic preservation plan which can dovetail with and build on existing planning documents. A separate historic preservation planning process and plan may also enable a community to focus more specifically on historic and cultural resources and historic preservation strategies.

Why prepare a historic preservation plan or a historic preservation component of another planning document?

A historic preservation plan is essentially a tool designed to help communities achieve the social, economic, and environmental benefits of historic preservation. Reasons for preparing historic preservation plans include:

- Articulating the community's historic preservation goals, establishing historic preservation policies, and building consensus regarding the identification, protection, enhancement, interpretation and promotion of historic and cultural resources.
- Strengthening understanding of and support for historic preservation activities as well as the potential economic, social, and environmental benefits they generate.
- Establishing a basis for adopting new – or strengthening existing – laws to protect and enhance historic and cultural resources and preserve community character.
- Integrating historic preservation with all aspects of community planning and development, including land use, transportation, housing, tourism, revitalization, growth, etc.
- To help prevent legal challenges and provide informed guidance for local officials, property owners, investors, and decision makers.

What are the key elements of a historic preservation plan?

Like other planning documents, historic preservation plans typically include three major components: a description and evaluation of existing conditions including issues, opportunities, and constraints; a vision statement and goals for future accomplishment; and an action plan containing a series of actions through which the plan will be implemented.

The existing conditions part of the plan provides a basis for understanding preservation accomplishments, issues, and needs. It should include:

- A historical overview providing a description of the community's historic and architectural character and development;
- Identification of historic resources, including individual buildings or districts listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places or designated as local landmarks as well as areas that are potentially eligible for designation and/or need a historic resource survey. This can include historic contexts to guide future research and survey work.
- Description of past and existing historic preservation efforts including previously completed historic resource surveys to establish the preservation context.
- Description of groups involved in historic preservation and their activities, including local government, not-for-profit organizations such as a local preservation group or historical society, or neighborhood groups. This, or a related, section might also describe the efforts or potential efforts of related organizations such as an affordable housing organization or homeless housing services provider that rehabilitated buildings and neighborhoods.
- Explanation of the legal basis for historic preservation to establish the context within which preservation activities take place. If there is no local preservation ordinance or other legal tools, this section usually describes relevant tools and their purpose, use and value to the community.
- Coordination with land use, zoning, and smart growth efforts – should include a description of the legal tools available and applicable to the community, including the zoning ordinance, local historic preservation ordinance, neighborhood conservation

districts, nuisance abatement laws to maintain quality of life, conservation or façade easements, etc.

- Description of incentives for preservation activities including grants, low- or no- interest loans for building rehabilitation, façade and streetscape improvement, and signage; federal, state, and local tax credits or abatements; technical assistance such as design assistance; façade and conservation easements;
- Description of the relationship between historic preservation and education, which focuses on activities designed to educate the public about and raise awareness of historic resources and may include activities such as annual meetings or celebrations (such as Preservation Month in May), award programs, school programs, scout programs, realtor training programs, incentive program education/outreach, etc.

The plan's vision statement should be both realistic and inspiring in order to catalyze future action. It should give a sense of what the community is striving for and hopes to achieve. Goal statements should provide direction for achieving this vision.

The action plan should include clear implementing actions for each goal, as well as potential partners that can help complete the action, potential funding sources, and a time frame within which the action will be completed. Time frames generally include ongoing actions, as well as actions that will be completed in the short (one year), medium (3-5 years), and long (5+ years) terms. The more specific the action plan is, the more likely it is that the plan will be successful.

Who prepares a historic preservation plan?

A historic preservation plan or plan component should be prepared as part of a municipality's official planning activities, with the endorsement and participation of elected officials, staff, and any existing historic preservation organizations or historical societies. Plan preparation should be overseen by an advisory or steering committee appointed by the municipality's executive officer (mayor, supervisor, etc.) with broad representation from various business sectors and neighborhoods in the community. The plan can be prepared by municipal planning staff with historic preservation experience, a preservation planning consultant, a historic district commission, or by a group of dedicated community residents, with support from a preservation planning consultant or municipal planning staff.

Who should be involved in the preparation of a historic preservation plan?

The effectiveness of a historic preservation plan generally depends on the extent to which the community has been aware of, and involved in, its preparation and implementation. The underlying goal of an historic preservation plan is essentially to "main stream" historic preservation tools and strategies, incorporating them more firmly into existing community and economic development activities. Ideally, the planning process helps diverse community stakeholders focus on how they can combine efforts and resources to protect community character and achieve the benefits associated with historic preservation.

In addition to the elected officials, municipal staff, and the usual history and historic preservation constituencies, it is important to involve developers, realtors, bankers, community development and affordable housing organizations, educational institutions, religious organizations, local businesses and industries, and youth. When deciding who to involve, think in terms of who currently occupies older and historic buildings (or who might benefit from in doing so), what expertise and financial resources they might contribute to planning and implementation, and what might be achieved through collaboration with these individuals and groups.

When should a community prepare a historic preservation plan?

A historic preservation plan or component of a comprehensive plan can be a useful tool at any time. While historic preservation planning is often conducted in conjunction with the preparation of a comprehensive plan or similar planning documents, it may also occur in response to a specific crisis such as demolition of a much loved older or historic building or to address a specific community need such as downtown or neighborhood revitalization or redevelopment of an important, long vacant “anchor” building. Preparation of a historic preservation plan may also take place in conjunction with, before or after completion of historic resource surveys.

How can a community get help preparing a historic preservation plan?

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation offers technical assistance, resource materials and training regarding the preparation of historic preservation plans or historic preservation plan components of other planning documents. For more information, please contact Amy Facca, Historic Preservation Planner, at 518-237-8643 extension 3109 or amy.facca@oprhp.state.ny.us.

Where can a community get funding for historic preservation planning?

Historic preservation plans or plan components may be funded through local, state, and federal governments, voluntary efforts and contributions, and various grant sources.

Certified Local Governments are eligible to apply to the NYSHPO for CLG grant funds to produce historic preservation plans or components of comprehensive plans. For information on CLG grants please contact Lorraine Weiss, Certified Local Government Program Grants contact at 518-237-8642..

Featured Websites and Contacts

Municipalities participating in the New York State Department of State's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) are eligible to apply for funds to advance historic and cultural resource protection goals including preparation of historic preservation plans or plan components. For information on LWRP grants contact Ken Smith at 518-473-3373 or kenneth.smith@dos.state.ny.us.

Communities (both entitlement and non-entitlement communities) may also use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the preparation of historic resource surveys, historic preservation plans or components of comprehensive (or other) plans. Information about using CDBG funding for historic preservation activities can be found on the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's (HUD) Historic Preservation page at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/environment/library/subjects/preservation/index.cfm>

Additional guidance from HUD includes the following publications:

- Historic Preservation in Housing and Community Development – Linking Historic Preservation to Community Development Block Grant Objectives
https://www.historicpreservation.gov/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=1fa28aa0-a67c-4d5b-b27b-3cbbc3dd1ebc&groupId=14502
- Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism in Housing and Community Development: A Guide to Using Community Development Block Grant Funds for Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism in Your Communities
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/library/historicpreservation/historicpreservation.doc>

Additional Web-based Resources

- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning - http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_1.htm
- Working on the Past in Local Historic Districts (National Park Service)
<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/workingonthepast/>
- Historic Preservation Planning for Local Communities (National Park Service)
<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/pad/localplan.html>
- Cultural Resources Partnership Notes & Other Resources (National Park Service)
<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/pad/partnership/index.htm>
- *Historic Preservation: A Tool for Managing Growth* (Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development)
<http://www.mrsc.org/GovDocs/HistoricPreservationGuidebookFinal.pdf>
- *A Guide to Smart Growth and Cultural Resource Planning* (Wisconsin Historical Society, Division of Historic Preservation)
http://www.doa.state.wi.us/dir/documents/cultural_guide.pdf

Additional Reading

Additional guidance from HUD in regard to Historic Preservation Activities includes the following publications:

- Historic Preservation in Housing and Community Development – Linking Historic Preservation to Community Development Block Grant Objectives
https://www.historicpreservation.gov/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=1fa28aa0-a67c-4d5b-b27b-3cbbc3dd1ebc&groupId=14502
- Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism in Housing and Community Development: A Guide to Using Community Development Block Grant Funds for Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism in Your Communities
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/library/historicpreservation/historicpreservation.doc>

For more information, contact your municipal planning or community development office.



Photo: The grain elevators of Buffalo are internationally recognized icons of Buffalo's history as a major inland grain port. Their "form... follows function" aesthetic and massive scale also influenced architects worldwide working in the then radical style of modernism that became known as the International Style. These historic structures can be seen as part of a boat tour of the Buffalo waterfront during the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Annual Conference, October 19-22, 2011.

The Back Page

The section below from the *Draft Preservation Plan for City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, November 15, 2010* is an excellent summation of what a preservation plan can aspire to achieve. Look it over and think about how a preservation plan can help your community;

“...This plan seizes an opportunity to step back and assess the current state of preservation in the City of Bethlehem and envisions a diverse and wide-ranging future role for historic preservation as:

- 1) An essential strategy for maintaining Bethlehem’s unique sense of place.
- 2) A powerful tool for economic development and community revitalization.
- 3) A significant generator of jobs, income and tax revenues.
- 4) A key element of the environmentally sustainable city.
- 5) A vital approach to understanding how diverse cultures have come together to shape the society we know today.
- 6) A broad, inclusive project that integrates a “preservation ethic” into community decision-making so that historic resources are identified, preserved, experienced, and enjoyed.”

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Plan is to provide a central preservation policy document which contains the following components...

- Evaluation of Bethlehem’s developmental history
- Inventory of existing conditions
- Articulation of community goals, objectives and strategies
- Implementation program/action plan
- Identified funding sources, tools, and methods to implement historic resources plan
- Establishment of the legal basis for historic preservation”