

Preservation Planning Guide for Local Governments

Does your community want to plan for historic preservation?

Local historic preservation activities are usually more successful when they follow this sequence:

- Survey (Documentation and Evaluation)
- Designation (Local or National Registers)
- Treatment (Preservation)

This approach is both thorough and effective. Unforeseen circumstances may require deviation from this sequence, but that should occur only infrequently.

Public education activities should be a part of each phase. Education makes a big difference in the success of a specific project and in creating greater awareness and support for the overall preservation program.

Here are the steps:

1. Survey

- Do a Reconnaissance-Level Survey.
This is a systematic, computerized inventory of all the historic buildings in a community, neighborhood, or commercial district. This identifies which buildings have potential to be “historic” and therefore worthy of additional documentation and preservation efforts.
- Do Intensive Level Surveys
This is in-depth historical research on the construction, ownership, and uses of an individual building over the years. This further refines the historical status of a building and provides a solid foundation for eventual registration or designation.

Public education ideas:

- newspaper articles and online announcements
- website development and updates
- property owner contacts
- public involvement
- presentations to planning commission and city council
- walking tour booklets
- tours of historic sites conducted as part of annual community celebrations
- display of historic photos etc. at city hall or library
- presentations to school groups

2. Designation

- List buildings on the community's Local Historic Sites List.
A Local Historic Sites Lists is created by a local preservation ordinance. Standards for these lists are often lenient and non-restrictive.
- List buildings on the Local Landmark Register.
A Local Landmark Register is also created by a local preservation ordinance. Standards are more exclusive and restrictive.
- Nominate buildings to the National Register of Historic Places.
National Register designations must be coordinated with the SHPO.

Public education ideas:

- newspaper articles and online announcements
- neighborhood meetings for owners of historic properties (to address questions/concerns, etc.)
- distribution of "fact sheets" to historic property owners so they are aware of the implications of designation
- presentation of certificates or plaques to property owners by local officials
- placement of plaques on buildings
- walking tours
- school programs
- press releases

3. Treatment

- Pre-development: architectural and engineering services
- Development: rehabilitation of buildings, stabilization of archaeological sites
- Local Design and Demolition Controls: implemented through a local ordinance
- Local Preservation Incentives: conditional uses, relaxed building code requirements, grant programs, design assistance, etc.
- Tax Incentives for Commercial and Residential Buildings (federal tax credits and state property tax freeze programs)
- Grants: state (Preserving Oregon grants) and federal funds for rehabilitation

Public education ideas:

- newspaper articles and online announcements
- annual preservation awards for outstanding rehab projects
- tours through completed projects
- ribbon-cuttings involving local and state officials and the press
- "rehab in progress" signs displayed on site
- exhibit of architectural drawings at city hall or library
- "before" and "after" photos for newspaper or online exhibits
- coordination with planning commission and city council on planning and zoning-related issues