

Historic Preservation Chapter

Overview

Frederick is renowned for its downtown, which comprises a local historic district of over 2,000 properties spanning 50 blocks and constituting the largest contiguous collection of historic resources in the State. A larger area, encompassing the local historic district, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Early settlement patterns and proactive historic preservation efforts have resulted in a city with rich in architecture, neighborhoods with diverse design and vibrant streetscapes, making Frederick a tourist destination as well as a desirable place to live. However, with the proximity to the Baltimore and Washington, DC metro areas, the City is experiencing a period of rapid growth. The resulting development pressure must constantly be balanced with historic preservation goals. The policies in this section are intended to promote the preservation of Frederick's historic resources in a way that enhances its unique character, stimulates investment, and improves quality of life.

Established in 1745 as a speculative land venture, Frederick has evolved over the years from a small frontier settlement to one of the largest cities in the State. Over two and a half centuries of growth have transformed the City into an important regional center for commerce and industry, as well as a convenient commuter location for people working in Washington, DC and Baltimore. Remarkably, because most early growth occurred within the original 340 lots platted by Daniel Dulany and his son, the City contains a broad spectrum of architectural styles that reflect the region's dynamic history.

The impetus of the Frederick Town Historic District was a group of residents who came together during the City's bicentennial in 1945 to form the Historic Zone Committee. As a result of their work, the City created the Old Frederick District, comprising just a few blocks, and, in 1952, established the advisory Architectural Commission. This initiative made Frederick the second city in the State and the thirteenth in the nation to establish a local historic district. Due to these grassroots efforts by the citizenry, Frederick enjoys one of the largest and best preserved historic districts in the State. In 1963, the State of Maryland passed the Historic District Commission Act, which enabled local governments to establish historic districts and commissions empowered with review authority. The momentum to preserve the City's built heritage was reinvigorated with the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, which serves as the basis for all preservation legislation created since. In 1967, Frederick residents, business owners, the Downtown Frederick Association and other civic groups petitioned the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for a Historic District Commission under the 1963 act. In 1968, the Historic District Commission was created with the authority to review and approve exterior alterations, signs, and demolitions.

After several years of grassroots efforts, the historic district's boundaries were expanded in 1977 and then again in 1995. In 2001, the name of the district was changed to the "Frederick Town Historic District." With the adoption of the City's Land Management Code (LMC) in 2005, criteria and procedures for designating new districts and individual landmarks were established. Since the adoption of the 2010 Plan, the City's efforts to preserve historic properties through designation with the Historic Preservation Overlay (HPO) have expanded considerably. The authority for such designation is granted to the Board of Aldermen under the Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article, § 8 and the LMC.

Through the zoning map amendment process, a HPO can be applied to sites, structures, or districts that are deemed to be of historic, archeological, or architectural significance. The Criteria for Designation closely mirror those for the National Register of Historic Places and when a property is designated with an HPO, all exterior alterations, new construction, and demolition become subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

In 2012, the Historic Preservation Commission also established a Designation Committee (Committee). In conjunction with the Planning Division, the new Committee embarked on a multi-year effort to document properties identified in the 2010 Plan, to update the Design Guidelines for Individual Landmarks and Small Districts, and to establish a property tax credit as a financial incentive. The Committee and the HPC then began putting forth applications to designate properties from the 2010 Plan. As result of these efforts and the city-wide demolition review ordinance, nine new HPO zones were established.

In 2013, the Board of Aldermen took additional steps to preserve significant historic resources by adopting an ordinance that establishes a demolition review process that applies to areas outside of an established HPO. Through a streamlined review process during which the age and significance of the structure are considered, the demolition review provisions of the LMC allow the HPC to determine if further projection is necessary. The outcome of demolition review is either the issuance of a Certificate to Demolish without Delay or designation of the structure with the HPO. As a result of these efforts, several historic properties have been protected and incorporated into redevelopment plans.

In promoting designation after the 2010 Plan, the City quickly found that the long-standing property tax credit model was ineffective in supporting the exterior preservation and rehabilitation work required by HPO designation. As a remedy, the City implemented a new program in 2012 that granted tax-paying property owners a property tax credit equal to 10% of the properly documented expenditures incurred for exterior work that contributes to the restoration or preservation of a structure designated with an Historic Preservation Overlay. Subsequently in 2014, the City increased the percentage to 25%. Since the start of the new tax credit program, the City has granted \$403,227.09 in historic preservation property tax credits.

Statewide Preservation Plan

This chapter incorporates by reference *Preserve Maryland II, Statewide Preservation Plan 2019-2023*. The plan is a five-year guidance document for government agencies, non-profit advocates and others involved in historic preservation, archeology, and cultural heritage. It was developed by an interdisciplinary advisory committee and solicited feedback through open public meetings held around the State, focus groups, surveys, and stakeholder interviews.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

The City uses the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) maintained by the Maryland Historical Trust as the local inventory of potentially eligible historic resources. The MIHP is a repository of information on districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of known or potential value to the prehistory and history of the State. The MIHP can be accessed through Medusa, the Maryland Historical Trust's online database of architectural and archeological sites and standing structures or at the Maryland Historical Trust Library. Since the MIHP is solely an instrument for research and documentation, listing involves no regulatory restrictions or controls. Rather, the state inventory is a planning tool that identifies properties that may warrant further research and evaluation for eligibility under the City's Criteria for Designation and may warrant special consideration as part of development plans. The MIHP includes information about both standing structures and archeological resources. It includes properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Listing in the NRHP is largely honorific, but may establish eligibility for Federal and State tax credits and may provide some protection from state and federal actions.

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan

This chapter also incorporates by reference the *Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA) Management Plan*. The HCWHA plan is designed to enhance tourism in Washington, Frederick, and Carroll counties through the State's Heritage Area Program. The plan outlines the heritage resources in a given heritage area and makes recommendations on coordination and conservation strategies for resource protection. It also enables the counties to take advantage of tax credits and special funding programs to implement heritage tourism programs identified therein.

Historic Preservation Chapter Policies and Implementation

HPE Policy 1: Support the preservation of sites, structures, and districts of historical, archaeological, cultural, or architectural significance.

Implementation

1. Update the National Register Nomination (1988) for the Frederick Historic District.
2. Expand the City's Frederick Historic District Historic Preservation Overlay to correspond with the National Register District where appropriate.
3. Seek out grants and partnerships to support a city-wide reconnaissance level survey of previously unidentified historic resources that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Historic Preservation Overlay. Use the survey to contribute to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and to support the protection of important historic resources and inform policy and decision-making.
4. Seek out grants and partnerships to support citywide thematic surveys of underrepresented historic resources such as those related to African Americans and slavery, suffrage, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ people. Coordinate with related statewide surveys where appropriate.
5. Support the Historic Preservation Commission's role in the designation process and the proactive recommendation of sites and districts for Historic Preservation Overlay designation.
6. Evaluate resources listed in the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties for eligibility under the City's Criteria for Designation.
7. Increase the awareness and appreciation of historic resources and the benefits of historic preservation with workshops, trainings, publications, tours, etc.

HPE Policy 2: Ensure that impacts to historic resources are considered in planning and development decision-making.

Implementation

1. Provide targeted outreach and education to property owners, elected officials, Planning Commissioners, developers, engineers, and related parties.

2. Undertake an evaluation of existing codes and policies to determine if historic preservation is adequately addressed. Propose amendments that support historic preservation goals, as appropriate.
3. Ensure that historic preservation concerns are identified in all City projects or initiatives by fostering inter-departmental coordination and cooperation.
4. Inform and educate elected officials, commissioners, and staff about access to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties and other documents that relate to historic resources so that the impacts of policies and decisions on potential historic resources can be considered.
5. Utilize the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties to identify historic resources that may be impacted by development proposals.
6. Submit new or updated Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties forms to the Maryland Historical Trust for historic properties that have been, or are to be, locally designated and/or surveyed so that the information can be easily accessed by a wide range of decision-makers.
7. Conduct local surveys to identify properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and pursue resources for nominations, where appropriate.

HPE Policy 3: Promote an understanding of and appreciation for the City’s heritage and the role of historic preservation.

Implementation

1. Establish a “Historic Preservation 101” workshop or similar opportunity and partner with organizations such as the Frederick County Association of Realtors and the Frederick County Building Industry Association to advise their members on value of historic resources and processes for preservation.
2. Establish a quarterly community lecture or workshop series on heritage topics in collaboration with partner organizations.
3. Continue to publish bimonthly *Preservation Matters* articles in the Frederick News Post.
4. Continue to partner with the Audio-Visual Department to produce *Preserve This* videos.
5. Formalize a process for posting historic preservation content to City social media and to existing email lists.
6. Partner with and support the Frederick County Landmarks Foundation on an expanded recognition program for historic preservation projects.

HPE Policy 4: Expand and enhance programs and policies to protect archeological resources.

Implementation

1. Identify and document archeological sites.

2. Undertake an assessment of Section 603 of the LMC pertaining to archeological protection to evaluate its effectiveness in achieving its purpose.
3. Ensure that archeological assessment occurs early in the planning process so that impacts can be considered, mitigated, or avoided concurrently with other development considerations.
4. Develop procedures that involve the Historic Preservation Commission in archeological assessment and protection where appropriate.
5. Establish standards that support the consistent application of the Section 603 of the LMC pertaining to archeological protection.
6. Provide workshops, trainings, publications, field days, etc. to increase the awareness and appreciation of archeological resources.

HPE Policy 5: Improve access to historic preservation data and documentation.

Implementation

1. Update the City's online "Historic Properties Database" to ensure correct information and to add additional documentation when available.
2. Coordinate with the Information Technology (IT) / Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department to overlay historic maps and link historic images in a publically accessible format.
3. Submit all inventories, surveys, and designation reports in appropriate formats to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties.
4. Digitize and make publically available relevant historical records, maps, historical permit records, and archived photographs/drawings in various departments of the City.
5. Explore tools such as story maps or other media applications to disseminate documentation about historic resources and programs.
6. Incorporate archeological information into GIS for internal planning purposes.

HPE Policy 6: Reevaluate historic preservation policies and procedures in order to streamline processes and improve applicant experience.

Implementation

1. Research and evaluate best practices for informing potential and new owners that a property is located in the Historic Preservation Overlay. Seek input from realtors and related organizations. If appropriate, recommend new policies or regulations with the goal of better informed property owners.
2. Continue to prepare and distribute informational welcome packets to realtors for properties listed for sale in the Historic Preservation Overlay. Explore new and more reliable ways to reach potential owners with this information prior to purchase.

3. Utilize the updated National Register Nomination for the Frederick Historic District and other applicable resources to support the Historic Preservation Commission in adopting a contributing/non-contributing list and to establish a finite period of significance for the Frederick Town Historic District in order to improve applicant expectations. Update codes and standards accordingly.
4. Budget for and prepare an annual mailing to property owners in the Historic Preservation Overlay to inform them of the applicable regulations and any related changes.
5. Establish an ad hoc citizen historic preservation advisory group to identify issues and gauge progress and effectiveness.
6. Cross-train City staff by developing a concise training program for those whose jobs intersects with historic preservation.

HPE Policy 7: Maintain a balance between economic growth and historic preservation in order to achieve shared objectives.

Implementation

1. Support interdepartmental and interagency collaboration so that conflicts between economic growth and historic preservation can be identified early in the process and resolved.
2. Continue to collaborate with the Downtown Frederick Partnership to promote the benefits of historic preservation to merchants, residents, and contractors.
3. Undertake a study that assesses the impact of historic preservation and the marketing value of historic preservation and related activities to the local economy. Publish findings to be used as a resource for elected officials and policy makers.
4. Conduct an assessment of existing incentives for adaptive reuse and for vacant or underutilized properties to identify any conflicts with historic preservation goals. Propose solutions as appropriate.
5. Conduct an assessment of existing development regulations to identify any conflict with historic preservation goals. Propose solutions as appropriate.

HPE Policy 8: Foster civic beauty by supporting programs and policies that support the maintenance of historic properties.

Implementation

1. Continue to promote the local property tax credit program for historic preservation.
2. Sponsor workshops on financial incentives and other community benefits and invite the Maryland Historical Trust to participate regarding applicable state and federal programs.

3. Undertake targeted outreach and education to threatened historic properties including those undergoing demolition-by-neglect or classified as blighted.
4. Assess and evaluate existing regulations and policies that address demolition-by-neglect. Implement amendments or propose new regulations that strengthen policies that limit demolition-by-neglect of historic resources.

HPE Policy 9: Support policies and explore new tools to enhance older neighborhoods with cohesive character in ways that reinforce the historic downtown core.

Implementation

1. Undertake character studies for older and historic neighborhoods to identify unifying qualities. Seek neighborhood input on valued characteristics.
2. Conduct a survey of post-war neighborhoods to tell a more comprehensive history of the City and its development.
3. Assess community support for tools to preserve older and historic neighborhoods that do not meet the criteria for or do not have support for Historic Preservation Overlay designation, such as conservation districts. Evaluate and implement tools where appropriate.
4. Prepare targeted educational materials about how historic preservation and/or design review can positively affect neighborhoods, where appropriate.
5. Assess, quantify, and disseminate information regarding the environmental impact of building reuse as a supplemental purpose for maintaining older and historic neighborhoods.

HPE Policy 10: Connect historic preservation to broader and more diverse audiences.

Implementation

1. Solicit and appoint qualified members to the Historic Preservation Commission that represent the diversity of the city.
2. Create a social media outreach strategy to better utilize available platforms and applications to educate and inform the community regarding historic preservation and heritage topics.
3. Ensure that all historic preservation projects and programs are inclusive in their characterization of history. Specifically seek out resources to document difficult stories and those of underrepresented groups and minorities.
4. Identify and document intangible aspects of the City's heritage and utilize alternative methods, such as oral histories, where appropriate.
5. Engage K-12 and college students through partnerships with Frederick County Public Schools and local institutions of higher education to provide presentations, guest lectures, internships opportunities, and

academic practicums. Produce targeted, age-appropriate resources and educational materials for students.