



Iowa City Historic Preservation Initiative

May 2020



School of
Urban &
Regional
Planning

IOWA CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION INITIATIVE



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Course Name: Field Problems

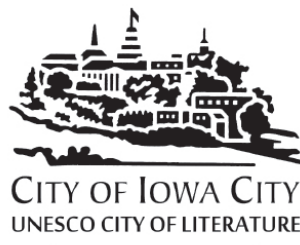
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Executive Summary

Iowa City has an active downtown with rich historic character and a diversity of building types, new and old. A number of buildings in the downtown are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). While a NRHP listing offers minimal protection to these structures, it does incentivize historic rehabilitation and conservation to retain the historic integrity of the community. Locally, cities have the authority to protect historic buildings and areas through the creation of local historic landmarks and districts, which are typically regulated by adopted historic preservation guidelines. Local historic districts give local governments greater power to protect historic buildings, neighborhoods, and downtowns.

While local historic protection is based on the framework of national and state standards, these should be established in a way that protects the long-term viability of downtowns and neighborhoods and is supportive of other community goals.

This report enriches understanding of historic preservation, especially as it is applied to Iowa City's downtown, and how that practice addresses, or fails to address, the shared values and needs of the community. This report establishes and delivers recommendations on how local preservation policies can be made to better address local needs—not just preservation needs, but also other needs, such as: environmental needs, including those pertaining to sustainability and climate change; accessibility, particularly for the disabled; community development and improvement; and affordable housing. These are key areas of broad concern identified by National Main Street Director Patrice Frey as related to but not usually underscored by historic preservation and its advocates. She argues in a February 8, 2019 article in *CityLab* that preservation's stock can be better supported by extending the conversation about preservation to include preservationists and those who primarily think about and advocate in each of these related areas. Our recommendations are based on studying and summarizing the underlying principles of historic preservation, reviewing state and federal guidelines, and conducting stakeholder interviews with community leaders, policy makers, building owners, and business owners and then drawing conclusions based on our objective of exploring the value of historic preservation in downtown Iowa City beyond the protection of older buildings. In particular we recommend that careful thought be given to how downtown Iowa City represents not only the extant historic buildings in downtown Iowa City, but as the city center it represents the history of the various peoples who have lived or live now in Iowa City, even before Iowa City was incorporated under that name.

Findings

Overall, the team's interview and data collection process highlighted that, while challenges in preserving older structures exist in the downtown, interviewees are enthusiastic about preserving the downtown in a way that addresses broader community goals. Through feedback from stakeholders, the team was able to identify how preservation can both conflict, and be compatible with, community goals.

Some of the key outcomes include:

- ▶ Stakeholders expresses a willingness to work towards enhanced historic preservation guidelines that are compatible with social, environmental, and economic goals.
- ▶ Preservation is inherently compatible with environmental sustainability and receiving building LEED Certification.
- ▶ Many commercial buildings in Iowa City have not taken advantage of free energy audits provided by the City through AmeriCorps.
- ▶ A perception exists that the City completely disallows renewable energy upgrades, such as solar panels on historic buildings throughout the city.
- ▶ Opportunities exist for cooperation between historic preservation, the Iowa City Downtown District, and the City in support of the arts downtown.
- ▶ Rehabilitation and restoration training can provide needed skilled labor as well as offer economic opportunities and employment.
- ▶ In Iowa City's downtown, Historic Tax Credits and other financial incentives are underutilized due to the high upfront costs of restoration, the perception of a lack of flexibility and transparency in the restoration process, and a missing middle of funding opportunities. Patrice Frey, president of the National Main Street Program, reports in her 2019 *CityLab* article that smaller projects that typify many smaller town or city downtowns (typically less than \$5 million) are not large enough to justify the employment of Federal Historic Tax Credits.
- ▶ Lease rates for commercial properties in the downtown are more affordable than those in new buildings downtown and new buildings on the fringe of Iowa City.
- ▶ Housing and commercial affordability analysis is limited by a lack of consistent and available data.

Goals of this Report

Historic Preservation is the practice of protecting and preserving sites, structures or districts, which reflect elements of local culture and history. However, the processes and guidelines underlying historic preservation are complex and may not adequately address contemporary dynamic social issues. The objectives of this report therefore include:

- ▶ Summarize historic preservation incentives and tools and how they are applied in Iowa City's downtown (area indicated in the geographic scope section)
- ▶ Inform discussion about the important role of historic preservation and how preservation achieves broader social, environmental, and economic goals
- ▶ Relate historic preservation to goals and values of Iowa City
- ▶ Document the perceptions of historic preservation through stakeholder interviews with building owners, business owners, community leaders, and policymakers
- ▶ Highlight case examples of historic preservation best practice and identify local alternatives
- ▶ Make recommendations on how historic preservation in downtown Iowa City can address broader community goals

Introduction

Nationally, districts with a mix of old and new structures are proven to promote a diversity of business and entrepreneurship opportunities and contribute to a local sense of place that builds community pride and resilience.¹ Communities and their leaders have discussed the importance of older structures for many years. However, as Patrice Frey tells us, planners and preservationists still depend on a set of tools to fail that live up to historic preservation's potential to address key social, financial, and environmental needs. Preservationists are challenged with potentially outdated zoning regulations, overly prescriptive building and energy codes, and limited financing tools which continue to make it difficult to reuse older structures and retain the human scale of older blocks and neighborhoods.²

Frey goes on to say, “[b]eing an effective preservationist means understanding that our efforts to save buildings are woven into a complex tapestry of other important social needs, including – but not limited to – affordable housing, economic and social equity, economic development, and climate change.” Frey calls upon preservationists to consider “new opportunities for impact, confront uncomfortable truths about where we may be falling short, and be vigilant in our efforts to find and embrace creative new tools for preservation.”³

In Iowa City today, older structures contribute to the community's character, livability, and economic vitality.⁴ Iowa City has established ordinances that further the protection of older structures by granting City Council the ability to designate local historic/conservation districts and local historic landmarks. While this zoning is robustly applied to residential districts in Iowa City, there are very few cases of its application in commercial zones, such as downtown Iowa City. In response to Frey's call to action, this report offers a guide through the laws that shape policymaking and building owner decisions, clarifies the process of preservation, identifies the challenges of the existing preservation framework and how they address community values, and finally, offers recommendations and creative new tools for preservation locally in downtown Iowa City. The report first addresses common misconceptions and summarizes truths about historic preservation in “Chapter 1: Why Historic Preservation Matters.” Next the laws impacting local, state, and federal historic preservation practices are summarized. This law review includes a look into the specifics surrounding accessibility, an issue that was raised throughout interviews and research. The next three chapters analyze social, environmental, and economic goals and how these goals relate to historic preservation. Each chapter offers examples through case studies of how other communities harness creative historic preservation tools and then concludes with recommended alternatives.

¹ Preservation Green Lab, “Older, Smaller, Better.”

² Preservation Green Lab, “The Greenest Building.”

³ Frey, “Why Historic Preservation Needs a New Approach.”

⁴ City of Iowa City. *Survey and Evaluation Update of the Iowa City Central Business District.*

Methodology

Through the use of case study research, stakeholder interviews, property data analysis, and guiding City documents, the project team analyzed the impacts of historic preservation practice in Iowa City and how that practice relates to identified social, environmental, and economic community goals.

Stakeholder Interviews

The research team conducted interviews with professionals that use historic preservation tools in their work. Each interviewee was determined through a combination of targeted interviews—aimed at addressing a specific issue or area of research—and a snowball sample method. Nationally this included policy makers in communities leading innovative historic preservation initiatives and researchers measuring the success of those initiatives. On the state level, State Historic Preservation Office staff were interviewed regarding the process of reviewing historic designations, and the assistance available to practitioners through the state. Locally, stakeholder interviews included building owners, business owners, developers, architects, contractors, City staff, historic preservation commission members, and others involved in the preservation process. Stakeholder interviews were used to identify the values addressed in this report and inform the discussion of local conditions. Interviews were conducted either in person, on the phone, or through teleconference technology. Most interviews were digitally recorded; however, a promise of anonymity was given to each interviewee, therefore direct reference to any individual interviewee is not made in this document.

Figure 0.I: Completed Interviews

<i>Completed Interviews</i>	#
<i>Iowa Economic Development Authority</i>	1
<i>City Staff</i>	4
<i>Building Owners</i>	4
<i>Business Owners</i>	2
<i>Architects</i>	2
<i>Contractor</i>	1
<i>Real Estate Agents</i>	2
<i>State Historic Preservation Office Historic Preservation Commission</i>	4
<i>Other</i>	4
<i>Total</i>	24

City Planning and Historic Preservation Documents

Goals outlined throughout Iowa City Planning documents were used to identify shared community values. Iowa City historic preservation documents also provided insights into existing historic preservation goals and policies. Documents were chosen based on their relevance to the topic and the geographic scope of this report. The most recent version of each document was used to help establish a most up-to-date collection of local values.

The relevant city documents include:

- ▶ Iowa City Comprehensive Plan
- ▶ Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan
- ▶ Iowa City Historic Preservation Handbook
- ▶ Survey and Evaluation of the Iowa City Central Business District
- ▶ Historic Preservation Funding Applications
- ▶ Iowa City Climate Action and Adaptation Plan
- ▶ Iowa City Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan
- ▶ Iowa City Downtown District Strategic Plan
- ▶ Iowa City Ordinances (Especially Title 14 Historic Preservation Overlays and Exemption)

Property Data

To better understand existing conditions and analyze the local impacts of historic preservation policy, the team collected and mapped historic resources downtown and their characteristics; such as lease rates per square foot, building values, tax incentives used, and diversity in ownership and types of business.

Case Studies

The research team developed Case Studies to identify and evaluate best practices implemented in other communities. The team chose case studies that best reflect the characteristics of Iowa City; however, some topics required the use of areas with dissimilar characteristics. To fill in the research gaps, the research team analyzed the best practices studied by prominent preservation advocacy groups such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Place Economics. These are cited throughout the document and inform the report’s final recommendations.

Figure 0.2: Community Case Studies

<i>Community</i>	<i>Case Study</i>	<i>Interviews</i>
<i>Dubuque, Iowa</i>	✓	✓
<i>Missoula, Montana</i>	✓	✓
<i>Humboldt Park, Chicago, Illinois</i>	✓	
<i>Bloomington, Indiana</i>	✓	✓
<i>Magnuson Park, Seattle, Washington</i>	✓	
<i>Lansing, Michigan</i>	✓	

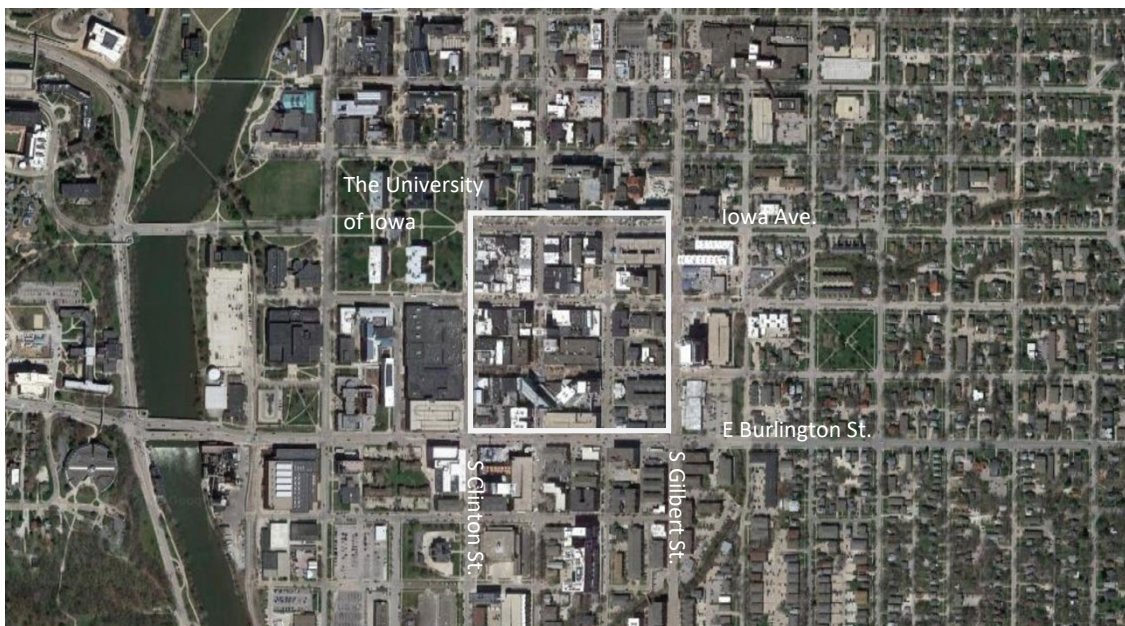
Geographic Scope

Iowa City is located in eastern Iowa and is the county seat of Johnson County. Since its founding in 1839, Iowa City has seen a number of demographic, cultural, and structural changes. Changes include waves of immigration, the state government and capitol moving from Iowa City to Des Moines, and the continued growth of the University of Iowa. The current population of Iowa City is estimated to be 76,290 within a 25.01 square mile area.⁵ The continued growth of Iowa City in recent decades has propelled downtown Iowa City to become a focal point of the region. Much of the activity that makes

downtown Iowa City so vibrant occurs in a historic downtown that offers a rich sense of character. The scope of this report matches the area analyzed in the 2018 survey of historic properties in downtown Iowa City—*Survey and Evaluation Update: Iowa City Central Business District*, prepared by Alexa McDowell of AKAY Consulting.



FIGURE 0.3: PROJECT GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE



⁵ United States Census Bureau

Defining Historic

A historic property is defined in the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as any property that is eligible for the inclusion in or is already included in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).⁶ Locations that may be deemed historic can include buildings, structures, sites, objects, or districts. For a property to be deemed eligible to be listed in the NRHP, it must be established historic by the National Park Service based on the places age, physical integrity, and historic significance.

A property listed in the NRHP benefits from national recognition of the cultural value of the property to the nation, state of Iowa, and local community.

Additional benefits of NHRP listings include:

- ▶ Opportunities to leverage recognition for local planning, heritage tourism, and education
- ▶ Review of any federally licensed, financed or assisted projects to determine its effect on historic properties
- ▶ Eligibility for federal and/or state income tax credits
- ▶ Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation (such as planning and rehabilitation), when funds are available

There are four criteria established by the U.S. Department of the Interior that are used to identify the type of historic significance of a property:

Criterion A: A property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion B: A property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Criterion C: A property that embodies that distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Criterion D: Property has yielded or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

After a resource is determined to have historic integrity, is at least 50 years old, and has met one of the above criteria, it becomes eligible for individual NRHP status. Figure 0.3 maps historic resources within the project scope.

⁶ National Historic Preservation Act 1966, 54 U.S.C. § 300308 (1966)

Historic Resources in Downtown Iowa City

In 2018, the City completed a Survey and Evaluation Update of the Iowa Central Business District (SEICBD) which inventoried and evaluated the historic resources downtown. The primary goal of this report was the identification of historic resources that individually or collectively meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The evaluation found a high density of historic resources in the downtown and that the potential for a historic district exists. Figure 0.4 maps the extent of older structures in the downtown. In the 2018 evaluation, resources are categorized under four levels of eligibility or ability to contribute to the designation of a historic district. Categories include contributing resources, key contributing resources, individually NRHP eligible resources, and non-contributing resources. Definitions and criteria for each type of resource can be found below. Figure 0.5 shows the historic resources in the downtown by type, which are defined here and in the report's glossary.



Figure 0.4: Buildings by Age

Individually Eligible Resource

Individually eligible resources meet the highest standard of eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP. Individually eligible resources are buildings usually of at least 50 years of age, must retain high historic integrity on the exterior and interior of the building, and retain character-defining features necessary to convey its significance.

Key Contributing Resource

These resources indicate increased impact on the sense of time and place conveyed in a downtown streetscape. Buildings with the designation of key contributing may have a diminished historic integrity (preventing individual eligibility in the NRHP), but their significant to the character of the streetscape, to their architectural style or their historical context, elevates their importance, they must also usually be no less than 50 years old.

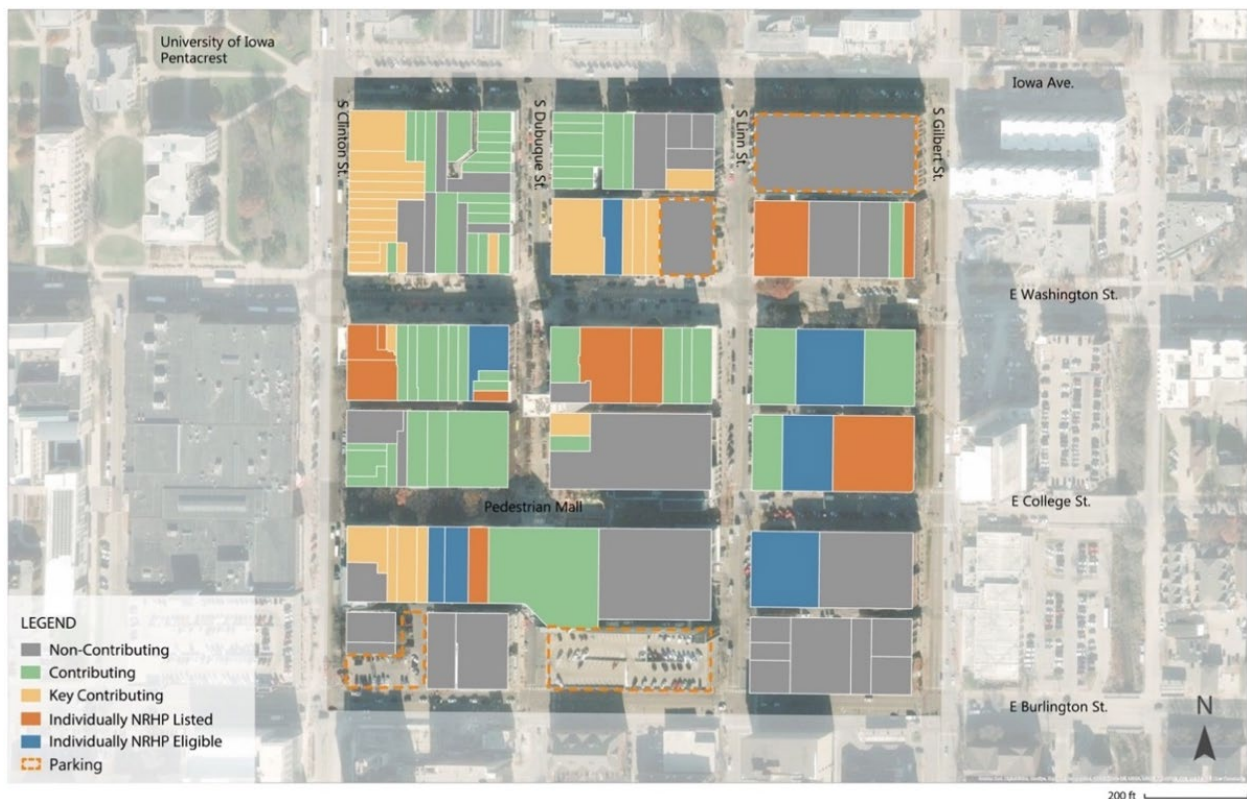
Contributing Resource

Contributing resources are buildings usually of at least 50 years of age, with a demonstrated historical association or representing an architectural style, but which lack the degree of historic integrity necessary to be considered individually eligible. Contributing resources together in a district retain sufficient historical significance and convey a sense of place, however, do not retain enough significance to be individually eligible in the NRHP.

Non-Contributing Resource

Non-contributing resources are those built less than 50 years ago, or which do not meet the aforementioned standards required to be considered a contributing resource. In many cases in the downtown, buildings are considered non-contributing because they are too new, they have been altered to heavily thus compromising their historic character, or they are not in close enough proximity to other historic structures to be considered a contributing resource to a potential district.

FIGURE 0.5: HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE DOWNTOWN



Chapter 1: Why Historic Preservation Matters

Throughout stakeholder interviews and research, several misconceptions related to historic preservation were identified. This chapter provides a brief overview of some of the key truths about historic preservation and why it matters.

Why Historic Preservation Matters

Historic preservation can support economic growth and be cost-effective

In the Annual Report on the Economic Impact of Federal Historic Tax Credit for FY 2018, the tax dollar investment into Historic Tax Credits (HTC) is compared with investment in non-preservation investments. According to a study conducted by Rutgers University, “in many parts of the country, a \$1 million investment in historic rehabilitation yields markedly better effects on employment, income, GDP, and state and local taxes than an equal investment in new construction and many other economic activities.” Nationally, in 2018, \$7.7 billion was invested in rehabilitation which yielded approximately 129,000 new jobs.⁷

In Iowa, financial incentives for preservation play an important role in historic preservation activity and economic growth. For example, an Iowa Department of Revenue study done in 2009 reported that for every \$1 of state tax credits allocated to a project, \$3.77 of federal and private money had been leveraged. This indicates that financial incentives can make historic preservation projects economically viable and stimulate investment and economic growth. This was especially true in places in historic districts or higher densities of historic structures. Rehabilitation is usually more cost-effective than new construction. The rehabilitation of commercial space rather than demolition and replacement has been found to cost 3%-16% less than new construction.⁸

Financial incentives encourage historic preservation

Structures deemed historic are eligible for funding sources otherwise not available. In downtown Iowa City, two revitalization projects using federal historic tax credit incentives have been completed, which have added over \$3.5 million in federal funding and resulted in over \$11 million in direct private investment in the downtown. While many properties in the downtown have invested in significant improvements, fifteen additional structures could be rehabilitated in a way that qualifies for significant funding at the federal and state levels, providing incentive for revitalization to strengthen owner commitment to the Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District.

Older buildings have the potential to be just as energy efficient or more efficient than new buildings

With proper maintenance, historic buildings (pre 1950s) from before the era of urban renewal (1960s and 1970s) often test with similar or better energy efficiencies when compared to new construction. Buildings built post-2000 only test 0.6% more efficient than those built pre-1920.⁹ This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

⁷ National Park Service, *Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018*.

⁸ Rypkema, Donovan D, *The Economics of Rehabilitation*. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2003.

⁹ Young, Robert, A, *Stewardship of the Built Environment: Sustainability, Preservation, and Reuse*, 2012

New Construction can have negative environmental impacts

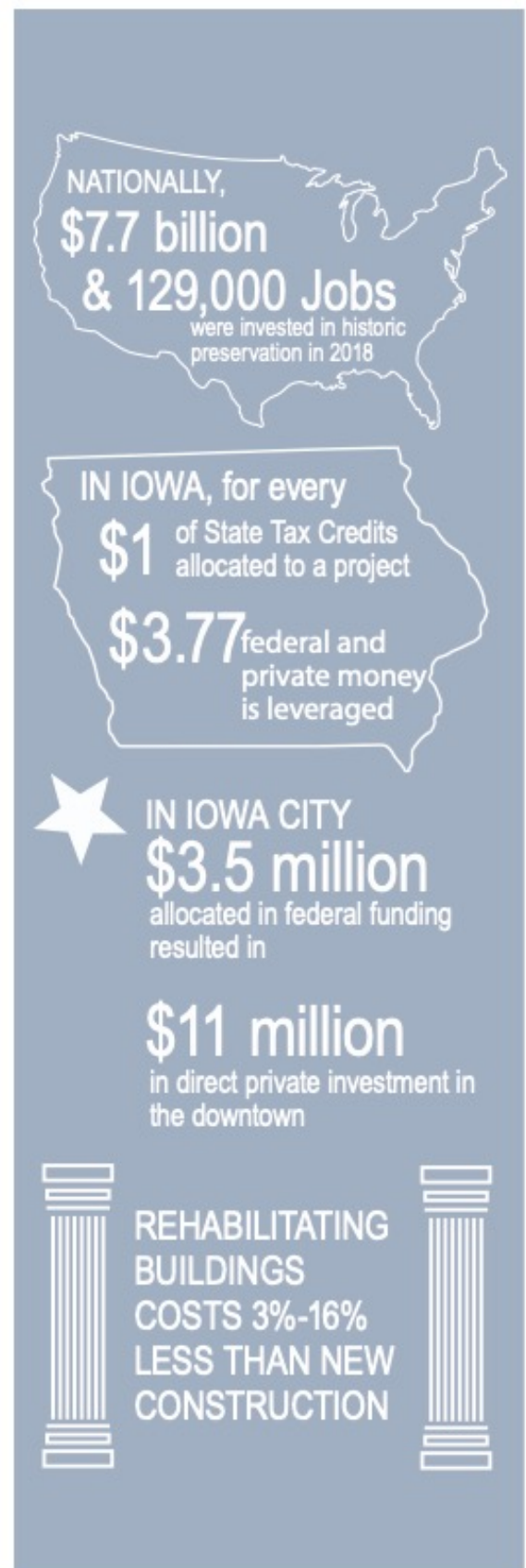
Construction waste from the demolition of older buildings and the resources required to construct “greener” replacements is estimated to make up 40% of all landfill volumes. In Seattle, a historic firehouse of about 14,000 square feet was slated for demolition (built largely with brick and steel). It would have produced 1,212 tons of waste. This is the equivalent of an individual putting 4.6 pounds of waste in a landfill per day (the per capita average for the US) for 1,444 years and equal to the recycling of 1,972,830 aluminum cans. The energy embodied within existing historic structure, and the energy associated with constructing a new building often have environmental impacts that can take decades to neutralize.

Historic preservation can be used to preserve many types of older structures, not just monumental landmarks

Buildings that are deemed historic by the NRHP are not always those buildings one would suspect. Most buildings that are over 50 years old are eligible for listing if they meet the criteria described by the National Park Service.

Older business districts provide variety and flexibility in commercial space

Studies have shown that streets with a combination of small, old, and new buildings have higher proportions of non-chain restaurants and retailers and a higher proportion of jobs in small businesses. In downtown Iowa City, the same is true as the varied building stock provides opportunity for non-chain retailers to thrive. Additionally, downtown Iowa City contains a high concentration of non-chain restaurants and retailers when compared to newer commercial development in and around the fringe of the city.



Chapter 2: Historic Preservation Law

This chapter discusses the laws that directly affect historic preservation, especially in the Iowa City context. This chapter will also explore accessibility and the laws that surround it.

Topics:

The Hierarchy of Law: A brief introduction to the layers of legal jurisdiction and how they are structured.

Historic Preservation Act of 1966: A discussion on the main piece of preservation law, and the foundation of historic preservation practice.

Section 106: States the importance of historic preservation in federally funded projects

State Historic Preservation Officer: Describes SHPOs and their form and function

Certified Local Governments: Describes CLGs and their form and function

State Laws on Historic Preservation: Discusses the important state laws regarding historic preservation practice

Local Laws on Historic Preservation: Introduces Iowa City ordinances surrounding historic preservation, giving the local context

Local Historic Districts: Introduces local historic districts and their form and function.

Local Conservation Districts: Introduces local conservation districts and their form and function.

Historic Preservation Commission and Historic Review Process: Describes the HPC, what they are tasked to do, and how they do it.

ADA Standards for Access: A brief introduction to accessibility and the legal framework established around it.

Iowa City Legal Context: Includes a range of legislation and legal history, contextualizing each aspect to the Iowa City local context

Federal Regulations: A brief description and discussion on federal regulations and their application to historic preservation in downtown Iowa City

State Regulations: A brief description and discussion on state regulations and their application to historic preservation in downtown Iowa City

Legal History: A primer on some of the most important and recent cases on accessibility and their impacts on accessibility and historic preservation in Iowa City

Local Reasonable Accommodation Ordinances: A discussion on the impacts of local ordinances

Introduction

Historic preservation laws create the framework through which states, counties, and cities preserve older buildings and community character. This chapter gives an overview of the current historic preservation framework, specifically looking at the interactions between differing levels of government, how the law is applied in Iowa City, and how this framework can be adjusted to better fit the local context and better address other social, environmental, and social values.

The Hierarchy of Law

Laws in the United States are subject to what is referred to as a hierarchy of jurisdiction. This hierarchy serves as a baseline for all laws and must be followed by dictate of the Constitution. This hierarchy consists of three layers of decreasing jurisdictional influence, federal, state, and local. This hierarchy dictates that federal laws hold the highest jurisdiction, meaning that every entity must abide by federal laws. The second tier is state laws, these can be more restrictive than federal laws and can be outside the scope of federal laws, however they cannot be less restrictive or contradict federal laws. The final, and lowest, tier of laws is local laws, these laws can be more restrictive and generally can go beyond the scope of federal and state laws, however they cannot contradict or interfere with state or federal laws. The distinction between levels of power and jurisdiction is important to keep in mind while discussing existing laws, and especially when suggesting new laws and policies.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Historic preservation in the United States is primarily dictated by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The National Historic Preservation Act sets a clear goal for focusing historic preservation as a necessary act and establishes the framework under which much of historic preservation takes place. The three main aspects of the NHPA are the creation of section 106 considerations, the creation of State Historic Preservation Officers which are often referred to as Offices (SHPO),¹⁰ the creation and designation of Certified Local Governments (CLG).¹¹ Keeping with the hierarchy of jurisdiction, this report will discuss them in order of jurisdictional importance.

What is Section 106?

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 ensures that all agencies (federal, state, and local) take preservation values into consideration when proposing or financing a project that may affect historic properties and involve federal funding.¹²

¹⁰ National Historic Preservation Act 1966, 54 U.S.C. § 302303 (1966)

¹¹ National Historic Preservation Act 1966, 54 U.S.C. § 302505 (1966)

¹² National Historic Preservation Act 1966, 54 U.S.C. § 306108 (1966)

This means that all federally funded projects are required to take into account impacts those projects have on the historic character of a building, site, or district for which they are being used. Throughout the process, federal agencies consult with State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) and their staff to assess the potential impacts each project has on historic structures. It is important to remember that historic does not simply mean old; historic has a set of requirements and characteristics established by the NHPA and should not be used when talking about all old buildings.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

The authors of the NHPA wanted to establish a national standard for historic preservation in order to expedite the process and unify it under one framework. This act attempts to balance federal authority with the power of states and SHPO's. The purpose of the SHPO is to assist in the creation and implementation of historic preservation practices and legislation in a given state or legal territory. The State Historic Preservation Officers are usually appointed by the governor or through election. For the purpose of this report SHPO will refer to the historic preservation office as a whole.

The SHPO is also responsible for assisting Certified Local Governments (CLG) in their efforts to practice historic preservation primarily by providing technical assistance and allocating funding. In Iowa City, the SHPO is responsible for ensuring that all applications for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) meet the necessary requirements. The SHPO also provides technical assistance and oversees the rehabilitation process for properties applying for state administered funding opportunities. The SHPO is tasked with a number of objectives including, but not necessarily limited to:¹³

- ▶ Conducting a comprehensive survey of historic properties
- ▶ Maintaining an inventory of historic properties
- ▶ Administering state programs of federal assistance
- ▶ Identifying and nominating eligible properties to the NRHP
- ▶ Advising and assisting federal, state and local governments in matters of historic preservation
- ▶ Preparing and implementing a statewide historic preservation plan
- ▶ Providing public information, education, training, and technical assistance
- ▶ Working with local governments in the development of local historic preservation programs and help them become CLGs
- ▶ Providing consultation for federal undertakings under the Section 106 provision of the NHPA

Certified Local Governments

Certified Local Governments (CLG) are municipalities that have been recognized as working towards the national and state goals of historic preservation. Upon receiving CLG designation, these communities are given access to a number of resources that they would not otherwise have, these range from financial support to technical

¹³ National Historic Preservation Act 1966, 54 U.S.C. § 302303 (1966)

training and materials. CLGs work closely with the SHPO in order to ensure that historic preservation is being done while keeping the federal requirements and ethos in mind. Requirements for becoming a CLG differ slightly between the states, however the general requirements are as follows:¹⁴

- ▶ Establish a qualified historic preservation commission
- ▶ Enforce appropriate state or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties. In most cases, this is done in the form of a local ordinance
- ▶ Maintain a system for the survey and inventory of local historic resources
- ▶ Facilitate public participation in the local preservation, including participation in the NRHP listing process
- ▶ Follow additional requirements outlined in the State's CLG Procedures. Each state has *Procedures for Certification* that may establish additional requirements for becoming a CLG in that state

Iowa City is a CLG and follows the requirements listed above. In the case of this report, the consideration for nomination and creation of a federally recognized historic district in downtown Iowa City hinges on the information gained through the 2018 Historic Survey and Evaluation of the Iowa City Central Business District (SEICBD). This survey was conducted as a part of the continued requirements of CLG status, being one part in the greater collection of documentation on local historic resources.

State Laws

With the passage of the NHPA, states have played a larger role in historic preservation. Iowa contains the highest number of CLGs within a state meaning many cities in Iowa already meet the standards outlined above.¹⁵ Within state historic preservation laws in Iowa, a majority of the legislation involves considerations for counties—and by extension unincorporated area—and how historic preservation is to be handled with considerations towards Native and Indigenous peoples. Perhaps the two most important aspects of state legislation when it comes to historic preservation are specific criteria for Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and the limitations placed on historic preservation commissions. When it comes to TIF, the inclusion of the “economic development area”¹⁶ allows for a greater potential use of TIF as a funding source for historic preservation rehabilitation projects. This is due to the relaxed requirements for the area to be considered “blighted,” a term used to describe areas with higher levels of disinvestment and decay. The second, and probably more impactful, legislation concerning preservation is the restriction on historic preservation commissions to the exterior of

¹⁴ National Historic Preservation Act 1966, 54 U.S.C. § 302503 (1966)

¹⁵ “Certified Local Governments”

¹⁶ Iowa Code § 403.5

historic sites and buildings. Certain exceptions for drastic change in use exist, however this effectively limits the considerations to the exterior of the site in question.¹⁷

Iowa City Ordinances: Historic and Conservation Districts

As with any other municipality, Iowa City has a set of codes and ordinances which guide both development and redevelopment within their community. The previous section discussed the requirements to be a Certified Local Government, giving municipalities access the full range of benefits associated with historic preservation. To be a CLG, a city must enact historic preservation ordinances. Iowa City Codes and Ordinances contain provisions for historic preservation, which are in the form of local historic and conservation districts. Both local districts have distinct features and are useful tools in regulating the character of neighborhoods in Iowa City.

City codes and ordinances contain strict requirements for how (re)development is to be done within the city, this ranges from zoning to specific building requirements. The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan has identified historic preservation as an important goal for the city. In practice, this has made historic preservation a factor that is considered whenever requirements are placed on the (re)development of property within Iowa City. This includes a historic preservation fund, potential waivers for certain requirements such as setbacks, frontage, signage, Floor Area Ratio (FAR), and many other property characteristics. In addition to the potential waivers listed above, historic preservation can be used in certain zones to receive additional bonuses.¹⁸ These benefits and incentives are subject to change based on City decisions, additional information on the specifics of these incentives can be found on the City's website. Those with additional questions regarding the specifics of the process should contact the City with any further questions.

There are also considerations for what is to be done in the case of the remediation of dangerous conditions,¹⁹ as well as for the prevention of demolition by neglect.²⁰ Prevention of demolition by neglect mandates the upkeep of a property which contributes to a local conservation, local historic district, or is eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. This legislation aims to protect against decay, deterioration, and structural defects by the owner or individual/entity which has custody over the property by levying fees against allowing properties to fall into disrepair, thereby losing their historic character. Consideration for historic preservation can occur with any property that is in the NRHP, but also occurs in what the city ordinance calls local historic districts and local conservation districts. Both of these districts place additional requirements on the properties within them, requiring a historical review process for any substantive change.

¹⁷ Iowa Code § 303.28-29

¹⁸ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-2B-7

¹⁹ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-3B-6

²⁰ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-3B-7

The Difference Between Local and National Register Historic Districts

When discussing historic districts, it is important to be cognizant of the type of district that is being discussed. Historic districts at both the federal and local level differ greatly in their form and function. When discussing historical districts this report will differentiate the two by referring to all Iowa City historic districts as “local historic district(s),” and by referring to all National Register Historic Districts as “National Register Historic District(s).” These two types of districts are both used to designate a specific area as having historical significance. The National Register Historic District—which is listed on the NRHP—is primarily honorific, while the local historic district contains both an honorific and regulatory aspect. These two designations are not mutually exclusive, and can both be applied to the same area, only the local historic district contains the authority to regulate processes that might endanger the historic significance of the district and the structures within.

Local Historic Districts

Local Historic districts in Iowa City are considered an overlay zone, which is a type of zoning used to include additional requirements onto an area and as such apply additional scrutiny to (re)development within the zone. By definition, overlay zones cannot be the only zone and are instead added to conventional land use zones such as residential or commercial. The historic district overlay (OHD)²¹ is used to designate both local historic landmarks and historic districts, the primary goal of a OHD is to maintain the “existing character of historic neighborhoods and preserve the historic integrity of the resource.”²² The establishment of a OHD is split between two bodies, the City Council, and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC); the HPC brings forward the recommendation of a OHD and the City Council reviews the specifics of the recommendation and either approves or denies the request. Properties listed in the NRHP, but that are not within a local historic district, do not have to follow the requirements laid out by the establishment of an OHD. According to Iowa City ordinances historic districts are contiguous and geographically cohesive areas which possess a significant concentration of historic resources which meet both criteria a and b, as well as at least one of either c, d, e, or f of the following six criteria.

- a. Are significant to American and/or Iowa City history, architecture, archaeology and culture; and
- b. Possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship; and
- c. Are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- d. Are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

²¹ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-3B-1

²² Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-3B-1

- e. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction; or represent the work of a master; or possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- f. Have yielded or may likely yield information important in prehistory or history

Iowa City currently has eight local historic districts which include: the Woodlawn, East College Street, Brown Street, Summit Street, Longfellow, College Green, Northside, and Jefferson Street historic districts. Each of these districts is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These districts are almost entirely comprised of residential uses.

Local Conservation Districts

Similar in form and function to the local historic district, a local conservation district is another type of overlay zone which is used to assist in the preservation of historic places in Iowa City.²³ Unlike the local historic district, however, a local conservation district is much more focused on maintaining the architectural and aesthetic qualities of historic neighborhoods and structures. Similar to historic districts, conservation districts require the same method of creation, being recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) or Planning and Zoning Commission (PNZ) and approved or denied by the City Council.

Conservation districts act as a sort of transitory phase between not having any historic preservation protection and designation as a local historic district. This means that the requirements for the number of properties of historic importance within these zones is lesser than that of historic districts. However, this does not mean that all local conservation districts will eventually become local historic districts. In order for buildings to be considered to contribute to the creation of a conservation district they must be at least 50 years old and be of sufficient quality, they must also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ▶ They represent the traditional character of Iowa City neighborhoods through architectural characteristics, building scale, building setback and streetscape design; or
- ▶ They exemplify a pattern of neighborhood settlement or development significant to the cultural history or tradition of Iowa City; or
- ▶ They represent unique or unusual physical character that creates a distinctiveness

Iowa City has five local conservation districts: The College Hill, Governor-Lucas Street, Clark Street, Dearborn Street, and Goosetown-Horace Mann Conservation Districts. These conservation districts are also almost entirely comprised of residential uses.

²³ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-3B-2

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of Iowa City consists of at least seven members, who are appointed by the mayor and serve a three-year term.²⁴ The purpose of the HPC is to help promote the benefits of historic preservation in maintaining and celebrating the historic aspects of Iowa City through the education, protection, and highlighting of historic sites, neighborhoods, and buildings throughout Iowa City.

Historic Review: The importance and process

One of the most important tasks given to the HPC is the historic review process, which is a required task for any property within either a local historic or local conservation district, and all historic landmarks, to complete before they may be (re)developed.²⁵ This process is often limited to exterior modifications, but may also include considerations to a number of other exterior factors, i.e. construction of additional access. A historic review is triggered whenever “a material change that requires a regulated permit” is proposed, and comes in three levels: a minor, intermediate, or major review. A material change is classified as “any act that adds new materials or otherwise modifies an exterior feature of a property,” normal repairs or maintenance which do not result in a material change are not required to go through a historic review process.

Approval Criteria

Approval criteria for the historic review process is contained within the Iowa City Municipal Code.²⁶ Information on the pertinent documents and their requirements can also be found in the Iowa City Historic Preservation Handbook.²⁷ This handbook includes a basic overview of the process, similar to this chapter, and makes mention to a number of other documents which guide the historic preservation process in Iowa City. Among the documents mentioned in the Handbook are, the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, Iowa City Guidelines for Historic Preservation, and individual district guidelines. The specific documents which guide the approval process differ depending on what type of property is being reviewed, as well as whether it is in a local historic district, a local historic landmark, or in a conservation district. If a historic review is completed and the permit is denied, the aggrieved person may appeal decisions made by the commission in historic districts or with historic landmarks to the city council and may appeal decisions made in conservation districts to the board of adjustments.

²⁴ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-7A-3

²⁵ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-3B-3

²⁶ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-8E-2

²⁷ City of Iowa City, *Iowa City Historic Preservation Handbook*.

Certification of Appropriateness

Following the historic review process one of the possible outcomes can be the granting of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA).²⁸ This certificate indicates that the proposed changes are in fact a material change, and that they comply with the requirements for approval of the permit. A CoA entitles the individual to complete the actions detailed in the permit; however, it does not give permission to conduct any actions which were not contained within the request given to the HPC. This means that a CoA must be sought for any additional or future material changes to be made to the historical site.

Certification of No Material Effect

A Certification of No Material Effect (CoNME) is a certification which indicates that the action which is to be undertaken will have no material change to the historic characteristics of the site, building, or district and can be completed without further approval.²⁹ This certification is a companion certificate to the CoA and is given when a project does not require a CoA but is nonetheless approved by the commission.

Certification of Economic Hardship

In the case of a historic review being denied, the owner of record can apply for a Certificate of Economic Hardship (CoEH).³⁰ An economic hardship is determined if: the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if required to comply with the requirements and standards of historic preservation, the owner's situation is unique or particular to the property in question and is not shared by other landlords or due to general conditions of the neighborhood, or the hardship is not of the property owner's or applicants own making. The burden of proof for an economic hardship is on the applicant.

ADA Standards for Access

The United States, on the whole, is due to experience rapid demographic changes. As the Baby Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) gets older, the portion of Americans over age 65 is expected to double by 2030.³¹ Additionally, it is estimated that one in five Americans suffer from a disability and this number will only continue to grow as Americans age.³² This trend presents new challenges to our current infrastructure

²⁸ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-7A-3

²⁹ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-8E-2

³⁰ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-8E-3

³¹ Engel, "The Americans with Disabilities Act," pg. 301

³² Ibid pg. 299

and requires rapid adaptations to provide better accessibility services in every sector. The ADA of 1990 was passed into federal law to provide civil rights protections for those with disabilities, whether they be physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities, and those who have a history of such impairment or are perceived by others to have such an impairment.³³

Historic preservation faces a unique challenge when it comes to accessibility standards. Published by the National Park Service, The Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties provides standards for preserving historic properties but does little to address issues of accessibility. Properties in downtown Iowa City present challenges to accessibility because of their scale and size. The spatial constraints of buildings downtown require creativity and patience in order to promote accessibility for all people to these historic resources. In stakeholder interviews, property and business owners expressed a willingness to make accommodations but found that following the current requirements for a fully ADA compliant elevator would significantly impede the economic function of the space, making accommodations cost prohibitive. The primary focus of this section is on Title III for ADA compliance as it pertains to accessibility and commercial space.

Federal Regulations

Since its adoption in 1990, the ADA has made immense progress in promoting access for all people to public resources, commercial properties, and other facilities. Title III of ADA regulates the standards and codes that must be followed for commercial spaces in the case of alterations, elevator installation, historic preservation, and other standards.

Alterations: According to Title III, any commercial alterations made after January 1992, must be made accessible to the *maximum extent feasible* for those with disabilities, including those in wheelchairs. Alterations are defined as activities such as form remodels, renovations, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and historic restoration, but does not include normal maintenance such as roofing, painting, asbestos removal, and mechanical and electrical system changes. Title III describes maximum extent feasible as situations where the nature of an existing facility makes it virtually impossible to comply fully with accessibility standards with the proposed planned alterations. Any feature alteration that may be made to increase accessibility should be made but does not have to be done for all class of disability. In particular, this would mean if alterations could be made to accommodate those with crutches but not those who use a wheelchair, the alterations to allow access for those with crutches would be sufficient to satisfy ADA requirements.³⁴

Elevator Exemption: Title III does not require properties to install elevators to increase accessibility. ADA requirements for commercial property elevators only apply to buildings over three stories or those with more

³³ "Introduction to ADA"

³⁴ Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III § 36.402 Alterations (1990)

than 3,000ft² per story.³⁵ While not all buildings downtown necessarily meet this criterion, many do. Certain building uses, however, require elevator access regardless of building characteristics. For example, professional healthcare providers cannot locate their offices in buildings without elevator access without also violating ADA standards.³⁶

Historic Preservation: As mentioned previously, properties listed in the NRHP are only required to comply with ADA standards to the maximum extent feasible. According to Title III, if no accommodations can be made without threatening or destroying historic significance of the facility then there should be alternative forms of access provided.³⁷ Within downtown, this would only apply to historic properties in question; some alternatives to physical access include using audiovisual materials and devices to display historic properties, or assigning a guide to individuals with disabilities for assistance moving through non-accessible portions of historic properties.³⁸ Unfortunately, because many of the properties in the downtown contain commercial uses that are not necessarily related to the historical use of the building, these alternatives to physical access may not serve any real purpose. For example, providing audiovisual material on a restaurant that is in a historic structure, may not serve a purpose as the property is not frequented for historical merit so much as current commercial usage.

State Regulations in Iowa

Iowa's own state regulations mirror that of federal ADA standards for access as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973).³⁹ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in both public and private programs or activities that receive federal aid.⁴⁰

A combination of federal and state funds and tax credits can be used for historic preservation activities, but preservation activities are not held to the same standards for access as new construction projects. Because of the way the NHPA and ADA are composed, federal funds may be used to restore structures that are not fully accessible, and do not require them to become fully accessible.

³⁵ Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III § 36.404 Alterations: Elevator Exemption. (1990)

³⁶ Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III § 36.404 Alterations: Elevator Exemption (1990)

³⁷ Americans with Disabilities Act, Title III § 36.405 Alterations: Historic preservation (1990)

³⁸ Cullinane, "Maintaining and Repairing Old and Historic Buildings," pg. 222

³⁹ Iowa Judicial Branch, *Disability Accommodation*.

⁴⁰ "A Comparison of ADA, IDEA, and Section 504"

Legal History

The issue of access to historic resources has been litigated in a few high-profile cases, however a definitive answer has yet to be gained for the right to access in the context of historic structures. One of the first attempts at remedying this conflict was made by the Tenth Circuit Court in the case of *Colorado Cross Disability Coalition v. Herman Family Ltd. Partnership (2001)*. In this case, the plaintiff filed suit to have four wheelchair ramps added to a historic block of commercial real estate. This suit resulted in the inception of the “Colorado Cross Test” which shifts the burden of proof onto plaintiffs in ADA litigation to establish that the barriers that prevent accessibility exist and the methods to remove them are readily available.⁴¹

Another example of litigation came out of Boston, Massachusetts, where NRHP sites are commonplace. The issue of historic preservation and accessibility came to a head in the case of *Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay v. Federal Transit Administration (2006)*. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) was using funds from the Federal Transportation Authority (FTA) to upgrade accessibility in a train stations at Copley Square with an elevator. In this case, the construction also had to adhere to National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) standards in order to receive funding. Two NRHP properties (Boston Public Library and the Old South Church) were in construction zones for the proposed elevator. The Neighborhood Association brought the case forward to stop construction in the name of preservation. However, state courts and the First Circuit Court ruled that the Neighborhood Association was unable to establish irreparable harm, undue hardship, or the injunction on behalf of public interest. This case did not set a precedent in other cases and is viewed as an example of one in a long line of inconsistent federal and state decisions on preservation and accessibility.⁴²

More recently the case of *Molski v. Foley Estates Vineyard and Winery, LLC (2008)* in the Ninth Circuit Court shifted the burden of proof to defendants to prove excessive cost and difficulty in removing the barrier to access but only applies in cases where the defendant argues that modification cannot be readily achieved because it would violate the historic nature of the property.⁴³ The legal history indicates that historic preservation and accessibility are often at odds as social values and have differences in feasibility. At this point, lower courts often apply the Colorado Cross Test when buildings are listed in the NRHP and little progress has been made to apply different standards to legal proceedings.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Engel, “The Americans with Disabilities Act,” pg. 309

⁴² Ibid. pg. 303-306

⁴³ Ibid. pg. 309

⁴⁴ Ibid. pg. 310

Local Reasonable Accommodation Ordinances & ADA Statements

The zoning designation of all non-public buildings in the downtown of this report fall under Central Business (CB10) designation with several local historic landmarks which require different consideration than residential properties for accessibility. However, Iowa City is liable to adhere to federal and state regulations for ADA access and has done so. Iowa City has implemented an ADA grievance procedure that designates a staff person to review and respond to any ADA related complaints filed.⁴⁵ Iowa City building code does not currently stipulate special requirements for historic buildings undergoing alteration. The building code simply requires compliance with current state and federal ADA standards for new construction. Therefore, owners of historic buildings are not currently required by city code to make their buildings accessible.

⁴⁵ City of Iowa City, *Accessibility Statement*.

Chapter 3: Social Values

This chapter identifies social values drawn from City documents and establishes ways in which historic preservation can enhance and effectively connect with public engagement, arts and culture, and education and craftsmanship.

Topics:

Introduction to Community Development and Historic Preservation: Discusses the connections between historic preservation and community development on a fundamental basis

Population and Demographic Change: Discusses trends in population and demographic changes and how they affect community development and historic preservation in Iowa City

Iowa City Community Development Goals and Objectives: Discusses how the goals defined by the City can and do connect to the historic preservation process

Public Engagement: Case Study on Community as a Campus Chicago, Illinois

Arts and Culture: Case Study on Arts and Culture in Bloomington, Indiana

Education and Craftsmanship Support: Case Study on Dubuque, Iowa

Interview Outcomes: Discusses interviews with stakeholders, preservationists, and individuals involved in community-based organizations

Recommendations:

Hire Full-time Preservation Planner: Hire a full-time preservation planner to better equip the City to address the connections established in this report.

Create a set of Public Engagement Plans for Historic Preservation: Create a short-and long-term historic preservation public engagement plan.

Establish Heritage Tourism: Create and expand heritage tourism programs in Iowa City that reflect the architecture and social heritage of Iowa City, including of groups that have historically been underrepresented.

Establish Educational Programs: Create educational programs with the goal of engaging local historic districts, local conservation districts, schools, community and neighborhood centers in historic preservation. This would include discussions with Kirkwood Community College on re-instating their Historic Preservation Certificate.

Create an Arts and Culture Commission: Establish a commission on arts and culture for Iowa City, and create a support staff position through the City.

Conduct a Survey: Create and administer a survey that aims to develop data on the need and availability of historic preservation craftsmanship.

Provide Assistance for Non-profits: Provide support to Friends of Historic Preservation and other non-profit organizations to plan and implement historic rehabilitation training programs that target different community groups.

Introduction

The value of historic preservation has been clearly recognized, especially following the introduction of the City's first historic preservation plan of 1992. The plan's mission statement established that, "Iowa City and its citizens seek to identify, protect, and preserve the community's historic resources in order to enhance the quality of life and economic well-being of current and future generations."⁴⁶ The need to preserve the City's historic resources is also recognized across many other City documents, planning visions, and processes. The 2018 report of the Historic Survey and Evaluation of the Central Business District (SEICBD) points to the pressures historic resources encounter in the face of "build up" trends. Controversy over the construction of the Plaza Towers/Hotel Vetro built in 2004, and the early construction of the Vogel House, led to public backlash and calls for measures to protect historic resources and the character they create in the community.⁴⁷ The urgency of addressing the protection of the community's historic sites and structures is expressed through the recent loss of the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks (BPOE), a building that was listed as a contributing resource in the SEICBD.⁴⁸ This Colonial Revival structure was built in 1909 and was a contributing resource to a possible NRHP district. Without local protections this building, and the history it represents, has been lost to demolition and redevelopment.

⁴⁶ City of Iowa City, *Historic Preservation Plan*. (p.16)

⁴⁷ City of Iowa City, *Historic Preservation Survey and Evaluation Update of the Central Business District*. (p.12)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (p.35)

Pressures and occurrences similar to the events surrounding the BPOE have been observed across the nation, concerning historic preservationists and raising questions on the validity of the current historic preservation toolkit. In the article, “Why Historic Preservation Needs a New Approach,” author Patrice Frey points to the surge of interest in historic districts as young professionals have developed a preference for walkable neighborhoods and proximity to city amenities. She draws attention to the pressing need for change in both historic preservation standards, as specified in the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and the methods of financing historic preservation.⁴⁹ Frey also recognizes that preservation challenges require a multi-disciplinary approach, which takes into consideration communities’ varying social needs. Since 2000 there has been a focus on the potential for a National Register Historic District in downtown Iowa City. This proposed district covers the study area of this project—the area covered in the SEICBD—which includes a rich stock of historic resources including examples of Greek Revival, Late Victorian era Commercial Italianate, Renaissance, Romanesque, Classical Revival, Georgian, and Modern style building designs.⁵⁰

Historic preservation has a role that can, and must, be played to enhance current and future economic, social, and cultural aspects of the communities with the combined efforts of researchers, policymakers, and planners. That being said, the nexus between historic preservation and community development has yet to be largely explored. Ryberg-Webster and Kinahan point out that contemporary historic preservation focuses largely on the economic gains of historic preservation and evaluation of the impact of historic destination on property values and sales prices, creating a dire need for more empirical studies on the contemporary relationship between preservation and urban revitalization.⁵¹ The

Figure 3.2: The BPOE contributing building at 325 E Washington Street currently bought and demolished for redevelopment – top picture taken 02/07/2020



⁴⁹ Frey, “Why Historic Preservation Needs a New Approach”

⁵⁰ City of Iowa City, *Historic Preservation Survey and Evaluation Update of the Central Business District*. (p.39)

⁵¹ Ryberg-Webster and Kinahan, “Historic Preservation and Urban Revitalization in the Twenty-First Century,” p.123

sense of place and community that is often touted as a value connected to historic places may create comparative advantage for communities. Sohmer argued that authenticity offered by historic buildings is marketable in a continuously changing and developing environment; whereas Listokin and Lahr point out that communities' historic legacy and their preservation activities can represent a competitive advantage in which these communities can plan their future development.⁵² It has been said that, "there is an intuitive spatial overlap between older, inner-city neighborhoods that likely contain historic buildings and the locus of community development activity."⁵³

Half a century ago, Jane Jacobs argued that infusing new uses into older spaces can generate diversity.⁵⁴ This occurs, according to Jacobs, out of the capacity of places to serve multiple primary functions, thus engendering vitality. It is important to emphasize Jacobs's point that visitors and people of the city act as the major source of diversity and vitality—through their repeated and continuous visits and use of downtown for their leisure time—as opposed to the businesses and residents who occupy these spaces. Community development, as it is used in this document, refers to policies, actions, and activities that aim to address issues of community diversity, inclusivity, and cohesiveness. These issues can be addressed through the development of community shared cultural, recreational, historical, and economic resources, and making use of the existing historical fabric of downtown should assist in synthesizing the goals of both historic preservation and community development.

Community development considerations can provide social cohesiveness, stronger sense of place, and civic pride amongst residents, and can create a locus for community activities in the study area. The considerations can also include recognition of the various communities—past and present—that have lived in the Iowa City area and that therefore comprise the historic legacy of the community, a legacy that the downtown, as the community's civic center, is ideally suited to recognize. This chapter highlights some demographic patterns important to the context of historic preservation and community development. Further, it looks into areas with which Iowa City can use historic preservation to advance Iowa City's community development. The chapter examines the role of public engagement, arts and culture, and support for historic preservation education and rehabilitation craftsmanship.

⁵² Ibid. p.127

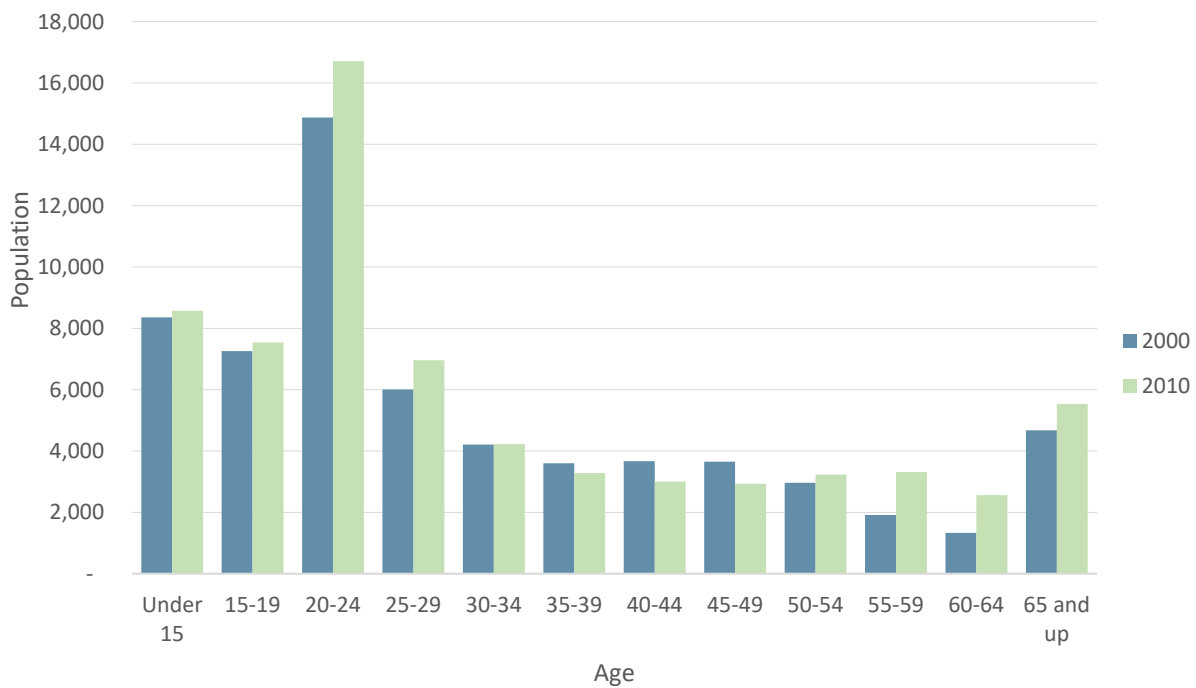
⁵³ Ibid. p.128

⁵⁴ Jacobs, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities," p.158

Population and Demographic Changes

Iowa City ranks among the top cities in the state in terms of population growth. The Iowa City 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update (IC2030) points to 2010 Census data which indicates that nearly a third of the City’s population represents individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 and this segment increased by 10% from 2000 to 2010. This is a group that is influenced by the university’s enrollment. Similar increases have occurred with individuals aged 25 to 34 during that same period. It’s worth noting that the only groups which have been declining in population are individuals between the ages of 35 to 54—IC2030 named the “family years” group—which declined by 13.5% between 2000 and 2010, and children ages 10 to 14 years which had an 8% drop during the same years.

Figure 3.3: Population by Age in 2000 And 2010⁵⁵



A report completed by The State Library of Iowa analyzed census data and pointed to an increase in Iowa’s Hispanic, Asian, and African American populations along with an increase in international immigration, which

⁵⁵ U.S. Census

accounted for Iowa's largest population growth between 2010 and 2015.⁵⁶ Recent census estimates indicate that Johnson County's population climbed from 131,339 to 151,260 between 2010 and 2018.⁵⁷ Also, both Iowa City and neighboring Coralville have experienced an increase in their foreign-born population averaging 14.4% and 18% respectively, which is higher than the United States' average of 13.2%.⁵⁸ This data confirms the strong influence of the student population, which is often hailed as one of the city's strengths. However, the proximity of the university's main campus to the study area may pose many challenges. One such issue is students' demand for housing around downtown and the transient nature of college students housing needs—by commonly staying in a single community for a few years and not establishing roots—which conflicts with the community values and needs as reflected in the adjacent neighborhoods to the north and east of downtown.⁵⁹ Also, changing demographics as indicated by this data draws attention to changing cultures emerging in the city, and the importance of including them in the City's community development planning process.

Iowa City Community Development Goals and Objectives

Public Engagement

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody,” Jane Jacobs.⁶⁰

Public engagement is a value repeated across the City's documents. The Community Vision of the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan Update (IC2030) included “promoting opportunities for civic engagement and human development for all who call Iowa City home.”⁶¹ Civic engagement has long been the trend associated with the City's planning as witnessed in *Beyond 2000*, a plan adopted in 1997 that divided the city into ten districts, with

⁵⁶ State Library of Iowa, *Iowa Population Trends and the Future of Your Library*.

⁵⁷ “Social Explorer.”

⁵⁸ U.S. Census Bureau.

⁵⁹ City of Iowa City, *Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan*. p.49

⁶⁰ Jacobs, “The Death and Life of Great American Cities”

⁶¹ City of Iowa City, *IC2030: Comprehensive Plan Update*. p.7

planners engaging the public and assisting districts' residents to formulate their individual visions and goals.⁶² Also, the SEICBD recognizes the role of community in the planning process as a critical component.⁶³ The SEICBD's public engagement process included three presentations: the first provided an overview of the SEICBD and a discussion about the impact of new development and loss of identity due to developmental pressures; the second was a presentation focused on concerns related to business and property owners, and the final presented the findings and recommendations. The list of participants mostly included County and City officials, downtown businesses owners, and representatives of the downtown district.⁶⁴

For historic preservation in downtown to have the broad public support that Patrice Frey envisions in her article, it is imperative that as many people as possible, from diverse backgrounds, be brought into the process of not only evaluating the historic buildings and spaces in downtown but in constructing the historical narratives that mark downtown Iowa City as the civic center of an historic and varied community.

As an example, the iconic Englert Theatre, owes its survival to the public engagement efforts made by a group of citizens during the early 2000s. This group worked hard to convince the City of Iowa City to purchase and hold the property in a trust until funds could be secured to renovate it.

Iowa City's historic preservation goals necessitate strong public engagement tools that can effectively communicate the message of historic preservation—as a public good—to the community at large. Indeed, the current efforts of the City to establish a National Register Historic District in the downtown is an attempt to preserve cultural heritage and prevent the negative externalities associated with the loss of historic properties through demolition and new development. For example, Goal 4 of the Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan (ICHPP) of 2008 discusses provisions for technical assistance, Goal 5 discusses heightening historic preservation's public awareness, and Goal 7 focuses on maintaining and strengthening historic preservation support. The issues addressed in these goals require the community's wider participation as articulated by Ivis Garcia in his study on the neighborhood of Humboldt Park in Chicago. Garcia looks at community engagement as an “ongoing process of facilitation of community members, especially the underrepresented groups, in designing their neighborhoods and cities.”⁶⁵

Garcia's commentary is supported by the 2018 award-winning book, *Constructing the Dynamo of Dixie: Race, Urban Planning, and Cosmopolitanism in Chattanooga, Tennessee*, by Courtney Elizabeth Knapp. Knapp

⁶² “Iowa City Comprehensive and District Planning.”

⁶³ City of Iowa City, *Historic Preservation Survey and Evaluation Update of the Central Business District*. p.4

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.5

⁶⁵ Ivis, “Community As A Campus,” p. 522

contrasts the “cosmopolitanism” of city efforts to attract the middle and upper classes to Chattanooga (what others call gentrification) with what she calls “diasporic placemaking,” which are efforts to recognize that city’s diaspora—including Cherokees who were forced to embark from Chattanooga on the Trail of Tears in the 1830s and African Americans, many as slaves, who came to Chattanooga both before and after the Civil War. She cites the efforts, some successful, some not so much, by Chattanoogaans to mark through art and preservation the historic contribution and heritages of these groups.

In the same way, as planners and public leaders contemplate the historic character of downtown Iowa City, they should seek to broaden public interest and engagement in historic preservation by broadening it to include not only the extant buildings in downtown, but also the central importance of downtown Iowa City to the lived experience of all Iowa City’s residents past and present. This can and should include the Meskwaki who occupied the Iowa City region just as Indian cessions were forcing them to the west in the 1830s, African Americans who came to Iowa City during and after the Civil War to escape slavery and Jim Crow and later came to Iowa City to attend the University of Iowa, and Mexican immigrants who moved to Iowa City to work for the Rock Island railroad as *traqueros*.

Iowa City’s historic preservation faces important issues that if addressed can create a reinforcement loop between the public engagement process and the advancement of historic preservation goals. First, it is important to identify and create new ways to engage the broader public, especially the groups that have historically been underrepresented in historic preservation such as those just named. Second, it is necessary to explore, identify, include, and honor cultural and architectural elements that contributed to the history of the city with a focus on historically underrepresented groups. As noted, there is much to be learned about the important African American history and Mexican history in Iowa City. And in addition to the Meskwaki settlements near Iowa City, it is also important to recognize that in 1856 in the Iowa Capitol, adjacent to downtown, the Iowa legislature voted to permit the Meskwaki to purchase land in Tama County at a time that California was seeking to exterminate Indians. The Iowa Capitol is also where the state legislature in 1857 adopted the state’s current constitution, whose first section states “All men and women are, by nature, free and equal...” thereby establishing a heritage of equality under the law that resonates to this day. Third, it is also necessary to reintroduce heritage tourism to reflect the contributions of the City’s diverse history and culture, support economic development, and to increase awareness and support to historic preservation. Lastly, attention should be paid to increasing educational opportunities that target the public in general, and future generations specifically, is important to draw the city’s future with broader involvement in historic preservation.

Returning to the goal of diasporic placemaking, it therefore should be the goal of historic preservation in Iowa City to encourage broad public participation by recognizing the various groups such as the Meskwaki, African

Americans, and Mexicans who have played an important if not fully recognize role in the city's history—a history that is reflected in a downtown that is the civic center of the community.

The first goal of the ICHPP of 2008 relates to identifying historic resources significant to Iowa City's past, whereas another goal is focused on establishing and supporting heritage tourism efforts. Both are important and can be used in support of the City's cultural and educational efforts, as well as functioning as an economic development tool. The City's historic preservation staff points to funding and staffing shortages which threaten to continue to slow advancement in these goals.⁶⁶

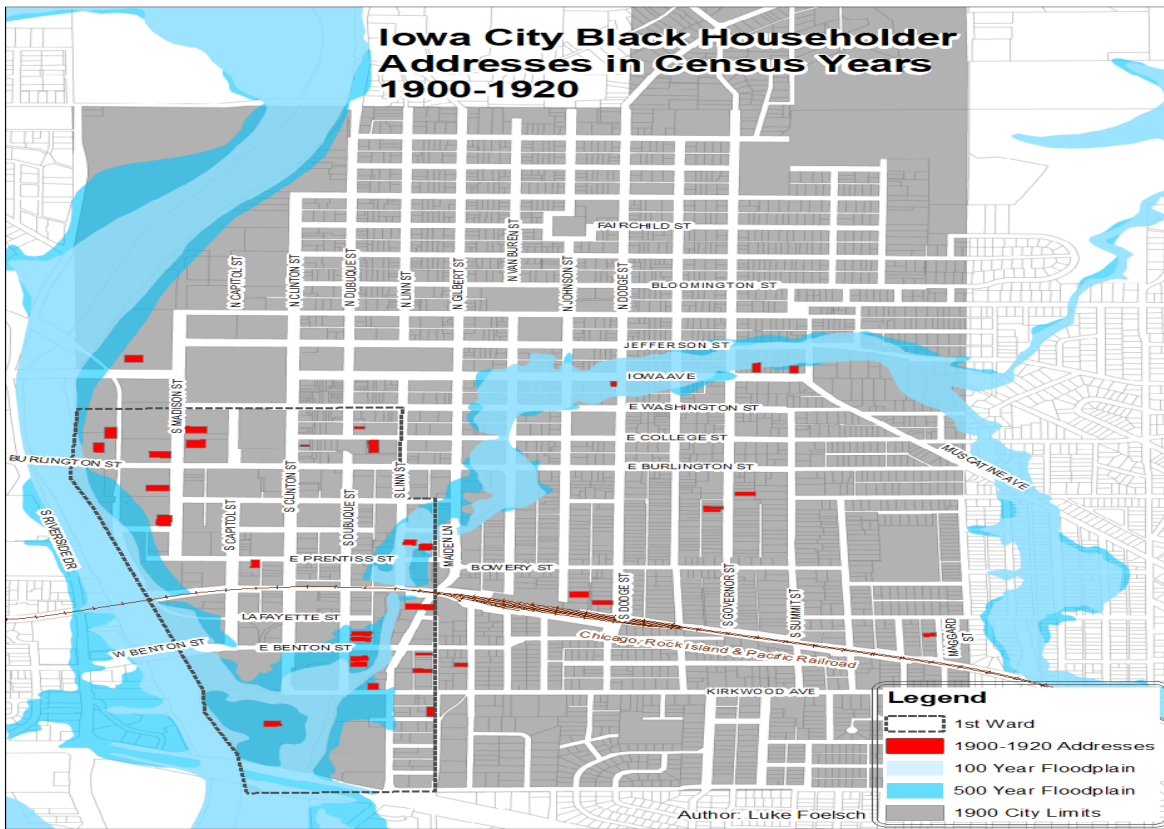
Iowa City's African American history is currently honored with two historic buildings that are local historic landmarks and individually listed in the NRHP. The Iowa Federation Home located at 942 Iowa Avenue and the Tate Arms building located at 914 S. Dubuque Street have historic markers to honor their history that goes to the first two decades of the nineteenth century. During that time, the University of Iowa witnessed an enrollment spike that brought African American students to the City. Students who were challenged with housing segregation, both in the city and at the university, with its policies that prohibited African American dormitory occupancy. Students found relief in the rooming houses owned and operated by African Americans, private businesses, and fraternities during the late 1940s. These two buildings are important because they are the only known and recognized structures that highlight this important history. A weak connection to this history can be found in the building located at 630 S. Johnson Street, which was occupied by a chapter of the black fraternity Kappa Alpha Psi for a single year (1919–1920).⁶⁷ Short's Shoe Shine, at 18 S. Clinton, was owned and operated by Haywood Short, an African American, between 1921 and 1946. The existence of this business and building was important for African American students who worked there while completing their education.⁶⁸ The Bethel A.M.E. Church located at 411 S. Governor Street is another historic property listed in the NRHP for its significance in ethnic heritage and black social history.

⁶⁶ Interview with Iowa City Historic Preservation Planner.

⁶⁷ City of Iowa City. National Register Nomination for Tate Arms. <https://www8.iowa-city.org/WebLink/0/edoc/1899161/Tate%20Arms%20NRHP%20nomination.pdf>

⁶⁸ City of Iowa City. National Register Nomination for Tate Arms. <https://www8.iowa-city.org/WebLink/0/edoc/1899161/Tate%20Arms%20NRHP%20nomination.pdf>

Figure 3.4: Iowa City Black Households 1900 - 1920⁶⁹



These historic structures are part of a large stock of historic places lost due to unrecognition, demolition, and redevelopment. The City’s historic preservation staff described an unexplored history of Mexican families who arrived to serve the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific-Railroad Company starting in 1917 and settled in the areas north and south of the railroad track between Dodge and Dubuque Street. Issues with a lack of funding and staffing were raised, which reduce the ability of historic preservation to adequately identify and protect these historic resources. A member of the Historic Preservation Commission interviewed commented that in order for historic preservation to function in a higher capacity funds and staffing have to be considered; “I feel that a volunteer commission just isn’t enough to meet all the related goals of the community.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Map prepared by Luke Foelsch, City of Iowa City. <https://www.icgov.org/project/preserving-black-history-iowa-city-tate-arms-and-iowa-federation-home>

⁷⁰ Interview with Historic Preservation Commission Member.

Case Study: Community as a Campus, Chicago, Illinois

Humboldt Park is a community of about 65,000 residents in the west side of Chicago. The community has a strong Puerto Rican identity that was formed when the early waves of Puerto Ricans arrived in mainland United States during the late 1940s. The presence of Puerto Ricans accelerated during the 1960s and 1970s following the urban renewal efforts of the City of Chicago which displaced Puerto Rican families to west side Chicago from the north side (35 percent of neighborhood residents are Hispanic, of which 20 percent are Puerto Ricans).⁷¹

Figure 3.1: Entrance Gateway into Humboldt Park, Chicago, Illinois



The neighborhood has a strong identity and has been known for its history of political and social engagement. In 1995, the City of Chicago honored the contributions of activists and leaders of the neighborhood by erecting a steel gate (Figure 3.1). Gentrification pressure challenged the cultural and social identity of the neighborhood leading to a shift in the demographic makeup of the neighborhood, with an increase of white population by 30%, and Asian population by 130%, whereas the black population declined by 16% and the Hispanic population by 42% between 2000 and 2015. Gentrification had other effects on the neighborhood which can be observed in income disparity with household incomes ranging from \$26,607 to \$204,793 in 2015, as well as home sale increases of 60% and home price increases of 33% since the recession of 2008.⁷²

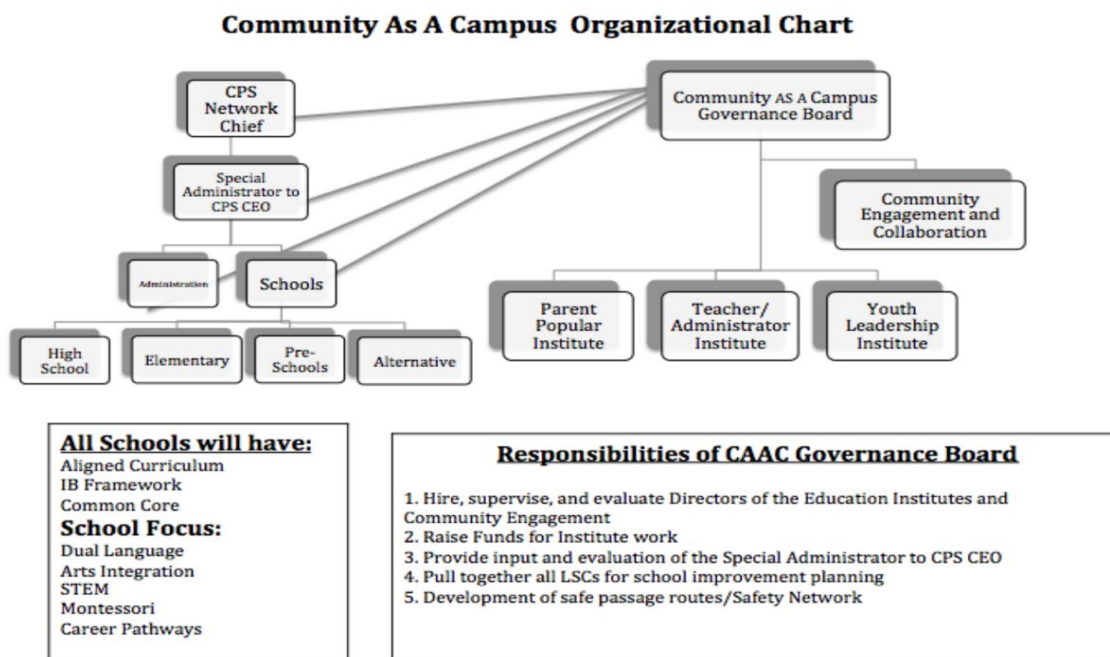
Community As A Campus (CAAC) is an education-oriented community initiative that was launched in 2008 and adopted by the Community Action Council in Humboldt Park. It was endorsed by the Chicago Public Schools

⁷¹ Ivis, "Community As A Campus," p. 525

⁷² Ibid. p. 527

Board of Education with the aim to create an academic pipeline under the International Baccalaureate system. CAAC engages education in a holistic approach that goes beyond the traditional education system to include, among other things, involving parents in after school programs, parents’ participation in continuing education and workforce training. In 2013, Chicago Public Schools announced a policy resulting in the shutdown of 54 Chicago schools due to claims of declining student populations and financial difficulties. All these schools were in underserved areas, and four of them were in Humboldt Park including Alexander Von Humboldt, the subject of this case study. Von Humboldt is a historic building designed and built in 1884 in the Italianate style with red brick and terra cotta detailing. The school building was placed on the market for sale by the school district in 2015 and the school district stipulated a local alderman’s final approval for the building’s repurposing to ensure that community needs are considered in repurposing the school building.

Figure 3.5: CAAC Organization – Source: bpichicago.org



CAAC formed a coalition of community organizations, the local alderman, and Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF), and placed an offer for the building that was accepted even though it was not the highest bid, but it was the one with the highest community value.⁷³ RBH Group, a developer, partnered with IFF and CAAC to repurpose the school building as the Humboldt Park Teacher’s Village, which consisted of 84-unit residential complex including 17 affordable housing units, 25 middle-income units and 42 units at the market rate.⁷⁴ The goal has been to

⁷³ Ibid. p. 530

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 531

provide affordable housing for teachers to attract them to the area as a key component to the community's educational and development goals.

This case study highlights the importance of public engagement as a tool to communicate the community's voice and needs. The community was able to join efforts and provide resources to save a valuable asset that would have otherwise been lost. In a similar way, citizen efforts were able to save the Englert Theatre in the early 2000s. In both cases, community groups and leaders obtained the means to influence the political decision, however, marginalized and underrepresented communities may lack the resources that enable them to act. Historic preservation needs to create a public engagement plan to serve the goals established in the ICHPP. The plan is important as a communication and educational media to increase connections between historic preservation, historic property owners, and the broader public.

Conclusion

Several issues emerged from the case of Humboldt Park, including public participation of the community that has been built through decades of civic engagement. Elements that contributed to saving the Alexander Von Humboldt School building included the local leadership that was able to create an alternative solution to save the building, reduce the impact of gentrification, and repurpose the building to serve important community need. Another key element is the role of a local authority that empowered the community represented by the local alderman to ensure that the proposed development would meet the community's needs. The third element is the financial resources to fund the project. Similar success has been achieved in Iowa City in the effort of the Friends of Historic Preservation to save the Old Brick Church, and the successful saving of the Englert. However, it is important to note that this would not have been achieved without the communities having access to these elements. Public engagement can be used to increase a community's awareness and educate the members on historic preservation opportunities. Through public engagement, a historic building (the Englert or the Humboldt school) was rehabilitated to meet a community need (a civic theater or affordable housing, respectively).

Arts and Culture

Iowa City's value and appreciation of the arts is nothing new, and the effort of citizens to successfully save the Englert Theatre as a cultural center in 2004 speaks for this appreciation. The city's vision of arts and culture has been solidified by the United Nations' recognition of Iowa City as a UNESCO City of Literature in 2008, and by the designation of two cultural districts in the city by the State of Iowa—Old Capitol Cultural District, and Iowa River Cultural District. The ICHPP of 2008 did not focus on arts and culture; however, it included a goal to emphasize preservation education to heighten public awareness of historic preservation. Downtown—the study area in addition to the Old Capitol Mall—was recognized as having developmental opportunities that identify the area

as a regional destination for arts, culture, and entertainment.⁷⁵ The IC2030 recognizes the unique character of downtown Iowa City as a focal point with energetic and flourishing retail, cultural, and leisure activities. Emphasis on the economic role of arts and culture is also evident in the DRCMP which points to the artists' role in building a "creative class" to stimulate local economy.⁷⁶ However, Ryberg-Webster cautions that there is still not sufficient research and empirical studies conducted which examine the connections between preservation and the ability of cities to attract the creative class.⁷⁷ The DRCMP recommends developing an incubator program that will provide low-cost opportunities for starting artists.⁷⁸ This vision is included in the IC2030 economic development goals and strategies, which promotes arts and culture as part of the city's creative economy and supports plans to develop artist communities and high-tech business incubator spaces in downtown.⁷⁹ The City's arts goals include supporting programs that reflect the City's changing demographics.⁸⁰ The DRCMP objectives include envisioning the City's core as a regional destination for arts, culture, and entertainment. The plan includes many art opportunities including the development of several public arts locations, additionally, proposing the development of a Gilbert Street Arts District. While the concept of a centralized cultural hub has been proposed, some have been critical of centralizing culture and art in the core. These critics believe in a higher benefit arising from cultivating community neighborhood arts and cultural clusters, with the goal of linking them and forming a network with the regional creative economy. This is thought to achieve a more equitable result, using culture and the arts as a tool of vitality and community development.⁸¹ Furthermore, there are concerns that using arts as an economic tool may possibly lead to gentrification and displacement, which, in our study area, can be the displacement of small-scale businesses that are key to the community development process. Ryberg-Webster argues that more investigation continues to examine the links between artists and gentrification and the class and race implications of artist-driven revitalization.⁸²

⁷⁵ City of Iowa City, *Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Plan*. p. 54

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 48

⁷⁷ Historic Preservation and Urban Revitalization in the Twenty-first Century (p.127)

⁷⁸ City of Iowa City, *Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Plan*. p. 48

⁷⁹ City of Iowa City, *IC2030: Comprehensive Plan Update*. p.32

⁸⁰ Ibid. p.49

⁸¹ Florida, "The rise of the creative class."

⁸² Ryberg-Webster and Kinahan, "Historic Preservation and Urban Revitalization in the Twenty-First Century," p.127

In the past at least, the arts, through a large mural inspired by Black Hawk, have been used to make clear Iowa City's connection to native history. Today, Black Hawk Mini Park is what is left of an effort in the 1970s to make a statement in opposition to the destruction of urban renewal through a memorial work of art to the great Sauk leader. Since then, the mural was taken down and an adjacent one, showing buffalo in Iowa, has been covered up by a newer building. As a consequence there is no meaningful recognition in downtown Iowa City of the native Americans who once were the primary occupants of Iowa and in this case to the Indian leader, whose defeat was the pretext for beginning the forced removal of Indians from Iowa.

More recently, an example of a significant downtown cultural and artistic event that attempts to draw connections between Iowa City and its African American diaspora has been the annual Iowa City Carnival Parade organized by University of Iowa faculty member Loyce Arthur. Building on this idea, the City should look to use the public spaces downtown, most significantly the Ped Mall, as space that features multicultural goods, food, and eateries, perhaps in the popup form that the Downtown District employs during the winter holidays. Spaces like this can assist with the diasporic placemaking by which downtown Iowa City becomes more than the sum of its buildings, but also a significant place where the various cultures that have passed through the city intersect.

Case Study: Arts and Culture in Bloomington, Indiana

The City of Bloomington, Indiana, has focused on arts and culture for decades. In 1983, the City established the Bloomington Community Arts Commission with the mission to provide a means "to stimulate community appreciation for and participation in the arts."⁸³ Part of the recognized achievements of the arts in the city was the City's amendment of the municipal code in 1994 to establish a policy to include works of arts and design services in capital projects owned by the City including buildings, structures, parks, utilities, streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities.⁸⁴ The ordinance authorized the establishment of a Municipal Arts Fund in which 1% of the City's cost contribution in City capital projects would be allocated to art in addition to any other arts funding, such as grants. The Arts Commission has a guiding strategic plan and released a master plan in 2015. Moreover, the City established the state-designated and City-led Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District (BEAD) with goals to support the City's arts and culture planning, increase community engagement, and provide data and analysis to organizations and users.⁸⁵ Additionally, the City has a dedicated arts staff.

⁸³ City of Bloomington Indiana, *Bloomington Arts Commission*.

⁸⁴ Bloomington, Indiana, City Ordinance § 94-66

⁸⁵ Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District, *Strategic Plan for the Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District*.

Bloomington has effectively incorporated arts and culture in the City's planning and community development initiatives with the City's public arts master plan including policies and processes that involve collaboration and actively engage with the City's boards and commissions in support of public art activities. In Iowa City, an Englert representative contends that Iowa City's Public Art advisory committee, that has been in place for more than a decade, is highly underfunded and very limited in what it can offer to downtown art and culture organizations. They argue that the City needs a dedicated arts staff to serve as a liaison to the downtown organizations, especially in matters related to funding opportunities. Following the outbreak of COVID-19 eight of the downtown arts organizations formed the Iowa City Downtown Arts Alliance and the interviewee pointed out that this has been an attempt at cooperation to fill the gap left by the missing City staff support.⁸⁶

Conclusion

There is an opportunity for historic preservation to play a role in support of art through coordination with Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD) and downtown art organizations to create joint programs in support of arts and incorporate public art activities in the downtown area. The restoration of the Englert Theater in the early part of the century followed by more recent community-driven support for maintaining and enhancing the facility illustrate the important relationship between the preservation of fine, old buildings and the promotion of the arts in downtown Iowa City.

Old and historic buildings also provide opportunities for art startup endeavors because of their affordable costs. Film Scene is an example of a startup taking advantage of an older building. Although outside the historic downtown employed in this study, Public Space One, with assistance from the City, was able to recently purchase two historic homes on Gilbert Street in the North Side neighborhood part of the Iowa City Downtown District. PS1 is converting these homes into space that artists can use to create and display art. In addition, the public spaces of downtown, such as Black Hawk Mini Park or the public rights of way can be used to reflect the events and the culture of the various populations that have sojourned through Iowa City.

Historic preservation, in coordination with the City, ICDD, and downtown art organizations, can create a mechanism to ensure old downtown buildings are offered opportunities to support the goal of developing incubator programs that provide low-cost opportunities for starting artists while also ensuring that public spaces, such as the Ped Mall and the streets of downtown are employed for festive events reflecting the diversity of the city's cultures.

⁸⁶ Interview with the Englert executive.

Education and Craftsmanship Support

Goal 6 of the 2008 ICHPP aims at providing the technical assistance necessary to preserve and improve historic properties. Part of this assistance is communicating knowledge about historic preservation and increasing property owners' awareness about the financial incentives at the federal, state, and local levels. One of the issues that repeatedly emerged in interviews is the perception that the historic preservation funding process is expensive and complex. This issue is further discussed in the economic values chapter of this report.

Since its founding in 1975, the Friends of Historic Preservation in Iowa City has played a key role in supporting the historic preservation commission and the historic preservation movement through educational and advocacy programs, including activities of the Salvage Barn. Rehabilitation craftsmanship is important in supporting historic preservation, considering the Secretary of Interior's (SOI) Standards for Rehabilitation are detailed and require specific labor practices, which can easily become expensive. The standards add cost and effort when sustainability is included into projects, especially for large projects, as the SOI sustainability guidelines recommend integrating a sustainability team which includes a preservation professional.⁸⁷ Rehabilitation costs can be reduced based on availability of skilled labor. This skilled labor trained in rehabilitation and restoration can handle issues ranging from minor maintenance to larger rehabilitation tasks and it may therefore be useful for the preservation movement to promote educational and training opportunities that support the field. Kirkwood Community College, in Cedar Rapids, had previously offered a program, "Historic Preservation Interior and Exterior Certificate Series" that enhanced the local historic rehabilitation skill set. The program was first run in 2014 and continued for only one year, ending enrollment in 2015 as the program failed to attract adequate enrollment.⁸⁸ With this background, there is an opportunity to initiate a discussion with the State Historic Preservation Officer to sponsor a study that explores the market's needs and potentials for rehabilitation labor and coordinate with Kirkwood Community College potentially bring back the program.

Case Study: Dubuque, Iowa

Dubuque's historic preservation practices are evident with over 60 historic buildings/sites listed in the NRHP and 17 National Register Historic Districts. Additionally, Dubuque has a number of conservation districts and other district types. The city is known for its extensive use of federal, state, and local financing mechanisms and

⁸⁷ National Park Service, *The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation Sustainability Guidelines*.

⁸⁸ Interview with program director of Kirkwood College.

incentives, as one of the expert interviewees put it, “Dubuque is a great example of a community that has leveraged tax incentives to a whole other level.”⁸⁹ Heritage Works is a local Dubuque nonprofit that was founded in 2015 after seeing a need for an entity to support and promote historic preservation. The organization focuses on providing training and educational opportunities by sponsoring rehabilitation training programs and workshops. Speaking to the program manager, they stressed the importance and need of rehabilitation training and referred to a window restoration workshop attended by 14 residents who were then able to either complete their own restoration work or gain employment with the skills obtained.⁹⁰ The organization also offers historic tax credit application services as well as other educational programs.

Four Mounds, a nonprofit organization, has provided multiple community services in Dubuque since 1987. Located on a 60 acre landmark property, Four Mounds runs a program titled Housing and Rehabilitation Training (HEART) in which young students who are at risk of failing in school are offered a hands-on learning experience. The organization partnered with the City of Dubuque to employ the students, while they pursue their high school diploma, in rehabilitation projects in blighted homes within the Urban Revitalization District; an adult version of the program was added last fall.⁹¹

Conclusion

The SOI Standards recommends work according to specific guidelines. Creating a historic rehabilitation workforce can contribute to reducing the cost of rehabilitation and encourage property owners to get involved with historic preservation. Additionally, rehabilitation can offer job opportunities as well as helping to be part of the solution to other social problems.

⁸⁹ Interview with Historic Preservation Commission member.

⁹⁰ Heritage Works interview.

⁹¹ Executive Director of Four Mounds interview.

Interview Outcomes

Funding and staffing limit historic preservation effort.

Effectively engaging and reaching out to the public, especially underrepresented groups, is likely one of the most effective ways to meet social goals. Interviews with City staff and historic preservation specialists highlighted limited funding and staffing as barriers to reaching out and engaging the community effectively.

Unexplored History.

Iowa City has an important African American history during the era of segregation in housing on the grounds of race, and an unexplored Mexican history associated with arriving railroad laborers during the early 1900s.

Heritage Tours.

In the past, Weber Days has been successful in telling the musical history of the city. More educational programs like this can serve the goals of engaging the public. Establishing heritage tours which highlight the history of individuals, groups, and the city as a whole, would allow for a greater understanding of Iowa City's past.

Education.

Interviews point to the lack of educational programs that link property and business owners, students, and future generations with historic preservation. Interviewing one city official revealed a lack of educational programs that would help property owners leverage historic incentives. It was also found that nonprofit organizations play a key role to prepare future generations to be the stewards of historic assets; interviews with Heritage and Four Mounds in Dubuque point to educational programs that connect school history classes with historic architecture and culture and empower young people to achieve their goals of graduation.

Arts and Culture.

Art and culture in Iowa City's downtown could receive greater support from the City by providing more resources and abilities to the Public Art Advisory Committee and by adding a City arts staff member. There are opportunities for cooperation between historic preservation, ICDD, and the City in support of art in downtown.

Rehabilitation Craftsmanship.

The cost of rehabilitation and restoration can be high and often requires professional craftsmanship. Heritage Works executives point to the usefulness of their program that train youth and property owners on restoration; they state that most learners who attend their training either qualified enough to complete restoration work or join the restoration labor force that has a good demand in Dubuque. Four Mounds, a non-profit, has partnered with the City of Dubuque to run a program that trains young students who are facing issues that put them at risk of dropping out of school to participate in restoring building in the city's urban revitalization district. In addition to attained skills, the students get help to achieve their scholastic goals. Four Mound executives state that about 12 students attend the program and eventually add to the restoration professional stock. Kirkwood Community College offered the vocational program "Historic Preservation Interior and Exterior Certificate Series" which has stopped due to insufficient enrollment.

Recommendations

Public Engagement

Consider creating a short-and long-term historic preservation public engagement plan

Public engagement is a value that is largely expressed in almost all City documents, but often lacks details and process. The 2008 ICHPP includes important goals that require the implementation of policies and actions steps.

Address the need to enhance an inclusive heritage tourism program

Iowa City's diversity is recognized in the IC2030 and other documents. One key to diversity is the recognition and honor of groups that have contributed to the history of Iowa City. There are important unexplored Indian, African American, and Mexican histories that tell about the struggles of the first waves of these groups arriving in the City. Adequately highlighting and honoring this history not only contributes to enriching the history of the City, it also adds strength to the City's social, economic and political structures.

Establish historic preservation educational program

Education is a long-term tool that engages the society with historic preservation. There is a need to establish a historic education curriculum with multiple layers to connect historic preservation with downtown property and business owners, schools, and the public at large. Historic preservation can engage downtown property and business owners with a focus in rehabilitation tools and finances that make preservation attractive, provide support for nonprofit organizations, schools, and colleges to offer programs that prepare a future generation of historic stewards, and encourage initiatives that engage the public with programs and activities that tell the history of the city.

Arts and Culture

Explore new ways to support art and culture in downtown Iowa City

The IC2030 and DRCMP have goals and strategies that promote arts and culture in downtown as part of the city's creative economy and encourage the development of artist communities and incubator spaces in downtown. Historic and old buildings of downtown provide an opportunity for developing such artist communities because of their affordable cost. The HPC can develop a mechanism in coordination with ICDD and the City to ensure historic downtown buildings are offered opportunities to support the goal of developing incubator programs that provide low-cost opportunities for starting artists while also ensuring that downtown public spaces are used to reflect the varied cultures of past and present Indians, African Americans, and Mexicans.

Education and Rehabilitation Craftsmanship Support

Conduct a survey to develop data to indicate the need and availability of historic preservation craftsmanship

Rehabilitation and restoration training can provide needed skilled labor as well as offering economic opportunities and employment beyond the city to serve the entire region. The training can be used to address other social and educational issues that may face students and people in need. Before this education can be established sufficient evidence for the need of skilled craftsman should be established through some form of data collection.

Coordinate with Kirkwood Community College to explore the possibility of bringing back Historic Preservation Interior and Exterior Certificate Series

This training provides benefits to historic preservation that goes to the regional level. The City should consider initiating discussions with Kirkwood Community College and explore the possibilities of support provided by the SHPO to reintroduce the program and other similar courses that support historic preservation.

Provide support to Friends of Historic Preservation and other non-profit organizations to plan and implement historic rehabilitation training programs that target different community groups

Friends of Historic Preservation in Iowa City and other nonprofit organizations provide support of several types to historic preservation. Historic preservation advocates can examine, coordinate and provide support for nonprofit organizations to initiate training programs that educate and qualify a cadre in historic rehabilitation, such programs have a long-term benefit by preparing a future generation to steward the City's historic legacy.

Chapter 4: Environmental Values

This chapter focuses on the environmental sustainability efforts of Iowa City, highlighting some best management practices for energy efficiency, embodied energy, building reuse, and density as they relate to historic preservation.

Topics:

Introduction to Environmental Values and Historic Preservation:

Iowa City Goals and Objectives: Introduces Iowa City’s current goals and objectives on the environment and historic preservation

City Documents: Discusses how City documents address the link between preservation and environmental sustainability

Preservation and Environmental Sustainability: Presents the core connections between historic preservation and environmental sustainability

Construction Quality: Case Study on Christman Company Building in Lansing, Michigan

Embodied Energy: Case Study on Fire Station Building in Magnuson Park Seattle, Washington

Resource Consumption and Construction Waste: Discusses the real and potential impacts of waste created through the demolition of old structures

Adaptive Reuse Ordinance: Case Study on Missoula, Montana

Social Context and Density: Discusses the relationship between the density of historic development downtown and environmental goals of Iowa City

Interview Outcomes: Discusses interviews with stakeholders, practicing preservationists, and architects.

Recommendations:

Adopt and Implement a Local Historic District for Downtown Iowa City: To protect the character of downtown’s historic buildings, both from demolition and modifications that detract from the original design of these buildings, it is important that the City adopt local historic district status for the downtown, just as it has done for historic residential neighborhoods in the city.

Emphasize Energy Audits for Historic Buildings: Perform energy audits on historic buildings to identify areas of energy loss and improve efficiency.

Clarify the Role of Preservation in Climate Action and Adaptation Plan: Add a section in the Iowa City Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (ICCAAP) that addresses the role of preservation to reduce landfill waste and energy consumption in historic buildings.

Increase Retrofits for Older Buildings: Identify ways in which to encourage the retrofitting of older buildings to meet existing ICCAAP goals.

Introduction

For the purposes of this report, environmental sustainability is the ability to retain and reuse previously constructed resources thereby mitigating the negative environmental impacts of demolition and the disposal of old materials, and to adequately finance and implement energy efficiency upgrades/retrofits. Environmental sustainability practices may support smart growth initiatives and maintain a dense downtown in accordance with City and business district climate goals. Environmental sustainability was identified as a community value through reading various reports published by the City of Iowa City concerning climate change.

While the relationship between historic preservation and these environmental sustainability goals may not be immediately obvious, preservation efforts present a unique opportunity to offset environmental degradation through a reduction in the loss of current buildings, and the embodied energy held within them.

Iowa City Goals and Objectives

Environmental sustainability was identified through analysis by the project team as a focal point for several major city documents adopted by Iowa City. Historic preservation in the context of these documents unfortunately is frequently isolated from broader issues of environmental sustainability. A lack of language concerning sustainability efforts and historic preservation may lead to the City missing the mark on broader environmental goals if left inadequately addressed.

Iowa City Comprehensive Plan

The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan Update (IC2030), adopted in 2013, laid much of the groundwork for environmental sustainability efforts in Iowa City. The City has prioritized maintaining the form of downtown which already encourages pedestrian use. Most importantly, this plan makes a point of preserving the historical development of downtown which gives this area its unique character.⁹² However, the plan includes very little to encourage the reuse of historic structures. In a section addressing environmental impacts, despite setting a goal of raising awareness of the environmental benefits of urban development which makes efficient use of land and reducing reliance on the automobile for transportation, the plan makes few references to using historic preservation as a method to accomplish this goal.⁹³ Another goal, dedicated to increasing energy efficiency,

⁹² City of Iowa City, *IC2030: Comprehensive Plan Update*. pg. 24

⁹³ Ibid pg. 40

does not address opportunities to retrofit historic structures with efficiency upgrades, but instead prioritizes rain barrels and compost bins as a solution for management of environmental issues.⁹⁴ There is little to no language in IC2030 that would suggest that the City views historic preservation as a means to address environmental sustainability goals.

Iowa City Downtown District Plan

The Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan (DRCMP) plan addresses many challenges facing downtown that also affect historic preservation in downtown, such as: student housing demand, limited public resources for development projects, and proper regulatory mechanisms. The plan makes several commitments to the protection of historic resources downtown, and credits historic buildings downtown with providing character and ambiance.⁹⁵ Historic preservation is a recurring goal appearing throughout the document within various goals and objectives, such as:

- ▶ Maintain downtown Iowa City as the focal point of the region⁹⁶
- ▶ Preserve and enhance the historical integrity of the district
- ▶ Promote sustainable design practices throughout the district⁹⁷
- ▶ Encourage the reuse and preservation of historic structures and the development of walkable development within the study area
- ▶ Creating Downtown District Summary Master Plan Objectives⁹⁸
- ▶ Protect historic character and key historic buildings
- ▶ Build on existing strengths (locally owned shops, proximity to the University of Iowa, farmer’s market, adjacent neighborhoods, etc.)

The DRCMP continues in its pursuit of protecting historic resources within downtown by recommending density bonuses, waiving parking requirements, and even going so far as to recommend consideration of local landmark status for particular buildings and/or a local district designation.⁹⁹ This would ensure protections for existing resources by the City as local landmarks and local historic districts are granted enhanced protections.

⁹⁴ Ibid pg. 42

⁹⁵ City of Iowa City. *Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan*.

⁹⁶ Ibid pg. 24

⁹⁷ Ibid pg. 24

⁹⁸ Ibid pg. 54

⁹⁹ Ibid pg. 55

Iowa City Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Iowa City improved upon their dedication to the pursuit of environmental sustainability with the adoption of the Iowa City Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (ICCAAP) in 2018. The plan sets forth goals which aim to reduce overall carbon emissions from the city by 80% by the year 2050.¹⁰⁰ This is a lofty goal and will require coordination between all city departments, committees, local businesses, community organizations, and developers to be achieved. The ICCAAP has specific goals for increasing building efficiency to reduce carbon emissions. Historic preservation supports the goals of the City to retrofit 10% of all buildings with more energy efficient systems by 2025 and 90% by 2050.¹⁰¹ ICCAAP, at the very least, sets forth a goal to retrofit buildings rather than suggesting a complete rebuild. The plan only acknowledges that older buildings have more opportunities for upgrades towards higher energy efficiency.

The ICCAAP also makes a goal to divert construction waste from landfills through partnerships with existing organizations and the broader community.¹⁰² While the ideal situation would be to preserve historic structures when feasible, it is important to retain as much material from demolition and construction to avoid filling landfills and conserve the embodied energy within these materials. This may be an important aspect of the future of preservation efforts in the city. If historic buildings cannot be saved or restored, salvaging materials will be an important step to further meeting climate goals.

With these outlined goals, there begins to appear a clear chance for historic preservation policy to be considered as a meaningful method of addressing environmental sustainability. The ICCAAP could benefit from the inclusion of discussion about historic preservation, as preservation has an opportunity to promote and assist in achieving the City climate goals mentioned in the ICCAAP.

Preservation and Environmental Sustainability

Historic preservation is in a unique position to address environmental sustainability issues. Finding new ways of reusing old materials, maintaining preexisting buildings, and reducing the use of new materials allows for the saving of energy and resources associated with new construction. Maintaining and reusing historic resources will put the City in a better position to meet climate targets.

¹⁰⁰ City of Iowa City, *Iowa City Climate Action and Adaptation Plan*. pg. 6

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* pg. 28

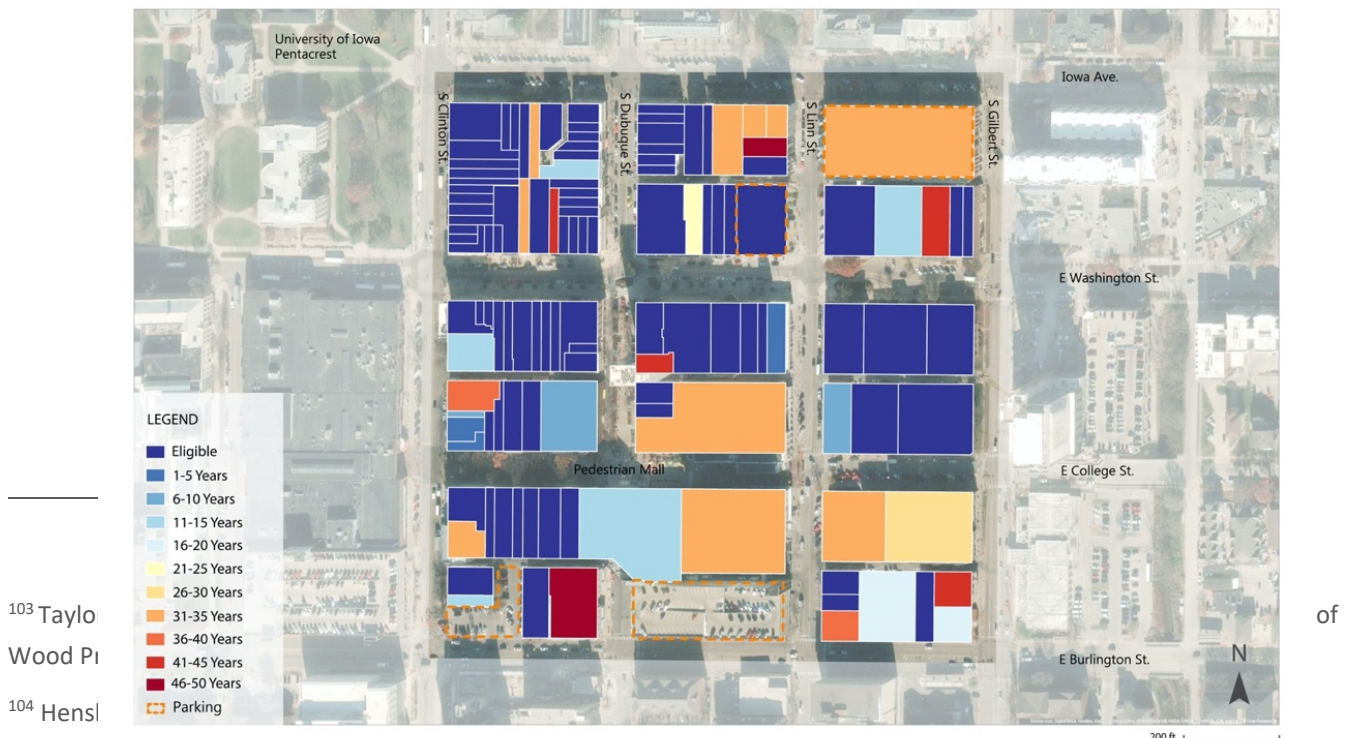
¹⁰² *Ibid* pg. 47

Construction Quality

The construction quality of historic structures and the materials used to build the structure are important considerations when examining the merits of a preservation project. Well-maintained historic structures have been shown to be as energy efficient, if not more so, than their newer counterparts due to some of the construction methods of the past. Materials used prior to the mid-20th century were of higher quality and resilience than newer construction, for example, old growth wood with higher densities than commercial lumber used in new construction can offset rot and other maintenance issues in structures.¹⁰³ Additionally, design, type of construction, size, shape, site orientation, surrounding landscape, and climate all play a role in how buildings perform.¹⁰⁴ Taking each of the previously mentioned factors into consideration can increase efficiencies in older buildings and new buildings alike.

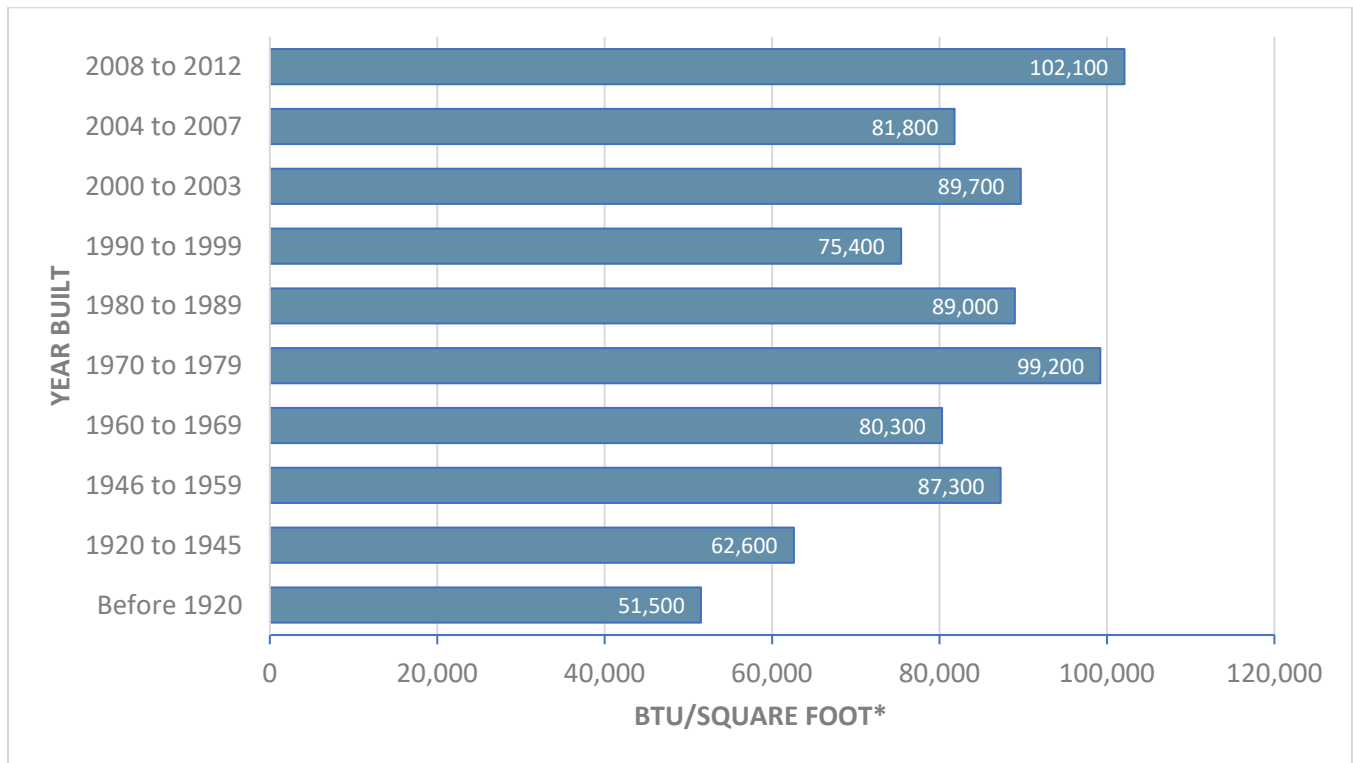
These performance measures about historic structures are, however, not without caveats. Buildings constructed in the era of urban renewal (1960s and 1970s) which are now entering the age of NRHP eligibility are often less efficient than both their newer and older counterparts. No buildings test worse for energy efficiency than those constructed in the 1980s. Buildings constructed post 1990s, pre-1920s, and in the 1950s are extremely similar in efficiency. Additionally, post-2000 buildings when compared to those built pre-1920 only test 0.6 percent more efficient.¹⁰⁵ While these are national statistics, these findings highlight the inherent energy efficiency of historic buildings similar to those historic buildings in Iowa City.

Figure 4.1: Years Until Building Becomes NRHP Eligible Within the Geographic Scope



¹⁰⁵ Young, "Stewardship of the Built Environment," pg. 83

Figure 4.2: Energy Consumption of Commercial Buildings in the Midwest¹⁰⁶



Throughout preliminary research performed by the team, there were several misconceptions about historic buildings and their efficiencies. The most common example of this seems to be with windows in old buildings. Windows seem the most obvious suspect for heat loss in a building and this opinion is reiterated by just about any homeowner complaining about energy costs in winter. However, this is largely not the case. Because hot air naturally rises, heat loss occurs mainly in under-insulated roofs and attics.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, when insulation was installed before 1940, it was much less effective than modern insulation. Installing modern insulation would have a greater impact on the heat-loss than would window replacement.

Older windows do, however, require special attention; the skills needed to repair most older windows can be easily learned by the average building owner. The parts that make up an older window can be individually repaired and crafted to keep the same window functioning long-term. Vinyl windows parts cannot be replaced or repaired in the same manner as historic windows can be, and therefore must be completely replaced when damaged. This practice is unsustainable and only adds to the waste associated with newer construction. By

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey*.

¹⁰⁷ Young, "Stewardship of the Built Environment," pg. 117

* BTU or British Thermal Unit is approximately the energy it takes to heat one pound of water one degree. In this case, it is used to measure the energy efficiency or embodied energy of the built environment. This will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

creating a product that cannot be maintained, but must be replaced, it is hard to argue new materials are sustainable or efficient in this case.

Newer construction is no longer at the mercy of most weather conditions, as technology has adapted to create the new heating, ventilation, and air cooling (HVAC) systems for the purpose of heating and cooling. Older structures relied on passive cooling and materials that would trap heat in colder periods throughout the year. In other words, historic buildings were built to respond to climate conditions.¹⁰⁸ This is fully on display with techniques like daylighting, during which prisms refracted natural light further into the structure, typically accomplished in tandem with tall windows that may now be associated with energy inefficiency.¹⁰⁹ The techniques of historic construction did a lot to accommodate local conditions with context-sensitive design, that is sometimes absent in contemporary subdivision or commercial design. Also, recent requirements to include HVAC in all buildings that did not previously have HVAC drives retrofits which may not suit a historic structure aesthetically or economically. One of the best examples of prioritizing preservation and environmental sustainability balanced this very issue in Lansing, Michigan.

Case Study: Christman Company Building in Lansing, Michigan¹¹⁰

In 2007, the Christman Construction Company undertook a major renovation to their headquarters in the downtown core of Lansing, Michigan. The building was constructed in 1928 and had received historic landmark status. The status of the building as a brownfield site provided an opportunity to perform a highly praised green historic preservation project. This project utilized several state and federal tax incentives for rehabilitation to offset costs. The total square footage of the seven-story building was around 64,190ft² and the entire project would cost around \$12 million. The per square foot cost to achieve this status was then around \$136.

The project began with the goals of preventing the expenditure of the embodied energy in the existing building, preventing urban sprawl, and downtown revitalization. After the project's completion it was classified as the first Triple Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building. LEED certification is the most widely used building rating system throughout the world, it uses measures of energy efficiency to rate buildings and provide certification in the pursuit of environmental sustainability. The Christman Company set lofty goals to reduce waste and the project was able to save 92% of existing walls, roof, and floors, and diverted 77% of construction debris from the landfill. The project accomplished waste reduction goals by restoring the wooden historic windows, replacing glass with double pane glass, repairing brick mortar joints on the exterior, and adding six inches of insulation to reduce the urban heat island effects thereby reducing energy needs.

¹⁰⁸ Hensley and Aguilar, "Preservation Brief 3: Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings."

¹⁰⁹ Whole Building Design Guide, "Sustainable Historic Preservation."

¹¹⁰ Gavin Gardo, "Christman Building: Civic Commitment."

When the project began the EPA’s Energy Star rating for the building was a 39, the company had a goal of achieving a 75 rating, however the project was able to obtain a rating of 81. This places the Christman Building not only among the most efficient historic buildings, but in the top 20% of all buildings. The reduction of yearly CO₂ emissions from the structure would be the equivalent of planting 5,162 trees or reducing the impact of driving 1.3 million miles.¹¹¹ This was all topped off with a yearly utility cost savings of almost \$50,000. This was largely accomplished through installation of the following:

- ▶ Task Lighting
- ▶ Motion sensors for lighting
- ▶ Programmed timers for lighting
- ▶ Daylighting for 92% of occupants
- ▶ High efficiency HVAC systems
- ▶ Low flow toilets
- ▶ Encouragement of recycling of all office supplies used in building which diverted 73% of the buildings 59, 956 lbs. of waste from the landfill
- ▶ Indoor air quality control system

Conclusion:

This project is an example of the relationship between preservation and sustainability goals. Not only was the Christman Building historic, but it presented an opportunity to take advantage of state and local incentives for efficiency upgrades, resulting in massive cost savings and emission reductions. Identifying buildings within the study area, may assist the City of Iowa City in reaching climate goals set out in the ICCAAP. There are a number of upgrades available to older buildings, as highlighted by the Christman project, that may be possible for similar buildings in Iowa City, so long as deficiencies can be identified.

Embodied Energy

All buildings, of any construction age, have an associated embodied energy. Embodied energy has several slightly varied definitions, but one of the least complex explanations comes from the Australian Government:

“Embodied energy is the energy consumed by all of the processes associated with the production of a building, from the mining and processing of natural resources to manufacturing, transport and product delivery. Embodied energy does not include the operation and disposal of the building material, which would be considered in a life cycle approach. Embodied energy is the ‘upstream’ or ‘front-end’ component of the life cycle impact of a building.”¹¹²

Experts in this field would additionally include the term *recurring embodied energy* or the energy that is consumed through maintenance, repair, restoration, refurbishment, or replacement of a built property. This

¹¹¹ Gavin Gardo, “Christman Building: Civic Commitment.”

¹¹² Australian Government, *Your Home: Embodied Energy*.

may further extend to include *operational energy* which includes energy needed to operate the facility based on climate, occupancy type, or physical attributes of the building. Finally, this does not include *demolition energy*, the energy required to raze, load, and transport materials to disposal sites.¹¹³

Embodied energy is a particularly important consideration in historic preservation projects because it is a quantifiable variable used to measure environmental impact. Much of the conversation around historic preservation is vague and unquantifiable as preservation costs are often context sensitive. With embodied energy, however, claims can be made to show just how damaging losing old and historic buildings can be to the environment. For example, preserving a building made of about three million pounds of brick saves the embodied energy that would be required to power 145 homes for a year.¹¹⁴ Additionally, building houses touted as more sustainable may take 12-15 years to recover the environmental impact associated with construction. If that house is replacing a historic structure, it will likely double this recovery period.¹¹⁵ Additionally, if the new building is only 30% more energy efficient than the historic structure it replaces, it can take 10-80 years to repay the environmental impact back in the form of energy reduction associated with demolition and construction.¹¹⁶ Embodied energy is measured in British Thermal Units (Btu), the energy required to raise a pound of water one degree Fahrenheit, or about 0.3 Watt hours of electricity¹¹⁷ and are estimated as such:¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Young, "Stewardship of the Built Environment," pg. 85-86

¹¹⁴ Ibid. pg. 91

¹¹⁵ Ibid. pg. 86

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pg. 98

¹¹⁷ Cullinane, "Maintaining and Repairing Old and Historic Buildings." pg. 213

¹¹⁸ Young, "Stewardship of the Built Environment," pg. 85

Figure 4.3: Material Efficiency by BTU/Pound and BTU/Cubic Foot¹¹⁹

<i>Material</i>	Btu/pound	Btu/ft³
<i>Stone</i>	340	54,485
<i>Concrete</i>	559	85,351
<i>Lumber</i>	1,075	37,039
<i>Brick</i>	3,483	138,763
<i>Recycled Aluminum</i>	3,483	586,991
<i>Recycled Steel</i>	3,827	998,716
<i>Glass</i>	6,837	1,007,842
<i>Steel</i>	13,760	6,742,208
<i>Plastic</i>	30,100	2,512,761
<i>Aluminum</i>	97,610	13,841,388

Case Study: Fire Station Building in Magnuson Park Seattle, WA

In 2009, a large fire station building from the 1930s—that was deemed to be not historically significant enough to preserve—was slated for demolition by the City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department. Because of the lack of historical significance, an environmental argument for maintaining the building was made to prevent the building from becoming a vacant lot. Community members argued that preserving the building could serve as a form of recycling program. At that time the mayor had recently rolled out a new recycling campaign.

The primary concern was the loss of embodied energy in the materials and sheer amount of building materials that would be diverted to landfills.¹²⁰

The old fire station was approximately 14,013ft² and would create an estimated 1,212 tons of debris to be sent to the landfill. This amount of waste was calculated to have the environmental impact of an individual putting 4.6 lbs. of trash in a landfill every day for 1,444 years or the equivalent of recycling almost 2 million aluminum cans.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Young, “Stewardship of the Built Environment,” pg. 85

¹²⁰ Merlino, “[Re] Evaluating Significance,” pp. 72-74

¹²¹ Ibid. pp. 72-74

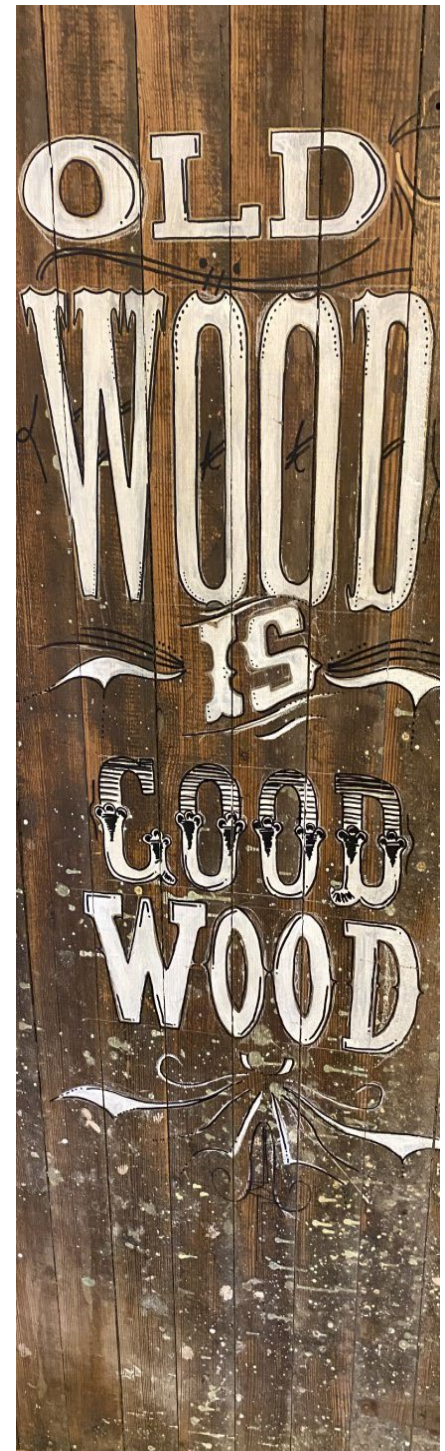
Currently, the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department is in contract negotiations to re-develop and restore the now historically designated building. According to the executive director of Outdoors for All, the foundation will lease the space stating that, “...we want it to be a showpiece for the transformative powers of adaptive recreation, and a launching pad for our program participants, volunteers, employees and anyone else” as negotiations were underway.¹²²

Conclusion

In Seattle, community groups stressed that preserving the Firehouse in Magnuson Park was a form of recycling. A similar mentality in Iowa City may divert waste from landfills and prevent potential demolitions of old and historic buildings in the future. The embodied energy of just one large building may negate other efforts on behalf of any city to recycle and build sustainably.

Resource Consumption & Construction Waste

Construction waste from the demolition of older buildings is estimated to account for up to 40% of all landfill volume and the resources required to construct “greener” replacements are estimated to take anywhere from 10-80 years to overcome the environmental impacts associated with new resource extraction.¹²³ While Iowa City does have resources such as the Salvage Barn, located at the East Side Recycling Center, to reuse materials from the demolition of older buildings, large scale efforts to prevent demolition should be undertaken to further mitigate the effects of waste on the environment. There is a growing body of literature which highlights the importance of encouraging the stewardship of historic structures as a method of mitigating the same climate change effects highlighted in the ICCAAP.



¹²² Seattle Parks and Recreation, *Magnuson Park Building 18 Request for Proposal (RFP)*

¹²³ Young, “Stewardship of the Built Environment,” pg. 7

Adaptive Reuse

While it is valuable to recognize how much energy is associated with the demolition of historic buildings, these same buildings must serve a function, especially in a commercial district like downtown Iowa City. The reuse of historic structures for purposes that may differ from their original function has come to be known as adaptive reuse. Some experts in the field of preservation have even gone so far as to suggest cities adopt Adaptive Reuse Ordinances (ARO) in order to preserve historic buildings and promote their reuse.¹²⁴ Iowa City has yet to add considerations of this nature into their climate adaptation strategies and AROs may be something to consider in the future. This idea has not prevailed on a large scale, but there are still several examples of cities that have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, AROs with the aim of addressing more contemporary social values such as environmental sustainability, community development, and affordability.

Case Study: Missoula, Montana

Missoula, Montana, adopted an ARO into municipal code in August of 2019. Missoula is a city of a similar size and population to Iowa City and has the University of Montana within city limits. The City started working on the ordinance following the loss of the Mercantile Building, which was built in the 1860s (before Missoula was incorporated). Soon after demolition the site was home to a newly constructed Marriott Hotel which required tax-increment financing (TIF) funds to be built. In this case, the building that was replaced had been sitting vacant for several years, but still, granting of demolition permits caused some community backlash. This created a new community understanding and appreciation for historic resources which ultimately resulted in the fast creation of the ARO.

The ARO incentivizes the reuse of older buildings, with bonuses such as, the partial waiver of fees,, expedited review of applications that use the ARO, and the waiver of density limits except those required under the building code. Applying for the ARO opens up the developer to access these bonuses while adding stipulations to ensure that the building reuse maintains its historic character. In compiling the ordinance, there was input from the City sustainability coordinator, City affordable housing officials, building inspector, and fire chief to ensure providing non-financial bonuses and incentives in the name of sustainability and community development would not conflict with safety regulations. Additionally, the ARO allows for historic buildings that were not formerly zoned for commercial use to be adapted for commercial uses in certain instances.

The ARO in Missoula takes the form of an overlay district, which is applied to established buildings of historical significance and can be used on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The ordinance is intended to preserve buildings more effectively, but also to relate preservation with goals of environmental sustainability, economic development,

¹²⁴ Mayes, “Bending the Future 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation” pg. 162-164

and community development through public education and financial incentive programs which have not yet been fully implemented.

The code also addresses the importance of maintaining the character of the city and reducing the environmental hazards and costs associated with new construction.¹²⁵ Looking forward, Missoula is in the process of establishing a local register of historic places, which will likely not be based off of the NRHP criteria, instead taking local conditions into greater consideration. The City will be able to control how reuse is carried out and will also allow for projects to include sustainability measures like solar panels or energy efficiency upgrades without conflicting with national standards.

Conclusion:

Local control of historic resources has allowed Missoula to effectively write preservation policy that meets local needs, and which considers City goals, such as sustainability. The key lesson derived from the Missoula ARO is the apparent effectiveness of incentives that make it easy for developers to obtain performance-based rezonings and reward their reuse of buildings with density bonuses.

Social Context/Density

The dominant development pattern since WWII has been a push towards suburban development. These developments tend to be sprawling and act to separate residents from resources such as downtowns. Typically, this has put economic strain on downtown areas and pulled investment out of these areas. Downtown Iowa City has managed to continue to thrive even with this prevailing development trend. Historic resources, specifically those in Iowa City, are important to give the area a sense of place. Fortunately, downtown Iowa City has been able to create a sense of place with resources such as the Pedestrian Mall, lined with historic buildings, even though it is not yet itself eligible for NRHP status.

If not just for sense of place, many historic buildings can be more sustainable than their newer counterparts. The density granted by areas like downtown Iowa City more easily accommodate different forms of transportation, other than personal automobile use, which can assist in meeting Iowa City climate goals.

In the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, the City has prioritized higher density development which explains projects like the Chauncey building that have largely not appeared within the downtown but are instead adjacent to downtown (this is specifically defining downtown as the area encompassed in the geographical scope of this project). By doing so, Iowa City's zoning code prevents issues with redevelopment such as mass

¹²⁵ Missoula, Montana, Code of Ordinances § 20.25.035

replication of franchise architecture. If the zoning code were not written in such a way as to discourage poor redevelopment practice, it may lead to less differentiation between buildings and contribute to a growing sense of placelessness.¹²⁶ Iowa City's downtown has the ability to preemptively avoid a path like this by including preservation in discussions of environmental sustainability to promote reuse rather than demolition and replacement. However, if development within the district is halted, it may justify new development on the periphery of the city. New development, even of LEED certified buildings, on the periphery of the city requires significant energy resources, and can lead to an increase in air pollution through additional automobile trips, increased public infrastructure costs, and could promote social isolationism.¹²⁷ Density and development both within, and surrounding downtown, have created a favorable land use pattern for meeting Iowa City climate goals.

Downtown Iowa City is a well-connected hub for multiple modes of transportation and presents few challenges in accessibility to the physical downtown location. This does not mean that every building in downtown is fully accessible, but rather getting to downtown presents relatively few challenges for a city of Iowa City's size.

The compact development strategy of IC2030, DRCMP, and ICCAAP each support a future moving towards even fewer mobility challenges, especially to and from downtown. It may seem as if there is little connection between mobility and historic preservation, however, many cities developed their downtown areas before the inception of the personal automobile as the dominant form of transportation. Because of these early development patterns, residents are able to enjoy the benefits of a walkable environment in the downtown area. Increasing residential and employment uses near the Central Business District (CBD) combined with higher density and compact city blocks has been directly linked with reduced vehicle miles travelled (VMT). This speaks to the imperative to examine the land use decisions in and around the CBD as it relates to VMT and environmental degradation. Without intervention, this will eventually become a quality of life issue as pollution continues to catalyze climate change.¹²⁸

Preserving a denser, existing, and more walkable historic environment therefore supports environmental sustainability goals in more ways than one. One of the most pivotal resources in downtown is the existing Pedestrian Mall. While the Pedestrian Mall is not yet eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, it provides an important sense of character to downtown and is lined with historic buildings that have been identified in this report's study area. The pedestrian experience of the downtown is likely the most important of all forms of transportation for consideration.

Downtown contains the most basic elements of a pedestrian environment such as sidewalks on each street, proper ADA compliant ramps on most crossings, and designated pedestrian areas as mentioned before.

¹²⁶Young, "Stewardship of the Built Environment," pg. 13

¹²⁷ Ibid. pg. 5

¹²⁸ Ding et al., "Understanding the role of built environment"

Pedestrians are the focal point of making downtown as economically viable as it can be and are pivotal in continuing to build on that success. Many destinations in the downtown are likely accessed by foot, even if a car trip or bike ride preceded the walking trip. The historic character of downtown ensures that destinations are connected and provide positive design conditions that ensure a comfortable pedestrian environment including enclosure, human scale, transparency, complexity, and coherence.¹²⁹ Density and destination increases have been shown to increase the walking behavior found in urban areas and preserving an already vibrant pedestrian environment will likely play a role in continuing the success of downtown.¹³⁰

Preserving historic structures in the downtown reduces energy consumption and divert waste from landfills and presents an opportunity for preservation to impact the modal choice of residents, thereby reducing carbon emissions associated with transportation. While preservation alone will not, and cannot, eliminate emissions as a whole, it can support existing strategies set forth by Iowa City in a variety of plans to reduce transportation emissions. Additionally, preserving historic resources will keep construction materials out of landfills—similar to the goals of the Salvage Barn—and reduce the consumption of new materials required to construct new buildings.

Interview Outcomes

To inform the environmental sustainability chapter of this report, interviews were conducted with two members of Iowa City staff, two LEED certified architects, and five other stakeholders or experts in the field of preservation. Throughout these interviews some of the key revelations in the relationship between preservation and environmental sustainability were as follows:

Preserving existing buildings provides a boost towards gaining LEED certification for buildings.

In research and discussions about LEED certification, this point was repeated and emphasized many times over in interviews with both LEED-certified architects. As Iowa City increases climate action goals, ensuring that buildings can achieve this status will be pivotal in meeting any future climate goals and ensuring efficiency and reductions of emissions.

Many commercial buildings in Iowa City have not taken advantage of free energy audits provided by the City through AmeriCorps.

¹²⁹ Ewing and Bartholomew, "Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Design," pg. 63

¹³⁰ Stewart, Orion T. "Comparing Associations."

In discussions with City staff regarding the ICCAP, interviewees highlighted that many commercial building owners and/or business owners were not taking advantage of the free program provided by Iowa City through AmeriCorps. This program would assist stakeholders in identifying deficiencies in their buildings and what kind of upgrades could be made to further ensure environmental sustainability.

A perception exists that the City completely disallows renewable energy upgrades, such as solar panels on historic buildings throughout the city.

This issue seemed to rise from misconceptions, or a lack of clarity surrounding what a NRHP or local historic designation dictates. The stakeholders that were interviewed for this project had differing answers for what is possible with historic buildings. Clarification on this issue seems to be vital if Iowa City moves forward with a local designation for downtown. Ensuring that owners can install such upgrades will again serve climate action goals and lower utility bills for owners.

Materials used to build older buildings (brick, wood, and steel) have lower embodied energy than those used in newer construction (aluminum, glass, and concrete).

Embodied energy differences between new and historic building materials appeared in initial research for this report and was confirmed in all meetings with LEED-certified architects. The energy associated with the materials used in historic construction is much lower than the energy associated with production, shipment, and construction completed with newer materials. There is an energy cost associated with any and all projects, of course, but in the particular case of construction, there is the energy loss of materials from the historic building, and that of constructing a new building. It was expressed in meetings with City staff that this is already a consideration but formalizing this process in documentation may be in the best interest of meeting climate action goals.

Diverting construction waste away from landfills is key to making preservation environmentally sustainable.

Earlier in this chapter it was revealed that construction debris accounts for up to 40% of landfill volume nationally. Efforts already exist, and are formalized in Iowa City, to divert demolition debris from historic structures to the Salvage Barn. While preservation is often the most environmentally sustainable option, it is important to have programs such as the Salvage Barn to divert any waste from demolished historic buildings if possible. Being able to salvage as many materials from demolished buildings is an important sustainable practice that should continue to be supported if a building is to be demolished.

Recommendations

Using the information collected through research and interviews, the following recommendations were assembled by the project team to link historic preservation and environmental sustainability:

Designate a Local Historic District

The key method for protecting the environmental values of historic buildings is to create a local historic district. Such districts have been used very successfully in Iowa City to protect the character of neighborhoods such as Brown Street, College Green, and Longfellow. Buildings in these neighborhoods are protected against demolition and modifications that would harm their character and detract from the overall character of the neighborhood. While local historic districts tend to focus on the aesthetic values associated with a particular period of architecture, their emphasis on preservation also has the corollary impact of conserving embodied energy and diminishing the need for the employment of greenhouse gases to construct new buildings. The advantages of creating a local historic district is that the greenest building is the one that is already built. Between the embodied energy calculations and landfill diversion, and the environmentally friendly historic design (walkable, daylighting), a local historic district would further advance the environmental sustainability value of Iowa City.

Emphasize Energy Audits for Historic Buildings

As mentioned, the City already offers free energy audits that would allow for owners to directly identify ways they could upgrade building efficiencies. Discussions in this chapter focused on energy loss and inherent efficiencies of historic buildings. These could be improved by identifying areas of particular buildings that are inefficient and how they could be enhanced through energy audits. This is already emphasized in the ICCAAP and would be a continuation of current City efforts.

It would be in the interest of existing climate action goals that call for the retrofitting of historic buildings for the City to form partnerships with the ICDD on the grounds of encouraging the use of energy audits in downtown commercial spaces. The City has an ambitious set of climate goals that will be assisted by increasing efficiencies in all buildings. Focusing some attention on downtown commercial spaces, in particular, should help offset the urban heat island effect and reduce emissions.¹³¹ Increasing the number of audits in the study area alone will not be sufficient, however, encouraging more commercial audits will put the City in a favorable position to reduce emissions.

¹³¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency, *What You Can Do to Reduce Heat Islands*.

Clarify the Role of Preservation in Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and Comprehensive Plan

The ICCAAP lays out action steps for increasing the energy efficiency of newer buildings but does not do the same for older buildings. Older buildings are mentioned as needing efficiency upgrades but there is little consideration for other factors such as embodied energy or demolition waste.

Echoed throughout the research and various interviews, preservation is often the most environmentally sustainable option. With examples like the Christman Building in Lansing, Michigan, it seems evident that Iowa City could and should ramp up efforts to improve efficiencies in older buildings as well as newer buildings. Preservation of existing building stock in the face of rapid growth may elevate progress towards other climate action goals as new waste is not added to landfills.

Additionally, the IC2030 Comprehensive Plan would benefit from including similar standards to address inherent efficiencies in historic buildings. Issues of building efficiency are lacking from the plan as a whole. The addition of efficiency data in the IC2030 would then align with any new goals in the ICCAAP.

Increase Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Older Buildings

Iowa City is one of the fastest growing cities in the state and should preserve existing buildings when possible. With recent building code updates, the City should collaboratively work with all relevant stakeholders to examine possibilities for upgrades to older buildings that will further assist in reaching City emission goals. While older buildings are not required to meet the same energy codes as newer buildings, the City will enhance energy audit efforts and work with owners to find efficiency solutions for older buildings. Additionally, preserving buildings will divert waste from landfills and prevent further resource consumption for the construction of new buildings.

Chapter 5: Economic Values

This chapter outlines the ways historic preservation is funded and the relationship between historic preservation and residential and commercial affordability in Iowa City. Finally, this chapter identifies recommendations for how the process of preservation can better accommodate economic values.

Topics:

Introduction to Economic Values and Historic Preservation: Discusses the link between historic preservation and broader economic values and goals

Funding Mechanism: Discusses the many modes and methods of historic preservation funding

Historic Tax Credits at a Glance: Introduces historic tax credits in both form and function

Federal Tax Credits: Discusses the Federal Tax Credit program and its mechanisms

State Tax Credits: Discusses the State Tax Credit program and its mechanisms

Affordability: Introduces the connection between historic preservation and affordable housing and structures

Residential Affordability: Connects historic preservation to residential affordability, touching on the seeming affordability of historic and older structures

Commercial Affordability: Draws a connection between historical and older commercial structures and a number of indicators for pricing and building conditions

Interviews and Research Findings: Based on interviews with stakeholders, preservationists, realtors, etc.

Case Studies:

College Street Redevelopment, Iowa City, Iowa

Citizen Apartment Building, Iowa City, Iowa

Dubuque Historic Preservation Incentives, Dubuque, Iowa

Recommendations:

Create a System of Surveys: Information is key when implementing policies to address the impacts of preservation.

Survey 1: Conduct a survey of existing financial conditions at regular intervals to gather accurate data on commercial and residential availability and affordability.

Survey 2: Implement an intercept survey at regular intervals to measure the real economic impacts of historic preservation in the downtown over time.

Implement Local Split-Rate Tax Incentives: Establish a split-rate tax incentive program to reduce the barrier to preservation expressed throughout interviews.

Establish a Co-operative Relationship between the City and ICDD: Form a partnership between the City and the Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD) to minimize overlap in preservation resources and expand existing programs.

Jumpstart Preservation: Expand opportunities for property owners to access beginning-of-project loans and grants.

Introduction

Scholars and experts have widely studied and measured the economic values of historic preservation. One of the most notable among these scholars, Donovan Rypkema, argues that the economic benefits of historic preservation outweigh its costs.¹³² The most common argument for historic preservation is that rehabilitation is usually more cost-effective than new construction. If the demolition of an existing building is required for new construction, a major commercial rehabilitation will probably cost anywhere from 3% to 16% less than new construction.¹³³ While projects vary, this common pattern emerges across the country.

Economic benefits alternate to intrinsic construction costs are also well documented. While the exact benefits of uniqueness are difficult to measure, many studies defend historic preservation with data on job and income growth, property values, and private investment catalyzed by historic preservation financing mechanisms. These findings are widely supported by historic preservation advocacy organizations across the country, more prominently by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a non-profit advocacy group, which outlines the following economic benefits throughout their many case studies:

Historic Preservation...

- Creates Jobs¹³⁴
- Increases Property Values¹³⁵
- Maintains Neighborhood Character¹³⁶
- Conserves Resources¹³⁹
- Attracts Investments¹³⁷
- Creates and Maintains Affordable Housing¹³⁸

¹³² Donovan Rypkema's work can be viewed on the Place Economics website at <https://www.placeeconomics.com/>

¹³³ Rypkema, *"The Economics of Rehabilitation."*

¹³⁴ Place Economics, *Profits Through Preservation: The Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Utah.*

¹³⁵ Place Economics, *The Economic Power of Heritage and Place: How Historic Preservation is Building A Sustainable Future in Colorado.*

¹³⁶ Place Economics, *Designing A 21st-Century City: Historic Preservation and the Raleigh of Tomorrow.*

¹³⁷ Place Economics, *Investment in Connecticut: The Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation.*

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Preservation Green Lab, *The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse.*

Funding Mechanisms

Nationally, the economic viability of historic preservation has required repetitive justification and the help of a variety of incentives. The largest federal program financially supporting historic preservation is the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, or more commonly known as the Federal Historic Tax Credit Program (HTC). The credit returns 20% of qualified reimbursable expenses when historic character is maintained. The National Park Service in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) administer the HTC program and it is touted as “the nation’s most effective program to promote historic preservation and community revitalization through historic rehabilitation. With over 44,000 completed projects since its enactment in 1976, the program has leveraged over \$96.87 billion in private investment in rehabilitation of historic properties.”¹⁴⁰

Historic Tax Credits at a Glance:

In the Annual Report on the Economic Impact of Federal Historic Tax Credit for FY 2018, the tax dollar investment into HTC is compared with investment in non-preservation investments. The report states, “in many parts of the country, a \$1 million investment in historic rehabilitation yields markedly better effects on employment, income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and state and local taxes than an equal investment in new construction and many other economic activities.” In 2018, \$7.7 billion was invested nationally in rehabilitation which yielded approximately 129,000 new jobs.¹⁴¹

That same report shows that in 2018 Iowa saw a total rehabilitation investment of \$204.4 million, yielding 3,694 jobs, \$138.4 million in additional income, \$206 million in GDP, and \$359.7 million output, leveraging \$6.8 million in state taxes. These are modest estimates compared to those published by the Iowa SHPO. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Iowa ranked 16th nationally for utilization of federal historic tax credits in 2017. Federal Historic Tax Credits are just one element of a list of incentives available to local Iowa communities including Iowa City, which are highlighted in figure 5.1 on the following page.

¹⁴⁰ National Park Service, *Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018*.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Figure 5.1 Funding Programs and Eligibility Requirements

Funding Programs	Eligible If Structure Is One of the Following:			
	National Register Listed	National Register Eligible	Locally Designated Landmark	In A Local District
Federal (Administered by the National Parks Service and State Historic Preservation Office)				
Federal Historic Tax Credits provide 20% of qualified rehabilitation costs as a credit against federal income taxes on income-producing historic properties. Rehabilitation work must be “substantial”* (an IRS test) and meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. Properties must be National Register listed within 30 months after claiming the credit. (A 10% tax credit is also available for non-historic, nonresidential, income-producing properties built before 1936).	✓	✓		
Web Source: https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/before-apply/eligibility-requirements.htm				
State (Administered by the State Historical Society of Iowa)				
State Historic Tax Credits provide 25% of qualified rehabilitation costs as a credit against the owner(s) state income taxes. For commercial properties, the rehabilitation project must exceed 50% of the fair market value of the property before rehabilitation. Rehabilitation work must meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. There are dedicated credits for buildings in Cultural and Entertainment Districts & for Small Projects (under \$500,000).	✓	✓	✓	
Web Source: https://iowaculture.gov/history/preservation/tax-incentives/state-tax-credit				
Historical Resource Development Program (HRDP) provides grants of up to \$100,000 to businesses, nonprofits, and individuals for acquisition, development, preservation, and conservation of historic resources. Grants require a match, a portion of which can be in-kind. HRDP offers funds for emergency projects. The annual grant deadline is May 15 unless noted otherwise in the grant guidelines.	✓	✓		
Web Source: https://iowaculture.gov/about-us/about/grants/historical-resource-development-program				

<p>The Temporary Historic Property Tax Exemption is a local property tax incentive for the sensitive, "substantial rehabilitation" of historic buildings. Property taxes remain the same for four years followed by increases of 25% per year for the following four years.</p>	✓	✓	✓	
<p>Web Source: https://iowaculture.gov/history/preservation/tax-incentives/property-tax-exemption</p>				
<p>National Trust Preservation Fund grants are available to nonprofits and public agencies for preservation planning projects, such as hiring an architect to prepare a preservation plan, but NOT for the actual cost of rehabilitation. Grants range from \$500 to \$10,000 and require a one-to-one cash match. Deadlines are February 1, June 1, and October 1, depending upon the availability of funds.</p>	✓	✓	✓	
<p>Web Source: https://forum.savingplaces.org/build/funding/grant-seekers/preservation-funds?_ga=2.112008717.829197187.1576465215-247825020.1572562024</p>				
<p>County (Administered by the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office)</p>				
<p>The Temporary History Property Tax Exemption provides a local property tax incentive for the sensitive, substantial rehabilitation of historic buildings. The program provides a combination of four years full exemption from any increased valuation due to a rehabilitation, followed by four years of property tax increases (25% per year) up to the new valuation.</p>	✓	✓		
<p>Web Source: https://iowaculture.gov/history/preservation/tax-incentives/property-tax-exemption/before-you-apply</p>				
<p>Local (Administered by Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission)</p>				
<p>The Iowa City Historic Preservation Fund Program are available to provide owners with financial assistance for rehabilitation of the exterior of structures. Grants provide funding for 50% of the total cost of the project with a maximum grant amount of \$5,000. Eligible properties are those in a Historic District, a Conservation District, or a Local Landmark. Properties eligible in Districts must be Key Contributing or Contributing. Non-contributing properties in districts are eligible only if the improvements reclassifies the structure as Contributing to its Historic District or Conservation District</p>			✓	✓
<p>Web Source: https://www8.iowa-city.org/WebLink/0/edoc/1586459/2019%20HP%20Fund%20web%20application.pdf</p>				

*Federal Historic Tax Credit Program:*¹⁴²

- ▶ The National Park Service and Internal Revenue Service administer the program in partnership with Iowa SHPO
- ▶ 20% of qualified rehabilitation expenses is credited back to income producing buildings that are NRHP listed or eligible to be listed. (Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures (QRE) are the expenses which are eligible for consideration in the calculation of Tax Credit totals)
- ▶ The federal tax credit program has committed over \$102 billion in rehabilitation investment and certified 45,383 historic rehabilitation projects
- ▶ In Iowa in FY2019, 20 property owners completed the application process and 19 projects were approved to receive federal funding totaling almost \$148 million in project credits and averaging \$7.8 million per project¹⁴³
- ▶ In FY2019, almost 50% of the federal credits allocated went to projects with costs totaling less than \$1 million. 47% of credits went to projects with costs between \$1 million and \$25 million while only 4% went to projects over \$25 million

Iowa State Historic Tax Program:

- ▶ The SHPO administers the program in partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority
- ▶ For commercial buildings, the QRE must equal at least 50% value of the building (excluding land) before rehabilitation or \$50,000, whichever is less. 25% of QREs is credited back to historically significant buildings that require substantial rehabilitation
- ▶ A minimum of 5% of available credits are set aside each year for small projects, or those with rehabilitation costs of less than \$750,000. The remaining 95% go to large projects
- ▶ Out of all the requests for funding in FY2019, SHPO was able to award 18 large projects totaling \$42.2 million and 31 small projects totaling \$3.3 million.¹⁴⁴ (Approximately 37% of funding goes toward projects with QRE of less than \$750,000)

¹⁴² "Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties."

¹⁴³ National Park Service, *Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2019*.

¹⁴⁴ Iowa Economic Development, *Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program 2019 Progress Report*.

Affordability

A common perception exists that the affordability of commercial and residential spaces is in opposition with the goals of historic preservation and maintenance of community character. However, prominent research institutions such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust) consistently prove this to not be true across the country. Their research has found that older, smaller buildings and mixed-age blocks tend to provide more opportunities for affordable commercial and residential units.¹⁴⁵

Through research and stakeholder interviews, this report finds opportunities for historic preservation goals to work in balance with community affordability goals. In many instances, older structures in the downtown are more affordable than their new-construction counterparts. However, the discussion of affordability in the downtown is complicated and nuanced. The affordability of the downtown continues to be influenced by a variety of factors such as the downtown's proximity to the University of Iowa, high land values, continued development pressure, and a layering of funding mechanisms.

Residential Affordability

The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan Update (IC2030) has identified goals and strategies that will “preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods while encouraging diverse and affordable housing options in all neighborhoods – new and old.”¹⁴⁶ While the structures downtown are primarily made up of commercial uses, maintaining a density of affordable housing, which is defined as housing costing less than 30% of a resident's income, is crucial to maintaining a vibrant and heavily trafficked downtown. In order to meet the demand for housing in the downtown and alleviate development pressures in the historic downtown the City has designated strict high-density development areas outside of the downtown study area. This measure has changed the landscape of housing options significantly over the last ten years.

There are barriers to fully understanding the demand of the housing market downtown, including a lack of data and the high proportion of transient renters. Over 80% of people living in the downtown are between the ages of 18 and 24 and an estimated 95.1% of people rent their homes. This demographic of residents has a median household income of an estimated \$8,832 annually and pay median gross rent for rental of about \$1,045, indicating a high proportion of young student residents who reside for shorter periods of time.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Preservation Green Lab, *Older, Smaller, Better*.

¹⁴⁶ City of Iowa City, *IC2030: Comprehensive Plan Update*.

¹⁴⁷ U.S. Census

While geographies available for residential affordability analysis include both the older downtown and the areas designated for newer development, similar statistics can be deduced from the historic buildings alone based on building owner interviews and available vacancy information.¹⁴⁸ By these measures, historic buildings have rental unit costs slightly lower than newer buildings due to the lower real estate class of older residential units. Stakeholder interviews indicate there is little incentive for the maintenance and updating of second and third story residential units in the downtown which helps to keep their rental rates lower.

Commercial Affordability

The Iowa City Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Plan (DRCMP) includes a market analysis of the downtown in relation to the growing demand for new and dense development. The plan states “the City desires to preserve and enhance the historic buildings and character of Downtown, while encouraging appropriate infill development with a mix of building uses.”¹⁴⁹ Following the completion of the DRCMP, the designation of dense development areas in Riverfront Crossings and areas south of Burlington Street have alleviated development pressures on the historic resources of downtown. This is critical in protecting these older structures, where no official historic regulations are currently in place.

Data available to analyze the commercial affordability downtown is limited and was supplemented with interviews from business owners and real estate agents related to their lease rates, maintenance costs, and funding barriers. According to market analysis in the DRCMP, triple net rents (net of utilities, property taxes, and other proportional building expenses) for the downtown range from \$16 to \$25 per square foot, while highway oriented rents on the fringe of Iowa City and Coralville tend to be lower.¹⁵⁰ Since this study in 2012, fringe development has increased dramatically, with new construction completed on the fringe of the city as well as immediately surrounding the downtown.

Currently, quality commercial space in older buildings in the downtown have similar if not more affordable rates when compared to new construction in the downtown. According to recent estimates, triple net rents in historic structures range from \$18 to \$34 per square foot depending on class of real estate (ranging from Class C to A respectively). Lease rates for first floor space in newly constructed buildings in the downtown are rarely available for less than \$28 per square foot. When compared to commercial space in the Iowa River Landing (IRL) highway-oriented development, lease rates of older buildings in the downtown are more affordable and new

¹⁴⁸ The 0.25 mile radius around the center of the pedestrian mall was used for this analysis, which includes the report area and contains the following 2010 census tract(s): 19103001600, 19103001100, 19103002100. The data presented in this report is summarized by the averages of these three census tracts, which limited accuracy of analysis.

¹⁴⁹ City of Iowa City, *Downtown and Riverfront Crossings Master Plan*. p.18

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.19

construction commercial leases have comparable costs with IRL properties ranging from \$28 to \$34 triple net rent per square foot.

Figure 5.2: Triple Net Lease Rates of Commercial Property¹⁵¹



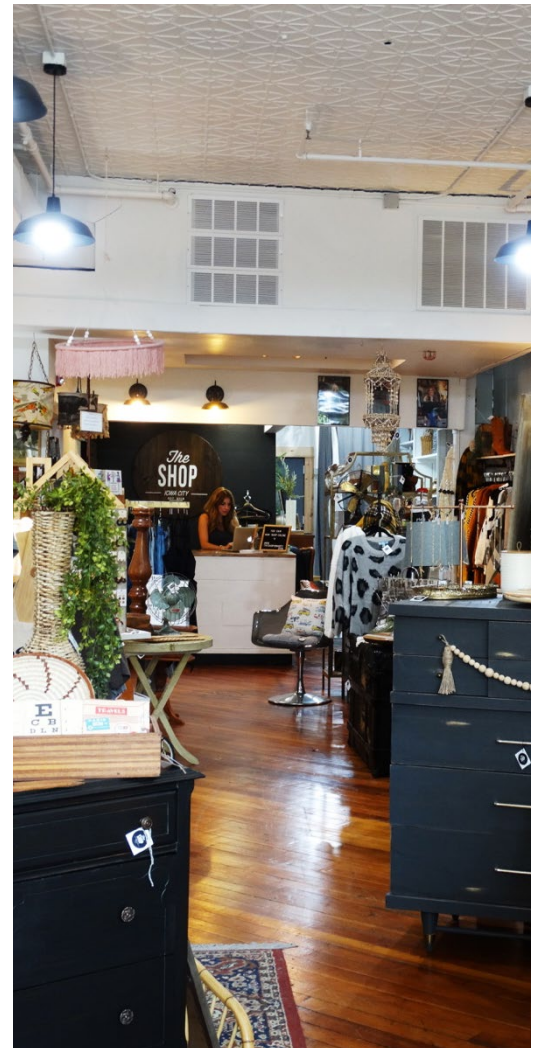
¹⁵¹ Lease rate data was compiled from websites advertising commercial lease availability, interviews with property owners, and interviews with Iowa City and Coralville real estate agents. There was no comprehensive data source available for commercial lease rates.

Interview Outcomes

In Iowa City's downtown, old buildings are highly coveted for their character, authenticity and location; however, they are not priced as highly as new commercial development. Although older and historic buildings are not formally protected, the high cost of acquiring property in this area and small building footprints protect buildings from being demolished. For most properties, the character and location of their space offsets the high cost of maintaining an older structure. However, there are financing barriers in the downtown that challenge its long-term economic sustainability. Through studying the financing mechanisms and interviewing stakeholders, the following key financial conditions have been identified:

In Iowa City's downtown, Historic Tax Credits and other financial incentives are underutilized due to high upfront costs of restoration, the perception of a lack of flexibility and transparency in the restoration process, and a missing middle of funding opportunities.

Two properties in the downtown have used Historic Preservation Tax Credits to fund their building restorations. While this has totaled over \$3.5 million in federal funding and over \$10.6 million in private investment, 16 other properties in the downtown are NRHP listed or eligible to be NRHP listed, and therefore eligible for HTCs and a variety of other incentives.¹⁵² Research and interviews have shown that one of the most significant barriers to undergoing a rehabilitation project or building upgrade is the high upfront cost of working with older structures. In the case of the Iowa State Bank & Trust Building, the technical assistance and leadership through the rehabilitation process by the Iowa SHPO made their large investment worthwhile with 25% of Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures (QRE) being refunded. In the case of the Englert Theatre, their capital campaign to



¹⁵² National Park Service, *Data Download*.

save the building was successful and raised the funds necessary to begin, and ultimately complete, the rehabilitation.¹⁵³

State historic tax credits offer some flexibility to investors by making tax credits transferable. This means owners who cannot use the credits can sell their credits to banking institutions and other property owners or businesses. However, there are some limitations to the state historic tax credits that are problematic to local owners of historic properties. The state credits currently mandate a high minimum cost of upgrades requiring that the owner invest at least 50% of property value or \$50,000, whichever is less. Additionally, credits are credited back to the project over a four-year period, usually after the rehabilitation is completed.¹⁵⁴ As a result, building owners who wish to undergo the process need to be able to afford high upfront costs while waiting for additional funding. Many property owners in the downtown are not willing or able to front the cost of expensive upgrades and perceive the process as complicated and lacking transparency.¹⁵⁵

While local incentives attempt to fill gaps in funding for historic properties, they are only applied in locally designated historic districts and local landmarks.¹⁵⁶ If the downtown were to become a local historic district, then local, state, and federal funding opportunities would become available to all NRHP listed properties within the district boundary. The local Iowa City Historic Preservation Fund Program allocates to key contributing and contributing buildings in historic districts or conservation districts; however, the downtown is not identified as a historic district and therefore is not eligible for the City's local funding.

Lease rates for commercial properties in the downtown are more affordable than those in new buildings downtown and new buildings on the fringe of Iowa City.

According to market analysis in the DRCMP, triple net rents for the downtown range from \$16 to \$25 per square foot, while highway oriented rents on the fringe of Iowa City and Coralville tend to be lower.¹⁵⁷ Since this study in 2012, fringe development has increased dramatically, and new construction completed on the fringe of the city as well as immediately surrounding the downtown.

Currently, quality commercial space in the downtown has similar if not more affordable rates when compared to new construction in the downtown. According to recent estimates, triple net rents in historic structures range from \$18 to \$34 per square foot depending on class of real estate (ranging from Class C to A respectively). Lease

¹⁵³ Stakeholder Interviews

¹⁵⁴ Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, *Tax Incentives*.

¹⁵⁵ Stakeholder Interviews

¹⁵⁶ Iowa City, Iowa, Municipal Code § 14-3B

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p.19

rates for first floor space in newly constructed buildings in the downtown are rarely available for less than \$28 per square foot with rates frequently above \$34.

Housing and commercial affordability analysis is limited by a lack of consistent and available data.

Residential contract rental census data in the downtown area can be accessed at the block group level, however the older structures in the downtown cannot easily be isolated from newer development to the south and the east. Block groups are the smallest geographical division of census tracts that is available for this data. A 0.25 mile radius around the center of the pedestrian mall incorporates the study area and touches three different block groups. The data presented in this report is summarized by the averages of these three census tracts, which limited accuracy of analysis. The scope of existing appraisal work is too broad and does not delineate analysis by structure age.

Commercial lease rates were delineated through limited available online vacancy advertisements and interviews with building owners and real estate agents. Going forward, it will be challenging to analyze the affordability impacts of any policy intervention without adequate data.

Case Studies

In Iowa City, the College Street Redevelopment project promotes unique design solutions without compromising its historic character. If approved, the project will operate within the Secretary of the Interior Standards, become a designated local historic landmark, and restore the functionality of the building.

Case Study: College Street Redevelopment¹⁵⁸

Figure 5.3: Frontal View of Proposed Project Redevelopment



In July of 2019, the city received a preliminary request for Tax Increment Financing (TIF) from the Tailwind Group for a redevelopment on the south side of the 100 block of East College Street, involving the College Block building, the Crescent Building, and the Dooley Block (Martini’s, the Union Bar, Revival, Graze, and the former Giovanni’s Restaurant). Between 2014 and 2020, Tailwind Group was able to acquire five buildings on the block for approximately \$11.3 million, consolidating the blocks ownership from five owners to two (not including the Wells Fargo Bank Building which is not part of the redevelopment project).¹⁵⁹

The project proposal would protect the historic structures facing College Street and the Pedestrian Mall, however, behind the buildings and separated by a walkway, the developer would build a nine-story, 170-unit apartment building, and two levels of parking, matching the height of the neighboring Graduate Hotel.

In order to meet the requirements to receive TIF, which would total a \$9 million package for a \$65 million project, and to fulfill the vision of the DRCMP to “preserve and enhance the historic buildings and character of

¹⁵⁸ Memo and developer information obtained from Wendy Ford, Iowa City Economic Development Coordinator

¹⁵⁹ Johnson County Property Information Viewer

the Downtown, while encouraging appropriate infill development with a mix of building uses,” the developer will:

- ▶ Designate each of the three buildings a Local Historic Landmark, thereby ensuring it against demolition
- ▶ Rehabilitate the buildings using Secretary of the Interior Standards and honor some of the original uses of the building by restoring the third floor of the Crescent Building to be a public gathering space including programable space, a shop, office, sales counter, and restrooms
- ▶ Exceed TIF Policy energy efficiency standards by building the new building to be certified LEED Platinum

Conclusion

Private-public partnerships such as this may serve to ensure the long-term maintenance of historic blocks in the downtown while sharing the burden of large rehabilitation costs. In this case, approval of this TIF package would ensure financial support to the developer while giving the city leverage to ensure certain community benefits in return. Some of these community benefits include ensuring additional community event space in the downtown and adjusting the footprint of the building to be more usable for commercial business. Additionally, it incentivizes preservation of the block and gives the developer opportunity to leverage additional financial incentives. In this partnership the City is able to preserve the block’s character, meet a variety of social goals, and gains over \$50 million in private investment.

Case Study: Citizen Apartment Buildings

The Citizen Building is located at 319 E. Washington Street and was built in 1937 by architect Henry L. Fisk to house the Press-Citizen newspaper company. The building was constructed in a modern art deco style architecture.¹⁶⁰ However, by the 1990s, the building had become dilapidated and was threatened with demolition. In December of 1993, the building was purchased to be redeveloped into a multi-residential building. While the cost to rehabilitate was high, a variety of tax credits and grants were applied to cover all building costs.

Instead of utilizing historic preservation funding, the property leveraged alternate forms of state and federal funding (Figure 5.4). As a result of the building using state and federal funding, section 106 (which is discussed further in Chapter 2) invokes a review of the proposed property changes. This review is done to ensure that the modifications are doing no harm to the existing historic integrity of the structure. In this case, the building owner was able to utilize alternate forms of funding while still maintaining the National Register eligibility. Because they maintained this eligibility, this becomes a NRHP District the property would be eligible for additional historic rehabilitation incentives.

Conclusion

A wide variety of funding opportunities are leveraged to maintain the character of buildings and meet affordable housing goals in the downtown as identified in IC2030. While the last of these subsidies expired for this building in 2018, the building maintains below average rental rates for the area at around \$800 per unit.

Figure 5.4: Project Funding Breakdown

<i>Grant / Loan Type</i>	Percent of Project Cost
<i>Iowa Finance Authority – Low Income Housing Tax Credit</i>	67%
<i>Community Development Block Grant</i>	23%
<i>Iowa Finance Authority Loan</i>	5%
<i>Federal Home Loan Bank</i>	5%
<i>Total</i>	100%

¹⁶⁰ Rhomberg, "Mid-Century Modern Architect had Prolific Local Career."

Case Study: Dubuque Historic Preservation Incentives

Dubuque Iowa, which is a case example discussed further in the Social Values chapter of this report, has had a commercial historic district listed in the NRHP since January of 1983. In the years following, Dubuque’s downtown area faced significant dilapidation and some properties originally a part of the district were demolished.¹⁶¹ In the City’s renewed commitment to revitalize the downtown beginning in 2007, the City has implemented a variety of policy interventions and funding mechanisms to bring the area back to life. Funding in the historic districts is allocated for façade improvements, design grants, financial consultant grants, and land discounts. Funding option grants and loans are available for up to \$25,000.

While these are smaller incentive opportunities for owners, the Urban Redevelopment Boundary offers another level of incentives to fill the gap between small city incentives and federal funding. In addition to the national and state level incentives afforded to property owners in the five existing local historic districts, the City has also established a large urban renewal boundary, combining all the historic districts and their surrounding areas by layering additional financial incentives.

Buildings within the boundary have access to the following split-rate tax exemptions:

- ▶ Residential: If assessed value increases by more than 10%, property is granted 10 years of exemption on 100% of the increased valuation
- ▶ Multi-Residential: if assessed value increases by more than 15%, property is granted 10 years of exemption on 100% of the increased valuation
- ▶ Commercial: If assessed value increases by 15%, property is granted 3 years of exemption on 100% of the increased valuation¹⁶²

A Split-Rate Tax is an exemption of increased property value resulting from qualifying building improvement for a set period of time

¹⁶¹ Old Main Street Historic District Boundary Increase Amendment, United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/15000722.pdf>

¹⁶² City of Dubuque, *Dubuque Urban Revitalization Plan*.

Conclusion

Dubuque is a successful example of a locality layering smaller municipal incentives to provide small and mid-sized funding opportunities. This has allowed Dubuque to multiply the economic benefits of existing county, state, and federal level historic preservation funding opportunities such as historic tax credits and county historic tax exemptions.

Following the creation of the Urban Revitalization Boundary in 2007:

- ▶ 36 properties within the boundary have utilized Historic Preservation Tax Credits to restore and rehabilitate buildings
- ▶ A total of \$214,554,591 has been invested in their downtown, incentivized by over \$50,000,000 in state and federal level funding, not including additional TIF funding, local grants, exemptions, and loans¹⁶³
- ▶ More than 2,000 jobs have been created as a result of restorations and rehabilitations
- ▶ A total of 41 federal and state Historic Tax Credit projects in the boundary have spurred more than \$600 million in additional downtown development¹⁶⁴

Recommendations

The IC2030 has identified goals and strategies that will “preserve and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods while encouraging diverse and affordable housing options in all neighborhoods – new and old.”¹⁶⁵

As established in previous chapters, the Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan (ICHPP) incorporates three goals relating historic preservation and economic incentives, health, and stability:¹⁶⁶

- Goal 3: Establish economic incentives to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods
- Goal 8: Establish and support heritage tourism efforts appropriate to Iowa City’s historic preservation resources and community needs
- Goal 10: Adopt strategies to preserve historic neighborhoods which reflect their organic development, historical roles and traditions, modern needs, and economic health and stability

¹⁶³ “Historic Tax Credit Projects in Dubuque, Iowa”

¹⁶⁴ Davis, “Finding Dubuque: An Iowa City Rediscovered Its Sense of Place.”

¹⁶⁵ City of Iowa City, *IC2030: Comprehensive Plan Update*. p.27

¹⁶⁶ City of Iowa City, *Iowa City Historic Preservation Plan*. p. 41,58,63

In order to meet these preservation goals and ensure the long-term economic viability of the downtown district, the City should implement the following recommendations:

Conduct a survey of existing financial conditions at regular intervals to gather accurate data on commercial and residential availability and affordability

Today, comprehensive data regarding residential and commercial characteristics in the downtown does not exist. With updated data, the City could better understand the density needs for the area surrounding the downtown and monitor the outcomes of policy interventions. By measuring commercial vacancy rates, turnover, and lease rates, the City gains a valuable context of commercial space in older buildings versus newer builds surrounding the downtown.

Following any policy intervention, implement an intercept survey at regular intervals to measure the real economic impacts of historic preservation in the downtown over time

Appendix K of the ICHPP includes a model for evaluating the economic impact of historic preservation. The section outlines a methodology for measuring the economic impact of preservation in three key areas: rehabilitation, or money spent on the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic properties; property values; and heritage tourism. Property values would be expressed as a variety of indicators including rate of appreciation, value comparison, rate of value change, and sale price.

Direct property owners to county-level split-rate tax incentives and consider adopting additional local split-rate tax incentives

Building owners in the downtown have reported that the possibility of increased property values is a deterrent from doing regular maintenance and making upgrades.¹⁶⁷ Johnson County currently offers a split-rate tax exemption for 100% of improved property value over four years, which is not currently utilized by downtown property owners. If the use of this incentive was further encouraged by the City, property owners may be encouraged to make regular building investments without the burden of immediate increased taxes. The City should consider the adoption of a local split-rate incentive when property owners meet a specified threshold of investment in their historic property.

Form a partnership between the City and the Iowa City Downtown District to minimize overlap in preservation resources and expand existing programs

The Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD) offers historic preservation resources to those in their district. The district has established storefront and signage guidelines compliant with SOI Standards supported by local businesses. Additionally, the ICDD offers a Property Evaluation Program which covers a large portion of the cost for property owners to complete a property evaluation study. As a result, property owners have the information they need to best invest in their property.

¹⁶⁷ Stakeholder interviews.

Expand opportunities for property owners to access early-project small and mid-sized loans and grants.

As highlighted in the economic analysis above, Iowa State Historic Preservation Tax Credit policy prioritizes large, shovel-ready projects over small projects, resulting in a missing middle of funding options. Small projects slip further through the funding cracks due to the prioritization of large projects with QREs greater than \$750,000. However, interviews indicated that smaller project funding availability is critical for property owners in downtown Iowa City to manage the increased costs of maintaining their structures and to prevent long-term dilapidation. To fill funding gaps, the City should assist property owners in receiving moderate early-project grants and loans, which would assist them in gaining the necessary technical assistance when undergoing smaller rehabilitation and maintenance projects.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter brings all of the topics discussed throughout the report together and paints a picture of what historic preservation can become.

A Tapestry of Social Factors

The driving force behind this report was an article by Main Street President Patrice Frey in which she called out historic preservation as being too isolated from other social forces. Frey’s call to action was a request for preservationists to recognize the connections between historic preservation and a list of social factors such as: affordable housing, economic and social equity, economic development, and climate change.¹⁶⁸ Frey, when describing these factors refers to them as, “...a complex tapestry of other important social needs...” no imagery better describes the complex interplay between these social factors and historic preservation. Connecting the concepts and arguments laid out by Frey in her article and the conditions of preservation in Iowa City this report should be seen as a resource to guide how preservation practices in Iowa City can better address those social factors.

This report was written with all practitioners of historic preservation in mind. However, some of the recommendations specifically pertain to how the City of Iowa City can and should implement certain changes to the legal framework in which preservation exists. While all preservationists should be diligent in adopting a new mindset that includes these social factors in their process, historic preservation practice is heavily impacted by the legal framework of laws and ordinances that are set by various governmental entities. While changes cannot be made in such a way as to invalidate federal or state laws, how preservation is practiced and legislated on a local level is highly up to the City itself.

While reading this report it is easy to get lost in the specifics of each of the chapters; however, this report was not written to merely discuss the three main aspects of community values. Instead, it was written to bring all of these aspects together to create a holistic view of what historic preservation could be. The authors of this report felt that it was necessary to break the social factors and preservation practices down into three segments: social values, environmental values, and economic values. This was done to help facilitate an easier read of the material, in a framework that mirrors the three pillars of sustainability (a concept that is commonly used in planning). However, the intention was not to make it seem as if these values were independent of each other, in fact, these values are often so intrinsically linked that it becomes difficult to maintain this framework. The purpose of this conclusion is to remove those perceived barriers between the social, environmental, and economic factors.

¹⁶⁸ Frey, “Why Historic Preservation Needs a New Approach.”

The Legal Framework – A Winding Thread

Keeping with the concept of viewing historic preservation and the identified social factors as a tapestry, it is important to discuss the “glue that keeps it all together,” although in this case it would be the thread. The passage of the NHPA enshrined within U.S. law the importance of the government in the process and practice of historic preservation. Since then, as indicated by Frey, the ability of preservationists to adapt to changing social factors has been limited to what has been thought to be allowed under the current legal framework. While this report does not aim to change the federal and state legal processes for historic preservation, as this is currently beyond the ability of individuals and entities within Iowa City, it does aim to affect the local processes through which historic preservation occurs. Considerations for these values can and should be made through whatever legal processes the City has available. For those who wish to incorporate these values into their practice—but are not a governmental body capable of impacting the legal process—this report should hopefully serve as a source of inspiration and evidence. While many of the recommendations are tooled towards changes that should be made at the local governmental level, individuals should feel free to incorporate as many of these suggestions into their personal or organizational practices.

Understanding the Overlap

Throughout the process of constructing this report a number of similarities began to pop up throughout the differing chapters; however, these overlapping aspects are not always obvious. As explained above, these social factors identified by Frey have been grouped into the three pillars of sustainability. One important piece of the sustainability triangle is the interconnected relationships between these three pillars. The next three segments will be a brief overview of the connections that have been identified between the various pillars of sustainability.

Environmental and Social Values

The overlap between environmental and social values run to the core of what makes the downtown such an important place to preserve. The density and variety of building and business types allow the downtown to become a location that can be used by a wide array of individuals. Through preservation, the downtown will be able to maintain the character that makes downtown Iowa City so inviting. In addition to the gravity of downtown, both environmental and social concerns over the maintenance and rehabilitation of these buildings—and the spaces that they provide—lead to a support for the expansion of a workforce that is capable to support preservation downtown. Through education and training of new individuals in the methods needed to provide the quality craftsmanship required to rehabilitate, maintain, and green downtown’s older and historic structures, the ability of local building and business owners—who might have considered preservation before but could not find adequately trained professionals—to find quality skilled labor will be massively improved.

Social and Economic Values

Three main overlaps between the social and economic values expressed and discussed in this report presented themselves. First, the Tailwinds Redevelopment project represents a successful public-private partnership which meets the financial demands of a large restoration project while accommodating programmable public space for community use. Iowa City's development standards gave them leverage to make conditions for development approval which balanced social and economic goals. Second, the establishment and implementation of heritage tours would allow for a greater involvement of the public in both identifying and supporting local businesses and sites which hold historical importance within Iowa City. Lastly, considerations for the possibility of gentrification through investments in arts and culture and the places they inhabit, tie social and economic values together creating opportunities both positive and negative.

Economic and Environmental Values

Through research and interviews this report has identified a number of benefits that older buildings offer to a community in both an economic and environmental way. This report has identified the difference in net lease rates for spaces downtown and have shown that older structures often offer a more affordable rate. These spaces not only assist in providing more affordable spaces, these older structures are also important to maintain for ecological reasons. Preserving these spaces is important for: reducing waste, offering affordable spaces, and providing spaces that can be made energy efficient with minimal cost and labor.

Recommendations – A Comprehensive List

Many of the recommendations in this report would be made easier and more effective through the creation of a local historic district within the geographical scope of this report. Evidence for a National Register Historic District has already been established through the Survey and Evaluation of the Central Business District of 2018 (SEICBD) and talks have begun on applying for a federally recognized district. As discussed in the Chapter 2, National Register Historic Districts are primarily honorific while local historic districts offer a greater ability to facilitate historic preservation while focusing on local values.

Consider creating a short-and long-term historic preservation public engagement plan

Public engagement is a value that is largely expressed in almost all City documents, but often lacks details and process. The 2008 ICHPP includes important goals that require the implementation of policies and actions steps.

Address the need to enhance an inclusive heritage tourism program

Iowa City's diversity is recognized in the IC2030 and other documents. One key to diversity is the recognition and honor of groups that have contributed to the history of Iowa City. There are important unexplored African American, Mexican, and Meskwaki histories that tell about the struggles and integrity of these groups in the

City. Adequately highlighting and honoring this history not only contributes to enriching the history of the City, it also adds strength to the City's social, economic and political structures.

Establish historic preservation educational program

Education is a long-term tool that engages the society with historic preservation. There is a need to establish a historic education system with multiple layers to connect historic preservation with downtown property and business owners; schools, Kirkwood, and the University of Iowa students; and the public at large. Historic preservation can engage downtown property and business owners with a focus in rehabilitation tools and finances that make preservation attractive, provide support for nonprofit organizations, schools, and colleges to offer programs that prepare a future generation of historic stewards, and encourage initiatives that engage the public with programs and activities that tell the history of the city.

Consider recruiting full-time staff

Engaging the public to address the goals of the ICHPP requires multiple layers of resources with a full-time staff being first. Without adequate staffing the goals of historic preservation in the city will be limited.

Explore new ways to support art and culture in downtown Iowa City

The IC2030 and DRCMP have goals and strategies that promote arts and culture in downtown as part of the city's creative economy and encourage the development of artist communities and incubator spaces in downtown. To promote multicultural or diasporic placemaking it is also important for there to be events and festivals that celebrate the city's diverse populations. The Ped Mall is particularly appropriate for these uses as well as the development of multicultural markets and eateries located on the Ped Mall space perhaps in a popup mode like the Winter Holiday market that operates every December in Black Hawk Park. Moreover, given Black Hawk Park's name, efforts should be made to connect downtown to Native American culture as well as the cultures of other minority populations. Historic and old buildings of downtown provide an opportunity for developing such artist communities because of their affordable cost. The historic preservation commission can develop a mechanism in coordination with ICDD and the City to ensure old downtown buildings are offered opportunities to support the goal of developing incubator programs that provide low-cost opportunities for starting artists.

Conduct a survey to develop data to indicate the need and availability of historic preservation craftsmanship

Rehabilitation and restoration training can provide needed skilled labor as well as offering economic opportunities and employment beyond the city to serve the entire region. The training can be used to address other social and educational issues that may face students and people in need. Before this education can be established sufficient evidence for the need of skilled craftsman should be established through some form of data collection.

Coordinate with Kirkwood Community College to explore the possibility of bringing back Historic Preservation Interior and Exterior Certificate Series

If the aforementioned survey demonstrates a need, this training provides benefits to historic preservation that goes to the regional level. The City should consider initiating discussions with Kirkwood Community College and explore the possibilities of support provided by the SHPO to reintroduce the program and other similar courses that support historic preservation.

Provide support to Friends of Historic Preservation and other non-profit organizations to plan and implement historic rehabilitation training programs that target different community groups

Friends of Historic Preservation in Iowa City and other nonprofit organizations provide support of several types to historic preservation. Historic preservation can examine, coordinate and provide support for nonprofit organizations to initiate training programs that educate and qualify a cadre in historic rehabilitation, such programs have a long-term benefit by preparing a future generation to steward the City's historic legacy.

Designate a Local Historic District

The designation of a National Register Historic District brings with it a number of benefits—primarily the preservation of historic buildings so that they maintain their character and they provide the benefits—social, environmental, economic—that are described in this report. Most significantly, perhaps, the preservation of older buildings addresses climate change and the City's climate action plan by employing embodied energy that reduces the production of greenhouse gases that would be released if new buildings were constructed to replace downtown's historic buildings. It is important to remember, however, given the cultural, historical, and artistic values embodied in downtown that it is not enough to just designate a local historic district. While local historic district designation may suffice in a private residential neighborhood, the public character of downtown means that preservation of buildings is not sufficient justification by itself to create a sense that an historic downtown is serving the public good. A downtown, therefore, should not simply be a museum, a place in which a particular time and place has been preserved, but a place where the historical character of the buildings and spaces between the buildings serves as an important context for the ongoing life of the city as expressed in its culture, arts, and history. Once again, the downtown is the civic center of the city and its preservation should highlight the continuing development of the city's culture, arts, and history, including and especially the diverse voices of black, brown, red, as well as white people. This is especially true in Iowa City as it, like the rest of Iowa, evolves from a nearly all-white city to a much more diverse population.

Emphasize Energy Audits for Historic Buildings

As mentioned, the City already offers free energy audits that would allow for owners to directly identify ways they could upgrade building efficiencies. Discussions in this chapter focused on energy loss and inherent efficiencies of historic buildings. These could be improved by identifying areas of particular buildings that are inefficient and how they could be enhanced through energy audits. This is already emphasized in the ICCAAP and would be a continuation of current City efforts.

It would be in the interest of existing climate action goals that call for the retrofitting of historic buildings for the City to form partnerships with the ICDD on the grounds of encouraging the use of energy audits in downtown commercial spaces. The City has an ambitious set of climate goals that will be assisted by increasing efficiencies in all buildings. Focusing some attention on downtown commercial spaces, in particular, should help offset the urban heat island effect and reduce emissions.¹⁶⁹ Increasing the number of audits in the study area alone will not be sufficient, however, encouraging more commercial audits will put the City in a favorable position to reduce emissions.

Clarify the Role of Preservation in Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and Comprehensive Plan

The ICCAAP lays out action steps for increasing the energy efficiency of newer buildings but does not do the same for older buildings. Older buildings are mentioned as needing efficiency upgrades but there is little consideration for other factors such as embodied energy or demolition waste.

Echoed throughout the research and various interviews, preservation is often the most environmentally sustainable option. With examples like the Christman Building in Lansing, Michigan, it seems evident that Iowa City could and should ramp up efforts to improve efficiencies in older buildings as well as newer buildings. Preservation of existing building stock in the face of rapid growth may elevate progress towards other climate action goals as new waste is not added to landfills.

Additionally, the IC2030 Comprehensive Plan would benefit from including similar standards to address inherent efficiencies in historic buildings. Issues of building efficiency are lacking from the plan as a whole. The addition of efficiency data in the IC2030 would then align with any new goals in the ICCAAP.

Increase Energy Efficiency Retrofits for Older Buildings

Iowa City is one of the fastest growing cities in the state and should preserve existing buildings when possible. With recent building code updates, the City should collaboratively work with all relevant stakeholders to examine possibilities for upgrades to older buildings that will further assist in reaching City emission goals. While older buildings are not required to meet the same energy codes as newer buildings, the City will enhance energy audit efforts and work with owners to find efficiency solutions for older buildings. Additionally, preserving

¹⁶⁹ United States Environmental Protection Agency, *What You Can Do to Reduce Heat Islands*.

buildings will divert waste from landfills and prevent further resource consumption for the construction of new buildings.

Conduct a survey of existing financial conditions at regular intervals to gather accurate data on commercial and residential availability and affordability

Today, comprehensive data regarding residential and commercial characteristics in the downtown does not exist. With updated data, the City could better understand the density needs for the area surrounding the downtown and monitor the outcomes of policy interventions. By measuring commercial vacancy rates, turnover, and lease rates, the City gains valuable context of commercial space in older buildings versus new builds surrounding the downtown.

Following any policy intervention, implement an intercept survey at regular intervals to measure the real economic impacts of historic preservation in the downtown over time

Appendix K of the ICHPP includes a model for evaluating the economic impact of historic preservation. The section outlines a methodology for measuring the economic impact of preservation in three key areas: rehabilitation, or money spent on the acquisition and rehabilitation of historic properties; property values; and heritage tourism. Property values would be expressed as a variety of indicators including rate of appreciation, value comparison, rate of value change, and sale price. Heritage tourism would be defined as both travelers who incorporate at least one visit to a historical site or landmark among other activities during their visit, and to the smaller subset of visitors whose primary reason for traveling is to visit historic places.

Implement local split-rate tax incentives

Building owners in the downtown have reported that the possibility of increased property values is a deterrent for doing regular maintenance and making upgrades.¹⁷⁰ If a split-rate tax exemption were implemented, property owners may be encouraged to make regular building investments and be more likely to leverage county level tax exemptions available to them. Using commercial properties as an example, the City could offer a 100% exemption on all additional valuation if a certain threshold of private investment is met.

Form a partnership between the City and the Iowa City Downtown District to minimize overlap in preservation resources and expand existing programs

The Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD) offers historic preservation resources to those in their district. The district has established storefront and signage guidelines compliant with SOI Standards and that is supported by local businesses. Additionally, the ICDD offers a Property Evaluation Program which covers a large portion of the cost for property owners to complete a property evaluation study. As a result, property owners have the information they need to best invest in their property.

¹⁷⁰ Stakeholder interviews.

Expand opportunities for property owners to access early-project small and mid-sized loans and grants.

As highlighted in the economic analysis above, Iowa State Historic Preservation Tax Credit policy prioritizes large, shovel-ready projects over small projects, resulting in a missing middle of funding options. Small projects slip further through the funding cracks due to the prioritization of large projects with QREs greater than \$750,000. However, interviews indicated that smaller project funding availability is critical for property owners in downtown Iowa City to manage the increased costs of maintaining their structures and to prevent long-term dilapidation. To fill funding gaps, the City should assist property owners in receiving moderate early-project grants and loans, which would assist them in gaining the necessary technical assistance when undergoing smaller rehabilitation and maintenance projects.

Wrap-up and Places for Future Research

Throughout the process of preparing this report the authors have gone from having collectively no practical experience with historic preservation laws, theory, or practice, to creating what we hope to be an informative and useful document. We would like to thank the ICDD, the City of Iowa City, Technical Advisors, and our professors in the School of Urban and Regional Planning of the University of Iowa for the opportunity to work with you all to create this report. We have learned quite a bit about not only historic preservation but about ourselves and each other.

While this report attempts to take a holistic view in addressing the call to action given by Patrice Frey, there are undoubtedly some aspects of the preservation process that were unable to be adequately addressed in this report. We feel that these aspects of social factors and how they can be aided through historic preservation warrant a greater inspection, and hope that planners and preservationists can continue to investigate them further:

- The intersection of historic preservation and gentrification, and how gentrification affects the social and economic values discussed in this report
- A greater analysis of the public perception of historic preservation and whether or not that perception impairs or strengthens the cause
- A deeper discussion on the impacts to preservation and the environmental considerations that will come when buildings constructed under the period of urban renewal become eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

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Glossary

This report will be filled with many terms which may have a wide variety of meaning, or are used differently depending on context, this section is intended to provide the definitions for each of the major sources of potential confusion. The definitions that follow below have been compiled by the authors of this report and will be used throughout this report, please make use of this section to ensure consistency throughout this document.

Accessibility refers to physical access to, and within, buildings for all people. This includes those with disabilities which might require accommodations for historic buildings. Accessibility of buildings is impacted by existing reasonable accommodation ordinances in municipal code. For consistency in this document, a difference between Accessibility and accessibility has been made; accessibility refers to the connectivity of downtown locations to locations outside of downtown.

Adaptive Reuse Ordinances (ARO) refers to a set of ordinances that aim to incentivize the reuse of older and historic structures through a myriad of primarily non-financial incentive structures. Is often voluntary and comes in the form of an overlay zone.

British Thermal Unit (BTU) refers to a standard unit of energy used in the United State and represents the amount of thermal energy necessary to raise the temperature of one pound of pure liquid water by one-degree Fahrenheit

Census Tract refers to an area roughly equivalent to a neighborhood established by the Census Bureau for analyzing populations.

Certified Local Governments (CLG) refers to municipalities that have been identified for their commitment to historic preservation. They are approved by the SHPO based on a specific set of criteria.

Commercial Affordability refers to a complex and interrelated set of issues which affect downtown businesses in a variety of ways. The affordability of historic commercial property depends on the location, quality of space, income of the property, capital costs of maintenance, and location among other variables.

Community Development refers to the set of policies, actions, and activities which aim to address issues of community diversity and inclusivity. Through shared cultural and recreational resources offered downtown, community development can establish a stronger sense of place and civic pride amongst residents.

Contributing Resources refers to buildings usually of at least 50 years or more of age, with a demonstrated historical association or representing an architectural style, but which lack the degree of historic integrity necessary to be considered individually NRHP eligible. National Register Historic District contributing resources together in a district retain sufficient historical significance and convey a sense of place.

Demolition Energy refers to the energy required to raze, load, and transport materials to disposal sites

Embodied Energy refers to the energy consumed by all of the processes associated with the production of a building, from the mining and processing of natural resources to manufacturing, transport and product delivery.

Environmental Sustainability refers to the ability to retain and reuse previously constructed resources thereby mitigating the negative environmental impacts of demolition and the disposal of old materials, the ability to adequately finance/implement energy efficiency upgrades/retrofits and support smart growth initiatives to maintain a dense downtown in accordance with city and business district climate goals.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program is a federal historic preservation program that awards tax credits as funding for approved preservation activities and projects.

Federal Historic Tax Credit Program (HTC) – see *Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program*

Financing Mechanisms refers to a combination of federal, state, and local programs, tax incentives, and grants available to address historic preservation costs.

Floor Area Ratio refers to the ratio of a building's total floor area to the size of the piece of land upon which it is built. It is often used as one of the regulations in city planning along with the building-to-land ratio. The terms can also refer to limits imposed on such a ratio through zoning.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) refers to the total value of goods produced, and services provided in a country for one year.

Heritage Tourism refers to traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past, and heritage tourism can include cultural, historic and natural resources.

Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) refers to a commission appointed by the City, often times the mayor, and charged to help facilitate the City's historic preservation efforts.

Historic Resource refers to any building, structure, object or site that has been in existence more than 50 years and possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and: is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad

patterns of our history, or is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, or embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important information in prehistory or history; and has been designated as such by the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission.

Historic Survey and Evaluation of the Iowa City Central Business District (SEICBD) is the survey that covers the nine square blocks which is also this report's study area, conducted in 2018 to measure and inventory historical structures and assets for use in local historic preservation practices.

Individually Eligible Resources refers to buildings that are the at least 50 years old and are the highest standard of eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP. Generally, it must retain high historic integrity on the exterior and interior of the building, with character-defining features specific to the period of significance retained.

Intercept Survey refers to a research method used to gather on-site feedback from an audience.

Iowa City Downtown District (ICDD) is a 501(c) (6) nonprofit organization representing property owners and stakeholders in the Downtown and Northside Neighborhoods of Iowa City charged with overseeing the reinvestment of these funds as they advance a mission to steward the area.

Iowa City Historic Preservation Handbook is a historic preservation resource adopted in 2010 and contains guidelines for the historic review of properties in historic and conservation districts and historic landmarks; an explanation of the historic preservation process and regulations; and information about best practices for historic property owners.

Key Contributing Resources refers to buildings that indicate an increased impact on the sense of time and place conveyed in the National Register Historic District. Buildings with the designation of key contributing may have a diminished historic integrity (preventing individual eligibility in the NRHP) but must still be 50 years or older and significant to the character of the streetscape, to their architectural style or their historical context, elevates their importance.

Local Historic District refers to a group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or any geographically definable area which possesses a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Local historic districts designate historic areas based on local criteria and protects historic properties character and quality with design controls and a design review process.

Local Iowa City Historic Preservation Fund Program refers to a program designed to provide owners of historic properties with financial assistance for the rehabilitation and preservation of the exterior architectural features of their property.

National Register Historic District refers to a group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or any geographically definable area which possesses a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. The National Register Historic District must be significant as well as identifiable and it must meet National Register Criteria for listing on that Register. The National Register Historic District identifies historic properties and designates historic areas based on Secretary of Interior Standards but does not obligate private property owners or prevent alteration to structures.

National Register of Historic Places refers to an official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, engineering and culture as authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. that works in the field of historic preservation in the United States. Was originally created and funded by the United States Federal Government but has since separated and is no longer federally funded.

Non-Contributing Resources refers to buildings built less than 50 years ago, or which do not meet the standards required to be considered a contributing resource in a National Register Historic District. In many cases in the downtown, buildings are considered non-contributing because they are too new, they have been altered to heavily thus compromising their historic character, or they are not in close enough proximity to other historic structures to be considered a contributing resource to a potential district.

Overlay Zone/Zoning refers to a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district, placed over an existing base zone(s), which identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone.

Planning and Zoning Commission (PNZ) refers to a locally elected or appointed government board charged with recommending to the local town or city council the boundaries of the various original zoning districts and appropriate regulations to be enforced therein and any proposed amendments thereto.

Private-Public Partnership refers to a cooperative arrangement between two or more public and private sectors, typically of a long-term nature.

Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures (QRE) refers to the expenses which are eligible for consideration in the calculation of Tax Credit totals.

Real Estate Class refers to a system of classification for real estate based on the quality of a property often combining multiple variables into its calculation.

Residential Affordability refers to housing that costs less than 30% of gross household income. This number varies between regions but is generally accepted as 30%.

Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) is a tool communities in Iowa can use to help fund public improvement and maintenance projects within a specified area. SSMID funds are created through an additional tax placed on property owners in the defined District.

Split-Rate Tax refers to a tax system that treats land and any buildings on it as separate units and taxes them at different rates. Often used to reduce increases in assessed property value and tax rates for a period of time following improvements and/or investments.

State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) refers to a government appointed office that is tasked with assisting in the creation and implementation of historic preservation practices and legislation in a given state or legal territory.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) refers to a financing tool to address urban blight and promote (re)economic development. The revenue to finance a TIF project comes from the increase in property value generated by the project times a combined property tax rate of all affected entities including the city, county and school district.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) is the legislation intended to preserve historic and archaeological sites in the United States of America. This legislation created and maintains much of the legal framework that historic preservation exists within.

Title III of the American Disability Act is the portion of the ADA that regulates the standards and code that must be followed for commercial spaces in the case of alterations, elevator installation, historic preservation, among many other standards.

Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) are the equivalent of a SHPO but for Native American Tribes.

Triple Net Rent refers to a lease agreement on a property where the tenant or lessee agrees to pay all real estate taxes, building insurance, and maintenance (the three "nets") on the property in addition to any normal fees that are expected under the agreement

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