



AGENDA
BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 4, 2026
BIRMINGHAM CITY HALL, 151 MARTIN ST., COMMISSION ROOM #205
******* 7:00 PM*******

- 1) Roll Call**
- 2) Approval of the HDC Minutes of [January 12, 2026](#)**
- 3) Courtesy Review**
- 4) Historic Design Review**
- 5) Sign Review**
- 6) Study Session**
 - A. [Historic Preservation Master Plan – Final Draft Adoption](#)**
 - B. [Demolition Delay – Study Session](#)**
- 7) Miscellaneous Business and Communication**
 - A. Pre-Application Discussions**
 - B. Draft Agenda**
 - 1. [March 18, 2026](#)**
 - C. Staff Reports**
 - 1. [Administrative Sign Approvals](#)**
 - 2. [Administrative Approvals](#)**
 - 3. [Demolitions](#)**
 - 4. [Action List 2026](#)**
 - D. Communications**
 - 1. [Agenda Software & Meeting Times](#)**
- 8) Adjournment**

*Please note that board meetings will be conducted in person once again. Members of the public can attend in person at Birmingham City Hall, 151 Martin St., OR may attend virtually at:

Link to Access Virtual Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/91282479817>

Telephone Meeting Access: 877 853 5247 US Toll-free

Meeting ID Code: 912 8247 9817

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Las personas con incapacidad que requieren algún tipo de ayuda para la participación en esta sesión pública deben ponerse en contacto con la oficina del escribano de la ciudad en el número (248) 530-1800 o al (248) 644-3405 (para las personas con incapacidad auditiva) por lo menos un día antes de la reunión para solicitar ayuda a la movilidad, visual, auditiva, o de otras asistencias. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).



**Historic District Commission
January 12, 2026 – 5 p.m.
151 Martin Street, Conference Rooms 202 & 203, Birmingham, MI**

Minutes of the special meeting of the Historic District Commission ("HDC") held January 12, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

1) Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Keith Deyer; Board Members Timothy Collins, Gigi Debbrecht, Patricia Lang, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Members Steven Lemberg, Mary Jaye

Absent: Chair Dustin Kolo; Board Member Natalia Dukas

Staff: Planning Director Dupuis

2) Approval of the HDC Minutes of December 3, 2026

01-01-26

Motion by Jaye

Seconded by Debbrecht to approve.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Lemberg, Willoughby, Deyer, Collins, Debbrecht, Jaye, Lang

Nays: None

3) Courtesy Review

4) Historic Design Review

5) Sign Review

6) Study Session

A. Historic Preservation Master Plan – Public Comment Review and Recommendation

PD Dupuis presented the draft Historic Preservation Master Plan (Plan) and answered questions from the HDC.

HDC members raised the following points during discussion:

- In order to be successful, the City must fund its historic preservation efforts.
- This Plan proposes that demolition delays be a matter for study. Members of the public are very concerned and engaged on the topic of demolitions in the City.
- Some members of the Commission had expressed hesitance regarding demolition delays. The hesitance included questions about legalities, potential unintended financial impacts, and next steps.

- When considering a potential master plan, it is important for all involved to remember that a master plan is a suggestion.
- It is also important to understand that a master plan is a guideline and a reference, and that master plans are often used as a basis for future decisions.
- The Commission has final approval of any demolition delay proposal.
- The City Attorney explained that the cost of a demolition permit had to be tied to the cost for the City to produce the permit, and could not exceed that cost. This was of interest because there was some question as to whether some of the cost of demolitions could be used towards supporting this Plan.
- An ideal outcome would be to delay some demolitions while aspects of this Plan are implemented.
- One intent of this Plan would be to consistently evaluate the impact of City actions on historic and potentially historic resources.

01-02-26

Motion by Lang

Seconded by Debbrecht to move that the Historic District Commission recommend that the City Commission approve the Historic Preservation Master Plan and requests that the City Commission provide additional support through a resolution restating the public purpose of historic preservation and support of the goals of the Plan.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Lemberg, Willoughby, Deyer, Collins, Debbrecht, Jaye, Lang

Nays: None

7) Miscellaneous Business and Communication

A. Pre-Application Discussion

B. Draft Agenda

C. Staff Reports

- 1. Administrative Sign Approvals**
- 2. Administrative Approvals**
- 3. Demolitions**
- 4. Action List**

D. Communications

8) Adjournment

No further business being evident, the HDC motioned to adjourn at 5:29 p.m.



Nicholas Dupuis, Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist



MEMORANDUM

Planning Department

DATE: February 4, 2026

TO: Historic District Commission Members

FROM: Nicholas Dupuis, Planning Director

SUBJECT: Historic Preservation Master Plan – Adopted

On January 26, 2026 ([Agenda](#) – [Video](#)), the City Commission moved to formally adopt the City's first Historic Preservation Master Plan. Overall, the Commission was very supportive of the plan and is eager for the Historic District Commission to get to work on the many items planned.

Please see attached the final adopted version of the Historic Preservation Master Plan.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN

 2026 - CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, MI



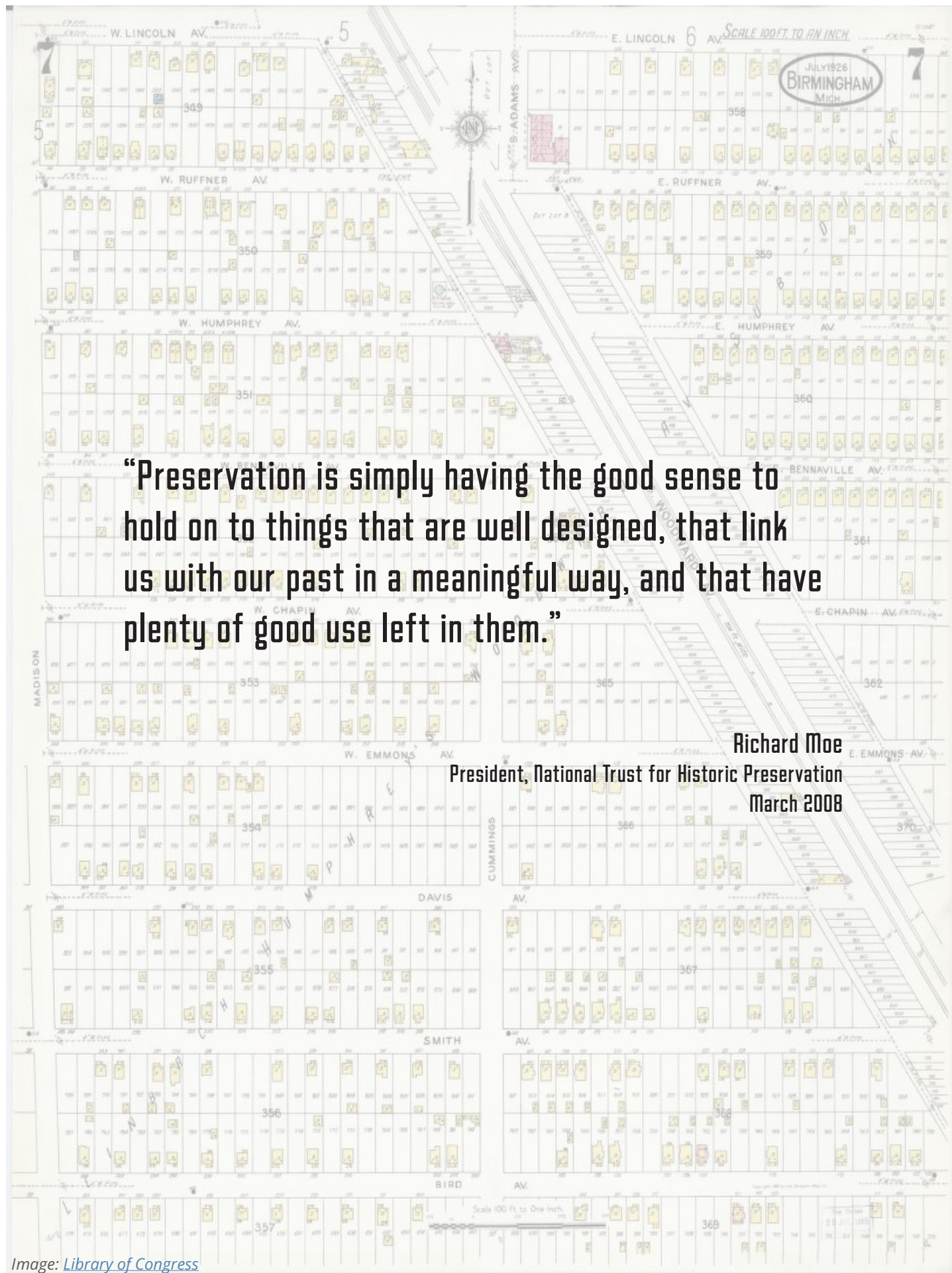


Image: [Library of Congress](#)

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham City Commission

Clinton Baller, Mayor
 Anthony Long, Mayor Pro Tem
 Therese Longe
 Andrew Haig
 Brad Host
 Kevin Kozlowski
 Bill Kolb

Birmingham Historic District Commission

Dustin Kolo, Chairperson
 Keith Deyer, Vice-Chairperson
 Gigi Debbrecht
 Natalia Dukas
 Timothy Collins
 Michael Willoughby
 Patricia Lang
 Steven Lemberg
 Mary E. Jaye

Birmingham Historic District Study Committee

Jake German, Chairperson
 Margie Duncan
 Sean Moran
 Ron Berndt
 Jennifer Roush
 Katherine Barta

Birmingham City Staff

Nicholas Dupuis, AICP, Planning Director (Author)
 Summer Aldred-Arens, City Planner
 Edward Ricketts, Planning Assistant
 Jana Ecker, City Manager

Resources & Support by:



Adopted January 26, 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISION STATEMENT

The Birmingham community will support, strengthen and expand its connections to a vibrant history by committing to preserving historic buildings and places. Through historic preservation, Birmingham will retain its unique character and welcoming sense of community, will bolster sustainability efforts, and will preserve an authenticity that, once gone, cannot be recreated.



GOALS - HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN

1

Goal #1: Get Back to the Basics

To support existing historic resources and create an environment that is conducive to historic preservation.

The Historic Preservation Master Plan recognizes the valuable stock of historic resources that are currently designated within the City. As time marches forward, these resources will need to be maintained and treated consistently against the City's Historic Design Guidelines. In addition, opportunities for monetary support should be prioritized.

2

Goal #2: Embrace Proactivity

To transition the City from a reactive approach to historic preservation to a proactive one and meet people where they are.

The City has access to a multitude of resources from data to social networks to several useful tools that can be leveraged to ensure that irreplaceable resources are not lost to neglect, and that new pockets of history in Birmingham can continually be discovered. At times, the community may not know what it has until it is brought to them.

3

Goal #3: Inform and Engage

To boost the profile of historic preservation in Birmingham to a level that unifies public opinion towards historic preservation in the City.

To build continued support for historic preservation in Birmingham, the City must provide the community with the information it needs to understand what it means to preserve and why it is important. Emphasis can be added to robust data and accessibility of information.

Summary of Actions

Understanding the Summary of Actions

The following tables consolidate all of the objectives contained within this Plan and provides for a one-stop-shop to review what this Plan is recommending, but also estimates as to when the City may expect to start each of the projects based on the interconnectedness of the goals, relationships to other plans, or political environments. This summary is aspirational and the goals and associated objectives and timelines are expected to ebb and flow over the implementation of this Plan.

Table Key:

BROAD OVERALL GOAL			
Shorthand Abbreviation of Goal for Ease of Association	Objective	Regulatory or Non-Regulatory	Post-Adoption Implementation Timeline Intention

GOAL #1 - GET BACK TO THE BASICS

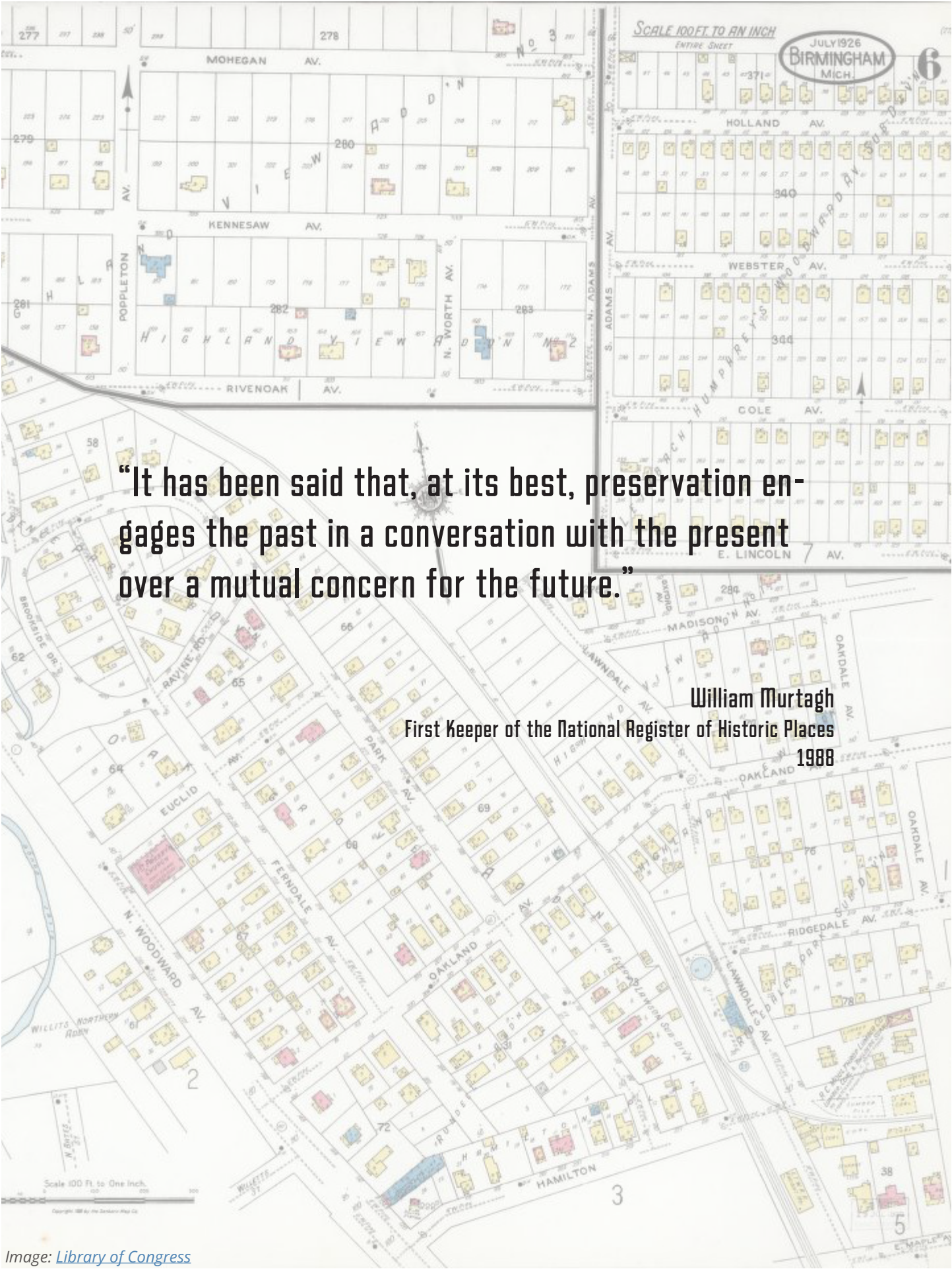
B2B-1	Provide annual training for Historic District Commission and Historic District Study Committee members.	NR	YR. 1+
B2B-2	Perform biennial reviews of all historic district boundaries and resources.	NR	YR. 2
B2B-3	Update the city's historic preservation webpage with current information and resources.	NR	YR. 1
B2B-4	Create simple, high quality resources for commonly requested information including (but not limited to) the process for historic designation, what it means to be a designated historic resource, and the "do's and don'ts" of preservation.	NR	YR. 1
B2B-5	Pursue a nomination of City Hall and the Baldwin Public Library to the National Register of Historic Places.	NR	YR. 3
B2B-6	Review and update historic preservation ordinances to meet current needs.	R	YR. 4
B2B-7	Develop policy and procedures for the review of work performed on noncontributing resources/properties within historic districts.	R	YR. 1
B2B-8	Increase and regularize enforcement of maintenance requirements to ensure that historic materials are not lost to neglect.	R	YR. 1
B2B-9	Develop a consistent Certificate of Appropriateness to issue to property owners after project approval.	R	YR. 1

GOAL #2 - EMBRACE PROACTIVITY

PRO-1	Engage with realtors, brokers, and other persons engaged in the sale of land and buildings towards the preservation of historic buildings.	NR	YR. 3
PRO-2	Petition for historic designation of all remaining Wallace Frost designed homes in the City.	R	YR. 4
PRO-3	Perform a full reconnaissance level survey of the Little San Francisco neighborhood.	NR	YR. 3
PRO-4	Study the feasibility of preservation overlay zoning districts in the City.	R	YR. 1
PRO-5	Generate a list of ready-made historic preservation projects eligible for Certified Local Government grant funding.	NR	YR. 1
PRO-6	Develop a network of historic preservation advocates to support historic preservation efforts in the City.	NR	YR. 3
PRO-7	Coordinate with the Planning Board and City Commission in the implementation of the Birmingham Plan 2040 to ensure that the historic preservation goals of the City are reflected in broader planning.	NR	YR. 2
PRO-8	Consider a demolition delay ordinance.	R	YR. 1
PRO-9	Incorporate historic preservation values, principles, and processes into applicable municipal policy, facilities planning, and programs.	NR	YR. 4
PRO-10	Create a financial incentive program in Birmingham to support historic property owners in the maintenance and upkeep of their historic buildings.	NR	YR. 5
PRO-11	Resurrect the City's Heritage Home Program to recognize buildings at or older than 100 years of age.	NR	YR. 1
PRO-12	Develop an annual budget and regular allocation of funds to support general historic preservation activity in the City.	NR	YR. 2
PRO-13	Historically designate 40 additional buildings or properties by 2040.	R	YR. 1

GOAL #3 - INFORM & ENGAGE

INF-1	Work with the Birmingham Museum to provide current, accurate descriptions of designated historic resources within the City.	NR	YR. 3
INF-2	Provide unique programming during National Historic Preservation Month every year.	NR	YR. 1+
INF-3	Develop and install historic district signage that is consistent with the wayfinding program for the City.	NR	YR. 4
INF-4	Produce updated historic plaques for all designated historic buildings in the Central Business Historic District.	NR	YR. 1+
INF-5	Create more opportunities for the City to interact with property owners of historic resources.	NR	YR. 3
INF-6	Establish an annual Preservation/Conservation Awards Program to highlight and celebrate preservation and conservation initiatives and achievements by residents and entities in Birmingham.	NR	YR. 5
INF-7	Develop historic tours as a part of the Birmingham Shopping Districts tourism initiatives.	NR	Yr. 3
INF-8	Through city staff, provide technical support to the owners of historic properties on the Michigan State Historic Tax Credit program.	NR	YR. 5
INF-9	Provide regular historic preservation related content in the City's newsletters.	NR	YR. 1+



“It has been said that, at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future.”

William Murtagh
First Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
1988

Image: [Library of Congress](#)

INTRODUCTION



Historic preservation is often characterized by the unique challenge it presents and the profound questions it asks one to consider. What is important in our history? What parts of our past should we preserve for the future? How can we best transmit our understanding of the past to future generations? Although these questions do not have a singular answer and are often debated, historic preservation has proven to be an enduring, useful, and multi-faceted tool for governments of all levels. As time moves forward, it is important and beneficial to retain a strong commitment to preserving the past. Planning a meaningful, holistic, and long-range strategy for how to do so remains the current challenge.

According to the National Park Service, **preservation planning is the rational, systematic process by which a community develops a vision, goals, and priorities for the preservation of its historic and cultural resources.** The community seeks to achieve its vision through its own actions and through influencing the actions of others. Goals and priorities are based on analyses of resource data and community values.¹

The City of Birmingham's Planning Department, together with the [Historic District Commission](#), accepted the challenge of developing the City's first Historic Preservation Master Plan and did so based on the following premises:

1. The City has a multitude of resources at its disposal including the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, professional networks, experienced historic property owners, and preservation orga-

nizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Alliance for Preservation Commissions, Michigan Historic Preservation Network, and American Planning Association.

2. Developing the Plan was expected to provide an excellent educational experience for all involved in the process, both for longtime advocates and people new to the field; and
3. Creating the Plan together, from scratch, would provide the community with a sense of ownership over the plan and a responsibility to see it through to the best of our ability.

This Plan is centered in public input, which included historic property owner round tables, surveys, guided discussions, and other unique engagements. This input formed the backbone of the Plan. This Plan goes on to outline all of the essential background information on historic preservation in Birmingham including maps, data, histories and regulations that apply.

As was emphasized by the community, the City developed the recommendations within with a mind towards balancing regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to historic preservation. **Regulatory** approaches to preservation guide and control the environment in which historic preservation is managed through laws and ordinance, and the application of strict guidelines. **Non-regulatory** approaches strategize and problem solve without the use of laws or regulations, often relying on voluntary action, incentives, and education. These terms will be referenced throughout the plan when describing various policies, procedures, or other related issues.

At present, the City boasts 82 designated historic resources and/or sites. Of the 82, 30 are commercial (37%), 12 are public/institutional (15%) and 40 are residential (49%). There are three contiguous historic districts (Central Business, Shain Park, and Bates Street Historic Districts), while the other districts are considered non-contiguous or single-resource. In addition to designated historic resources/sites, the City has several neighborhoods with rich histories and many old structures.

To date, Birmingham has long acknowledged the importance and utility of historic preservation. The dedication to historic preservation and the benefits thereof are codified in [Chapter 127 of the Birmingham Code of Ordinances](#), which declares historic preservation to be a public purpose and was designed to:

1. Safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving districts that reflect elements of its history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.
2. Stabilize and improve property values in each district and surrounding areas.
3. Foster civic beauty.
4. Strengthen the local economy.
5. Promote the use of historic districts for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the citizens of the city and of the state.

With all of the above considered, the current approach to historic preservation in the City has predominantly been a reactive one. That is, the City has mostly managed its existing stock of historic resources through design review and other requests for alterations, and have fielded but a handful of designation requests that have come from homeowners in the last 20 or so years.

There have, though, been some admiral efforts to develop more proactive approaches by City Staff, volunteers on the Historic District Commission and Historic District Study Committee, the Birmingham Museum, and interested residents. These efforts produced programs like the Heritage Home Program, educational campaigns, documents such as ["Wallace Frost: His Architecture in Birmingham"](#), and other endeavors. Unfortunately, many of these efforts have been relatively short-lived. This is with the exception of the high-quality and robust programs and exhibits produced by the Birmingham Museum, which has remained a stalwart conservator of Birmingham's heritage and the history of its people and places.

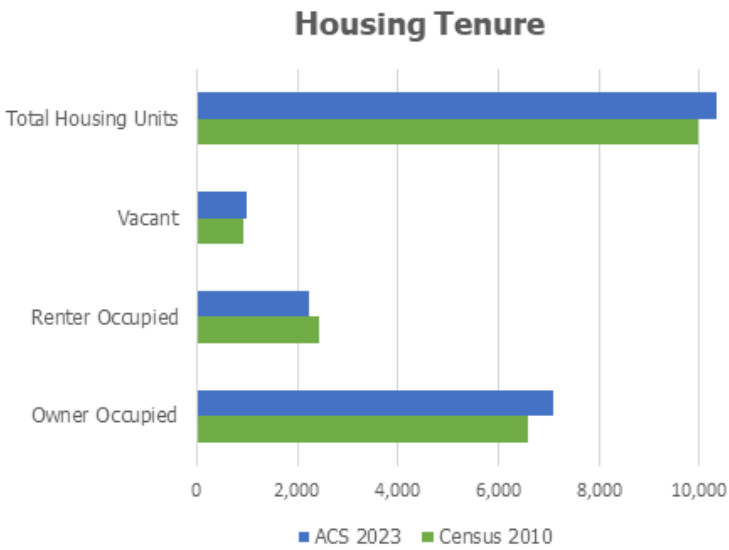
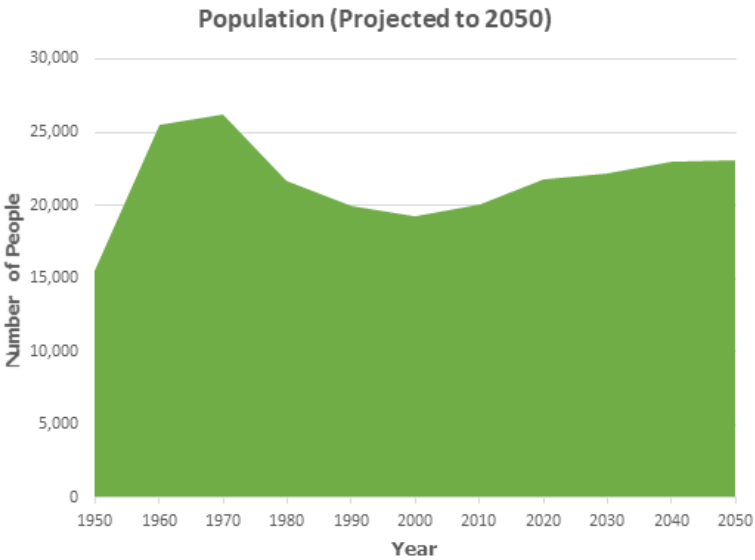
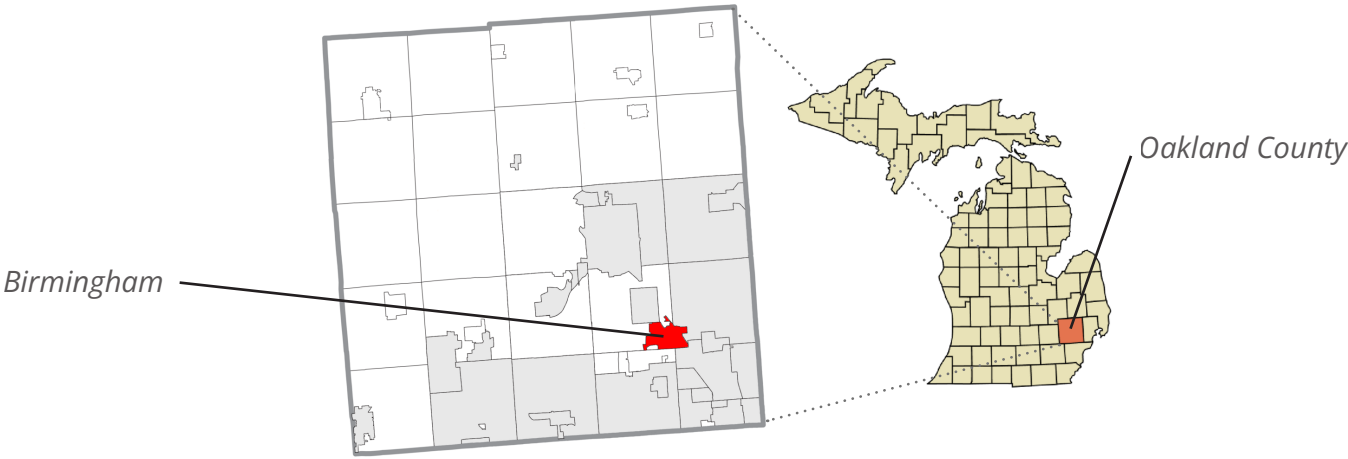
Historic Resources



Birmingham Context

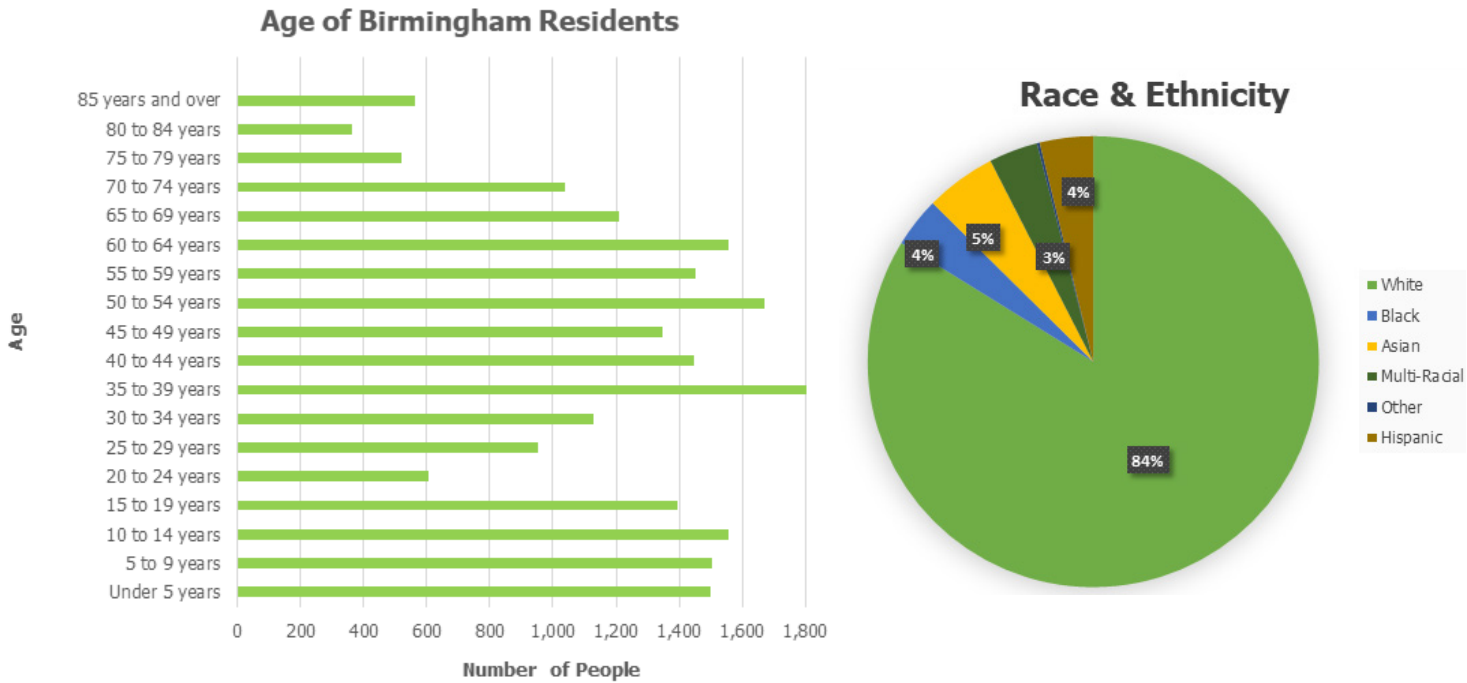
The City of Birmingham, Michigan is a quaint, prosperous, and vibrant suburb of Metro Detroit located approximately halfway between the City of Detroit and the City of Pontiac, in Oakland County. Birmingham has many consequential spatial relationships that have shaped its history including those with the border communities of Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, Beverly Hills, Royal Oak and Troy. Birmingham also shares an asset in the Rouge River with 48 other communities, and exists along the Woodward Avenue corridor, the states first highway.

The City of Birmingham is roughly 5 square miles in area, and houses over 21,000 people. It contains three major commercial areas (most notably its Downtown), all of which are surrounded by single family neighborhoods. Due to this, Birmingham is, and always has been, a center for business, social and cultural activities spanning more than a century.



Want to explore more Birmingham Census Data?

- [BIRMINGHAM MI CENSUS PROFILE](#)
- [BIRMINGHAM - DATA COMMONS](#)



From the Birmingham Museum

The formal settlement of the area now known as Birmingham occurred over 180 years ago. The pioneer story of this small Michigan community began when three enterprising men purchased the first land parcels at the crossing of the Rouge River and the Saginaw Trail (now Woodward Ave.) In 1818. Elijah Willits, John Hamilton and John West Hunter brought their families onto their combined 480 acres of wilderness land to start new lives. Unlike other pioneering communities that attracted farmers looking only for rich new farmland, Birmingham's founders diversified, developing new business opportunities relating to the trail and the intensified settlement of the area. Foundries, tanneries, blacksmith shops, broom- and brick-making factories and transportation services were just some of the businesses that quickly defined this frontier community. Birmingham's name was chosen after England's biggest industrial center by those optimistic about the potential growth of the village and its manufacturing capabilities.

Most of the manufacturers of the 1830s were gone by the 1860s, and so were the visions of Birmingham as a major industrial center. Instead the quiet Village of Birmingham emerged as a local commercial and agricultural hub for area farmers. The Eccentric newspaper, banks, merchants, and other professionals such as doctors, dentists, and lawyers established successful practices in town. By the 1890s, long-time residents who had worked toward infrastructure, education, and cultural improvements began to see better roads, the development of interurban street car lines, quality public schooling, the establishment of a paid fire department, a clean water supply and a new public library.

These improvements made Birmingham both quaint and progressive, and its location on Woodward Avenue continued to offer commercial and business opportunities into the 20th century. Farms evolved into small subdivisions and the growing automobile industry in both Detroit and Pontiac made Birmingham especially appealing as a place to live. In 1929, Birmingham was one of the first communities in Michigan to form a planning commission and develop a comprehensive village plan. In 1933, after more than a decade of preparation, Birmingham successfully made the transition from a village to a city governmental structure and balanced growth with preserving the city's downtown character. Today, Birmingham's business district and residential areas still enjoy much of the small town charm that is integral to Birmingham's sense of place.

History of Preservation in Birmingham

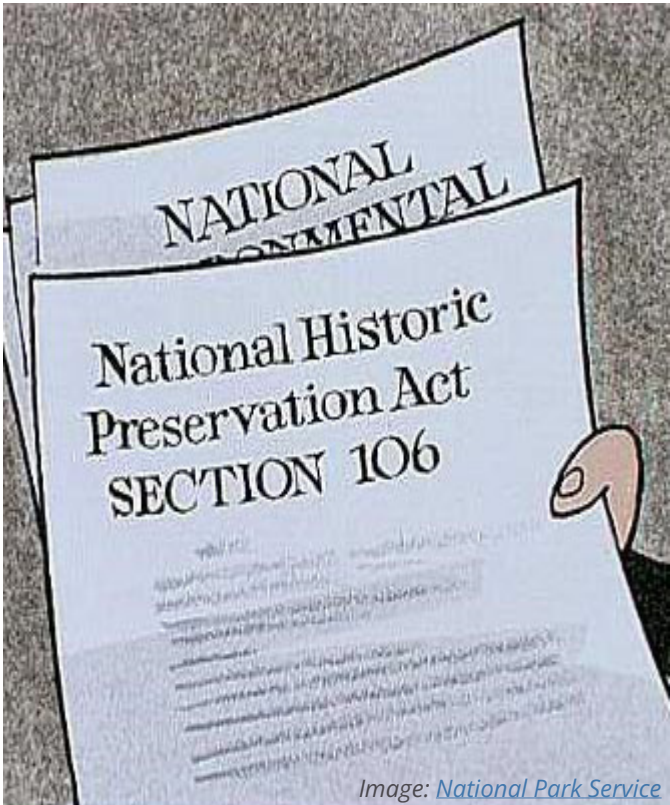


Image: [National Park Service](#)

The modern historic preservation movement in the United States started in 1966 with the passage of the [National Historic Preservation Act](#) (NHPA). This Act codified many of the practices of historic preservation in the United States, establishing funding methods, encouraging local historic preservation, and establishing definitions for historic preservation relative to the legal boundaries of property ownership.² In general, it was a reaction to the loss of landmark buildings (like the Pennsylvania Station in New York City), but also the sweeping changes that were being seen across the country in urban areas that razed entire blocks, neighborhoods, commercial corridors and major buildings. In addition, the NHPA also established a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in every state, including Michigan. SHPO's have their own preservation policies and programs and often act as an intermediary between local and national government, particularly when it comes to funding.

Shortly after the establishment of the SHPO in Michigan, [Public Act 169 of 1970](#) was adopted, which provided for several local activities such as (but not limited to) the following:

1. The establishment of historic districts.
2. The acquisition of certain resources for historic preservation purposes.
3. Preservation of historic and non-historic resources within historic districts.
4. The establishment of historic district commissions.
5. The maintenance of publicly owned resources by local units.

In 1977, the City of Birmingham created its own regulatory body to oversee historical preservation, which at the time was called the "Historic District and Design Review Commission." After some time, the ordinances were amended in 2006 to better align with PA 169 and to provide property owners in the City of Birmingham with better access to the Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Credits. As a part of this exercise, the Historic District and Design Review Commission was split into two separate bodies, the Historic District Commission (HDC) and the Design Review Board (DRB), both of which are still active today.

In addition, the 2006 updates were made to pave the way for Birmingham to be eligible to become a [Certified Local Government](#). The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is a preservation partnership between local, state, and national governments focused on promoting strong local historic preservation programs. The CLG program is jointly administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office.³ The City of Birmingham became certified for the program in 2010. As a part of the CLG program, the City of Birmingham (along with 42 other Michigan communities as of November 2025) have exclusive access to funding and technical assistance to develop and maintain strong preservation programs in their respective communities.

The 2010 CLG designation and associated process was the last substantive change to the way that the Historic District Commission operates in its current form. In the background of all of those changes, the City's Planning Department has supported the work of the Historic District Commission from its inception, acting as liaisons between the HDC, City Hall, and the broader community.

Preservation Organizations

There are many organizations in the historic preservation space in Michigan ranging from governmental or non-profit organizations to corporations and educational institutions. In Birmingham, relationships with various organizations can vary in terms of regulatory versus non-regulatory, and can be required or voluntary depending on the organization. Below are a list of the main external organizations that are regular fixtures in the historic preservation work in the City:



The Michigan SHPO's main function is to provide technical assistance to local communities and property owners in their efforts to identify, evaluate, designate, interpret and protect Michigan's historic above and below-ground resources. The SHPO also administers incentive programs that include federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, and pass-through grants available to Certified Local Government communities.⁴



The Michigan Historic Preservation Network supports the sustainability and economic viability of Michigan's historic places through advocacy, education, and direct action.⁵



The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout the country and the world.⁶



The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) provides technical support and manages an information network to help local commissions accomplish their preservation objectives. NAPC also serves as an advocate at federal, state and local levels of government to promote policies and programs that support preservation commission efforts.⁷



The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and affiliated Island Communities.⁸



Birmingham Historic District Design Guidelines

In 2021, the City was awarded a grant through the Certified Local Government program to create the City's first set of comprehensive historic preservation design guidelines. The design guidelines were intended to synthesize and summarize 50+ years of historic preservation efforts in the City while also equipping the Birmingham Historic District Commission to be better suited to perform their duties in an environment where development pressures are tremendous and ongoing. Design guidelines are an important facet of the historic design review process, as they provide consistency in design review, a basis for making fair decisions, incentives for investment, property value enhancement and an important educational tool.

Birmingham's Historic District Design Guidelines, formally adopted in 2023, contain a variety of information about Birmingham and the historic resource alteration process. The guidelines are especially crucial in providing technical and contextual recommendations on how to approach key issues during design review processes that are both common in Birmingham as well as common in most communities across the country. These guidelines contain a wealth of information that can also apply to the concepts within this Plan. Thus, deliberate efforts were made to avoid being duplicative. **The Birmingham Historic District Design Guidelines should be considered a sister document to this Plan.** The Guidelines are split up into seven key sections:



Interested in reading more?

- [BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES](#)
- [BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY](#)
- [NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - PRESERVATION BRIEFS](#)

What are the Historic District Design Guidelines Used For?

Historic District Design Guidelines are a tool for many. For residents, developers, property owners, architects, contractors, or similar stakeholders - they offer a starting point in terms of planning for alterations. These stakeholders can gain helpful insight as to how the City of Birmingham considers various issues, such as window replacements or painting, and the various approaches the City may take based on the conditions of the site.

For members of the Historic District Commission and City Staff, the guidelines serve as an additional layer of insight into best practices and the appropriateness of proposals. Although the guidelines contain no regulatory standards, they are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards the Treatment of Historic Properties, which are discussed in detail in the following section. In addition, Birmingham's guidelines are influenced by the National Park Service's Preservation Briefs, which have been a staple resource for preservation commissions around the country for decades. The underlying guiding principle that is used by the Historic District Commission when utilizing the Guidelines is the hierarchy of treatment:

Hierarchy of Treatment for Historic Properties

- 1. Preservation:** Focuses on maintaining and repairing existing historic materials and retaining the property's form as it has evolved over time.
- 2. Rehabilitation:** Allows for altering or adding to a historic property to meet new uses while retaining its historic character. This is the most commonly used and flexible standard.
- 3. Restoration:** Depicts a property at a particular period of its history and removes evidence of other periods.
- 4. Reconstruction:** Re-creates a non-extant feature in an accurate historic manner and is the most interventionist approach.⁹



Secretary of the Interior’s (SOI) Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

Chapter 127 of the Birmingham Code of Ordinances states that “In reviewing plans, the [Historic District] Commission shall follow the **U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation** and guidelines for rehabilitating historic buildings as set forth in [36 C.F.R. part 67](#). Design review standards and guidelines that address special design characteristics of historic districts administered by the commission may be followed if they are equivalent in guidance to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards and guidelines and are established or approved by the state historic preservation office of the Michigan Historical Center.”

What are the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation?

Actually, this question is more nuanced than one might imagine. Starting at a higher level, the National Park Service states that the purpose of the SOI Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings is to provide guidance to historic building owners and building managers, preservation consultants, architects, contractors, and project reviewers prior to beginning work.¹⁰ It is worth highlighting that the Standards for the Treatment of

Historic Properties addresses four treatments: *preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction*. Notably, the Birmingham Code of Ordinances only addresses one of the four treatments in rehabilitation.

The SOI Standards have a [rich history](#), having first been codified in 1977 in 36 CFR Part 67 and updated most recently in 1995. In the most recent update, the SOI Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties was developed to provide a for a broader framework encompassing the aforementioned treatments, within which the SOI Standards for Rehabilitation became a more specific set of standards under that broader umbrella.¹¹ Both, however, are regulatory standards that are crucial pieces of not only local historic design review processes, but also many tax incentive programs at the local, state and federal levels of government.

In stating that the SOI Standards are regulatory, it is also apparent in the reading of them that they are intentionally general, allowing the interpreters of such the ability to factor in important local considerations such as level of significance, physical condition, proposed use, and codes and other regulations.



SOI Standards for Rehabilitation

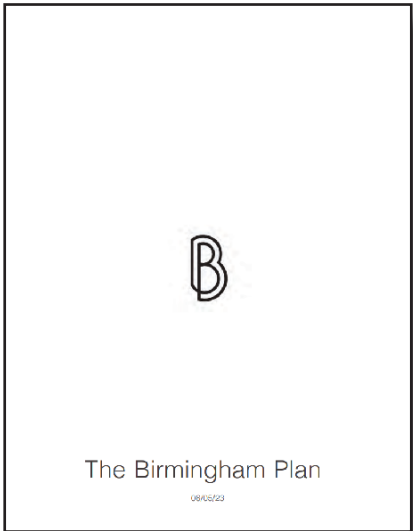
1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.



Master Planning

The City of Birmingham is at an inflection point in terms of the next 20+ years of planning and policy. In the last two years, three different master plans have been adopted in the City, with this plan as the fourth to follow. In developing each plan, the City has woven threads across these recent master plans to get them working together in a cohesive and consistent direction, which provides residents and City leadership with certainty and confidence in decision making processes. It also helped to ensure that each effort was not repetitive, and that they are being supported by one another as implementation progresses.

In addition, there are updates undertaken to other plans, particularly at the state level. The Michigan SHPO is required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to develop a statewide historic preservation plan at regular intervals, informed by public input, to identify broad preservation priorities and goals. The next version of the Michigan Statewide Historic Preservation Plan is expected to be completed in 2027, and will carry through to 2034.



1. Adjust residential zone boundaries and standards to better match existing housing. This requires a study of the city's residential architectural styles and building types, their key characteristics, position on their properties, driveway configuration, age, and the areas where each common type is located.
2. Adopt a policy to proactively establish new historic districts as well as landmarks.

There are other parts of this master plan that will require the Historic District Commission to assist the Planning Board and City Commission. For example, current and future eligible contiguous historic districts may not fit nicely within the proposed neighborhood boundaries in the 2040 Plan and may prove to be disadvantageous to establishing new historic districts. For one, the Bates Street Historic District is currently split between two proposed neighborhoods – the Downtown and Barnum neighborhoods (only one historic property is split off, but the point stands).

As another example, there are parts of the 2040 Plan that envision greater density. Any recommendations that work towards achieving those goals should be reviewed carefully, as encouraging higher density uses and raising the highest and best use of the land could see the removal of swaths of historically significant houses or buildings. This is a common issue when balancing zoning and preservation, and is totally manageable when the parties communicate effectively and often.

Although these conflicts exist, the 2040 Plan and the Historic Preservation Master Plan can work together to achieve a common goal by considering the recommendations within each plan together.

Chapter 3: Retain Neighborhood Quality

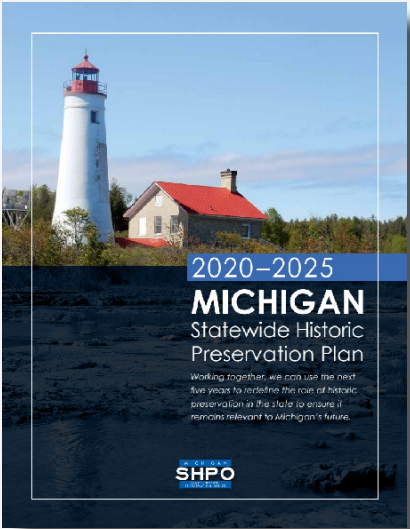
This chapter of the 2040 Plan is where this Plan will draw its strongest corollary. In the “Retain Housing Character” section of this plan, it suggests that many Birmingham neighborhoods have lost touch with sense of scale and coordination with the broader area. The 2040 Plan goes on to provide two specific recommendations that lend themselves to supporting historic preservation and a stronger commitment to such:



The **Birmingham Green: Healthy Climate Plan** (“Green Plan”) was adopted in 2024 and was the first plan of its kind both in its subject matter (sustainability & climate action), but also its approach. The Green Plan could be considered the City's most broad-based active plan in terms of its scope, but also the level of necessary involvement from every aspect of government, residents, institutions and private entities. The Green Plan draws several parallels to historic preservation, and boasts a recommendation that suggests that the City should “Expand the City's historic preservation program to protect existing buildings and character”



The **Birmingham Parks and Recreation Master Plan** (“P&R Plan”) was adopted in December of 2023. As the most loosely connected plan in terms of its relationship to historical preservation, the strategy lies in the supportive function of parks and open space to the historic areas of the City. In fact, some City parks even exist within historic districts themselves. When considering improvements to these parks, the HDC can leverage the stated goals of the P&R Plan to expand the reach of historic preservation where appropriate. The City of Birmingham is required to update its Parks and Recreation plan every 5 years to maintain eligibility for state and federal grants. The next opportunity to update the P&R Plan will be in 2028.



The **Michigan Statewide Historic Preservation Plan** (“MI Plan”) in its most recent form was adopted in 2020 and is in the process of being updated. The MI Plan focuses on building up Michigan to be a model of successful historic preservation through shared awareness, engagement and investment. The current plan contains 5 goals and 23 associated recommendations. Overall, the MI Plan is a useful tool to ensure that preservation efforts in Birmingham are reflected in state goals, but also that the City's goals may be supported by the state, which acts as a pass-through for many grants as well as a treasure trove of educational opportunities and technical support.



The Birmingham Museum

The [Birmingham Museum](#) was established in May 2001 at the former Marion and Harry Allen House and surrounding four acres. It includes the oldest house in Oakland County, the 1822 John West Hunter House, as well as the 1928 Allen House. These historic structures are linked by a public plaza that serves as the gateway to the grounds, and was dedicated in 2007 as the John West Hunter Historic Park. The landscape includes some of the city's most complex and diverse topography in a natural setting, including a spring fed pond, historic walled pool, and a connection to the Rouge River trail - all just a short walk from Downtown Birmingham. The Allen House houses the Museum's archives and features changing exhibits about Birmingham and its heritage. The John West Hunter House reflects 19th century pioneer life in the early settlement, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The award-winning Birmingham Museum works in partnership with other cultural organizations, especially the [Friends of the Birmingham Museum](#) (aka the "Birmingham Historical Society") to preserve and interpret Birmingham's unique story with public tours, educational lectures, and innovative social media. They also work together to create self-guided walking tours and host special events such as docent-led tours of historic [Greenwood Cemetery](#). The Friends of the Birmingham Museum also assist with lectures, historic research, funding support, and publish a regular newsletter for their members, *The Heritage*.

Recently, the Historic District Commission and Historic District Study Committee have utilized the resources of the Birmingham Museum in several ways. In one example, in researching and developing reports for the review of proposed alterations, City Staff has been requesting historical photographs from the Museum to get a sense for context, materials, design elements and other important considerations when applying the Hierarchy of Treatment for Historic Properties. The Museum also recently played an integral role in the recent designation of the Frederick E. Good House. The Museum provided critical research into the home and its first occupants, which helped make the case for designation. This Plan continues to consider the Birmingham Museum as a critical partner and aims to build stronger connections between the two to support the City's broader preservation efforts.

Museum Mission Statement

"The Birmingham Museum will explore meaningful connections with our past, in order to enrich our community and enhance its character and sustainability. Our mission is to promote understanding of Birmingham's historical and cultural legacy through preservation and interpretation of its ongoing story."



Want to know more about the Birmingham Museum?

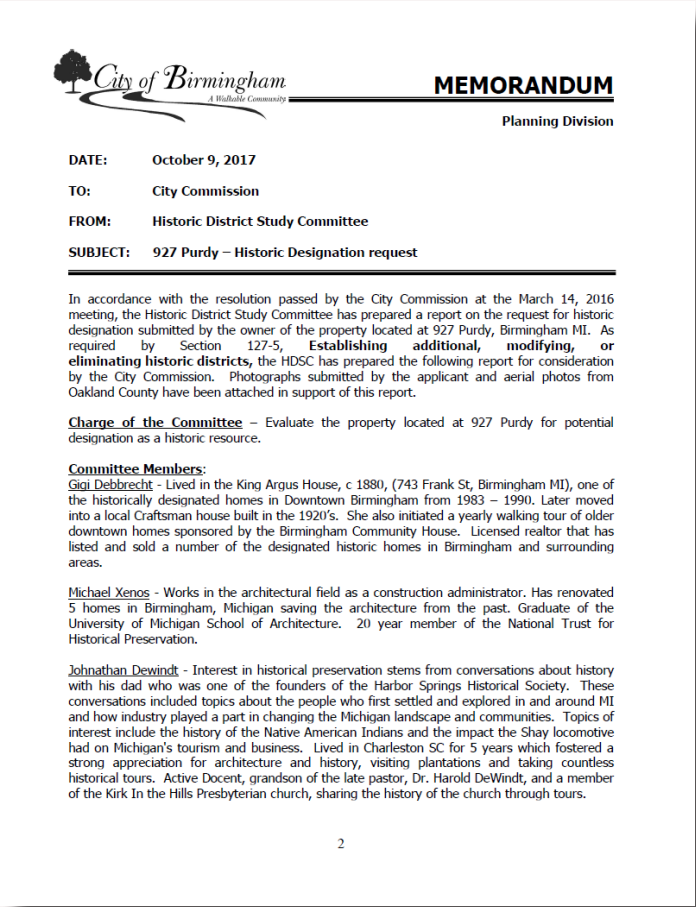
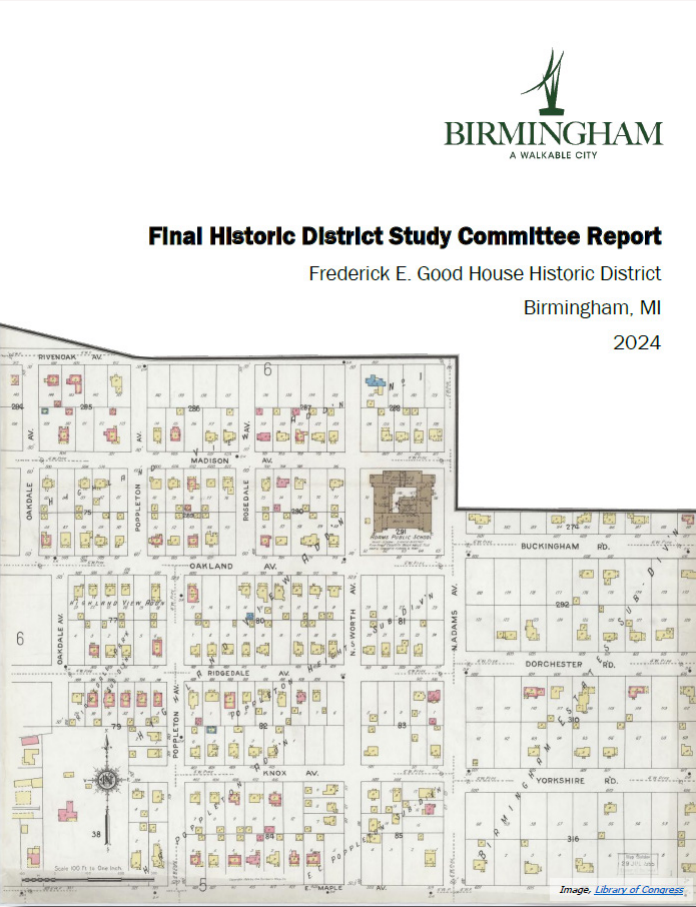
- [BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLAN 2026](#)
- [INSTAGRAM](#)
- [YOUTUBE](#)
- [FACEBOOK](#)

The Historic District Study Committee

Although the role of Birmingham's [Historic District Study Committee](#) (HDSC) is related to historic preservation, it is a very different role than that of the Historic District Commission. It may even be fair to say that at this time, the role of the HDSC is completely one-dimensional in that their sole purpose, as outlined in Chapter 127 of the Birmingham City Code, is to produce reports to the City Commission for the historic designation of properties. These reports are developed with strict guidelines and checkpoints, involve heavy research, and require the collection of information on historical significance, all of which come together to form a recommendation on the qualifications of the building or property based on 36 CFR Part 60 and criteria established or approved by the SHPO.

The HDSC consists of seven members with "a clearly demonstrated interest in or knowledge of historic preservation." A unique aspect of this group is that it is one of few boards, commissions or committees in the City in which city residency is not required if an expert on the potential historic district topic is not available among city residents. Another unique requirement of the HDSC is that the group may only meet when directed by a resolution of the City Commission, and has historically been limited to its singular purpose of producing Historic District Study Committee Reports.

In the last 20+ years, records suggest that the HDSC and City Commission have only designated 2 properties as historic, although other attempts were started but not able to be seen through to completion. The two designations occurred in 2017 and 2024. These two designations, separated by 7 years, contained all of the same required information, but took different approaches in terms of presentation. Ultimately, consistency is a goal of the HDSC and the focus will continue to be on design and approachability to encourage readership.



DATA & MAPPING



Non-Contiguous Historic Districts

1. Hood House Historic District, 555 Stanley

2. Grooms House Historic District, 587 Stanley

3. Trollop House Historic District, 536 Southfield Road

4. Richard Erwin House Historic District, 1119 Southfield Road

5. Randall-Latham House Historic District, 1128 Southfield Road

6. Daniels House Historic District, 1128 Pierce

7. Eli Wooster House Historic District, 1876 Northlawn

8. Schlaack House Historic District, 839 Knox
9. King-Argus House Historic District, 743 West Frank

10. Stewart-Watkins House Historic District, 146 Puritan

11. Quarton Homestead Historic District, 1155 Quarton

12. Birmingham Grand Trunk Western Railroad Depot Historic District, 245 S. Eton

13. Quarton Maple Avenue House Historic District, 1158 West Maple Road

14. Wallace Frost House Historic District, 579 Tooting Lane

15. Almeron Whitehead House Historic District, 927 Purdy

16. Frederick E. Good House Historic District, 1283 Buckingham

Bates Street Historic District

1. United Presbyterian Parsonage, 539 S. Bates

2. Koontz House, 544 S. Bates

3. Peck House, 571 S. Bates

4. John Hall House, 584-588 S. Bates

5. Major Jones House, 607 S. Bates

6. Frank Schlaack House, 612 S. Bates

7. John W. Perry House, 651 S. Bates

8. McBride House, 668 S. Bates

Central Business Historic District

1. Wabeek Building, 256 W. Maple

2. Leonard Building, 166 W. Maple

3. Quarton Building, 142 W. Maple

4. Blakeslee Building, 138 W. Maple

5. Billy McBride Building, 122 W. Maple

6. Ford Building, 101 N. Old Woodward and 120 W. Maple

7. Ertz and Nixon Building, 163-167 N. Old Woodward

8. Bell Building, 191 N. Old Woodward

9. Schlaack Building and Huston Building 1916, 205-219 N. Old Woodward

10. Huston Building 1923, 237-243 N. Old Woodward

11. National Bank Building, 152-176 N. Old Woodward

12. Wooster Building, 132-136 N. Old Woodward

13. Parks Building, 110-116 N. Old Woodward

14. Madison Building, 297-323 E. Maple

15. Hawthorne Building, 361 E. Maple

16. Shain Townhouses, 378, 386, 390 E. Maple and 112, 120, 124 Brownell

17. Briggs Building, 111 S. Old Woodward

18. Birmingham Theater Building, 211 S. Old Woodward

19. Ford-Peabody Mansion, 325 S. Old Woodward

20. Detroit Edison Building, 220 E. Merrill

21. D.U.R. Waiting Room, 138 S. Old Woodward

22. McBride Building, 124-128 S. Old Woodward

23. Johnston-Shaw Building, 112-114 S. Old Woodward

24. O'Neal Building, 106-110 S. Old Woodward

25. St. Clair Edison Building, 135-159 Pierce

26. Telephone Exchange Building, 148 Pierce

27. Bigelow-Shain Building, 115 W. Maple

28. Field Building, 135-141 W. Maple

Shain Park Historic District

1. Municipal Building, 151 Martin Street

2. Shain Park

3. Baldwin Public Library, 300 Merrill Street

4. Birmingham Community House, 380 S. Bates

5. United States Post Office, 322 Martin

Mill Pond Neighborhood

1. Historical Park Historic District

2. Baldwin Park Historic District

3. John W. Hunter House and Allen House, 500 and 556 West Maple

4. Mill Pond Historic District

5. Village Waterworks Historic District

6. Chatfield-Campbell House Historic District, 460 W. Maple

7. Edwin Baldwin House Historic District, 484 W. Maple

8. Edgar Lamb House Historic District, 474 Willits

9. Stickney House Historic District, 412 Willits

10. Ebenezer Raynale House Historic District, 300 Warren Court

11. Benjamin Daniels House Historic District, 372 Harmon

12. Greenwood Cemetery Historic District

Merrill-Townsend-Brown Neighborhood

1. Abigail Carter House Historic District, 415 Merrill Street

2. Irving House Historic District, 439 Merrill

3. Daisy Benedict House Historic District, 535 Merrill

4. Hewitt House Historic District, 211 Townsend

5. Langley House Historic District, 404 S. Bates

6. Townsend House Historic District, 339 Townsend

7. Toms-Dickinson House Historic District, 464 Townsend

8. Hoston-Logan House Historic District, 504-506 Townsend

9. Fall House Historic District, 523 Townsend

10. Schuyler House Historic District, 544 Townsend

11. Cinderella Patch House Historic District, 347 W. Brown

12. William Bell House Historic District, 384 West Brown



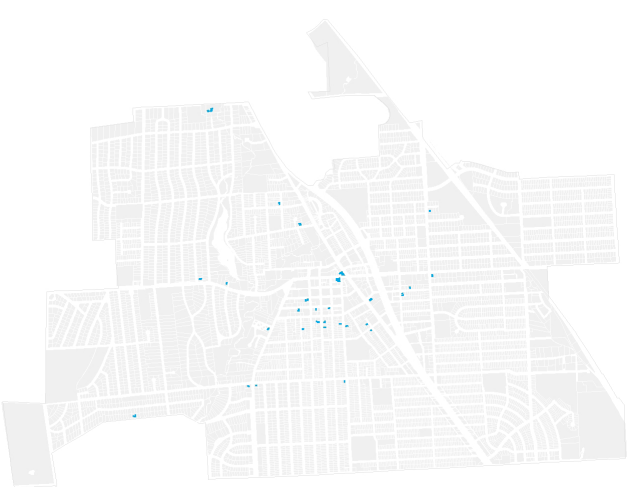
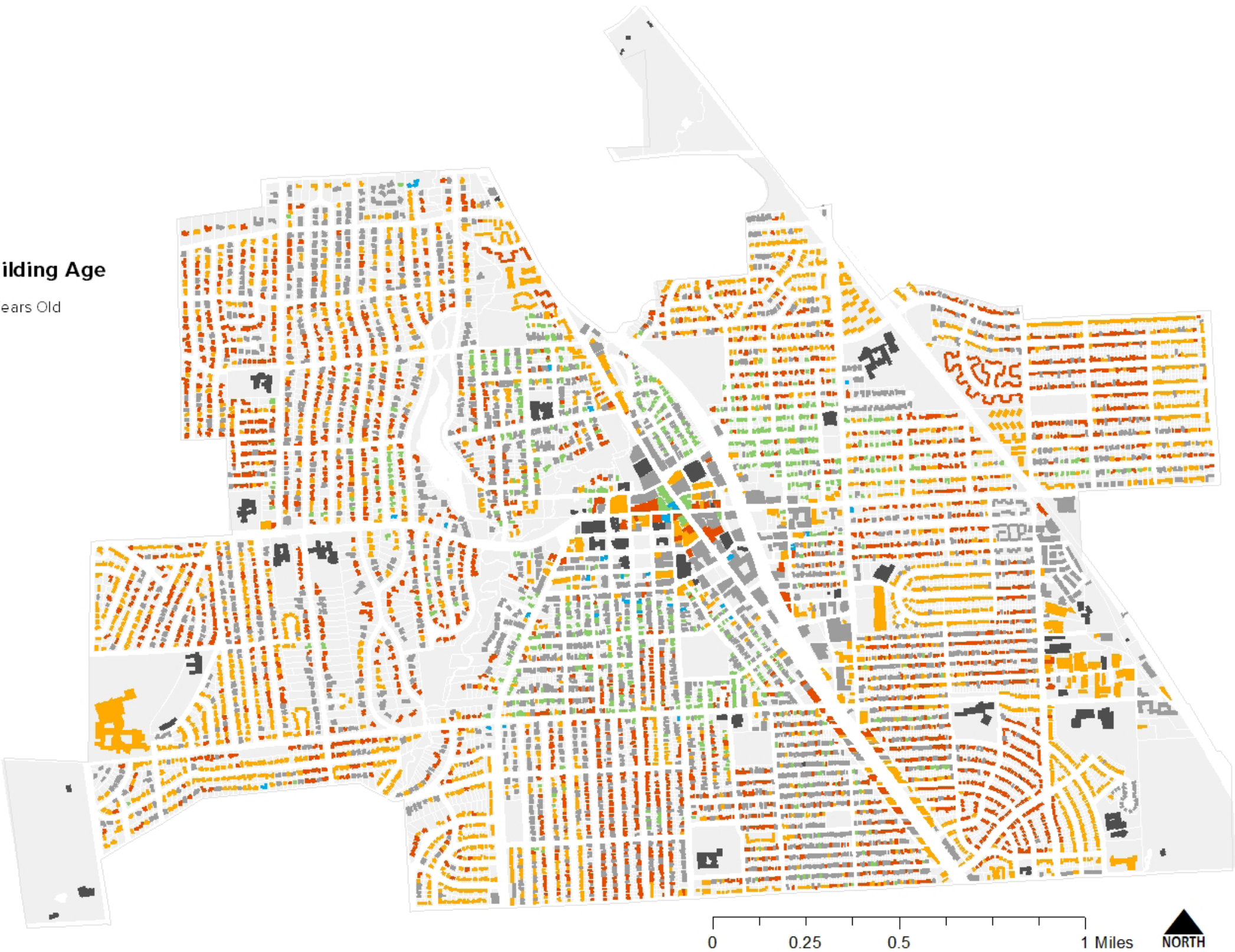
The official list of designated historic resources is maintained in the City Code:

- [CHAPTER 127, SEC. 127-25.](#)

A Deeper Look...

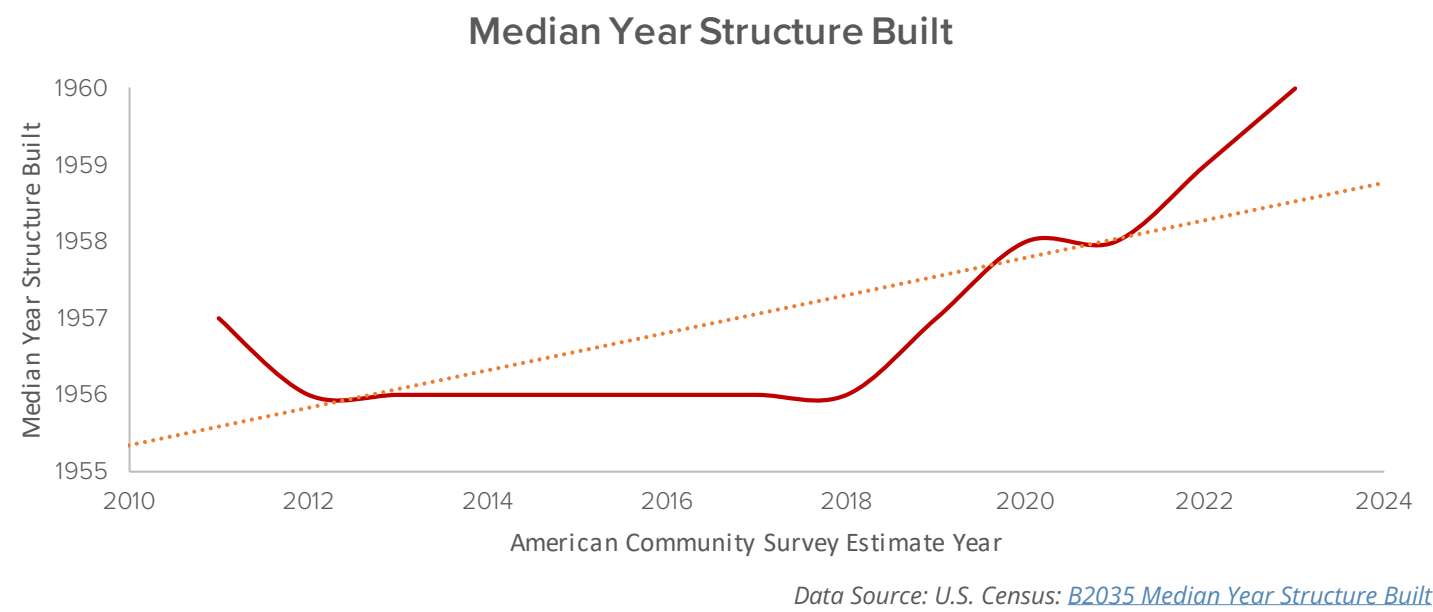
Birmingham Building Age

- Less than 50 Years Old
- 50 Years Old
- 75 Years Old
- 100 Years Old
- 125 Years Old
- No Data



Data Source: [SEMCOG Building Footprints 2024](#)

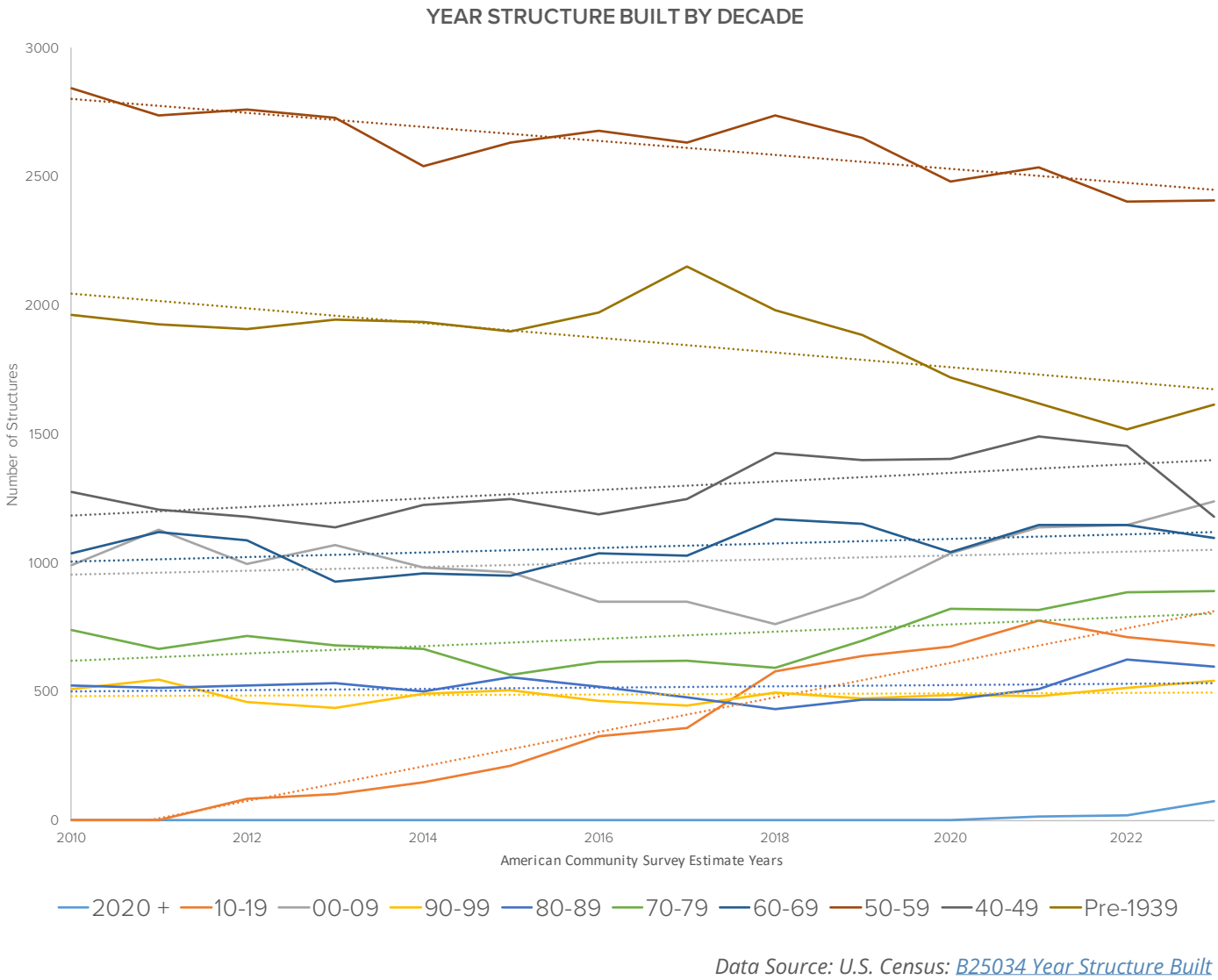
A Deeper Look Continued...



Building Quick Facts 2025

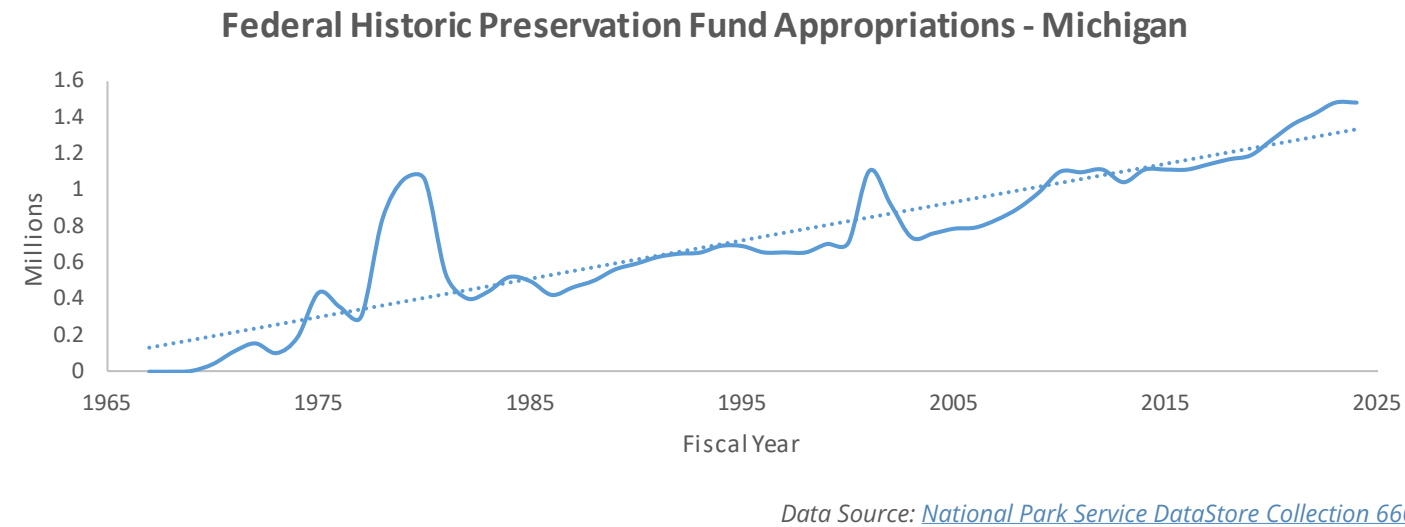
- 1831** Birmingham's Oldest Building
- 7,982** Total Principal Buildings
- 739** Single-Family Homes Demolished Since 2015
- 32** Commercial Buildings Demolished Since 2015
- 736** Buildings Over 100 Years Old

Data Source: [SEMCOG Building Footprints 2024](#)



Federal Funding for Historic Preservation

The National Park Service administers the Historic Preservation Fund on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior and uses annually appropriated funds to provide grants to eligible recipients for the preservation of historic resources.¹² The NPS generates annual reports, which are accessible on their [website](#). The following represents the funding received by the State of Michigan since the inception of the fund, which shows a steady increase:



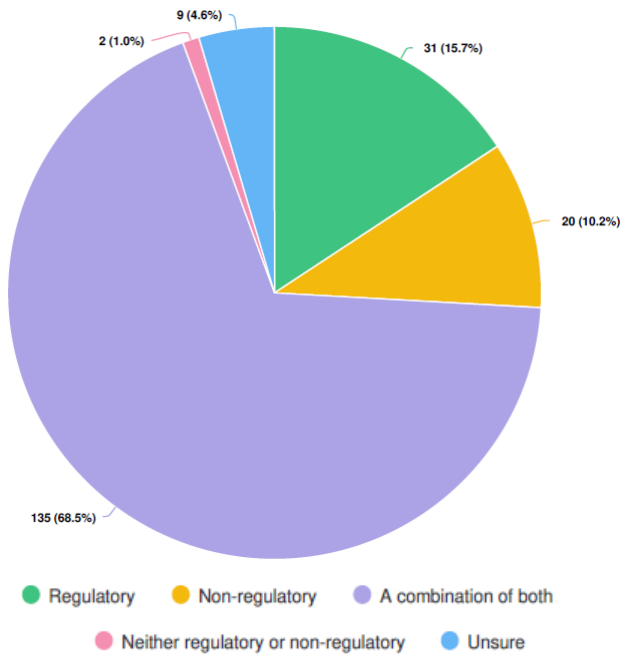
Public Engagement Summary

As is typical in Birmingham, it was a pleasure to engage the community in impassioned discussions about historic preservation. Although historic preservation is often considered a niche field within government and planning, the community showed up, and in turn has made their mark on this planning effort. The depth of knowledge, experience and willingness to discuss challenging issues in this community remains a key contributor to Birmingham’s elevated status in the region.

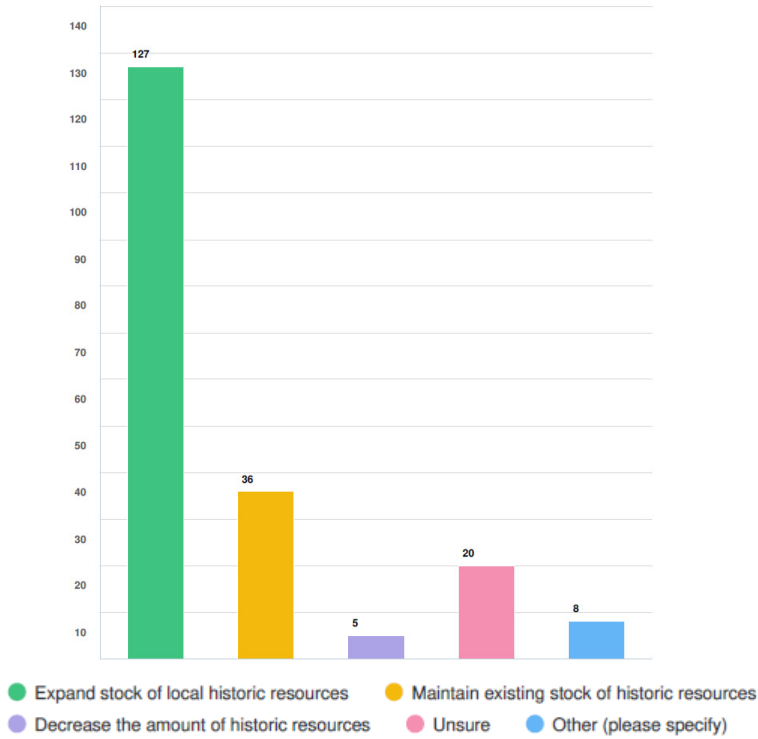
Throughout this process, the HDC was able to provide a multitude of engagement and informational opportunities including over **20** HDC meetings, **3** property owner round tables, **2** newspaper articles, **2** community presentations, **6** newsletter articles, and countless conversations.

Overall, it was apparent that the community feels strongly about its history and character, and is willing to explore more opportunities to preserve it. This section provides a snapshot of some of the feedback we received at the various engagement events.

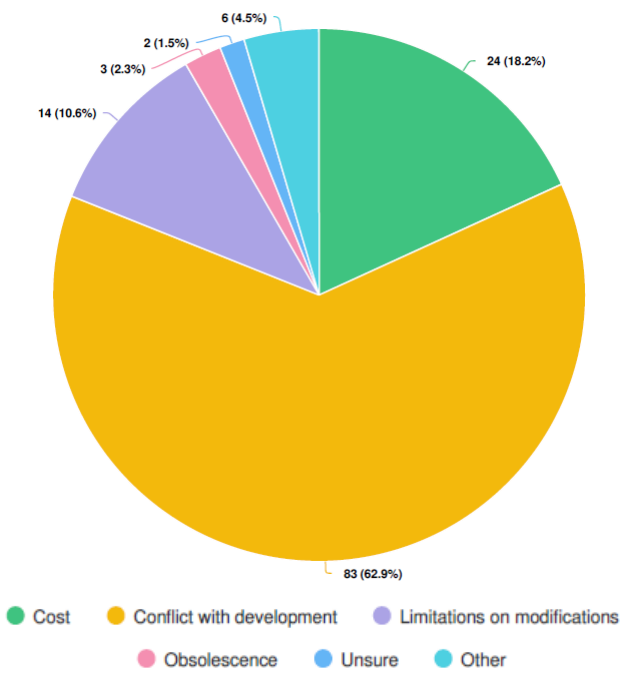
The approach to historic preservation can be simplified in to regulatory and non-regulatory approaches. Which approach do you feel better suits the City of Birmingham?



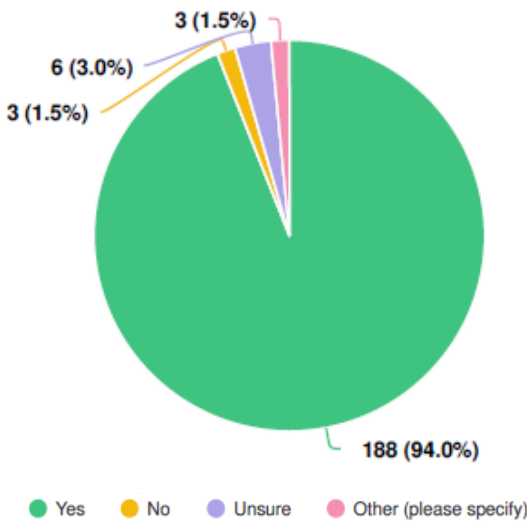
What direction do you think the City should take in the future regarding the creation of local historic resources (buildings and/or sites)?



In your opinion, what is the biggest barrier to historic preservation?



Do you believe historic preservation is a worthwhile goal?



“We don’t want to sound negative about the homes lost, but we do believe that there can be a cultural shift in how we look at Birmingham’s oldest homes.”

- L.S. - Birmingham Resident



HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Understanding what it means to be a historically designated historic resource is a critical step to understanding the remainder of this plan. This is a question that is fielded regularly by City Staff and has a relatively straight forward answer in the technical sense. However, there are many other programs or designations that can confuse and complicate the environment for historic preservation. It shall be a goal of this plan to unwind some of the confusion that exists surrounding historic designation and provide a first step towards educating the community on the differences between the various levels of designation.

As an important part of this effort, there is an overarching distinction to be made between the different types of designations a historic building or site can achieve. This distinction is binary in that each designation can be described as either a **protective** designation or a **recognition** designation. Protective designations provide legal restrictions on what can be done on the building or site, while recognition designations offer a celebration of history based on whatever criteria the program exists to promote.

Local Historic Designation

☒ PROTECTIVE ☐ RECOGNITION

Local designation is the most common and strongest form of historic designation. In the City of Birmingham, the responsibility to designate a historic resource is held by the City Commission. A request to designate a single building (non-contiguous historic district) or a group of buildings together (contiguous historic district) can come from anyone or any group of people. The request would be considered by the City Commission, directed to the Historic District Study Committee to develop a report and recommendation (if so desired), then back to the City Commission for final consideration.

In the event that the City Commission establishes a new historic district (whether contiguous or non-contiguous), each resource within the district is subject to Chapter 127, [Section 127-10](#) of the Birmingham Code of Ordinances, which gives the Historic District Commission purview to review any work, such as addition/alteration to the exterior of the resource and/

or its site. Each resource would also be subject to the Design Review standards outlined in [Section 127-11](#), which are referred to as the “Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.”

Birmingham Heritage Home Program

☐ PROTECTIVE ☒ RECOGNITION

The Heritage Home Program (sometimes referred to as “Centennial Home” program) in the City of Birmingham was introduced in 2012 for the purpose of recognizing homes constructed 100 years ago or more with a commemorative plaque and certificate that certified a home as a “Heritage Home.” Upon the inception of the program, the City presented several plaques to homes throughout the City. Plaques were generally made available upon request from the homeowner without a formal application process, therefore there is little information available to the City as to the program and its participants.

Before fizzling out a couple of years later, the Heritage Home program was able to recognize 31 homes for their age, most of which were accompanied by irreplaceable charm, character and complexity. At this time, it is estimated that nearly half of the homes certified through the Heritage Home program have been either lost to demolition or significantly altered.

National Register of Historic Places

☐ PROTECTIVE ☒ RECOGNITION

The [National Register of Historic Places](#) program is administered by the National Park Service. The program maintains an official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties have significance to the history of their community state, or the nation.¹¹

The City of Birmingham currently boasts three properties on the National Register: the Grand Trunk Western Railroad Birmingham Depot, John W. Hunter House and Derby Street-Grand Trunk Western Railroad Bridge.

Petitioning a property for the National Register does not require it to be designated locally, but the nomination does require a property to meet the same standards that locally designated resources are held to. Properties on the National Register do also open up eligibility for federal preservation tax credits.

Although the placement of a property on the National Register is challenging and prestigious, under Federal Law, the listing of a property in the National Register places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance.

National Historic Landmark Program

☒ PROTECTIVE ☐ RECOGNITION

[National Historic Landmarks](#) are buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects that have been determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be nationally significant in American history and culture. Many of the most renowned historic properties in the nation are considered National Historic Landmarks. Mount Vernon, Pearl Harbor, Alcatraz, and Martin Luther King’s Birthplace are examples of Landmarks that illustrate important contributions to the nation’s historical development.

National Historic Landmark Designations are set at a much higher bar, and are held to a different set of very high standards. All that being said, properties designated as a National Historic Landmark require a review of demolition proposals, but does not prohibit demolition outright. The process required to seek demolition is not a simple or easy process and is typically subject to a thorough review, thus it could be considered more protective than the National Register. Birmingham does not have any listings in the National Historic Landmark Program.

Michigan Historical Marker Program

☐ PROTECTIVE ☒ RECOGNITION

In conversations about historic designation, it is sometimes suggested that properties can be designated by the State of Michigan as historic in some way. Although this is not entirely untrue, it is unlike local designation, or either of the national designations. The [Michigan Historical Marker Program](#) offers properties an opportunity to recognize a property, building or site with a marker, but does not go much further than that. Eligibility for a marker is determined by historic significance at the local, state or national level, and in the case of historic resources, integrity. Birmingham has one property with a state historical marker, which is located at the Greenwood Cemetery.



ACTION PLAN

In order to achieve the goals of this plan, a series of objectives has been developed by the Historic District Commission (HDC) that reflects best practices, realistic expectations, legal requirements, and resident/stakeholder input. These objectives range in terms of level of effort, regulatory versus non-regulatory, and time horizon. This action plan will serve as a blueprint for implementation, and is structured upon the following components:

- **Clear Goals:** Each stated objective was designed to work towards the broader goal to which it is assigned. The HDC used the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) model to develop each objective and this plan will attempt to describe how each objective fits into that framework. It should be noted that with many of the objectives in this plan, measurability may be a simple binary - complete or not.
- **Tasks and Steps:** When it comes to implementation, it is essential to outline the tasks or steps that will be necessary to reach each objective. This plan attempts to provide insight into these steps, but recognizes that conditions can change over time.
- **Responsibilities:** As the implementation of this plan will at times require assistance from numerous different entities and stakeholders, it was important to include them as a part of this plan.
- **Resources:** Generally speaking, it is very advantageous for the City to understand what materials, budget, or tools may be necessary to complete an objective early on in the process, as things like implementation, budget cycles, and staff or volunteer availability often do not align. As a general rule, it should be noted that the City understands that there are costs associated with staff time that can be attributed to each objective, and may be implied, though not explicitly listed in the Action Plan.



Get Back to the Basics [B2B]

To support existing historic resources and create an environment that is conducive to historic preservation.

The Historic Preservation Master Plan recognizes the valuable stock of historic resources that are currently designated within the City. As time marches forward, these resources will need to be maintained and treated consistently against the City's Historic Design Guidelines. In addition, opportunities for monetary support should be prioritized.

B2B-1 - Provide annual training for Historic District Commission and Historic District Study Committee members.

This *non-regulatory* objective intends to provide volunteers on the City's preservation-related bodies with trainings on the role of a commission or committee member or other important subjects. In order to provide consistent and well rounded education, there are two resources that should be leveraged: Michigan Historic Preservation Network's (MHPN) Historic District Commissioner Training and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions' (NAPC) Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP). Both training opportunities require membership, which the City of Birmingham already holds and renews annually. Beyond the cost of a membership, annual costs for the trainings themselves could be in the \$500-\$1000 range. As an added benefit, some of these trainings could also be open to the public. Scheduling trainings will be the responsibility of the Planning Department as liaisons to each body, and will require taking steps to contact MHPN or NAPC representatives and scheduling trainings at convenient times, most likely during regularly scheduled meetings.

B2B-2 - Perform biennial reviews of all historic district boundaries and resources.

Best practice suggests that communities should regularly review historic district boundaries and resources to track changes, enforce maintenance codes, and propose changes if necessary. The reality of these reviews are that they are time consuming and could generate more work as observations are made. Thus, this *non-regulatory* objective aims to review its stock every other year to allow for city staff or volunteers to manage the project effectively. The HDC will need to build this review into their routine, which could leverage the regular annual report process in which they report to the City Commission their activities for the year and action items for the upcoming year. This approach would also allow the City Commission to become more informed in regards the City's historic districts. This plans Facade Condition Assessment project could be considered the first iteration of this objective. Preparation for future reviews should begin in 2027 for reporting in 2028. In terms of resources, staff time is the main consideration.

B2B-3 - Update the City's historic preservation webpage with current information and resources.

Digital resources are becoming more and more of an asset for local governments and their preservation activities. The City's website is modern and user-friendly, and in many cases acts as an easy entry point for people to learn about the City. At present, the historic preservation related pages of the site are outdated and require a focus shift. This is a *non-regulatory* objective that should be completed as early as possible in 2026, even considering that there may be some digital resources that are not yet available to place on the site. The Planning Department would work closely with the City's Communications Department, who are the main administrators of the City's website. This objective could be completed with little in terms of resources, which could include requests for service to our website provider (currently Revise) for any novel requests or structural changes.

B2B-4 - Create simple, high quality resources for commonly requested information including (but not limited to) the process for historic designation, what it means to be a designated historic resource, and the “do’s and don’ts” of preservation.

The most common questions that the City gets related to historic preservation are based on what it means to be historically designated and what can or cannot be done on building or site if it is historically designated. These questions often lead to a lot of misconception about historic designation that have proven to be antithetical to the City's preservation goals. The *non-regulatory* objective to produce these resources is a simple exercise, as the City has much of the necessary information, as well as the technical tools to produce approachable, high quality documents. Based on feedback and experiences shared by HDC & HDSC members as well as the public, this objective should be completed in 2026, as it may be considered an enabler for future objectives.

B2B-5 - Pursue a nomination of City Hall and the Baldwin Public Library to the National Register of Historic Places.

A major theme of the “Back to the Basics” goal is to ensure that in seeking to expand the City's stock of historically designated resources, we do not forget about the existing stock. These two particular resources are government controlled and have been contributing to the City's historic preservation efforts for 100 years. As noted in an earlier section, this objective would be considered *non-regulatory*, as National Register nominations have no protections build in at the federal level. The nomination process for buildings is rather arduous, thus this objective should be considered a lesser priority in comparison to others beginning in 2028. Although arduous, there are no application fees or other direct costs to be placed on the National Register. It is anticipated that the Planning Department would work closely with the Birmingham Museum, City Commission, and Michigan State Historic Preservation Office to achieve this objective.



B2B-6 - Review and update historic preservation ordinances to meet current needs.

The City's historic preservation ordinances are *regulatory*, and are legally necessary to engage in the historic design review processes and other preservation activities in the City. Although the current ordinances appear to be aligned with the requirements of Public Act 169, the City should review these ordinances to ensure that they align with the goals of the City while also maintaining adherence to State and Federal statutes. These updates could be as minor as formatting and grammar, or could be broader changes to the roles and duties of the HDC or HDSC. Because the ordinances are considered legally sound and up to date in terms of design review standards and processes, this objective should be pursued in 2029 after other work from this plan is completed, which is expected to reshape the preservation environment in Birmingham. Thus, it would be helpful to ensure that any ordinances reflected that new environment after it is formed. This objective will be carried out by the Planning Department in close coordination with the City Attorney, and will be overseen by the HDC and City Commission. As the historic preservation ordinances are hosted in the Municode online platform, there will be a minor cost to update the language if/when adopted by the City Commission. However, maintenance of the Municode platform is currently budgeted for on an annual basis, so no budget updates are expected to be required.

B2B-7 - Develop policy and procedures for the review of work performed on noncontributing resources/properties within historic districts.

The historic district ordinances of the City of Birmingham state that all plans that include work, such as addition/alteration, to the exterior of a resource and/or its site shall be reviewed by the HDC. The ordinance defines resource as “one or more publicly or privately owned historic or non-historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, features, or open spaces located within a historic district.” Up to this point, the City has done a poor job of regulating buildings or properties within historic districts that are not specifically listed as designated historic resources. As a general rule, all properties within a district have a potential to impact the character and feel of the district, which is why such regulations exist in Birmingham and other communities across the nation. As this objective is again considering the enforcement of existing ordinances, it is considered *regulatory*. This objective will be carried out by the Planning Department and Historic District Commission with the assistance of the Building Department. There are no additional resources required for this objective, as the City already has the tools and systems necessary to complete. For this reason, the objective should be completed in 2026.

B2B-8 - Increase and regularize enforcement of maintenance requirements to ensure that historic materials are not lost to neglect.

The number one issue for historic buildings in Birmingham is maintenance. It is both a tedious task, and sometimes an expensive endeavor. Although our ordinances require the exterior of every resource to be maintained in a workmanlike manner, the City has been unable to keep up with the enforcement of these codes, which has led to significant deterioration of historic material that, in some cases, cannot be repaired. As the City looks to expand its portfolio of historic resources, the task will only become a larger challenge. For this reason, it is imperative to jumpstart this *regulatory* objective in 2026 to ensure that the City can quickly develop a program of enforcement to stem the tide of deterioration of historic materials. Enforcement will be the responsibility of the Building Department and Planning Department.

B2B-9 - Develop a consistent Certificate of Appropriateness to issue to property owners after project approval.

Each alteration project that is approved by the HDC is issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Over the years, the deliverable has been inconsistent in terms of design, but also in terms of internal filing systems. Although the issuance of a COA is a regulatory procedural step, this objective may be considered *non-regulatory* in that the focus is on the design and post-approval organization of the COA. This objective requires no additional resources, and will be undertaken by the Planning Department. As this objective is a part of the legal framework of Design Review, it is imperative to standardize the COA before the first Design Review is completed in 2026.



Embrace Proactivity [PRO]

To transition the City from a reactive approach to historic preservation to a proactive one and meet people where they are.

The City has access to a multitude of resources from data to social networks to several useful tools that can be leveraged to ensure that irreplaceable resources are not lost to neglect, and that new pockets of history in Birmingham can continually be discovered. At times, the community may not know what it has until it is brought to them.

PRO-1 - Engage with realtors, brokers, and other persons engaged in the sale of land and buildings towards the preservation of historic buildings.

This *non-regulatory* objective aims to leverage what could be considered front-line individuals that are heavily involved at critical junctures in a properties lifetime. There are many benefits to engaging with these types of individuals at the time of sale/purchase of a historic property, predominantly regarding the transfer of information during due diligence periods. At no point after the purchase of a historically designated property should the buyer have questions as to whether or not their new building is historic, it should be communicated early and often and the City should ensure that expectations are clear and acknowledged. The Planning Department will be the main contact point for this objective, but will likely require assistance from the Birmingham Museum and real estate professionals in the area. It is not anticipated that this objective will require monetary resources, but there may be tools required in terms of access to real estate databases or software that could be considered. This objective should be started in 2028 after the City has time to build its capacity and resource base. Ultimately, the City could explore the expansion of this objective to consider other buildings that may be considered historic, but may not be designated at the time.

PRO-2 - Petition for historic designation of all remaining Wallace Frost designed homes in the City.

The City has long acknowledged the importance of local architect Wallace Frost and his architecture in Birmingham. There were 44 buildings in Birmingham known to have been designed by Wallace Frost. At present, there are only 36 remaining. Today, only 3 of the 36 have been historically designated. When it comes to considering places to start in expanding the City's stock of historic resources, protecting the remaining Wallace Frost designed buildings may be considered low hanging fruit. This objective would be considered *regulatory*, as the end result would be listing in the historic district ordinance and requiring that these properties adhere to the regulations within. As outlined in the historic district ordinance, the City Commission and HDSC would be responsible for designating these resources, and would receive support from the Planning Department and Birmingham Museum. It should be stated that this objective will also heavily involve the owners of these properties, as the City would be seeking *voluntary designation*. With the coordination required, as well as a strong desire to build support from Wallace Frost property owners, this objective should be started when the environment is right, perhaps in 2029.

PRO-3 - Perform a full reconnaissance level survey of the Little San Francisco neighborhood.

The Little San Francisco neighborhood is the oldest neighborhood in Birmingham. Reconnaissance level surveys are designed as a "first-look" at a neighborhood or broad group of potentially historic resources. The survey would collect and record basic information through a review of existing files and data sources, and form an exterior review of the buildings. This information is then assembled in a final report that outlines the character and history of the area. This report may be used in support of the historic designation of specific buildings or areas in the future should the City and/or neighborhood wish to commence that process. This type of survey can be completed by a combination of the Planning Department, HDC, and HDSC, and is a *non-regulatory* process. The forms that guide these surveys are free and readily available. This objective should be considered in 2028.

PRO-4 - Study the feasibility of preservation overlay zoning districts in the City.

The City's Zoning Ordinance is a *regulatory* tool that is supported by the City's comprehensive plan, in this case the Birmingham Plan 2040. The 2040 Plan and preservation overlay districts have something in common - both contain features that are aimed at protecting the distinctive character of Birmingham's neighborhoods. In the case of the 2040 Plan, the character-based recommendations are aspirational. That is, to be enforceable, they need to be translated into zoning ordinances. As the City moves forward with the Zoning Ordinance update project that is expected to begin in 2026, preservation overlay zoning should be studied for use as a tool for preserving neighborhood character. The timing is right, and resources have already been allocated to the Zoning Ordinance Update project. The Planning Department would be responsible for engaging with the consultant team and community members during the update project.

PRO-5 - Generate a list of ready-made historic preservation projects eligible for Certified Local Government grant funding.

Since becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 2010, the City of Birmingham has only received 1 grant award from the program in the amount of \$20,000, which funded the recent Historic District Design Guidelines project. As we understand it, [CLG grant funding](#) is readily available on an annual basis, and frequently underutilized. This *non-regulatory* objective would provide for better, more efficient access to a funding program that could jumpstart many of the objectives within this plan, or other projects that the HDC or City Commission feel are worthwhile. The Planning Department, together with the HDC, should procure a list in 2026 in preparation for the 2027 CLG grant cycle.

PRO-6 - Develop a network of historic preservation advocates to support historic preservation efforts in the City.

In the City of Birmingham, we are constantly impressed by the willingness of residents to volunteer their time and experience toward furthering the goals of government. The City has also observed groundswells of public support for the preservation of historic places, unfortunately often at times when it is too late. As a *non-regulatory* objective, the City may explore some creative opportunities and tools to connect like-minded people including social media, constant contact groups, or neighborhood associations. The Planning Department would be responsible for setting up the city-based systems with the assistance of the Communications Department, but much of the network building can also be supported by the HDC, HDSC, and City Commission. Although progress on this objective could start immediately, the full network of preservation advocates may not be completed and ready to mobilize until 2028.



PRO-7 - Coordinate with the Planning Board and City Commission in the implementation of the Birmingham Plan 2040 to ensure that the historic preservation goals of the City are reflected in broader planning.

As noted earlier in this plan, historic preservation planning works best when it is integrated to a communities broader planning and policymaking activities. The master planning activities of the last two years in the City has created a collaborative environment that must be carried through to implementation. Coordination could be improved through leveraging existing tools such as joint meetings, or could be strengthened by developing new communication tools between the HDC, Planning Board, and City Commission. The Planning Department and City Manager’s office will be responsible for these *non-regulatory* efforts. Although implementation timelines are different for the separate plans, there are several opportunities available through 2027 to achieve this objective with no additional costs incurred.

PRO-8 - Consider a demolition delay ordinance.

Demolition delay ordinances are a *regulatory* tool that enable communities to trigger a temporary waiting period before a building is demolished, which gives the HDC, HDSC and/or City Commission time to review and document any potential historical significance as well as explore alternatives to demolition. Although demolition delay ordinances do not guarantee preservation, it at least provides an opportunity to consider preservation or other alternatives before a permit is issued. This objective will require the Planning Department and Building Department to coordinate efforts to develop the language, and may necessitate that the HDSC be authorized to meet to perform the functions of the ordinance. Due to the rate at which buildings are being demolished, the City should pursue this objective in 2026.



Interested in seeing what a Demolition Delay Ordinance could look like?

- [PITTSFIELD, MARYLAND](#)
- [PAWTUCKET, RHODE ISLAND](#)
- [CHICAGO, ILLINOIS](#)
- [NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS](#)
- [WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT](#)

PRO-9 - Incorporate historic preservation values, principles, and processes into applicable municipal policy, facilities planning, and programs.

This *non-regulatory* objective aims to broaden the reach of historic preservation to all City Departments, Boards, Commissions and Committees that touch historic preservation in some way, even if only tangential, to ensure that the goals of this plan can be supported by more than just the Planning Department, HDC, HDSC, and City Commission. Because Birmingham’s City Hall and the Baldwin Public Library are designated historic resources, the City has already demonstrated a commitment beyond paper, policy and plans. However, there are other considerations to be had in efforts such as strategic planning, budgets, public services and maintenance (to name a few) that could do well to incorporate more historic preservation principles, even at a high level. This responsibility may be borne by the City Managers office with assistance from the Planning Department, and would require little in terms of resources beyond staff time. Due to competing priorities and the effort required, it would be fair to target 2029 for this objective.

PRO-10 - Create a financial incentive program in Birmingham to support historic property owners in the maintenance and upkeep of their historic buildings.

The interest in some sort of financial incentive to support historic property owners in rehabilitation or maintenance project was one of the top issues for residents and property owners in the City. Generally speaking, current opportunities for financial incentives can be broken into two categories: tax breaks and grants. Both would be new concepts in the City, and both provide for their own unique challenges. Although this is a highly sought after objective, it requires a delicate approach and careful policy crafting to ensure fairness, legality, and longevity. This objective would be considered *non-regulatory*, and the resources required are uncertain at this time, and highly dependent on the approach. In any event, the City should look to have a program drafted by 2030. The Planning Department would work closely with the Finance Director, City Attorney and City Manager on proposals related to financial incentives.

PRO-11 - Resurrect the City’s Heritage Home Program to recognize buildings at or older than 100 years of age.

When considering historic preservation programs in the City, it is important to have options. It is true that not all property owners with old or eligible buildings are interested in local historic designation. This is where the Heritage Home program could fit back into the fold. This resurrected, *non-regulatory* program could offer a different starting point for many people, and could act as a stepping stone to full historic designation. In restarting this program, however, the City should make sure to track and collate data much better than the first time around, as the point of this program is to recognize history, which is difficult to do without the tools to do so. Depending on the approach that the City takes in restarting this program, costs incurred could be in the \$200-\$500 range for each new plaque. The Planning Department has managed this program in the past, and assistance could be provided by volunteers on the HDC or HDSC. The program should be developed in the later stages of 2026 after some other important objectives are complete.

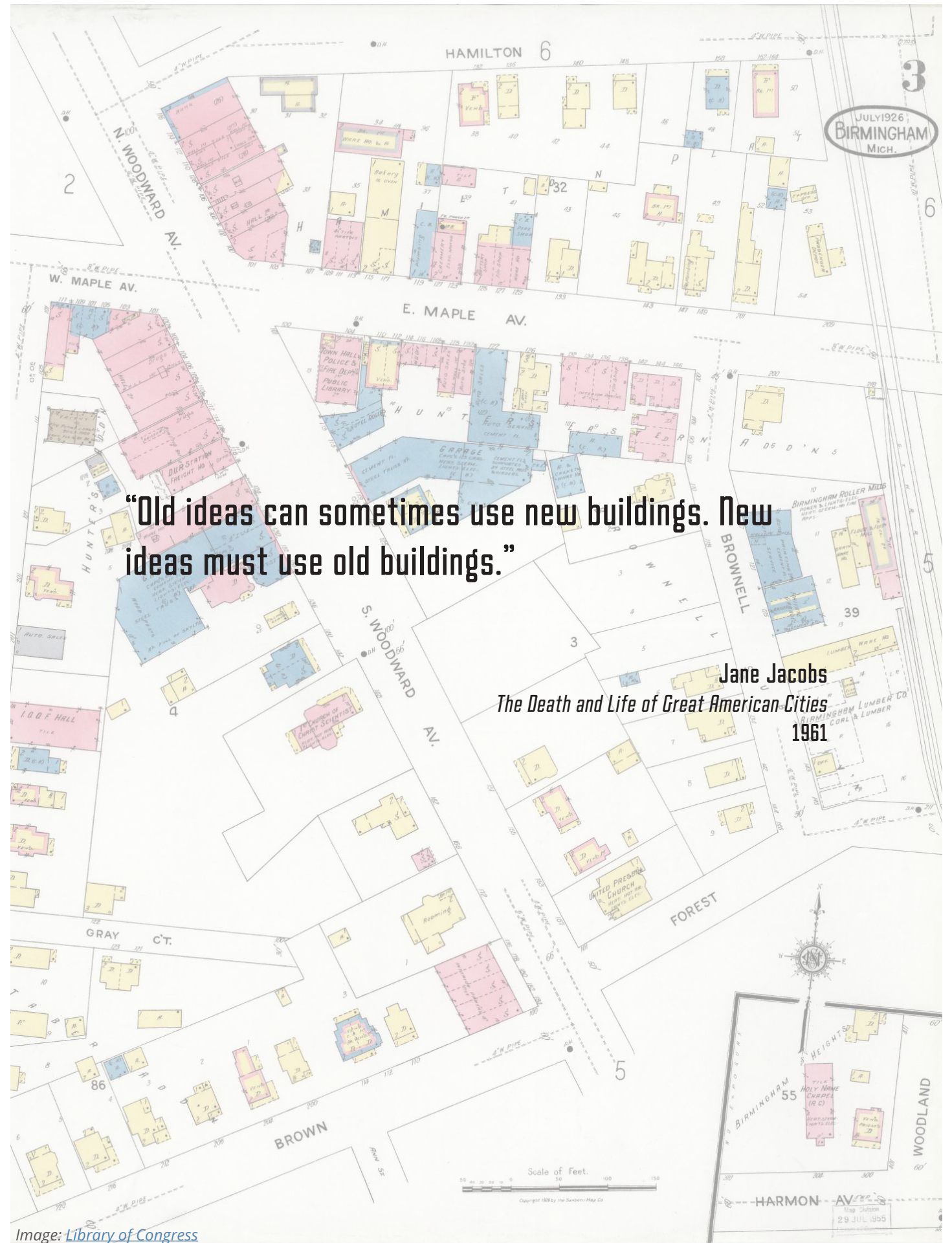


PRO-12 - Develop an annual budget and regular allocation of funds to support general historic preservation activity in the City.

Although historic preservation work in the City is mostly performed by City Staff and volunteers, there are at times projects or activities that may cost money. This can range from the aforementioned trainings in B2B-1 to grant matches and everything in between. Providing the HDC & HDSC with an annual budget, a *non-regulatory* action, would further the City's commitment to historic preservation and allow flexibility when considering projects. The budgetary allotment would not be significant to start, perhaps in the \$5,000-\$10,000 range annually. It is worth noting that these funds would need to be approved by the City Commission in both their potential allocation and expenditure. The funds would likely be managed by the Planning Department as liaisons to both groups, but will be overseen by the City Manager. The Planning Department should make this request in the 2027-2028 budget cycle when more progress is made in this Plan.

PRO-13 - Historically designate 40 additional buildings or properties by 2040 ["40 by 40"].

Historic designation is a big deal. Adding 40 additional buildings to the City's existing stock of 82 (a 50% increase) would be an even bigger deal. If this sounds like a tall task, it certainly is. However, 40 new historic properties is only 5% of the homes currently over 100 years old, and is 0.5% of the overall number of buildings in the City. This *regulatory* objective, "40 by 40," is catchy and marketable as a historic preservation tactic, which could encourage property owners who may already be thinking about designation to commit to be a part of this exclusive group of properties. As the City needs all the time it can get to achieve this objective, developing materials and other marketing-type approaches should be started right away in 2026. The Planning Department and Communications Department would be the main drivers of this objective. As City Staff has the graphic design and communication skills necessary to build this program as well as the volunteer work of the HDSC to administer designations, there would not be any extra anticipated cost.



Inform and Engage (INF)

To boost the profile of historic preservation in Birmingham to a level that unifies public opinion towards historic preservation in the City.

To build continued support for historic preservation in Birmingham, the City must provide the community with the information it needs to understand what it means to preserve and why it is important. Emphasis can be added to robust data and accessibility of information.

INF-1 - Work with the Birmingham Museum to provide current, accurate descriptions of designated historic resources within the City.

The Birmingham Museum is a wealth of information and will continue to be the number one resource for information related to the City's historic properties. In the early 2010's, the Planning Department put together a file for each of the City's designated historic properties as a sort of "quick-reference" for use by the Planning Department. These folders have since become outdated, as are the descriptions within them. The Planning Department uses these descriptions during Design Reviews as well as for the historic plaque program. As this work will take considerable time and effort on the part of the Birmingham Museum, it would be best to give as much time to prepare as possible with a goal of 2028. At this time, there would be no cost in achieving this *non-regulatory* objective. Once completed, the City should make these resources available as a digital resource on the City's website.

INF-2 - Provide unique programming during National Historic Preservation Month every year.

Every year in May, the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) (NTHP) celebrates National Historic Preservation Month. Each year has a special theme, such as "People Saving Places" or "Harnessing the Power of Place." The NTHP provides the theme, free digital marketing kits, and stories to share. This toolkit makes celebrating preservation month that much easier, and that much more interesting. These activities provide for a unique opportunity for the community to showcase a piece of their history and channel some of the energy from the celebration into their preservation programs. In 2025, the City made their first major preservation month push with a well received celebration of [Wallace Frost](#), which involved themed social media posts, proclamations, newsletters, public engagements, and even a trivia challenge. This *non-regulatory* objective suggests that the City should build on the success of the program and endeavor to provide similar programming on an annual basis. Programming will be led and designed by the Planning Department, but will include assistance from the Communications Department and Department of Public Services.



INF-3 - Develop and install historic district signage that is consistent with the wayfinding program for the City.

In 2024, the City adopted a [Wayfinding and Signage Master Plan](#) to provide guidance to Birmingham personnel and outside consultants involved in specifying, fabricating, and installing signs for the City. It is designed to guide the use of the Birmingham design standard and to assure that it is correctly and consistently applied. The design scheme is based on the Freedom of the Human Spirit sculpture located in Shain Park, which is also integrated in the City's logo. In an effort to integrate historic preservation into City branding and wayfinding, the HDC should endeavor to develop complementary wayfinding signage for its historic districts and historic places. This *non-regulatory* objective would require funding from the City Commission, as well as potential design consultation services. The Planning Department and Communications Department spearhead the City's wayfinding program and should continue to do so with the assistance of the Wayfinding and Branding Committee. At this point, it would be best to consider this objective after the City has completed the first phases of the broader wayfinding program in 2029.

INF-4 - Produce updated historic plaques for all designated historic buildings in the Central Business Historic District.

Recently, the City has noticed that the majority of the existing commercial historic plaques have begun to deteriorate. The existing plaques, which were the first of their kind, were constructed of porcelain enameled steel and mounted to a bracket. The initial plaques were placed as a part of a voluntary, *non-regulatory* program, which the City would look to continue. The City was recently given an opportunity to replace two plaques downtown after one was stolen and the other removed for construction. At that point, it was clear that the existing style would be very hard to recreate, and at a cost of nearly \$600 a sign, the effort would be cost prohibitive. Thus, the City purchased two plaques to use as a pilot for a new program. These plaques are constructed of acrylic with applied vinyl, and are attached to the building on standoffs. At around \$200 a plaque, they are much more cost-effective, and have a much cleaner aesthetic. The Planning Department will manage this program with content help from the Birmingham Museum, and currently has an annual budget of \$1,000 to purchase historic plaques. As a single years budget will not be sufficient to replace all of the existing plaques, the City should begin in 2026 by taking an inventory of all remaining plaques and create a replacement program that prioritizes the most damaged plaques.

INF-5 - Create more opportunities for the City to interact with property owners of historic resources.

It is unfortunate that often the only time the City and historic property owners interact is during the Design Review process, which can sometimes be stressful and can create an adversarial relationship that deepens misconceptions about historic designations. In engaging historic property owners during this planning process, it became clear that these property owners have so much more to offer in experience and perspective that the City would be wise to leverage. The Planning Department is well suited to create these opportunities, and will surely benefit from including the HDC and HDSC at times. The City should look to spend time developing these opportunities and explore different options to ascertain what might be most beneficial for both parties. 2028 would be a realistic timeframe to complete this *non-regulatory* objective.



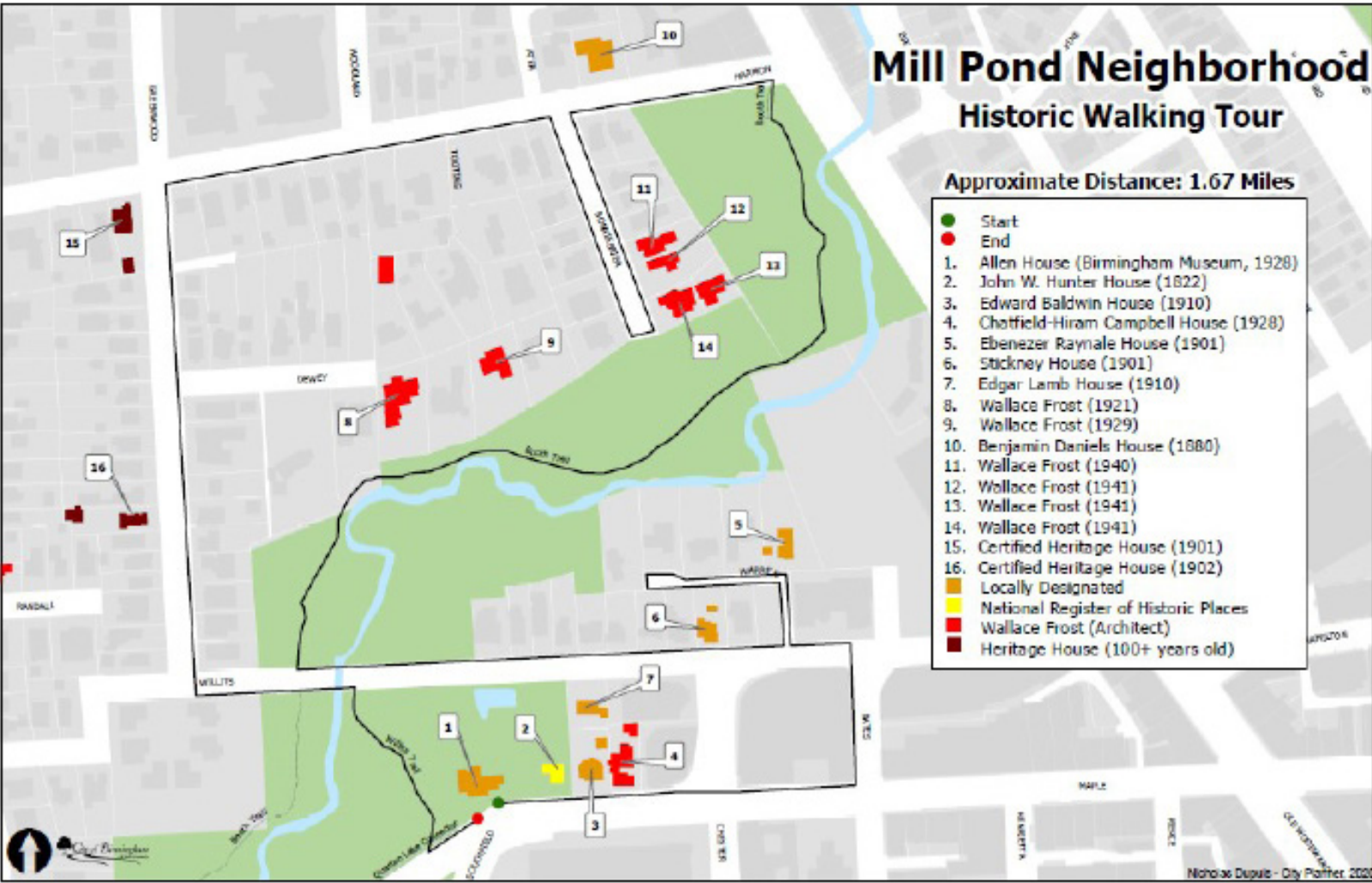
Did you know that the artist that created the Freedom of the Human Spirit (the inspiration for Birmingham's logo and branding), Marshall Fredericks, lived in a Wallace Frost designed house on Lake Park?

INF-6 - Establish an annual Preservation/Conservation Awards Program to highlight and celebrate preservation and conservation initiatives and achievements by residents and entities in Birmingham.

With the high levels of complexity and creativity required for rehabilitation projects in the City, it could be beneficial to recognize projects that rise to the top in terms of approach, execution and results. The HDC would need to develop criterion, plan an awards ceremony, and determine how these projects would be recognized. Awards programs are *non-regulatory*, and exist to build energy and draw attention to preservation in the City. Developing the program would not require funding, however the procurement of any physical award would likely require funds to be budgeted and planned for annually. Most of these responsibilities will be borne by the Planning Department, and should not be considered until the City's preservation program is a little more built out. This program could start in 2030 and used to usher in a new era of historic preservation in the City.

INF-7 - Develop historic tours as a part of the Birmingham Shopping Districts tourism initiatives.

Walking tours are a simple, low cost opportunity that provides the public with what might be considered the best way to experience a historic property - live and in living color! This *non-regulatory* objective recognizes that there have been several historic walking tours developed by both the Planning Department and the Birmingham Museum over the years, but they have not been coordinated up to this point. With the [Birmingham Shopping District's](#) (BSD) recent tourism initiatives, the environment is ripe to collaborate on walking tours that can be hosted on the BSD's updated, state of the art webpage. The Planning Department and Birmingham Museum should collaborate to create walking tours of historic districts, but also historic neighborhoods and other historic places that may not be designated at the time. This plan suggests developing basic tours by 2028, and building on success as time goes on.

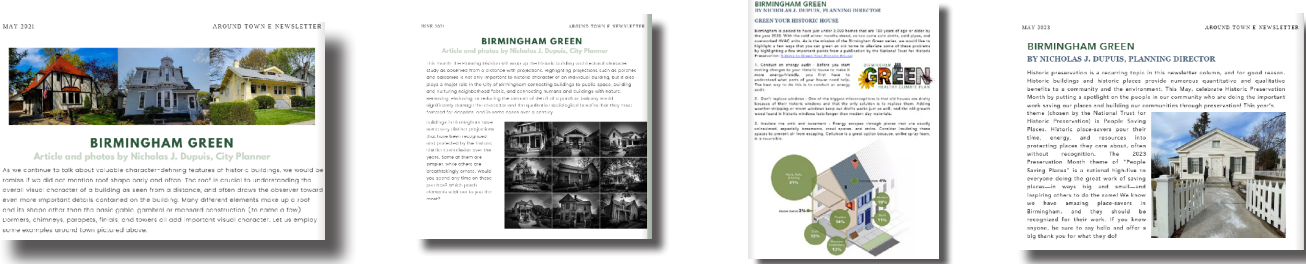


INF-8 - Through city staff, provide technical support to the owners of historic properties on the Michigan State Historic Tax Credit program.

An added benefit of any communities historic preservation program would be to provide technical support to its historic property owners when seeking state historic tax credits. Having recently been resurrected in 2020, these tax credits became available to properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the State Register of Historic Sites, or be in a local historic district, and either be individually listed or contribute to a listed district in order to be eligible for the State Credit. Although the City does not currently have experience working with tax credit projects, providing the opportunity for city staff to become well-versed in the process could provide a unique and lucrative public service to Birmingham residents and property owners. Non-profits and other advocacy groups are regularly lobbying to increase the funding for these tax credits, which are often quickly exhausted. Technical support services are a *non-regulatory* approach to historic preservation, although the application process itself and the eligibility requirements for tax credits can feel like they are regulatory at times. The Planning Department would be the best fit to provide these services, but may consult with the Finance Director at times to better understand the financial side of the issue. As the City continues to monitor the status of the State tax credits, it should consider 2030 as a reasonable goal to have something in place.

INF-9 - Provide regular historic preservation related content in the City's newsletters.

The City's [Around Town E-Newsletter](#) and [Birmingham Beat](#) printed newsletter are valuable engagement tools that have a strong presence, high quality design, and high interaction rates. The Planning Department uses these newsletters to discuss historic preservation issues in a more candid, casual manner that is often a much needed respite from the technical side of historic preservation. This *non-regulatory* objective can continue in 2026 and through the lifespan of this plan. These newsletter articles are written by the Planning Department and formatted by the Communications Department.



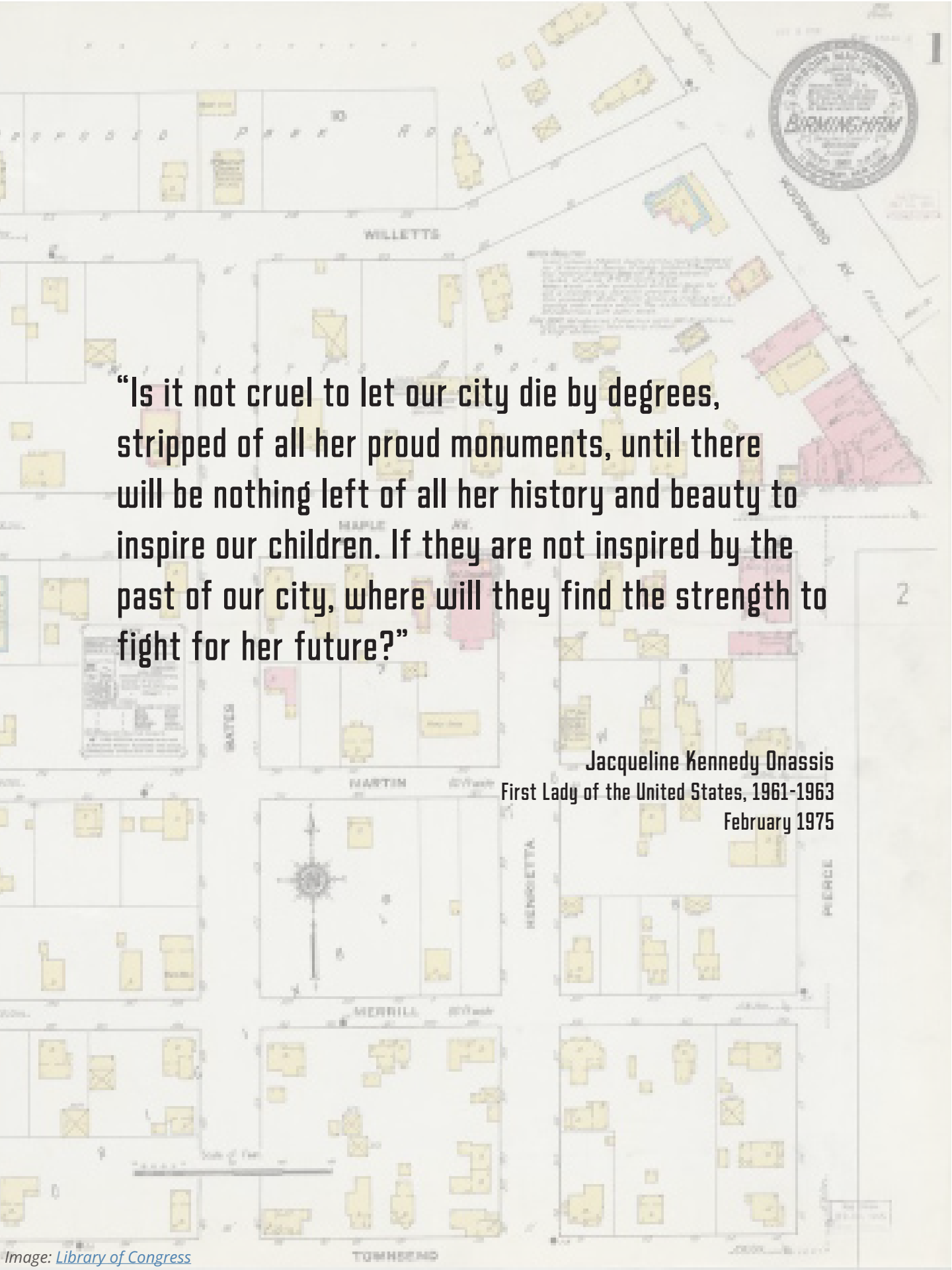
INF-10 - Together with the Birmingham Museum, develop or expand historic context statements for each of the City's historic resources.

The context in which a property, building, or place is historic is an important part of understanding its significance and why it is worth saving. These historic context statements can also explain how each resource may fit in with others in the City, and for what reasons. Creating these statements, a *non-regulatory* objective, can help make historic preservation a little more approachable and relatable to many different people. Developing these statements would be of no cost, and would be completed by the Planning Department and Birmingham Museum. These types of actions could be started in 2028 when the initial objectives are complete or well underway.



Interested in signing up to receive City newsletters and other communications?

- [BIRMINGHAM COMMUNICATION RESOURCES](#)



CONCLUSION

A Call to Action

Historical preservation preserves character, roots, and stories that span generations. Birmingham’s stock of historic places is special. It ranges from 3 nationally registered historic sites (and counting), to over 80 locally designated resources, to an abundance of eligible buildings anxious to be discovered. With Birmingham’s walkable and inviting community, it is uniquely possible to have intimate interactions everyday with the City’s rich past.

As a general rule - every old building is special, complete with its own identity and its own distinctive character, its own experiences, and its own personality. In Birmingham, that comes in many different shapes, sizes, materials, craftsmanship, and decorative details. What is worth preserving? Why is it important? This plan submits that Birmingham contains many important historic buildings that meet the criteria for preservation and could be recognized for their historical value no matter their age, prominence, or disposition.

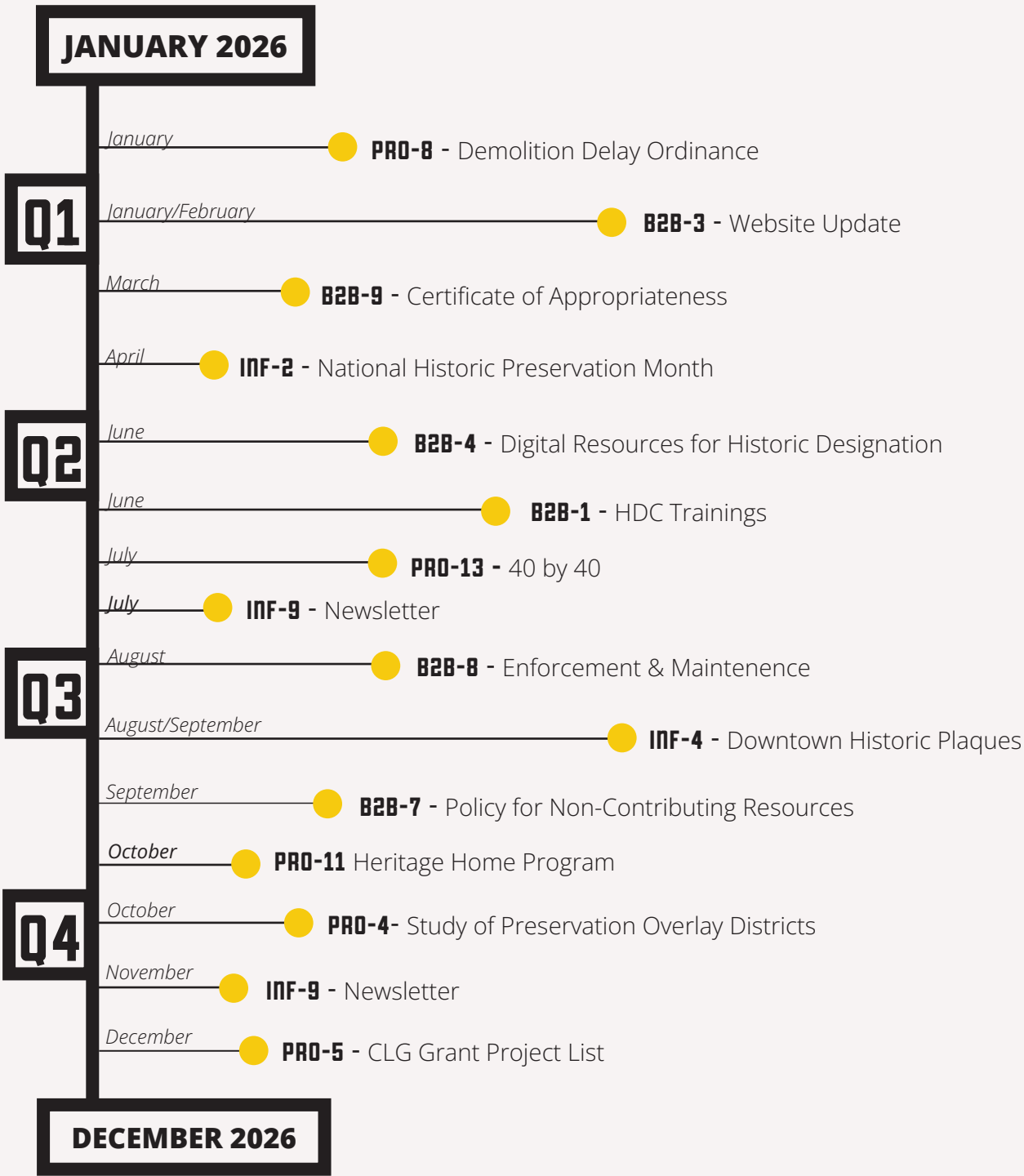
Successful historic preservation practice requires the Birmingham community to coalesce and support the historic preservation projects and policies that are envisioned in this plan to protect historic places from demolition and neglect, because **ONCE IT IS GONE - IT IS GONE FOREVER**. As we look to the future, success can start with a conversation, a short walk, a unique experience, or a new idea.

In closing, this plan offers much in terms of opportunity to gain (or rather retain) something that is purposeful, meaningful, and accessible. Moreover, the spillover effects are undeniable. Historic preservation is positively correlated with sustainability and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Economically, historic preservation can have positive impacts in boosting property value, creating jobs, and driving tourism. For the community, historic preservation provides a sense of identity and civic pride while also fostering connections to the past. It is our hope that this plan drives you to ask questions, talk to your neighbors, and think about historic preservation in a different way.



First Steps

Achieving the goals of this plan will require a strategy that balances time, resources, and scope to produce a high quality product that can stand the test of time. As such, the Action Plan set timing goals for each objective to help the implementors of this plan stay tight to task. The following graphic summarizes the suggested order of operations for the first year of implementation:



GLOSSARY

Key Terms & Acronyms

The following terms and acronyms were collated from various historic preservation sources including the National Park Service, Michigan Historic Preservation Network, and National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.

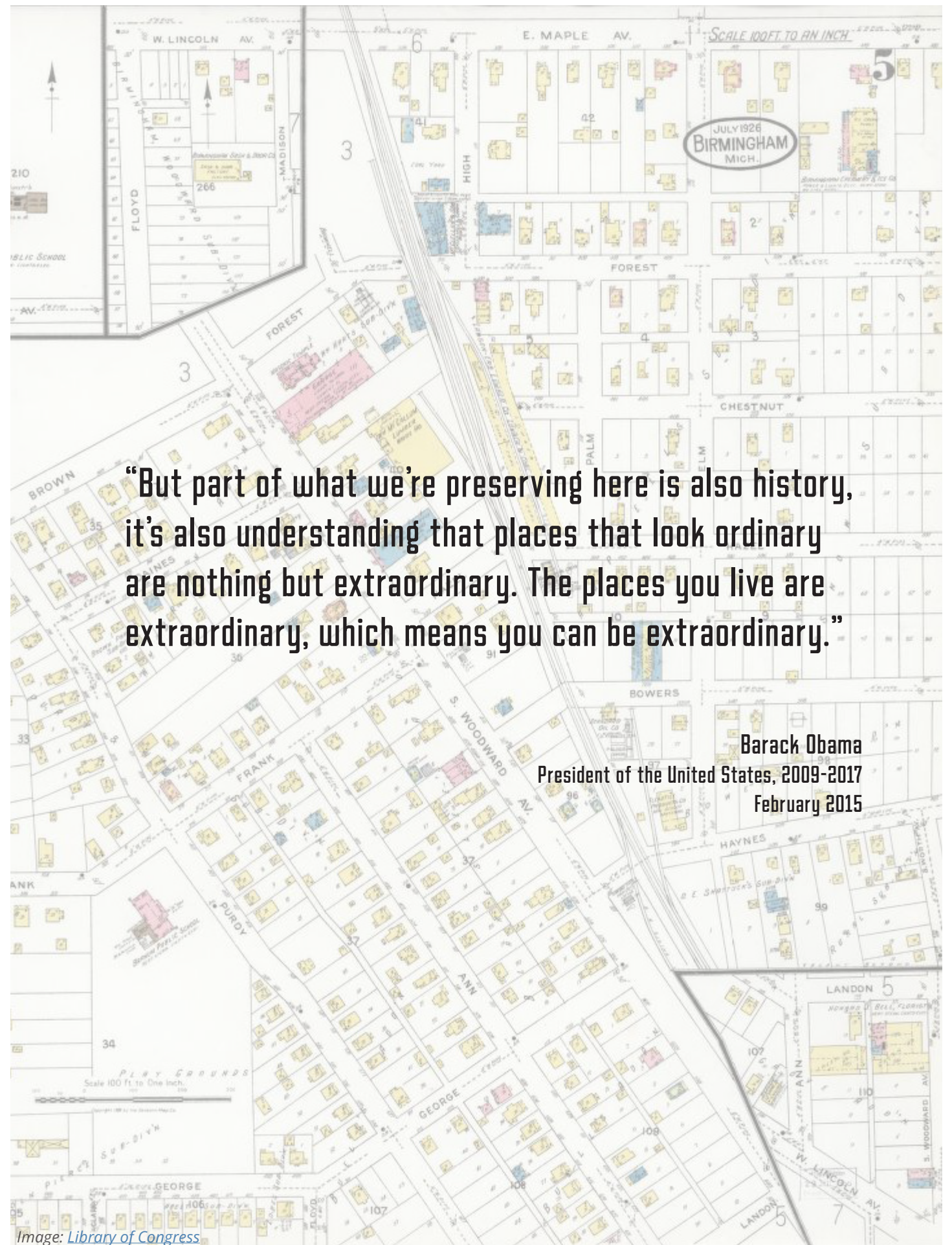
- **Certificate of Appropriateness** - Written approval of a permit application for work in a local historic district by the Historic District Commission, indicating that the work is appropriate and does not adversely affect a resource.
- **Contributing Resource** - A building, structure, object, or site adding to the significance of a historic district.
- **Design Guidelines** - Standards of appropriate activity to preserve the historic and architectural character of a building, structure, object, or site.
- **Historic Context** - A unit created for planning purposes that groups information about historic properties based on a shared theme, specific time period and geographical area.
- **Historic District Commission (HDC)** - A local governmental board responsible for overseeing design review for locally designated districts in Michigan.
- **Historic District Study Committee (HDSC)** - A committee appointed by a local government in Michigan to survey a potential historic district and prepare a recommendation report for review and consideration.
- **Historic District Ordinance** - Local law enacted under Michigan PA 169 of 1970 to allow a local unit of government to establish and administer local historic districts, including establishment of a HDC.
- **Historic Preservation** - The process of identifying, protecting, enhancing, and interpreting buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes of historic and cultural significance.
- **Historic Property** - A district, site, building, structure or object significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology or culture at the national, State, or local level.
- **Historic Resource** - Any prehistoric or historic building, structure, object, or site included in or eligible for a historic register.
- **Integrity** - The authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period.
- **Intensive Survey** - A systematic, detailed examination of an area designed to gather information about historic properties sufficient to evaluate them against predetermined criteria of significance within specific historic contexts.
- **Inventory** - A list of historic properties determined to meet specified criteria of significance.

- **Local Historic District** - An area, or group of areas, not necessarily having contiguous boundaries, that contains one resource or a group of resources that are related by history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture designated by the local unit of government.
- **Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN)** - A statewide non-profit historic preservation membership organization "advocating for Michigan's historic places to contribute to the economic vitality, sense of place, and connection to the past."
- **Michigan Historical Commission (MHC)** - State commission advising the Department of Natural Resources on historical artifacts and materials and on the dissemination of information on Michigan's history including the historical marker program.
- **Michigan Historical Marker Program** - Historic sites, events, objects, subjects, and persons having historic significance to the state of Michigan marked at a significant location by signage erected under authority of the Michigan Historical Commission (PA 10 of 1955).
- **Michigan State Register of Historic Sites** - The list of historic sites, events, objects, subjects, and persons having historic significance to the state of Michigan marked at a significant location through the Michigan Historical Marker Program (PA 10 of 1955).
- **National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC)** - A national non-profit membership organization supporting local historic preservation commissions.
- **National Historic Landmark (NHL)** - A district, building, structure, site, or object of national significance, designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior for possessing exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.
- **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)** - A federal law that fosters the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic and prehistoric resources in the United States enacted in 1966.
- **National Parks Service (NPS)** - A federal agency within the Department of the Interior that works to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations



GLOSSARY CONTINUED...

- **National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)** - The Official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation.
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP)** - National non-profit membership organization that “protects significant places representing the nation's diverse cultural heritage.”
- **Non-Contributing Resource** - A building, structure, object, or site that does not add to the significance of a historic district.
- **Preservation (Treatment)** - Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction.
- **Public Act 169 of 1970, as Amended (PA 169)** - Michigan law, also known as Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act, that provides a legal foundation for the creation and administration of local historic districts.
- **Reconnaissance Survey** - An examination of all or part of an area accomplished in sufficient detail to make generalizations about the types and distributions of historic properties that may be present.
- **Reconstruction (Treatment)** - Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.
- **Rehabilitation (Treatment)** - Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.
- **Restoration (Treatment)** - Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.
- **Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SOI Standards)** - Typically refers to the Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties—Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, & Reconstruction. However, Standards are also available for Preservation Planning, Identification, Evaluation, Registration, Qualification, and Historical, Archaeological, Architectural, and Engineering Documentation.
- **State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)** - Established by the NHPA, the agency in each state or territory that administers the national historic preservation program. The Officer is appointed by the Governor to oversee its functions.



APPENDIX

Facade Condition Assessments

As a part of this planning process, the Planning Department and the Historic District Commission performed facade condition assessments of the existing inventory of historic places in the City. These assessments were structured using sections of the [Michigan Above Ground Survey Manual](#) and contain observations about the condition, alteration, or other details related to the property.

Due to the size of the document, the completed facade condition assessments are being hosted on the City's website, and may be reviewed through the following link:



[2025 FACADE CONDITION ASSESSMENTS](#)

CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW LINK

Helpful Links

- [City of Birmingham, Michigan Website](#)
- [Birmingham Historic District Design Guidelines](#)
- [Birmingham Code of Ordinances, Chapter 127 - Historic Districts](#)
- [Birmingham Historic District Commission](#)
- [Birmingham Historic District Study Committee](#)
- [Birmingham City Commission](#)
- [Michigan State Historic Preservation Office Website](#)
- [Michigan Historic Preservation Network Website](#)
- [National Park Service Website](#)
- [Michigan Historical Commission Website](#)
- [Library of Congress - Sanborn Maps](#)
- [National Trust for Historic Preservation Website](#)
- [National Alliance of Preservation Commissions](#)
- [Birmingham Shopping District Website](#)
- [United States Department of the Interior](#)
- [Video - Historic District Commission Recommendation for HPMP to City Commission \(January 12, 2026\)](#)
- [Video - City Commission Adoption of HPMP \(Part I - January 12, 2026\)](#)
- [Video - City Commission Adoption of HPMP \(Part II - January 26, 2026\)](#)

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City Commission Resolution

RESOLUTION #01-015-26
HISTORIC PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, The City of Birmingham has long declared historic preservation as a public purpose to:

- 1) Safeguard the heritage of the city by preserving districts that reflect elements of its history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.
- 2) Stabilize and improve property values in each district and surrounding areas.
- 3) Foster civic beauty.
- 4) Strengthen the local economy.
- 5) Promote the use of historic districts for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the citizens of the city and of the state;

WHEREAS, Birmingham is home to hundreds of examples of high quality, distinctive and historic architecture of different time periods, styles, and purposes that fosters a sense of identity, pride, and continuity within Birmingham by honoring the stories and experiences of past generations;

WHEREAS, Historic preservation promotes environmental sustainability by conserving existing structures, reducing construction waste, and minimizing the need for new resource-intensive development;

WHEREAS, Preservation of historic properties contributes to economic vitality by supporting tourism, revitalizing neighborhoods, and encouraging investment in local communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The City Commission hereby affirms its support for the protection, preservation, and responsible stewardship of historic resources through the adoption of the Birmingham Historic Preservation Master Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The City Commission encourages public awareness, education, and community engagement regarding the value and benefits of historic preservation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The City Commission supports policies, programs, and partnerships that promote the preservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of historic properties.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, The City Commission acknowledges the importance of leadership in historic preservation through the protection and maintenance of public historic buildings and a commitment by all City Officials to ensure public historic buildings and spaces are held to the same standards as all other historic properties in the City;

I, Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk of the City of Birmingham, Michigan, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the Birmingham City Commission at its regular meeting held on January 26, 2026.

Alexandria Bingham
Alexandria Bingham
City Clerk



Acknowledgments

Birmingham’s first Historic Preservation Master Plan is the result of 3+ years of collaborative work between City Staff, volunteers of the Historic District Commission & Historic District Study Committee, and the residents of the City of Birmingham. We appreciate all of the efforts and time dedicated to this project, including the willingness to share honest, unfiltered personal experiences constructively and in great detail. The collective wisdom and insights that we were able to garner throughout this process made this effort worthwhile. Whether we spoke on the phone, met at an engagement, or spent time together at your home or building - *thank you*. We look forward to this continued partnership.

We would also like to thank past volunteers of the Historic District Commission & Historic District Study Committee, as well as previous City Staff liaisons to these public bodies who are not listed in this plan. There have been a number of admirable efforts and projects undertaken by these people that created the strong base upon which this plan was built. Without their efforts, energy and dedication to historic preservation, the environment for historic preservation in the City of Birmingham could be a very different one today.

Finally, thank you to the City Commission, past and present, for supporting these projects over the years and providing space for the development of this plan in a City with many important competing interests. The perspectives of City Commissioners and their unique connections to the public have been, and always will be a very useful tool.







MEMORANDUM

Planning Department

DATE: February 4, 2026

TO: Historic District Commission Members

FROM: Nicholas Dupuis, Planning Director

SUBJECT: Demolition Delay

With the recent adoption of the Historic Preservation Master Plan (the "Plan"), the first year of planned work must begin. The Plan contemplated that the Historic District Study Commission begin by considering a demolition delay ordinance (PRO-8) to attempt to reduce the rate of demolitions of historically significant buildings in the City. As noted in the Plan, since 2015 an average of 77 buildings are being torn down each year. Historically, the Historic District Commission has had no control over demolitions, but has received a monthly report from the Building Department as a courtesy so that they may monitor demolitions in the City.

To begin the study on considering a demolition delay, the Planning Department is approaching the concept while considering two main components:

1. Based on the high-profile nature of a change and the concerns expressed by the City Commission, the decisions upon which the demolition delay ordinance would be built must be data driven and reflective of reality; and
2. Luckily, there are several well-established demolition delay ordinances across the country that the City can model new ordinance based on. In reviewing and ultimately utilizing ordinance language from other municipalities, the Planning Department would do well to go further and contact these municipalities to understand their experiences with their demolition delays and assess any positives and negatives.

To that end, the following report contains initial information for both components for the Historic District Commission to consider. It is expected that the study of a demolition delay ordinance will take several months at the Historic District Commission, with the final consideration for any new proposals to be reviewed by the City Commission.

Demolition Data

It is often purported that historic buildings are more frequently targeted for demolition based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, obsolescence, condition/safety, buyer preferences, or economics. In an effort to confirm the belief that older, historic homes are being demolished more frequently, the Planning Department will be building new data sets from demolition data in the City's BS&A permit software to upload into the City's Geographic Information System. This new data will be used to analyze demolition data against the appropriate building data accessible from SEMCOG.

This work is being performed presently, and will be reported when final results are prepared. However, it is worth reporting that the strategy of the Planning Department is twofold. The first figure that will be generated is the average age of homes demolished from 2015-2025. This will assist the Historic District Commission in determining potential thresholds for a new demolition delay ordinance. The second set of data that will be produced are age groupings demonstrating how many homes in the Less than 50, 50-75, 75-100 and 100+ age range have been demolished in the respective time frames. This data will also include a high and low figure.

Demolition Delay Ordinances

Demolition delay ordinances, sometimes also referred to as demolition review ordinances, appear to be a commonly used tool in historic preservation. In an effort to not be duplicative, the Planning Department has located an *excellent* document from the National Trust for Historic Preservation titled "Protecting Potential Landmarks Through Demolition Review" which summarizes and explains the concept in simple-to-understand terms and also provides a list of communities who have adopted some form of demolition delay ordinance or demolition review process. *The Historic District Commission should thoroughly review this document.*

As we discuss and come to understand the reasons why a demolition delay may work for the City of Birmingham, the Planning Department has begun contacting representatives from some of the communities listed to gather anecdotal feedback on their programs, and to inquire upon whether or not they can provide us with any examples to review.

A National Trust preservation law publication . . .

Protecting Potential Landmarks Through Demolition Review

by Julia H. Miller



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
202.588.6035

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities. Support for the National Trust is provided by membership dues, endowment funds, individuals, corporate and foundation contributions, and grants from federal and state agencies.

The National Trust's Law Department provides educational materials and workshops on legal developments in historic preservation law for the benefit of citizens, organizations, and governmental institutions throughout the United States. Through this work, the Trust helps communities protect their heritage, their homes and businesses, their neighborhoods, and their history.

For further information, contact the Law Department at 202-588-6035 or send an email to law@nthp.org. Also visit our website at www.nthp.org/law.html.

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Cover Photo: Redwood Street Historic District, Baltimore, MD (Historic American Buildings Survey, NPS)

Protecting Potential Landmarks through Demolition Review

By Julia H. Miller*

Last year, the wrecking ball fell twice in downtown Baton Rouge—almost. Two historic buildings, the 1910 S.H. Kress Building, the site of a 1960 civil rights protest at the then all-white, lunch counter of the five and dime, and the adjacent Welsh & Levy Building, built in 1885, were spared only after the owner backed off his plans to demolish the buildings for a surface parking lot in response to public outcry. The fate of a third building, the Old Baton Rouge Ice Plant, proved less fortunate. This 1880s one-story brick building was demolished for a riverfront condominium project. Once used for ice production, the building had been located on the Mississippi River on one of the city's few remaining intact blocks dating from the Nineteenth Century.

Baton Rouge has since taken steps to protect its unprotected resources and other communities can too. Through the adoption of a “demolition review ordinance,” older buildings (generally those over 50 years) cannot be demolished without review by a preservation commission or special committee to determine whether a building is historically significant. If the building qualifies as significant, then a commission may delay the issuance of a demolition permit to explore preservation alternatives, such as designating the building as a historic landmark or finding a purchaser who may be interested in rehabilitating the building.

What is a Demolition Review?

Demolition review is a legal tool that provides communities with the means to ensure that potentially significant buildings and structures are not demolished without notice and some level of review by a preservation commission. This process creates a safety net for historic resources to ensure that buildings and structures worthy of preservation are not inadvertently demolished.

Demolition review does not always prevent the demolition of historically significant buildings or structures. Rather, as the name suggests, it allows for review of applications for demolition permits for a specific period of time to assess a building's historical significance. If the building is deemed significant, then issuance of the permit may be delayed for a specific period of time to pursue landmark designation, or alternatively, to explore preservation solutions such as selling the property to a purchaser interested in rehabilitating the structure or finding alternative sites for the proposed post-demolition project.

What is the Difference between “Demolition Review Laws” and “Demolition Delay” or “Interim Protection” Provisions used in Preservation Ordinances?

Demolition review laws are typically, but not exclusively, separate and distinct from historic preservation ordinances. They preclude the demolition of *any* building or structure over a certain age, or any building or structure identified for protection—regardless of significance—for a specific period of time, to allow for a determination of historical or architectural merit. Historic properties may or may not be designated as a landmark at the culmination of this process, depending upon a law's specific terms, and such laws may or may not include a

*Special Counsel and Legal Education Coordinator, National Trust for Historic Preservation

“demolition delay” or “waiting period” component.

The nomenclature can be confusing. Demolition review laws are sometimes called “demolition delay ordinances” or simply, “demolition ordinances.”

Demolition delay provisions in historic preservation ordinances are used to prevent the demolition of buildings or structures that have already been designated as historic landmarks or as contributing structures in a historic district for a specific amount of time, usually ranging from 6 to 24 months. During that time, the preservation commission, preservation organizations, concerned citizens, and others may explore alternatives to demolition, such as finding a purchaser for the structure or raising money for its rehabilitation.

These provisions are typically used by communities that lack the authority to deny demolition permits. For example, in North Carolina, local jurisdictions generally only have the authority to delay a demolition permit up to 365 days unless the structure at issue has been determined by the State Historic Preservation Officer to have “statewide significance.” *See* N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160A.400.14.

Interim protection provisions are also found in preservation ordinances. They preclude the demolition or alteration of buildings or structures during the period in which the building is under consideration for historic designation. The objective is to preserve the status quo pending designation and to prevent anticipatory demolitions. For further information, see Edith M. Shine, “The Use of Development Moratoria in the Protection of Historic Resources,” 18 PLR 3002 (1999).

Why Do Communities Adopt Demolition Review Procedures?

Demolition review procedures help to prevent the demolition of historically significant buildings. Given the vast numbers of older buildings in cities and towns across the United States, it is virtually impossible for a community to identify all buildings that should be protected under a historic preservation ordinance in advance. By establishing a referral mechanism, communities can be assured that buildings meriting preservation will not fall through the cracks. The delay period provides an opportunity for the municipality or other interested parties to negotiate a preservation solution with the property owner, or to find persons who might be willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate, or restore such buildings rather than demolish them.

Demolition review procedures have also been adopted to protect buildings that may not meet the standards for designation but nonetheless embody distinguishing features that help to make a community an attractive place to live or work. For example, demolition review provisions are being used to address the proliferation of “teardowns” in many of our older neighborhoods. By delaying demolition for a period of time, concerned residents may be able to negotiate the preservation of character-defining houses on a case-by-case basis. *See, e.g.* Santa Monica, California, and Highland Park, Illinois.

Which Properties are Subject to Demolition Review Procedures?

Demolition review ordinances typically set forth objective criteria for determining which properties are subject to review. For example, a demolition review ordinance may require some level of review for all buildings built before a specific date or all buildings that have attained a certain age on the date the permit application is filed. Many communities use “50 years” as the critical benchmark. *See, e.g.* Boston, Massachusetts, Boulder, Colorado, and New Castle, Delaware. A few jurisdictions have opted for a shorter time period, largely in recognition of their younger building stock, *see, e.g.* Santa Monica, California (which uses a 40-year benchmark), and Gainesville, Florida (all structures listed in the state’s “master site

file" and/or 45 years of age). Still others utilize a specific date. See, e.g. Alameda, California, and Weston, Massachusetts, which protect all buildings constructed prior to 1945.

Alternatively, the demolition ordinance may only apply to properties identified on a historic survey or listed on a state historic register or the National Register of Historic Places. Chicago, for example, requires review for the roughly 6,200 buildings designated as "red" or "orange" on its 1996 Historic Resources Survey. Montgomery County, Maryland, stays the issuance of a demolition permit for properties included on its Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites.

Finally, some communities limit the scope of protection afforded to buildings located within a specific geographic area. Baton Rouge's newly-enacted demolition ordinance, for example, applies only to its downtown buildings. Boston's law governs any buildings located in its downtown area, Harborpark, and neighborhood design overlay districts, in addition to all those that are at least 50-years old.

Keep in mind that the viability of this system may depend upon an applicant's representation or a permit official's ability to verify or accurately determine a building's age. Boston addresses this issue by insisting that all demolition permit applications be referred to the city's landmark commission. Staff to the commission makes the determination as to whether the building is subject to review.

In Wilton, Connecticut, the burden of establishing the age of the building rests on the demolition permit applicant. Applications must include a statement regarding the size and age of the building or structure to be demolished with verification through independent records such as tax assessment records or the city's cultural resource survey. Santa Monica bases its age determination on the date the original permit for the building or structure was issued. Alameda, California's law provides that the age is to be determined by review of city records. Weston, Massachusetts, protects against the potential problem that the date of a building or structure cannot be determined by record by also requiring the review of all properties of "unknown age."

What Actions Generally Trigger Demolition Review?

All demolition review procedures are triggered by the filing of an application for a demolition permit. The scope of demolition work requiring review, however, varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In addition, requests for permits to move or substantially alter buildings may also require review.

In Boulder, demolition review is required for the demolition or removal of any building over fifty years old. Demolition includes the act of either demolishing or removing—

- Fifty percent or more of the roof area as measured in plan view (defined as the view of a building from directly above which reveals the outer perimeter of the building roof areas to be measured across a horizontal plane); or
- Fifty percent or more of the exterior walls of a building as measured contiguously around the "building coverage"; or
- Any exterior wall facing a public street, but not an act or process which removes an exterior wall facing an alley.

[Illustrations omitted.] To meet the exterior wall retention standard,

- The wall shall retain studs or other structural elements, the exterior wall finish, and the fully framed and sheathed roof above that portion of the remaining building to which such wall is attached;

- The wall shall not be covered or otherwise concealed by a wall that is proposed to be placed in front of the retained wall; and
- Each part of the retained exterior walls shall be connected contiguously and without interruption to every other part of the retained exterior walls.

In Davis, California, the city's demolition review procedures apply to "the destruction, removal, or relocation of a structure not classified as an 'incidental structure,' or the permanent or temporary removal of more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the perimeter walls of a structure." Incidental structures are accessory buildings such as sheds, fences, play structures, and so forth.

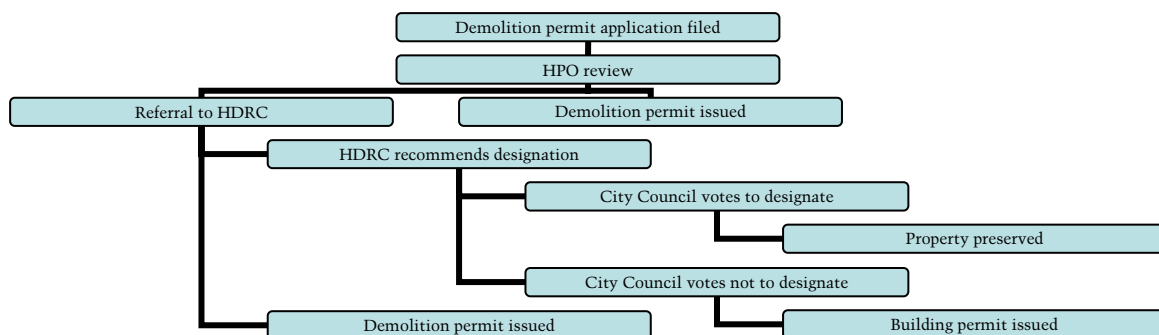
In Newton, Massachusetts, the demolition review requirement applies to any permit, without regard to whether it is called a demolition permit, alteration permit, or building permit, if it involves total and partial demolitions. A "total demolition" is "[t]he pulling down, razing or destruction of the entire portion or a building or structure which is above ground regardless of whether another building or structure is constructed within the footprint of the destroyed building or structure." A "partial demolition" is "[t]he pulling down, destruction or removal of a substantial portion of the building or structure or the removal of architectural elements which define or contribute to the character of the structure."

A few jurisdictions have narrowed the number of applications requiring review by limiting referrals to projects entailing the demolition of at least 500 square feet of gross floor area. *See, e.g.,* Concord, New Hampshire, and Monroe, Connecticut.

How is Demolition Review Accomplished?

Under typical demolition review procedures, the permitting official is directed to refer a demolition permit application to a review body for an initial or preliminary determination of significance. In San Antonio, for example, all demolition permits are referred to the city's Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) to determine within 30 days whether or not a building or structure is historically significant. If the HPO finds the building significant, the HPO is required to forward the application to the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) for review and recommendation as to significance. If the HDRC concurs in the HPO's finding of significance, then the Commission must recommend designation to the City Council. Buildings and structures not deemed significant at any time during these proceedings may be demolished.

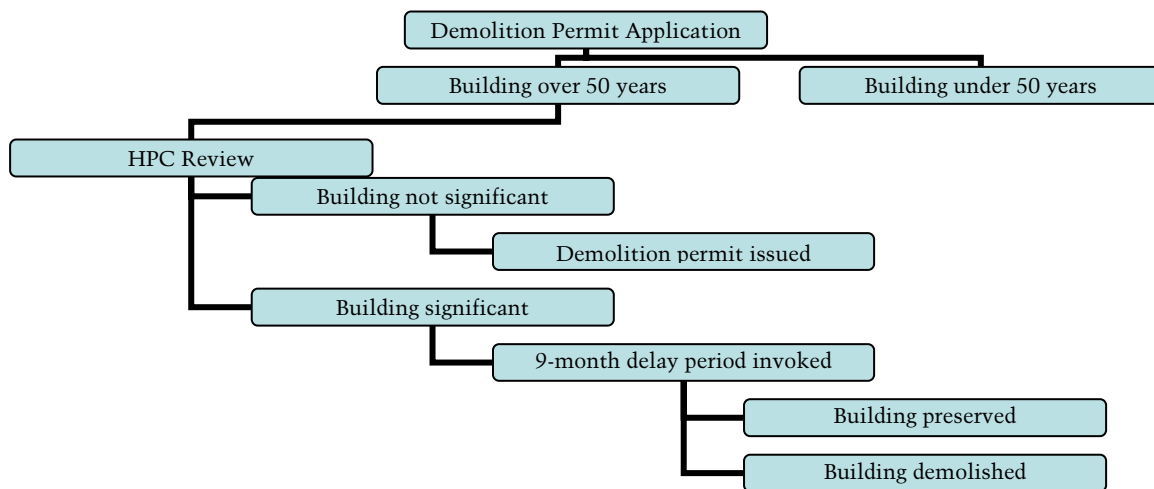
San Antonio Demolition Review Process



Santa Monica and Chicago also delay issuance of a demolition permit to allow for the landmark designation of the building, if warranted. In Santa Monica, the demolition permit may be issued if no application to designate is filed within 60 days. Chicago's demolition ordinance delays issuance of permit up to 90 days "in order to enable the department of planning and development to explore options to preserve the building or structure, including, but not limited to, possible designation of the building or structure as a Chicago Landmark in accordance with Article XVII of Chapter 2-120 of this code."

Some demolition review laws simply provide for a delay in the issuance of a permit to explore preservation-based solutions. New Castle County, Delaware utilizes this approach. The county may delay issuance of a demolition permit for any building "thought to be over 50 years old" for a period up to 10 days, during which time the Historic Review Board must make a determination whether the building is historically significant. If the building is deemed significant, then the board may order further delay up to 9 months from the date the application was initially filed to seek demolition alternatives.

New Castle County Demolition Review Process



In Boston, the Inspectional Services Department must transmit a copy of an application for a permit to demolish a building to the Boston Landmarks Commission within three days. The commission staff, in return, must make a determination within 10 days as to whether the building is (1) subject to review and (2) significant under specific criteria. If the property is determined not to be significant, then no further review is required. If the property is significant, the commission must hold a public hearing to determine whether the building should be subject to demolition delay. A decision on whether to delay the permit must be made within 40 days from the date the demolition permit application was initially filed.

To invoke the delay period, the commission must find that, in considering the public interest, it is preferable that the building be preserved or rehabilitated rather than demolished. Factors for consideration include: (a) the building's historic, architectural, and urban design significance; (b) whether the building is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the neighborhood, the city, or the region; and (c) the building's condition. If the commission finds that the building is subject to demolition delay, issuance of the demolition permit may be delayed for up to 90 days from the close of the public hearing. A "Determination of No Feasible Alternative" may be issued during the public hearing or prior to the expiration of the 90-day period if the commission finds that there are no feasible alternatives to demolition.

Who Makes the Determination of Significance?

In most cases, the historic preservation commission makes the determination of significance, with initial review by the staff to the commission. *See, e.g.*, Boston, Massachusetts, Davis, California, and San Antonio, Texas. Variations, however, do exist from community to community. In Santa Monica, for example, demolition permit applications are forwarded directly to each of the members of the landmarks commission. In Boulder, initial review is performed by the city manager and two designated members of the landmarks board. If the property is significant, then the matter is referred to the city's landmarks board. In the cities of Keene and Concord, New Hampshire, the demolition review committee, comprised of three members of each city's heritage commission, is responsible for conducting the initial review, making an official determination of significance, and holding a meeting to explore preservation alternatives.

What Evidence Must be Submitted for Review?

Most jurisdictions require the submission of sufficient information to enable the decision maker to make an informed decision on a building's age and significance. In Santa Monica, for example, a completed application form must be submitted to the landmarks commission, along with a site plan, eight copies of a photograph of the building, and photo verification that the property has been posted with a notice of intent to demolish.

Boston requires the submission of photographs of both the subject property and any surrounding properties with a demolition permit application. In addition, the applicant must provide a map identifying the location of the property, a plot plan showing the building footprint and those in the immediate vicinity; plans for site improvements, including elevations if a new structure is planned, and the notarized signatures of all owner's-of-record along with proof of ownership. Additional materials may be required if a public hearing on the issue of whether the property is "preferably preserved" is held. Items such as a structural analysis report, adaptive reuse feasibility studies, the availability of alternative sites for the proposed project, effects of post-demolition plans on the community, and other materials the commission may need to make a feasibility determination may be requested.

Newton, Massachusetts has comparable requirements. In the case of partial demolitions involving alterations or additions, the town also requires the submission of proposed plans and elevation drawings for the affected portion of the building.

What Standards are Used to Determine Historical Significance?

In Gainesville, Florida, the preservation planner is essentially charged with determining whether the structure would qualify as a landmark under the city's historic preservation ordinance. A demolition permit may be issued if the planner finds that the structure "is not designed in an architectural 'high style' or a recognized vernacular building pattern, and it does not have historic events or persons associated with it."

In New Castle County, Delaware, the Historic Review Board makes a determination as to whether the building or structure is historically significant, based on the criteria for listing in the New Castle County Register of Historic and Architectural Heritage.

In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the city's planning commission is charged with determining whether "[t]he structure is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places or included in a National Register Historic District, or the structure is classified as National Register Eligible or Major Contributing in the historic building survey of the Central Business District."

In Westfield, Connecticut, individual findings of significance are not made. Rather, to invoke the 90-day, demolition delay period, the structure must be listed in or located within a historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the State Register of Historic Places, the Westfield Historical Commission Register of Historic Places, or a local historic district created under the city's historic preservation ordinance. To be included on the city's historic register, the property must "contain or reflect distinctive and demonstrably important features of architectural, cultural, political, economic or social significance to the City of Westfield."

In Boulder, a preliminary finding on whether there is "probable cause" for designation as an individual landmark is made. If there is "probable cause," then the matter is required to be referred to the landmark commission for a public hearing on the eligibility of the building for designation as a landmark. In addition to determining whether the building meets the objectives and standards for landmark designation under its preservation ordinance, the Boulder commission must also take into account: (1) "[t]he relationship of the building to the character of the neighborhood as an established and definable area;" (2) "the reasonable condition of the building;" and (3) "the reasonable projected cost of restoration or repair." If the building is found to merit designation, then a delay period not to exceed 180 days from the date the demolition permit application was initially filed may be invoked.

Cities and towns enacting demolition review procedures in Massachusetts may not invoke a delay period until the building or structure at issue is found to be both "significant" and "preferably preserved." The term "preferably preserved" essentially means that it is in the public's interest to preserve the building. In some cases, a determination may be made to seek landmark status. Newton's "demolition delay ordinance" is illustrative. Under the city's law, a significant building is "any building or structure which is in whole or in part fifty years or more old" and which:

(1) is in any federal or state historic district, or if in any local historic district, is not open to view from a public street, public park or public body of water; or

(2) is listed on or is within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places or eligible for such listing, or listed on or is within an area listed on the State Register of Historic Places, or eligible for such listing; or

(3) has been determined by the commission or its designee to be a historically significant building after a finding that it is:

a) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City of Newton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America; or

b) historically or architecturally important by reason of period, style, method of building construction or association with a particular architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures; or

c) located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the boundary line of any federal or local historic district and contextually similar to the buildings or structures located in the adjacent federal or local historic district.

A building or structure is "preferably preserved" if issuance of the requested demolition permit "would result in the demolition of a historically significant building or structure whose loss would be detrimental to the historical or architectural heritage or resources of the City of Newton."

What Procedures are Used to Evaluate Significance?

The notice and hearing requirements set forth in demolition review ordinances normally address two concerns. One is meeting the constitutional rights of the applicant to due process. The other is ensuring that the community knows about the pending demolition and has a meaningful opportunity to participate in the proceedings. Determinations of significance are generally held upon review by a city's historic preservation commission at a public hearing.

Notice. Individual notice is often required when specific findings are made affecting the applicant's request for a demolition permit. For example, in Boulder, notice must be provided to the applicant upon a finding by an initial review committee that probable cause exists that the building or structure may be eligible for designation as an individual landmark. The applicant is also entitled to notice of the public hearing before the full commission regarding the property's eligibility for landmark status and notice of the commission's final decision to stay the demolition permit for a period of 180-days to explore preservation alternatives.

Public notice requirements under demolition review ordinances can also be extensive. In situations where delay periods may be invoked for the purpose of exploring preservation alternatives, public awareness can be critical. In Monroe, Connecticut, for example, concerted efforts are made to inform the public. The city's ordinance requires publication of notice in newspaper of general circulation and individually-mailed notice to the city's historic district commission, the town historian, the Monroe Historical Society, and all abutting property owners. In addition, the city is required to post for at least 30 days a 36 by 48" sign visible from nearest public street with the words "DEMOLITION" printed on the sign with the letters being at least 3 inches in height. Among other requirements, Gainesville, Florida, requires that the historic preservation planner post a sign on the property "notifying the public of the owner's intent to demolish the structure in order to allow interested parties to come forward and move the structure upon consent of the owner."

Hearings. Public hearings are typically required under demolition delay provisions to determine whether the building or structure posed for demolition is historically significant. See, e.g. Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Boston, Massachusetts, Boulder, Colorado, Westfield, Connecticut, Gainesville, Florida, and Concord, New Hampshire. Some demolition delay laws also use the public hearing format to consider alternatives for demolition delay. The Westfield, Connecticut, ordinance, for example, specifically states that "[t]he purpose of said Hearing shall be to discuss, investigate and evaluate alternatives that will allow for the preservation of such buildings, structures, features/components or portions thereof." It provides, however, that [t]he applicant's intended use/reuse of the property is not a topic of the hearing."

How Long Do Delay Periods Typically Run?

The delay periods invoked under demolition review ordinances run from 30 days to two-years, with most falling within the 90-day to six-month range. In some jurisdictions, the length of the delay period may be prescribed by state law. For example, in Connecticut, § 29-406(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes authorizes any town, city, or borough to impose a waiting period of not more than ninety days. Also note that the effective length of equivalent waiting periods can vary significantly, depending upon the date upon which the delay is measured. Boston, for examples, measures its 90-day delay period from the close of the public hearing. Chicago, in comparison, measures its 90-day delay period from the application filing date.

Communities with longer delay periods sometimes include specific provisions that enable the issuance of a demolition permit prior to the expiration of the waiting period if spe-

cific conditions are met. For example, in Lake Forest, Illinois, the city's 2-year waiting period for all demolition permits may be waived or shortened, upon a finding by the Building Review Board, after holding a public hearing, that—

- a. The structure itself, or in relation to its environs, has no significant historical, architectural, aesthetic or cultural value in its present restored condition; or
- b. Realistic alternatives (including adaptive uses) are not likely because of the nature or cost of work necessary to preserve such structure or realize any appreciable part of such value; or
- c. The structure in its present or restored condition is unsuitable for residential, or a residentially compatible use; or
- d. The demolition is consistent with, or materially furthers, the criteria and purpose of this section and Section 46-27 of the Zoning Code.

In Newton, Massachusetts a demolition permit may be issued before the expiration of the city's 12-month delay period if the Newton Historical Commission is satisfied that the permit applicant:

- has made a “bona fide, reasonable and unsuccessful effort to locate a purchaser for the building or structure who is willing to preserve, rehabilitate or restore the building or structure; or
- has agreed to accept a demolition permit on specified conditions approved by the commission.

See, also, Boston's Demolition Delay Ordinance, which provides for the issuance of a finding of “no feasible alternative to demolition” at the public hearing or any time prior to the expiration of the delay period.

Also note that some jurisdictions insist that the property be secured during the demolition delay period. In Boston, for example, the applicant is required to secure the building during the review period. If the building is lost during this period due to fire or other causes, then the action is treated as an unlawful demolition.

How are Demolition Alternatives Explored?

The historic preservation commission usually sits at the center of the preservation effort. The commission will work with the owner and other interested organizations, public agencies, developers, and individuals who may be instrumental in developing a workable solution. Boston's demolition review ordinance specifically identifies who must be asked to participate in the city's investigation of alternatives. In addition to the owner, the Landmarks Commission must invite the Commissioner of Inspectional Services, the Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the Chairperson of the Boston Civic Design Commission, and any other individual or entity approved by the applicant. In Boulder, the Landmarks Board may “take any action that it deems necessary and consistent with this chapter to preserve the structure, including, without limitation, consulting with civic groups, public agencies, and interested citizens.”

The range of alternatives that may be pursued may be specifically identified in the ordinance or left to the preservation commission's discretion. In addition to considering the possibility of landmark designation, the moving of a building to an alternative location, and the salvaging of building materials, the Boulder Landmarks Board is empowered to “take any action that it deems necessary . . . to preserve the structure.” In Wilton, Connecticut, the Wilton Historic District Commission or the Connecticut Historical Commission is charged

with “attempting to find a purchaser who will retain or remove such building or who will present some other reasonable alternative to demolition” during the 90-day delay period.

Alternatives that are often considered include the possibility of rehabilitating the building with the assistance of tax incentives or other financial assistance; adapting the building to a new use; removing the building to another site; finding a new owner who is willing and able to preserve the building; incorporating the building into the owner/applicant’s redevelopment plans; and using an alternative site for the owner/applicant’s project.

The submission of specific information pertaining to the property is generally required. An applicant, for example, may be required to submit a structural engineer’s report and information on the cost of stabilizing, repairing, rehabilitating, or re-using the building, plans for the property upon demolition, and the availability of other sites that would meet the applicant’s objectives.

What Exceptions May Apply to the Strict Application of Demolition Review Laws?

Many demolition review laws recognize exceptions upon a showing of economic hardship or where the public safety is at stake. In Gainesville, Florida, for example, the demolition delay period may be waived by the historic preservation board if the applicant can demonstrate “economic hardship.” As is generally the case with the consideration of economic hardship claims under historic preservation ordinances, the burden of proof rests on the applicant to show that retention of the property is not economically viable and the applicant must set forth specific relevant information to make his or her case.

Virtually every demolition review law recognizes an exception on public safety grounds. Gainesville also provides that “any structure that has been substantially burned or damaged by an event not within the landowner’s control with more than 50 percent of the structure affected” may also be demolished, regardless of the building’s significance.

Weston, Massachusetts provides the following exception:

Emergency Demolitions

Notwithstanding the following provisions, the Building Inspector may issue a demolition permit at any time in the event of imminent and substantial danger to the health or safety of the public due to deteriorating conditions. Prior to doing so, the Building Inspector shall inspect the building and document, in writing, the findings and reasons requiring an emergency demolition, a copy of which shall be forwarded immediately to the Commission. Before allowing emergency demolition, the Building Inspector shall make every effort to inform the Chairperson of the Commission of his intention to allow demolition before he issues a permit for emergency demolition.

No provision of this by-law is intended to conflict with or abridge any obligations or rights conferred by G.L.c.143 regarding removal or demolition of dangerous or abandoned structures. In the event of a conflict, the applicable provisions of Chapter 143 shall control.

Once the Delay Period Expires, What Other Restrictions May Apply?

Some jurisdictions also require the submission of documentation of the property and/or the salvage of significant architectural features prior to the issuance of the demolition permit. Boulder, Colorado, expressly authorizes the city manager to require the submission of documentation about the building prior to the issuance of a demolition permit, such as a de-

scription of significant events, information on its occupants, photographs, plans, and maps. In Keene, New Hampshire, the demolition review committee is required to “photographically document the building” prior to demolition. In addition, the salvage of significant architectural features is encouraged.

How are Demolition Review Ordinances Enforced?

Experience has shown that historic buildings will be demolished, without regard to protections against demolition, if the ramifications for non-compliance are minor or insignificant. Accordingly, communities generally seek to establish penalties that will, in fact, discourage violations from occurring. Commonly used penalties, for example, include the imposition of significant fines for each day of the offense, and the preclusion of a permit to develop or occupy the property for specific period of time.

In New Castle County, Delaware, the county attorney is authorized by ordinance “to take immediate action prosecute those responsible” for the demolition of structures determined to have historic significance prior to the issuance of a demolition permit. In addition, building permits for the parcel affected may be withheld for a period of one to three years. Violators of the demolition ordinance in Monroe, Connecticut, may be subject to a fine amounting to the greater of one thousand dollars or the assessed value of the property for each violation. In Highland Park, Illinois, a person who violates the demolition review ordinance may be assessed a fine equal to “90 percent of the fair market value of the cost of the replacement of such regulated structure.”

Newton, Massachusetts, authorizes the imposition of a \$300 fine and two year ban on the issuance of a building permit against anyone who demolishes a historically significant building or structure without first obtaining and fully complying with the provisions of a demolition permit issued in accordance with its demolition review ordinance. However, a waiver on the building permit ban may be obtained in instances where reuse of the property would “substantially benefit the neighborhood and provide compensation for the loss of the historic elements of the property” either through reconstruction of the lost elements or significant enhancement of the remaining elements. As a condition to obtaining the waiver, however, the owner must execute a binding agreement to ensure that the terms agreed to are met.

Do Demolition Delay Ordinances Work?

On December 15, 2003, a Chicago Tribune article written by architectural critics, Blair Kamin and Patrick T. Reardon, made headline news. Kamin and Reardon reported that, in a year’s time, only one of 17 buildings slated for demolition had been preserved under the city’s much acclaimed “demolition delay ordinance.” The critics asserted that the city’s much-touted effort to preserve the buildings coded red or orange on Chicago’s 1996 Historic Resources Survey through the imposition of a 90-day waiting period on demolition permits, wasn’t working. They attributed the loss of the buildings to the city’s failure to make preservation a priority and by not providing sufficient legal protections and financial incentives to get the job done.

In the same article, Kamin and Reardon also reported that the Chicago Landmarks Division had made a contrary assessment. Sixteen out of the 17 orange-rated buildings posed for demolition were not recommended for designation because they had failed to meet the criteria for landmark status and the one building that was saved would have been demolished but for the demolition delay ordinance.

It cannot be denied, as Kamin and Reardon noted, that demolition review laws seem to support an “ad hoc” approach to landmark designation. The buildings being designated are

those threatened by demolition rather than those most deserving. Also, the question of what is preserved often depends upon who cares about the matter, rather than the historical or architectural merit of the building at issue.

Keep in mind, however, that the need for such laws really stems from the fact that it is impossible to designate every building worthy of protection in advance, especially in cities like Chicago, where over 17,000 buildings have been listed on the city's historic survey. Historic preservation commissions are often understaffed, and often cities simply lack the resources or political will to protect all of their historic properties in advance.

Indeed, in Massachusetts, where over 100 demolition review laws have been adopted, demolition review laws are considered overwhelmingly successful. According to the Massachusetts Historical Society, demolition delay enabled the preservation of the Coolidge Corner Theater and a Lustron house in Brookline. Negotiations under Eastham's delay provision enabled a historic house to be moved rather than demolished. Demolition review requirements have also helped to stem the tide of teardowns in residential areas in Newton, and resulted in the rehabilitation of the circa-1710 Foster Emerson House in Reading. For more information, see Christopher Skelly, "Preservation through ByLaws and Ordinances" (Massachusetts Historical Commission 2003).

What Else do I Need to Know About Demolition Review Laws?

By now you should be aware that demolition review laws can vary significantly. In developing your own program, it is important to understand not only how such laws work generally, but also to think about how such a law would work in your own community. Basic considerations include the types and number of buildings likely to require review, who should conduct that review, and how the law would relate to your city or town's historic preservation program. Communities should also seek to —

- **Establish an efficient process.** Provide a quick and efficient means for ensuring that permits on non-significant buildings are not held up unnecessarily. The number of demolition permit applications filed in a given year can sometimes be staggering. The San Antonio Historic Preservation Office, for example, reports that it reviews approximately 900 applications per year.
- **Have resources in place which help applicants and/or permitting officials determine the age and significance of their buildings.** In other words, take the guesswork out of the process.
- **Avoid making the safety net too small.** It is important to ensure that potential landmarks are, indeed, subject to the law's protections. In communities with resources from the recent past, for example, it may be necessary to establish a threshold date that is commensurate with those resources. Communities relying on specific dates rather than the age of the building may find the need to amend the ordinance over time. If demolition review is limited to a category of buildings or list of structures, comprehensive survey work must be done prior to the law's enactment to ensure that all buildings meriting protection are included.
- **Keep the community informed.** Effective notice provisions, such as the posting of a large sign, are critical. Members of the public cannot respond to a demolition threat unless they know about it.
- **Don't make the delay period too short.** Without a meaningful delay period, leverage is lacking. It takes time to find a new buyer or a new site, or to even make an assessment as to whether an adaptive reuse project would work.

- **Give the preservation commission the necessary tools to negotiate a solution.** Preservation solutions are more likely to be forthcoming with some level of financial assistance or tax savings. Enable the commission to draw on the expertise of other city officials when necessary and invite critical players to the table. Demolition review provides an invaluable opportunity to improve communication between a preservation commission and its staff, and other governmental officials and the development community.
- **Enable the property to be designated, if designation is warranted.** Negotiated preservation is no substitute for a strong preservation ordinance.
- **Enforce your ordinance.** Ensure that the penalties effectively deter non-compliance and be prepared to enforce your ordinance if violations occur.

Where Can I Find Examples of Demolition Delay Ordinances?

Listed below are examples of demolition delay ordinances that have been adopted around the country.

California

Alameda City Code § 13-21-7.

http://www.ci.alameda.ca.us/code/Chapter_13/21/7.html

Davis Building Ordinance § 8.18.020

http://www.city.davis.ca.us/pb/pdfs/planning/forms/Demolition_Permit_Requirements.pdf

Santa Monica Municipal Code § 9.04.10.16.010 (as amended by Ordinance No. 2131 (July 27, 2004)).

<http://www.codemanage.com/santamonica/>

Colorado

Boulder Revised Code § 10-13-23.

<http://www3.ci.boulder.co.us/cao/brc/10-13.html#Demolition>

Connecticut

Monroe Demolition Delay Ordinance

<http://www.cttrust.org/index.cgi/1049>

Wilton Demolition Ordinance

<http://www.cttrust.org/index.cgi/1049>

Delaware

New Castle County Code § 6.3.020(B).

http://www.municode.com/resources/online_codes.asp

Florida

Gainesville Code of Ordinances § 6-19.

http://www.municode.com/resources/online_codes.asp

Illinois

Chicago, Illinois. Municipal Code of Chicago § 13-320-230(a)-(c) and § 2-76-215.
http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_EDITORIAL/DemolitionPermits.txt

Highland Park Ordinances, Ch. 17 §§ 170.040.
<http://www.cityhpil.com/govern/ordinances.html>

Lake Forest, Illinois, Building Scale and Environmental Ordinance § 9-87.
<http://www.cityoflakeforest.com/pdf/cd/bsord.pdf>

Louisiana

Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish Demolition and Relocation Ordinance
http://municode.com/resources/on-line_codes.asp

Massachusetts

Boston Zoning Code, Art. 85, §§ 1-8.
<http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/pdf/ZoningCode/Article85.pdf>

Cambridge Municipal Code Ch. 2.78, Art. II
<http://bpc.iserver.net/codes/cbridge/index.htm>

Newton Revised Ordinances, Ch. 22, Art. III, § 22-44.
http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/legal/ordinance/chapter_22.htm#art1

Town of Weston Bylaws, Art. XXX.
<http://www.lmstrategies.com/whc/by-law1.htm>

Maryland

Montgomery County Code, Part II § 24A-10
http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery_county_md/

New Hampshire

Concord Code of Ordinances, Art. 26-9 §§16-9-1 through 16-9-5.
http://municode.com/resources/on-line_codes.asp

Keene Code of Ordinances, Art. IV, §§ 18-331 through 18-335.
http://municode.com/resources/on-line_codes.asp

Texas

San Antonio Unified Development Code. Art. 4, § 35-455(b)(2).
http://www.sanantonio.gov/dsd/pdf/udc_article4_04.pdf



AGENDA
BIRMINGHAM HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY – MARCH 18, 2026
BIRMINGHAM CITY HALL, 151 MARTIN STREET, COMMISSION ROOM 205, BIRMINGHAM, MI
******* 7:00 PM*******

- 1) Roll Call
- 2) Approval of the HDC Minutes of [February 4, 2026](#)
- 3) Courtesy Review
- 4) Historic Design Review
- 5) Sign Review
- 6) Study Session
 - A. [Demolition Delay – Study Session](#)
- 7) Miscellaneous Business and Communication
 - A. Pre-Application Discussions
 - B. Draft Agenda
 1. [April 15, 2026](#)
 - C. Staff Reports
 1. [Administrative Sign Approvals](#)
 2. [Administrative Approvals](#)
 3. [Demolitions](#)
 4. [Action List 2026](#)
- 8) Adjournment

*Please note that board meetings will be conducted in person once again. Members of the public can attend in person at Birmingham City Hall, 151 Martin St., or may attend virtually at:

Link to Access Virtual Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/91282479817>

Telephone Meeting Access: 877 853 5247 US Toll-free

Meeting ID Code: 912 8247 9817

NOTICE: Due to Building security, public entrance during non-business hours is through the Police Department — Pierce St. Entrance only. Individuals with disabilities requiring assistance to enter the building should request aid via the intercom system at the parking lot entrance gate on Henrietta St.

Persons with disabilities that may require assistance for effective participation in this public meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at the number (248) 530-1880, or 248-644-3405 (TDD) at least one day before the meeting to request help in mobility, visual, hearing, or other assistance.

Las personas con incapacidad que requieren algún tipo de ayuda para la participación en esta sesión pública deben ponerse en contacto con la oficina del escribano de la ciudad en el número (248) 530-1800 o al (248) 644-5115 (para las personas con incapacidad auditiva) por lo menos un día antes de la reunión para solicitar ayuda a la movilidad, visual, auditiva, o de otras asistencias. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION ACTION LIST – 2026

This Action List is derived from the Historic Preservation Master Plan and is adjustable to accommodate additional projects or directives from the City Commission:

Historic District Commission Project	Quarter Goals	In Progress	Complete
Demolition Delay Ordinance	1 st (January-March)	☐	☐
Website Update	1 st (January-March)	☐	☐
Certificate of Appropriateness Update	1 st (January-March)	☐	☐
National Historic Preservation Month Program	2 nd (April-June)	☐	☐
Create Digital Resources for Historic Designation	2 nd (April-June)	☐	☐
Historic District Commission Trainings	2 nd (April-June)	☐	☐
Start "40 x 40" Campaign	3 rd (July-September)	☐	☐
Newsletter	3 rd (July-September)	☐	☐
Enforcement & Maintenance	3 rd (July-September)	☐	☐
Review and Inventory Downtown Historic Plaques	3 rd (July-September)	☐	☐
Draft Policy for Non-Contributing Resources	3 rd (July-September)	☐	☐
Restart Heritage Home Program Refresh	4 th (October-December)	☐	☐
Begin Study of Preservation Overlay Districts	4 th (October-December)	☐	☐
Newsletter	4 th (October-December)	☐	☐
Create CLG Grant Project List	4 th (October-December)	☐	☐