

BUILDING ON THE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL FOUNDATIONS
OF NEBRASKA:
The State Historic Preservation Plan for Nebraska
2007-2011

If the historic and cultural foundations of Nebraska are its historic places, we must build on these foundations in a way that will maintain and find vision in the past.

-The Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation, 1995

INTRODUCTION

In 1992 the Nebraska State Legislature authorized the "Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation" to conduct a two-year study of preservation issues and needs in the state. The task force concluded its study and released its report of historic preservation issues and recommendations, entitled: "Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation: Strategies for Preserving the Historic and Cultural Foundations of Nebraska." The report was presented to the Governor and Legislature and distributed to wide audiences.

The report by the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation was subsequently adopted as Nebraska's "State Historic Preservation Plan," a requirement of Nebraska's participation in federal programs under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Since that time it has guided the work of historic preservation statewide. After ten years of application, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Plan is now revised and updated for the years 2007-2011.

TOWARD A PRESERVATION ETHIC: A Vision for Historic Preservation in Nebraska.

The goal of Nebraska's State Preservation Plan is to guide historic preservation as shared value, a preservation ethic in our state, and one that has relevance to addressing contemporary issues. This plan sets forth a vision for historic preservation in Nebraska:

In the revitalization of rural communities, opportunities will be found for Nebraska's main streets by rehabilitating older buildings, developing tourism, and fostering local pride by preserving the unique personality of smaller communities. In reviving Nebraska' urban centers and neighborhoods, historic preservation will bring together old and new in the planning and progress of cities.

In enhancing Nebraska's quality of life, opportunities will be recognized in the preservation of important sites and rural landscapes, in providing quality and affordable housing by redeveloping historic buildings and in educating present and future generations by preserving historic places as living parts of all communities.

Nebraska's State Historic Preservation Plan is dedicated to addressing the challenges and identifying the opportunities for historic preservation in Nebraska.

PARTNERS in PRESERVATION PLANNING

The Nebraska State Historical Society: In 1967, the Nebraska Legislature accepted the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act and delegated the administration of the state's historic preservation program to the Nebraska State Historical Society. As such, the Nebraska State Historical Society serves as the state's principal agency to administer federal historic preservation programs and public policy. The Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society serves as State Historic Preservation Officer. The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board, composed of professionals and public members, guides public policy. The State Historic Preservation Office, a division of the Nebraska State Historical Society, manages historic preservation programs, which includes the conduct of a statewide historic preservation plan and maintaining a current plan.

National Park Service: The National Park Service is the federal agency that oversees programs and the participation of states under the National Historic Preservation Act. The development of an approved statewide planning document is a requirement of Nebraska's participation in programs of this federal-state partnership. The state program is supported with an annual grant, which includes the Nebraska State Historical Society's projects and activities for the coming year. That component becomes the annual work plan for the Nebraska State Historical Society, addressing issues and recommendations set forth in this plan.

Certified Local Governments: The federal-state partnership is extended to local governments. Local government historic preservation programs are certified to participate in federal and state historic preservation programs and receive grants that are made available through Nebraska's annual federal grant. By enacting local preservation ordinances and establishing local preservation commissions, communities can further historic preservation through comprehensive planning and other activities.

Tribes: Tribes are keepers of Native American culture and history. Tribal governments and its members serve to promote the rights and address problems common to Native Americans in Nebraska. Tribes may participate in the federal preservation program, directed by a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. Tribal officers can accomplish comprehensive planning and consult on federal undertakings consistent with both their own plans and this statewide plan.

National Trust for Historic Preservation: Through this organization's Mountain/Plains Regional Office, efforts are made to foster preservation advocacy and leadership. Each year, the Nebraska State Historical Society and the National Trust for Historic Preservation compare annual work plans to address consistency and partnerships in planning activities in the state.

Nebraska Lied Main Street Program: The Nebraska Lied Main Street program was founded in 1994 with start-up funds from the Lied Charitable Trust. It is a partnership of the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Nebraska Department of Roads, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Architecture, and the Nebraska Community Foundation. The program works with communities across the state to encourage revitalization of their commercial business districts through historic preservation. The program has become the most significant effort at addressing revitalization of Nebraska's communities through all types of preservation planning.

Local Preservation Organizations: Nonprofit historic preservation organizations are dedicated to increasing community awareness in local historic places. By using this plan in fulfilling their missions, local organizations can serve an important role in advocacy and public participation.

CONSTITUENCIES in PRESERVATION

Federal, State and Local Governments: Government officials and other units of government make decisions that effect cultural resources. They also have the potential to plan for these resources. Through dialogue, they can fulfill their role in cultural resource preservation by adopting this plan. Through many types of other efforts they can support historic preservation and planning.

Advocacy Groups. Both the Commission on Indian Affairs and the Nebraska Mexican-American Commission are state advocacy agencies that coordinate activities among their people and address state and federal policy. Other organizations include those that promote common issues of their public: African-Americans, women and those with disabilities. Statewide planning can enhance their efforts in addressing policy concerning historic preservation or the identification of historic resources that promote cultural pride.

Professional Organizations. Professional organizations include the American Institute of Architects-Nebraska, the American Planning Association-Nebraska, the Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association and the Nebraska Board of Realtors. Through their professional work they are involved in disciplines that concern properties of historical merit, such as redevelopment of historic buildings or local planning.

Colleges and Universities. Departments of history, anthropology, geography and architecture are scholarly divisions of Nebraska's colleges and universities. They provide research that can add to Nebraska's body of knowledge concerning historic places.

Nonprofit Organizations: These include local historical associations, community development organizations, tourism councils, chambers of commerce, downtown redevelopment organizations and others that support historic preservation. By recognizing the issues and recommendations addressed in this plan, they can further the important needs of advocacy and public awareness.

The Public: The general public is the largest audience to be effected by threats and issues confronting the state's historic places. With public awareness about the values of preservation, constituents can support and help in developing public policy.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: Our Current State of Knowledge

Survey Activities

The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey is maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society. This statewide survey, begun in 1974, is the foundation of local, state and national preservation efforts. Over 68,500 properties are currently entered in the survey. It provides basic information on a full range of Nebraska's historic places for use in identifying those worthy of preservation, including structures, sites, buildings and districts. Surveys are conducted on a county-by-county basis, with efforts aimed at individual communities and neighborhoods, rural areas, and specific kinds of buildings representing important themes in state and local history. Although conducted mainly at a "reconnaissance" level, county surveys also include special thematic components that address special research interests and gaps in information. By identifying properties having potential historical merit, the survey provides major applicability to local government planning, local advocacy and awareness. Survey efforts are also sponsored by Certified Local Governments. A major emphasis of surveys is to advocate local planning and address the identification of properties that are in threat or decline.

The Archeology Division of the Nebraska State Historical Society maintains the comprehensive collections of archeological surveys. The Nebraska Archeological Survey currently includes over 8,600 sites of both prehistoric and historic archeological merit. Cooperative efforts with the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office include the funding of broad-based surveys of regional drainage basins, using methodologies based on sampling techniques. This methodology allows the broadest application of research to cultural occupations. It also allows major threats to be identified, such as modern agricultural practices and urban development. A Geographic Information System has accelerated the development of contexts for archeological resources.

For statewide planning purposes, the surveys are most useful in identifying the contexts of properties locally, regionally and statewide and compare their respective significance. Surveys are used to inform units of government in their cultural resource management.

Communities that develop comprehensive plans to guide the quality of their growth can use the survey to incorporate into local plans. Some communities have historic preservation ordinances that allow them to offer protection to significant buildings and districts identified in state or local surveys.

Evaluation and Registration

Information gathered from surveys is used as the basis for evaluating properties worthy of preservation. Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places recognizes properties of significance and encourages their preservation. Currently, nearly 1,000 Nebraska properties are listed in the National Register. Properties are entered in the National Register to address public interests, broad based public participation and local planning. Primary among the planning facets of the National Register are historic contexts and associated property types. Nebraska's evaluation and registration efforts include rare resources or where contexts can add to information about associated property types. Contexts are tools that can be used in the development of planning at the local, state and federal levels.

PUBLIC INPUT

The State Historic Preservation Plan draws upon ten years in gathering information and ongoing consultation with individuals and groups. This plan will be in effect for the years 2006-2011, during which period new information will be gathered and public participation solicited. A five-

year planning cycle will be implemented in subsequent years. In soliciting public and professional participation in the planning process, the following groups were identified to provide input.

- Architects, planners and realtors. Professional organizations included the American Institute of Architects-Nebraska, the American Planning Association-Nebraska, the Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association, and the Nebraska Board of Realtors.
- Preservation-related professionals. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of History, Department of Anthropology and Geography, Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board, and Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists.
- Tourism councils, chambers of commerce, and community development associations.
- Federal agencies and their designees, state agencies, local government officials, councils of government and planning departments.
- Native American Tribes.
- County and local historical associations and local preservation organizations.
- Public at large.

Public and professional input has been obtained through these and other major outreach activities. This is not an exclusive list. These and other efforts will continue during the period of this plan.

“The Four Corners Tour: Preservation for the New Century.” In collecting public preferences for preservation in Nebraska, the Nebraska State Historical Society conducted regional forums in 1998 and 1999, billed as the “Four Corners” tour. Participants included local government officials, planners, membership of both the Nebraska State Historical Society and National Trust for Historic Preservation and the public at large. Chambers of commerce, local historical organizations and other community development groups cosponsored the forums.

The Nebraska Community Improvement Program. A session, “Our Historic Places: Entering the Twenty-First Century,” was held at the Nebraska Community Improvement Program’s annual meeting in 2000. This program serves to enhance community development efforts and attracts large audiences of chambers of commerce, local officials, and community advocates.

Cable Broadcasts. In September 2004, the Nebraska State Historical Society taped a program as part of its monthly lecture series. The topic was programs of the Nebraska State Historical Society and statewide planning. The telecast was made on eight cable access stations statewide, most broadcasting from Nebraska’s largest cities.

Tribal Consultation. The Nebraska State Historical Society, National Endowment for the Arts, Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Humanities Council hosted a summit for Native American Tribes. The following year a report, “A Race Against Time: Preserving Indian Cultural Heritage,” was released.

Other State Plans. Much effort has been made to participate in other agency planning efforts. The Nebraska State Historical Society has taken an exceptionally active role in this regard. As a result, historic preservation has been given standing in such plans as the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission “Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan,” submitted to the National Park Service; the Nebraska Department of Roads’ “Building a Better System for the Future,” submitted to the Federal Highway Administration; and the Department of Economic Development’s “Consolidated Plan” submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.” These plans have allowed the Nebraska State Historical Society to tap a number of audiences that would have otherwise been overlooked, such as recreational users, transportation planners, tourism councils and community development officials.

The “Report Card.” The “Report Card on Historic Preservation” and a draft of this document were offered for public comment. Through targeted mailings, public and professional organizations were invited to comment. These included the American Planning Association-Nebraska, Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association, Nebraska Lied Main Street Program, American Institute of Architects – Nebraska, Nebraska Realtor’s Association, departments of Nebraska colleges and universities and other advocacy groups. Individual mailings were made to an extensive list of public constituents whose names were collected from public meetings and from other mailing lists. The “Report Card” and draft plan was also posted on the Nebraska State Historical Society’s website. Over 848 hits were made to the website in two months.

Input of the Archeological Community. Efforts are continuing to solicit input in developing regulations for the “Nebraska Archeological Protection Act,” recently passed by the Nebraska State Legislature. The act provides for the position of “state archeologist” with duties including education, public outreach and cooperative efforts with state agencies.

Annual Work Plans. Fundamental to planning in Nebraska is the Nebraska State Historical Society’s annual work plan. The annual work plan is developed both for addressing the Nebraska State Historical Society’s strategic plan and to identify projects and activities that will be carried out to achieve objectives of the State Historic Preservation Plan. The annual work plan is made available for public comment, which is incorporated into the Nebraska State Historical Society’s annual grant application to the National Park Service.

Public Dimension Assessment. No planning document would be valid unless it began with its author, the Nebraska State Historical Society. The Nebraska State Historical Society adopted a “self study” methodology used by the American Association of Museums. Independent reviewers collated information from surveys, interviewed staff of the divisions of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and reviewed other self-study methodologies and techniques. The findings included a critique of the public profile and public “face” of the Nebraska State Historical Society. In developing this assessment, special emphasis was placed on Nebraska’s statewide preservation program, including public meetings with preservation constituents.

PLANNING for CULTURAL RESOURCES

While the work of identifying and evaluating Nebraska's historic properties has been a substantial part of Nebraska's statewide program, several shortcomings should be addressed.

- Many of the counties represented in the Nebraska Historic Buildings Surveys were last surveyed many years ago. There is a need to continually update these surveys, improve their coverage and develop specific intensive and thematic components of study. This is currently done through a ranking process, which includes the date of the initial survey, net population decline or growth and areas where special interest has been generated. All efforts are made to target county surveys to all regions of the state and address areas where there are particular pressures on historic resources. Work is continuing to address the identification of historic properties in Nebraska's 93 counties.
- A Geographic Information System for the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has been put in place by the Nebraska State Historical Society but there is a need to accelerate the entry of sites and develop overlays of specific contexts of sites identified.
- With the passage of time, more properties should be identified in the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey that fall within eligibility criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Work in future years, for example, will include buildings of the mid-20th century, such as those associated with mechanized agriculture, the post-World War II period of the automobile culture and architecture.
- The Nebraska State Historical Society maintains an extensive body of historic context research. The framework for historic contexts is defined by theme, geographical area and time period. Historic contexts allow an evaluation of historic properties to be more thoroughly and accurately determined. Where identified, the development of historic contexts can address the identification and evaluation of properties that are becoming increasingly rare, those that are threatened by activities or issues identified in this plan and where research "gaps" exist. Priorities for the development of historic contexts should be made.
- An area of study not yet thoroughly addressed is traditional cultural places. These properties are associated with the cultural practices and beliefs of communities of people.
- For archeology, only a small portion of the state has been surveyed. The increase in the number of surveys can provide further information and planning data that can serve to identify significance.
- There is a need to identify the contexts of specific historic and archeological cultural occupations, especially in areas of rapid growth.

The National Register of Historic Places provides the official inventory of properties and a baseline for planning and in this regard several improvements have been identified:

- The development of historic contexts and associated property types should be expanded for use by local, state and federal agencies.
- The nomination of properties under federal ownership should be enforced. In the past ten years, less than five federal properties have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places by federal agencies.
- The National Register of Historic Places and the criteria for listing should be used as a tool to identify properties in local plans.
- The evaluation of historic properties and districts should be addressed in all "main street" communities participating in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program.

PRESERVATION PRIORITIES:

Major Factors Effecting Historic Resources

Rural Population Decline

Rural population decline has affected the vitality of Nebraska's 532 communities, 499 of which are under 5,000 in population. Decline of farm populations and the increase in acreage of the typical farm has resulted in the demolition of hundreds of historic farmsteads and closure of churches. State-mandated consolidation of schools has resulted in the closure of small schools. Aging populations and rural exodus of young people results in a lack of a coming generation of leaders.

Urban Growth and Development

Urban development is most pronounced in Lincoln and Omaha. Urban development in the Omaha area has "leapfrogged" into adjoining counties and into many areas where a presence of archeological sites and rural sites have been documented. In Lincoln, the opening of the Steven's Creek watershed for development will result in urban pressures in this rural area.

Local Planning

Most local comprehensive plans do not sufficiently recognize historic preservation.

Regional Planning

Few regional plans are being accomplished. Cultural resources should be incorporated in plans.

Funding

Federal and state budget cuts continue to reduce funding that has been available for the preservation of cultural resources. Nebraska lacks some funding programs that have been proven effective in other states.

WHERE DO WE GO?

Major Findings in the Development of This Plan

- There is greater potential to increase the profile of historic preservation with local and state elected officials.
- Public outreach and educational programs should seek wider audiences statewide.
- The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Plan should include priorities for community development, “main street” revitalization, tourism and local preservation planning.
- The State Historic Preservation Plan should include local, regional and statewide priorities.
- The Nebraska State Preservation Plan should address the needs of local historical organizations, advocacy groups and other stakeholders. It should investigate how collaborative and mentoring relationships could be established.
- There is a need to organize local, regional and statewide advocacy groups.
- There is a great need to provide funding for historic preservation, particularly grants to nonprofit organizations and private property owners.
- Constituents look to the Nebraska State Historical Society as the major resource for programs and technical assistance.

These and other findings have been grouped in the following sections. Each identifies issues, goals, objectives and strategies.

- **Cultural Preservation**
- **Planning and Law**
- **Economics**
- **Archeology**
- **Education**
- **Public Participation**

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

The “Nebraska Experience” is a story of these cultures, past and present. It extends from the Native Americans - the first Nebraskans – to the immigrant groups that settled the state and the newly arrived immigrants as well. It is a story of opportunities, assimilation and the conflict of cultures.

ISSUE: Historic preservation is often not considered in addressing contemporary issues.

GOAL: Promote historic preservation to serve affordable and quality housing needs.

Objective: Target housing in historic buildings.

Strategy: Promote both federal investment tax credits and Nebraska’s Valuation Incentive Program to developers and homeowners.

Strategy: Develop more collaborative efforts with other providers of low- and moderate-income housing and home ownership programs.

Strategy: Address neighborhood renewal in older and historic residential districts.

GOAL: In cities experiencing the influx of newly arrived immigrants enhance small business opportunities and culture.

Objective: Promote these businesses as an important mix in traditional downtown commercial districts.

Strategy: Encourage business development in cooperation with the Nebraska Lied Main Street program and in “main street” community revitalization efforts.

Objective: Encourage the preservation of historic buildings to serve social and religious needs of these groups.

Strategy: Promote the reuse of historic buildings such as former schools and churches to serve the social and religious needs of these groups.

ISSUE: Preservation is broader than properties, buildings, archeological sites and objects.

Sites of traditional cultural significance deserve more recognition. Language, arts, food customs, songs, dances, and oral traditions are also worthy of preservation.

GOAL: Nebraska’s public interpreters of history should take a lead-supporting role in assisting the preservation of traditional importance.

Objective: Cooperative efforts to identify and preserve places associated with ethnic or cultural history should be established.

Strategy: The Nebraska State Historical Society, local historical societies, preservation programs and others should maintain dialogue with and guidance from the “keepers” of the full range of Nebraska’s ethnic culture.

GOAL: Establish partnerships with the “keepers” of cultural traditions.

Objective: Preserve cultural traditions using educational programs, oral histories, preservation of languages, archives and museum interpretation.

Strategy: Initiate partnerships with the Nebraska State Historical Society, colleges and universities, and others in preserving cultural traditions.

ISSUE: No Tribes in Nebraska have applied for status as a Tribal Historic Preservation Office as provided by the National Historic Preservation Act. These provisions allow Tribal governments to assume participation in programs authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act.

GOAL: Enroll all Tribal governments as Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

Objective: Increase the capacity of Tribes to assume participation.

Strategy: The Nebraska State Historical Society should continue its efforts to work with each Tribe to apply for status.

ISSUE: Tribes struggle to preserve traditional cultural heritage.

GOAL: Locate and understand diverse sites, such as prehistoric, historic, cultural and traditional properties.

Objective: Address preservation issues and types of properties in cooperation of Tribal governments.

Strategy: Ongoing partnerships with the Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs and Tribes should be furthered.

Strategy: The Nebraska State Historical Society, Tribes, local groups and cultural organizations should maximize their capabilities to locate and understand diverse sites, such as prehistoric, historic, cultural and traditional properties.

ISSUE: Apparent apathy among younger generations threatens the cultural preservation of local and regional ethnic heritage.

GOAL: Encourage respect, recognize and maintain cultural values by youth.

Objective: Expand educational opportunities in school systems.

Strategy: Use historic properties, historic contexts and studies to educate younger generations.

Strategy: Consult with the “keepers” of Nebraska’s ethnic groups to develop and critique educational materials used in the school system and train teachers to incorporate this material into the social sciences.

PLANNING AND LAW

Recognizing the role of historic preservation in community development and planning, all levels of government should strengthen the protection and enhancement of historic preservation as a public purpose. Preservation should be accorded standing in governmental decision-making.

Other federal and state agencies, regional development councils, development districts and metropolitan planning agencies are partners in historic preservation through missions that can support or enhance historic places, recognize historic preservation through planning, or programs that can and do support preservation activities in Nebraska.

ISSUE: State government lacks an effective and efficient process for planning its actions to avoid harming historic places, for reviewing the results of its actions, for limiting adverse effects, and for establishing cooperative efforts in historic preservation.

GOAL: Reevaluate or better implement existing state laws.

Objective: Identify efficient and effective ways to accomplish requirements of the current law applying to state-owned historic buildings.

Strategy: Update and reevaluate the current inventory of state-owned historic buildings in state ownership or control.

Strategy: Work with the Department of Administrative Services and individual state agencies to evaluate current review procedures for state-owned historic structures.

Objective: Identify inconsistencies in related law dealing with vacant or surplus state-owned historic properties.

Strategy: Work with the Department of Administrative Services and state agencies to identify state-owned historic buildings that could be subject to surplus and vacation within a timeframe early enough to effectuate options for these buildings.

Strategy: Work with the Department of Administrative Services and individual state agencies to develop procedures or amend state law to effectively address vacant and surplus historic buildings and options for their marketing and preservation.

Objective: Implement the "Nebraska Archeological Protection Act."

Strategy: Develop regulations, procedures and guidelines.

Strategy: Once developed, work with state agencies on training and outreach to familiarize them about these procedures.

ISSUE: Federal and state agency compliance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act should be made more effective through better planning processes.

GOAL: Increase effectiveness of preserving properties by the Nebraska State Historical Society and other state and federal agencies.

Objective: Administer and develop management plans to increase efficiency and consistency of reviews.

Strategy: Monitor existing management plans for effectiveness.

Strategy: Identify classes of resources that could be addressed by management plans and work in cooperation with federal agencies and their designees to develop them.

Strategy: Utilize information technology and management systems such as Geographic Information Systems.

Strategy: Administer and develop programmatic agreements to increase efficiency and consistency of reviews.

ISSUE: There is a lack of focus on the development of regional historic preservation planning and identification of regional development strategies.

GOAL: Identify regional development strategies and encourage regional historic preservation planning.

Objective: Strengthen the link between preservation in planning, land use and growth management.

Strategy: Enroll governmental entities currently implementing regional planning and development strategies to incorporate historic preservation.

Strategy: Initiate a facilitated process between the Nebraska State Historical Society, local governments, metropolitan planning agencies and planning and community development organizations to investigate ways that regional preservation planning can best be accomplished.

Strategy: Encourage local governments to cooperate in inter-local agreements addressing historic preservation.

Objective: Strengthen or amend existing state law to directly address regional preservation planning.

Strategy: Advocate and enlist support to introduce legislation and passage of appropriate legislation.

ISSUE: Comprehensive planning by local governments throughout Nebraska is inconsistent and often insufficient to support effective decision-making. This undermines good comprehensive planning, hampering local governments in the guidance and enforcement of land use-policies and zoning. Broad-based preservation action is hindered when public officials are not aware of preservation's potential at the local and state levels.

GOAL: Identify local comprehensive planning strategies that consistently and explicitly require recognition and protection of historic resources as an essential element of comprehensive planning and zoning.

Objective: Study existing state enabling law addressing comprehensive planning.

Strategy: Sponsor a legislative resolution study to identify the adequacy of current provisions for comprehensive planning.

Strategy: Strengthen or amend existing state law to directly address preservation planning.

Strategy: Advocate and enlist support to introduce legislation and passage of appropriate legislation.

GOAL: Increase awareness of public officials to the relevance of historic preservation and comprehensive planning.

Objective: provide technical assistance a train local officials in "best practices."

Strategy: Enter into collaboration between the Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association, and American Planning Association-Nebraska.

Strategy: Develop or adopt model planning provisions that could be incorporated into local comprehensive plans.

ISSUE: Rehabilitation of historic buildings is often made more difficult by conflicting and inflexible code requirements intended primarily for new construction. Preservation of historic value should be recognized as a positive aspect of rehabilitation.

GOAL: Nebraska state law recognizes the "International Building Code," however the companion to this code that addresses existing buildings needs to be adopted by state legislation.

Objective: Legislate the "International Existing Building Code" for building rehabilitation.

Strategy: Facilitation between the Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska codes officials, the Nebraskaland Conference of Building Officials, Nebraska State Fire Marshall's Office, the American Institute of Architects-Nebraska and the Nebraska Lied Main Street program should be initiated.

Strategy: Once placed in state building code, its use at the local level should be encouraged through training.

Objective: Evaluate the State's implementation of the "Americans With Disabilities Act" and fire codes as applied to historic buildings.

Strategy: Facilitate meetings between the Nebraska State Historical Society, State Fire Marshall, League of Human Dignity, American Institute of Architects-Nebraska, Nebraska Society of Professional Engineers and others.

Strategy: Offer training for architects and engineers in applying these options.

ISSUE: Nebraska lacks a public policy recognizing and encouraging the necessity of cooperative efforts by state agencies.

GOAL: Strengthen preservation planning with state agencies.

Objective: Integrate historic preservation planning with other state agency planning.

Strategy: Comment on state plans and have preservation represented on planning committees that have been organized by state agencies.

Strategy: Encourage the adoption of this plan as part of other state plans.

ISSUE: There is a need to identify and initiate medium to long-term strategic planning by the identification and evaluation of cultural resources in the State.

GOAL: Engage research toward promoting knowledge of the state's cultural resources for purpose of better planning and decision-making.

Objective: Manage and collect information on Nebraska's cultural resources.

Strategy: Conduct cultural resource surveys at the local, county and state level, especially where such research can best engage other planning activities.

Strategy: Identify classes of historic properties that are threatened or endangered and engage planning to address them.

Objective: Promote the highest of standards for research and the dissemination of information resulting from survey research.

Strategy: Utilize technology to best manage information and make information accessible.

ECONOMICS

Preservation is an essential component and proven element for effective and successful efforts in community revitalization, housing creation and economic development. Preservation contributes to rural and urban economies through downtown revitalization and housing in older neighborhoods. Tourism, enhanced community image, and quality of life are important elements of economic growth. Investment in revitalized business districts and neighborhoods attracts new business and industry, provides jobs and enhances appropriate growth. In order to realize these opportunities, preservation requires a partnership of public programs and private investment.

ISSUE: Historic properties and preservation programs are often not included in community development efforts at the local, regional or state levels.

GOAL: Develop relationships with governmental agencies and organizations to evaluate funding sources that could be applied to historic preservation.

Objective: Increase the capacity of agencies and organizations to collaborate in community development opportunities, using historic preservation as a shared goal.

Strategy: Increase collaboration between the Nebraska State Historical Society, Department of Economic Development-Community and Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development, Nebraska development districts, Resource Conservation & Development Councils and Nebraska Department of Roads.

ISSUE: Organizations and business owners seeking downtown commercial revitalization often do not recognize that preservation is a tool to accomplish their goals.

GOAL: Encourage preservation as a component of the mission of commercial development organizations.

Objective: Increase awareness of preservation by business people and commercial development organizations.

Strategy: Increase participation of communities in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program. Encourage Certified Local Government (CLG) status for participating communities.

Strategy: Maximize the participation of partnering agencies in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program: the University of Nebraska – Lincoln College of Architecture, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the Nebraska Community Foundation.

Strategy: Fund historic buildings surveys to evaluate historic downtown districts and buildings and disseminate the information.

Strategy: Release preservation information to commercial development organizations suitable to incorporate into newsletters and web sites.

Strategy: Promote the Federal Investment Tax Credit and the Nebraska Valuation Incentive Program as revitalization tools.

Objective: Organize networks.

Strategy: Encourage commercial development organizations to ally with other local organizations such as chambers of commerce to identify common issues.

Strategy: Encourage commercial development organizations to network regionally or statewide with other preservation organizations and share information.

ISSUE: The economic value of historic preservation in Nebraska is most often overlooked.

GOAL: Reinforce the economic impact of historic preservation.

Objective: Demonstrate the substantial economic impact that preservation accomplishes in Nebraska, including tourism, housing creation, building rehabilitation, and commercial districts and neighborhood revitalization.

Strategy: Conduct a statewide economic impact analysis and distribute widely to governments, agencies and other organizations.

ISSUE: Smaller communities often perceive that there is a deterrent to successful rehabilitation of historic buildings and community development.

GOAL: Encourage historic preservation as a community development tool, especially where rural economies and decline of rural populations are pronounced.

Objective: Promote historic preservation by collaborating with rural development initiatives.

Strategy: Enroll more communities under 5,000 in population in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program.

Strategy: Collaborate with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program; the Nebraska Department of Economic Development - Community and Rural Development Division; and Resource Conservation & Development Councils.

ISSUE: Nebraska lacks funding sources for the preservation, acquisition or development of historic places.

GOAL: Secure increased government and private funding for historic preservation at all levels.

Objective: Create a Nebraska Heritage Trust Fund to assist a wide range of preservation activities.

Strategy: Identify a revenue stream of public funding, such as a documentary tax stamp increase on real estate transfers.

Strategy: Identify supporters and legislative sponsors.

Objective: Allow historic buildings to garner special preference in Nebraska's affordable housing programs.

Strategy: Facilitate and build support between the Nebraska State Historical Society, Affordable Housing Agency Cooperative (AHAC), and Nebraska Department of Economic Development - Community and Rural Development Division.

Objective: Expand and diversify historic preservation funding sources to supplement public funds.

Strategy: Identify issues, types of buildings that face common issues, and types of organizations that cannot access other sources of funds.

Strategy: Seek private endowments, foundations and donors to fund statewide programs related to preservation.

Strategy: Create an endowed fund for small planning grants and feasibility studies to public and nonprofit organizations.

Strategy: Discuss with the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation means to place priority on fund raising to be directed to endangered properties where immediate situations require action.

Objective: Extend state income tax incentives to certified rehabilitations under the Nebraska Valuation Incentive Program.

Strategy: Identify supporters and legislative sponsors.

Strategy: For Nebraska income tax purposes allow passive loss deduction on properties qualifying for federal Investment Tax Credits.

ISSUE: Developers of commercial and housing projects frequently do not recognize historic preservation.

GOAL: Encourage more commercial rehabilitation in historic buildings.

Objective: Utilize existing programs to accomplish this goal for historic preservation.

Strategy: Promote the use of the Federal Investment Tax Credit for rehabilitation of historic buildings through commercial district revitalization organizations, “Main Street” communities, business improvement districts and chambers of commerce. Employ the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Lied Main Street program to extend information.

Strategy: Encourage the combination of the Valuation Assessment Program and the Federal Investment Tax Credit to promote commercial rehabilitation.

ISSUE: Existing programs for the preservation, acquisition or development of historic buildings are underutilized.

GOAL: Other programs should be leveraged to accomplish more goals for historic preservation.

Objective: Encourage the use of existing programs to encourage more rehabilitation of historic buildings, such as the Federal Investment Tax Credit and the Nebraska Valuation Incentive Program.

Strategy: Promote the Federal Investment Tax Credit and the Nebraska Valuation Incentive Program by reaching broader audiences, such as Nebraska development districts, local governments, developers, realtors, planners and architects. Employ the Nebraska State Historical Society to participate in developing information sources.

Objective: Collaborate on funding sources offered by all federal and state programs.

Strategy: Recognize historic preservation as an eligible activity under the Nebraska Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Strategy: Increase the capacity of agencies and organizations to collaborate in community development opportunities using historic preservation as a shared mission. Develop partnerships and technical resource committees to deliver programs and services.

ISSUE: There is a lack of existing programs, incentives and funding sources for the development of historic properties and related activities by public and nonprofit organizations.

GOAL: Identify funding sources for assistance to public buildings and those owned by nonprofit organizations.

Objective: Preserve properties that have high visibility and are accessible to the general public.

Strategy: Create a Nebraska Heritage Trust Fund to assist a wide range of preservation activities. Potential sources of public funds include a documentary tax stamp increase.

ISSUE: Development and promotion of historic places should be recognized as a leading element of travel and tourism strategies.

GOAL: Establish a heritage tourism program for Nebraska.

Objective: Seek ways to increase and enhance visitation to Nebraska.

Strategy: Develop a statewide heritage tourism marketing plan to promote significant historic sites and activities in Nebraska by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development – Travel and Tourism Division.

Strategy: Coordinate tourism councils and Nebraska Byways organizations to promote regional heritage tourism activities.

Strategy: Utilize the Community Development Block Grant program for tourism development initiatives.

ISSUE: Rural economics and decline of rural populations often cannot support rehabilitation of historic buildings and community development. Conversely, smaller communities often overlook that historic preservation can be a tool to enhancing rural economics.

GOAL: Encourage historic preservation as a community development tool, especially where rural economies and population decline are pronounced.

Objective: Target historic preservation to small communities, especially those under 5,000 in population.

Strategy: Enroll more communities in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program with corresponding increases in staffing and funding levels

Strategy: Develop collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community and Rural Development program, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development – Community and Rural Development Division and Resource Conservation & Development Councils.

Objective: Address absentee property ownership in small towns.

Strategy: Make a "land reutilization" process - patterned after the Douglas County Commission - available statewide on an expanded county or regional basis to return tax-delinquent properties to tax rolls and expand development opportunities.

ISSUE: Urban development strategies sometimes do not consider historic preservation as a tool to revitalizing downtown or neighborhood commercial districts and inner city neighborhoods.

GOAL: Encourage neighborhood commercial revitalization in Lincoln and Omaha.

Objective: Establish an urban main street program in Lincoln and Omaha. Model after National Main Street Center and/or administer under the Nebraska Lied Main Street program.

Strategy: Facilitate meetings with Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Lied Main Street program, city planning and urban development departments.

ARCHEOLOGY

Archeological resources provide a record of the human experience and add to oral and written history, which is sometimes incomplete, biased or unclear. While archeology in Nebraska has traditionally focused on Native American culture, archeology can offer insights into all aspects of the early history of our state.

ISSUE: Local political subdivisions are not required to consider archeological sites in the planning and execution of projects unless there is federal involvement.

GOAL: Tie cultural resource legislation to comprehensive planning, actions by planning commissions and appropriate ordinances.

Objective: Extend provisions for local comprehensive planning.

Strategy: Investigate current deficiencies in state enabling legislation for comprehensive planning.

ISSUE: Sites are being damaged and destroyed at alarming rates due to urban development and agricultural practices.

GOAL: Protection of sites in rapidly expanding growth areas and undergoing modern agricultural conservation practices.

Objective: Establish ways to acquire title, options, easements or property tax preferences to preserve significant archeological sites.

Strategy: Establish a Nebraska Heritage Trust Fund to include the purchase of easements.

Strategy: Develop educational outreach programs with landowners of archeological sites.

ISSUE: Archeological research in the state needs to be expanded and more comprehensive.

GOAL: Maximize the potential of the "Nebraska Archeological Protection Act."

Objective: Identify adequate staffing and appropriations to effectively implement the act.

Strategy: Develop rules and regulations to implement the act.

Objective: Increase awareness of archeology.

Strategy: Enlist professional archeologists and the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists.

Strategy: Implement the "Nebraska Archeological Protection Act" and establish the position of state archeologist.

GOAL: Promote the highest standards for archeological research within the state.

Objective: Manage information on Nebraska's archeological sites.

Strategy: Increase coverage of archeological survey statewide.

Strategy: Seek private funding for a state-of-the-art archeological conservation and curatorial facility.

Strategy: Utilize GIS for management of information.

GOAL: Disseminate non-restricted information resulting from archeological research.

Objective: Engage this research toward promoting knowledge of state's past and better decision-making.

Strategy: Establish a state archeologist to provide information to private, professional and governmental entities.

ISSUE: Partnerships are not well established in the preservation of properties that have cultural and archeological importance.

GOAL: Seek diverse public and private partnerships.

Objective: Promote a better network of advocacy with Tribes when threatened or endangered archeological sites are identified.

Strategy: Develop more effective consultation with Tribes regarding state and federal undertakings.

Objective: Seek partnerships of organizations that oversee natural and environmental policies and programs.

Strategy: Consult with organizations such as the Archeological Conservancy and Nebraska Environmental Trust.

ISSUE: Public awareness of the state's archeological heritage is poor due to a lack of public education and awareness.

GOAL: Advocate the interests of archeological site preservation to governmental and private entities.

Objective: Expand public outreach and educational programs.

Strategy: Establish a staff position of state archeologist within the Nebraska State Historical Society to conduct public outreach and provide a central source for public or agency assistance and technical guidance.

Strategy: Engage the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists to in disseminating public archeological information and conducting educational programs.

Strategy: Assist in the reorganization of the Nebraska Archeological Society.

EDUCATION

Heritage education draws on history, literature and the arts, architecture, and the social and natural sciences to study the past in today's natural and built environment, in material culture, in written documents, oral and family traditions, community practices, folkways and cultural traditions. Educational efforts enhance understanding and provide opportunities for more effectively teaching local history. Developing an understanding of history is a building block for teaching.

ISSUE: There are innovative approaches to utilizing local historic resources in education, but also shortcomings in readily available tools to assist classroom teachers to apply them to local contexts.

GOAL: Incorporate heritage education techniques within continuing education programs for elementary teachers.

Objective: Reestablish the "Nebraska Institute: Teaching Nebraska History and Culture through Social Studies and the Humanities" for teachers statewide.

Strategy: Seek public funding sources for the Nebraska Institute.

Strategy: Working with local educators and college programs for teachers, seek funds from the Nebraska "Education Innovation Fund" for history education projects.

GOAL: Fulfill the Nebraska State Historical Society's position in education.

Objective: Enhance the outreach and educational opportunities with and within the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Strategy: Restore staffing cuts to the education program to expand heritage education opportunities statewide.

Strategy: Expand the existing the education program of the Nebraska State Historical Society, with corresponding increase in resources.

Strategy: Establish a permanent Educators Advisory Committee to assist and advise the Nebraska State Historical Society on history education.

GOAL: Develop educational materials that can incorporate historic preservation and historic places.

Objective: Develop curriculum materials for teachers in the area of history education.

Strategy: Enroll the Nebraska Department of Education to ensure that teacher-training methods meet Nebraska curriculum standards.

Strategy: Utilize the research on historic places compiled within the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Strategy: Encourage teachers to use models of the National Park Service "Teaching With Historic Places" for classroom instruction.

Strategy: Expand online resources for teachers and students using the website, nebraskastudies.org.

Strategy: Develop modules in collaboration with the Nebraska State Historical Society and entities that interpret historic places.

Strategy: Through teachers who have been enrolled in the "Nebraska Institute" develop models and share locally based modules for classroom use.

Strategy: Develop a statewide history education network to share the innovative ideas and programs developed by teachers statewide, utilizing newsletters, annual conferences, and electronic networking.

GOAL: Partnerships between local historical organizations and classroom instruction should be developed

Objective: Integrate classroom instruction at all levels of local school systems.

Strategy: Enlist local historical organizations to participate in pilot projects.

Strategy: Enlist Certified Local Governments to develop materials and expand their efforts in both classroom and broader public education.

ISSUE: Nebraska lacks a graduate program in historic preservation.

GOAL: Establish a graduate program in historic preservation.

Objective: Educate students who enter the field of architecture or community and regional planning with a sound knowledge of applying historic preservation.

Strategy: Consult with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Architecture.

Strategy: Seek funding sources for establishing a program.

Strategy: Identify resident and non-resident faculty.

ISSUE: Learning of the historical experiences, past discrimination, and assimilation of all cultures that make up the Nebraska “melting pot” can be improved in school systems.

GOAL: Increase knowledge about these diverse groups, their culture and assimilation using historic places and historic contexts.

Objective: Develop lesson plans and educational materials.

Strategy: Consult with social and cultural organizations in developing educational materials for use in the school system.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Promoting a community's history and sense of place is essential to developing a positive self-image and the ability to recognize community assets. Sound decision-making about historic preservation requires an understanding of the past. If Nebraskans are to care about preserving historic places, formal and informal participation should reinforce why historic places are important.

ISSUE: Historical organizations do not always recognize that utilizing and exploring historic places is central to the success of their missions.

GOAL: Increase the participation of local historical organizations.

Objective: Develop greater capacity of local historical organizations to participate in and support historic preservation.

Strategy: Develop a field representative position in the Nebraska State Historical Society to work extensively with local historical groups.

Strategy: Encourage local historical organizations to ally with other preservation programs on a statewide basis through a statewide organization of cultural institutions.

Strategy: Expand membership in local historical organizations to include historic property owners and other representatives having an interest in historic preservation.

Strategy: Cultivate new leadership.

Objective: Encourage local government historic preservation programs and Nebraska Lied Main Street communities to advocate the benefits of preservation and reinforce their own role in the community.

Strategy: Promote the creation of local government preservation programs under the Certified Local Government program.

Strategy: Encourage local historical organizations to ally with the Nebraska Lied Main Street communities to advocate the benefits of historic preservation. Require a representative of a local historical organization to be on Main Street boards.

ISSUE: Public awareness and general knowledge of preservation is low.

GOAL: Increase public participation efforts for the broader public and develop informal educational opportunities for the general public.

Objective: Provide non-scholarly opportunities to learn about historic places and historic preservation.

Strategy: Reach audiences such as parents, tourists, and recreational users.

Strategy: Extend heritage education programs to all types of "lifelong-learning."

Strategy: Develop walking tours and iPods, historical interpretation in local museums, public buildings, and historic commercial and residential districts.

Strategy: Establish interpretation in highly visible locations, such as recreational facilities and parks.

Strategy: Increase attendance at Nebraska historic sites by producing travel itineraries for the traveling public.

Strategy: Use online technology. Develop an electronic newsletter about historic preservation.

GOAL: Strengthen the visibility of historic preservation in the media.

Objective: Increase media exposure to preservation successes and issues.

Strategy: Establish contacts for media, including newspapers, radio, and television.

Strategy: Develop press releases and organize press conferences and media events.

- Strategy:** Enlist popular publications to develop articles on historic preservation.
- GOAL:** Reach broader professional audiences.
- Objective:** Increase awareness of local history and historic buildings by professional, such as realtors, developers, contractors, planners and architects.
- Strategy:** Organize conferences and workshops that qualify for ongoing training and continuing education credits for professionals.
- GOAL:** Place local historic places in new contexts.
- Objective:** Increase awareness that there are important historic places in all communities.
- Strategy:** Conduct local surveys of historic places and make the findings widely available.

ISSUE: Public officials are often not aware of historic preservation.

GOAL: Increase awareness of public officials to the relevance historic preservation in a local setting.

Objective: Reinforce the opportunities preservation can offer to economic and community development, comprehensive planning, and neighborhood and commercial district revitalization.

Strategy: Provide training and technical assistance for local government officials, including workshops and other forums on federal and state programs, as well as successful examples of historic preservation that has been applied in a local setting.

Strategy: Promote the creation of local government preservation programs under the Certified Local Government program.

Strategy: Collaborate with organizations such as the Nebraska League of Municipalities, Nebraska Association of County Officials, Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association and American Planning Association-Nebraska and Nebraskaland Conference of Building Officials.

Strategy: Conduct local and county historic buildings and archeological surveys and present findings to local officials.

ISSUE: Preservation activities often do not include participation by minority groups.

GOAL: Broaden the diversity of the preservation community.

Objective: Create opportunities to involve underrepresented groups.

Strategy: Consult with social and cultural organizations to determine historic places and historical interests they may have in historic preservation.

Strategy: Network with people in positions of leadership in social, cultural and religious leadership.

Strategy: Enroll minority business enterprises into participating in local main street programs.

Strategy: Enroll more minority representatives to preservation boards and commissions.

ISSUE: Neighborhood organizations often do not recognize that preservation is a broader activity worthy of their participation.

GOAL: Encourage preservation as a component of the mission of neighborhood organizations.

Objective: Increase participation in the local preservation and encourage neighborhood awareness.

Strategy: Fund surveys to local government programs evaluate historic neighborhoods and disseminate the information.

Strategy: Release preservation information to neighborhood organizations suitable to incorporate into their newsletters and web sites.

Strategy: Promote the Valuation Incentive Program as a revitalization tool.

Objective: Organize networks.

Strategy: Encourage local neighborhood organizations to network with other historical organizations.

ISSUE: There is a great deal of misinformation about historic preservation.

GOAL: Correct misconceptions about historic preservation of what historical designation means.

Objective: Through public information sources, clarify the differences between federal agency review, local landmark designation and the National Register of Historic Places.

Strategy: Enlist popular publications to develop articles on preservation.

Strategy: Develop information brochures for widespread distribution by local government historic preservation programs, historical organizations and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Strategy: Prepare a series of “frequently asked questions” for general distribution and posting on web sites.

ISSUE: Nebraska lacks a statewide preservation organization to promote public involvement in historic preservation and advocate legislative issues.

GOAL: With leadership of cultural organizations, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Nebraska State Historical Society, establish a statewide advocacy group.

Objective: Promote regional networks of private citizens and organizations to rally support and greater awareness of historic preservation in Nebraska.

Strategy: Have the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Nebraska State Historical Society host forums of local and county historical organizations, regional tourism councils and others to organize local and regional historic preservation organizations.

Strategy: Cultivate leaders and stimulate program development of grassroots preservation organizations.

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