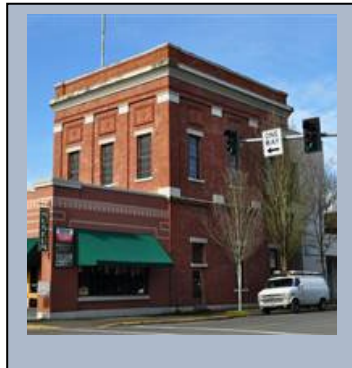
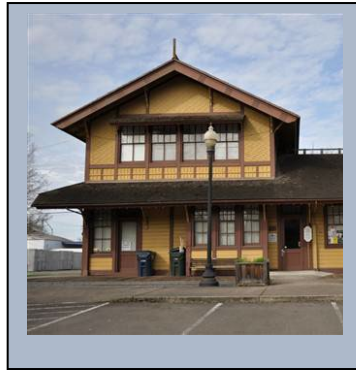




for the Springfield Historic Commission
Springfield, Oregon



Prepared for the Springfield Historic Commission by the
National Alliance of Preservation Commissions

March 10, 2022

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Photo of Springfield, Oregon Historic Resources

The Purpose of this Report

This CAMP report was prepared for the city of Springfield by the Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) Trainers of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. It is meant to be a brief, practical, action-oriented assessment of what a preservation commission should prioritize within its given authority and within its current resources. It is hoped that this report will be a guide for how best to administer a local preservation program within the city of Springfield.

The report includes various topics related to an effective local historic preservation program. Each section includes a general description of the topic and why it is important. Then, a summary of the current circumstances in Springfield related to that topic. Information here is based on the SWOT analysis prepared with Springfield Historic Commission and includes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that were noted during the analysis with the commission. Each section concludes with a set of recommendations.

Administering an effective municipal historic preservation program is multi-faceted and can be a challenging undertaking. Based on the experience and knowledge of the CAMP trainers, it is believed that implementing these recommendations will make substantial improvements to the historic preservation program in Springfield.

NAPC welcomes thoughts on this CAMP Report and hopes to hear an update from the Springfield Historic Commission as they move forward with implementing their recommendations.

Disclaimers

The information contained in this NAPC document is for informational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice. Use of this information does not give rise to an attorney-client relationship and does not represent a comprehensive analysis of any particular issue, legal or otherwise. Contact an attorney in your jurisdiction to obtain advice with respect to any particular issue.

Information in this report was gathered remotely, solely from discussions with municipal staff and historic commission members. As a result, the report is limited in its scope and analysis.

The Process to Prepare this Report

This CAMP Report was prepared following a Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) for the Springfield Historic Commission. Held over two half days, January 29, 2022 and February 5, 2022, attendance included the Springfield Historic Commission members, staff to the commission, and other local commission members from the Springfield region.



CAMP is the signature training offered by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). It is led by qualified preservation professionals in support of NAPC's mission to build strong local preservation programs through education, advocacy, and training. The goal of CAMP is to provide high-quality, engaging and informative training to preservation related boards and commissions of all types through presentations, hands-on exercises, group discussions, networking and mentoring.

The Springfield CAMP was requested in 2021 because the commission had many new members in need of training and there was an overall interest in how the commission could be more effective.

The training was led by experienced CAMP trainers with backgrounds in local and state government, non-profit management, preservation law, design review and planning. Rory Hays addressed Legal Basics for preservation commissions. Chris Skelly presented Identifying and Designating Historic Resources as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Design Review. Adrian Scott Fine covered Preservation Planning and Public Outreach and Community Engagement with a DEI Access Lens. Friderike Mittner led a Design Review Exercise.

Following the CAMP training, Springfield Historic Commission members had the opportunity to respond to an online survey regarding the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). This information was compiled by CAMP trainers and presented to the commission in a virtual meeting.

Following discussion with the commission, the CAMP trainers developed a set of recommendations tailored to the issues noted within the Springfield preservation program. The SWOT analysis and the recommendations are summarized here in this CAMP Report.

Historic Property Identification and Survey



Overview

The identification of historic resources is the primary task of any local preservation commission. Without knowing and understanding the historic resources present in the community, no effective historic preservation planning can take place. Systematically identifying, documenting and describing historic resources is known as historic property survey.

There are generally two types of survey. Reconnaissance survey provides a small amount of information about a large quantity of historic resources.

Intensive level survey has a much greater level of detail on individual historic resources but since it is a more time-consuming process, it requires a more strategic approach.

Information gathered during a survey project typically results in compiling all the information in an organized way, such as on survey forms or in a database. Historic property survey greatly assists preservation commissions administering a local historic district ordinance when they can contain photographs, a location map, a historical narrative, and an architectural description.

Historic property survey provides an overall sense of what makes the district a special place, in other words, the character-defining features of the district. This historical, architectural, contextual, and baseline information is particularly helpful when reviewing the impact of a project on a particular historic resource. When survey for the district is comprehensive and up-to-date, the commission will have valuable and instantaneous information on all the historic resources of the local historic district.

Surveying community-wide historic resources, outside designated areas, illuminates what historic resources are significant and provides a broader understanding of what is needed to plan for their protection.

Historic property survey isn't about just documenting buildings. Other resources that are often surveyed include historic parks, structures, bridges, burial grounds, and archaeological sites.

A preservation commission should regularly review the historic property survey for their community for how comprehensive and current the survey is. Does it include resources throughout the whole city? Are survey forms up to date? Is information lacking? What resources besides buildings need to be surveyed?

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- The city has an interesting collection of mid-century modern buildings.
- The city has a vibrant downtown with an interesting collection of buildings.

- The city has a unique collection of 19th and early 20th Century neighborhoods.

Weaknesses

- There is no comprehensive inventory of historic resources in the city.
- Most historic resources in the city are unresearched, unlisted and unknown.
- There is no context for the area in relation to Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

Opportunities

- The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office has grants available for updating survey.
- The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office can be consulted for guidance on updating the city survey.
- The Historic Preservation degree program is based at Portland State University.
- The University of Oregon may have class projects that could assist with surveying.
- Longtime residents can provide oral histories that can be incorporated into the survey.
- An archaeological reconnaissance survey could help identify possible indigenous settlements
- A landscape survey could help to identify historical and cultural landscapes.

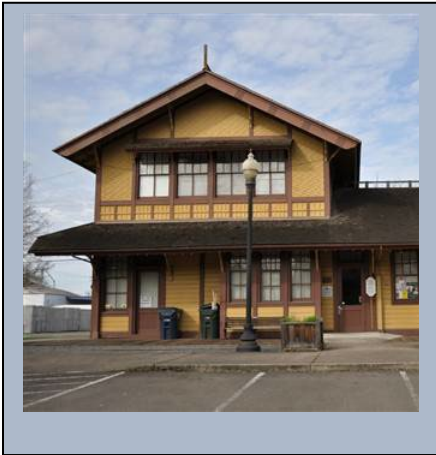
Threats

- Without up-to-date survey information at hand, advocating for threatened historic resources is greatly weakened.
- The potential for seeking knowledge about historic resources through oral histories is diminishing.

Recommendations

- Contact the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office for guidance on prioritizing survey needs.
- Contact the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office to discuss Certified Local Government grant opportunities.
- Review the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office guidebook on historic property survey.
- Contact the Portland State University historic preservation program to investigate partnership opportunities.
- Prepare a historic property survey plan that can help prioritize where to focus survey efforts.
- Consider hiring a consultant to assist with preparing a historic property survey plan.
- Undertake a prioritized and phased approach to a comprehensive, city-wide, historic property survey.

State and National Designations



Overview

Historic property designations mean that a site, building, district or place have met certain criteria and have been officially approved for inclusion on a register or list.

At the national level, the National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of historic properties that have significance and meet criteria for listing. Administered by the National Park Service, buildings, districts, structures, sites, and objects can be listed in the National Register, either through individual nomination or, if appropriate, through National Register District nominations. While the National Register of Historic Places is primarily an honorary designation, it has many

benefits including a sense of owner appreciation and community pride. Additionally, it is far easier to advocate for preserving buildings that have received this national designation. There may be some tax incentives available for national register listed properties depending on the state and individual circumstances.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- The city has many individual properties and districts that are likely eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office can provide guidance on the process of listing.

Weaknesses

- The commission has not utilized the National Register of Historic Places as a preservation strategy.

Opportunities

- Listing on the National Register of Historic Places can help build appreciation for historic resources in the community.

Threats

- Significant historic resources may be destroyed because they lack official recognition of their importance.

Recommendations

- Work with the State Historic Preservation Office to list individual properties and districts on the National Register of Historic Places.

Local Historic Preservation Ordinances and Designations



Overview

Local designations, such as local historic districts and local landmarks, are typically recommended by the preservation commission because they meet the criteria for local designation. The approval is usually finalized by the local legislative body, City Council. Depending on the wording of the city ordinance, local designations may require a review from the local preservation commission before changes to exterior architectural features are altered. It is through local designations that buildings are best protected from demolition and inappropriate alterations. Besides local historic

districts and local landmarks, other ordinances, such as demolition delay and neighborhood conservation districts, may provide some safeguards to protecting historic resources.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- The Historic Commission is a well-established local board in city government.
- The Historic Commission is responsible for guiding change in the Washburne Historic District through the city ordinance.
- The Design Guidelines and other base documents provide a sound foundation for administering the local historic district.

Weaknesses

- Other areas of Springfield, such as the downtown, are not protected by a local historic district.
- The Local Historic District Ordinance is difficult to understand for those not familiar with it.
- Decisions of the Historic Commission are only advisory to the planning commission.

Opportunities

- The existing local historic district could be expanded.
- Additional local historic districts could be created such as other residential districts or downtown.
- Updating the local historic district design guidelines would assist the commission and applicants in the process.

Threats

- Significant historic resources may be altered or destroyed because they have no protections through the city ordinance.

Recommendations

- Hold listening sessions with the community to discuss the role of a local historic district.

- Update the local historic district design guidelines, preferably with the assistance of a preservation consultant.
- Prepare a planning study on protecting additional significant properties or districts through the local historic district ordinance.
- Review local historic district ordinances from other municipalities for ideas on how the language of the city ordinance could be made clearer and more effective.
- Explore amendments to existing preservation ordinance to ensure more effectiveness as a decision-making entity instead of advisory only.

Preservation Incentives and Benefits

Overview

Preservation incentives and benefits are offered as a means of encouraging property owners to pursue projects that support historic preservation. At the national level, the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit program provides a 20% income tax credit to developers of income producing properties. State and local incentives vary across the country, with some local incentives limited to the local historic districts and some offered city wide. State and local incentives and benefits might be low interest loans, matching grants or local property tax exemptions. To be eligible, projects must typically meet certain local guidelines or the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- None noted.

Weaknesses

- There are no locally based grants, tax credits or loans specifically available to historic property owners.

Opportunities

- A financial incentive program, such as a revolving loan program, could greatly benefit property owners and historic preservation.

Threats

- A lack of funding results in deferred maintenance for historic properties that may ultimately lead to loss of the resource.

Recommendations

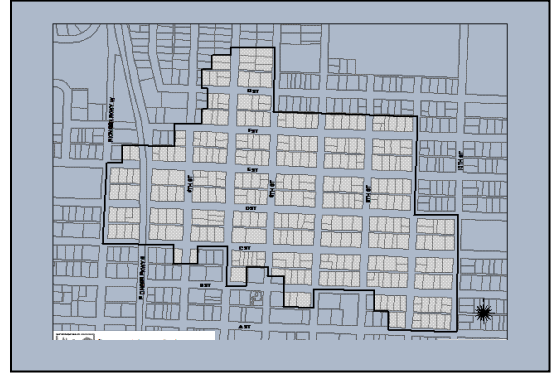
- Contact the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office for successful examples of preservation incentives and benefits.
- Consider offering land use/variance relief and permit fee waivers for owners of contributing properties within locally designated historic districts.

Commission Procedures and Administration

Overview

The administration of a local preservation ordinance is a complicated and multi-layered structure that includes applicants, commission members, municipal departments, elected officials, local laws, state laws and the general public. Local commissions must be able to work in partnership with all of them.

Local commissions must be well-versed in understanding not only their preservation ordinance but also conflict of interest laws, open meeting laws and other related laws.



Local commissions must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with the general public and amongst themselves at commission meetings in order to accomplish their tasks and maintain public relations. How the preservation commission engages with members of the public at meetings and hearings can have long-lasting positive or negative impacts.

Several documents can greatly help a preservation commission in their procedures and administration. Having operating rules of procedure will make the functioning of a commission clearer. Having an up to date, comprehensive, user friendly set of design guidelines will help both commission members and applicants, clarifying the decision-making process of the commission.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- The commission is engaged in their work, effective and focused.
- The commission has excellent support staff.
- The commission membership feels inclusive.
- The commission membership includes expertise in architecture and design.
- The commission membership includes expertise in legal proceedings.
- The commission membership is respectful and open-minded.

Weaknesses

- The commission has had recent turnover, resulting in loss of institutional memory.
- The commission does not have ready access to municipal legal counsel.
- The commission has not taken on projects aside from application review.
- The commission is very busy with application reviews.

Opportunities

- The commission has new members with energy and new ideas.

Threats

- The commission has been unable to investigate protecting vulnerable areas of the city due to their workload.

Recommendations

- Develop a flow chart or straightforward guide that can be used by applicants to better understand the local historic district ordinance review process.
- Prepare an annual work plan for the commission so that the agenda is not simply application reviews.
- Review with city officials how access to municipal legal counsel can be improved.

City Ordinances, Policies and Stewardship

Overview

This section of the report considers how the overall city government impacts historic preservation through city ordinances, policies and stewardship. Various city ordinances can have a substantial impact on historic resources. The impacts can be beneficial for historic resources or notably destructive. Zoning, in particular, is notable for its effect on historic resources, both positive and negative.

City policies may be formal documents or simply casual, longstanding practices. Policies can be challenging to recognize and address when they are not codified and are negatively impacting historic resources.



Stewardship relates to how the city government maintains its own property. This includes historic city buildings, schools, parks, burial grounds and other municipally owned historic properties.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- None noted.

Weaknesses

- The commission is not actively involved in the stewardship of city owned historic resources.
- The commission is not engaged in city ordinances or policies that may have an impact on historic resources.

Opportunities

- The commission can participate in upcoming zoning revisions.
- Zoning revisions that encourage increased density in the neighborhoods could be written so that community character can be protected with increased density.

Threats

- The current zoning does not always support historic preservation.
- Zoning revisions could encourage the loss of historic resources.
- Historic resources are at risk from earthquakes and natural disasters

Recommendations

- Hold a joint meeting with the planning commission to discuss shared goals.
- Participate in the process of zoning revisions.

Preservation Partners and Stakeholders

Overview

An active city-wide historic preservation non-profit advocacy organization is an invaluable resource. As a membership organization, a non-profit advocacy organization can develop a broad, grassroots constituency. That constituency can be influential with local elected officials when a preservation concern is raised. In addition, non-profit activities such as preservation awards, house tours and dinners help to generate interest, raise awareness and keep preservation positive in the public eye. Other frequent activities of preservation non-profits include endangered resource lists, acquiring property, restoring buildings, administering revolving funds, operating easement programs, fundraising efforts and media communication. These are all roles that are not well-suited to a municipal preservation commission but are perfect for a preservation non-profit organization.



Other local preservation partners might include museums and historical societies. Stakeholders are those organizations and groups that have a role in historic preservation among other interests. Contractors, developers, real estate professionals, business owners, neighborhood groups and chambers of commerce are all examples of preservation stakeholders.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- The Springfield Historic Commission is an effective educational organization.
- The Lane County Historical Society is an effective educational organization.

Weaknesses

- The Commission is not networked with preservation partners and stakeholders.

Opportunities

- A city-wide non-profit historic preservation advocacy organization could take on tasks that are not well-suited for the historic commission.
- The Historic Commission could collaborate with the University of Oregon.

Threats

- Without a clear line of communication to preservation partners and stakeholders, the effectiveness of the commission is diminished.

Recommendations

- Review state and national examples of local non-profit historic preservation advocacy organizations and the programs these organizations administer.
- Develop a list of preservation partners and stakeholders and a strategy for how communication can be improved for each.

Community Outreach and Engagement

Overview

Community outreach and engagement is an essential task of the preservation commission. Preservation Commissions often focus their time and energy on administering the local historic district ordinance. Over time, neglecting community outreach and engagement is most certain to have consequences to the effectiveness of the preservation commission.

It is essential that the preservation commission undertake educational activities that explain the architectural and historic significance of the district, the role of the commission, and the process of applying to the historic district commission for a certificate.



There are dozens of community outreach and engagement activities for a preservation commission to consider. A few of them include a newsletter to all the property owners in the local historic districts, easy to understand application instructions, holding workshops for the real estate community or installing entering historic district signage.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- The commission encourages public input and responds appropriately.

Weaknesses

- Some residents do not appreciate the historic resources of their city.
- Some residents do not understand the role of the historic commission.
- Some residents do not recognize the benefits of historic preservation.

Opportunities

- Additional community outreach is an effective preservation tool.
- Community events provide an opportunity for outreach.

Threats

- Significant historic resources may be destroyed because they not appreciated by residents of the city.

Recommendations

- Organize a series of walking tours through the Washburne Historic District, downtown and other historic areas.
- Organize construction tours of sites that are meaningful to the community.
- Hold a resiliency workshop regarding seismic retrofitting of historic buildings.
- Meet with the city council once per year to present the accomplishments of the commission over the past year.

- Convene core City departments and personnel (building department, enforcement and front counter staff) for periodic orientation to fully explain preservation process and how all can work collaboratively.
- Launch annual preservation awards program, to recognize exemplary rehabilitation and restoration efforts in the community; utilize the media to help promote.

Community-wide Historic Preservation Planning

Overview

In its simplest form, historic preservation planning can be thought of as three simple steps: identification, evaluation and protection. All three steps are essential for an effective local historic preservation program. Successful local preservation commissions identify historic resources through survey, evaluate the significance of historic resources through established local criteria and protect historic resources through a wide variety of tools. These include local ordinances, public outreach, advocacy and incentives, among others.



Knowing where to begin, what to focus on can feel overwhelming to preservation commission members. Many communities have prepared a historic preservation plan as a guide for when and where to focus their energy. A preservation plan can help the commission establish and prioritize goals, feel productive, stay on track, and most importantly, not get overwhelmed.

A preservation plan can take many different forms. Some commissions have hired a consultant to prepare a detailed municipal preservation plan. Other commissions simply prepare their own plan of action for the coming year.

Without a plan, a commission may struggle and remain unfocused. With a plan, a preservation commission can focus efforts where they are most needed.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Noted

Strengths

- None noted.

Weaknesses

- There is no community-wide historic preservation plan.
- There is no annual work plan prepared by the commission.
- There is little focus placed on historic preservation outside of the Washburne Historic District.
- There is a general lack of clarity about what else the commission should focus on.

Opportunities

- A historic preservation plan could help the commission focus on key tasks in a systematic way.

Threats

- The commission is only moderately effective when they are limited to reviewing local historic district applications.

Recommendations

- Review historic preservation plans and comprehensive plan elements from other municipalities in Oregon and around the country.
- Seek guidance from the Oregon State Historic preservation office on preparing a historic preservation plan.
- Prepare an historic commission annual work plan that considers all aspects of an effective historic preservation program.