



Historic Preservation Commission

MEETING
October 15, 2025

Tom Baker Meeting Room	City-County Office Building	3:00 PM
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The City of Bismarck encourages citizens to provide their comments via email to planning@bismarcknd.gov. The comments will be sent to the Historic Preservation Commissioners prior to the meeting and included in the minutes of the meeting. To ensure that comments are compiled and forwarded to the Historic Preservation Commission with enough time to review all comments, please submit your comments no later than 12 noon the day of the meeting. Comments should also include which agenda item number or topic your comment references and your name (anonymous comments will not be forwarded to the Historic Preservations Commissioners or included in the minutes of the meeting).

If you would like to appear via video or audio link for a 3-5-minute comment on a public hearing item, please provide your e-mail address and contact information to planning@bismarcknd.gov at least one business day before the meeting.

As always, live meeting coverage is available on Government Access Channels 2 & 602HD, FreeTV.org, ROKU, Apple TV and Fire TV.

1. MEETING INFORMATION

A. Historic Preservation Reports

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Includes items on the Regular Agenda or the prior Historic Preservation Commission agenda items

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. Approval Of Meeting Minutes for September 17, 2025

4. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Historic Preservation Fair

B. 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant Update

5. OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN

- A. The next regular meeting date is scheduled for November 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

2025 Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission - Historic Preservation Reviews

Review Number	Date of HPC Review Completion	Review Group	Review Type	Requestor	Project Location	Project Description	SHPO Review	HPC Review
HPC2024-008	6/25/2025	Full Commission	Other - Section 106	Northern Plains Heritage Foundation	1600 River Road	Renovate Bismarck's Keelboat Park and boat ramp into the Bismarck Riverfront Park and Festival Grounds	No Historic Properties Affected (physical impact); No Adverse Effect (visual impact)	Support
HPC2024-009	1/23/2025; 04/03/2025	Chair and Staff	CDBG - Section 106	Stepping Stones Ministries	112 South 24th Street	Interior renovations for the creation of medical respite care units	No Historic Properties Affected	Decline to comment
HPC2025-001	4/16/2025	Full Commission	Other - Section 106	City of Bismarck	221 North 5th Street	Interior lighting upgrades		No Adverse Effect
HPC2025-002	4/22/2025	Chair and Staff	CDBG - Section 106	Ministry on the Margins	715 East Interstate Avenue	Affordable housing acquisition	No Historic Properties Affected	No Historic Properties Affected
HPC2025-003	5/20/2025	Chair and Staff	CDBG - Section 106	Burleigh County Senior Center	315 North 20th Street	Purchase of refrigeration and kitchen equipment and support expanding needs of various food programs	No Historic Properties Affected	No Historic Properties Affected
HPC2025-004	5/23/2025	Full Commission	Other - Section 106	City of Bismarck	515 North 5th Street	Interior lighting upgrades		No Adverse Effect
HPC2025-005	6/25/2025	Chair and Staff	CAP - Section 106	Individual	4221 Claridge Loop	Walk-in shower installation and safety/structural failure repairs	No Historic Properties Affected	No Historic Properties Affected
HPC2025-006	7/2/2025	Chair and Staff	CAP - Section 106	Individual	725 S 12th Street #229	Walk-in shower installation and safety/structural failure repairs	No Historic Properties Affected	No Historic Properties Affected
HPC2025-007	6/25/2025	Chair and Staff	CAP - Section 106	Individual	109 East Interstate Avenue	Walk-in shower installation and safety/structural failure repairs	No Historic Properties Affected	No Historic Properties Affected



Public Comment Policy

The Historic Preservation Commission welcomes and values public input during its meetings. This policy outlines the procedures for public comment to ensure that all individuals have a fair opportunity to be heard while maintaining an orderly, transparent, and efficient meeting environment.

1. A public comment agenda item will be the first non-procedural agenda item at all regular meetings of the Historic Preservation Commission.
2. To provide public comments, each individual must sign a speaker sheet located at the podium that includes the individual's name and address. A reasonable accommodation will be made for those requiring it pursuant to the City's Title VI policy.
3. Each individual will be allotted up to five minutes to make comments; the time may be extended at the discretion of the chair. The individual will be notified when the time has expired.
4. An individual may not yield his or her allotted time to another individual.
5. The public comment agenda item may be limited to a total of thirty minutes. The initial thirty minutes may be extended at the discretion of the chair, but each speaker will continue to be limited to five minutes.
6. All comments must address an item of the current agenda or an agenda item from the preceding meeting.
7. Comments may not:
 - a. Be defamatory, abusive, harassing, or unlawful.
 - b. Include information that is exempt or confidential under North Dakota open records law.
 - c. Interfere with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
 - d. Must be pertinent to the public entity.

BISMARCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

September 17, 2025

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission met on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building, 221 North 5th Street. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom. Dakota Media Access was present to record the meeting and archive on freetv.org for public viewing.

Commissioners present were Matthew Hull, Beth Nodland, Scooter Pursley, Amy Sakariassen John Swanson, Greg Zenker, and Chair Damita Engel.

Staff members present were Annie Hojian – Office Assistant, Daniel Nairn – Acting Community Development Director, Lauren Oster – Planner, and Joshua Jyring – Assistant City Attorney.

MEETING INFORMATION

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made or submitted for the current agenda or prior August 20, 2025, agenda. Chair Engel closed the public comment period.

MINUTES

Chair Engel called for consideration of the minutes of the August 20, 2025, meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission.

MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Zenker to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2025 meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sakariassen and with Commissioners Hull, Nodland, Pursley, Sakariassen, Swanson, Zenker and Chair Engel voting in favor of the motion, the motion was approved.

2024 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Oster provided an update for the Local History Education Resources Project under the 2024 Historic Preservation Fund Grant. The last update on this project was provided in February 2025 at the regular meeting. The overarching topic of the kits is the Great Depression in North Dakota, with two kits being created, one for K-5th grade and the other 6th-12th grade. Subcommittee work is still ongoing for this project and commissioners had no comments or suggestions to share at this time.

2025 HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND GRANT UPDATE

Ms. Oster provided an update on the 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant. The City of Bismarck was awarded \$34,790 in funding from the 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant to perform a Downtown District Survey as well as finalize the Historic Preservation Plan. A minimum match of \$23,193 is required with donated labor being eligible. Commissioners will need to review items outside of the regular commission meetings and this time can be used for labor match calculations. Commissioners are asked to keep track of their review time. The goal of the Downtown District

Survey is to review and update properties within the current boundary of the Downtown Historic District, as well as conduct a survey of properties surrounding that boundary, including those properties south of the railroad tracks. City Staff anticipates setting up a meeting with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to discuss the request for funds (RFP) and what the project would include, including a timeline for the project. To stay on track with the tentative timeline, staff plans to include a draft RFP for the October 15, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting for commissioners' review. Staff recommends commissioners determine who will assist in drafting the RFP and suggests no more than two commissioners.

Commissioner Engel asked for clarification on the total number of properties to be assessed. Ms. Oster informed commissioners that the 151 properties is based on the current parcel data, however based on discussions with the state going into the RFP, it may be adjusted based on costs. Commissioner Engel also asked for clarification on the budget table and determining a consultant's scope of work as she wants to ensure the consultant is doing both the site forms and the updates and the HPC is just doing review. Ms. Oster confirmed this. Commissioner Engel also asked if the consultant will be asked to attend any meetings, as with a Class III Evaluation, this is not usually done. She found this to be very helpful when South Fork Historical Research was present at the August 20, 2025, meeting. Attendance at a meeting(s) was expressly in the contract with South Fork Historical Research. Ms. Oster stated that the way the reconnaissance is currently being conducted, a consultant may attend some meetings if requested, but it would be based on the scope of work detailed in their contract, as well as the RFP that would be provided. Commissioner Engel and Commissioner Pursley volunteered to work on the RFP.

Commissioner Hull asked for clarification regarding the decision on where to draw the boundary line for the expanded survey area. He is concerned about expending resources on properties, such as a parking garage, where potentially nothing of value will come from researching the property. Ms. Oster explained that while they did want to create a broad scope to encompass as many properties as possible, it was with the understanding some properties may be exempt on a case-by-case basis.

At the last meeting, commissioners requested an update on the progress of the Historic Preservation Plan. As a reminder, the most recent subcommittee was created in 2024 to finalize the work previously conducted on this plan. Recent work has included the creation of an Implementation Table for the goals and objectives, inclusion of the Threats to Historic Resources section, and editing to the previous plan. Work will begin on the digital copy at the next scheduled subcommittee meeting on October 9, 2025. Staff recommend the HPC provide comments or suggestions on the plan or the project timeline.

Commissioners discussed the items on the Implementation Table and determined commissioners should review goals and objectives, evaluate and assign a priority level, and add/delete any information prior to a final draft and printing. Commissioner Zenker stated this could be accomplished at the next, or a future meeting, during the meeting rather than a separate meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Oster gave an update regarding the 250th Anniversary of the U.S. Staff and Commissioners Hull and Pursley met with members of the Bismarck Historical Society and staff from the Bismarck City Administration on September 15, 2025, to begin discussing the celebratory efforts for the 250th anniversary. Discussion revolved around events and activities potentially utilizing funding from the North Dakota 250 Community Initiatives Grant. Ideas included a story walk

component utilizing portions from the Bismarck Timeline and the information that is already available can be updated as necessary to accommodate the overarching 250th history of the U.S. This could be accomplished through a display for events throughout the next year, potentially at the Bismarck Event Center. Other ideas were to host a symposium, or Chautauqua, creating educational cards, similar to trading cards, utilizing portions of the Bismarck Timeline. This could create an opportunity to hand out educational material during the 4th of July *Red, White and Boom* event that is held at the Bismarck Community Bowl. Staff will verify with the state if this would be an eligible expense for an educational material item. The Bismarck Timeline could also be reframed and turned into a short history series, potentially utilizing Dakota Media Access. The discussion involved identifying how the city should be involved, and one idea was that instead of applying for the funds itself, the City could support other groups in the community who would be applying for grant funding and assistance with those associated historical narratives or information.

Another idea included having the city apply for a specific project, and other community organizations applying for their own, but combining the various projects to be cohesive. The group included having City staff reach out to other groups in the community to gain knowledge of anything they may be planning for next year and determining if there is potential to tie those projects together. The Bismarck Historical Society is going to verify with their board what they'd like to do, and they will give staff an update. Staff reached out to several sign companies regarding the story walk display to see the different sign materials and options that could be utilized. Staff is researching potential funding options for the trading cards. The group, the City of Bismarck and the State Historical Society, would apply for the grant funds from the North Dakota 250 Community Initiatives Grant, however it would be submitted for the next review cycle which begins January 1st. This allows some time for the city to bring it to this board if they'd like to apply for grant funding, as well as obtain city commission approval as needed. The National Endowment for the Humanities Celebrate America Grant has extensive application requirements and due to this, application for these grant funds may be a secondary option and would be dependent on funds not being available, or not received from the state grant, or if the project's proposed budget be higher than anticipated, expenses could be covered under the state.

Commissioner Sakariassen received a phone call from Jan Webb with the Bismarck Art & Galleries Association (BAGA) requesting a meeting to see if the HPC would be interested in developing an exhibit at BAGA using the funds available with the North Dakota 250 Community Initiatives Grant. It was suggested an exhibit of artwork, or photographs related to Bismarck, encompassing buildings or architectural details or people and somehow tying art and the community together. Commissioner Sakariassen will meet with Ms. Webb and bring any information discussed to the HPC at the next meeting. It is anticipated BAGA would write the grant and the HPC would be involved with planning and advisement of subject material. Commissioner Hull asked if BAGA would be interested in any display that is created being moved to another location upon the end of the exhibit, much like the proposed signage for the story walk moving to the Bismarck Event Center.

Commissioner Pursley stated the HPC could do letters of recommendation to attach to other groups' grant applications, or create as many community partnerships as possible, rather than the HPC themselves applying for grant funds.

Commissioner Swanson suggested the HPC send out congratulatory letters to property owners that have had their properties listed on the National Register. It could also apply when a district is nominated.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Engel declared the meeting of the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 3:52 p.m. to meet again on October 15, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION REPORTS

Respectfully Submitted,

Annie Hojian
Recording Secretary

Damita Engel
Chair

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Engel and Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Lauren Oster, Planner

SUBJ: Historic Preservation Fair

MEETING: October 15, 2025

The idea for a Historic Preservation Fair was brought up by members of the Historic Preservation Plan subcommittee which includes community members that are not part of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). This idea was added as a potential strategy to accomplish goals and objectives of the Plan. The goal of the Historic Preservation Fair would be to provide an opportunity for members of the community who have questions related to preserving their properties or who are interested in the processes to be able to ask questions of multiple groups at one time.

What would be included at a Historic Preservation Fair?

Subcommittee members discussed several areas of what could be included at the fair.

- Speaker(s) or Panel Discussion Opportunity
- Workshop(s)
 - This could include window reglazing or other preservation-related activities for homeowners.
- Booths
 - These could include ones from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Bismarck Historical Society, cultural resource firms, contractors or trade businesses, educators, architects, or even individuals who work in historic preservation.
- Associated educational materials

Staff reached out to State Historic Preservation Office staff and members of the Bismarck Historical Society about participating in a local preservation fair earlier this year. Both groups said they would be open to it.

How could this be funded?

There is the potential to use some of the funds from the 2024 Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant for the Fair. Staff spoke to the grant coordinator for SHPO about what the funds could potentially be used for with the Fair. The funds could be used for marketing, promotion, and associated educational materials. Additionally, payments for services rendered, such as speaker's

fees at a grant-assisted workshop are allowable; however, funds are not permitted to be used for honoraria, especially when the primary intent is to confer distinction on, or to symbolize respect, esteem, or admiration for, a recipient.

Currently, approximately \$2,500 of the 2024 HPF grant is earmarked for a sports history brochure which is currently being worked on. Regular sized brochures that the Historic Preservation Commission have previously created have ranged in cost between \$1,000-\$1,500 based on design costs and quantity. Staff anticipate that this current brochure will be around that same price. Additionally, some items for the local history education resource project, like the kit trunks, were provided through other means, and staff no longer need to purchase those items. As such, there may be some additional funding available from that project that could be utilized for a Historic Preservation Fair.

Additionally, the Community Development Department requested a one time request for \$1,500 for a "Historic Preservation Conference" with the 2026 City Budget. This request was approved on September 9, 2025, by the City Commission. These funds could be used as a match for the grant funds.

What could the funds potentially go towards?

- Speaker fees for workshops
- Marketing/promotion of the event especially since it would be the first time it occurred.
 - Postcards for the event could be sent to property owners in all the current historic districts or in areas that we are currently looking to survey.
- Venue rental space
- Additional educational materials to be provide to attendees like handouts for potential funding sources, best practices for certain types of historic home projects, etc.

What could a potential timeline for a project like this be?

May is Historic Preservation Month every year. It could be beneficial to host it during this month. The potential timeline below is based on that possibility. However, it may not be possible to get everything in place in such a short time, so it may need to take place later in the year. Additionally, 2026 is the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, so this event could support other events and activities related to that.

Action	Date
Hold first subcommittee event planning meeting	November 2025
Beginning marketing/promotion of event	March 2026
Finalize a venue space	March/April 2026
Finalize speaker(s) and booth participants	April 2026
Finalize educational materials for event	April 2026
Hold event	May 2026

Staff Recommended Action

1. Determine if the HPC would like to host a Historic Preservation Fair.
 - 1) If the HPC would like to host the Fair, determine how it will be funded.
 - 2) If the HPC would like to host the Fair, determine who from the HPC will help plan it.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Engel and Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Lauren Oster, Planner

SUBJ: 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant Update

MEETING: October 15, 2025

Downtown District Survey

The goal of this project is to review and update properties within the current boundary of the Downtown Historic District and to conduct a survey of properties surrounding the current boundary of the historic district including those south of the railroad tracks.

Staff and Commissioners Pursley and Nodland met with staff from the State Historic Preservation Office at the end of September to discuss items to include in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Downtown District Survey project. Notes from this discussion as well as comments from Commissioners are included in the draft RFP. This draft is attached for discussion, and ultimately, approval.

Staff Recommended Action

Review and approve the draft RFP for the Downtown District Survey.

Attachments:

1. Draft RFP

Historic Preservation Plan

At the September 17, 2025, meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission asked that this project, and its associated documents, be brought back for further review and discussion at this meeting. The text version of the Plan and the implementation table are attached. These were not changed from their inclusion in last meeting's agenda.

Staff Recommended Action

Provide comments or suggestions on the Plan.

Attachments:

1. Draft Plan

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

A CLASS III INTENSIVE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF BISMARCK, ND

Issued: October 20, 2025

Proposals Due: December 19, 2025



City of Bismarck
221 North 5th Street
P.O Box 5503
Bismarck, ND 58506

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):

A CLASS III INTENSIVE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF BISMARCK, ND

Summary RFP Schedule:

RFP Issued	October 20, 2025
Proposal Deadline	December 19, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
Selection of Proposal by Historic Preservation Commission	February 18, 2026
Selection of Proposal by City Commission	March 2026

Any interested individual may request to be on an email list to receive updates on the RFP process, including addenda to the RFP if any are issued. The City may alter this RFP at any time.

Submittal Instructions

Proposals must be received by the City of Bismarck no later than **5:00 p.m. CST on December 19, 2025**. Proposals received after this deadline will not be accepted.

Send proposals and direct questions regarding the RFP to:

Lauren Oster,
Planner
City of Bismarck
PO Box 5503
Bismarck, ND 58504
laoster@bismarcknd.gov

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Purpose for Request

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission (BHPC) is looking to complete a Class III intensive architectural survey of properties surrounding Bismarck's current Downtown Historic District and to update the site forms for the Downtown Historic District (see the Proposed Survey Boundary Map under the [Resources section](#)). This will be inclusive of, but not limited to, conducting thorough background research, establishing a period(s) of significance, and completing and submitting a draft and final written report and all associated site forms for the Class III.

Additional buildings have become historic since the original investigation twenty-five years ago. All the historic buildings in the project area need to be evaluated to see if they still meet eligibility criteria, or contribute to additional time periods of significance or to additional themes to the current District (e.g., Urban Renewal). It is possible they need to be considered as separate a Historic District(s). There have been changes in this core area including changes to building appearances, demolitions, additions, and address changes. Today, the project area is comprised of commercial, public, office, and multi-family residential uses. The Class III project will look at structures built on or before 1980 in order to prepare for a possible amendment, or nomination, as a next step, that may occur after the conclusion of this Class Inventory.

Scope of Services

The BHPC, through this Request for Proposals, seeks a qualified consultant to conduct a Class III intensive architectural survey of the Downtown area.

The scope of services includes the following tasks:

1. **Archival Research & Historical Narrative.** Conduct thorough literature review of previous related projects and Class III inventories of the project area using the ND State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) system and other available materials. The project consultant will use all applicable archives, the State Historical Society of North Dakota, City, County, and other records, as needed, to gather data on the properties in the project area. This will include reviewing the previous National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Bismarck Downtown Historic District (see the [Resources section](#)).
2. **Architectural Intensive Survey.** Conduct an intensive level survey of buildings and structures within the identified survey boundary to collect new field data and complete new and updated site forms for qualifying properties. The intensive survey will:
 - a. Document the existing historic character and conditions of each property within the survey area, completing an North Dakota Cultural Resources Survey (NDCRS) Architectural Site Form for each property in the survey area. Data collected will include locational information, property boundaries, current ownership, date of construction, known architects or contractors, assessment of integrity, evaluation of significance under the NRHP Criteria, and site

photographs meeting or exceeding minimum NDCRS Site Form Data requirements.

- b. Update existing documentation of any previously recorded cultural resources within the survey area. Where eligibility has been recommended or determined in a previous survey, such recommendation will remain unchanged unless the consultant provides evidence that the statement warrants change.
 - c. Provide a historic context and architectural themes for the development of the survey area and make recommendations for future preservation activities, including evaluation of whether the current National Register of Historic Preservation (NRHP) historic district should be amended and/or if a new nomination should occur.
 - d. Not include entry onto private property. All work, including photography, will be conducted from the public right-of-way or property.
3. **Boundary Recommendation.** This would include the creation of a map showing the boundary for the period of significance. This boundary may be different from the current NRHP historic district boundary and should be noted if so. This should be updated based on current conditions identified within the survey area.
4. **Establish Period(s) of Significance and Themes.** A table identifying historically or architecturally significant properties, including evaluation of both individually eligible and contributing sites is required. The evaluation of the significance of historic properties using established criteria is required. This may include the application of the criteria within identified historic contexts and architectural themes of the current District or the consultant may provide revised historic contexts and/or architectural themes with justification.
5. **Formatting.** Edit all documents for grammar, punctuation, and clarity prior to submission to the BHPC or SHPO.
6. **Document Submission.** Submittal of the written report and NDCRS Architectural site forms for review and final submission must follow all SHPO site form and report requirements (see ND SHPO Guidelines Manual for Cultural Resource Inventory Projects and NDCRS Architectural Site Form Manual under the [Resources section](#)).
 - e. NDCRS architectural site forms will be submitted first to the BHPC for review and comments. The BHPC will provide comments within 15 days to the consultant. The consultant will have 15 days to make the corrections and will submit to SHPO. An initial ten percent of the site forms should be submitted to SHPO for review early on to ensure compliance with format and data requirements. Typically, SHPO has 15 days for review of the submitted site forms. The consultant will be responsible for making any modifications required by SHPO within 15 days of SHPO providing comments. Submission of revised site forms

should be submitted to SHPO by the end 2026, unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties.

- f. The draft written report will be submitted first to the BHPC for review and comments. The written report must address the survey results and methodology. The BHPC will provide comments within 30 days to the consultant. The consultant will have 15 days to make corrections and submit the written report to SHPO for review. Once submitted, SHPO has 30 days for review. If corrections are required, the consultant will have 15 days to make corrections and submit the revised written report to SHPO. SHPO will have 30 days for review of the revisions.
 - g. All final deliverables including, but not limited to, all required final hard and digital copies of the written report and site forms, photographs, and GIS data must be submitted to SHPO by May 31, 2027. Consultant is responsible for submitting all final deliverables and ensuring that they are accepted.
7. **Communications.** Maintain regular communications with Planning Division staff through email, meetings, or phone calls throughout the process of surveying the project area, filling out the site forms, and drafting the survey report, to include, at a minimum, monthly remote meetings with staff unless otherwise discussed. Staff will provide regular updates to the BHPC and SHPO on the progress of the project based on these communications.
- h. City of Bismarck Planning Division staff will include the staff coordinator of the BHPC and the Planning Manager. The Planning Division will remain a local resource to the consultant throughout the process. The Planning Division will help the consultant facilitate public engagement for this project including, but not limited to, property notifications, the addition of project resources on the City's website, and public input opportunities at public meetings.

Project Budget

The BHPC received funding for this project through the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grant which is distributed by the ND SHPO to North Dakota's Certified Local Governments. A fixed fee contract of an amount to be specified in the proposal, not to exceed \$34,670, will be used. Project costs may be invoiced at regular intervals throughout the project.

Community Profile

Bismarck, the capital city of North Dakota, is the second most populous city in the state with an estimated 2023 population of 75,092. The city is a growing regional retail and medical center that is consistently recognized as a great place to live for its quality schools, parks, open space, low crime, affordability, and strong economy.

The city is located on the banks of the Missouri River, which for thousands of years was the homeland of the Mandan tribal nation. Bismarck today is located near the Standing Rock and the Fort Berthold Reservations, homes of the Sioux Nation, and the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara.

The river has long served as a trade and transportation corridor, with Bismarck situated as the key commercial hub, developing adjacent to the transcontinental railroad. Bismarck served as the major shipping center for the military, freight, and settlers via the steamboat trade on the Upper Missouri until the railroad bridge was built. As Bismarck developed, the city grew into the financial, warehousing, and retail center of the region. Main Avenue housed the primary financial institutions of the region. The buildings along Main Avenue backing the railroad reflect the role of Bismarck as a key warehousing and distribution center, especially for fruits and vegetables. The west end of the Downtown District was the hub of automobile dealerships, garages, and body shops that reflect the city's important role in the transportation history of the region. The civic buildings, including the Courthouse, the Belle Mehus, and the WWII Auditorium signify the importance of public life of the Downtown. The historic hotels, bakeries, shops, and clubs represented the thriving social life of the city for over a century of Bismarck's history.

The Downtown Bismarck Historic District was designated in 2001. A subsequent amendment to the district was completed in 2012 to clarify some inconsistencies in the original nomination. The project area contains 11 properties already individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and 19 properties that are individually eligible/contributing within the current historic district boundary. Additionally, there is one NRHP Historic District within three blocks of the boundary of the project area, the Cathedral Area Historic District, and the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission is currently in the process of considering another potential future district nearby.

The buildings in the current Bismarck Downtown Historic District are assigned to the Period of Significance: 1872-1951. Within that, they are considered within the context of five time periods and assigned to several National Register Areas of Significance and Historic Functions: Commercial, Social, Political/Governmental, and Warehouse/Transportation:

- 1872 – 1897 Bismarck's Founding – Before the Great Fire
- 1898 – 1900 The First Great Dakota Boom Ending – After the Fire
- 1901 – 1918 The Second Dakota Boom
- 1918 – 1942 The Inter-War Years – between WWI and WWII
- 1942 – 1951 World War II and the Early Postwar Boom

Based on City Assessing records of the parcels in this project area, a majority of the buildings were built on or before 1975. The majority in the current Historic District fall in the time period between 1901-1942.

Resources

The following resources should be reviewed prior to submittal of a proposal:

1. [Proposed Downtown Survey Boundary Map](#)
2. [Downtown Historic District Nomination](#)
3. [North Dakota SHPO Guidelines Manual for Cultural Resource Inventory Projects](#)
4. [NDCRS Architectural Site Form Manual](#)
5. [Historic Preservation Commission Ordinance](#)

All manuals, forms, and ordinances provided as resources above are the most recent version available at the time of release for this RFP. However, it is up to the consultant to make sure that the most recent versions of these resources when are used when conducting services for this project.

Proposal Request and Selection Process

Schedule of Process

The schedule of the RFP issuance and evaluation process is intended to occur as follows. This schedule may be revised by the Community Development Director to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, contract negotiations, or additional review time needed as identified by either the BHPC or SHPO.

Event/Process	Date(s)
RFP Issued	October 20, 2025
Interested parties may correspond with the City for clarification on the RFP, if necessary. Interested parties are encouraged to leave contact information for updates.	October – December, 2025
Proposal Deadline	December 19, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
Proposal distributed to selection committee for review. The selection committee may conduct an initial cut-down of proposals based on evaluation criteria and may request virtual interviews.	December 29, 2025 – January 2, 2026

Remote consultant interviews conducted, if requested by selection committee.	January 5 - 9, 2026
Final recommendation of selection committee submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission for review in agenda packet.	January 16, 2026
Selection of proposal by Historic Preservation Commission for recommendation to City Commission.	January 21, 2026
Final recommendation of Historic Preservation Commission submitted to the City Commission for review in agenda packet.	February 3, 2026
Selection of proposal by City Commission.	February 10, 2026
Development of contract, including negotiation with the selected firm on terms, scope, conditions, and costs.	February 11 – March 13, 2026
Contract approval by City Commission.	March 24, 2026
Notice to proceed.	March 25, 2026
10 percent of physical site forms submitted to SHPO for review	TBD
Remaining site forms submitted to SHPO for review	TBD
Final Site Form Submittal	TBD
Draft Written Report to BHPC for review	TBD
Final Written Report to SHPO for review	April 1, 2027
Project Completion	June 30, 2027

Submittal Instructions

All proposals should be submitted in pdf format. Digital files may be transferred via email.

Lauren Oster,
 Planner
 City of Bismarck
 PO Box 5503
 Bismarck, ND 58504
laoster@bismarcknd.gov

Large files should be uploaded with a link to download files provided via email. The City is not responsible for communication errors. Consulting firms are advised to call the Planning office at 701-355-1840 to confirm that a submittal has been received.

Required Proposal Contents

Proposals should include sufficient information about the firm's qualifications and intended project approach to allow the selection committee to effectively evaluate the proposal. However, no proposal may be longer than 15 pages, excluding any attachments or linked documents. The following information should be provided, in no particular order:

1. **Firm Capacity.** Identify the size, history, and subject-matter expertise of the firm, as it relates to the purpose of this request. If any portion of the project would be subcontracted to additional firms, provide information about each subcontractor's qualifications.
2. **Work Products.** Provide the three most relevant examples of firm work products, as they relate to this request. Ideally, examples will involve historic architectural surveys or other work completed within the past ten years for a community with similar characteristics to Bismarck. However, projects in process or provided for larger cities may also be considered. Each community is different, and there is no expectation that the examples provided will align with Bismarck's own goals.
3. **Geographic Accessibility.** Describe the accessibility of the firm, and/or any proposed subcontractors, to the Bismarck geographic region. Describe travel, if necessary, which will be the responsibility of the selected firm.
4. **Individual Roles.** Identify the principal investigator and other staff who would perform the work, and describe the role, qualifications, and availability of each person. A single project manager should be identified with contact information included. The principal investigator for the project must be permitted as an architectural historian per NDCC 55-03-01 and NDAC 40-02-02 and must meet the professional qualification standards outlined in 36 CFR 61 for historians and architectural historians prior to contract approval. Other appropriate standards set forth in the ND SHPO guidelines must also be met.
5. **Project Approach.** Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of this request and the local context of Bismarck by suggesting an approach to meet each task listed in the scope of work above, including the historical narrative, the intensive survey, and the document submission process. Ensure that any approach will be compliant with any state and federal law that would intersect with provisions of conducting background research and an architectural reconnaissance survey.

6. **Timeline.** Propose a timeline for completion of each item in the project scope with the goal of final project completion on, or prior to, June 30, 2027. Identify and account for any potential revisions of site forms and the written report if necessary. The consultant is responsible for incorporating SHPO's required review periods for site forms and reports into their proposed timelines. It may be helpful to account for more than one review period.
7. **Itemized Budget.** Identify the total estimated cost for completion of the project, not to exceed \$34,670, and provide proportional cost estimates for each task described in the project approach. The itemized budget should include travel expenses, if any, and any other incidentals necessary to complete the work. Allowable travel costs cannot exceed the rates established by the State of North Dakota:
 - i. The rate of mileage cannot exceed the 70¢ per mile in North Dakota.
 - ii. The rate for meals cannot exceed \$45 per day per person in North Dakota.
 - iii. The rate paid for lodging cannot exceed the General Service Administration (GSA) rate per night per person.
8. **Staff collaboration.** Describe how the consultant intends to involve staff from the Planning Division and members of the BHPC. A basic communication plan involving all parties should be included.
9. **Proof of Insurance.** Consultant will be required to carry, for the period of the contract, Comprehensive General Liability Insurance (personal injury, bodily injury, and property damage to a combined single limit of \$2,000,000 for each occurrence and \$500,000 per person) and comply with worker's compensation insurance and employer's liability insurance as required under the laws of the State of North Dakota. The City of Bismarck must be listed as co-insured on these policies. Any and all sub-consultants must be similarly covered, either under their own or the general consultant's liability insurance policy.
10. **Conflict of Interest.** Describe any relationships involving the City of Bismarck, its employees, and/or the BHPC with a statement explaining why the relationship does not constitute a conflict of interest relative to rendering services as requested.
11. **Suggested Modifications or Additional Information (Optional).** The consultant may wish to provide recommendations as to potential changes to the scope of the project that would improve upon the final product, or the consultant may wish to provide additional information that would be useful to the selection committee. This is not required.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used as a standard to evaluate all proposals fairly. The evaluation will be conducted by a selection committee consisting of City officials and staff, and a recommendation will be presented to the Board of City Commissioners.

The following criteria, not in any particular order of priority, will be used:

1. **Firm Qualifications.** The qualifications and experience of the firm, demonstrated through previous performance and achievements with similar projects and clients. Any sub-consulting firms will also be considered in relation to their proposed role in the project.
2. **Grasp of Project.** The proposal of the firm is aligned with the purpose of this RFP and is consistent with the purposes and goals outlined in the Historic Preservation Commission Ordinance (see [Resources Section](#)).
3. **Project Approach.** The ideas and methods proposed by the firm to complete the scope of services, as contained herein, demonstrate a clear understanding of the issues, creativity, and problem-solving ability. The planning and scheduling techniques assure quality performance. It highlights the consultant's familiarity with the community and potential partners, pertinent local cultural resources, and historic preservation principles and methodology including all National Register Bulletins.
4. **Project Team.** The qualifications, experience, and availability of the principal consulting staff proposed to work on the project, including the variety of relevant disciplines evident on the team, as well as the availability and qualifications of sub-consulting staff, if any. The principal investigator is qualified according to the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards per 36 CFR 61 and is permitted as an architectural historian per NDCC 55-03-01 and NDAC 40-02-02. Project personnel have the technical capability, educational background, pertinent work experience, and the knowledge and familiarity with research sources and techniques needed to adequately complete the project.
5. **Firm Reliability.** The firm has demonstrated the ability to complete the project within the stated timeline and budget and the quality of work done on similar projects meets the State Historical Society of North Dakota standards.
6. **Project Cost.** Proposed cost to complete project. Identifies the ability to provide the best final product within the limitations of a set budget.

Other Information

Modifications to the Request

The City of Bismarck reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, make counter proposals and/or engage in negotiations with any or all firms or individuals, waive any requirements or otherwise amend this RFP, or cancel the RFP in order to achieve the City's goals and objectives. Any changes in the status of the RFP will be brought to the attention of all parties that provide contact information for updates. The information contained in this RFP represent the City's best information at the time of the release of the RFP and the City reserves the right to modify any term or condition contained herein.

If no agreement is reached during contract negotiations in a reasonable timeframe, the City of Bismarck reserves the right to cancel the RFP or select the next most-qualified firm, according to the same procedures.

Eligibility

The City of Bismarck requires that any chosen firm needs to be registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State's office to do business in North Dakota prior to contract approval.

Responsibility for Proposal Preparation

Except as otherwise specifically agreed to in writing by the City, all firms submitting proposals shall provide and pay for all materials, labor, transportation, charges, levies, taxes, fees or expenses incurred, including all costs to prepare a response to this RFP, travel and presentation costs, and all other services and facilities of every nature whatsoever necessary for the preparation of the RFP.

It is neither the City's responsibility nor practice to acknowledge receipt of any proposals as a result of the RFP process. It is the proposer's responsibility to assure that a proposal is delivered and received in a timely manner.

Civil Rights

Title VI assures that no person or group of persons may, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs or activities administered by the City of Bismarck.

The City of Bismarck will consider every request for reasonable accommodation to provide:

- An accessible meeting facility or other accommodation for people with disabilities,
- Language interpretation for people with limited English proficiency (LEP), and

- Translations of written material necessary to access City of Bismarck programs and information.

Appropriate provisions will be considered when the City of Bismarck is notified at least 10 days prior to the meeting date or the date the written material translation is needed.

To request accommodations, contact the City of Bismarck Title VI and ADA Coordinator, at 701-355-1336. TTY users may use Relay North Dakota at 711 or 1-800-366-6888.

No Conflict of Interest

No member of the Board of City Commissioners, Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission, member of the selection committee for this RFP, and any other officer, employee or agent of the City of Bismarck who exercises any functions or responsibilities in the selection of a proposal, shall have any personal interest, direct or indirect, in the project, unless said conflict is disclosed prior to any discussion and the member is recused from participation in selection of a firm.

Open Records/Proprietary Information

The City of Bismarck recognizes that in responding to this RFP, the proposer may desire to provide proprietary information in order to clarify and enhance their response. To the extent permitted by law, the City of Bismarck will keep confidential such information provided that:

1. The information submitted is arguably proprietary, and
2. The proprietary information is submitted in a separate file or section that is clearly identified as containing proprietary information.

Only information that is credibly proprietary may be included in the sealed portions of the submittal. Inclusion of non-proprietary significant information in the sealed portions may render a submittal ineligible.

Responders should note that the City of Bismarck is a municipality, and as such its files are available for public review pursuant to the North Dakota Constitution Article XI, Section 6 and NDCC Chapter 44-04-18 unless otherwise exempt.

Ownership of Project Materials

Any and all deliverables, meeting notes, data, illustrations, and other materials created as final work products through an awarded project will be the property of the State Historical Society of North Dakota as a public record, unless otherwise noted.

This program receives federal funds from the National Park Service through the State Historical Society of North Dakota. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair Engel and Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Lauren Oster, Planner

SUBJ: 2025 Historic Preservation Fund Grant Update

MEETING: September 17, 2025

The City of Bismarck was awarded \$34,790 in funding from the 2025 Historic Preservation Fund grant. This funding will be used to perform a Downtown District Survey and finalize the Historic Preservation Plan. A minimum match of \$23,193 in donated labor is required for this grant. Several items will require review by Commissioners outside of the regular monthly meetings. Staff suggest that Commissioners, if possible, keep track of this review time as this can be used as part of the donated labor match.

Downtown District Survey

The goal of this project is to review and update properties within the current boundary of the Downtown Historic District and to conduct a survey of properties surrounding the current boundary of the historic district including those south of the railroad tracks. A copy of the proposed project map and a copy of the project's description that were submitted with the application are attached for your reference.

City staff anticipate setting up a meeting with staff from the State Historic Preservation Office to discuss their thoughts on the RFP and the project as whole. A tentative timeline for this project is identified below. To stay on track, staff plan to include a draft RFP at the October 15, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission meeting for review.

Scope of Work/RFP	October 1, 2025
Choose Proposal	December – February 2026
Contract Development/Approval	February - March 2026
Consultant Notice to Proceed	March 2026
Site Forms for Review	November 2, 2026
Draft Written Report to HPC	January 4, 2027
Draft Written Report to SHPO	February 15, 2027
Final Survey Report	May 31, 2027

Staff Recommended Action

Determine which Commissioners would like to help with drafting the RFP for this project.

Attachments:

1. Project Item from Application
2. Proposed Downtown District Map

Historic Preservation Plan

On the August 20, 2025, meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission asked for an update on the Historic Preservation Plan to be provided at the September 17, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission meeting. A subcommittee was created in 2024 to finalize the work previously conducted on the Historic Preservation Plan. The subcommittee meets regularly once a month, and it includes community members, Historic Preservation Commissioners, and city staff.

A copy of the project's description that was submitted with the application is attached for your reference. Recent work on the Plan has included the creation of the implementation table for the goals and objectives; the inclusion of the *Threats to Historic Resources* section; and editing portions of the documents. The version of the draft Plan included in the agenda only includes text for the document and the implementation table. Photos, graphics, other tables, and graphs will be added later when staff begins work on the digital copy of the Plan.

A tentative timeline for this project is identified below. Work will begin on the digital copy at the next scheduled subcommittee meeting for October 9.

Begin Design Work for Plan	October 1, 2025
Design Work/Revise Draft.....	October 2025 – February 2026
Public Comment Period for Plan	February – April 2026
Final Draft Completed	May 2026
Forward to HPC for Approval	June 2026
Forward to SHSND for Review/Approval	July 2026
Forward to City Commission for Approval.....	August 2026
Add to Historic Preservation page City Website	August 2026
Project Completion	August 2026

Staff Recommended Action

Provide comments or suggestions on the Plan or the project timeline.

Attachments:

1. Project Item from Application
2. Draft Plan



Historic Preservation Commission adoption
City Commission adoption

Acknowledgements

Bismarck Board of City Commissioners

Michael Schmitz, President
Anne Cleary
John Risch
Michael Connelly
Greg Zenker

Others

Tory Jackson
Blake Dinkins
Calvin Grinnell
Will Hutchings
Kim Lee

Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission

Amy Sakariassen
Beth Nodland
Damita Engel
Greg Zenker
Scooter Pursley
John Swanson
Matthew Hull

Cover Photo:

Blake Dinkins - Photo Collage of East Main Avenue

Historic Preservation Plan Subcommittee

Emily Sakariassen
Amy Bleier
Deb Jaeger
Matt Heilman

City of Bismarck Staff

Ben Ehreth, Community Development
Director
Daniel Nairn, Planning Manager
Lauren Oster, Planner
Isak Johnson, Planner

SHPO

Lorna Meidinger
Amy Munson

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Introduction

Our place along the Missouri River has been a bustling crossroads of trade and transportation for hundreds of years. We share a rich and diverse history, steeped in the oral traditions of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara, the Lakota and Dakota and other tribes. That history was transformed by exploration and the fur trade, steamboat travel, military campaigns and conflict. At the end of the 19th Century, our forebears experienced the coming of the railroad, western settlement, immigration and homesteading, the “Golden Age” of agriculture, and energy development. This heritage is embodied in historical, architectural, and cultural resources throughout our community.

Bismarck has a tremendous wealth of historic resources that contribute to the unique identity and strong character of the community. The city’s historic resources contribute to the unique character of our community in a variety of ways. Many of these resources may be vulnerable to development pressures, environmental factors, neglect and other modern threats. The City of Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission has created this plan to provide guidance on historic preservation activities for the City. The Plan along with the resources cited and definitions of historic character are meant to provide an understanding of the past and current state of our historic resources in this community. The identified goals and objectives [\[Add Section Reference\]](#) will provide a framework for future historic preservation activities.

How to use this document

This Plan is a policy document to guide the work of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and provides a comprehensive overview for the public of the Historic Preservation Commission's roles, responsibilities, and goals. The plan begins with an overview of Bismarck’s history through themes and events identified in the Timeline of Bismarck History. Next, it introduces readers to key principles of historic preservation and discusses ways numerous groups engage in preservation efforts in Bismarck. The plan defines the relationships between some of these groups, and the regulatory framework for historic preservation at the local, state, and federal levels. Lastly, the plan lays out the Historic Preservation Commission’s goals and objectives, with actionable items for implementation over the course of the next several years. An appendix provides the supporting data and information used to produce the plan.

Background

What is Historic Preservation?

Historic preservation is any activity that identifies, protects, maintains, or enhances places of historic and/or cultural value. Preservation aims to keep such places in active use by encouraging appropriate treatments to sustain their usefulness and maintain the aspects that define their significance as historic and cultural resources.

Why is Historic Preservation important?

Reasons to save historic places vary widely, but studies have shown that the preservation movement contributes to a collective wellbeing in several key ways, having economic, environmental, cultural and education benefits for our community.

“Tangible and intangible resources...can show us, if we take a moment to reflect on these, a unique and inspirational story of human existence in this wide and windswept part of the upper plains.”

- Amy Sakariassen, HPC

Historic preservation is an integral part of other goals and objectives of the City that support all aspects of the Bismarck community, including housing, public safety, education, public health, arts, and general social capital.

The economic benefits for historic preservation include:

- Providing sales tax dollars which can boost hospitality and travel industries.
- Fostering vibrant, cultural places that draw tourism, art, festivals, and other activities which in turn draw investment, revenue, and economic growth.
- Creating specialized and highly skilled jobs.
- Stabilizing property values and bolstering neighborhood cohesion.
- Lower costs for rehabilitation or adaptive reuse compared to new construction since new costly civic infrastructure is not required, and the majority of costs are for labor rather than materials.

This combination of preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures can help reduce the number of properties considered to be blighted.

Historic preservation lessens environmental impacts.

Historic rehabilitation reduces waste while preserving cultural heritage. Reusing an existing building prevents loss of buildings, materials and crafts indicative of their time and place. Maintaining existing inventories of historic properties reduces the adverse effects of urban sprawl. Historic districts are typically more walkable and facilitate the

use of other forms of transportation such as bicycles and scooters, which reduce the need for automobile travel to complete most tasks.

[Figure: Preparing for demolition of the former Carnegie Bismarck Public Library, located at 6th Street and Thayer Avenue, in 1980. Image courtesy of Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library (Bismarck: Capital City Memories 1c-30).]

[Figure: Ruins of the former Carnegie Bismarck Public Library, demolished in 1980. Image courtesy of Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library (Bismarck: Capital City Memories 1c-33).]

Historic preservation bolsters the culture of the community.

Historic preservation reinforces a sense of place, identity, evolution, ownership, and community. Historic sites, buildings and districts provide tangible reminders that strengthen civic pride and convey what makes Bismarck unique. Building on an understanding and appreciation for our community's past can also help inform our community's future.

[\[Recommend a photo from the upcoming September food truck festival to be held in front of the historic downtown rail depot – photo should feature the building as well as indicators of the space being activated and used by the public\]](#)

Educational opportunities are supported by historic preservation.

Historic preservation elevates discussions about our community and the past endeavors of residents. Understanding the past informs decisions that help encourage civic pride and guide future decisions. It also serves as another way to welcome new residents to the City and the area by creating a shared understanding of the past. School curriculums that promote the history of the community help build a sense of hometown pride and offer a local historic lens within the greater context of our state, national and world history.

[Figure: Historic Sites Supervisor for the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Jonathan Campbell, gives a public presentation at Camp Hancock State Historic Site, 101 E Main, Bismarck.]

Who Engages in Historic Preservation?

At the federal level, the National Park Service sets the standards for the treatment and management of historically significant resources, and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) oversees various preservation programs including the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and State Historic Sites Registry.

At the local level, Bismarck's Historic Preservation Commission implements the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, while special interest groups, non-profits, and individuals carry out a variety of activities that celebrate, promote, or preserve area history.

Bismarck Residents

Property owners who purchase older homes or buildings may invest time and money of their own into preservation, keeping a resource in active use. Those whose historic

property is listed or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP may also qualify for financial incentives for the maintenance of the property. This investment, in addition to owning a piece of Bismarck's historic fabric, results in pride of ownership.

[Insert Window Repair Figure]

[as a side bar/photo caption]: Historic commercial buildings are often more affordable than new construction and attract small businesses. By their nature, they are frequently located in a city or town's commercial core, tied to existing infrastructure in destinations that draw residents and visitors alike.

[Insert Repair 1 and 2 Figures]

[as a side bar/photo caption]: "Charm" is often part of the appeal of living in a historic home. Historic houses tend to have unique architectural features, quality craftsmanship, and walkability. Located in older neighborhoods and historic districts, they may even have higher rates of appreciation than properties elsewhere.

Visitors

Many of Bismarck's major tourist attractions include historic events and activities and historic sites, including Bismarck's historic downtown where visitors sleep, shop, and eat. Other notable historic sites include:

- North Dakota Heritage Center and State Museum
- State Capitol Building
- United Tribes Technical College International Powwow
- Camp Hancock
- Former Governors Mansion

[Figure: Visitor admires the recently-restored stained glass windows in the 1881 Bread of Life Church while touring the Camp Hancock State Historic Site, 101 E Main, Bismarck.]

[Figure: Passengers aboard the Lewis & Clark Riverboat take photographs as they approach the 1883 Northern Pacific Rail Bridge spanning the Missouri River.]

Bismarck History

Prior to the founding of Bismarck, the Missouri River has been a hub of human activity for thousands of years. In the Archaic period (5500 – 400 BC), early hunters camped on nearby bluffs, following herds of bison, elk, or deer. In the Late Plains Woodland period (1000 AD) people began to cultivate the resources of the Missouri River valley and established the first permanent community along Apple Creek. By the 14th century, the farming villages of the Mandan were the center of a trans-continental trade network that came to include the Hidatsa and, later, the nomadic Lakota. By the end of this era, the population in the area around Bismarck, from the Mandan villages alone, was likely close to 20,000.

From 1783 to 1872, new groups entered the region. The Lakota emerged as a dominant power on the Northern Plains while European and American trappers, traders, and explorers followed the Missouri River and its tributaries further into the continent's interior. Euro-American disease decimated Mandan and Hidatsa villages. The Lewis & Clark Expedition (1804-1806) wintered with the Mandan near present-day Washburn. Their reports ushered in an age of westward expansion. The military established a strong presence along the Missouri River to protect the nation's economic interests. Lakota resisted white encroachment under leadership including Tatanka Iyotanka (Sitting Bull). In the mid-1800s the Arikara were forced northward and what would become the Three Affiliated Tribes (Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara) consolidated near the Knife River.

"The river, in all seasons and in all its varied aspects, we have found it beautiful. And dear it will ever be, this wild, majestic, ever changing river, to the hearts of all who have learned to revere the works of nature." Linda Slaughter, 1870.

Originally named Edwinton after the Northern Pacific Railroad chief engineer, Bismarck was founded in 1872 at a location selected as an ideal crossing for the coming railroad. Early businesses supported military forts and steamboat trade on the upper Missouri River. Custer and the 7th Cavalry rode from Fort Lincoln to their defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn by Lakota and Cheyenne. The Northern Pacific Railroad bridge was completed, and Bismarck became the territorial and, later, state capital. Institutions like the Bismarck Tribune, St. Alexius Hospital, and First National Bank emerged. The region experienced an economic boom as merchants, tradespeople, and other opportunists arrived.

"The citizens of Bismarck may congratulate themselves upon the action of the railroad...as the permanent crossing of the Missouri River by the N.P. railroad will add greatly to the attractiveness of Bismarck, facilitate business interests, and with the city's natural advantages, commercially, make it the point of importance in the Missouri River valley." -Bismarck Tribune Sep 24, 1880

Bismarck was a growing capital city. From 1898 to 1930, it prospered as a regional distribution center. European immigration swelled, agricultural prices rose, and North Dakota became the number one wheat-producing state. The community suffered through the Great Fire of 1898 and managed to rebuild, with stone and brick public buildings, churches, and commercial structures that replaced the wood-framed buildings of yesteryear. The Nonpartisan League dominated state politics as nationwide social movements took hold, including Women's suffrage. When the U.S. entered the Great War in Europe, the men, women, and children of Bismarck answered the call of duty.

A shifting social and political climate in the 1930s and early 1940s, coupled with extreme weather conditions affecting agriculture, challenged the people of Bismarck and North Dakota. Federal relief programs to support the arts, architecture, engineering, farming, and conservation created jobs and put men, women, and even young people to work. The new Art Deco style State Capitol building was completed and touted as the “Skyscraper on the Prairie.” The Army National Guard established Fraine Barracks as its headquarters, on the campus of the former Bismarck Indian School. The country was called once again to serve in a World War.

Bismarck experienced mid-century growth in the post- World War II years, from 1945 to 1965. It outgrew its core as veterans returned from World War II and settled in urban areas in record numbers. Completion of the Interstate Highway system and the Grant Marsh Bridge drew commercial and residential development north. The Garrison Dam on the Missouri River was authorized under the Pick-Sloan Act and provided flood protection for farm and ranch lands to the south of Bismarck, at the same time the Lake Sakakawea Reservoir inundated tribal communities to the north. The discovery of oil in western North Dakota stirred excitement, created jobs, and brought newfound wealth.

From the mid-1960s through 1999, Bismarck became a regional leader in higher education, briefly attracting Job Corps training programs, as Bismarck Junior College and University of Mary grew, and United Tribes Technical College was founded. Residents embraced arts, culture, and recreation. The Heritage Center and State Museum opened its doors, the Bismarck Civic Center was built, Sleepy Hollow Summer Theater and Arts Park was created, and Bismarck hosted the first of many Prairie Rose State Games and the state’s Centennial celebration.

Bismarck faced unprecedented growth at the turn of the 21st century. The City withstood natural disasters and grappled with social, environmental, and political issues. The Bakken Oil Boom brought an influx of people and new businesses to the area, boosting the local economy. The community banded together to combat major floods on the Missouri River. Tensions rose when Energy Transfer Partners’ Dakota Access Pipeline crossed under Lake Oahe southeast of Bismarck, and the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Burleigh County in March 2020. The City of Bismarck established its Historic Preservation Commission to promote awareness of local history and historic resources. The City of Bismarck celebrated its sesquicentennial (150th anniversary).

“It’s important to have people talk about these histories, just like it’s important to talk about what happened here in North Dakota, what happened to the Missouri River, how do we...affect generations to come?” - Alisha Hall, Superintendent Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site

Overview of the Historic Preservation Commission

"The CLG program provides important resources that have helped preserve our downtown district...and have furthered our understanding of Grand Forks' urban development throughout time. Sharing this work with the community helps to foster a greater appreciation for our shared cultural heritage and local history." - Susan Caraher, Grand Forks Historic Preservation Commission

Upon the request of citizens, the City of Bismarck applied to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) in the summer of 2018, drafting ordinance amendments to establish a historic preservation purpose and declaration of public policy and establish a Historic Preservation Commission, defining its powers and duties, membership terms, appointments, and qualifications. The ordinance was adopted by the City Commission on January 8, 2019.

After submitting all necessary requirements to the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service, the City of Bismarck received notice that it was granted Certified Local Government status on April 29, 2019. Bismarck is the 2012th local government to join the ranks as a partner in the Federal Preservation Program and the eighth Certified Local Government in North Dakota.

What advantages does the community gain by joining the CLG program?

- Greater control of local preservation issues.
- Better access to federal funding for local preservation projects.
- Direct participation in the National Register nomination process.
- Greater access to expertise, assistance, and guidance in resource management.

[as a side bar/photo caption]: Each year the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office allocates 10% of the federal funding they receive for individual CLGs, through a competitive application process. The funds received must be matched by the City with 40% or more of local funds or in-kind labor or donations.

The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission is an advisory board made up of six local historic preservation experts and a Bismarck City Commissioner. The Commission's main responsibilities are to advise on matters related to nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, assist in the nomination process, document historic resources and properties, and work to promote and educate community members about the city's history, heritage, historic properties and past citizens. The Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission also serves as a resource for citizens and the city to seek local historic expertise, as needed.

Plan Development Summary

The preservation planning process for the City of Bismarck spanned several years, starting in June 2019, when the Historic Preservation Commission identified the need to create a preservation plan to guide participation in the CLG program. The HPC held a series of special meetings beginning in August 2019 to define its goals and objectives. Tasks were assigned that included reviewing existing historic resources, developing historic contexts, garnering community insight on preservation issues, and identifying specific preservation planning goals and objectives and the actions necessary for achieving them.

A partial draft of the Historic Preservation Plan was presented by City Staff on February 14, 2020; the final plan was adopted by the City of Bismarck HPC on [REDACTED] and the Bismarck City Commission on [REDACTED].

Members of the HPC, City Staff, and volunteer members of the community have all contributed to this years-long planning process. Key planning activities included:

- **National Alliance for Historic Preservation Commissions conference (September 16, 2020)**

City Staff participated in the National Alliance for Historic Preservation Commissions and were introduced to several model historic preservation plans.

- **Historic Context development (January 2021 - March 2023)**

The HPC formed a subcommittee to focus on a section of the Historic Preservation Plan that would serve as a historic context for understanding local history and prioritizing preservation activities. The section was to be organized by historical eras and themes and presented as a timeline.

From January 2021 through March 2023, HPC Commissioners Dinkins, Nodland, and Jackson (chair) along with several members of the community worked on developing this timeline of Bismarck history, culminating in a bound book and digital interactive website. The timeline was launched on March 15, 2023, with a public event that coincided with other Sesquicentennial celebrations held in 2023 by various entities throughout the community. The publication is available from the Bismarck Community Development office in the City/County office building.

[Insert Timeline 1 and 2 Figures]

- **Second Draft Historic Preservation Plan (August 10, 2023)**

The HPC reviewed an updated draft of the Historic Preservation Plan. Staff reviewed the intent of the Plan stating, “the Bismarck Historic Preservation Plan is to ultimately serve as an encyclopedia of resources, including information on tax credits, legislation, and organizations, that are relevant to the goal of historic preservation throughout the Bismarck community specifically (though much of the information could be applied to other communities as well).”

- **Historic Preservation Survey results (May 10, 2024)**

City Staff developed and disseminated an online survey to gauge public interest in historic preservation issues. The survey received over 100 responses from community members. Members of the community who answered the survey were asked if they would like to serve on the Historic Preservation Plan subcommittee. As a result, the subcommittee was reformed to include volunteers from the community.

- **Final Historic Preservation Plan (DATE)**

Goals & Objectives

The following implementation table identifies the goals, objectives, and anticipated timeframes to implement associated strategies. These will provide a framework for future historic preservation activities that the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission will strive to accomplish.

Time Frames
Now (0-3 years)
Soon (3-5 years)
Next (5-10 years)

Priority
1= low priority
5= high priority

Funding is required. Identify a source(s).
Funding may be required. Identify a potential source(s) if it is.
Funding is not required. Identification not required.

Goal 1: Celebrate the heritage of Bismarck					
Objective	Time Frame	Priority	Recommended Strategy	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
A. Promote civic pride by highlighting Bismarck's unique character and culture	Now (0-3 years)	1	1) Continue instituting annual preservation awards	City of Bismarck	
	Now (0-3 years)	2	2) Encourage plaques for buildings and sites on the National Register of Historic Places	The Downtowners, local residents in NRHP districts, local businesses, City of Bismarck	
	Now (0-3 years)	2	3) Collaborate with the community partners on oral history programs	Bismarck Historical Society, SHSND, City of Bismarck	
B. Encourage social engagement in heritage events and activities	Now (0-3 years)	1	1) Participate in and promote Bismarck's Founders Day celebrations	City of Bismarck, Bismarck Historical Society	
	Now (0-3 years)	5	2) Celebrate Historic Preservation Month every May	Bismarck Historical Society, SHSND, Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, City of Bismarck	
	Now (0-3 years)	3	3) Participate in and promote the Bismarck Historical Society monthly presentation program	Bismarck Historical Society, City of Bismarck	
	Now (0-3 years)	1	4) Create interactive GIS StoryMaps or other digital resources highlighting events and activities	City of Bismarck	

Goal 2: Preserve places that represent the City's heritage, its historic properties, and the past endeavors of its residents.					
Objective	Time Frame	Priority	Recommended Strategy	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
A. Prepare and maintain a comprehensive inventory of historically significant and potentially eligible properties within the City.	Now (0-3 years)	1	1) Maintain and conduct annual updates to a map of all site and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places	City of Bismarck	
	Now (0-3 years)	1	2) Maintain and conduct annual updates to a map showing all structures over 45 years of age	City of Bismarck	
B. Encourage good stewardship of historic places	Now (0-3 years)	3	1) Create and/or distribute handouts on historically appropriate renovations, alterations, tax credits and maintenance to residents in historic neighborhoods	City of Bismarck, SHSND, realtors	
	Now (0-3 years)	3	2) Monitor for development patterns that may impact historic and cultural resources within and adjacent to the City	City of Bismarck, local developers	
	Now (0-3 years)	3	3) Develop, provide and maintain design guidelines and "best practices" for historic properties	City of Bismarck, SHSND	
C. Facilitate disaster and resilience planning for historic properties	Now (0-3 years)	4	1) Identify historic areas at risk and prioritize proactive mitigation and resilience measures for those most at risk	City of Bismarck, SHSND	
	Soon (3-5 years)	5	2) Engage residents in historic neighborhoods to conduct basic property documentation on their homes prior to disasters	City of Bismarck, SHSND, cultural resource management firms, local residents, local businesses	
	Soon (3-5 years)	2	3) Incorporate preservation goals into community disaster plan(s) like the Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan	City of Bismarck	

Goal 3: Encourage historic preservation as part of the City's economic planning and development					
Objective	Time Frame	Priority	Recommended Strategy	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
A. Identify and promote funding for historic preservation projects or initiatives.	Now (0-3 years)	3	1) Maintain and update a list of local, state, and federal funding sources on the city's Historic Preservation webpage	City of Bismarck, SHSND	
	Soon (3-5 years)	4	2) Explore additional local funding avenues to help fund programs related to historic preservation	City of Bismarck, financial institutions, SHSND, private organizations	

B. Develop materials, programs, or areas that help bolster Bismarck's heritage tourism.	Now (0-3 years)	2	1) Develop historic walking maps/tours	City of Bismarck, SHSND, local tour guides, Bismarck Historical Society, The Downtowners	
	Now (0-3 years)	4	2) Provide historic district markers, street signs, interpretive signage, and/or wayfinding elements	City of Bismarck, SHSND, local businesses, The Downtowners, Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, Dakota West Arts Council	
	Soon (3-5 years)	1	3) Create brochures and digital media of historic districts, buildings, people, and events	City of Bismarck, SHSND, Bismarck Historical Society, Dakota West Arts Council	
	Next (5-10 years)	3	4) Determine the feasibility of creating a Bismarck-specific exhibit in a publicly accessible location	City of Bismarck, SHSND	
C. Promote the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures as a benefit of economic growth	Now (0-3 years)	2	1) Encourage adaptive reuse as an option for affordable housing while still protecting life and safety through application of the existing building code	City of Bismarck, local developers, local tradespeople	
	Now (0-3 years)	2	2) Identify and provide information on appropriate adaptive treatments, such as for accessibility or aging in place		

Goal 4: Advocate for historic preservation to other public entities.

Objective	Time Frame	Priority	Recommended Strategy	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
A. Coordinate historic preservation efforts and regulations among city documents and departments	Now (0-3 years)	5	1) Provide yearly updates to City Commission about the Historic Preservation Commission's previous year's activities and new or updated local, state and federal policy and statute changes	City of Bismarck	
	Soon (3-5 years)	4	2) Assess and coordinate with local repositories (e.g., libraries) to increase awareness of historical resources such as books, videos, or websites	City of Bismarck, Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library, SHSND, Bismarck Historical Society	
	Now (0-3 years)	2	3) Assist and provide feedback on pertinent City of Bismarck plans, studies, guidelines and ordinance changes	City of Bismarck	
B. Enhance existing or develop additional preservation programs	Next (5-10 years)	5	1) Consider creating a local landmark designation program	City of Bismarck	
	Next (5-10 years)	4	2) Update the Historic Preservation Plan every 10 years	City of Bismarck	
C. Develop and maintain the capacity and excellence of the Historic Preservation Commission	Now (0-3 years)	3	1) Participate in ongoing training opportunities including heritage and preservation conferences	City of Bismarck, Bismarck Historical Society	
	Now (0-3 years)	2	2) Create a quarterly newsletter with information on Commission projects and current historic preservation resources	Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission	

Goal 5: Educate the public about Bismarck's heritage and the benefits of historic preservation.

Objective	Time Frame	Priority	Recommended Strategy	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
A. Educate young community members about Bismarck's history	Now (0-3 years)	3	1) Develop and provide educational resources, lectures, online lesson plans, and curricula to area schools	Bismarck Public Schools, Bismarck Historical Society, SHSND, City of Bismarck, United Tribes Technical College, BSC, University of Mary	
	Soon (3-5 years)	3	2) Encourage schools to integrate more Bismarck-specific history into the Social Studies curriculum	Bismarck Public Schools, Bismarck Historical Society, SHSND, City of Bismarck	
B. Identify and provide historic preservation training opportunities for the public	Soon (3-5 years)	4	1) Partner with local contractors and workforce training centers to encourage integration of historic rehabilitation training	ND Chapter AIA, general contractors or trades associations, cultural resource management firms, BSC, Bismarck Public Schools, City of Bismarck	

	Now (0-3 years)	5	2) Create and sponsor a Historic Preservation Fair	City of Bismarck, SHSND, Bismarck Historical Society, cultural resource management firms, local tradespeople, United Tribes Technical College, BSC, University of Mary, ND Chapter AIA	
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Goal 6: Engage community members in historic preservation processes					
Objective	Time Frame	Priority	Recommended Strategy	Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities
A. Identify ideas about historic preservation from the public through a variety of methods and techniques	Now (0-3 years)	5	1) Use a quick response (QR) code to direct people to the Historic Preservation Commission website when participating in events or when sponsoring a historic preservation booth or table	City of Bismarck	
	Now (0-3 years)	3	2) Utilize art as an engagement method to foster dialogue and understanding of Bismarck's history and historic preservation	City of Bismarck, SHSND, Dakota West Arts Council	
B. Ensure a robust and inclusive engagement process	Now (0-3 years)	4	1) Develop a public participation framework to utilize for large projects like National Register of Historic Places nominations	City of Bismarck	
	Now (0-3 years)	3	2) Utilize digital and in-person options as a way for individuals to engage with historic preservation events, policies, and projects	City of Bismarck	
	Soon (3-5 years)	4	3) Encourage input from local underrepresented groups about additional information that should be included in resources and projects related to Bismarck's history	City of Bismarck, SHSND, United Tribes Technical College	

Applicable Preservation Laws

This Historic Preservation Plan was proposed and adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission to further the purposes of the city ordinance that created the commission; guide the commission in the exercise of its powers and duties under the ordinance; guide the City in fulfilling its obligations pursuant to the Local Government Certification Agreement; and foster public input and interest in the commission's work.

The powers and duties of the commission may in some cases be informed or affected by various local, state and federal laws. The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of this legal context.

Local Preservation Laws

The following laws, policies, and agreements apply to the City of Bismarck:

Historic Preservation Commission Ordinance

Chapter 2-12 of the City Code of Ordinances was adopted by the Bismarck Board of City Commissioners on January 8, 2019, to create the Historic Preservation Commission. The purpose of the ordinance is to preserve historic properties and districts by providing guidance on the various functions of the City relating to the built environment. The ordinance establishes the membership, powers, and duties of the commission, including the responsibility to inventory historic assets, make recommendations to the City Commission and other political bodies regarding historic preservation, and develop educational programs and outreach.

Local Government Certification Agreement

The City of Bismarck and the State Historical Society of North Dakota entered into an agreement on April 17, 2019, to establish a Certified Local Government Program. The City agrees to various undertakings, some of which mirror various provisions of the ordinance, including the following enforcement of various federal, state, and local historic preservation laws, as described below, and adherence to other requirements of the national Certified Local Government Program. As a member of this program, the City of Bismarck cooperates closely with the State Historical Society to achieve these objectives.

Design Review Standards

Sections 14-04-21.1(4)(c) and 14-04-21.2(4)(c) of the Bismarck Code of Ordinances contain design review standards applicable to the restoration and rehabilitation of historically significant buildings within the zoning districts known as the Downtown Core

District (DC) and Downtown Fringe District (DF). Historically significant buildings are defined as any building on the National Register of Historic Places, individually eligible for listing, or identified as contributing to the downtown Bismarck historic district, or any building more than 50-years old that may be determined to be historically significant on a case-by-case basis. In general, restoration or rehabilitation of historically significant buildings should reflect the original architectural character of the building and its characteristics, and new designs should be consistent with traditional features. Rehabilitation is encouraged to conform to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. All such projects are subject to review by the Downtown Design Review Committee, and the ordinance requirements are supplemented by the Downtown Design Review Guidelines.

State of North Dakota Historic Preservation Laws

The North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) contains various provisions regarding historic preservation. Pursuant to the Local Government Certification Agreement summarized above, the City has agreed to cooperate with and assist the State Historical Society and comply with the following statutes:

Protection of Artifacts and Sites (NDCC 55-02-07)

Any historical or archaeological artifact or site on City-owned land may not be disturbed without the approval of the State Historical Board, although there are some exceptions to protect public health and safety. The State Historical Board Director determines the significance of any historical resource and provides direction to the City for the protection of this resource, and the city and state director cooperate on historic preservation actions, including the exploration of any alternatives to demolition or alteration.

Protection of Location Data (NDCC 55-02-07.1)

The director of the State Historical Society may limit access to, and release of, files which contain data that specifically identifies the location of archaeological, historical, or paleontological sites in North Dakota.

Required Permits (NDCC 55-03-01.1 and 55-03-02)

Any person engaged in the investigation, excavation, or other recording of cultural resources on land owned by an instrumentality of the state or in the excavation of cultural resources on private land, must obtain a permit from the director of the state historical society.

Retention of Materials (NDCC 55-03-06)

When the city sells, conveys, transfers, or leases land, title to any and all archaeological or paleontological materials, whether found upon or below the surface of the land, must be retained by the city.

State Historic Site Registry (NDCC 55-10-02(4), 55-10-07, 55-10-08, 55-10-09)

The state historic site registry is a publicly accessible listing of sites designated by the state historical board as state historic sites. A city may not demolish or cause to alter the physical features or historic character of any site listed in the registry without prior approval from the director. The statute also governs the acquisition by a city of fee title or a historic easement with respect to a state historic site or property listed on the national register, provides for arbitration if a city disagrees with the director's disallowance of alteration or demolition of a site listed on the state registry, and requires the city to cooperate with the director in safeguarding state historic sites and in the preservation of historic and archaeological sites.

Federal Historic Preservation Laws

Federal law contains various provisions regarding historic preservation. The following obviously is not an exhaustive list, but summarizes some of the relevant federal laws:

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (54 U.S.C. 300101 *et seq.*)

Enacted in 1966, the NHPA is the primary federal historic preservation law. Among its many provisions, the law includes the number of provisions that are particularly relevant to the work of the Historic Preservation Commission, which are listed individually in this section.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The NHPA established the NRHP, an inventory of national historic resources. The NRHP is maintained by the National Park Service, which has developed criteria for evaluating nominations.

To be listed, the resource must “possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association” and:

1. Be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
2. Be associated with the lives of significant persons in our past;
3. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a

significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

4. Yield or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Section 106 Review

The NHPA also establishes a regulatory review process known as Section 106 review. This review requires all federal agencies to consider the effects of any project engaged in or funded by an agency that could have an impact on a property listed or eligible to be listed on the national register. Various consulting parties participate in this review including the state historic preservation office and local government agencies and commissions. The review requires submitting federal agencies to provide documentation concerning the nature and scope of the proposed work. Typically, the end result is a determination of the potential effect on historic properties and resources.

Detailed requirements for the Section 106 Review are covered in the “Section 106 Applicant Toolkit” published by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). The publication is available on the government website www.ACHP.gov.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321)

Enacted in 1969, NEPA is one of the primary federal environmental protection laws. One of the stated goals of NEPA is to “preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage.” NEPA requires review and analysis of proposed major federal actions that could significantly affect the environment, including cultural and archaeological resources, most often through an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The NEPA review process includes the participation of federal, state, tribal and local agencies and various private stakeholders. Projects that fall outside the scope of NEPA review might still fall within the Section 106 review process.

Section 4(f) Review (49 U.S.C. 303 and 23 U.S.C. 138)

Originally enacted as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f) requires that a special effort must be made to preserve the natural beauty of public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites during transportation project development. The law applies to any project receiving funding or requiring approval from any agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Section 4(f) Review applies to all historic sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register. Any transportation project that affects Section 4(f) land must include an assessment, and the program or project requiring the use of such land will be approved only if there is no prudent and feasible alternative and it includes all possible planning to minimize harm to

the land or resources (unless there is a finding of *de minimis* impact on Section 4(f) property). The Federal Highway Administration has developed administrative procedures for the preparation, circulation and coordination of Section 4(f) documents. Unlike Section 106, which is primarily a consultative procedural law, Section 4(f) is a substantive law that can prevent a project from going forward if a prudent and feasible avoidance alternative is available.

Funding

Potential Tax Credits

Renaissance Zone Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (NDCC 40-63-06)

In addition to state income tax and property tax exemptions, state law provides a tax credit for investments in the historic preservation or renovation of property within an established Renaissance Zone, has a commercial or residential use, and is eligible or on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of downtown Bismarck is within an established Renaissance Zone, not necessarily aligning with the boundary of the Downtown Historic District. Projects beyond the boundary of the Renaissance Zone are not eligible for these tax credits.

The credit is equal to twenty-five (25) percent of the amount invested, with a maximum allowable credit of \$250,000. The credit can be claimed in the year in which the project is completed and can be carried forward up to five years. The rehabilitation must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. A meeting with the State Historical Society of North Dakota and consultant with a tax expert prior to application are strongly encouraged. Approval must be secured before construction work begins.

Entities Involved in Tax Credit Administration: State Historical Society of North Dakota, North Dakota Department of Commerce, National Park Service, Internal Revenue Service

Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (26 U.S.C. 47)

The federal historic rehabilitation tax credit program provides a twenty (20) percent federal tax credit to property owners who undertake substantial rehabilitation of a historic building for a commercial or other income-producing purpose, while maintaining its historic character. An eligible taxpayer can claim up to twenty (20) percent of the total credit amount each year during the five years beginning when the project is placed in service. The building must be a "certified historic structure" which means that the building is either listed on the National Register or located in a registered historic district and certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district. The rehabilitation

must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The owner must maintain ownership of the building for five years after completing the rehabilitation or be subject to a staggered recapture of the tax credit.

Entities Involved in Tax Credit Administration: State Historical Society of North Dakota, National Park Service, Internal Revenue Service

[insert image of the Patterson Place 420 E Main Ave (\$13,042,175 qualified expenses in 2022) and/or Woodmansee Building 114 N 4th Street (\$127,500 qualified expenses in 2005)]

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (26 U.S.C. 42)

This is a federal program, administered in North Dakota by the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency, that is designed to encourage investment in the development and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing. Acquisition of property with substantial rehabilitation of existing historic multi-family housing or adaptive reuse of existing non-residential historic buildings that create affordable housing units are considered eligible projects.

Eligible applicants for this program may receive federal income tax credits for up to ten (10) years based on the capital investment and level of commitment to low-income tenancy. Units of government, local or tribal housing authorities, community action agencies, regional planning councils, and non-profit or for-profit developers are eligible to apply for this program. Applicants without prior Low Income Housing Tax Credit experience are required to partner with an experienced entity.

These tax credits are awarded annually through a competitive application process. A project may receive a maximum allocated tax credit of nine (9) percent of the project's qualified basis which is typically defined as the project's depreciable cost times the percentage of the project that is restricted for low-income households that are sixty (60) percent or less of the area median income. For certain difficult development areas, qualified census tracts, or other high-cost areas, the qualified basis may be increased up to thirty (30) percent.

Entities Involved in Tax Credit Administration: North Dakota Housing Finance Agency, Internal Revenue Service

Grants and Programs for Preservation

Additional information on several of these grant programs can be obtained from the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Preservation Fund grant (for Certified Local Government Programs)

Each year, the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) receives federal funds from the Historic Preservation Fund to assist in historic preservation endeavors. The SHSND sets aside ten (10) percent of this historic preservation funding for the North Dakota Certified Local Governments as subgrants. Each fall, the Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission reviews and narrows down historic preservation projects that would benefit from historic preservation funding and applies for a Historic Preservation Fund grant from the SHSND to implement those projects. These projects are identified by Bismarck Historic Preservation Commissioners or by members of the Bismarck community.

Entities Involved in Grant Administration: Bismarck Historic Preservation Commission, State Historical Society of North Dakota, National Park Service

[Insert Talking Trail Figure]

Historic Preservation Fund (for NRHP properties)

As stated above, each year, the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND) receives federal funds from the Historic Preservation Fund to assist in historic preservation endeavors for cultural resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Only properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places and have maintained their historic integrity qualify to apply for this subgrant. This includes private citizens, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, federally-recognized tribes, governmental entities, owners of land containing a National Register archaeological site, and owners of a contributing property within a National Register Listed District.

A non-federal cash match of fifty (50) percent is required, and grant funds can only be used for a maximum of fifty (50) percent of the total project cost. The total project cost includes the grant funds and the cash match. The program is administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the SHSND.

Entities Involved in Grant Administration: State Historical Society of North Dakota, National Park Service

[Insert photo of Belle Mehus?]

Community Development Block Grant Program

The City of Bismarck receives an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds must be used for community activities that primarily

benefit low- and moderate-income persons or for removal of slum and blight. The City adopts several plans related to this grant including a 5-year Consolidated Plan which is the program's guiding document for priority goals and objectives including identifying the programs and projects it intends to fund. An Annual Action Plan is adopted every year and it describes how the city's CDBG funds will be utilized that year.

CDBG funds must be used primarily for the benefit of low- and moderate-income persons. These funds may be used for the rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures. Each year, at least 65% is used for housing programs, public facilities, infrastructure improvements, and other uses allowed under federal regulations. Examples of potential eligible projects related to historic properties include, but are not limited to, rehabilitation and preservation for low- and moderate-income owner-occupied houses; low- and moderate-income public housing; publicly or privately owned historic properties; a commercial or industrial facility for job creation or retention; affordable housing or mixed income housing; and low- and moderate-income senior housing.

Entities Involved in Program Administration: City of Bismarck, Department of Housing and Urban Development

Cultural Heritage Grant

This is a state-funded grant program that provides funding for exhibits, special projects, events, education activities, collections, projects, and capital improvements for non-profits, museums, and historical societies. A dollar-for-dollar match is required for grant funds and can be in the form of cash or in-kind which includes donated labor, supplies, and equipment. It must be used on the specific project supported by the grant, not for work completed prior to the applications or award of the grant. Grant funds are distributed by reimbursement after a project is complete and the final report is submitted with the request for reimbursement.

Entities Involved in Grant Administration: State Historical Society of North Dakota

Neighborhood Reinvestment Initiative Program

This is a program of the City of Bismarck, in partnership with local financial institutions, that offers reduced-interest loans to homeowners for eligible home improvement projects. It aims to revitalize older and potentially disinvested areas of the city through reinvestment in Bismarck's existing housing stock. Certain criteria must be met in order to be considered eligible from the city's perspective including the residence's age, its property value, the residence being owner-occupied upon the completion of the work, the loan being between \$10,000 and \$100,000, and the proposed improvement being eligible. Applicants may be

eligible from the city's standpoint but may not meet requirements identified by the financial institution at the time of application.

All loans are provided by the financial institution. No public funds subsidize these loans.

Entities Involved in Program Administration: City of Bismarck, local financial institutions currently including Gate City Bank and Capital Credit Union

Contact info/brands for the different entities identified above

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Historic Resources

Designations

Historic resources can be designated at the local, state, or national level. At the local level, the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, defines a Historic Property as a building, structure, site, object, resource, or district that meets the Criteria of Significance as promulgated by the Secretary of Interior and endorsed, accepted or adopted by the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office. In other words, the City defers to the criteria established for the National Register of Historic Places. Properties that meet those criteria are afforded some protection in the form of consideration and mitigation of adverse effects from federally-funded or licensed projects whether they are formally listed in the National Register or simply determined to be eligible for listing. The City's Preservation Ordinance provides a mechanism for the Historic Preservation Commission to review and comment on such projects and their potential effects.

The City does not currently maintain a local historic sites registry or local landmark program.

National-Level Designations

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic properties recognized for their significance in American history, architecture, engineering, archaeology, or culture. To benefit from the program, administered by the National Park Service under the Department of the Interior, a property must be of a certain age (fifty years or older), be historically significant, and possess historic integrity.

- **Significance**
Is the property associated with events, activities, or developments important in the past? Is the property associated with the lives of people who were historically important? Is the property associated with distinctive architecture, landscape, or engineering achievements? Does it have the potential to yield important information through archaeological investigation?
- **Age and Integrity**
Is the property old enough to be considered "historic" (at least 50 years in age) and does it still look much the way it did in the past?

Information on Bismarck NRHP properties can be found here:

<https://www.bismarcknd.gov/2394/Historic-Preservation>

State-Level Designations

The State of North Dakota maintains its own list of historic properties, the State Historic Sites Registry, recognizing places that are important to North Dakota history. Much like the National Register, the State Historic Sites Registry establishes certain criteria that a prehistoric site, structure, building, object, neighborhood, network, or cultural landscape must demonstrate in order to be eligible for inclusion. Any state agency, department, municipality, county, school district, or other governmental subdivision or private organization or individual may submit nominations of properties to the State Historic Sites Registry. It is important to note, however, that only when registry properties are also listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places do the federal programs or regulations related to such listing apply to registry properties.

For more information about the State Historic Sites Register, refer to Chapter 40-02-01 of the North Dakota Administrative Code: <https://ndlegis.gov/information/acdata/pdf/40-02-01.pdf>

Historic Resource Surveys

The Bismarck HPC encourages and facilitates historic resources surveys, to identify properties within the community to identify those that may be historically significant. In coordination with the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, the HPC evaluates these properties to determine their significance using the State Historic Sites Registry and/or National Register of Historic Places criteria. Such properties enhance our understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of our city, state, and country. The North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office maintains the State Historic Sites Registry and National Register program for the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

What is a historic resource survey?

A survey is the process of identifying and collecting data regarding a community's historic resources. Some are conducted by federal or state agencies, in compliance with Historic Preservation laws and are carried out by professional cultural resource contractors. Others are undertaken by local governments, communities, neighborhoods, organizations, or individuals to identify the historic values of private properties.

A survey may be designed to meet a variety of project needs. A comprehensive inventory, for example, identifies all historic properties (prehistoric and historic sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts) within a specific area. More specialized inventories may concern only certain types or historic properties, such as an architectural inventory in a particular neighborhood.

How are Surveys Conducted?

All inventories begin with planning and research, followed by a field survey to physically locate historic properties and record important data using the North Dakota SHPO's standardized North Dakota Cultural Resources Survey (NDCRS) Site Form.

In a Reconnaissance Level Inventory, data collected may be limited to a property's location, physical description, and condition, but should be sufficient to provide a general understanding of an area's historic resources (i.e. the distribution of buildings, structures, and neighborhoods, as well as the different architectural styles, period, and methods of construction present in an area). Properties of particular interest or concentrations of architectural or historical properties that contribute to a sense of time and place identified during a Reconnaissance Level Inventory can be mapped for consideration in planning or to inform further work.

An Intensive Level Inventory is a more detailed inspection done by, or under the direction of a professional historian, architectural historian, archaeologist, or other specialist. This type of study requires additional research and documentation, as site data must be sufficient to assess the historic significance of a property and evaluate its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/or the North Dakota State Historic Sites Registry.

The State Historic Preservation Office curates site forms, manuscripts, and photographs generated by all historic resource inventories in the state. The SHPO's database contains documentation for approximately 70,000 properties; more than 19,000 manuscripts reporting on the inventory, evaluation, and mitigation of adverse effects to cultural resources in the state; and extensive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data.

As of September 9, 2025, approximately 830 resources have been inventoried and are included in the SHPO's NDCRS database within the city limits of Bismarck.

Of those resources, 605 are included within a historic district or are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Threats to Historic Resources

Threats to properties can be both immediate and long term, and survey priorities must be flexible to respond. Threats may include deterioration of a property due to neglect, severe weather, or high UV exposure and affect a property's integrity. Activities like demolition, new construction, or house "flipping" may also result in the loss of integrity of an individual property, neighborhood, or district and, in turn, its eligibility for historic designation.

Identification through survey and inventory is the first step to help stem the loss of historic resources.

In Bismarck, some of the most common environmental factors likely to reduce the integrity of historic resources are moisture (snow, ice, rain, flooding); efflorescence (salt); and damage due to temperature extremes (freeze-thaw). Extreme deterioration may eventually result in "demolition by neglect." However, properties subject to these particular threats may benefit from a survey project that generates interest in historic preservation, especially if the survey results lead to financial incentives for preservation.

Activities that cause the most harm to historic resources in Bismarck include storefront alterations and replacement of windows and siding with materials incompatible with the property's historic character; new construction or infill that is not sympathetic to the surrounding resources; and demolition.

New construction and infill within a designated historic district may be compatible and sympathetic to its surroundings; this can have a positive impact encouraging maintenance and repair of historic buildings. However, new construction may also be incompatible with the surrounding buildings and negatively impact that area's eligibility for historic designation. Sometimes zoning changes within a historic district may allow new uses that could significantly alter historic buildings, as when residential buildings are changed to accommodate commercial use. It is therefore recommended that any rezoning should be accompanied by a survey of that neighborhood.

Public initiatives such as road projects may also result in adverse effects on historic properties. Even federally funded projects may result in the demolition of historic resources if no other prudent or feasible alternative is available. Examples of this type of action are road-widening or improvement projects.

Threats to historic sites, buildings, neighborhoods, and districts should be considered in the HPC's goals and objectives, especially when establishing survey priorities.

List of Historic Resources

Helpful Links

Preservation Plan Survey & Results

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