

Importance of Preservation

The physical appearance of any community may be perceived by many as the direct reflection of the attitudes and values of its citizens. Well-maintained neighborhoods and business districts suggest a higher degree of community pride than do neighborhoods and downtowns which appear less cared-for. Beyond that, a community's appreciation of itself is often mirrored in its attitude toward the preservation of its historic buildings.

The National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) states:

“Historic preservation planning is a proactive way to provide for the protection of a community’s historic resources and character. A community that includes a preservation component as part of long-range planning recognizes the importance of local heritage and the built environment.”

[“Preservation Plans,” NAPC. (www.napcommissions.org/preservation-plans).]

Among other things, a preservation plan identifies and articulates community preservation goals, lets current and future property owners know how the community intends to grow, helps eliminate confusion about the purpose of the local preservation ordinance, educates the public about the community's history and heritage, creates an agenda for future preservation work and creates a way to measure progress. Preservation plans also encourage economic development and strengthen political understanding of historic preservation policies.

Adoption of a preservation plan is a collaborative effort between historic preservation commission members, commission staff, other municipal departments, elected officials, and community advocates. Consultants are typically hired to

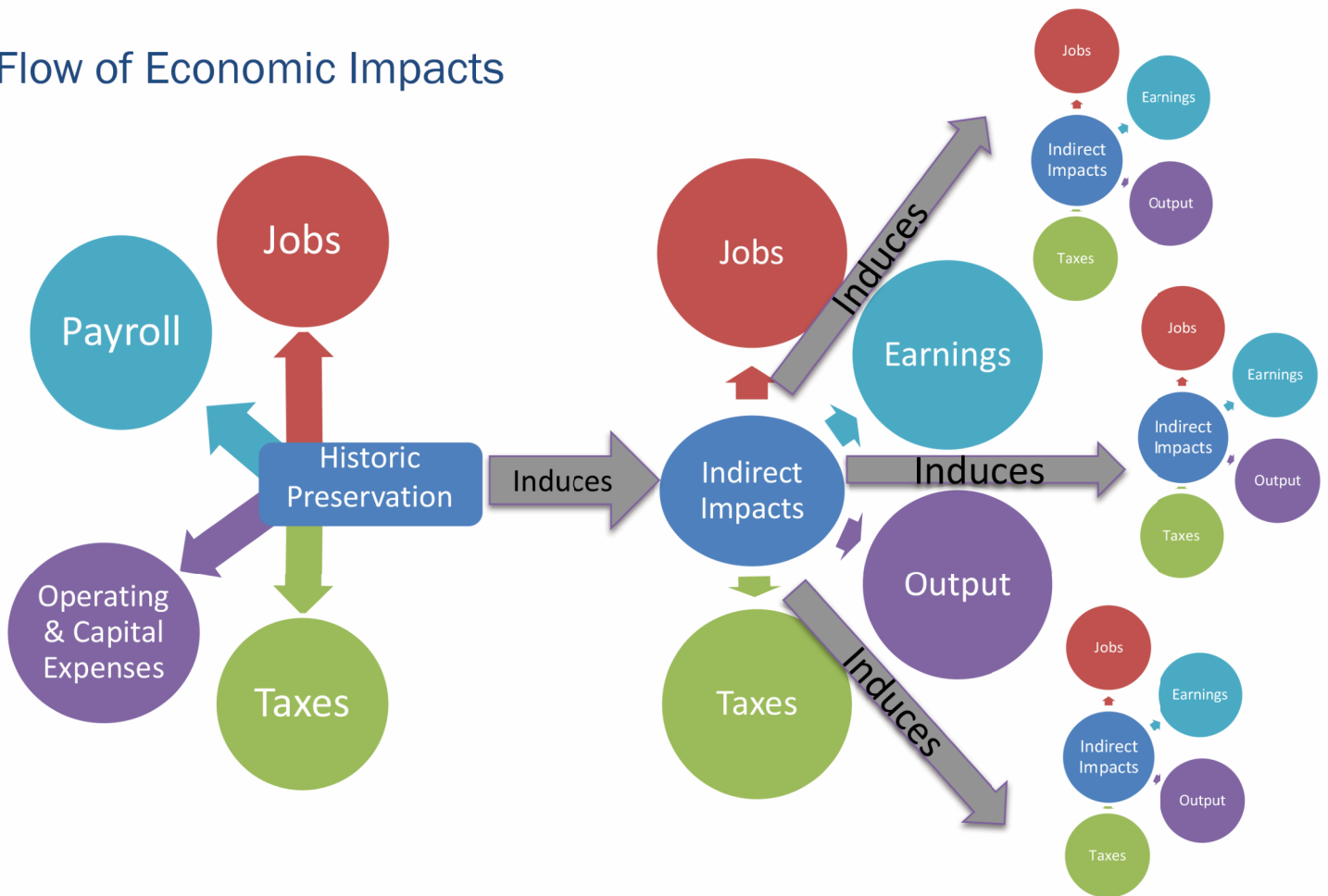
draft the plan, which is reviewed at public input forums. Funding, implementation and scope are all challenging facets of adopting a preservation plan, but there are numerous examples of success stories from which inspiration and best practices can be drawn.

Much of Columbia's architectural character and physical attraction are owed to the variety of historic architecture found within the community. Beginning in the early years of the nineteenth century, the built environment of the City of Columbia represents many of the styles popular during this span of many decades. If the character of Columbia's downtown and historic residential neighborhoods is to be maintained, it is important for property owners, tenants, and community leaders to be aware that historic preservation does not occur without the conscious efforts of the citizens and community leaders. This Historic Preservation Plan has been developed to serve as a roadmap to guide the decision-making and planning processes to ensure that the historic character of the community is maintained and enhanced for generations to come.

In its simplest terms, historic preservation seeks to retain and enhance those individual properties, sites, neighborhoods, and districts in Columbia that embody the community's historical, architectural, and cultural values, and continue in productive use, while accounting for sympathetic change as needed to achieve those ends. The ongoing use and stewardship of historic places contributes to Columbia's overall economic vitality and sense of place.

Viewed as a necessary process of community planning, historic preservation in the twenty-first century seeks to encourage dialogue among community residents and stakeholders regarding

Flow of Economic Impacts



those buildings, places, sites, traditions, and cultural assets that are worth retaining and enhancing for the benefit of future generations. The conservation of traditional historic assets leads to a more complete understanding and appreciation the myriad and diverse facets of Columbia's history, the people and events that shaped it, and the cultural environment that is Columbia today.

Columbia Imagined

A review of the goals and objectives outlined in Columbia Imagined, Columbia's comprehensive plan, will reveal the broad impacts of historic preservation as perceived by Columbia residents. With implications noted under five of the seven primary goals of the comprehensive plan, its clear that Columbia residents value the historic fabric of the community, and expect it to be identified and protected for future generations.

Residents indicated a desire to maintain the existing personality and character of Columbia, by providing incentives and tools for property owners, while discentivizing contextually inappropriate infill development, or redevelopment of historic neighborhoods. Homeownership is to be encouraged by maintaining a diverse, affordable, and attractive housing stock across the city. Residents also noted a desire for Columbia to be, "...a model for affordable and practical environmental sustainability." Historic preservation is one such tool that can help provide affordable, sustainable housing options simply by avoiding waste. In terms of economic development, the primary goal listed in Columbia Imagined is to maintain and improve Columbia's downtown, which contains Columbia's historic core.

In 2012, the HPC engaged the St. Louis firm , Development Strategies, to prepare an analysis of the economic impact of historic preservation in Columbia. The study examined three facets of historic preservation: rehabilitation construction, heritage tourism, and downtown revitalization.

Summarizing, the report noted the following economic impacts:

- **Higher Property Values:** Homes within Columbia's local historic districts consistently outperform the rest of the Columbia's market in terms of appreciation.
- **Affordable Housing:** Older neighborhoods provide housing at lower costs, particularly for renters.
- **Rent Burden:** While rent in Columbia is relatively high, rents in older neighborhoods are more accessible to households with incomes below 80% median income.
- **Attracting Tourists:** Historic preservation attracts heritage tourists who are drawn to the unique sites, architectural character, and stories of the past.

- **Economic Boost:** Heritage tourists spend more, are more likely to stay overnight, and spend more days in Columbia compared to other travelers.
- **Spending Impact:** Spending from heritage tourism is dispersed across many local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, shops, and other small service-oriented businesses.

The study concluded, "Columbia's efforts to preserve historically significant buildings and districts has shown great impacts on the economy of the City and region." The document drew the same conclusions as have myriad other similar studies, both those focused upon specific locales and upon the nation as a whole.

[Development Strategies. Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Columbia, Missouri. Columbia: 2012.]

BELOW: *[Missouri Theater, Stephen Bybee.]*



Project Background

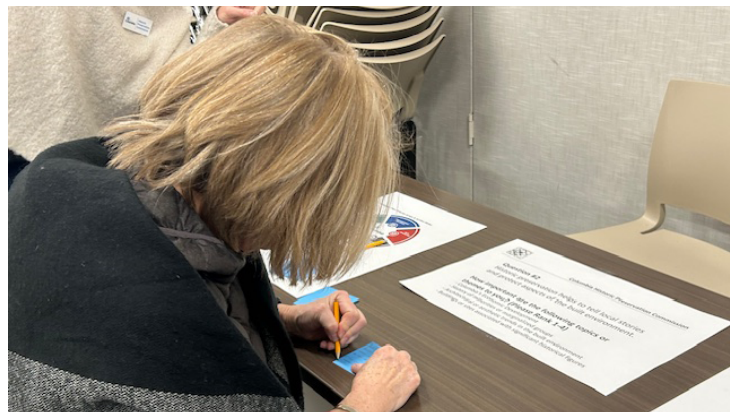
The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was created in 1998 (Ord. 015651), after nearly two years of deliberations between the public, City Council, and a Council-appointed exploratory committee of 17 citizens representing a range of appropriate professional backgrounds. With their formation, the HPC was assigned 18 ‘powers & duties’; a list which was later expanded to 27 in 2007 (Ord. 019076). Item #22 from the revised list is, “To develop a preservation component in the Comprehensive Plan of the city of Columbia and recommend it to the Planning & Zoning Commission and to the City Council.”

The HPC began the initial public input phase for the preservation plan in the spring of 2019, conducting an engagement meeting with interested parties at the Blind Boone Home, a local historic property. At the meeting attendees were asked five questions intended to gather public input on what preservation plan components were most-desired.

The five questions asked of respondents:

1. How should historic preservation benefit you?
2. What should be the Historic Preservation Commission’s priorities?
3. Who should the HPC partner with to support preservation efforts?
4. How can the HPC better serve the public and remain relevant?
5. What can the HPC do to be more accessible?

The conversation generated robust and informative feedback. In regards to Question 1, those in attendance shared concerns over displacement of marginalized communities through gentrification of historic neighborhoods, loss of ‘living history’ in historic properties to redevelopment, and maintaining the established identities of Columbia and its neighborhoods.





When asked about desired HPC priorities, the group noted a need for taking stock of existing historic elements, as well as immediate threats to historic properties. They also felt a priority should be placed on an improved web presence for the HPC and its activities to bolster efforts in terms of public education and outreach.

Later in 2019, the HPC was reevaluated by Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff for compliance with the Certified Local Government program, for which Columbia was certified in 1999. In the evaluation, SHPO staff recommended that the HPC, “...proceed with development of the historic preservation plan, and begin utilizing the plan to inform broader city planning efforts and preservation ordinance review,” and, “integrate architectural survey data into the City’s strategic preservation planning efforts.”

Given the significant funding needed beyond their annual budget, the HPC placed the project in their long-range programming priorities, with the intent to apply for a Federal Historic Preservation Fund grant to help with project expenses. On November 7, 2022 (R- 176-22) the City Council authorized the submission of the grant application, expressing support for the project. The financial assistance agreement was then approved on October 2, 2023 (Ord. 025469).

Due to a temporary halt in Federal funding for the Historic Preservation Fund in 2024, the project was placed on hold until the grant program was restarted in the fall of 2024. An historic preservation consultant was procured in late 2024, and the preservation planning process began with the consultant leading the first public input meeting on September 10, 2024.

Further public comments were accepted at each monthly HPC meeting throughout the plan preparation, and at two additional public input meetings at the 70% and 100% completion points. While many additional comments were generated, overarching themes remained consistent throughout the public input process.

Members of the public who provided feedback were interested in adopting a plan that informs citizens of the preservation tools available to them, and provides best practices for rehabilitation of their historic properties. Other consistent themes included the need for a devoted preservation planner on City staff, an improved online presence for the commission activities and resources, and an expansion of the commission’s duties and responsibilities to empower them in protecting endangered properties and establishing local historic preservation overlay districts (HP-O). Responses are included on the following pages.