



SECTION 3 : CITY PLANNING AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

City Planning and Program Administration

This section reviews local planning policies and their relation to local preservation planning in Albany, as well as the legal contexts that support historic preservation planning activities. Various policy documents, and other planning programs address the preservation of historic buildings, districts, sites, and other resources at the municipal level. Comprehensive plans, subareas, and neighborhood plans are the means for establishing clear goals and policies for promoting and encouraging historic preservation at the local level. A municipal historic preservation ordinance is also key to implementing local preservation policy and how important historic resources are preserved, protected, and managed over time. This section provides an analysis of Albany's preservation ordinance, as incorporated in the Rezone Albany Development Code, in comparison to the New York Model Historic Preservation Ordinance to determine any needed updates to enhance its effectiveness. A review of existing financial incentive programs for historic preservation, heritage tourism assets, and important local and institutional partners is also included in this section.

Federal and State Context

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Section 106

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470) is the nation's primary historic preservation law. The act created the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of properties significant in the history, architecture, archeology and culture of the United States. The act also called for the creation of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to administer the national program at the state level. In addition, any project that involves federal funds, licenses or permits is reviewed in accordance with Section 106, which establishes procedures to be followed by federal agencies whose actions may directly or indirectly have an effect on historic properties and directs those agencies to consult with SHPO to assess those effects. Therefore, any approvals/permits/funding that are given by a federal agency must also be reviewed by SHPO. The comments of an independent review agency, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, may be sought when federal agencies are involved in relevant undertakings. Examples of federal undertakings include but are

not limited to CORPS permits, FCC permits (cell towers), FDIC approvals/funding (banks, mortgage insurance, etc.), or HUD funding, etc.

The New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, Section 14.09

The New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 was established as a counterpart to the National Historic Preservation Act and declares historic preservation to be the public policy and in the public interest of the state. The act created the New York State Register of Historic Places, the official list of sites, buildings, structures, areas or objects significant in the history, architecture, archeology or culture of the state, its communities or the nation. The act also requires state agencies to consult with the SHPO if it appears that any projects being planned may or will cause any change, beneficial or adverse, in the quality of any historic, architectural, archeological or cultural property that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or listed on the State Register or that is determined to be eligible for listing on the State Register. It requires state agencies, to the fullest extent practicable, consistent with other provisions of the law, to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such properties, to explore all feasible and prudent alternatives and to give due consideration to feasible and prudent plans that would avoid or mitigate adverse impacts to such property. The act also establishes agency preservation officers within state agencies for the purpose of implementing these provisions. In addition, the act reaffirms and expands the role of the State Board for Historic Preservation, which advises and makes recommendations to the State Historic Preservation Officer on preservation programs and activities, including State and National Registers nominations and statewide preservation planning efforts.

State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)

The State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6NYCRR Part 617 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, establishes a set of uniform regulations by which all state, county and local governmental agencies incorporate consideration of environmental impacts into their planning, review and decision-making processes. Impacts to historic resources, such as buildings listed on the State or National

Registers of Historic Places and archeological sites, should be taken into account. To accomplish the goal of the act, SEQRA requires that all governmental agencies determine whether the action they directly undertake, fund or approve may have a significant impact on the environment. If an action may have a significant adverse impact, agencies must prepare or request an environmental impact statement. SEQRA applies to projects undertaken or permitted by county and local governments; consequently, many thousands of projects statewide that fall outside the purview of the state and national historic preservation acts are reviewed. New implementing regulations for SEQRA went into effect in 1996. Under this act, municipalities may request that a project be reviewed by the SHPO. All SHPO comments under this review are advisory only.



Local Plans and Policies

Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan (2010-2011)

The Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2011 and is the official policy document for the City of Albany. It incorporates a vision statement for 2030 which includes six components concerning Safe, Livable Neighborhoods, Model Educational System, Vibrant Urban Center, Multi-Modal Transportation Hub, Green City, and a Prosperous Economy. The Plan presents key planning goals, strategies and actions. Following are excerpts from the Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan that relate to the goals and objectives within this Historic Preservation Plan.

- The chapter on Community Form addresses the physical form and appearance of the city. It states that, "While Albany's physical appearance continue to change and evolve, its historic pattern of buildings and streets remains a defining characteristic of its community form and is a source of pride and identity for residents." (Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan, 2011, p. 35) Categories under Community Form include Land Use, Urban Design and Architectural Character. Strategies and Actions include:
- Gaining control of vacant and abandoned buildings through property acquisition for redevelopment;
- Creating design guidelines and a design review process for the entire city outside the historic districts;
- Develop a historic preservation plan;
- Maintain an inventory of all designated and non-designated historic buildings in the City, evaluate existing historic districts, and consider the feasibility of new or expanded districts;
- Create development incentives for historic preservation; and
- Adaptively reuse historic and non-historic structures in Brownfields remediation projects.

The chapter on Economy addresses ways to generate economic activity and commerce. The Investment category includes Strategies and Actions such as:

- Reinforcing, enhancing and promoting Albany's distinctive character and identity;
- Developing a modern marketing and branding campaign that utilizes Albany's unique historic and cultural heritage; and
- Identifying and designating new historic landmarks, historic districts, and Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

The chapter on Social systems addresses public safety and the arts and culture community. Strategies and Actions under these categories include:

- Remove the influences of blight to prevent or reverse neighborhood decline;
- Continue and expand the City's Vacant Building Court, Vacant Building Registry and Vacant Building Inventory through the use of new technology;
- Develop incentives for the rehabilitation and reuse of vacant and substandard buildings;
- Enhance stabilization codes and practices to tighten requirements for maintenance;
- Partner with Albany County to create a City of Albany Strategic Acquisition Fund and Land Bank that can acquire and hold strategic properties for stabilization and future reuse;
- Develop a citywide vacant/abandoned property strategy based on assessment of each property's structural soundness, market value, historic value and other indicators;
- Work with the City's arts and cultural organizations to expand and promote Albany's offering of cultural programs; and
- Increase awareness of the City's historic and cultural resources through special events, exhibitions, walking tours, and public art.

The chapter on Housing and Neighborhoods addresses housing diversity and choice, neighborhood identity and neighborhood services.

Strategies and Actions under these categories include:

- Developing rehabilitation assistance programs and incentives to promote reestablishment of homeowner occupied housing;
- Working with local groups to create a marketing strategy that highlights the benefits of city neighborhoods, including walkability, access to downtown, historic buildings, and lower transportation costs;
- Adopting design guidelines focused on scale, design, and density to ensure that housing fits in with and is sensitive to its surrounding neighborhood context while addressing the needs of the modern family;
- Use building and zoning code enforcement to improve housing quality and reduce building neglect;
- Continuing the practice of escalating fines and fees, and explore escalating assessment for vacant and abandoned properties to deter speculation and encourage reuse;
- Adopting design guidelines and incentives for adaptive reuse, redevelopment and infill development;
- Researching best practices in cooperation with New York State, developing and piloting a Rehabilitation Building Code that allows greater flexibility in restoration or rehabilitation of existing structures to encourage reuse rather than demolition of existing structures; and
- Promoting the use of historic tax credits and state and federal green building incentives to encourage rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings.

The chapter on Institutions addresses relationships and partnerships, facilities and projects, and fiscal impacts. Categories include Relationships and Partnerships and Facilities and Projects. Strategies and Actions within these categories include:

- Exploring the creation of a Downtown investment fund to support revitalization efforts; and
- Identify opportunities for the re-use of underutilized properties for educational purposes associated with regional institutions;

Albany Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan (2016)

As the Capital of New York State and one of America's First Cities, Albany is rich in cultural heritage assets that can serve as a significant catalyst for new economic growth, enriched quality of life and a renewed sense of place for residents and visitors alike. The City of Albany developed this plan to address the city's potential to become a major cultural heritage tourism destination.

The planning process resulted in the identification of several key findings that reinforced the idea that tourism is an important part of the city's economy and that cultural heritage tourism plays a significant part. The city's significant heritage and historic assets stand out when compared to other destinations and the importance of historic preservation and authenticity are common elements of successful destinations.

The plan resulted in the creation of a Vision Statement which stated that, "The City of Albany and the Capital Region are recognized as a top international cultural heritage tourism destination. In 2020, the City of Albany and Capital Region have a strong preservation ethic, where residents promote their appreciation of place and community pride, and cultural heritage tourism robustly contributes to the region's economic vitality and growth" (Albany Cultural Heritage Strategic Plan, 2016-2018, p. 7). The planning process also resulted in the creation of three goals, twelve strategies and thirty-five tactics.

Goal no. 1 is to promote and expand Albany's existing cultural heritage experiences. Strategies for accomplishing the goal involve sharing the city's important stories, increasing the visibility of heritage assets and improving the visitor experience. Goal no. 2 is to preserve and protect Albany's cultural and heritage assets for present and future generations. Strategies for accomplishing the goal include ensuring that effective preservation policies and practices are included in existing city plans and to educate the public on the importance of preservation to tourism. Goal no. 3 involves establishing the management and funding structure to implement the strategic plan and highlights the importance of partnerships. The plan goes on to highlight implementation strategies and funding sources.

Corning Riverfront Master Plan (2014)

The plan looked at the existing park conditions and design and made recommendations for improvements to the park and its connectivity to Downtown Albany.

Tivoli Lake Preserve Visioning Plan (2014)

The plan looked at assessing opportunities to improve Tivoli Lake Preserve, a natural resource project that aligns with goals set in the City's Albany 2030: Comprehensive Plan, and created a Visioning Plan that would redevelop Tivoli Lake Preserve and bring out its full potential that would make it both a local and regional destination.

Impact Downtown Playbook: Business Plan for Downtown Albany (2014)

This strategic business plan identifies strategies for revitalizing downtown as the major center of economic development in the City of Albany, including recommendations for investment, funding, business recruitment, organization, marketing and branding.

University at Albany SUNY Campus Heritage Preservation Plan (2009)

The Campus Heritage Preservation Plan was prepared for the University at Albany to use as a tool to guide preservation and future development of the campus, which was designed by renowned modern architect Edward Durell Stone. The original University at Albany campus includes fifty-four buildings built on and around a central Academic Podium. The Plan indicates that since its completion in the early 1970s, decades of service and use have taken their toll on the buildings and grounds. The plan also recognizes that campus is of great architectural importance which will warrant preservation and listing in the National Register of Historic Places when it becomes eligible. The plan is presented in two sections: Section 1 addresses the historic significance of the campus, provides a historic context for its development, and provides a detailed timeline of the development of the university and its architecture as well as a profile of architect Edward Durell Stone; Section 2 provides an analysis of the building HVAC systems, building exteriors and public spaces, and provides inventory forms for each building.

The College of St. Rose Master Plan Update (2009)

The master plan provides an assessment of the College's existing facilities and opportunities for their use, as well as identifying specific concepts and recommendations for implementation which include the renovation and expansion of existing buildings as well as new construction.

Central Avenue Cultural District Business Plan (2009)

The business plan was a result of the continued transition of Central Avenue to a vibrant, commercial area, and brings focus to the intersection of Quail Street and Central Avenue, known as the Central Avenue Cultural District. The plan provides a strategy to revitalize this particular area and create a destination within the City of Albany for music, food, arts and entertainment.

Capital South Plan: SEGway to the Future (2007)

The plan looked at diverse issues to create a vision for revitalization of the South End neighborhoods. Stabilization was stated as being the initial primary goal in order to achieve plan recommendations which include housing rehabilitation, new construction and historic preservation. The plan is divided into three sections, the first of which is "Stabilize the South End," which focuses on revitalization, vacant and abandoned properties and preservation initiatives. Relevant recommendations include:

- Reward property owners with incentives and financial assistance for rehabilitations;
- Create disincentives to discourage irresponsible and unresponsive owners from holding on to vacant and blighted properties;
- Develop disposition plans for blocks with abandoned properties;
- Be creative when it comes to reusing abandoned properties;
- Target certain areas of the South End as priority areas for preservation;
- Focus on historic buildings for reinvestment;
- Target concentrations of historic buildings;
- Provide technical assistance to the owners of and would-be re-investors of historic buildings;
- Target small grants and loans on favorable terms to homeowners and others rehabilitating historic properties;
- Tie redevelopment of abandoned property to public subsidies and tax incentives;
- Employ an abatement program for renovated buildings and redeveloped property;
- Clean and green the vacant lots;
- Support new initiatives like the Senior Rehab Program;
- Target new investment to areas where redevelopment is already occurring;
- The area around the Jared Holt Wax Factory site is one such area that is ripe for streetscape improvements and concurrent housing investment;

- Focus on housing and property neglect;
- Prosecute owners of derelict and abandoned properties;
- Upgrade Howe Library;
- Develop a South End Neighborhood Association; and
- Develop a Capital South Neighborhood Coalition.

The section titled "Energize the South End" focuses on reinvestment, housing and homeownership in the neighborhood. Relevant recommendations include:

- Support programs in which vacant buildings and lots are readied for rehabilitation by sweat-equity or mission-driven organizations;
- Transfer City- and County-owned property to a City-wide community development corporation;
- Continued code enforcement;
- Revise the City's regulations where necessary, and better educate owners and investors, to better maintain and reinforce historic character;
- Employ a zoning overlay district that relaxes aspects of the modern building code that do not affect life/safety;
- Ease permitting for older structures;
- Promote commercial revitalization on South Pearl Street; and
- Consider developing a city-wide community development corporation (CDC).

The section titled "Grow the South End" focuses on future economic growth and community vitality in the neighborhood. Relevant recommendations include:

- The redesign of Lincoln Square must respond to the site's intrinsic qualities;
- Embrace the community's vision of a renewed and reconnected Lincoln Square;
- Consider expansion of Lincoln Park as an alternative, inclusive of adjoining property;
- Create Capital South Square;

- Revisit the design of Interstate 787 and remove the elevated highway;
- Enhance the quality of Morton Avenue and Rensselaer Street through the redevelopment of vacant buildings and streetscape improvements; and
- Reveal the Schuyler Mansion to the public;

Park South Urban Renewal Plan (2006)

The purpose of the plan was to eliminate urban blight, create affordable housing opportunities, increase sense of community and visual attractiveness through the rehabilitation of historic buildings, encourage private investment and community revitalization. A key objective of the plan is to identify and encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Midtown Colleges and University District Redevelopment Plan (2005)

The plan assessed redevelopment strategies for the district to improve the multiple educational institutions within the district along with the City of Albany. Some of the plan's key objectives included strengthening adjacent residential neighborhoods by stimulating new and rehabilitated single and multi-family housing; expanding, upgrading and integrating student housing with the neighborhoods; and upgrading the image and appearance of the district, including the public rights-of-way and existing buildings.

Park South Redevelopment Plan (2004)

The purpose of the plan was to identify a realistic redevelopment strategy that will guide improvements necessary to reverse undesirable trends in Park South by providing new and rehabilitated quality housing, capital and infrastructure improvements, policy changes, improved area services and retail, and an overall improved quality-of-life for the neighborhood. The overall goal is to define an implementation strategy that will guide short-term and long-term neighborhood-wide improvements, including improving the residential and commercial character and attractiveness of the neighborhood. A key finding of the plan is that preservation and rehabilitation should be carefully considered but will not be the sole key to revitalization and should not compromise the

ability to attract development interest and investment.

Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan (2003)

The Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan was developed to achieve consensus on ways to revitalize the neighborhood and approach development. The plan focused on four key areas including Homeownership and Rental Housing; Arts, Culture and Heritage; Business and Job Development; and Quality of Life. Guiding principles were identified within each of the four areas. Following are excerpts from the Arbor Hill Neighborhood Plan that relate to the goals and objectives within this Historic Preservation Plan.

Key principles within the Homeownership and Rental Housing section include:

- Rehabilitating existing housing and building compatible infill housing; and
- Supporting the use of high-quality designs and material.

Key principles within the Arts, Culture and Heritage section include:

- Preserving the historic integrity of the neighborhood by maximizing the reuse of historic buildings;
- Supporting cultural institutions' applications for grant funding within or about Arbor Hill;
- Promoting Arbor Hill as a place for arts, culture and heritage, recognizing the neighborhood's rich history, including the African American experience; and
- Expanding public participation in the arts by promoting the neighborhood as a regional arts center and place of historic significance.

Upper New Scotland Avenue – Krumkill Road Neighborhood Plan (2002)

The plan looked at guiding growth and improvements and strengthening the quality of life for area residents. The plan balanced the steady demand for high quality housing against identified needs for open space, recreational facilities, and convenient neighborhood services. The plan included

recommendations for maintaining the primarily residential and institutional character of the neighborhood and preserving open space.

South End Revitalization Plan (2001)

The purpose of the report was to present a revitalization strategy for the South End of Albany to be carried out over a five-year period. The goals of the plan included achieving a stable, economically and racially diverse community; making the South End attractive for new investment; increasing the wealth and economic well-being of neighborhood residents; assisting residents through education and training; and creating a better living environment for existing residents and attracting new residents. Urban Design and Historic Resources was one of the five major areas discussed in the plan with the goal of conserving housing, removing blight and capitalizing on the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Development Strategy for the Broadway Commercial Corridor (2001)

The Development Strategy provided a framework for revitalization activities along the four mile corridor including neighboring Menands and Watervliet. The strategy's objectives included encouraging the expansion of neighborhood retail, promoting retail operations, supporting the historic Capital District Regional Market in Menands, and upgrading the appearance of the Corridor.

Washington Park Historic Landscape Report, Preservation Plan and Management Proposal (1989)

The goals of the plan included:

- Framing a vision for the park;
- Improving Park Management and Maintenance;
- Improving scenic quality;
- Developing stewardship of the park;
- Providing for a diversity of park uses;
- Emphasizing the natural environment of the park;
- Articulating the historic and cultural value of the park;

- Recapturing lost historic elements and preserving remaining historic resources; and
- Balancing contemporary needs and historic origins.

Ten Broeck Triangle Urban Renewal Plan (1980)

The Ten Broeck Triangle Urban Renewal Plan was developed to revitalize the Ten Broeck Triangle Area into a sound, predominantly residential neighborhood while eliminating blight, preserving housing stock, improving community services, creating diversity and vitality, restoring and preserving historic buildings and stimulating private investment and revitalization. The plan recommends rehabilitation assistance, public improvements, and acquisition.



Ten Broeck Triangle Historic District

City Zoning

Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance – Historic Preservation

A key element in any municipal preservation program is the management of processes related to landmark and district designation and design review – both administered by the Historic Resources Commission. The City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, as part of the Rezone Albany Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance (USDO), currently governs designation and design review processes. Some refinement to the Ordinance is recommended to provide clarity to processes and to integrate preservation best practices.

The City of Albany’s main zoning document is its Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance (USDO). The USDO became effective on June 1, 2017 with the purpose of implementing the policies from the Comprehensive Plan, promoting economic reinvestment, protecting and preserving residential neighborhoods, promoting energy conservation, secure safety from environmental dangers, facilitate the provision of community facilities, preserve the aesthetic quality and historic urban form and fabric, and promote the health, safety and general welfare.

Like most municipal zoning ordinances, the USDO regulates land use and development through base zoning districts, overlays, special purpose districts, and development standards, among other zoning tools. Historic Preservation is addressed in different sections of the USDO:

- Section 375-1: General Provisions;
- Section 375.2: Zoning Districts (F – Overlay Districts) creates Historic Resources Overlay Districts and Archaeological Resources Overlay Districts;
- Section 375.5: Administration and Review identifies the Historic Resources Commission and provides the procedures for demolition and Certificate of Appropriateness review as well as the procedures for designation landmarks and historic districts;

Chapter 42, Part 4 of the City Code establishes the roles and responsibilities of the Historic Resources Commission.

A more formal analysis of the USDO and its historic preservation provisions as it compares with the New York State Model Historic Preservation Ordinance (“NYS Model Ordinance”), as developed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, is included in the Appendices. The following table compares the relative strengths and weaknesses of the Albany USDO to other cities and communities in the region.

| Local Historic Preservation Ordinance – Community Comparisons | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Community | Owner Consent to Local Landmark Designation | Owner Authority to Request De-Designation | Mandated Design Review for Local Designation | Demolition Delay | Demolition By Neglect | Conservation Districts | No. of Commission Members |
| New York Model Ordinance | NO | YES | YES | NO | YES | NO | 5 |
| Albany | NO | NO | YES | NO | NO | NO | 9 |
| Syracuse | NO | NO | YES | YES | NO | NO | 9 |
| Rochester | NO | YES | YES | NO | NO | NO | 7 |
| Hartford, CT | NO | NO | YES | NO | NO | NO | 5 |
| Providence, RI | N/A (only districts) | N/A | YES | NO | NO | NO | 10 |

Design Review

Design review is the process in which both public and private projects are evaluated for their visual, aesthetic, architectural and urban design qualities, as well as their appropriateness and compatibility to the surrounding environment and setting. In the context of this Historic Preservation Plan, design review is associated with the Historical Resources Commission's administration of the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) review process for local Landmarks and properties located in local Historic Districts.

Although many commissions generally follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to determine the appropriateness of any changes, alterations and additions to historic properties, the Historical Resources Commission currently uses review standards prepared by the City of Albany to regulate appropriateness of the use, construction, alteration, repair, improvement, alteration and demolition of buildings, structures, properties, and sites within its local historic districts. Creating a user-friendly guidelines manual of the architectural review standards, including photographs and illustrations for easy comprehension, and basing them on the Standards for Rehabilitation is recommended. Many communities provide a separate document outlining their design review standards for ease of communication and outreach to property owners.

Administrative review by the Chief Planning Official, or their designated staff, is formalized in the Certificate of Appropriateness language in Section 375-5 (13) of the USDO. The ordinance authorizes the Chief Planning Official to approve or deny Minor COA applications for ordinary maintenance and repair, minor exterior alterations, paint color, replacement of non-original materials and restoration work.

Building Codes

New York State uses the 2015 codes of the International Code Council, with modifications identified in NYS Supplements, as the basis of its Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code, and its Energy Conservation Construction Code. Relative to the historic building's addressed in this Plan, these include the International Property Maintenance Code, and the

International Fire Code. Local modifications to these codes must be approved by the New York State Code Council and are approved only if the proposed modification exceeds the code's minimum standards and is based on the unique needs of a locality. Different city entities, in particular the Department of Buildings and Regulatory Compliance and the Fire Department, have responsibility for enforcement of these codes.

Currently, NYS is in the process of adopting an amended version of the 2018 Model Codes published by the International Code Council. A final decision should be made in September 2019 with the new codes published as the 2020 Codes of New York State. Either the 2015 or 2018 Uniform codes may be used for a three-month transition period, while the new Energy Conservation Construction Code will begin on March 3, 2020.

Preservation Administration

Currently, one staff member of the Department of Planning and Development provides support and administration to the Albany Historical Resources Commission on a full-time basis. Duties including reviewing and processing Certificate of Appropriateness applications, managing the operations of the Historical Resources Commission, outreach activities, overseeing survey and registration projects, and maintaining the City's CLG status.

Incentives

The federal historic preservation tax credit program offers owners of historic commercial properties a federal income tax credit equal to 20 percent of the rehabilitation cost. To be eligible, properties must be income-producing, listed in the National Register and the proposed work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

The state historic preservation tax credit program offers owners of properties that are located in eligible census tracts and qualify for the federal credit a state income tax credit equal to 20 percent of the rehabilitation costs, up to \$5 million in credits. Additionally, owner-occupied residential properties that are listed in the National Register and located in eligible census

tracts are eligible for a state tax credit equal to 20 percent of the rehabilitation costs, up to \$50,000 in credits. Every census tract in the City of Albany has been determined to be eligible by the State Historic Preservation Office for the state and federal tax credit program.

City Departments, Agencies, and Preservation Partners

The following is a description of City departments, commissions and boards that have specific roles in the management and administration of the City's historic preservation program. Other preservation partner organizations that have education and advocacy roles within the preservation program are also described in this section.

Albany Historical Resources Commission

Under Chapter 42 of the Albany City Code the mission of the Historical Resources Commission is to preserve and protect places, sites, buildings, structures, works of art and other objects having a special character or special historic or aesthetic interest or value in the City of Albany. The Commission's responsibilities include conducting an ongoing program of survey and historic resource documentation, designating Local Landmarks and Districts, conducting COA reviews, and maintaining the community's CLG status. The Commission currently has nine commissioners and is staffed by the City's Department of Planning and Development.

Albany Planning Board

The Planning Board's principal responsibilities are to review major development and district plans, conditional use permits, conduct design review of new construction and demolition and make recommendations to the Albany Common Council regarding the City's Comprehensive Plans, Plan amendments, and revisions to the City's zoning and land use regulations. The Board has five commissioners and is staffed by the City's Department of Planning and Development.

Albany Department of Planning and Development

The Albany Planning and Development Department is responsible for overseeing local implementation of the Albany 2030 Comprehensive Plan, administering the Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance and managing the municipal historic preservation program. The Department also staffs the Planning Board, Board of Zoning Appeals, as well as the Historic Resources Commission, including the Commission's COA review and permitting processes.

Albany Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Zoning Appeals holds public hearings to decide appeals or interpret provisions of the USDO that impact applicants requesting a change of use or other relief from USDO permitted regulations.

Albany Department of Buildings and Regulatory Compliance

The Albany Department of Buildings and Regulatory Compliance is responsible for building inspections and permits for building rehabilitation, construction and demolition, as well as code enforcement and vacant building registration.

Historic Albany Foundation

Historic Albany Foundation (HAF) is a private, nonprofit membership organization established in 1974 to advocate for the preservation of the Center Square and Hudson Park neighborhoods after the construction of Empire State Plaza and Interstate 787. Since that time, the Foundation's mission has been to preserve and protect buildings that have architectural, historic or civic value providing technical assistance, education and advocacy. HAF fulfills its mandate through public education, promotion and membership, technical assistance, community projects, advocacy for endangered buildings, historic resource surveys and National Register nominations, publications, tours, lectures and operation of an Architectural Parts Warehouse, opened in 1978.

Preservation League of New York State

Founded in 1974, the Preservation League is New York's statewide nonprofit preservation advocacy group focused on investing in people and projects that champion the essential role of preservation in community revitalization, sustainable economic growth, and the protection of historic buildings and landscapes.

Albany County Historical Association

Albany County Historical Association (ACHA) was founded in 1942 and is a private, not-for-profit educational corporation headquartered at the historic Ten Broeck Mansion in the Arbor Hill neighborhood. The mission of the ACHA is to preserve, present, and promote the rich history and culture of Albany County. The Association provides exhibits, lectures, concerts, tours, and other educational activities, including a Living History Day in May and a summer Archaeology Camp for children. The ACHA actively partners with other historical and cultural institutions, and works to promote Albany County's rich history with events held at the Ten Broeck Mansion as well as other locations around the Capital District.

New Netherland Institute

As an independent, non-profit, nongovernmental organization, NNI now supports the New Netherland Research Center (NNRC) in partnership with the New York State Office of Cultural Education (OCE), the parent agency of the State Library and State Archives. Created in 1986 as the Friends of the New Netherland Project, it has supported the transcription, translation, and publication of the 17th-century Dutch colonial records held by the New York State Archives and State Library. These records constitute the world's largest collection of original documentation of the Dutch West India Company and its New World colonies. They represent an irreplaceable resource for researchers exploring this important chapter in American history, with its legacy of cultural traditions, and its qualities of tolerance, diversity and entrepreneurship.

Discover Albany

Discover Albany is an independent, not-for-profit corporation and serves as Albany County's Official Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA), as well as an administrator of the Capital-Saratoga Region and Hudson River Valley marketing efforts. The Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. has been promoting the New York State Capital to visitors since 1976. Discover Albany also operates the Discover Albany Visitors Center, which is located at historic Quackenbush Square (corner of Clinton Avenue and Broadway in downtown Albany), and the Information Desk at the Albany International Airport.

New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

New York's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) helps communities identify, evaluate, preserve, and revitalize their historic, archeological, and cultural resources. The SHPO administers programs authorized by both the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980. These programs, including the Statewide Historic Resources Survey, the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places, the federal historic rehabilitation tax credit, the Certified Local Government program, the state historic preservation grants program, state and federal environmental review, and a wide range of technical assistance, are provided through a network of teams assigned to territories across the state. The SHPO works with governments, the public, and educational and not-for-profit organizations to raise historic preservation awareness, to instill in New Yorkers a sense of pride in the state's unique history and to encourage heritage tourism and community revitalization.

Albany County Hall of Records

The Albany County Hall of Records is a joint city and county collection. Because the archival records of both Albany County and the City of Albany are housed in one location, the public is better able to research local history. Expenses incurred to provide secure vault storage, public search room space, and trained staff are shared by the two participating governments.