

ALBANY HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

WHAT IS A HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN?

A historic preservation plan identifies and outlines the vision, goals, and strategies for enhancing and strengthening a local historic preservation program, recognizing that effective long-range planning can help identify, protect, and manage significant historic resources and key elements of Albany’s built environment. Creating a historic preservation plan is also an opportunity to engage, educate, and inform local stakeholders on the community’s history and heritage, the benefits of preservation, and the roles and responsibilities of the Albany Historic Resources Commission and other public and private entities in ongoing implementation of the preservation program. This Plan outlines specific policies and strategies for the City of Albany to follow and implement to gain that clear picture and predictability in the preservation planning process.



GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

(continued on following Page)

The following is a summary of Key Preservation Plan goals, policies and recommended actions:

SURVEY, DOCUMENTATION AND REGISTRATION

GOAL 1: DOCUMENT, INVENTORY AND DESIGNATE ALBANY’S SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC, CULTURAL, ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 1.1: Conduct on-going field surveys and documentation efforts as a basis for designating future historic districts, individual landmarks and conservation districts.

Action 1.1: Survey and inventory Albany’s older 19th-century areas that are not currently listed in the National Register or locally designated.

Action 1.2: Survey and inventory Albany’s early 20th-century residential areas that are not currently listed in the National Register or locally designated.

Action 1.3: Survey and inventory Albany’s historic religious structures..

Action 1.4: Survey and inventory Albany’s historic educational facilities.

Action 1.5: Create a Significant Property Inventory.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 1.2: Seek a diversity of funding sources for the continued survey and documentation of Albany’s historic resources.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 1.3: List new historic districts and individual properties in the National Register or designate them as Local Landmarks and Historic Districts.

Action 1.6: List the Delaware/Marinello Historic District in the National Register.

Action 1.7: Consider a Downtown Albany Historic District Extension.

Action 1.8: List the SUNY Albany Alumni Quadrangle in the National Register of Historic Places.

Action 1.9: List the SUNY Albany Uptown Campus in the National Register of Historic Places.

Action 1.10: List new properties in the National Register and designate new Historic Landmarks.

Action 1.11: Create an inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing buildings, properties and sites for all Local and National Register historic districts.

Action 1.12: Re-inventory existing historic districts to evaluate current eligibility.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN VISION AND VALUE STATEMENTS



Albany’s 400-year heritage has produced thousands of historic resources which are integral to the city’s image and identity, helping to maintain a prosperous downtown and enhancing residential neighborhoods. Albany’s historic resources are well maintained, and many are undergoing rehabilitation or restoration work to bring new housing choices to Albany residents. Property owners, contractors and developers are taking advantage of the many historic tax incentives and other initiatives to encourage rehabilitation of historic resources. The City of Albany and its historic preservation partners continually collaborate to document and register the City’s historic resources while educating its citizens, property owners and developers in the benefits of preservation. Historic preservation has improved property values in and around historic areas, fostered civic beauty, and preserved and promoted the appreciation of Albany’s historic buildings, structures, sites and districts for the education and welfare of the its citizens and stakeholders.



VALUE STATEMENT #1 HISTORIC PRESERVATION IS A CRITICAL TOOL TO REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN ALBANY

The historic building stock within Downtown Albany is widely viewed as a valuable and significant collection of 19th- and early-20th century architecture, a collection incorporated as part of locally designated and National Register historic districts. The community also recognizes that historic preservation plays a fundamental role in revitalizing traditional downtown districts – historic buildings can serve as incubator spaces for independent businesses while upper floors could be converted to offices, hotels and residential units, making Downtown Albany a true mixed-use center. The community will adopt new policies and sustain new initiatives that advance historic preservation-based approaches to revitalizing and maintaining Downtown Albany as the community’s vital and central commercial district.



VALUE STATEMENT #2 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ENHANCES RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOODS

Residential historic districts throughout the country serve to protect and reinforce distinct neighborhood character, design and authenticity; they are the essential reasons why such neighborhoods remain desirable places to live. In addition, Albany’s older, historic neighborhoods are located in close proximity to the Downtown commercial area and Capitol Hill; they also comprise a source of affordable housing as compared to newer developments. Albany residents desire the conservation and preservation of historic neighborhoods as a means of offering a range of living opportunities in historic environments rich in character and as an effective strategy for achieving community sustainability.

VALUE STATEMENT #3 A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE LOCAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM REQUIRES COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN MANY DIFFERENT PARTNERS

The Albany community believes that successful historic preservation and stewardship requires continual commitment on the part of the City of Albany and other preservation partners and advocates to support and implement various key preservation initiatives. Collaborative efforts help to leverage existing financial and organizational resources, engages new stakeholders as future preservation advocates and builds a strong community historic preservation ethic.

VALUE STATEMENT #4 PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN ALBANY RECOGNIZE ALL GROUPS AND POPULATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ALBANY’S BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

The preservation movement today recognizes that racially, culturally, and ethnically diverse groups are important to understanding a community’s complete story. The citizens of Albany consider the preservation of key sites, stories and legacies of the city’s diverse populations a high priority. Even without the physical evidence of buildings and locations to associate the stories of such groups, the City will find new and innovative ways to tell and interpret such stories to the broader community.



GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTIONS

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Goal 2: Review and enhance preservation policy and program administration.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 2.1: Review and update the historic preservation ordinance and other regulatory tools to advance community preservation planning goals.

Action 2.1: Update the historic preservation components of the Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance.

Action 2.2: Review fee structure for Major Certificate of Appropriateness applications and review of Demolition applications.

Action 2.3: Create an online application submission portal.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 2.2: Consider and adopt new tools that support and encourage preservation of important historic resources.

Action 2.4: Develop a design guidelines manual for historic districts and landmarks.

Action 2.5: Develop a property maintenance manual for older buildings.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 2.3: Improve Historic Resources Commission operations and develop local preservation leadership.

Action 2.6: Develop a design guidelines manual for historic districts and landmarks.

Action 2.7: Actively recruit new members to the Historic Resources Commission.

Action 2.8: Orient incoming Historic Resources Commission members to commission operations.

Action 2.9: Provide opportunities for the ongoing training and education of Historic Resources Commission members.

Action 2.10: Maintain the City of Albany’s Certified Local Government status.

Action 2.11: Establish a budget for publications and community outreach.

Action 2.12: Highlight Historic Resources Commission operations and accomplishments.

Action 2.13: Provide specialized historic preservation training for building and fire inspectors and code enforcement officers.

Action 2.14: Designate a preservation specialist among City building inspectors.

CITY REVITALIZATION

GOAL 3: REVITALIZE AND MAINTAIN ALBANY’S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMERCIAL AREAS THROUGH CONSERVATION, ADAPTIVE USE, AND OTHER ENHANCEMENT EFFORTS.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 3.1: Create and implement new planning, zoning and other regulatory tools that facilitate neighborhood and commercial district preservation and revitalization.

Action 3.1: Implement a neighborhood conservation district program.

Action 3.2: Adopt an adaptive use ordinance.

Action 3.3: Enhance the City of Albany’s tax abatement program for historic properties.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 3.2: Support and enhance private-sector organizations and entities involved in local preservation and revitalization initiatives.

Action 3.4: Encourage and facilitate the creation of an Albany revolving fund program for historic properties.

Action 3.5: Create an “early warning system” on neighborhood building conditions and property abandonment.

Action 3.6: Adopt demolition notification provisions within the Unified Sustainable Development Ordinance.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 3.3: Implement initiatives that address demolitions and vacant historic buildings, properties and lots.

Action 3.7: Create a marketing website portfolio for available historic properties.

Action 3.8: Waive vacant property registration fees as an incentive for property rehabilitation.

Action 3.9: Leverage available tax credit incentive programs to facilitate vacant property rehabilitation.

Action 3.10: Prioritize incentives, including Community Development Block Grant funds, to vacant properties.

Action 3.11: Bolster material recycling requirements for historic properties.

EDUCATON, ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

GOAL 4: PROMOTE INCREASED AWARENESS AND PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION BENEFITS THROUGH ONGOING EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY EFFORTS.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 4.1: Support educational initiatives that inform, engage new audiences, and tell the stories of Albany’s multi-cultural and generational populations.

Action 4.1: Provide specialized historic preservation training for community stakeholders.

Action 4.2: Consider creating an annual Preservation Awards program that includes categories such as residential, commercial, institutional, beautification and a block award. Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 4.2: Provide educational information that informs the community regarding the City’s historic preservation program, history, local landmarks and districts and educational opportunities.

Action 4.3: Create an educational brochure outlining the historic preservation program.

Action 4.4: Create an educational brochure on how to research your property.

Action 4.5: Create an educational brochure detailing local and state preservation funding sources.

Action 4.6: Create an educational brochure outlining the Local Landmark designation process.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 4.3: Use available technologies and other educational tools to increase awareness of Albany’s history and historic architecture and neighborhoods.

Action 4.7: Create an internet portal for Albany survey and historic property data.

Action 4.8: Create online versions of brochures, materials and other historic preservation information.

Action 4.9: Consider creating an involved historic preservation social media package.

Action 4.10: Consider creating a branding and marketing strategy to promote Albany’s historic neighborhoods and quality of life.

Policy Statement for Decision-Makers 4.4: Create and enhance partnerships with organizations and entities that maintain a variety of educational and advocacy activities.

Action 4.11: Expand partnerships with the Historic Albany Foundation.

Action 4.12: Seek partnerships with other organizations and entities.



PRESERVATION BENEFITS

Albany’s historic resources are key to the community’s visual appeal and physical environment, economic diversity and sustainability, heritage tourism and overall quality of life. Historic preservation is also an effective tool for revitalizing downtowns, stabilizing older neighborhoods and the quality and affordability of the existing housing stock, attracting new businesses and homeowners, and encouraging reinvestment in a community’s streets, sidewalks and other infrastructure. It is for these reasons that many municipalities in New York and around the country have created and maintained local preservation programs with preservation ordinances, landmarking and design review procedures, and incentives for property maintenance and adaptive use.

The benefits of preservation are substantial and contribute to the local economy in the following ways:

- New jobs created through rehabilitated buildings occupied by new businesses, especially in historic downtowns and traditional commercial districts.
- Stabilized and improved residential and commercial property values when historic districts are created and maintained.
- Increased housing choices through rehabilitated housing stock.
- Increased reinvestment in Albany’s Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Additional arts, cultural and tourism activities generated in association with historic landmarks and historic districts.
- Conserved building resources that reduce the environmental impact of new development.

