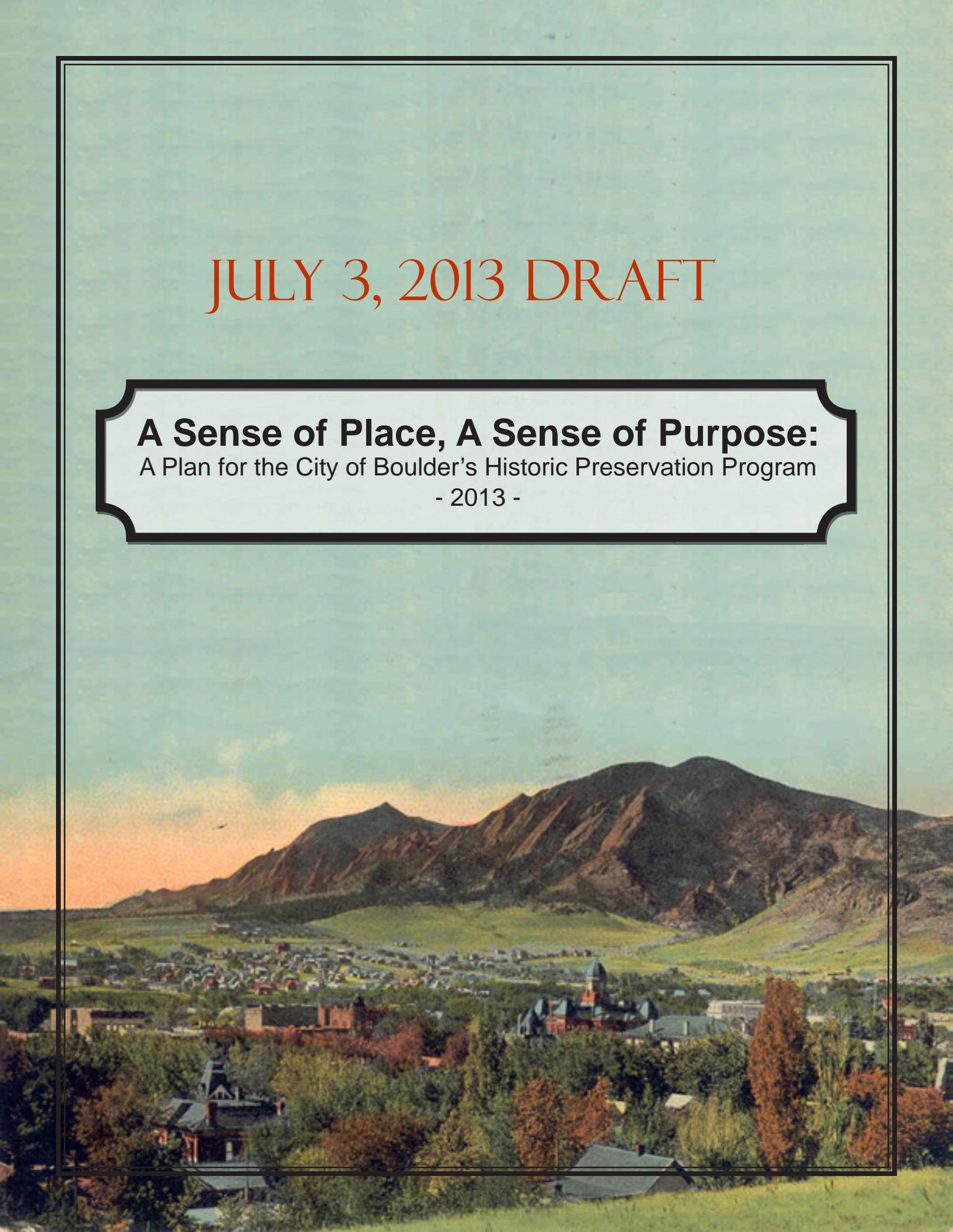


JULY 3, 2013 DRAFT

**A Sense of Place, A Sense of Purpose:**  
A Plan for the City of Boulder's Historic Preservation Program  
- 2013 -



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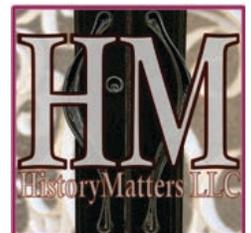
# **A Sense of Place, A Sense of Purpose:** A Plan for the City of Boulder's Historic Preservation Program - 2013 -

City of Boulder  
Community Planning &  
Sustainability Department

Certified Local Government  
Project #CO-12-017

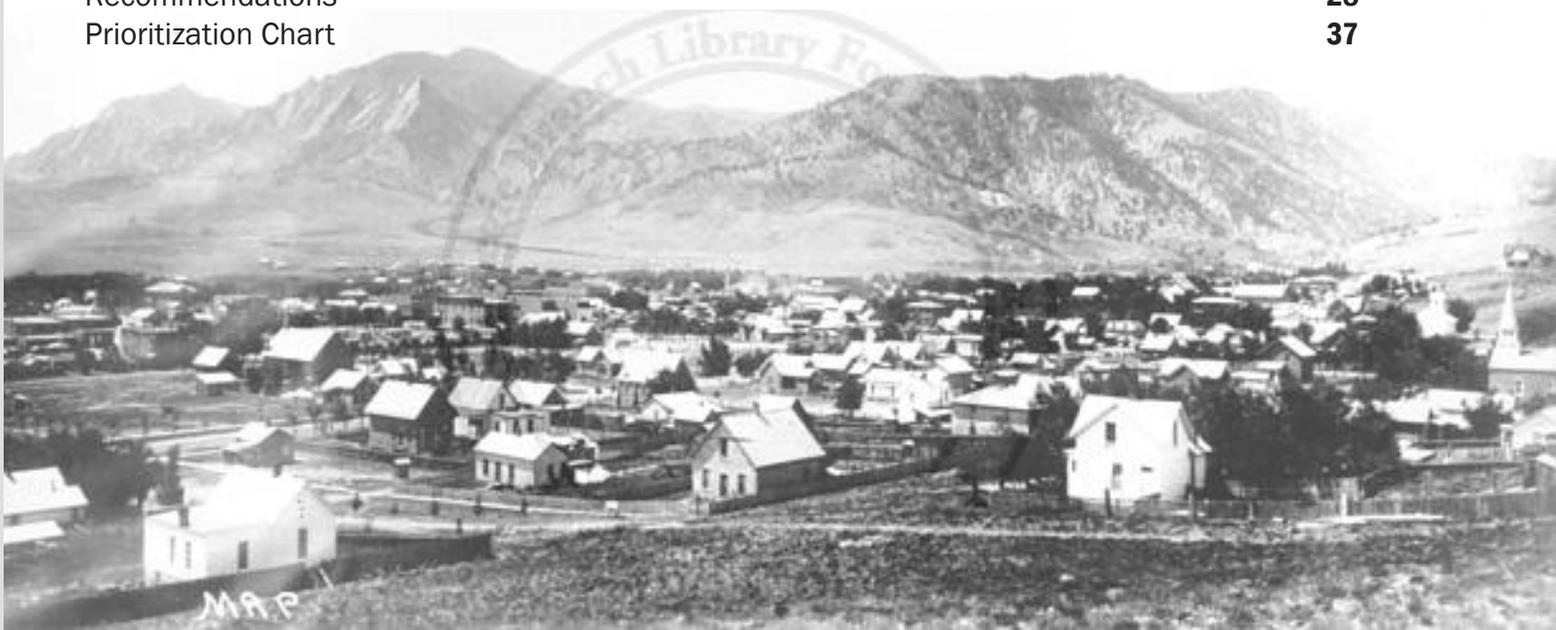
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July 2013



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Boulder's Historic Preservation program strives to model and facilitate long-term stewardship of Boulder's historic built environment.

## THE PROJECT

The goal of this grant-funded initiative is to establish an enduring vision for the city's Historic Preservation program, to set near and long-term priorities for the program, and to identify proactive strategies for achieving the identified goals and objectives in the plan.

## THE PLAN

The Plan reflects considerable public input and aspires to define a vision that can guide the diverse initiatives, programs, needs, opportunities, goals, and principles of the City of Boulder's historic preservation activities. On a practical level it is intended to identify implementable work program priorities that will assist in achieving the city's historic preservation goals and objectives.

The Plan identifies five goals to guide the City of Boulder's Historic Preservation program:

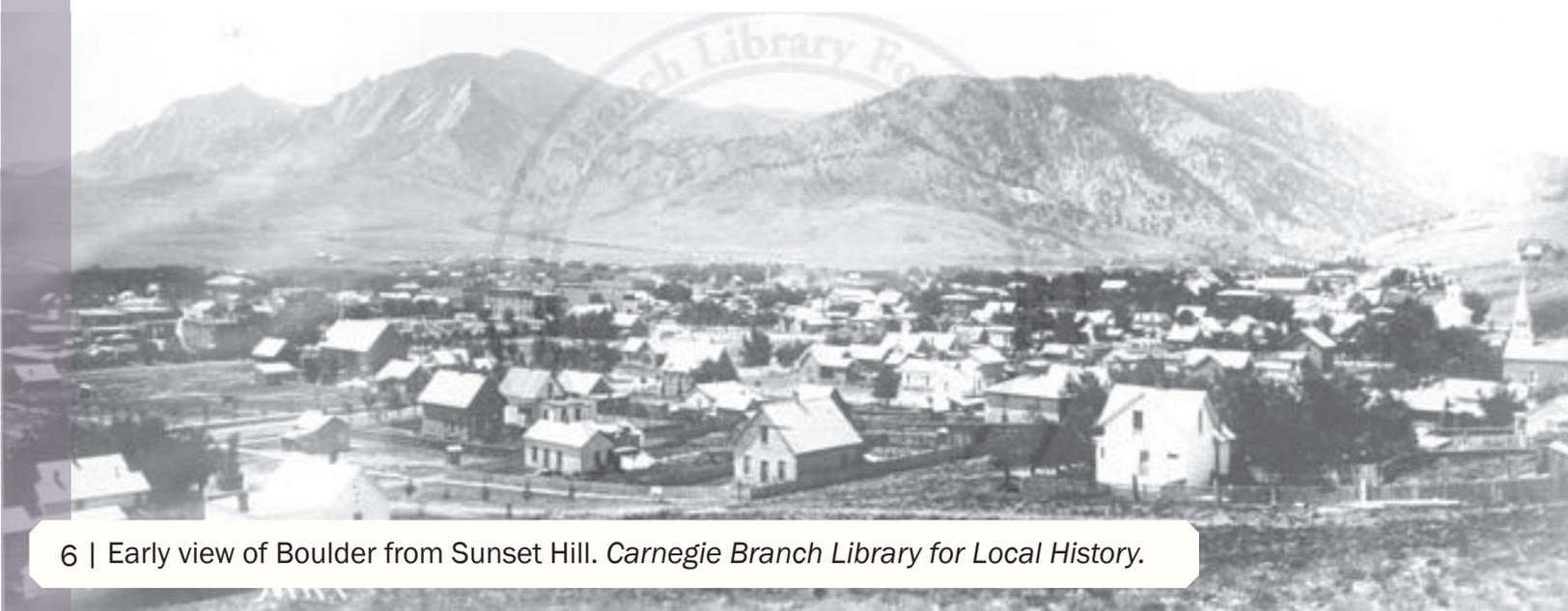
- **Ensure the Protection of Boulder's Significant Historic, Architectural, and Environmental Resources**
- **Actively Engage the Community in Historic Preservation Efforts**
- **Make Review Processes Clear, Predictable, and Objective**
- **Continue Leadership in Historic Preservation and Environmental Sustainability**
- **Encourage Preservation of Historic Resources**

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Three themes have been developed from the Goals and Objectives and are used to organize the recommendations. They are **Historic Resource Protection, Community Engagement and Collaboration** and **Program Operations**. Finally, recommendations in each theme are prioritized to ensure that existing historic preservation activities are addressed before expanding the program through new initiatives.

## **A SENSE OF PLACE: DEVELOPMENT OF A HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN**

The following section provides an overview of the development of this historic preservation plan and gives a brief history on the city's historic preservation efforts to date.



# DEVELOPMENT OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

In 2012, the City of Boulder received grant funding to develop a plan that would establish a long-term vision for the city's Historic Preservation program, proactively set priorities for future activities, and identify strategies for achieving the identified goals and objectives.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

Development of a historic preservation plan for the city and county is recommended in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan as a way to integrate historic preservation issues into broader goals and policies in the Boulder Valley. This plan is more limited in scope applying only to the City of Boulder's historic preservation activities, but may be useful in developing a historic plan for the Boulder Valley broadly.

Few communities in the United States have undertaken development of such a plan for an established municipal historic preservation program. This may relate to historic preservation being perceived as largely reactive in nature, responding to threats only when the proverbial bulldozers are on-site. In reality, current historic preservation practice is often woven into many facets of a city government's activities and plans. This is the case in Boulder.

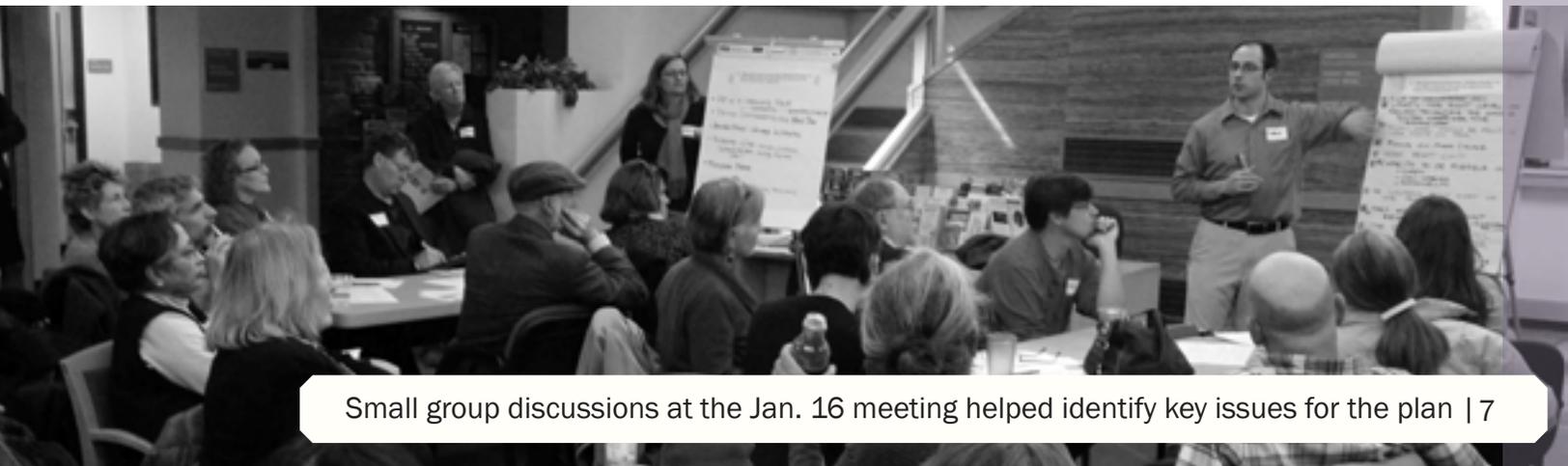
The Plan seeks to build on past successes by identifying what roles historic preservation will play in shaping Boulder's urban form and character, in contributing to the city's goals towards environmental and economic sustainability while maintaining the high quality of life to which the city's residents cherish. The Plan also aspires to bring vision to the diverse initiatives, programs, needs, opportunities, goals, and principles of the City of Boulder's historic preservation activities in the twenty-first century. On a practical level it is

intended to establish implementable work program priorities that will assist in streamlining the city's historic preservation efforts.

The Plan briefly describes and analyzes fourteen main program areas, establishes goals and priorities for the program, and includes recommendations and a plan for implementing those recommendations in three themes, Historic Resource Protection, Community Engagement and Collaboration, and Program Operations. The Plan provides concrete strategies for implementation with near and long-term outcomes to refine and improve the city's historic preservation program over the next 10 years.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

The planning effort reflects considerable public input from a broad range of stakeholders, some with direct interest in historic preservation, and others not. It recognizes the value of community engagement in undertaking an honest assessment of Boulder's historic preservation program and developing strategies for the future that will benefit the community as a whole. Groups engaged through the plan development process include the Boulder Area Realtors Association (BARA), the Boulder County historic preservation program, the Boulder History Museum, the Colorado Chautauqua Association, the Downtown Business Owners, Inc. (DBI), the Carnegie Library for Public History, Colorado History, the Floral Park Neighbors, Historic Boulder, Inc., the Mapleton Hill Neighborhood Association, PLAN-Boulder County, the Planning and Development stakeholder group, and the Whittier Neighborhood Association. The plan also integrates the six goals for local historic preservation as outlined in "The Power of Heritage and Place: The Statewide Plan for Historic Preservation in Colorado (2013).



Small group discussions at the Jan. 16 meeting helped identify key issues for the plan | 7

## A SENSE OF PLACE

Boulder possesses remarkable environmental, cultural, and historic wealth and unmistakable sense of place that its residents are, justifiably, proud of. The Southern Arapaho people are known to have recognized the Boulder Valley for its gifts, establishing a village near Haystack Mountain. Over the centuries, Utes, Cheyennes, Comanches, and Sioux visited and camped in the area.

When settlement first took place by the first European descendents in the 1850s Boulder was part of the Nebraska Territory. On February 28, 1861, the Territory of Colorado was created by the U.S. Congress after which the town developed quickly into a supply base for miners going into the mountains in search of gold and silver. Early Boulder was a rough hewn place that provided miners with equipment, agricultural products, housing, transport services, as well as many gambling and drinking establishments.

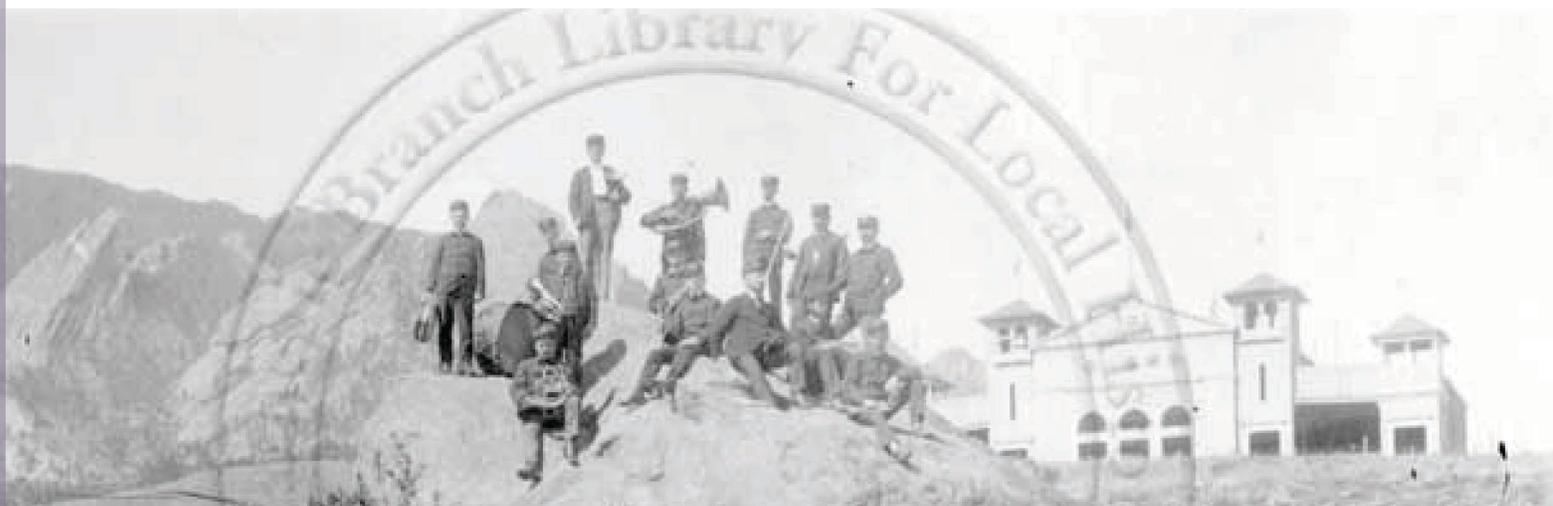
Boulder's first residential area was located in what is now downtown and in some parts of the Goss/Grove, Whittier and Mapleton Hill neighborhoods. In 1860 a group of Boulder residents began lobbying to have the University of Colorado located in Boulder and by 1874, the small community had won the designation, secured a donated 44.9 acre site and raised \$15,000 to match a similar grant by the state legislature. At the turn of the twentieth-century, growth of the University led to the development of parts of University Hill.

By 1905, the economy was faltering and Boulder counted heavily on tourism and health seekers to boost its fortunes; however, it had no first class hotel to attract summer visitors and group meetings. By 1906, a subscription drive had raised money to begin

construction of such an establishment. The first event at the new hotel was a reception for Boulderites, held on December 30, 1908, and the Hotel Boulderado opened to the public for business on January 1, 1909. Tourism continued to dominate the Boulder economy for the next 40 years. Each summer shopkeepers, transport firms, and lodging managers eagerly awaited the influx of Chautauqua residents, primarily from Texas, and other visitors. By World War II, when tourism declined, the university unknowingly provided another opportunity for growth. With the location of the U.S. Navy's Japanese language school at the university, young men and women from around the country became acquainted with the city and remained after the war.

### EARLY HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Efforts to protect Boulder's setting and natural resources represent some of the first conservation efforts within the community. A voter-approved ballot measure in the late-1890s allowed the City to purchase forty acres of land to establish the Colorado Chautauqua, marking the community's commitment to preserving and celebrating Boulder's natural beauty. Boulder citizens continued to play a strong role in determining the town's future growth. In 1903, the Boulder City Improvement Association was established to develop park lands and encourage desirable city improvements. This body had similar goals to Boulder's Park Board, which actively acquired lands along Boulder Creek and in other areas surrounding the city for park use. In 1908, the Improvement Association commissioned nationally-recognized landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to suggest ways to improve Boulder's physical environment. Olmsted advised



the city to promote itself as a residential community, to ensure its stability, and to distance polluting industries from central Boulder. Olmsted's report established a guide for growth in Boulder. In 1926, the city hired Denver planning consultant Saco R. DeBoer to formulate a Boulder zoning ordinance. Adopted in 1928, this ordinance established seven zoning districts and made Boulder one of the earlier western cities to have such land use guidance.

### **MID-CENTURY HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS**

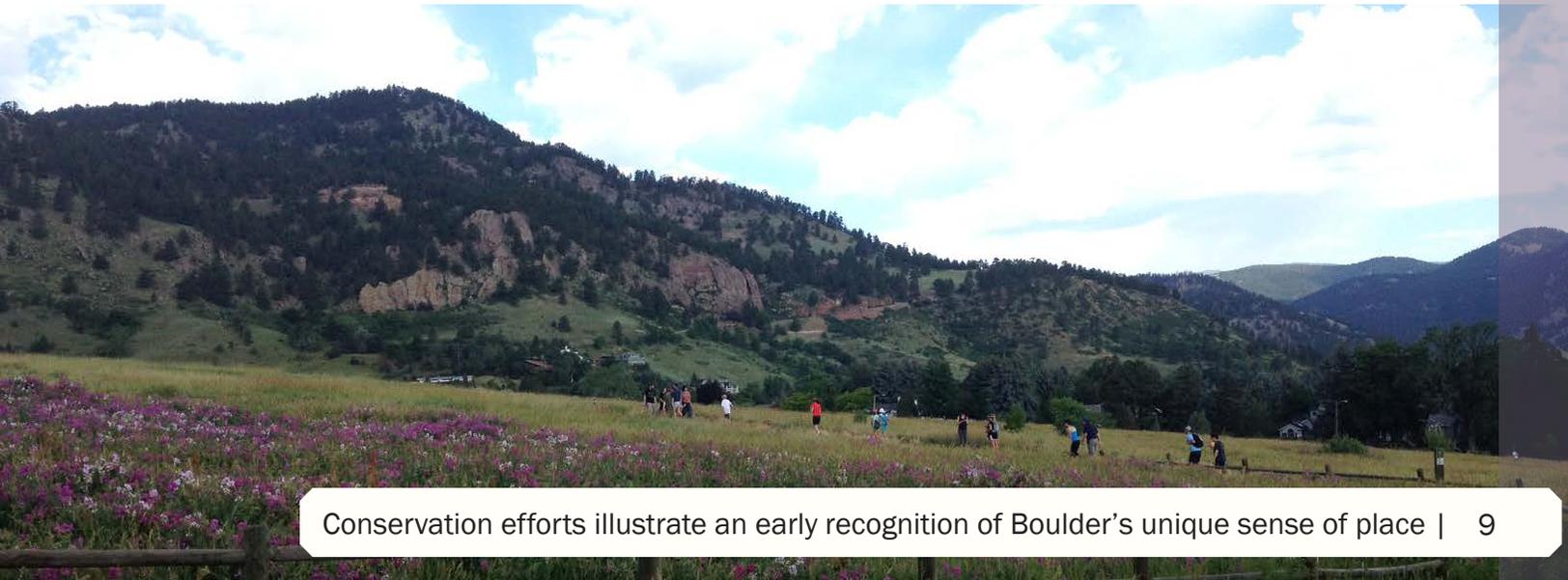
Boulder, like so many other communities across the western United States, experienced tremendous post-World War II population growth. A rising population, along with a national mood which emphasized the “new” after years of Depression-era and wartime deprivation, was perceived as a threat to both the natural setting and many older buildings. As a result, historic preservation and conservation efforts emerged from a combination of concerns about the effects of dramatic growth and a desire to protect the city's distinct sense of place. In 1959, after a successful grassroots campaign, Boulder voters approved an amendment to the city charter which introduced a “blue line” restricting water service at higher elevations as a way to preserve the views toward and character of nearby mountain areas. In 1967, Boulder was the first city in the United States to vote for an open space tax, and as a result over 45,000 acres of parks and open space surround the city. In 1971, Boulder citizens again supported an effort to protect Boulder's character; construction of the nine-story Colorado Building at 14th and Walnut streets encouraged voters to pass a law restricting the height of new buildings to fifty-five feet.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE**

Responding to the loss of several important historic buildings in the 1960s and early-1970s, Historic Boulder, Inc. drafted an historic preservation ordinance which City Council unanimously adopted in 1974. It established a recognized municipal function to preserve and protect the historic, architectural, and environmental assets which contribute to Boulder's sense of place.

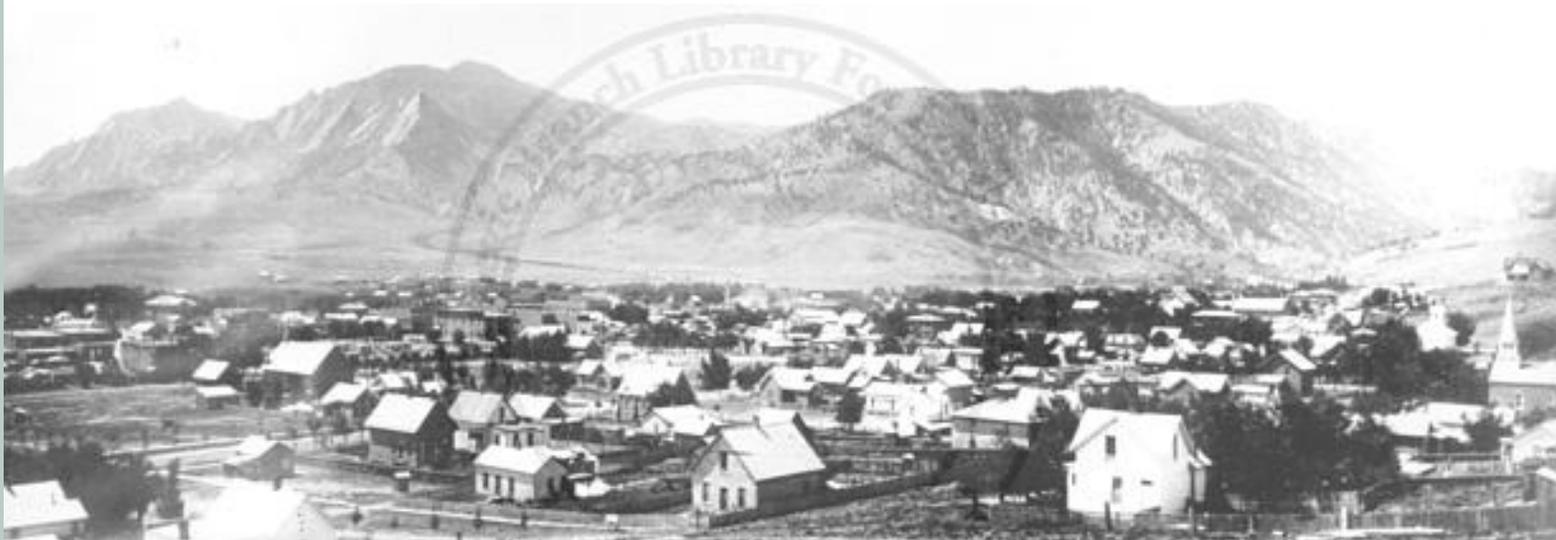
### **THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM TODAY**

Over its nearly forty-year history, the city's historic preservation program has grown, evolved, and matured. Today Boulder boasts a well-established and dynamic historic preservation program that is cited as a model in Colorado and nationwide. The local historic preservation ethic in the city is complex and focused on preserving vital aspects of the community's character that improve the urban quality of life by promoting distinct, lively, and sustainable neighborhoods. From the outset, the historic preservation ordinance has sought to balance private property rights with the public interest of resource protection, and this fundamental principle continues to guide the city's Historic Preservation program. While this balance is not always easy to achieve (and sometimes results in controversy), historic preservation efforts in Boulder have resulted in the designation of many significant buildings and neighborhoods, enhancing the community's character for citizens today and generations to come.



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The following descriptions and analyses the City of Boulder's Historic Preservation Program areas and activities is condensed from the longer program assessment. The full document is available on the city's historic preservation website.



# OVERVIEW

The City of Boulder’s Historic Preservation program was established in 1974, following a citizen-driven effort to recognize and protect buildings and sites important to Boulder’s history. The program began with the designation of five individual landmarks, and in 1974, Floral Park was designated as the city’s first historic district. Over the next 40 years, the program has grown to include 162 individual landmarks and 10 historic districts, for a total of over 1,300 designated properties.

## CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM (CLG)

The City of Boulder has been a Certified Local Government (CLG) since 1985. The purpose of the program certification is to encourage and expand local involvement in preservation issues and establish strong local preservation programs. Certified programs are eligible for grants from a designated fund, and landmarks within the CLG jurisdiction are eligible for a 20% State Historic Preservation Income Tax Credit.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established State Historic Preservation Offices, funded by the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service. History Colorado’s Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, administers the state program, including state and federal grants, review and maintenance of survey records, nomination of properties to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. In 1980, the state-federal partnership was expanded to local governments.

A Certified Local Government must establish a historic preservation ordinance, an adequate and qualified Historic Preservation Commission (Landmarks Board), a system for survey and inventory of historic properties, and encourage public participation in historic preservation programs.

The city has been successful in securing grant funds nearly every year since it was certified, which have funded survey and historic context projects, staff and board member training, and public outreach efforts. Annual CLG evaluations provide third-party analysis of the operation of the program to ensure compliance with the CLG requirements.

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM AREAS

The Historic Preservation Ordinance outlines the key functions of the historic preservation program, including designation of individual landmarks and historic districts, recognition of properties as Structures of Merit, ruling on Landmark Alteration Certificates, enforcement of historic preservation violations, and granting permits for demolition of buildings over 50 years old.

In addition to these key functions, the program includes public outreach efforts and functions related to the operation of the program within the Comprehensive Planning and Sustainability department and the city organization.

The following descriptions and analyses are organized into three themes: Historic Resource Protection, Program Operation, and Community Engagement and Collaboration.

**Historic Resource Protection:** Program areas that aid in the protection of historic resources, including the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Landmarks Board, Landmarks and Historic District Designation, Design Review and Demolition Review and Historic Preservation Incentives.

**Program Operations:** Program areas related to the overall operation of the program, including coordination between departments, enforcement policies, architectural survey, archeological resources, and disaster preparedness.

**Community Engagement and Collaboration:** Information on current public outreach efforts and the honorary Structure of Merit program.



# BOULDER'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Boulder's Historic Preservation Ordinance is the foundation for Boulder's historic preservation program. Outlining the intent, processes and standards by which the preservation activities are undertaken by the city, the ordinance continues to guide the program. The stated purpose of the ordinance is to:

*Promote the public health, safety and welfare by protecting, enhancing, and perpetuating buildings, sites, and areas of the city reminiscent of past eras, events, and persons important in local, state, or national history or providing significant examples of architectural styles of the past.... to develop and maintain appropriate settings and environments for such buildings, sites, and areas to enhance property values, stabilize neighborhoods, promote tourist trade and interest, and foster knowledge of the city's living heritage.*

The intention is not to “preserve every old building in the city but instead... draw a reasonable balance between private property rights and the public interest...” At its adopting, the ordinance established:

1. The procedure for designation of individual landmarks and historic districts,
2. The process for the review of alterations to or demolition of designated buildings,

3. The Landmarks Historic Preservation Advisory Board (now known as the Landmarks Board) and
4. The enforcement penalties to be levied if alteration or demolition decisions were disobeyed.

## ANALYSIS

Boulder's ordinance has served the city well over the past thirty-nine years, establishing a solid framework for the historic preservation program. Both adopted rules and ordinance revisions have allowed the program to change and adapt as needed. The most significant change occurred in 1994 and established a review process for the demolition and relocation review for non-designated buildings over fifty years old. In comparison with historic preservation ordinances in other like communities, Boulder's ordinance is comprehensive, with a clear purpose and articulated roles of the Board, staff, and various review processes. Feedback from the public, the Landmarks Board, and staff indicate the demolition section of the ordinance is unclear and the process often results in unintended results. Revisions to this section of the ordinance, providing for more flexibility in its application, might be appropriate (see Demolition section). Likewise, the Landmarks Design Review Committee process might be better articulated to clarify the subcommittee's role and increase overall consistency.



# LANDMARKS BOARD

Boulder’s original historic preservation ordinance established the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, a body assigned designation and review responsibilities for the City of Boulder’s Historic Preservation program. Renamed the Landmarks Board in 2007, the five members, two of whom are design professionals, are City Council-appointed to five year terms and include at least two representatives from the architecture or urban planning professions. The Board fulfills four major roles and has the authority to make rules and regulations to interpret the ordinance. The Board also includes a single non-voting member from the Planning Board who attends meetings and comments on historic preservation issues that may have larger planning implications. Members of the Landmarks Board and staff attend conferences, forums, and workshops annually to assist in designation, design review, and review of non-designated buildings older than 50 years. As Boulder property values and development pressures continue to rise, the Board is increasingly faced with more complex issues that require weighing sometimes competing community interests when making decisions regarding designation, design review, and demolitions.

## ANALYSIS

Landmarks Board members are volunteers who devote considerable time carrying out the intent of the city’s historic preservation ordinance. The board frequently forms subcommittees to engage in special initiatives including drafting design guidelines and public outreach efforts. Over the years, these subcommittees have been effective in promoting historic preservation in the city and can be credited

with a number of accomplishments including establishment of the Structure of Merit program and Historic Preservation and Environmental Sustainability initiative. Public feedback indicates a desire to increase objectivity and consistency in the review of projects. To this end, staff and the Landmarks Board should engage in regular training to ensure decisions are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation and the historic preservation ordinance

### Key Duties of the Landmarks Board, as specified in the Ordinance:

- Designating individual landmarks and historic districts,
- Recognizing properties for the Structure of Merit list,
- Ruling on Landmark Alteration Certificates,
- Review of permit applications for demolition of buildings over 50 years old.

### Other Landmarks Board activities:

- Annual retreat to discuss past year and plan future initiatives.
- Certified Local Government training workshops, hosted by History Colorado
- Attendance at annual Saving Places conference
- Annual letter to City Council



# LANDMARK AND HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION

Boulder’s historic preservation ordinance authorizes the Landmarks Board to recommend to City Council the designation of sites and areas of historic, architectural, and/or environmental significance. Designation of important historic properties ensures their protection while providing financial and other incentives for rehabilitation. Property owners, historic preservation organizations, the Landmarks Board or City Council may start the designation process. Historic Preservation staff researches the significance of the site or area and prepares a summary report, with a recommendation regarding designation, for the Landmarks Board public hearing. The Landmarks Board makes a designation recommendation to the City Council who decides whether the property or district should be landmarked. Once City Council approves a designation ordinance, a copy of this document is placed in the Boulder County real estate records, notifying future owners of the listed status of their building. Because the local landmark program is relatively dynamic and because of the high level of protection it provides, there are relatively few properties in Boulder listed in the State or National Register of Historic Places.

## ANALYSIS

The rate of designations in Boulder, both individual landmarks and historic districts, has remained fairly stable over time. Designations of individual landmarks and historic districts have generally been reactive in nature and the result of a perceived threat. Most landmarks were designated in the 1990s and the majority of historic districts were designated in the 1980s and 1990s. Many designations of

districts have occurred following historic survey; a pattern which should be maintained by the program.

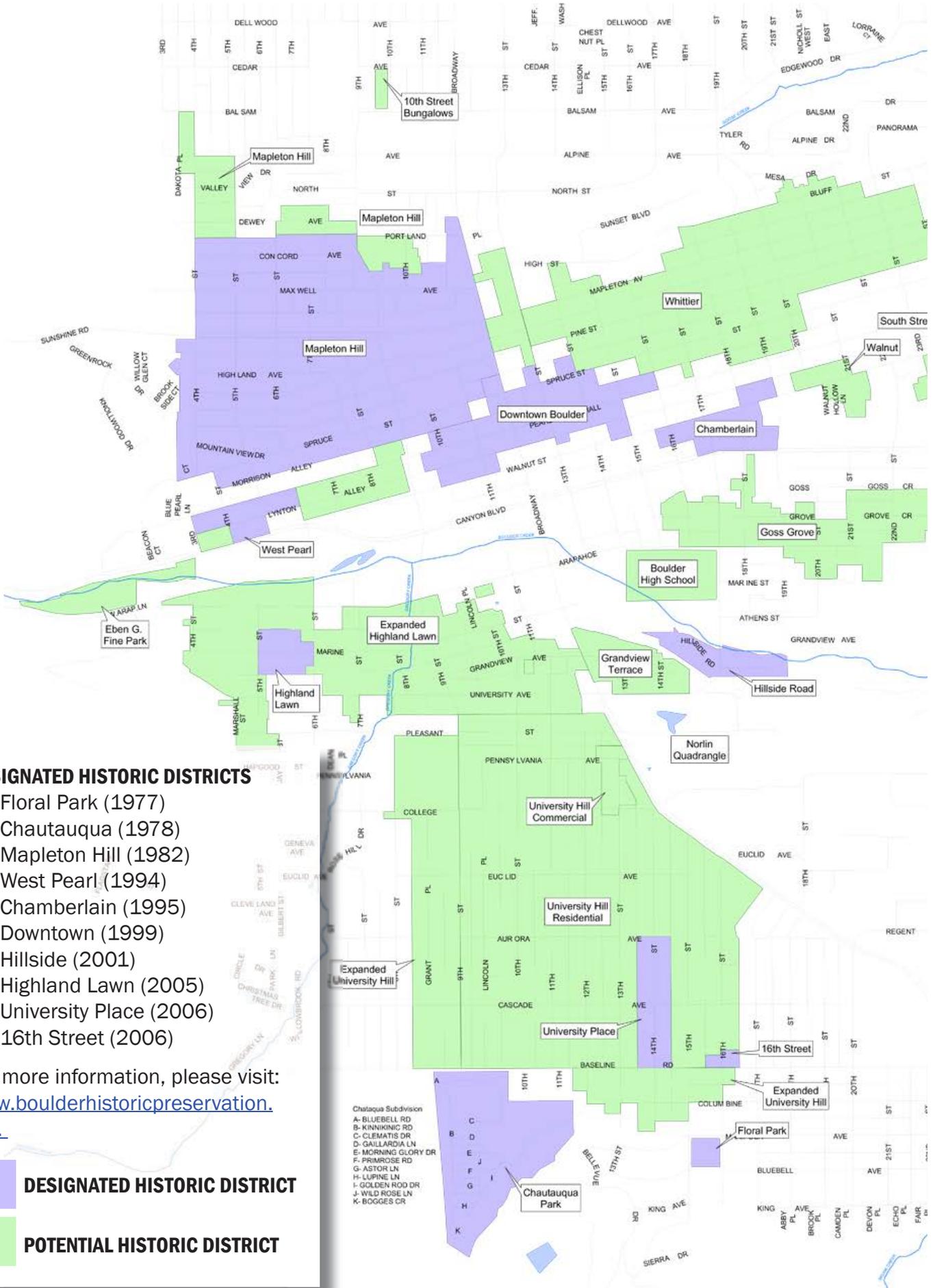
The majority of Boulder’s landmarks and historic districts reflect the city’s early history as is typical of historic preservation programs which tend to focus, at least initially, on older and rarer resources. While there is broad landmark representation of most types and eras from the pre-WW-II years, there are few buildings designated from the post-WW II era..

There are many identified areas and buildings in the city that are not protected through designation. These include older areas that have been previously identified as potential historic districts, under-represented resources (such as vernacular buildings and resources associated with minorities), many important modern buildings, and properties constructed during the 1950s through the 1970s. Data on the most vulnerable and underrepresented resources is currently not available.

An ordinance revision in 2007 allowed for a longer time period between historic district initiation and designation, a change which placed greater emphasis on property owner support and collaboration. Historic districts designated since 2004 have been smaller geographic areas, not only reflecting the complexities of listing larger areas but also making the public outreach process more manageable. Public input indicates that that the historic preservation program should better publicize information about the historic districts and ensure property owners are aware of the required review processes.



# DESIGNATED AND POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS



## DESIGN REVIEW

Change continually occurs in Boulder's historic districts and to individually landmarked properties. The Design Review process, and the requirement of a Landmark Alteration Certificate for exterior alterations, is in place to ensure that changes are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation by preserving key architectural features while addressing the needs of modern living. Through this process, staff reviews minor alterations, such as the construction of rear fences and roofing. The Landmarks Design Review Committee reviews applications for more significant changes including front and side yard fences, window rehabilitation and replacement, and additions to designated buildings.

Composed of two rotating Landmarks Board members and one Historic Preservation staff member, the Landmarks Design Review Committee meets weekly and works collaboratively with property owners, architects and builders within the framework of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation and relevant design guidelines. If the three members do not agree the proposal is consistent with these guidelines, the request is referred to the full Landmarks Board for review at a public hearing. If an applicant does not agree with the committee recommendation, he or she also may request a full board public hearing. Full Landmarks Board review is required for demolition or construction of a new building over 340 square feet on a landmarked property or in a designated historic district. The Landmarks Board's decisions are forwarded to the City Council for review and possible "call up" for their own consideration. Members of the Landmarks Board and staff attend conferences, forums, and workshops annually to

assist in their design review activities. Consideration might also be given to an independent evaluation of the design review process.

### ANALYSIS

Design review is vitally important in maintaining the visual and material character of Boulder's historically designated areas and properties. Landmarked sites, subject to design review over the years, represent some of the liveliest and most valuable properties in the city. Boulder's historic design review process has evolved into an efficient, thorough, and collaborative means to appropriately manage change to the city's historic fabric. The vast majority of the over 200 Landmark Alteration Certificates reviewed annually are approved or approved with modifications. As rising real estate values and land use pressures have continued to increase over the past decade, more ambitious proposals within historic districts are being seen. Such projects present ever increasing challenges in balancing the needs of private property rights with those of the public good.

Public feedback suggests there is sometimes confusion about the review process and a perceived a lack of consistency regarding decisions. Such criticism of historic preservation design review is not unique to Boulder and underscores the challenges of reviewing changes to historic properties where flexibility is required and "one size fits all" regulations do not work. Care needs to be taken in citing the specific design guideline provisions that inform review decisions; this approach illustrates to the public how such review decisions are both objective and predictable. Likewise, Historic Preservation staff should provide applicants with clearer information about what to expect from the review process and share with property owners the rationale behind the design guidelines and how decisions are made. Effort should also be made to encourage the Landmarks Board members and staff to participate in regular design training sessions to ensure the highest level of historic preservation design review.



# DESIGN GUIDELINES

Boulder’s design guidelines are written to provide guidance for property owners undertaking exterior changes to designated individual landmarks or buildings within historic districts. They are based on the federal Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, and assist staff and the Landmarks Board to evaluate alterations in a consistent, equitable, and predictable manner. The City of Boulder has drafted a total of eight design guideline documents. In 2008, the city received a best practices award from the National Alliance of Historic Preservation Commissions for developing design guidelines that assist in achieving Boulder’s sustainability goals in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards.

Early design guidelines were prepared after historic district designation, but more recently staff has worked collaboratively with property owners to develop appropriate design guidelines prior to designation. Using this approach, specific issues identified by residents can be integrated into the guidelines. This approach incorporates the proposed design guidelines into the pre-designation outreach process and has proven effective in cultivating critical public support for new historic districts. The design guidelines are available to the public on the city’s historic preservation website and in printed form.

## ANALYSIS

Boulder’s design guidelines provide more specific guidance for design review than in many other similar communities. However, it is important that they are as understandable, accessible, and comprehensive

as possible. The public and the Landmarks Board commented that the public is often not aware of the guidelines and their rationale. There were also comments about recent applications for alterations not addressed fully in current guidelines, such as the use of alternative materials.

Currently the city does not have an established process for reviewing the effectiveness (including independent evaluations) of the design guidelines. Regular assessment and a standard schedule for such revisions addresses this issue and should be addressed. In the near-term, revisiting sections of the General Design Guidelines may be useful, as this document is used most frequently.

## GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

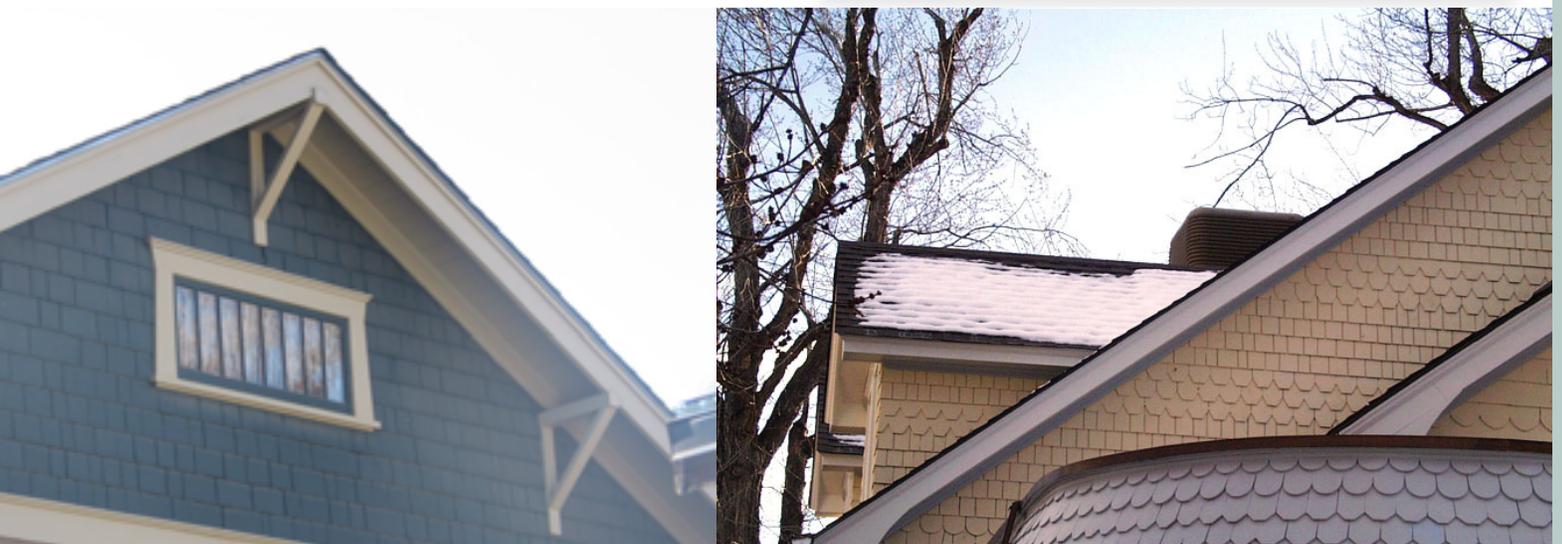
- General Design Guidelines (2007)

## DISTRICT-SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Mapleton Hill Design Guidelines (1985, Revised 1994)
- Chautauqua Design Guidelines (1989)
- Chamberlain Design Guidelines (1996)
- West Pearl Design Guidelines (1996)
- Downtown Design Guidelines (2002)
- Highland Lawn Design Guidelines (2005)
- University Place Design Guidelines (2006)

Guidelines are available online on the city’s website:

[www.boulderhistoricpreservation.net](http://www.boulderhistoricpreservation.net)



# DEMOLITION REVIEW

Intended to prevent the loss of buildings that may have historic or architectural significance, the historic preservation ordinance outlines a review process for non-designated buildings over 50 years in age proposed for demolition. If a building is found to be potentially eligible for designation as an individual landmark, a public hearing is scheduled. If the Board determines the property is not eligible for designation as an individual landmark, a demolition is granted. However, if the Landmarks Board finds there is “probable cause,” the building may be eligible for designation, a 180-day stay of demolition is imposed.

During this period, staff and the Board engage in discussions with the applicant to explore alternatives to demolition; Historic Boulder, Inc. has also played a key role in proposing alternatives to demolition. If it is determined there is not probable cause for landmarking, a demolition permit is issued.

## ANALYSIS

Boulder’s demolition ordinance has been effective in preventing the loss of historically significant properties. Limits on residential growth mean land use pressures are likely to continue in Boulder and demolition reviews will remain a significant aspect of the City’s Historic Preservation program. There is a general lack of understanding about the application of the demolition ordinance to all buildings fifty years or older, even if they are not designated. For this reason, property owners, especially those not living within an historic district, are sometimes surprised they are required to go through the demolition

review process.

While the very specific way the ordinance defines demolition has changed over the years to acknowledge that demolition can be less than complete removal of a building, it poses challenges in administering this program area. For instance, a proposal to remove a street-facing wall of a building older than fifty years of age is reviewed the same way as the demolition of the entire building. In such situations, the Landmarks Board may review only whether the subject building is potentially eligible as an individual landmark and is not able to assess the relative impact of the demolition. Consideration should be given to revising the ordinance to allow for the level of demolition to be taken into consideration or the possibility that such a change could be made through adoption of an administrative regulation.

## DEFINITION OF DEMOLITION

The current historic preservation code defines demolition as an act or process that removes:

1. 50% or more of the exterior walls of a building as measured contiguously around the building coverage; or
2. 50% or more of the roof areas as measured in plan view; or
3. any exterior wall facing a public street, but not an act or process which removes an exterior wall facing an alley



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

Boulder currently administers fourteen different incentives to encourage the stewardship of landmarked buildings and properties located in designated historic districts. These provisions include the State Tax Credit and the City Sales Tax Waiver that convey a direct financial benefit. Other available incentives allow for relief from land use regulations or honor owners of historic properties. The most utilized incentive is the State Tax Credit; as a Certified Local Government, Boulder reviews these applications in-house, usually as part of the Landmark Alteration Certificate process. Between 2003 and 2009, a total of thirty-nine State Tax Credit applications, the second highest number of any municipality in Colorado, were approved. The practice of providing free plaques to all owners of individual landmarks also is very popular.

## ANALYSIS

Boulder has been creative in developing incentives to encourage historic preservation in the community. While specialized tax revenues for historic preservation projects currently are not available here, as they are in Louisville, Boulder's zoning incentives are more expansive than those available in most other Colorado communities. Public input revealed that many owners of historic properties are not aware of available incentives. Enhanced promotion of existing incentives would be of benefit and consideration should be given to developing additional financial incentives.

## AVAILABLE INCENTIVES FOR LANDMARKED PROPERTIES

- Eligibility for a 20% Federal Tax Credit for income-producing properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Eligibility for a 10% Colorado State Income Tax for individually landmarked properties and those located within a historic district.
- City sales tax waiver on construction materials when applying for a building permit if at least 30% of the value of materials will be used for the building's exterior.
- Eligibility for grants through the State Historical Fund. Projects must have a public benefit to be eligible for a grant.
- Potential exemptions or variances from select building code and zoning standards, including floodplain, height, solar and residential growth management requirements.
- Newly-designated landmarks are honored with a bronze plaque presented at a public ceremony.
- Staff assistance for applicants for development review, Landmark Alteration Certificate, and building permit processes.



## INTERNAL COORDINATION

The city's Historic Preservation program interacts with many other city departments, reflecting the acknowledged institutional value of historic preservation within Boulder's government. This arrangement also illustrates the complex relationship of historic preservation with other city values like, housing, transportation, and environmental sustainability. Within the Community Planning & Environmental Sustainability Department, the Historic Preservation program coordinates and collaborates with Development Review, Zoning, Building Code, and the Local Environmental Action divisions. Coordination between Comprehensive Planning and the Historic Preservation program takes place during updates to the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan and its preservation/conservation policies.

### ANALYSIS

Feedback from the Internal Coordination group indicated collaboration and cooperation among the various municipal departments and the Historic Preservation program has improved markedly over the last few years. In particular, coordination through the discretionary review planning process takes place from the pre-application stage. However, there was also acknowledgment of a need for continued engagement with the community and transparent communication among city staff. In particular, emphasis should be given to increasing coordination between Housing Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Open Space and Mountain Parks and Facilities Management where historic resources are often at issue. Members of the coordination group suggested better information and more internal training on historic design review process, the Landmarks Design Review Committee, and how Landmarks Alteration Certificate decision was important to improve internal coordination.

## ENFORCEMENT

The historic preservation ordinance outlines the enforcement policies and penalties for historic preservation violations, including work completed without a Landmark Alteration Certificate the unauthorized demolition of buildings over 50 years old. Demolition violations are rare; most violations involve work completed without an LAC. Many enforcement cases are initiated by notification from neighborhood residents to Historic Preservation staff of a potential violation. If warranted, a stop work order is issued. Except in the cases of unauthorized demolition and relocation, property owners have thirty days to resolve the violation with Historic Preservation staff. The city may issue a summons if there is no attempt to resolve the situation or work on correcting the problem ceases. In the instance of an unlawful demolition or relocation of an historic building, the city issues both a notice of violation and a summons. The maximum penalty in Boulder for demolishing an historic building without the proper review and permit is a fine of not more than \$5,000 per violation, incarceration for not more than ninety days, or both a fine and jail time.

### ANALYSIS

Staff generally uses an educational rather than punitive approach to reduce not only violations but also the need for enforcement. Historic Preservation staff makes every effort to provide as much relevant information as possible to owners of historic buildings. Details about the Landmark Alteration Certificate and demolition review processes are posted on the City's website, provided over the phone and in person, and also appear in specialized brochures and publications. Staff also cooperates with other city employees to enhance the enforcement program. While this approach is relatively effective, enforcement practices by could be strengthened by establishing a historic preservation training program for inspectors.

## SURVEY AND HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Historic and architectural surveys and historic contexts are the foundation of understanding a community's cultural resources and how best to manage them in a proactive manner. Surveys inform a community what historic resources it has and why they may be important. In 1977, Boulder implemented a survey program and since then a total of sixteen survey projects have been completed, resulting in the documentation of nearly all of the city's historic buildings built prior to the 1960s.

Historic context reports determine the importance of particular properties for their association with key historic events or patterns, important people, and architecture or building types. From 1988 to 1998, the city utilized grants to develop an historic context program; this initiative created fourteen documents on a wide variety of historic, architectural, and cultural topics.

### ANALYSIS

Boulder is recognized as having one of the most comprehensive historic building survey records in the state. Yet, it is important to realize survey is never truly complete, with recent past resources and other under-represented resources requiring documentation as well as previously documented buildings needing resurvey to reflect current conditions. Work needs to continue to keep current with the aging building stock in order for the program to remain effective, responsive, and proactive. In fact much of Boulder's survey information and contexts are 30 years old and out of date. Emphasis on identifying those areas of the city in need of survey/resurvey should be made. Likewise, priority should be given to identifying and undertaking contexts.

## HISTORIC AND PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Boulder's Historic Preservation program currently does not have procedures for how archaeological resources, encountered in the course construction, should be handled. There are 122 known records for surveyed historic and prehistoric archaeological resources within the Boulder's city limits and recent archaeological finds indicate that humans have resided in the area at least 10,000 years ago. The Boyd Smelter currently is the only landmarked archaeological site in Boulder. Currently, the city does not have an archaeologist and there is no requirement that the Landmarks Board have an appointment with experience in archaeology.

### ANALYSIS

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan calls for identifying, designating, and protecting archaeological resources such as open ditches, street and alleyscapes, railroad rights of way, and designed landscapes. Despite the identification of archeological resources within city limits, the city has not established an archaeological program, relying primarily on the State and Federal protection currently in place. Protocol for the treatment of such resources should be further developed and consideration given to individual landmarking of archaeological sites in the city to ensure their protection. Consideration should also be given to providing training to staff and the Landmarks Board on archaeology and, over the long term, whether development of an archaeology program be established as recommend in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Boulder has the highest risk for flash flooding in Colorado and the risk of wildfire is very high in the area. Such disasters have the potential of causing catastrophic damage to the city's historic and cultural resources. The Historic Preservation program is involved in a County-led effort to prepare a disaster management plan. However, the City of Boulder currently does not have a plan which addresses post-disaster mobilization in order to assure both historic buildings are not lost to overly hasty and possibly needless demolition and property owners have the appropriate level of support and advice.

### ANALYSIS

The City is fortunate to have thorough and relatively current survey forms which document many buildings constructed prior to 1960. The city also proactively arranged for scanning and electronic storage of all survey records, making sure this information is available should the paper versions be destroyed or damaged. Such records can be essential for restoring the appearance and character-defining features of individual landmarks, buildings within historic districts, and other important sites in the post-disaster period. Plans for the protection of this information in the event of a disaster should be a prime component of a disaster plan. In addition, a protocol for the review of historic buildings damaged or destroyed in the event of disaster should be established as part of a disaster plan.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Historic preservation efforts do not take place without strong community support and a broad public understanding of the purpose and relevance of historic preservation. In Boulder, engagement and outreach occur mostly through the designation, design review, and demolition processes. Other ongoing outreach activities include events for Historic Preservation Month, presentations to community groups, and informational packets sent to new owners of properties within Boulder historic districts. The program utilizes its website, brochures, videos, and historic district signage to inform Boulder citizens about historic preservation. The relationship between the historic preservation program and Historic Boulder cannot be overstated, but important partnering also occurs with the Boulder History Museum, Colorado Preservation Inc., and History Colorado, particularly in community engagement efforts. Staff provides technical assistance to the public and frequently gives talks to neighborhood groups and organizations like the Boulder Area Realtors Association on local historic preservation issues. The Landmarks Board has recently reestablished a public outreach subcommittee dedicated to exploring ways to better engage the community about historic preservation issues.

### ANALYSIS

Customer service extends beyond program applicants to the much wider audience of all Boulder citizens who benefit from the sense



## STRUCTURES OF MERIT

of place fostered through historic preservation. Public feedback from the historic preservation plan development process indicates a need for more robust public engagement and outreach efforts to tell the many stories of Boulder's history while better explaining the benefits and responsibilities of historic preservation. Specifically, public comment indicates dissatisfaction with the city's historic preservation website and public outreach efforts in general. Recognizing the resource constraints, enhanced public engagement and collaboration should be a priority for the historic preservation program. This should include revisions to the historic preservation website to make information more accessible, better promotion of the benefits of historic preservation and sustainability, incentives, hands on workshops to assist property owners, lecture series, and public outreach efforts at events like the Farmer's Market.

The Landmarks Board established the Structure of Merit program in 1987 to recognize properties possessing historic, architectural, or aesthetic merit. This program is an alternative to landmark designation. Buildings and sites listed on either the National Register of Historic Places or the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties are automatically added to the Structure of Merit list. This program is strictly honorary and not subject to design review. Currently there are sixty-four properties on Boulder's Structure of Merit list.

### ANALYSIS

The Landmarks Board work plan has mentioned potential candidates for new listings, yet no new entries have been added to the Structure of Merit list since 1997. This lapse is likely related to a general lack of community awareness about this program. Recent Landmarks Board discussion indicates a high level of interest in reactivating this program and using it as a way to promote the stories associated with Boulder historic properties, to increase understanding of historic preservation, and to enhance owner pride. Reactivation of this program should include review of properties that might be eligible for Structure of Merit Designation and more active promotion of this program as a public outreach tool.

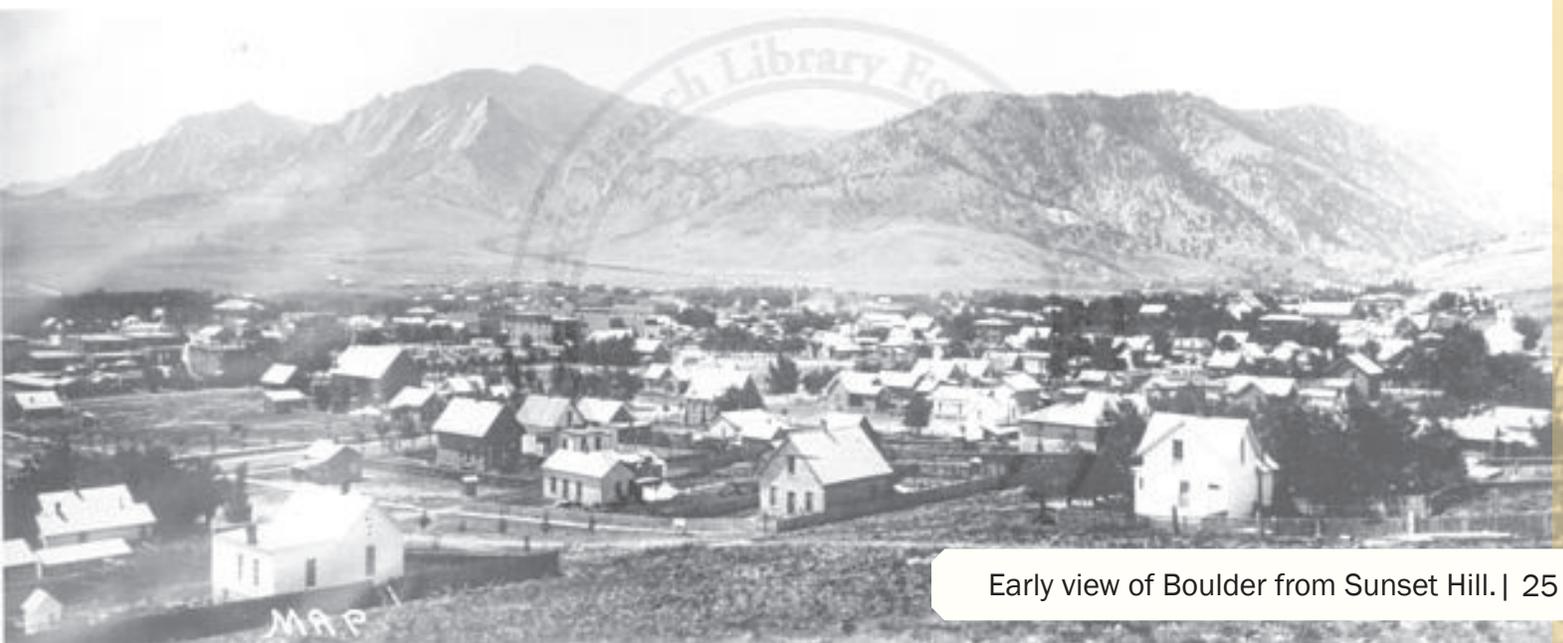




## A SENSE OF PURPOSE

This Historic Preservation Plan establishes a vision and recommended actions to guide the city's Historic Preservation program into the future organized in this chapter as follows:

- **Goals and Objectives** identify desired outcomes for the program;
- **Three themes** emerged from the Goals and Objectives and are used to organize the recommendations;
- **Recommendations** are tangible ways to address identified issues and realize the Goals and Objectives;
- **The Prioritization Chart** identifies timeframes and responsible parties for the Recommendations.



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Five goals and associated objectives were developed through input from the public, stakeholder group, and Landmarks Board. They establish the vision and more specific outcomes to guide the program and its intent to protect, enhance and perpetuate buildings and sites reminiscent of past eras. The program should balance proactive and reactive activities by improving current program operations, actively engaging the community and continuing to be a leader in historic preservation and environmental sustainability.

## **ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF BOULDER’S SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

- Ensure the City of Boulder remains a leader in historic preservation through the careful stewardship of its own historic resources and encouragement of innovative and collaborative approaches to preservation
- Prioritize resources and areas that are historically, architecturally and/or environmentally significant and representative of Boulder’s past, and develop strategies for their protection
- Align historic preservation goals with other city plans, policies and priorities and enhance internal coordination
- Improve and increase community understanding of the inherent connection between historic preservation and environmental sustainability
- Establish a clear process for the protection and management of historic resources in the event of natural disaster
- Explore innovative and alternative strategies to recognize and protect important resources from the recent past

## **ACTIVELY ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS**

- Encourage collaboration and open dialogue between the community, Landmarks Board, other boards, City Council, city staff and historic preservation organizations to advance historic preservation goals and enhance community support
- Interpret Boulder’s historic, architectural, and environmental resources for residents and visitors
- Celebrate, promote, and raise awareness about historic preservation successes in Boulder
- Establish on-going outreach initiatives that engage the community and promote the benefits of historic preservation

## **MAKE REVIEW PROCESSES CLEAR, PREDICTABLE, AND OBJECTIVE**

- Promote excellent customer service
- Provide training opportunities for board and staff to ensure fair, objective, and consistent decision-making
- Provide clear, accurate and easily-accessible information to the public
- Ensure regulations and design guidelines are current, relevant, and provide effective protection of historic buildings in balance with other community priorities and policies
- Protect historic resources through effective, consistent and transparent review and enforcement policies and practices
- Recognize and communicate that historic designation allows for change that is sensitive to the character of the building, landmark, or district

## **CONTINUE LEADERSHIP IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- Integrate historic preservation and environmental sustainability policies to maintain shared community resources for future generations
- Recognize innovative scholarship and projects that successfully balance historic preservation and environmental sustainability
- Continue to address common energy efficiency issues as technology evolves, including window replacement, solar panel installation, and the use of alternative materials

## **ENCOURAGE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

- Better publicize and promote existing incentives, such as eligibility for tax credits and relief from building and zoning codes
- Explore creative and innovative initiatives to encourage historic preservation, improve public perception and defray the cost of rehabilitation and restoration projects
- Improve public perception of historic preservation program through enhanced communication, meaningful collaboration, and involvement between the city and the community-at-large.
- Recognize and honor property owners for exemplary stewardship of historic buildings

## **THEMES**

Three themes emerged through the development of the Goals and Objectives and are used to help organize the Recommendations:

### **Historic Resource Protection**

Individual Landmark and Historic District designation, and the resulting design review process, are the primary means of protecting Boulder's historically, architecturally, and environmentally significant resources. Care should be taken to make the city's designation program representative of its overall development patterns, including properties representative of all classes and functions. The inherent sustainability of historic preservation should be promoted and city policies should be integrated to ensure cohesion between programs. Currently designated resources should be celebrated for their continued contribution to Boulder's unique sense of place.

### **Community Engagement and Collaboration**

Community support is critical for a strong and successful historic preservation program. The Landmarks Board and staff should work collaboratively with property owners, residents and organizations such as Historic Boulder, Inc. to advance historic preservation goals. Clear, accessible information should be provided regarding the design review, demolition review, and landmark designation processes to increase the transparency of the program. Engaging and accurate information on existing landmarked buildings and sites should be distributed to enhance community support for historic preservation. The Landmarks Board and staff should engage in an open dialogue with the community about historic preservation issues and be a resource for property owners in the stewardship of their historic places.

### **Program Operation**

It is important to continually improve the current program to ensure it is responsive to changing circumstances, emerging issues, and community needs and desires. Having clear and current design guidelines that are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards is a critical aspect of a successful design review program. Ways to make the demolition review process clearer and more predictable should be a priority for Boulder's Historic Preservation program. As the program continues to develop, and after the existing program is improved, additional program initiatives should be established to reflect current preservation issues and program needs.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations identify the actions needed to achieve the Goals and Objectives. It is not possible to accomplish all recommendations with existing resources or in the near term. Therefore, a prioritized chart is provided at the end of the section. Some recommendations may require additional resources, such as specialized consultants or supplemental funding. The recommended actions best suited to funding from grants are marked with a diamond (◊). Staff and the Landmarks Board should consider how best to prioritize these, developing a multi-year grants plan that specifies projects, request amounts, and best funding source based upon project objectives. The city should continue to apply to History Colorado's State Historical Fund and Certified Local Government programs though other grant funding sources should be explored.

The Historic Preservation Plan should be used to help guide upcoming annual work plans for the Historic Preservation program. For instance, at the annual board retreat, the Landmarks Board and staff should undertake a detailed discussion of historic preservation plan progress, with staff preparing a report of plan-related accomplishments and the board recommending initiatives for the next year. The report and work plan should be posted on the city's website and presented at the May Landmarks Board meeting, during Historic Preservation Month.

The implementation of this Historic Preservation Plan will require strong partnerships between the city, Landmarks Board, community members, historic preservation organizations, real estate groups and neighborhood associations. Community engagement is critical to the continued success of a historic preservation program.



## 1. HISTORIC RESOURCE PROTECTION

It is important for the city's Historic Preservation program to reflect the diversity and development patterns of the city. The four action steps below cite ways for Boulder to highlight underrepresented resources, buildings and areas not currently represented by existing landmarks and historic districts.

### 1.1 Create a Survey Plan to Maintain Accurate Records

A plan should be developed to address four key issues: reassessing eligibility, prioritizing resurvey, conducting additional survey (◊), and financing survey efforts. The program should encourage the designation of significant resources and areas found eligible for listing. Possible methods to foster additional landmarks and historic districts include continuing the practice of mailing letters to owners of eligible properties, hosting informational sessions within eligible historic districts, and creating a speakers bureau of owners of existing landmark properties.

### 1.2 Develop Additional Historic Context Reports

Existing historic context documents should continue to be utilized and additional historic context should be developed (◊). Possible topics for new historic contexts include Boulder's Hispanic community, its agricultural past, the community's significant relationship with the University of Colorado, the city's vernacular buildings, the architectural commissions of Charles Haertling, and other worthy topics. These may be developed through partnership with a graduate program or by hiring consultants. The documents may be utilized to assess the eligibility of thematic districts. All context documents should be posted on the Historic Preservation website.

### 1.3 Explore Ways to Preserve Smaller Buildings that are Eligible for Landmark Designation

The average square footage of house has grown in recent decades. This emphasis on size makes smaller buildings vulnerable to vacancy, inappropriate alterations, and demolition. To maintain the existence and character of small buildings in Boulder, the city should explore strategies to preserve these resources. Possible action steps include forming a working group to focus on this issue, studying how other similar communities have dealt with threats

to smaller buildings, promoting specialized design solutions (such as excavation to add more square footage) to make small buildings more suitable for contemporary use (◇), and establishing a funding source to preserve small buildings (◇).

#### **1.4 Collaborate with Owners of Existing Landmarks and Properties in Designated Historic Districts**

Historic property ownership involves both benefits and responsibilities. This situation is not unique to Boulder, with historic buildings everywhere offering the opportunity for individuals to possess a tangible link to history but also requiring higher levels of investment for compatible materials and specialized tradespeople or design professionals. Given this situation, it is important both to support owners of historic buildings and provide incentives to offset the higher costs associated with alterations and maintenance.

Owners of existing landmark properties and buildings within Boulder's historic districts represent important historic preservation partners and support of these individuals in critical. Engaging in discussions about the implications of living in Boulder landmarks or historic districts, collaborating on ways to streamline the design review process, and implementing improvements to the program to promote collaboration would be most useful.

#### **1.5 Publicize Existing Incentives**

Public feedback indicates many owners of historic properties are not aware of the fourteen available historic preservation incentives for which they may be eligible. Publicize more broadly these existing incentives to increase rates of usage and to benefit historic buildings. Suggested action steps include posting information prominently on the Historic Preservation website, developing and distributing a specialized brochure about existing incentives (◇).

#### **1.6 Initiate New Incentives**

Non-monetary incentives recognize building owners for their contributions to the public good and reward stewardship. New honorary incentives might include recognizing responsible owners of historic buildings with City Council proclamations or providing owners with framed historic images

suitable for hanging. Such items could be distributed at existing award ceremonies held during May for Historic Preservation Month, on the anniversary of designation, or at a special time of the year devoted to honoring owners of landmark properties and buildings within Boulder historic districts.

Financial incentives assist property owners to make appropriate alterations or changes to their historic buildings. Possible options for new historic preservation incentives in Boulder include low- or no-interest loans, increases to existing fee waivers, or specialized funding for both maintaining small and accessory buildings and making historic properties more energy efficient. Introducing new financial incentives will require not only a great deal of planning. Key steps in that planning process should include discussing with owners of historic properties what type of funding schemes are most desired; exploring how other communities manage and finance historic preservation incentives (in nearby Louisville, proceeds from a specialized tax may be used to restore or rehabilitate resources within the downtown historic district); securing both initial and long-range funding sources (◇); launching a small pilot incentive program; and adapting the pilot program (based upon results and public feedback) to assure it is both effective and self-supporting.

#### **1.7 Designate Eligible City-owned Buildings**

Boulder aspires to lead by example, modeling excellent stewardship for city-owned historic buildings. Many of the action steps below aim to achieve goals initially mentioned in the Boulder



Valley Comprehensive Plan (BVCP) and subsequently included in this Historic Preservation plan.

The city's willingness to participate in its own designation program represents an endorsement of historic preservation and will instill a sense of unity with owners of landmark properties and buildings within historic districts. Key action steps for achieving this recommendation include continuing to maintain the Facilities Asset Management department list of buildings fifty years or older, assuring the survey (or resurvey) of city-owned properties (◇) to determine eligibility for landmark designation, and discussing the importance of designation at City Staff Working Group meetings.

### **1.8 Increase Coordination between the City and County Regarding Landmark Designation**

The BVCP fosters collaboration on addressing a wide range of issues not just in Boulder but throughout Boulder County. In the spirit of this plan, there are opportunities for city-county coordination to designate significant, publicly-owned buildings outside of Boulder's municipal limits which are related to the city's significant history and architecture. For example, county-owned commissions attributed to prominent Boulder architect Charles Haertling should be designated. Key action steps for achieving such coordinated designations might include developing



a list of eligible county-owned resources, assuring the survey (or resurvey) of such properties (◇), and discussing the importance of designation at meetings of the existing Boulder County Heritage Roundtable.

### **1.9 Explore Establishment of an Archaeological Program**

The BVCP advocates development of an archaeology program for the City. Historic Preservation staff and Landmarks Board, in consultation with local archaeologists should determine how this program should be integrated into the existing Historic Preservation program. It seems most feasible to model the new archaeology program on provisions within the existing ordinance, detailing procedures for identification, designation, and protection of both prehistoric and historic archaeological resources and specifying how the Landmark Alteration Certificate process will apply for archaeological remains. This group also may consider altering the current composition of the Landmarks Board to include a non-voting member with archaeological expertise. The second step should be modifying the ordinance as necessary and promoting the new archaeology program (◇) in the media, on the Historic Preservation website, and with specialized brochures.

### **1.10 Promote City Owned Buildings that Incorporate Historic Preservation and Environmental Sustainability**

Such an approach will provide Boulder citizens with tangible examples of how best to integrate historic preservation and environmental sustainability, offering owners of historic properties with examples of the types of projects, materials, and techniques which are most effective in older buildings. Key action steps include choosing city-owned buildings for energy upgrades, documenting the use of technologies and materials and comparing pre- and post-project energy efficiency, and hosting open houses, either actual or virtual, to share the results of the project.

### **1.11 Foster Greater Awareness of Postwar Architecture**

Boulder, like many cities in the western United States, flourished in the postwar period. Amidst exponential population growth, the community developed a reputation for independent thinking and a strong environmental ethic that shaped the built environment. Given the importance of this period's history and the high proportion of extant

buildings constructed after 1945, addressing postwar resources is crucial if Boulder's Historic Preservation program is to reflect the community's overall development patterns.

Public feedback revealed a generally low-level of awareness of postwar resources. Yet, in many communities, a growing number of artists, empty nesters, and first-time homebuyers have found houses from this era affordable, adaptable and sustainable. Action steps for increased knowledge about post-war housing in Boulder include promoting articles from national publications; promoting stories about Boulder's postwar development, houses, and current neighborhoods to editors of local and national local media; working with neighborhood associations to host tours of recent past properties; and promoting the down-sizing and age-in-place opportunities of this type of housing.

### 1.12 Explore Creation of Conservation Districts

Given the sheer size of postwar neighborhoods and the city's desire to focus on smaller historic districts, investigating the use of conservation areas to protect the scale, house size, and setback within postwar neighborhoods may be appropriate. Action steps include studying how other communities have integrated conservation areas into existing historic preservation programs, developing a working group to discuss the desirability and implications of conservation areas, revising the ordinance to include suitable language for conservation area designation, and working with neighbors to designate eligible postwar neighborhoods or subdivisions as conservation areas.



### 1.13 Promote Compatible Design Solutions Suited to Postwar Houses

Historically, within individual subdivision filings, postwar developers offered a few house models with only slight variations in terms of plan, materials, or paint color. The sameness of postwar housing particularly suits this architecture to adaptable design solutions to address sensitive additions and energy efficiency upgrades. The city should develop pattern books to illustrate appropriate treatments for recent past architecture. Steps involved in this process include studying the work of other communities (i.e. Historic Denver's project in Arvada), discussing possible approaches with design professionals, creating plan books (◇) with options tailored to specific models and house types (ranches, split-levels, bi-levels), and promoting the use of the plan book solutions (◇) to owners within postwar subdivisions.

## 2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

The implementation plan assigns responsibility for individual recommendations to a wide variety of individuals and groups. Active participation in the action steps provides an opportunity to continue the discussions among the community, Landmarks Board, City staff, and Historic Preservation organizations initiated as part of the public input process for the historic preservation plan.

### 2.1 Strengthen partnerships with Historic Preservation Organizations

The partnership between the city and Historic Boulder, Inc. has been beneficial in raising awareness of historic preservation, fostering community engagement and designating significant resources. Key action steps include the nonprofit continuing to initiate and facilitate designations, coordinating with Historic Preservation staff and the Landmarks Board to identify significant resources and develop educational offerings, and advocating for historic preservation on behalf of the city program. In addition, the Landmarks Board and Historic Boulder Board should consider holding a joint-retreat to discuss other ways to offer mutual support for historic preservation initiatives in Boulder.

## 2.2 Establish Neighborhood Liaisons

The Landmarks Board and Historic Preservation staff should engage Boulder citizens to assist with increasing community support for historic preservation. Key action steps include meeting informally with residents of historic districts to discuss the most important issues facing each area and soliciting input on program operations. The Board may consider assigning individuals members to act as liaisons with individual historic districts.

## 2.3 Foster Greater Understanding of Historic Preservation Issues

Action steps include recruiting volunteers willing to act as neighborhood liaisons; developing a neighborhood liaison training course (◇) featuring thorough background information about the designation, Landmark Alteration Certificate, and demolition processes and plus details about available historic preservation incentives; meeting routinely with neighborhood liaisons to discuss common issues and concerns within all historic districts; and assessing the effectiveness of the neighborhood liaison program.

All Boulder citizens benefit from the community's unique sense of place and, therefore, represent part of the local constituency for historic preservation. Public feedback indicated some individuals have developed ideas about how the Historic Preservation staff and Landmarks Board operate based upon second-hand accounts rather than personal experience. There are opportunities to engage directly with Boulder citizens to discuss the Historic Preservation program.

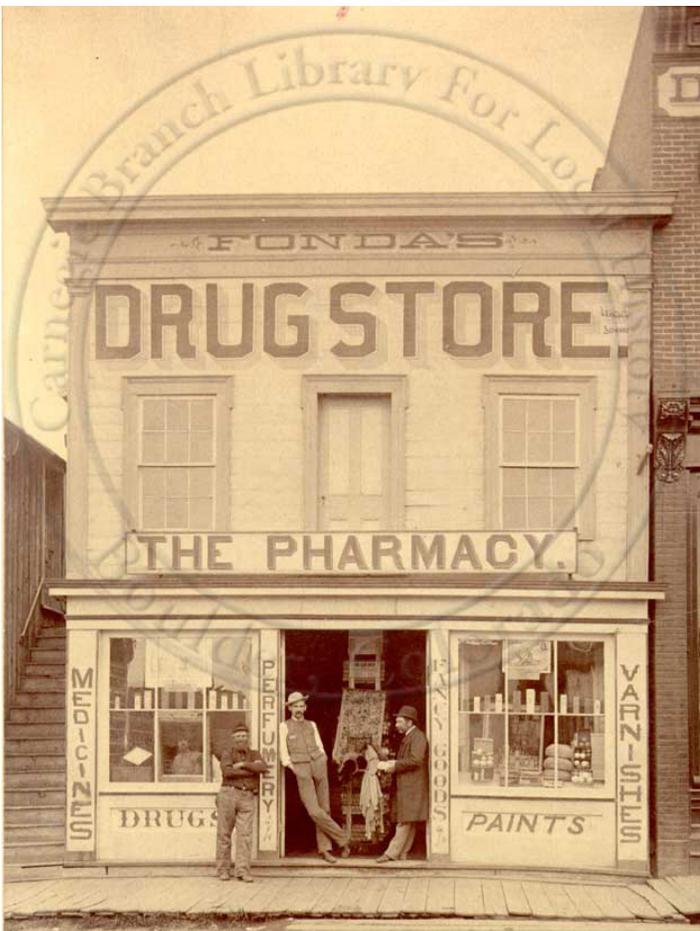
## 2.4 Develop Engaging Activities to Attract a Broader Audience

Direct interactions among Historic Preservation staff, the Landmarks Board, and the community have the potential to foster greater understanding of the nuances of historic preservation in Boulder. Key action steps include retaining the Stakeholder Group assembled to solicit input during the historic preservation plan, holding Landmarks Board meetings in the city's historic districts rather than at the municipal building, and implementing a method (perhaps online) for soliciting citizen recommendations of ways the Historic Preservation program can be improved.

## 2.5 Share Stories of Boulder's History

Historic preservation, at its most engaging, is about stories. These accounts help us identify with the past and value our history. Key recommendations for sharing the stories of Boulder's historic places include erecting more interpretive signage (◇) throughout the city, presenting "then and now" slideshows, encouraging local media to focus on the stories of Boulder's historic sites, developing mobile apps (◇) (like Denver Story Trek) which provide access to personal recollections and allow for the collections of new site-specific memories, and utilizing more oral history accounts in nominations for landmark and historic district designation.

The city should launch a "Preservation Roadshow" initiative (◇) with a focus on outreach to Boulder citizens. This program should encompass a wide variety of offerings at historic sites and in historic neighborhoods throughout Boulder. Key action steps include sponsoring "open house" events with neighborhood associations within historic districts, offering how-to workshops for increasing energy efficiency in historic properties, creating mobile apps



identifying examples of alterations adhering to design guidelines, staffing a booth at the farmer's market to promote historic preservation, and hosting tours highlighting projects which made effective use of historic preservation incentives. Planning for the "Preservation Roadshow" needs to consider logistics, funding, volunteer recruitment, promotion, curriculum, potential instructors, and effectiveness assessment.

## 2.6 Revitalize the Structure of Merit Program

The Structure of Merit program is an effective way to promote historic preservation, increase the inventory of recognized buildings that can be highlighted in the local media, and expand their public outreach and education efforts. Key action steps in revitalizing this recognition program include developing promotional materials to increase public awareness of its existence, compiling an updated list of eligible buildings and sites for listing, refining the process for selection (particularly assuring owner consent and deciding how many properties to list annually), and launching a publicity campaign to increase awareness about the historic and architectural significance of both existing and new listings. The Landmarks Board should consider creating a Structure of Merit subcommittee to oversee the reinitiated program.

## 2.7 Improve the City's Historic Preservation Website

Clear, accurate, and easily-accessible information is crucial for the public to participate more fully in the city's Historic Preservation program.

The existing Historic Preservation program website is adequate, but should be improved in terms of content, format, and ease of navigation. Possible additions to the website include: an annual "State of Historic Preservation" report, citing relevant statistics, highlighting program successes, and soliciting public input on future initiatives; links to useful information available from preservation partners (National Park Service, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, Historic Boulder, others); and details about existing historic preservation incentives, including eligibility and requirements. The website also should include a single link offering access to all relevant sustainability and historic preservation

information available online and a section devoted to tracking progress on the Historic Preservation plan. Key action steps include adding new content and establishing a schedule for assessment and routine updates.

## 2.8 Distribute Design Guidelines

Public feedback indicated a need for greater publicity regarding the existence and importance of the city's design guidelines. Key action steps for elevating the profile of Boulder design guidelines include developing and maintaining a list of individuals (architects, contractors, realtors, owners of landmarked properties and buildings in historic districts) who should know about Boulder's design guidelines, emailing links to the design guidelines, and informing these same individuals when design guidelines are revised or changed.

## 2.9 Promote Current Scholarship

Historic buildings are inherently green. Retention of historic materials enhances the community's sense of place and represents responsible stewardship for increasingly finite resources. It is important, to the city's cultural and environmental legacy, to preserve Boulder's historic resources.

There is a general lack of understanding regarding window replacement and energy efficiency. The Effects of Energy Efficiency Treatments on Historic Windows (2011) offers scientific evidence about which window treatments are most effective, a major issue for owners of historic properties. There also are opportunities to conduct similar studies (◊) regarding the use of solar power, wind power, other energy efficiency advances, and new materials in



historic buildings. Key action steps include posting the windows study and providing links to other research projects on the Historic Preservation website, delivering educational sessions based upon the window study results, and applying for grants to complete additional studies.

### **2.10 Recognize Projects that Successfully Integrate Historic Preservation and Sustainability**

Honoring projects which combine historic preservation and environmental sustainability is a way to bring greater exposure to such efforts and offer examples for other property owners to emulate. Key action steps include bestowing a new award (possibly given as part of the Historic Preservation Month ceremony) to reward property owners, architects, contractors, and other professionals involved with the successful project; developing a specialized plaque initiative to mark building projects that have balanced historic preservation and energy efficiency; and creating a mobile app (◇) to highlight these same projects.

### **2.11 Engage the Community in Historic Preservation Activities**

Boulder's mature Historic Preservation program has enjoyed numerous successes over its history. It is crucial to the program to celebrate, promote, and raise awareness about historic preservation successes in Boulder.

An informed public is more likely to engage in the Historic Preservation program. Key action steps for providing more information about historic preservation in Boulder include making an annual presentation to City Council highlighting preservation activities and successes, improving the Historic Preservation website (see above), holding more community events and educational sessions (see above), and pitching stories about historic preservation to the local media.

### **2.12 Honor Property Owners for Careful Stewardship of Historic Properties**

The owners of landmark properties and buildings within historic districts have the responsibility of safeguarding Boulder's history. It is crucial to recognize the important role these citizens play for historic preservation in the city, honoring them for exemplary stewardship of historic buildings. Key action steps instituting new honorary incentives

(see above) and recognizing successfully completed projects (perhaps with a ribbon cutting, yard sign, or congratulatory email).

## **3. PROGRAM OPERATION IMPROVEMENTS**

Historic Preservation staff and the Landmarks Board strive to make fair, objective, and consistent decisions regarding designation, design review, and demolition permits. Specialized training and continuing education can enhance skill levels and offer increased knowledge about the range of techniques currently employed in the historic preservation field.

### **3.1 Provide Training Opportunities for Staff and the Landmarks Board**

Landmarks Board training is important to ensure continuity, consistency, and capacity. New Board members need a detailed orientation and all members require ongoing opportunities that provide core knowledge, institutional background, and practical skills regarding Board operations and relevant historic preservation issues. Historic Preservation staff training should also emphasize time management, stress reduction, networking, and problem solving. Key action steps include improving current in-house training, encouraging Board members and staff to take advantage of available CLG-sponsored workshops, and seeking appropriate training based upon staff and Board assessment of needs and competence.

### **3.2 Analyze Existing Design Guidelines**

Design guidelines offer advice on how to allow changes to historic properties and areas while still protecting sense of place. The Landmarks Board needs current, relevant design guidelines in order to provide effective protection Boulder's landmarks and historic districts.

Design Guidelines must be current and clear to facilitate consistent design review decisions. Public feedback also indicated a need for more examples of how design guidelines should be implemented and increasing the understanding of the relationship between Boulder's design guidelines and the Secretary of Interior's Standards. Key action steps include instituting a schedule for review and revision of existing documents, the staff and Landmarks

Board maintaining a list of issues not addressed in current design guidelines to be added during scheduled updates, creating a standard template to make design guidelines consistent in terms of both content and format, crafting a design guideline handbook with case studies illustrating the appropriate application of frequently-referenced design guideline provisions to assist both the Landmarks Board and property owners, and promoting the Secretary's Standards and making it clear that these ten broad provisions provide the philosophical framework for all of the city's design guidelines.

### 3.3 Collaborate on Design Guidelines for New Historic Districts

Design guidelines for new historic districts (◇) should continue to be developed collaboratively, with participation from both Historic Preservation staff and district residents. Key action steps include identifying the character-defining features of the historic district and the appropriate design approaches for retaining them, recruiting members of the design guideline committee, preparing guidelines, and offering opportunities for citizen input prior to publication.

### 3.4 Establish Follow-Up Processes for Landmark Alteration Certificates

Review of Landmark Alteration Certificates represents a large portion of the Historic Preservation staff and Landmarks Board workload. However, current enforcement procedures should more adequately follow-up with property owners and assure projects are completed in accordance with applicable design guidelines. Other communities require contractor certification to work on historic properties and levy fines for non-compliance not only on property owners but also design professionals; public input indicated some support for similar enforcement provisions in Boulder. Key action steps for improving overall compliance include providing additional enforcement training (focus on appropriate preservation treatments, applicable design guidelines, and issues associated with the design review process in Boulder) to city inspectors and coordinating with contractors and building professionals to discuss ways to increase understanding of the responsibilities of working

on landmark properties or buildings within historic districts.

### 3.5 Explore Ways to Make Design Review More Consistent and Predictable

Effective, consistent, and transparent design review processes, enforcement policies, and historic preservation practices are necessary to make the city's program predictable and user-friendly.

Design review is one of the most important and most time-consuming duties for the Historic Preservation staff and Landmarks Board. More efficient design review is necessary if the historic preservation program plans to focus more on education and outreach as specified in this plan. The staff and Board should discuss the idea of increasing the administrative (staff) review of minor alterations.

### 3.6 Analyze Effectiveness of the Existing Demolition Ordinance

Since 1994, the demolition ordinance has resulted in the preservation of historic resources in Boulder. But there is an opportunity to analyze the overall effectiveness of this provision and consider further efforts to better protect eligible buildings fifty years



or older. Key action steps include continuing to gather statistics regarding demolition reviews (including numbers of applications and approvals and mapping of locations) to better understand overall development patterns, clarifying the demolition process for Boulder citizens to increase understanding it applies to all buildings fifty years or older, developing a framework for demolition review decision-making based upon identification of significant and threatened resource types, and considering revisions to the ordinance language to define demolition in a way which offers the Landmarks Board a more productive role in demolition reviews.

### **3.7 Revise Applications and Forms**

Historic preservation plan public input indicated many individuals and members of the Landmarks Board believe existing historic preservation applications are long, poorly organized, and difficult to complete. The goal is to make the paperwork clear and intuitive. Key action steps for streamlining forms include simplifying formats, clarifying directions, and making greater use of checklists and flowcharts to enhance understanding of review processes.

### **3.8 Develop a Disaster Response Plan for the Historic Preservation Program**

The City of Boulder is at high risk of both wildfire and flash floods. For that reason, it is crucial to consider how best to deal with historic resources in the wake of these or other types of natural and human-made disasters.

The city should have a disaster plan specifically for historic resources. (◇) The plan should feature a process for recruiting historic preservation professionals from outside the city who can assist in the post-disaster period, appropriate collaboration procedures with other City departments, and the possibility of fast-track design review. Referring to existing disaster plans for similar communities or municipalities also facing the threat of fires and floods is recommended. Key action steps include writing a grant application to cover the cost associated with development of a disaster plan for Boulder's historic resources.

### **3.9 Coordinate Existing Environmental Sustainability and Historic Preservation Programs**

There is an inherent connection between historic preservation and environmental sustainability. But this relationship should be better expressed in the City's policies and practices.

Various city departments, local boards, and other groups are active in shaping policies for both historic preservation and environmental sustainability. The Greenpoints program and city energy codes represent the two areas of greatest overlap. Key action steps to ensure integration between the city's sustainability and historic preservation goals include reviewing the Greenpoints program and energy code and discussing increased integration of future policies at City working group meetings

### **3.10 Continue to Address Energy Efficiency Issues as Technology Evolves**

Key action steps include continuing to encourage window rehabilitation to benefit historic character and conserve scarce natural resources, utilizing lessons learned from demonstration projects at city-owned historic buildings (see above) and other projects citywide, investigating new technologies and posting findings of such studies to the Historic Preservation website (see above).

### **3.11 Pursue Collaborative Approaches to Integrate Historic Preservation with Other City Operations**

Lack of consistency among City policies is particularly frustrating to citizens and can be counter-productive to historic preservation. Enhanced internal coordination is crucial for making historic preservation practices user-friendly.

Internal coordination should continue with discussions focusing on how best to integrate City policies related to both historic preservation and environmental sustainability. Key action steps include scheduling regular meetings to improve communication and brainstorm methods for enhancing internal coordination to benefit historic preservation goals and objectives and developing a series of checklists of historic preservation-related policies and goals for other city departments to consult when considering any policy or ordinance revisions.

# PRIORITIZATION CHART

Recognizing that the work plan will be determined annually through direction from City Council and the availability of current resources, the chart below prioritizes key recommendations that should be undertaken in the next five years. Public input influenced the suggested recommendations and timeframes for implementation of the historic preservation plan. Participants in the public meetings agreed the city should strengthen and improve its existing program before expanding into new initiatives. Near-Term refers to items of the highest priority that should be undertaken in the next five years, and Long-Term refers to items that should be subsequently addressed, in the 5-15 year range. “On-Going” recommendations are those that are currently implemented and should be continued and strengthened.

The prioritization of the recommendations reflects a scope of work that can be met within current resources. If the city is able to broaden its resources, through grants or additional funding, it could address priority objectives more quickly.

1. HISTORIC RESOURCE PROTECTION			
Objectives	Recommendations	Time Frame	Responsible Parties
Identify and prioritize resources and areas that are historically, architecturally, and/or environmentally significant and representative of Boulder’s past, developing strategies for their preservation	.1 Create a Survey Plan to Maintain Accurate Records (◇)	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Consultants
	.2 Develop additional historic contexts (◇)	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Consultants
	.3 Explore ways to protect smaller buildings that are eligible for landmark designation	Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Design professionals, Building owners
Encourage historic preservation and defray the cost of rehabilitation and restoration projects	.4 Support owners of existing landmarks and properties within historic districts	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff; Landmarks Board; Historic Boulder, Inc.; City Council
	.5 Publicize existing incentives	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff; Landmarks Board; and Historic Bolder, Inc.
	.6 Initiate new incentives	Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
Ensure the City of Boulder remains a leader in historic preservation through the careful stewardship of its own historic resources and encouragement of innovative and collaborative approaches to historic preservation	.7 Designate eligible city-owned buildings	On-Going/ Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Other City staff
	.8 Increase landmark designation coordination between city and county	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Other City staff, County staff, Preservation Roundtable
	.9 Explore establishment of an archaeological program (◇)	Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Local archaeologists
	.10 Promote, as demonstration projects, city-owned buildings which incorporate historic preservation and sustainability	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Other city staff, Scientists, Design professionals

Explore alternative strategies to recognize and protect important resources from the recent past	.11 Foster greater awareness of postwar architecture	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Neighborhood associations
	.12 Explore creation of conservation districts	Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Planning Board, City Council, Neighborhood associations, owners
	.13 Promote compatible design solutions suited to postwar houses (◇)	Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Consultants/ Design professionals

## 2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

Objectives	Recommendations	Time Frame	Responsible Parties
Encourage open dialogue among the community, Landmarks Board, City staff, and Historic Preservation organizations to advance historic preservation goals and enhance community support	.1 Strengthen partnerships with historic preservation organizations	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff; Landmarks Board; Historic Boulder, Inc.; Boulder citizens
	.2 Establish neighborhood liaisons	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Representatives from historic districts
Improve public perception of historic preservation program through enhanced communication, meaningful collaboration, and involvement between the City and the community-at-large.	.3 Foster greater understanding of historic preservation issues	Near	Historic Preservation staff; Landmarks Board; Historic Boulder, Inc.
Establish on-going outreach initiatives that engage the community and promote the benefits of historic preservation	.4 Develop engaging activities which attract a broad audience	Near	Historic Preservation staff; Landmarks Board; Historic Boulder, Inc.
Interpret Boulder's historic, architectural, and environmental resources to positively raise the profile of historic preservation and create an enhanced sense of place	.5 Share stories of Boulder's historic places (◇)	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Consultants
	.6 Revitalize the Structure of Merit program	On-Going/ Near	Landmarks Board
Provide clear, accurate, and easily-accessible information to the public	.7 Improve the Historic Preservation website	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
Improve and increase community understanding of the inherent connection between historic preservation and environmental sustainability	.8 Promote current research	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
	.9 Recognize projects that successfully integrate historic preservation and sustainability	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
Celebrate, promote, and raise awareness about historic preservation successes in Boulder	.10 Engage the community in historic preservation activities	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff; Landmarks Board; Historic Boulder, Inc.
	.11 Honor property owners for careful stewardship of historic properties	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, City Council

3. PROGRAM OPERATION IMPROVEMENTS			
Objectives	Recommendations	Time Frame	Responsible Parties
Provide training opportunities to ensure fair, objective, and consistent decision-making	.1 Enhance existing offerings and explore courses specific to Boulder's needs	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Neighborhood liaisons, Specialized trainers/ consultants
Ensure regulations and design guidelines are current, relevant, and provide effective protection of historic buildings	.2 Analyze existing design guidelines	On-Going/ Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Property owners in historic districts
	.3 Collaborate on design guidelines in new historic districts (◇)	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Property owners in historic districts
Pursue effective, consistent and transparent design review processes, enforcement policies, and historic preservation practices	.4 Establish follow-up processes for Landmark Alteration Certificates	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Neighborhood liaisons
	.5 Explore ways to make design review more consistent and predictable	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
	.6 Analyze effectiveness of the existing demolition ordinance	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
	.7 Revise applications and forms	Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
Establish a clear process for the protection and management of historic resources in the event of natural disaster	.8 Develop a disaster response plan for the historic preservation program (◇)	Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board, Consultants
Integrate historic preservation and environmental sustainability policies to maintain shared community resources for future generations	.9 Coordinate existing sustainability and historic preservation programs	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
	.10 Continue to address common energy efficiency issues as technology evolves	On-Going/ Long	Historic Preservation staff, Landmarks Board
Align historic preservation goals with other city plans and policies and enhance internal coordination	.11 Pursue collaborative approaches to integrate historic preservation with other city operations	On-Going/ Near	Historic Preservation staff, Other City staff