

**M E M O R A N D U M**  
**June 5, 2013**

**TO:** Landmarks Board

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**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing to provide input on the historic preservation plan themes and recommendations.

**SUMMARY**

In 2012, the City of Boulder was awarded a Certified Local Government grant to develop a Historic Preservation Plan. Work commenced in December 2012 and is anticipated to wrap-up in August of 2013. The goal of this initiative is to establish a long-term vision for historic preservation in Boulder, to set priorities and identify specific strategies for achieving the identified goals and objectives of the plan.

The work to date on development of the plan includes a program assessment, a comparison to other historic preservation programs, a customer survey of applicants, public and Landmarks Board meetings, stakeholder group meetings, a joint City Council and Landmarks Board Study Session, a Planning Board meeting, and a forum hosted by PLAN-Boulder.

The purpose of the June 5, 2013 Landmarks Board and public meeting is to provide input on plan recommendations

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Does the Landmarks Board have feedback on the preliminary plan themes and recommendations identified on page 5?
2. In the near-term, what should be the top action items for the Historic Preservation program?

## **WORK TO DATE**

### **Current Program Assessment**

As part of the development of the plan, an assessment of the current program was prepared. This is available online at:

[http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/Historic%20Preservation/plan/draft\\_current\\_program\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/Historic%20Preservation/plan/draft_current_program_assessment.pdf).

### **Comparison with Other Communities**

A chart was developed that compares Boulder's historic preservation program to other programs around the state and across the country in terms of review processes, architectural survey, incentives, and other program areas. It is available online at:

[http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/Program\\_Areas\\_Comparison\\_Chart.pdf](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/Program_Areas_Comparison_Chart.pdf)

### **City Council, Landmarks Board, Stakeholder Group and Public Input**

Public involvement is a critical piece of the development of the plan. Public outreach efforts include a customer survey, public meetings, and stakeholder group meetings. A summary of feedback to date is available online at:

[http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/Summary\\_of\\_Feedback\\_-\\_June\\_5.pdf](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/Summary_of_Feedback_-_June_5.pdf)

A survey was mailed to 448 applicants that had applied for a Landmark Alteration Certificate, Landmark Designation, or demolition review in the last year. Surveys were also sent to applicants who had applied for Historic Preservation Tax Credits in the last five years. The survey asked respondents to provide feedback on their experience with the Historic Preservation program and provide suggestions for changes that might improve the program.

On Jan. 16, 2013 the Landmarks Board and staff held a public meeting to introduce the project, gather input on the current program, and develop goals and objectives for the plan. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the meeting. Immediately following the public meeting, the Landmarks Board held a meeting to review the public input, discuss the current program, and formulate potential goals and objectives for the plan.

On Feb. 12, 2013 the City Council and the Landmarks Board discussed the historic preservation plan at a joint Study Session. After a brief introduction by staff and the consultant, council and the Landmarks Board discussed the work to date, key issues, goals and objectives and proposed steps and timeline for the completion of the plan.

On Feb. 19, 2013 the staff and Historic Boulder, Inc. hosted a stakeholder meeting to gather feedback. The questions asked of the Landmarks Board and the City Council provided a framework for the discussion.

On April 4, 2013 Planning Board discussed the development of the Historic Preservation Plan. The board was asked to comment on the work to date and identify key issues related to land use and potential goals and objectives.

On April 23, 2013 staff and Historic Boulder, Inc. hosted a stakeholder meeting to develop the preliminary Goals and Objectives of the plan. Posters were used to aid in the discussion and prioritization of Goals and Objectives.

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013 staff and board members participated in a forum on the historic preservation plan hosted by PLAN-Boulder.

On May 1, 2013 the Landmarks Board and staff held a public meeting to further develop preliminary Goals and Objectives of the plan. Approximately 10 members of the public attended the meeting. Immediately following the public meeting, the Landmarks Board held a meeting to review the public input and discuss the preliminary goals and objectives of the plan.

## **REFINED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Considerable input from the public, stakeholder group, Landmarks Board, Planning Board and City Council have informed the Goals and Objectives below. Generally, they aspire to balance proactive and reactive activities of the historic preservation program. They represent the basis of the plan that will guide the historic preservation program into the future. Crafting and prioritizing action items will establish practical ways to achieve these goals.

### **Goals to Guide the City of Boulder's Historic Preservation Program:**

#### **1. 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 and policies 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 innovation and alternative strategies to recognize and protect important resources from the recent past.

**2. Actively Engage the Community in Historic Preservation Efforts**

- Encourage collaboration and open dialogue between the community, Landmarks Board, 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 educational outreach initiatives that engage the community and promote the benefits of historic preservation

**3. Make Review Processes Clear, Predictable, and Objective**

- Provide 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
- 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

**4. 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

## **5. 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

## **PRELIMINARY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following themes are intended to organize the plan recommendations into four broad categories. The preliminary recommendations are intended to be shaped through discussion by the public and the Landmarks Board. Priority and timing will be established through discussion and feedback from the public and Landmarks Board. (BVCP) indicates items identified in the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan.

### **Historic Resource Protection**

Individual Landmark and Historic District designation, and the resulting design review process, are the primary means of protecting Boulder's historic, architectural, and environmental sense of place. Therefore, it is crucial to continue to designate resources that are architecturally, historically, and/or environmentally important to Boulder's history. 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. It will be important to update and make available existing survey records to reflect changing conditions and to review assessment for eligibility.

Specific recommendations include:

- Identify and prioritize underrepresented resources to ensure the protection of Boulder's overall development patterns. This may include developing historic contexts and resurveying resources associated with African American and Hispanic history, and significant buildings of the recent past.
- Identify and prioritize the designation of city-owned buildings that are eligible for landmark designation (BVCP).
- Update existing survey records to ensure current eligibility assessments (BVCP).
- Resurvey areas where significant change has occurred, identified potential areas where survey has not occurred, areas particularly vulnerable to

- inappropriate development, and under-represented resources and areas of the city.
- Use the updated survey information to identify and encourage the designation of significant resources and areas.
  - Develop additional historic context reports to better understand key themes related to Boulder’s development.

### **Education and Community 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. Clear, accessible information should be provided to help clarify the review processes, and the Landmarks Board and staff should establish themselves as a collaborative resource for property owners and others interested in historic preservation in Boulder.

Specific recommendations include:

- Strengthen partnerships with Historic Boulder, Inc and other local organizations to foster historic preservation.
- Establish neighborhood liaisons to strengthen communication and collaboration between property owners and the city. Liaisons may act as the point of contact for neighbors interested in learning about historic preservation and the organization of community outreach events.
- Send design guidelines and other information to realtors and new owners of landmarked properties and those located in a historic district.
- Utilize the website to provide clear and easily-accessible information regarding review processes, design guidelines and incentive programs.
- Establish a “preservation roadshow” in which Landmarks Board members and staff host workshops in historic districts to discuss common issues and highlight preservation successes.

### **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 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 the Boulder 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.

Specific recommendations include:

- Enhance board training expand initial orientation program for new members as well as pursue ongoing training opportunities.
- Revise applications and forms to be streamlined, clear and intuitive.
- Regularly assess and update design guidelines; create a template for future historic district design guidelines to ensure they are comprehensive.
- Reassess the demolition ordinance's effectiveness in preserving significant buildings.
- Explore innovative options for the recognition and protection of postwar buildings and neighborhoods.
- Consider creating an archeological program that identifies, designates, and protects historic and prehistoric archeological resources. (BVCP)
- Establish a process to follow-up on Landmark Alteration Certificates to ensure compliance with the design guidelines and consistent enforcement policies.
- Develop a disaster response plan for the historic preservation program.
- Explore ways to make reviews processes more efficient i.e. allowing increased administrative review of minor alterations.

## **Incentives**

Financial and other incentives help encourage the preservation of Boulder's historic resources. Financial incentives provide assistance to property owners to restore or rehabilitate their historic buildings. Possible options for new historic preservation incentives in Boulder include low- or no-interest loans, increases to existing fee waivers, and proceeds from a specialized tax (like Louisville has implemented). Special incentives should be available for making historic buildings more energy efficient while retaining historic materials.

Specific recommendations include:

- Publicize existing incentives. (BVCP)
- Consider initiating new financial (such as a low-interest grant or loan program) and honorary incentives.
- Evaluate the current Greenpoints program to ensure integration between the city's sustainability and historic preservation goals.
- Recognize projects that effectively integrate historic preservation and sustainability.

## NEXT STEPS

The schedule below details the next steps for the preparation of the Historic Preservation Plan. The Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation has granted an extension to the required deadlines until the end of August. The feedback gathered at the June public, stakeholder and Landmarks Board meetings will be incorporated into the draft plan. In July, the Landmarks Board, public and stakeholder groups will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Historic Preservation Plan. It is anticipated that the draft Plan will be reviewed by the City Council in early August. A public open house will be held in September for the review of the proposed Historic Preservation Plan. After the plan is accepted, it is anticipated to be a dynamic document that is revisited on an annual basis to guide the future of the program and inform work program priorities. The proposed plan will include an implementation plan that identifies the proposed priority and timing of actions to implement the plan.

June 5, 2013	Public and Landmarks Board input on themes and recommendations
June 2013	Stakeholder Group input on themes and recommendations
July-August 2013	Public, Stakeholder Group, Landmarks Board and City Council review of Draft Historic Preservation Plan
August 2013	Historic Preservation Plan submitted to OAHP
Early September 2013	Open House to review the Final Historic Preservation Plan