



Preservation A Tool for Municipalities



NEW JERSEY
HISTORIC
TRUST

Preservation: A Tool for Municipalities

Want to preserve your community's character and your local history? Enacting a historic preservation ordinance can help!

Historic preservation is a recognized public policy and activity. Sites identified as having historic significance may be listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places, the National Registers of Historic Places, or in a local historic register. For privately-owned property, listing in the New Jersey and/or National Register of Historic Places is generally honorific in nature; however, a municipality can enact a municipal ordinance and establish a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to preserve and protect its historic resources at a local level ensuring protections beyond this honorific title.

Historic preservation

is defined as the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic and archaeological resources so that they continue to play an integral, vibrant role in their communities.

Why preserve?

Preserving historic places can provide a sense of community pride. Walking past places that have stood for decades, if not centuries, helps to connect us with our past and becomes a vehicle for education. When done properly, historic preservation also encourages better quality of design while celebrating a community's individuality and uniqueness. It is important to note that historic preservation does not necessarily seek to block or prevent all new development and designs within a community, but rather when effectively combined with other community goals, it seeks to ensure that change is compatible with the historic character of the community.

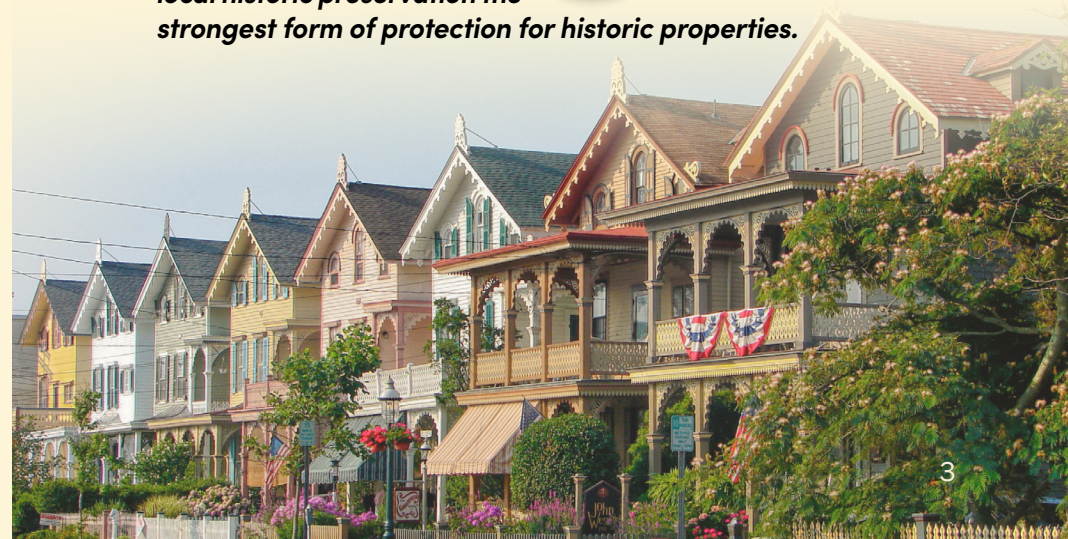
Historic preservation has numerous additional benefits that may not be readily understood:

- ◇ Historic district designation has a positive impact upon property values, often attributed to "investor confidence."
- ◇ Preservation of historic neighborhoods helps stabilize and support communities through the reduction of crime and stimulation of economic investment.
- ◇ Historic designation and preservation activities are proven to create more jobs, especially in the skilled building trades.
- ◇ Any form of restoration is environmentally friendly when compared to a new build.
- ◇ The designation of an area's historic resources encourages heritage tourism and a wider notoriety for the community.

In addition, historic properties affected by state/federal funding and/or permits face little protection unless a site is also identified, designated, and protected through a local historic ordinance. The regulatory power of local HPCs established by municipal governments, therefore, makes **local historic preservation the strongest form of protection for historic properties.**

New Jersey's Home Rule

grants municipal governments broad authorities to enact ordinances and regulations providing for public welfare and order. This rule stands as one of the major sources of authorization for local autonomy in the State. Resultingly, it is the responsibility of each local community to adopt ordinances and regulations for preservation within their community.



How do we preserve at a local level?

Local historic preservation begins with three steps:

1. assess community support for preservation,
2. add a historic preservation element to the Municipal Master Plan to outline community goals for preservation as well as to formally identify the locally listed historic resources within the community, and
3. draft and adopt a historic preservation ordinance in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) to establish an Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

New Jersey's Municipal Land Use Law

(MLUL) outlines the requirements for the establishment of local historic preservation ordinances. The MLUL inaugurates how municipalities should identify, evaluate, designate, and regulate historic resources—individual sites and historic districts alike. The Law also provides important information about preservation ordinance and Preservation Commission (HPC) requirements.

If municipalities want to truly save the character of their community, they must have local support and PLAN to do it.

Without an HPC and a plan for preservation, it is not possible to effectively protect historic properties. HPCs are tasked with recommending properties for local historic designation and then implementing

criteria to guide alterations and rehabilitation of any resource within its designated boundaries. The historic preservation ordinance of each municipality varies; however, most require any requests for demolition or major alteration to go through a regulatory review process in order to obtain a construction permit or certificate of appropriateness (COA) to proceed. The planning and zoning board, as well as the HPC, should work together to regulate the use and character of historic properties within local preservation boundaries as a result of this review process. By creating an HPC and assigning it powers of review, the HPC can be the entity that helps already established community boards guide appropriate, desirable change within a community in accordance with the Municipal Master Plan.

Guiding appropriate, desirable change is difficult without community support. Incentivizing preservation is a method to garner more support from private-property owners for preservation. Incentives can be monetary such as no-interest loan programs or grants to encourage the use of sound preservation practices. Tax exemptions for short periods of time, building code exemptions, and zoning variances are additional incentives that can encourage more adaptive reuse projects instead of demolition. Incentives may also take the form of technical assistance to make preservation more accessible to the public. Incentivizing preservation, when possible, is essential for creating a proactive local preservation program.

Historic Preservation Commissions (HPCs) also become the liaison between the municipality and the public on all historic preservation matters. As a result, HPCs can use their unique position within the community to educate the public about historic preservation to gain additional public support for preservation. Commissions can create walking tours in conjunction with their local Historical Society to encourage local heritage tourism. Brochures and markers can be drafted with the help of public input to highlight key properties. Commissions can even offer public lectures and exhibits about all things history and preservation. The educational role of HPCs is vital for community support and appreciation of the tangible remains of history.

In addition, while the Commission/Board members are considered volunteers, municipal funding should still be allocated for the HPC. In fact, Section 40:55D-108 of the MLUL says that "...the governing body shall make provisions in its budget and appropriate funds for the expenses of the HPC." A functioning HPC thrives with staff training opportunities, municipal plans, design guidelines, community education programs, and the creation or amendment of ordinances focusing on historic preservation. These elements can all be expenses funded by the municipal budget in a preservation-focused community.

HPCs play a crucial role in the preservation of locally significant historic resources and can serve as a valuable resource for regulation and education within their communities.

Where can we find help to preserve?

There are resources, including funding and training, within the state of New Jersey to aid municipalities in achieving their preservation goals.

Municipal, County, and Regional Planning (MCRP) Grants – New Jersey Historic Trust

The New Jersey Historic Trust offers competitive, 3-1 matching grants up to \$75,000 to municipalities for preservation-oriented work. The Municipal, County, and Regional Planning (MCRP) Grants are intended to foster sound planning and stewardship for New Jersey's historic properties. Grants are available to broaden public awareness and enjoyment of historic sites.



Eligible activities covered by the grant include,

- ◇ Preparation of Design Guidelines.
- ◇ Preparation or revision of Local Historic Preservation Ordinances.
- ◇ Preparation of historic preservation components to a municipal or county Master Plan.

- ◇ Preparation of an architectural survey to identify historic properties using the NJ State Historic Preservation Office's approved guidelines and format.

Please see the Trust's website for more information about this and other grant opportunities: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/njht/programs/preservenj/overview/>.

Historic Preservation Certified Local Government Grants – New Jersey Historic Preservation Office & National Park Service

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), in partnership with the National Park Service, administers the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. The goals of the program are to ensure the broadest possible participation of local governments in the national historic preservation program while maintaining standards consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation," to enrich, develop, and help maintain local historic preservation programs in cooperation and coordination with the SHPO; and to provide financial and technical assistance to further these purposes.

The Historic Preservation Office is required to regrant 10% of the state's allocation of federal historic preservation funds for pass-through as sub-grants to Certified Local Government communities. These grants range from \$15,000 up to \$50,000, and the goals for the grant projects are:

1. To identify buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts which are significant in the areas of history, architecture, archaeology, and engineering and which meet the criteria for inclusion in the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places; and
2. To design and implement planning tools for the protection of historic resources.

In order to become a CLG, a municipality must have a historic preservation ordinance in place, a commission established for review, and appropriate outlets for public participation in the process--all according to specific standards outlined by the 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act.

For more information about this grant program, please see the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office's website: <https://dep.nj.gov/grantandloanprograms/historic-preservation-certified-local-government-grants/>.



Continuing Education and Webinar Series– Rutgers Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (M.A.R.C.H.)

MARCH offers a variety of workshops and courses for public history practitioners, preservationists, and others with interests in historic preservation and public humanities.

The continuing education program provides fundamentals of contemporary historic preservation practice as well as opportunities for in-depth studies. This program is open to anyone interested in historic preservation: members of historic preservation commissions, town planners, historic site administrators and volunteers, owners of old or historic buildings, town administrators, architects, engineers, attorneys, students, and anyone else with an interest in preserving our built environment. Students will learn from professionals working in the field to gain a more realistic perspective on how the tangible remains of our past can be integrated within current environments. This is a non-degree, non-credit program, taught on a pass/fail basis. Students can register for individual workshops and classes or a series of them. Continuing education credits earned may be applied toward a certificate in historic preservation.

During the academic year, MARCH also offers live-streamed webinars and conferences from many of the world's leading organizations in public humanities.

For more training opportunities, please refer to the MARCH website: <https://march.rutgers.edu/>.



Commission Assistance & Mentoring Program (CAMP) – National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC)

The Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP®) is the signature training offered by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC). The goal of CAMP® is to provide customized, high-quality, and engaging training through presentations, hands-on exercises, group discussions, networking, and mentoring. CAMP® is led by qualified preservation professionals in support of NAPC's mission, helping to build strong local preservation programs and leaders through education, training and advocacy. NAPC's exceptional team of CAMP Trainers include commissioners, local, state and national staff members, attorneys, consultants and commission partners. CAMP® is offered in both virtual and in-person formats and ranges from 1-6 topics in length, depending on a community's budget and training needs.

Want to learn more about community resilience during the age of climate change? The NAPC also offers a [CAMP Resilience program](#) that focuses on Disaster Planning. CAMP Resilience is modeled after the signature CAMP program.

The NAPC offers additional training opportunities for Commissions including an annual conference, regularly scheduled webinars, and a virtual summer short course.

For more information about the CAMP program, please refer to <https://www.napcommissions.org>.

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New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1)



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