

Public Presentation of Draft Recommendations

Philadelphia Task Force on Historic Preservation

13 December 2018 DRAFT



Charge & Vision

From Mayor Kenney

Balance preservation and new construction across the city

The Mayor charged the Task Force to provide recommendations in four areas by the end of 2018:

1. Survey of historic resources – to create a citywide process for identifying historic assets.
2. Incentives for preservation –to identify incentives for individual property owners and developers to preserve historic resources.
3. Regulations for preservation outcomes –to identify potential policy and legal reforms to strengthen the city’s historic preservation ordinance and other city practices, while welcoming new investment.
4. Outreach and Education –to provide materials for residents, building industry professionals, city staff and others to convey the value of historic preservation as well as the city’s preservation laws and process. This work also includes getting information from the public to help shape the work of the Task Force.

The Vision of the Task Force

Philadelphia in 2035 is an internationally recognized leader in historic preservation practices, celebrating the unique identity of the city's historic buildings, blocks and neighborhoods through continued stewardship, innovative development, restoration and reuse.

Philadelphians are active protectors of their neighborhood history and cultural identity. In a groundbreaking partnership, the city government, civic leaders, planners, and preservation professionals identify and protect historic resources so that they may best be leveraged as assets by businesses, developers and residents, preserving both heritage and sense of place for current and future generations.

The city uses a comprehensive set of tools that include incentives, protections, education and planning to preserve historic places in active use and contribute to the extraordinary layering of history that makes Philadelphia unique.

Process & Participation

- Three written reports:
 - State of Preservation White Paper
 - Best Practices Report
 - Final Recommendations
- 13 Task Force Meetings - 8 open to the public
- Over 400 people participated in 10 public meetings
- Public meeting activities replicated online at phlpreservation.org
- 65 participants online through activities and comments

Draft Recommendations

Key Recommendations

- Plan for Success
- Create a Historic Resource Inventory
- Modify Historical Commission Processes
- Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation
- Clarify the Designation Process
- Incentivize Historic Preservation
- Support Archaeology
- Activate Education and Outreach

Plan for Success

Plan for Success

- Create a cross-sector Historic Preservation Policy Team of municipal employees to pursue policies and practices beneficial to preservation.
 - Led by senior staff in Department of Planning and Development (DPD).
 - Follow Federal Preservation Officer model.
 - Comprise Historic Preservation Policy Team (HPPT) of staff from all city agencies and allied offices (PHA, PRA) who touch on all aspects of the built and natural environments.

Plan for Success

- Ensure boards and commissions understand all aspects of development, including preservation, to form partnerships and leverage resources.
 - Fill board and commission seats with preservation expertise.
 - Support charter change requiring preservation expertise on boards and commissions that have a direct or indirect impact on the built environment.

Plan for Success

- Assign a Historic Preservation Liaison that can forge relationships between developers, neighbors, owners, community groups, and the City.
 - Shepherd applications through the approval process as part of Development Services in DPD.

Plan for Success

- Mandate City agencies (Public Property, Parks & Rec) and partners (PRA, PIDC, PHA) adopt “preservation-first” and adaptive reuse policies to revitalize vacant buildings throughout the city
 - Initiate policies necessary to ensure that City-owned historic buildings, whether designated or not, are preserved, revitalized, and reused.

Plan for Success

- Collect and update inventory information during neighborhood and district level planning processes and use information to inform those plans.
- Use zoning as a tool to support preservation activity, ensuring, where appropriate and feasible, conformance of zoning of historic property to its existing configuration.

Create a Historic Resource Inventory

Create a Historic Resource Inventory

- Establish an ongoing, citywide survey program for historic and cultural resources as a core function of the Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD).
 - PHC to consult with other agencies and partners on the city, state, and federal levels.

Create a Historic Resource Inventory

- Use inventory management software.
 - Survey program requires specialized software to collect, store, analyze, and retrieve information about historical and cultural resources.
 - Integrate with other City-maintained database and allow for public access.
 - Collect information on wide range of resource types including buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, and archaeological resources.
 - May be possible to use free, open-source software such as CGI Arches.

Create a Historic Resource Inventory

- Verify and use legacy data.
 - Coordinate data from reliable sources.
 - Collect legacy data from a variety of sources, such as the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office, PHC files and the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project.

Create a Historic Resource Inventory

- Leverage the efforts and resources in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.
 - Historic resource surveys are routinely undertaken by a wide array of public and private sector partners such as PennDOT, Septa, and Amtrak as well as HUD-funded projects.
 - Community organizations, universities, advocacy groups, and individuals are all potential partners.

Create a Historic Resource Inventory

- Create a survey protocol that is useful for decision-making across the city.
 - Include basic information that is readily available to identify patterns and trends useful for more intensive investigation and evaluation.
 - Establish protocols that include information that corresponds to proposed levels of district and individual landmark designation.

Create a Historic Resource Inventory

- Prioritize survey efforts.
 - Sponsor targeted survey projects in:
 - Areas targeted for public investment,
 - Buildings classified as imminently dangerous, and
 - Areas with zoning/preservation mismatch.
 - Undertake historic context studies before individual survey projects.

Complete a Historic Resource Inventory

- Provide adequate staffing and financial resources to implement and maintain a survey program.
 - Support dedicated staffing for survey program.
 - Hire survey manager within PHC.

Modify Historical Commission Processes

Modify Historical Commission Processes

- Identify a review system that recognizes varied levels of significance in Philadelphia Historical Commission districts (significant, contributing, non-contributing).
- Identify a review system based upon their level of significance, and recommended allowable degree of transformation, to identify properties at which lesser levels of review diligence is required (non-contributing) or where exterior alterations should be minimized (significant).
- Identify a review system for culturally designated resources.

Modify Historical Commission Processes

- Clarify the existing staff review process within the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance Rules and Regulations.
- Post monthly updates of staff review actions.
- Incorporate national and state preservation enabling language into PHC Rules and Regulations.

Modify Historical Commission Processes

- Establish PHC regulatory approval for:
 - All new construction within designated historic districts.
 - Substantial alterations to non-contributing buildings.

Modify Historical Commission Processes

- Create a new appeal body with preservation expertise for alteration and demolition decisions affecting historic properties.
 - Utilize specialized administrative law judge.

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

- Create an Index of significant undesignated buildings across Philadelphia.
 - Administrative “catch-up.”
 - One-time adoption of list with defined time limit.
 - Administrative authority delegated to PHC from Council.
 - All buildings on Index must include documentation that the property meets at least one designation criteria.
 - Property owners would be notified expeditiously.
 - PHC will continue to review designations of individual properties regardless of the Index.

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

- Adopt an ordinance amendment establishing additional district types.
 - 4 district types:
 - PHC-1: Existing historic districts to remain administered by PHC,
 - PHC-2: Lighter regulations of alterations administered by PHC,
 - CD-1: Enhanced conservation district with preservation criteria administered by PCPC, and
 - CD: Existing conservation district to remain administered by PCPC.
 - New ordinances require City Council approval.

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

- Correlate minimum documentation requirements for each of the four districts.
 - Higher level of protection requires increased documentation.
 - Identify designation submission requirements.

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

- Correlate incentives with each of the differentiated districts.
 - Implement greater financial incentives tied to higher levels of protection.
 - Incentives would not be available for undesignated properties with the six current Conservation District properties.

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

- Supplement information that is useful for decision-making.
 - Survey information should be used to inform a variety of City-level decision-making processes.
 - Survey program should support the four-tiered level of regulation and range of incentives proposed.

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

- Impose a demolition review process in Conservation District CD-1.
 - During the process, the applicant must present their proposal for demolition/new construction simultaneously.
 - If a variance is required, the applicant must then present their proposal at a public neighborhood meeting.

Reduce Historic Building Demolition and Broaden Neighborhood Preservation

- Provide updated communication materials that explain the benefits of designation.
 - Design guidelines addressing alterations and new construction per district type.
 - Clear road map for applicants to understand nomination and permit review processes and requirements.

Clarify the Designation Process

Clarify the Designation Process

- Establish criteria for nominated districts by which PHC-reviewed properties are designated based upon their level of significance.
 - Levels include “significant,” “contributing,” and “non-contributing,” with recommended allowable degrees of transformation.
 - Identify criteria for properties of cultural significance.
 - Individual nominations should be clear about the significance of the site and guide the PHC for its administration of permit applications.

Clarify the Designation Process

- Provide clear guidance regarding the designation process.
 - Refine current requirements for nomination and post to the PHC website.
 - Post examples of successful nominations.
 - Encourage nominators to seek staff guidance.

Clarify the Designation Process

- Streamline the PHC nomination review process.
 - Enable administrative designation procedures.
 - Establish expeditious staff review to determine nomination completeness.
 - Increase frequency of Committee on Historic Designation meetings.

Clarify the Designation Process

- Establish a process by which property owners are expeditiously notified of a PHC historic designation application.
 - Adopt and implement formal administrative review protocols.
 - Notify building and property owners in an expeditious manner concerning PHC receipt of a designation nomination, regardless of the quality, completeness, or correctness of that nomination.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Implement property tax assessment formula that recognizes historic impact.
 - Include historic preservation restrictions placed on building or site in market value assessment.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Accelerate permit speed.
 - Expedite entitlement process for historically significant buildings and those that contribute to a historic district.
 - Encourage investment in historic properties through accelerated permitting.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Reduce parking requirements.
 - Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for redevelopment of historic buildings that preserve the street facade and pedestrian experience.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in historic districts.
 - Current code established ADUs for single family, owner occupied properties but did not define any areas where these are allowed in the city.
 - ADU can be build as long as the existing structure exterior remains the same- (can't add a separate front door).
 - Define the allowed areas as historic districts in the code.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Allow by-right zoning for special purpose historic buildings.
 - Special purpose built buildings are civic, religious, or cultural spaces.
 - Developments would be permitted to convert the building to uses allowed in CMX1, CMX2, CMX 2.5, CMX 3 zoning areas, regardless of underlying zoning of the building, as long as the developer commits to historically rehabilitating the building. This would exclude uses like night clubs, pool halls, etc.
 - Historical Commission staff would review the improvements.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Upgrade life safety systems in historic buildings.
 - Increase fire protection requirements for existing buildings.
 - Assist building owners with sprinklers and other life safety improvements on historic properties.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Streets Department Impact Fees.
 - Eliminate the fees for the rehabilitation or restoration of historic properties.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Provide zoning bonus for historic preservation.
 - Add historic preservation as a zoning bonus option.
 - Reward private capital for investing in preservation.
 - Establish a Preservation Fund where funding may come from: (a) private contributions from either donations or payments made to access the zoning bonus; (b) public funds; and (c) philanthropic investments.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Maximize and promote use of Rehab Tax Abatement.
 - Assess improved value for vacant/substantial rehabbed structures at \$0, so it is equal to new construction improved values.
 - Educate and promote understanding of the tax abatement to ensure developers fully weigh the financial cost of both options.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).
 - Implement a program that allows historic structures to transfer development rights to other projects.
 - Establish fund to facilitate the process.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

Encourage investment and improvement into existing building stock:

- Offer targeted incentives to homebuyers of properties in historic districts.
- Increase funding and expand eligible properties for the City's storefront improvement program.
- Allow historic property owners to increase their Loan Program debt limits.
- Increase marketing for Basic System Repair Program in historic neighborhoods.
- Ensure Energy Efficient Program benefits historic structures.

Incentivize Historic Preservation

Other general changes:

- Increase funding for tangled title programs.
- Fund a pilot for activating upper floors on commercial properties.
- Allow contextually designed buildings.
- Increase technical assistance to developers and homeowners to understand historical commission requirements and access resources for property maintenance and rehabilitation.

Support Archaeology

Support Archaeology

- Create map-based predictive models of archaeological sensitivity.
 - Combine existing information about both known and likely archaeological resources with topographic and environmental data and historic maps.

Support Archaeology

- Adopt a new ordinance for archaeological resources.
 - Create “safe harbors” for owners.
 - Establish research protocols.
 - Augment PHC staff and Commission with archaeological expertise.
 - Establish separate review process for archaeological resources.

Activate Education and Outreach

Activate Education and Outreach

- Expand public outreach efforts and build a broader constituency for preservation.
 - Create hands-on experiences to learn about preservation and the city's history.
 - Maintain a user-friendly website.
 - Produce print and digital booklets and brochures to promote preservation and inform property owners.

Activate Education and Outreach

- Form partnerships between artists and historic sites to draw public attention and awareness to these unique resources.

Activate Education and Outreach

- Integrate education and community outreach activities into the survey and inventory process.

Next Steps