



KANSAS
PRESERVATION
PLAN
2023 - 2028



KANSAS PRESERVATION PLAN, 2023-2028

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement:.....	4
Preservation Planning in Kansas	5
The beginnings: establishing preservation policy 1960s-1970	5
Early efforts by the state 1970-1990.....	6
A foundation for preservation	7
A new phase for preservation	7
Introduction to 2023 Plan	8
The Place	8
Demographic and Economic Trends	9
Kansas Culture.....	10
Idealism: Ad Astra	12
Kansans respect history.....	12
Kansans take care of the land.	12
Recommendations:.....	13
Persistence/Resilience: Per Aspera	13
Recommendations.....	14
Understatement: That’ll Do.....	14
Recommendations.....	15
Individualism/Self-Reliance: The Great Commoner	15
WHY PRESERVE?	16
Covid-19.....	16
State Budget Cuts/Staffing Shortages.....	17
Labor and Supply Shortages	17
Creative Economy	17
Rural Prosperity	18
The Return of the Kansas Main Street Program	18
Infrastructure	18
State Historic Sites.....	18

Preservation Goes Mainstream..... 18

Incentives 19

 Online Resources 19

 Assistance with Documentation 19

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS 19

 Public Respondents 19

 Focus Groups.....21

Preservation Goals and Objectives 23

 Educate Kansans on the Value of Historic Preservation..... 23

 Broaden Public Awareness and Participation 23

 Develop Statewide Preservation Network..... 24

 Integrate Historic Preservation Practices into Community Planning..... 24

 Fund and Publicize Historic Preservation Initiatives 25

Raising Awareness 26

 Stretch Limited Resources by Partnering with Natural Allies 26

 Prepare for increase in 106 Reviews due to expected increase in infrastructure projects 26

 Explore Additional Funding for Preservation including Increase Heritage Trust Fund Funding 26

 Re-Evaluate use of Historic Preservation Fund (HPF)..... 26

 National Register Program..... 27

 Tax Credits..... 27

 Priority on Public Relations 27

 Succession Planning..... 27



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Credit for the outreach, research, documentation, and preparation of the Kansas Preservation Plan 2023-2028 goes to Christy Davis. As a former Kansas Historic Preservation Office employee, long-time preservation professional, and advocate, Davis's perspective and experiences helped her develop this iteration of the plan. Her extensive network from decades in the preservation field, working with developers and many rural Kansas communities, significantly aided Davis's outreach and research for the plan. The Kansas State Historical Society-Cultural Resource Division (KSHS-CRD) hired Davis due to her knowledge of preservation in Kansas. We would like to thank KSHS-CRD staff, partner organizations like Kansas Main Street, Scenic Byways, and Certified Local Governments, and those public and private organizations, citizens, and developers that aided in the research and documentation of the plan. Along with Davis's networking abilities and those who participated in the survey, Davis was able to gather quotes, perspectives, and anecdotal information from participants. Apart from some revisions of the plan's Goals and Objectives by KSHS-CRD staff, the overall plan is a reflection of Davis's experience and development of this iteration of the plan.



This material was produced with assistance from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior through the Kansas Historical Society. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior or the Kansas Historical Society.

KANSAS PRESERVATION PLAN, 2023-2028

Kansans have long had the drive to rehabilitate old buildings and take on preservation work by recognizing the state’s important past. We started early by protecting our sources through the creation of the Kansas Historical Society in 1875, a government agency. We later acknowledged the need to protect our state’s important places by passing the Kansas Antiquities Commission Act in 1967, the Kansas State Preservation Law in 1977, and the Kansas Unmarked Burial Sites Preservation Act in 1989. By preserving and documenting our significant historic places, archeological sites, historic buildings, objects, and structures, we enhance our understanding of the past, where we are going, and continue sharing Kansans important role in American history.

Kansans were central in national efforts to establish preservation policy, advocacy, and education.

PRESERVATION PLANNING IN KANSAS

THE BEGINNINGS: ESTABLISHING PRESERVATION POLICY 1960S-1970

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (the Act or NHPA) established historic preservation as public policy and gave the federal government a role in helping state and local governments expand their historic preservation programs. Historic Preservation is a broad term describing the overall efforts to preserve, maintain, restore, and manage the nation’s cultural resources of important value to culture and history. After the Act laid out the responsibilities of state preservation programs, Kansas began the process of identifying the state’s significant cultural resources. At the time, priorities and assessments of resources were to focus on the “obvious” buildings, such as libraries, city halls, courthouses, banks, etc. Typically, these places were listed for their architectural style or design. But it is important to note that the majority of these building were funded, constructed, designs, and operated by middle-to-upper class white men.

In terms of preservation of archeological resources, in 1967 Kansas passed the Kansas Antiquities Commission Act (K.S.A. 74-5401 through 74-5408), which prohibits uncontrolled excavation or vandalism of archeological sites on state, county, or municipal owned lands, thus serving as a state-level counterpart to the NHPA.

Before there were dedicated federal funds for preservation activities, Kansas tackled historic preservation on a project-by-project basis. In the early years, the Kansas “Historic Sites Survey Office” (now the State Historic Preservation Office) relied heavily on summer interns to carry out the work of surveying properties in each county and listing those determined most significant on the National Register of Historic Places.

The establishment of the first dedicated federal funds - the Historic Preservation Fund in 1976, and the federal historic tax credit program in 1977 – encouraged Kansas to make its own preservation policy. In 1977, K.S.A. 75-2721 formally established a state historic preservation program under the auspices of the Kansas Historical Society. By Fall 1978, the “Historic Sites Survey Office,” which had begun because of the NHPA, changed its name to the “Historic Preservation Department.”

EARLY EFFORTS BY THE STATE 1970-1990

In the late 1970s, the Kansas Historical Society carried out an ambitious slate of preservation projects, including a 1978 publication entitled “Black Historic Sites: A Beginning Point.” Still, preservation planning did not begin in earnest until the early 1980s with the establishment of the National Park Service’s “Resource Protection Planning Process (RP3).” RP3 was developed as “a means by which historic resources could be efficiently identified, evaluated, and preserved.” Through RP3, and the newly minted Certified Local Government Program, the National Park Service encouraged states to begin prioritizing historic preservation projects in a way that met the specific needs of each state and its communities based on their unique culture and history.

As a result, the first Kansas Preservation Planning documents emphasized state and region-specific historic contexts and trends in the built environment. “When properties are seen in context,” the first document proclaimed, “it is possible to make choices about preservation that reflect an informative and balanced sampling of prehistoric and historic settings.”

Each study unit had three sections:

1. Architectural Historical Overview (a context that included related historical documentation, property types, and an extensive bibliography);
2. Programs (a section where past progress and trends were noted, state responsibilities were identified, and future projects were recommended); and
3. “Actual local and regional projects.”

In May 1984, the preservation office announced the completion of the first study unit: “The Period of Rural/Agricultural Dominance (1865-1900).” A second unit, entitled “The Settlement Period (1820s-1880s),” was completed in 1987; and the final, “A Time of Contrasts: Progress, Prosperity, and the Great Depression (1900-1940),” was finished in 1990.

These early planning efforts were guided by Richard (Dick) Pankratz, who led the Kansas SHPO (and, later the Cultural Resources Division) for thirty-four years. Before joining the staff of the Kansas Historical Society in 1970, Dick taught English and History for a decade and he approached historic preservation from the perspective of a historian, teacher, and administrator.

In the decade it took to complete the Kansas Preservation Plan Study Units, the Kansas SHPO changed. In the late 1970s through late 1980s, three architects – Terry Marmet, Barbara Anderson, and Vance Kelley - joined the staff. They would offer technical guidance and review federal rehabilitation tax credit projects. But they spent much of their time reviewing projects under the state preservation statute. In the 1981 the preservation law was amended and the number of annual reviews exploded from 50 to 500. Without a corresponding funding increase, the SHPO staff would be forced to focus much of its time in the 1990s on reviewing projects with government ties (such as permits, licenses, or funds).

A FOUNDATION FOR PRESERVATION

There was a reason that many of the state's early historic preservation professionals were architects, and his name was Bernd Foerster. Foerster served as Dean of Architecture at Kansas State University from 1971 to 1984. Foerster was heavily involved in the early phases of the national preservation movement. While Dean of Architecture at KSU, Foerster hired other professors with complimentary interests. These included landscape architect Robert Melnick in 1974; architectural historian Richard Longstreth in 1976; and Richard Wagner, hired to teach architecture, preservation, and economics. Together, this team created state's first preservation advocacy organization (the professors, along with Bernd's wife Anelle Foerster), the Kansas Preservation Alliance in 1978. They influenced many students and young preservation professionals both at KSU, where Bernd taught until 1999, and the MA Preservation Program they founded at Goucher College in Baltimore.

Foerster famously said "buildings are not saved by scholarly historical research." In his view, documenting history was less important than forging community relationships and finding viable new uses for historic buildings. Armed with a new state preservation statute, many of the young preservation professionals Foerster inspired embarked on protecting the state's historic built environment.

A NEW PHASE FOR PRESERVATION

Two major events in the early 2000s - an increase in federal funding and the establishment of a state preservation tax credit - finally helped peak preservation interest across the state. New funds allowed the Kansas SHPO to turn its focus to historic contexts for the first time since the 1980s. The Cultural Resources Division's first Assistant Division Director Cathy Ambler helped manage projects that created consultant-produced Multiple Property Submissions for Railroad Resources (2000), Lustron Houses (2001), County Courthouses (2002), Opera Houses (2004), and Public Schools (2005). Kansans now had the more tools to streamline the nomination process and, with the creation of the state rehabilitation tax credit program in 2001, motivation for owners and developers to list properties in the historic registers.

Historic preservation efforts in Kansas have generated billions of dollars in economic impact; however, preservation programs have been inundated with budget cuts, staff changes, and yet overwhelmed with positive activity from Kansans. Preservation planning can seem like an ideal rather than a practical use and application for communities. The past two preservation plans (2011-2016 and 2017-2022) offered general goals - mostly in the areas of Education, Funding, Advocacy, and Community Planning.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 729 cities in Kansas, and 22 of them have more than 20,000 people. There are population centers in most regions across the state, such as Wichita, Overland Park, Topeka, Manhattan, Salina, Leavenworth, Dodge City, Garden City, Hays, and Pittsburg. But most of the communities across the state are rural with small pockets of development, rather than larger densely populated areas. In preparation for [this plan](#), we have reassessed issues, concerns, and priorities from communities the State Historic Preservation Office works with. For instance, incorporating preservation into community planning is challenging for the state's rural communities, which mostly have no planning or zoning laws. Not one community in Kansas has a full-time preservation planner; and given a decade-long period of disinvestment in government, it is not likely that will change in the next five years.

INTRODUCTION TO 2023 PLAN

The world is a very different place today than when the 2017-2022 Kansas Preservation Plan was published. The financial, labor, and supply disruptions fueled by the Covid-19 Pandemic have had a particular impact on historic preservation and will likely continue to affect the field for years to come.

When the pandemic reached Kansas in early 2020, architects had already witnessed the fallout from a global economic downturn. Early on, construction, particularly in urban areas, continued; but, in a period of great uncertainty, project planning nearly ceased. As businesses started to benefit from relief efforts, project planning resumed. But construction, plagued by labor shortages and disruptions in the manufacture and delivery of building supplies, faltered.

Despite many setbacks, historic preservation has continued to gain momentum in Kansas. During the pandemic, a new generation of remote workers returned to their hometowns. Old buildings, some of them abandoned for decades, proved to be great entry-level opportunities for these rural pioneers. Those who couldn't find or afford contractors did the work themselves. Although some may leave the state after the pandemic, a new-found sense of place will likely inspire continued investment in the cultural and economic futures of Kansas communities.

In these uncertain, but promising times, what does the future hold for historic preservation in Kansas? Forging a path forward requires an understanding of who we are and where we've been. In this way, the historic preservation community help facilitates a future that aligns, rather than conflicts with current trends and authentic Kansas culture.

THE PLACE

It is a rectangle bound by straight lines drawn in a futile attempt to avert civil war. In the place we now call "Kansas," are fifty-million acres of diverse landscape that has shaped, and been shaped by, people for more than ten millennia.

The state's regional identity has shifted over the decades; and in some ways it still defies classification. Due to the designation of Kansas as "Indian Territory" and the nation's struggles over the expansion of slavery, the border between Kansas and Missouri delayed white settlement for more than thirty years. To mid-nineteenth-century Euro-Americans, Kansas was "The West." For much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Wichita identified with the Southwest. The Dust Bowl placed southwest Kansas in the Southern Plains. Outsiders might firmly place the state within the elusive Midwest or, simply, "Rural America."

Regardless of its regional classification, one thing is clear. What works in other places does not always work in Kansas. The level of government regulation that is standard on the east and west coasts simply does not work here. What works in Kansas cities does not work in rural Kansas, where communities simply don't have the capacity to develop local preservation policy.

The region's earliest inhabitants were nomadic hunter-gatherers who pushed southward at the end of the last Ice Age. As a warming trend brought mass extinction of large mammals, they began to cultivate the land. The settlements of these First Peoples were concentrated near the largest waterways in Eastern Kansas, principally the Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas River Valleys, whose rich soil nourished crops of corn, squash, and beans. In the easternmost reaches of the state, culture looked eastward toward the Woodlands. In southeast Kansas, the Osages looked south and east toward villages that dotted the region we now call the Ozarks. In the Arkansas River Valley, the Wichitas established deep trading ties with tribes of the American Southwest. The shortgrass prairie of Western Kansas, which abounded with game from mammoths to bison, was the hunting grounds of the Apaches and Kiowas.

Guided by the natural landscape, Native Peoples established trade routes that endure today. In the wake of disease and displacement, Indian communities gave way to Euro-American settlers who, like those they displaced, established settlements near the great waterways, in the Arkansas, Missouri, and Kansas River Valleys. The trail that connected the Woodland and Plains tribes to the Southwest became the Santa Fe Trail, then the route of the Santa Fe Railroad, Highways 50 and 56, and Interstate Highway 35. Communities once connected by the Kansas River – Kansas City, Lawrence, Topeka, Manhattan, and later Abilene and Hays - came to be connected by the Union Pacific Railroad and, and later Interstate Highway 70.

In the early twentieth century, technology forged new agricultural and industrial landscapes. Steel plows and combustion-fired irrigation pumps made it possible to break virgin sod and water large expanses of wheat and broomcorn in western Kansas. Automation powered the industrial age, fueled by lead, zinc and coal mined from southeast Kansas and oil and natural gas from the southeast, southcentral, and west. And oil riches helped drive a budding aircraft industry that would later fly the allies to victory in World War II.

Kansas is still bounded by straight lines - but untamable natural resources continue to shape its culture. The Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas River Valleys remain heavily populated, with Kansas City looking northeast and Wichita looking southwest. Southeast Kansas still takes its cues from places of like landscapes, including southwest Missouri.

As farms in rural counties get larger, farm towns get smaller. As metropolitan areas grow, there is increasing pressure on historic resources regionwide. By considering the state's current demographic and economic trends within the context of the state's history, we can develop a method for preserving the rich cultural heritage of this place we call Kansas.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

With a population of 2.93 million (2020), Kansas ranks 35th among the states in population. Although nearly 40% of the state's citizens live in the Wichita and Kansas City Metropolitan Areas, the statewide average population density remains low, with only 34.9 inhabitants per square mile.

There are only nine towns in Kansas with populations greater than 50,000. Five of these – Overland Park, Kansas City, Olathe, Lenexa, and Shawnee – are located in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. The other

four include the historic trading center and “Air Capital” Wichita; the State Capital of Topeka; and University cities Lawrence and Manhattan.

Even accounting for the Kansas City and Wichita Metropolitan areas, Kansas has retained primarily an agricultural industry. The state is first in the nation for wheat milling and production and, with a cattle population that is double the human population, its third for cattle production and beef processing.

Because of the politics of Euro-American settlement, Kansas has historically been a rural state dotted with hundreds of small towns. There are 627 incorporated cities in the state, half of which have populations of fewer than 400. Ninety-one percent (91%) have populations of fewer than 5000. And 75% have fewer than 1500 residents. With population densities of fewer than 6 citizens per square mile, 36 of the state’s 105 counties are considered “frontier counties.”¹

What does this all mean for historic preservation in Kansas? It means that historic preservation policies and practice must meet the needs of the state’s growing metropolitan areas – but also must be malleable enough to work in the majority of the state’s communities, which are small towns and rural areas. Most Kansas communities don’t have full-time city administrators, let alone planning departments. Not one city in the entire state, including Wichita and Kansas City, has a full-time historic preservation planner. And because of the state’s unique history, with hundreds of fledgling towns competing with neighboring towns for county-seat status, there are cultural and political barriers to regional planning and consolidation.

In order to establish effective preservation policies, we must identify an inclusive shared culture and establish a path forward that aligns with it.

KANSAS CULTURE

I have heard you intend to settle us on a reservation near the mountains. I don’t want to settle. I love to roam over the prairies. There I feel free and happy, but when we settle down we grow pale and die. Satanta, Kiowa Chief

I was born upon the prairie, where the wind blew free, and there was nothing to break the light of the sun. I was born where there were no enclosures, and where everything drew a free breath. Ten Bears, Comanche Chief

This town is the fruit of great aspiration, and we who live here now, have a debt to posterity that we can pay only by still achieving, still pursuing; we must learn to labor and to wait, even as they learned it who built here on this townsite when it was raw upland prairie. William Allen White

Since the territory formally opened to white settlement in 1854, many cultural and ethnic groups have called Kansas home. In the late nineteenth century, the railroads attracted colonists from throughout Europe – from German-Russian Mennonites and German Catholics to Swedes, Czechs, Welsh and Scots. Black

¹ Based on research conducted by Christy Davis, former SHPO staff, long-time preservation advocate, and consultant hired to prepare this document.

migrants found homes in Kansas in the years following the Civil War, the years following Reconstruction, and during the Great Migration. And immigrants from Europe's Balkan Region (Greece, Italy, Romania) came to work in Southeast Kansas's mining and industrial sectors. In the late twentieth century, meat packing attracted new immigrants from Latin America and Asia. Today, Blacks (6.2%) and Latinos (13.7%) make up the largest non-white populations.² But approximately 25,000 Kansans speak Vietnamese or Chinese as their first language.

Given the state's diverse ethnic and natural landscape, it is impossible to place all Kansans into a single cultural box. But, in his seminal work on the cultural geography of Kansas, Pete Shortridge offers a lens through which to view the intersection of landscape and culture. He argues that "Pioneers usually establish the cultural tone, and later settlers, even if from quite different locales, typically adopt many of the earlier values and practices." Shortridge found that the ethnic identities of late twentieth-century Kansans corresponded "closely to the geographical patterns set down in the nineteenth century."

Regardless of their origin, people have come to Kansas for three principal reasons: ideology, land, and economic opportunity. Before the Civil War, the free-state movement was one of the major factors driving the settlement of the cities of Lawrence, Topeka, and Manhattan. After the Civil War, Union veterans took up land grants. In the 1870s and 1880s, Exodusters, Mennonites, Volga Germans and many other groups sought opportunity in Kansas. For those groups, Kansas was more than a state, it was a state of mind. For many, choosing Kansas meant endorsing a certain ideology, which by the 1880s included prohibition, partial women's suffrage, and, at least ostensibly, Civil Rights. (Kansas passed prohibition in 1880, women's suffrage in 1861 and a Civil Rights statute in 1874.)

Shared or overlapping motivations did not translate into harmonious inter-community relations. Kansas communities were born of competition and forged by plagues, droughts, fire, and bloodshed. Most of the state's towns and cities were founded during a period of rapid growth and speculation in the years immediately following the Civil War. In the 1850s, proslavery towns, like Atchison, were pitted against "free-state" towns, like Lawrence. Every settlement competed for the attention of the railroads and eastern investors in the 1860s and 1870s. And, through the first decade of the early twentieth century, battles between towns competing to become county seats dissolved into bribery, voter fraud, and bloodshed.

These early challenges left Kansans receptive to early twentieth century Progressive-Era ideals. But the struggle for a more perfect Kansas never succeeded and never ceased. In the capable words of William Allen White, Kansas small towns were metaphors for the value of community in a changing world. An ideal Kansas, and America, White railed, should hold the hard-working business owners on Main Street in esteem. During the early twentieth century, the values (however impossible to attain) that attracted a certain type of person to Kansas conspired to keep them here. And these values - Idealism, Persistence, Understatement, and Individualism - abide today.

² Based on US Census Bureau data, estimates as of July 1, 2024.

IDEALISM: AD ASTRA

The aspiration of Kansas is to reach the unattainable; its dream is the realization of the impossible. John J. Ingalls

Idealism must always prevail on the frontier, for the frontier, whether geographical or intellectual, offers little hope to those who see things as they are. Carl Becker

Never interrupt someone doing something you said couldn't be done. Amelia Earhart

Idealism was the founding principle of Kansas. The first half of the state motto is “Ad Astra,” to the stars. It could be said that Kansas was founded by the nascent Republican Party, whose 1860 platform called for the immediate admission of Kansas to the Union as a free state, condemned “reckless extravagance” and corruption, denounced slavery as a “crime against humanity,” demanded a living wage, supported protections for immigrants, and championed the Homestead Act. Many early Kansans were Wesleyan Methodists, who advanced social reforms including abolitionism, pacifism, women’s rights, and temperance.

Kansas has never been immune to hardships and inequalities. But our history is brimming with characters of all stripes bent on making the world a better place. Kansas idealism is what drove Carry Nation to smash up saloons, spurred Samuel Crumbine to wage a public-health crusade, attracted 15,000 Exodusters in search of freedom, motivated William Allen White’s campaign against the KKK, and inspired Dr. Karl Menninger to treat, rather than punish, the mentally ill.

What does this mean for historic preservation?

KANSANS RESPECT HISTORY.

Kansans are exposed to Kansas History from a young age. The public schools are required to teach Kansas History in Fourth Grade and Middle School. The state’s history standards focus on the idea that “Relationships among people, places, ideas, and environments are dynamic” and encourage teachers to explore how “the beliefs and ideas of Kansans [are] different/similar from other places.” A large percentage of Kansas communities, an estimated 200 of them, have local historical societies. According to responses to a survey conducted for this preservation plan, Kansans see these local historical societies as top resources for preservation advice. Unfortunately, many local museums lack the interpretation to place local history within a state or national context; many are in economic crisis; and, as their ranks age, many lack the human and financial resources to provide preservation advice, particularly to younger generations.

KANSANS TAKE CARE OF THE LAND.

Kansans know that our landscapes are cultural landscapes, shaped by people. There are no prairies without prescribed burning. There are no crops without tilling and planting. Without soaring mountains and crashing waves, we often take the landscape for granted. But we take care of it. Still, as fewer and fewer people inhabit and steward the land, misunderstandings between rural and urban Kansans abound. Many in the farming and ranching community are now seeing preservation

of small towns as an extension of their conservation efforts. But their hands-on approach doesn't always jibe with review timelines for incentive programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Identify ways to better equip local historical societies to learn historic preservation basics and help them transition to engaging a new generation of property owners.

Continue to explore Kansas History within the cultural landscapes that make each region unique.

Establish shorter review timelines for projects so hands-on projects can keep moving.

What can take idealism from an empty promise to action? Persistence.

PERSISTENCE/RESILIENCE: PER ASPERA

I just see no excuse if you believe anything enough for not putting your whole heart into it. Dwight Eisenhower

If the clouds don't bring rain, nor the Federal government equity, nor the loud knock on our door opportunity, nor the stars all they promised, wait until next year. We'll still be here. We're staying. C. Robert Haywood

If you believe in something, you should commit to seeing it done. Kansans are industrious and resourceful. And once they've set their sights on what is "right," they'll work their hearts out for it, sometimes to a fault. For many Kansans, if it isn't hard, it isn't worth doing. Kansans will leave the easy jobs for someone else. No matter how bad it gets along the way, it could always be worse.

Kansas persistence saw Bob Dole through three years of hospitalization for war injuries. It's also what drove the Topeka NAACP to keep working until schools were desegregated. And it created the perfect climate for building hundreds of planes to win World War II. If you want to do something that is impossible, start by hiring a Kansan for the job.

What does this mean for historic preservation?

Kansans are ready to roll up their sleeves and get things done. In many cases, particularly in rural communities, this means doing the work themselves. Kansans don't spend months planning before acting. Because many communities don't have stringent permit requirements, they buy a property and get to work. When they involve contractors, they often do so without a detailed plan of action, let alone an architect. When an architect is involved, they are usually the person who shares information about the incentives that often make larger projects possible. The margins are often too slim to attract non-local investors – and local investors often lack the kind of taxable income that makes federal tax credits work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regardless of whether a property owner takes advantage of rehab funding, the preservation community should encourage appropriate work to ensure the state's building stock is preserved long term. Because the state preservation office is stretched thin, this means educating folks through one-on-one interactions with local communities at the local level and rewarding those who are willing to do the right thing.

The preservation community should play a key role in educating or certifying construction professionals, like architects, contractors, and consultants. Then they should trust them to get the job done right. Doing this will require partnerships with existing organizations, including the AGC (Association of General Contractors) and AIA (American Institute of Architects) to establish training programs and hands-on workshops to certify contractors and architects.

Encourage appropriate work through interactive online resources, including as part of incentive applications.

Kansans are persistent – but they don't talk about it. Instead of talking about your plans for success, you should pull up your bootstraps and do the work.

UNDERSTATEMENT: THAT'LL DO

These men are all talk; What is needed is action – action! John Brown

What we need is ... fewer white shirts and brains, fewer men with business judgment, and more of those fellows who boast that they are "just ordinary clodhoppers but they know more in a minute about finance than John Sherman." William Allen White

The stars at night are big and bright in Kansas, too – but you're not likely to encounter people gloating about it. Kansans are about action, not talk. They'll work hard – but they sure don't expect a pat on the back for it. The best you might get is a "that's not half bad." It's hard to revel in your success when you know that your fortunes could reverse in an instant. And besides, how big is your ego compared to the endless sky?

Humble thyself. Kansans are skeptical of showboats – fancy clothes and fancy degrees aren't status symbols in a place where survival is at stake. Never judge a book by its cover. That woman in jeans and a worn-out sweatshirt? She might own 10,000 acres of the world's richest grasslands. The guy in the dusty cowboy boots? He might have an Ivy League degree. Once someone has proved themselves as a true Kansan, they don't have to prove anything else. If your world is too flashy, you may not be in Kansas anymore.

The subtle beauty of Kansas is reflected in the understated approach of its citizens. It's what gets Kansans through tornados, droughts and plagues. Understatement, or self-deprecation, is what kept Bob Dole in

Congress representing Kansas for thirty-five years – and, according to some, what lost him the White House.

What does this mean for historic preservation?

Many Kansans believe historic preservation is a luxury that we can't afford.

The phrase “spare no expense” is absent from the Kansas vocabulary. When you can purchase a downtown building for \$5000, it's tough to justify spending \$1 million on it. Many counties are struggling to maintain an infrastructure built for larger populations. For instance, Chase County maintains an infrastructure built for its peak population in 1920, which was SEVEN times the population today. So, we can't expect local incentives in most communities. Still, those, particularly younger generations, who understand the creative economy know that the only way communities can survive is by authentically preserving what makes them unique.

Kansans will do impossible things without expecting a pat on the back. (But that doesn't mean they shouldn't get one)

In urban places, financial incentives are enough to motivate development. In rural places, especially in cases of deferred maintenance, projects are more likely to be “labors of love.” Regardless of location, developers and property owners are likely to face skepticism and can't expect a pat on the back. As they tackle complex preservation projects, property owners and developers need cheerleaders from outside their own communities. The preservation community can offer these trailblazers patience, efficient reviews, and recognition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The preservation community's role as cheerleaders for those investing in our state's historic properties cannot be understated. Statewide preservation awards must continue as, for most, the only recognition of a job well done.

Not surprisingly, a culture of understatement breeds individualism and self-reliance.

INDIVIDUALISM/SELF-RELIANCE: THE GREAT COMMONER

On the frontier, where everything is done by the individual and nothing by organized society, initiative, resourcefulness, quick, confident, and sure judgment are the essential qualities for success ... [The] confident individualism of those who achieve through endurance is a striking trait of the people of Kansas.
Carl Becker

The amount of satisfaction you get from life depends on your own ingenuity, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. People who wait around for life to supply them satisfaction usually find boredom instead.
Karl Menninger

Most Kansans judge themselves more harshly than others would judge them. Kansans have common sense – and they trust that other Kansans do too. With high ideals and restless energy, you make your own luck. YOU are responsible for your own actions and your own success. No one is going to do it for you and your survival depends on it. Trust your judgment. Put your blinders on, ignore the naysayers and, whatever you do, put your nose to the grindstone and get it done. The best way to quiet the naysayers is to prove them wrong. Success is the best revenge.

What does this mean for historic preservation?

Because Kansas communities were born in competition, we shouldn't expect them to pool resources. The self-reliant culture makes many Kansans reluctant to ask for help. They will, however, get help from sources they trust (like local historical societies) and can passively seek help from online resources.

Not one city in Kansas, including Wichita and Kansas City, has a full-time preservation planner. Many Kansans are skeptical of government anyway. In order to build trust, preservation professionals should engage in one-on-one communication wherever possible. This will allow them to build networks that reach to the community level.

WHY PRESERVE?

Knowing the history of our culture is important. It is embedded in the stone architecture, historical barns, churches, homes, and buildings both rural and urban. The physical structures hold memories in a way that an empty lot or field does not. There is a symbiotic relationship between our culture and our values. Culture is what makes us human and provides common ground for diverse populations. It is a step toward overcoming the division in our society. – Quote from the Preservation Plan survey, 2022.

Historic preservation is the embodiment of ways the past can shape the future. But historic preservation, like most fields, is everchanging and evolving. Below are some current trends that affect historic preservation in Kansas.

COVID-19

The Covid-19 Pandemic has affected all aspects of life, including historic preservation. Forced social isolation has created a longing for connected communities and shared experiences. In 2020 and 2021, many Kansas natives returned to their home state, particularly to rural communities where it is possible to have meaningful in-person interactions while social distancing. Like most places, the demand for housing in Kansas has outstripped the supply. Existing spaces, like vacant upper stories of downtown buildings, are ripe for redevelopment. Historic buildings also align with a growing emphasis on “authenticity” and “buying local.” According to the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report, 86% of respondents say that authenticity is important when deciding on purchases. Forbes Magazine reports that remote work has

“driven a surge in ‘localism’ around the world,” with 61% of consumers reporting that “they plan to buy from local and independent retailers six months from now.”

STATE BUDGET CUTS/STAFFING SHORTAGES

State budget cuts over the past decade have greatly impacted historic preservation programs in Kansas. Since 2007, the Kansas Historical Society’s allocation of State General Funds has plunged by approximately 50%. In the same period, the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions at the agency has also halved. What this means is that as demand for preservation programs climbs, a smaller number of staff members take on an increased workload. The Kansas State Historic Preservation Office receives a federal allocation of approximately \$1 million dollars each year to carry out federal preservation programs in the state. The federal money requires a 40% match. But KSHS does not get enough state money to provide the necessary match. This means that the state must pass thru a large percentage of the federal funds to local entities that can match the money. These local projects make more properties eligible for preservation programs – but when the preservation office cannot match the funds, it cannot hire the staff necessary to carry out the programs. This leads to delays in the review of essential preservation projects in Kansas, particularly the rehabilitation tax credit program that helps drive the economic renewal of Kansas downtowns. As preservation programs – from tax credits to Main Street to RHID – expand and the federal government invests in infrastructure projects, staff demands will only increase.

LABOR AND SUPPLY SHORTAGES

The Covid Pandemic has exacerbated an already troubling shortage of skilled laborers and created supply-chain disruptions unprecedented since the post-World War 2 era. Large numbers of an entire generation of skilled workers in the building trades have retired in short period of time. In the year after the start of the pandemic, lumber prices quintupled. Bids on some Kansas projects were double their estimated costs. In the past year (2022), the Consumer Price Index has increased by 5.4% while the unemployment rate hovers at 3%. Together, these labor and materials issues caused major delays and unpredictable prices for rehabilitation projects. These increased costs make preservation incentives essential to getting projects done. The conditions create a “hurry up and wait” mentality. Building owners must move quickly when they can get contractors and materials. Maintaining a fair and efficient process for review of preservation incentive applications and regulatory requests is challenging for the reviewer. When accommodations are possible for expedited review times, reviewers help relieve some of these concerns.

CREATIVE ECONOMY

The Creative Economy, described in Richard Florida’s 2002 book *Rise of the Creative Class*, has expanded from the nation’s largest cities and coastal regions, to include smaller cities and rural areas. In Kansas, the arts and preservation communities already overlap. In her article entitled “7 Preservation Resolutions for 2021,” Marissa Brown challenges the preservation community to engage with artists “to connect the work of preservation to the present.”

RURAL PROSPERITY

During the early days of her administration, Governor Laura Kelly placed an emphasis on Rural Prosperity. After a 2019 listening tour, the Governor established workgroups to focus on housing, childcare, and workforce recruitment/retention/education. The following were identified as policy priorities: Sharing Successes and Supporting Local Leaders, Rural Healthcare, Infrastructure (especially digital), and Property Tax Reform. Historic preservation can facilitate these goals. And, if these goals are met, there will be great benefits to historic preservation. For instance, in an age of remote work, improved internet infrastructure will encourage future redevelopment of Kansas downtowns.

THE RETURN OF THE KANSAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

From 1985 to 2012, Kansas Main Street spurred \$600 million in downtown development and the establishment of 4000 new small businesses. The program was discontinued during the Brownback Administration. Now, as part of the rural prosperity initiative, the Kelly Administration has reinstated the Kansas Main Street Program. Based in Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Main Street provides technical assistance, training, design services and access to funding for twenty-eight Main Street communities. It is important for the preservation community to share information about preservation technology and funding programs with Kansas Main Street.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Public investment as a share of the economy has fallen by more than 40 percent since the 1960s. At present, Congress is considering a multi-trillion-dollar infrastructure bill aimed at repairing the nation's crumbling roads and bridges, addressing the housing crisis, and upgrading public buildings and services. An increase in federally funded infrastructure projects will drive an increase in reviews of these projects under federal preservation laws, placing an added burden on State Preservation Office reviewers.

STATE HISTORIC SITES

The state historic sites have seen drastic funding cuts in recent decades. Meantime, the Covid-19 Pandemic has spurred auto touring – and interest in both these sites and historical markers. It is more important than ever for the Kansas Historical Society to share information about these sites online and through interactive interpretation, particularly at unattended sites.

PRESERVATION GOES MAINSTREAM

Although survey respondents identify a “Lack of Interest” in historic preservation as one of the main barriers to preservation in their community, this phrase fails to acknowledge subtle generational differences about what constitutes historic preservation. Research from the National Trust for Historic Preservation shows that over 90% of Millennials express support for preservation. But younger generations have a different perspective on history. Rather than visiting in-person museums, many get their “history fix” through authentic experiences at local businesses and restaurants.

INCENTIVES

Both the U. S. House and Senate have introduced the Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act. This legislation would increase the federal historic tax credit to 30% for projects \$2.5 million and less, make the program easier for non-profits to use, and make it easier to pair with the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. If this legislation passes, it will incentivize more rehabilitations, placing additional pressures on staff. In 2021, the Kansas Legislature passed the Upper Story Rural Housing Incentive District Program (RHID), which enables cities and counties with documented housing shortages to establish incentive districts and create development plans. This program is promising for cities with the capacity to establish and manage the program. But the communities that lack planning programs and staffing may miss out.

ONLINE RESOURCES

One of the top three barriers to historic preservation that survey respondents identified was a “lack of knowledge” about preservation in their community. Since 62.9% of respondents say that their number one source for preservation information is an internet search, there is an opportunity to provide information online. Because 35.5% of survey respondents say they have never communicated with the Kansas SHPO, and 34.67% of respondents say they trust their local historical societies to provide this information, it is essential that KSHS not only provide the information in an easy-to-navigate online forum – but also to promote this to local groups as a trusted source. This will help save staff time and increase the chances that property owners have an introduction to preservation principles before applying for funding or starting work.

ASSISTANCE WITH DOCUMENTATION

Respondents to the survey identified women and minorities as themes that were underrepresented in the telling of Kansas History. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, only eight percent of the nation’s National Register sites and three percent of National Historic Landmarks represent people of color, women, or members of the LGBTQ community. Elements of our past like, modern architecture and roadside resources, to name a few, are other resources missing in documentation. As primary documents, like newspapers and census records, become increasingly accessible and searchable, researchers can expand on traditional accounts to include the stories of those who have been underrepresented. These tools should be used to further explore the cultural resources that tell all of Kansan’s stories.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

PUBLIC RESPONDENTS

A record 553 individuals completed the public statewide preservation survey beginning in March 2021. One of the goals of the survey was to reach out to a broad audience, versus only those with existing relationships with the Kansas SHPO. 63.77% of respondents noted that they had never participated in any SHPO funding programs. 80% noted that they had never been a member of a statewide or national historic preservation organization. 38.50% of respondents characterized their preservation ties as “general interest.” Likewise, 38.58% said they “never” communicate with the Kansas SHPO.

The largest age group of respondents (44.44%) were 65 years of age or older, a group that makes up only 14.6% of the state’s overall population. 58.8% of those who completed the survey identified as female; and 39.38% male.

Urban areas were well represented, with 45% of survey respondents living in the state’s top five populated counties. 26.37% of respondents were from cities with populations exceeding 100,000. 38.99% were from towns whose populations exceeded 50,000. Thirty-one of the state’s 105 counties were not represented in the survey. These were rural counties with low populations. 95.62% of respondents identified as white or Caucasian.

Although respondents mentioned several threatened historic buildings by name, the one that was mentioned most often was Century II, a concert and expo hall in downtown Wichita. Those who noted barriers to preservation in their communities emphasized lack of awareness, regulatory restrictions, and lack of funding.

368 respondents provided a written answer to the question: Why is it important to preserve the state’s cultural resources? And to summarize, they spoke to the way that preserving the past is important in shaping future generations.

We asked each survey participant to identify all the SHPO programs, if any, with which they had worked. Below is a chart showing the number of participants who indicated an experience with each program and the average overall satisfaction rating for each program. Each program is assigned a weighted rating based on both the size of the audience and level of satisfaction. For instance, the Heritage Trust Fund Program impacts 123 of the respondents and has a satisfaction rating of 9.2. So, although the program has a large public impact, its high satisfaction ratings make it a lower priority for improvements than the National Register and Tax Credit Programs, which both impact larger numbers of constituents and receive lower satisfaction ratings.

	Respond (total #)	Avg Rtg (out of 10)	Weighted importance (#/avg rating)
National Register	244	7.7	31.68
Tax Credits	141	7.6	18.55
Heritage Trust Fund	123	9.2	13.37
Historic Survey	100	7.7	12.99
Review and Compliance	87	7.4	11.76
Archeology Database	58	7.5	7.73

These findings will be among the basis for recommendations.

FOCUS GROUPS

Kansas is blessed with highly experienced creative preservation professionals. Many of whom worked with Bernd Foerster, while others got their start as architectural historians, architects, and reviewers for the Kansas SHPO. Twelve of these professionals – six preservation architects and six preservation consultants – responded to our preservation plan survey. Remote (zoom) focus group discussions were carried out for preservation consultants and architects. 100% of the architects and consultants who participated identified as white or Caucasian. 83.33% of consultants and 16.67% of architects identified as female. The gender numbers were reversed for architects, who were 16.67% female and 83.33% male.

Below are some key findings among preservation consultants:

- Respondents represent all age groups.
- All firms surveyed have been in business for more than 6 years.
- 4 of the 6 survey respondents have been in business for more than 25 years.
- All consultants surveyed work both in Kansas AND in other states.
- All firms have completed more than 6 tax credit projects.
- 3 firms have done more than 100 EACH.
- All firms average at least 2 tax credit applications per year.
- The consultants expressed an average satisfaction rating for the SHPO of 7.6 (out of 10).

	Avg Rtg (out of 10)
National Register	8.3
Tax Credits*	7.5
Historic Survey	7.0
Review and Compliance	8.5

*Consultants gave an average 7.5 satisfaction rating for the historic tax credit program; however, when asked about review times, the rating fell to 4.3.

Below is a specific consultant comment related to the National Register program:

“The review time still falls within a range that I would consider acceptable, but has been getting increasingly longer over the years. In one scenario, I had the nomination in within the deadline to meet the next HSRB meeting, but was told it would be presented at the following meeting because they could not review it in time.”

Below are some specific comments and recommendations from preservation consultants related to the tax credit program:

“I know they are doing the best they can, but reviews have been taking much longer than 30 days. The bigger problem is the spotty communication about those delays.”

“Obviously this past year was greatly impacted by Covid – but frequent staff changes seem to be a constant and review times are often over the stated review period which is hard for owners/developers.”

“It has been gradually getting longer over the years. I understand the lack of employees/help right now. What could help this issue is perhaps allowing construction on projects to begin simultaneously with the review process at the owner’s risk (like federal review).

Below are some specific comments from consultants for improving the historic survey database:

“Better user interface for editing multiple existing entries at a time. (example, rather than having to add a re-survey entry on every single resource, can there be a way to apply the re-survey to an entire group of resources?) There is a lot of lag time for loading the edit page, especially when editing photos.”

“Continue to review and edit earlier inventories.”

Below are some key findings among the architects surveyed:

Respondents represent all age groups.

- 5 out of the 6 firms have been in business more than 25 years.
- All firms have teams with an average of more than 20 years historic preservation experience.
- All firms have completed more than 6 tax credit projects.
- 1 firm has done more than 80.
- All firms average at least 1 tax credit project per year.
- AIA continuing education credits are a big motivator for attending workshops.
- Respondents identified “time constraints” as just as big a barrier to clients as not wanting to meet preservation standards.
- 100% of architects who responded, said their firm would be interested in the SHPO partnering with AIA Kansas to create a certification for historic preservation architects.

Architects provided the following recommendations for making their jobs easier:

- “I would like to attend more technical CE courses that deal with proper detailing for historic renovations. To be fair, I haven't been highly involved in SHPO events, so this may be something that they are already doing and I just haven't availed myself of the opportunities.”
- “Work as a partner to help owners earn tax credits, not act as an authority to take tax credits away.”
- “Use technology to expedite review.”
- Architects recommended the following related to the Heritage Trust Fund program:
- “The dollar amounts involved are pretty low. While the grant is useful for small construction projects and for planning and assessments, it isn't as useful for larger construction projects. Larger construction projects with broader community impact - such as public buildings in rural communities that need significant improvements or repairs really need a larger dollar amount to be worth the effort of applying and managing the grant.”
- “Increasing funding to follow construction inflation.”

PRESERVATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Previously, every five years, the Cultural Resources Division of the Kansas Historical Society (CRD) collaborates with partners and the public to reflect on past goals and achievements and develop new priorities for the upcoming years. Based on the summary of current programs and historic preservation-related organizations currently working in Kansas—and with valuable input from a broad spectrum of Kansans, as noted above—the CRD developed a series of goals that can be partially or fully addressed by state and federal agencies, preservation organizations, property owners, and interested members of the public.

EDUCATE KANSANS ON THE VALUE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- Make historic preservation and archeological programs, activities, and conferences more accessible to the public by actively promoting them through our website, social media, webinars, and videos; as well as, hosting the conferences and trainings virtually so more people can attend.
- Develop educational tutorials and how-to videos to be posted on websites and promoted to the public and as reference materials for local historical societies. Examples include commissioner trainings, how-to repair instructions, and tours of historic properties.
- Expand the development of historic preservation curriculum materials for K-12 with the assistance of teachers, archeologists, and the Kansas Department of Education. Train educators on how to utilize them in and outside the classroom.
- Work with partners (and create new partners) to identify, document, and assist in increasing the number of underrepresented communities that are reflected in registered properties.
- Continue to explore a wide variety of property types surveyed and nominated to state and National Registers. Emphasize the importance of documenting prehistoric and historic archeological sites, parks, cultural landscapes, heritage parks, rural vernacular properties, public buildings, New Deal-era resources, and recent past resources.
- Encourage communities to survey their resources and provide workshops and information to provide them the tools.
- Continue to develop programs to provide technical assistance for communities and historic property owners through the use of SHPO staff, videos, workshops, and webinars.
- Develop educational and interpretive public displays, such as markers and exhibits, at historic sites and significant places across the state.
- Work with colleges in developing preservation trades training and education.

BROADEN PUBLIC AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION

- Maintain a dedicated statewide preservation advocacy organization that can respond quickly to legislative issues.
- Invite national-level training programs, such as the National Center for Preservation Technology and the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, to hold workshops in Kansas. Promote the classes through websites, social media, email groups, and press releases.
- Utilize and promote historic sites to explore opportunities for volunteer-based preservation programs.
- Promote research on issues affecting Kansas' cultural resources, such as energy efficiency and

sustainability.

- Popularize preservation through an awareness campaign.
- Generate further awareness and recognition of historic buildings and archeological sites across the state utilizing National Register signage, historical markers, and preservation awards.
- Raise awareness about the economic benefits of historic preservation and rehabilitation projects.
- Bolster advocacy efforts at the local level.
- Establish a connection with organizations such as Preservation Action to give Kansas a voice in matters pertaining to preservation at the federal level.

DEVELOP STATEWIDE PRESERVATION NETWORK

- Continue connecting with partners and the public through email listservs, websites, social media, and webinars.
- Continue publicizing a “Source List” of historic preservation services and resources including contractors, consultants, and craftspeople who have experience working with historic properties.
- Strengthen partnerships with local government staff, students, and non-profit leaders by offering scholarships for attendance to conferences and trainings.
- Continue to promote hands-on programming such as the Kansas Archeology Training Program field school, certification classes, and building repair workshops by offering incentives—including college credit or professional certifications accepted by a variety of preservation partners.
- Work with interested parties to analyze and document archeological collections that have not yet been recorded.
- Collaborate with stakeholders about preservation and archeology-related programs and opportunities through workshops, training, and publications focusing on groups such as realtors, lenders, chambers of commerce, developers, planners, engineers, architects, governmental agencies, donors, and property owners.
- Promote stewardship of the state’s cultural resources, including state historic sites.

INTEGRATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PRACTICES INTO COMMUNITY PLANNING

- Provide local governments tools to promote regular maintenance, develop minimum maintenance requirements, and ensure that permits are reviewed per the State Preservation Law.
- Require recipients of grant and/or loan funds to develop a long-term maintenance plan and make arrangements for financing such plans in the future.
- Assist local governments in preservation planning efforts through HPF grants, including how to complete surveys that can be used as planning tools for future development and disaster readiness.
- Continue to negotiate programmatic agreements with federal agencies to streamline project reviews.
- Develop and coordinate Section 106 training programs with preservation partners for communities and organizations seeking federal funding.
- Develop standards for conservation easements for archeological sites.
- Work with local governments and state officials to create additional laws to protect cultural resources.
- Make more efforts to integrate preservation into state and city planning.

FUND AND PUBLICIZE HISTORIC PRESERVATION INITIATIVES

- Continue to build the rehabilitation tax credit programs.
- Call attention to the economic importance of preservation by featuring successful projects on various websites using podcasts, interactive maps, and social media.
- Campaign for more money for preservation from both public and private sources.
- Continue to provide financial incentives for owners of historic properties.
- Explore funding opportunities for disaster planning and related programs.
- Promote local community incentives for historic preservation.
- Seek out alternative financial incentives for historic preservation projects, training, and education.



RAISING AWARENESS

Below are specific recommendations to challenge preservation partners in increasing preservation awareness across Kansas.

STRETCH LIMITED RESOURCES BY PARTNERING WITH NATURAL ALLIES

- Partner with Kansas Main Street to develop quarterly design training related to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*.
- Partner with Kansas Association of Contractors (KAC) to explore options for recruitment, training, and certification of contractors.
- Partner with Kansas AIA to explore program to certify architects as preservation architects.
- Reach out to universities, trade schools, and/or other groups to identify preservation professionals and tradespeople in training and explore education options.
- Engage the “next generation” of preservation professionals – perhaps as a conference topic. Encourage youth members, voting or non-voting, for advisory boards and commissions.
- Explore a process for streamlining reviews of projects/products by consultants meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications.

PREPARE FOR INCREASE IN 106 REVIEWS DUE TO EXPECTED INCREASE IN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- Review existing staffing and project load to determine staffing needs and assign staff.

EXPLORE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION INCLUDING INCREASE HERITAGE TRUST FUND FUNDING

- Double the funding for HTF by increasing property registration fees.
- Use funding to increase maximum project amount. This will increase funding without increasing the number of projects and work for HTF staff.
- Explore ways to create separate project classifications and matching requirements for priority projects. For instance, offer 80/20 matching on all projects in rural communities, such as under 10,000 or under 5000 population.

RE-EVALUATE USE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND (HPF)

- Use increase in HTF funding to help match HPF funding to pursue SHPO-initiated/consultant-produced priority projects. Examples might include expanding contexts to include Modern Movement properties. Expand older MPDFs, like schools and agricultural properties.
- Use HPF funds to establish competitive salaries to recruit and maintain qualified staff (see “Succession Planning” #8 below).
- Apply increased in-house HPF funds to pursue priority projects (for instance related to historic markers, state historic sites, and statewide projects that tell diverse stories.)
- Prioritize HPF funding for projects that create local incentives programs.

NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAM

- Streamline preliminary process for determining historic eligibility by discontinuing the PSIQ process.
- Rely on qualified staff to make determinations of eligibility and manage the National Register Program, site visits, and review board meetings.

TAX CREDITS

- Streamline review process of small projects, such as residential and non-profit, through development and implementation of online state tax credit application that includes tutorials and tracking.
- Develop a list of “Standard Approvals” related to simplify state tax credit projects to streamline reviews and allow staff to work more independently.
- Divide staff time for review of time-intensive (property owner-driven) state tax credit only projects versus state and federal projects. This may mean one reviewer is communicating with the general public to guide smaller projects – and another is communicating mostly with consultants and professionals to usher through reviews.
- Raise processing fees for state tax credits to support additional reviewers to expedite reviews. Note: increased fees should be paired with commitments to expedite reviews. For instance, if projects are not reviewed within 30 days, SHPO could refund processing fees.
- Explore increased state tax incentives for rural communities where federal tax credits don’t work. For instance, raise state credit percentages for projects in small population areas.
- Explore other ways to bridge the financing gap for smaller projects that don’t work for federal tax credit investors. For instance, look at angel investment models or community bankers to find ways to engage community-minded investors who can take advantage of federal tax credits.

PRIORITY ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Establish metrics for preservation programs and demonstrate accountability to metrics.
- Focus improvements on programs with highest PR impact (for instance KATP, NR, Tax credits)

SUCCESSION PLANNING

- Conduct a salary survey among other SHPOs nationwide and use HPF funds to establish competitive salaries to recruit and maintain qualified staff.
- Survey Kansas universities to identify prospective future preservation professionals.
- Identify positions likely to need filling in the next ten years and develop a plan to fill them.