

8. Historic Preservation Plan

Issues

Since the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, much has been accomplished in the area of preservation, including development of historic contexts for the City and design guidelines for the Second Street Historic District. The Historic Preservation Subcommittee identified some of the major issues that the 2007 Comprehensive Plan should address:

- Visibility. A general lack of public awareness of some of the City's most unique resources, such as the Watkins and Polish museums.
- Cost concerns. The idea that historic building standards can increase costs of building renovation or rehabilitation.
- Lack of a local historic district. Locally established districts can offer some level of protection for existing historic buildings, compared to the largely honorary National Register district designation. The recent demolition of several contributing buildings in the Third Street Historic District for employee parking highlighted the importance of this issue.

Goals and Objectives

1. Preserve the City's unique character. Identify, value and preserve the unique and diverse characteristics of Winona's architectural and built environment and its valuable outdoor and other public spaces.

Objectives:

1. Preserve, protect and promote identified significant architectural themes, unique elements of infrastructure in the City, (such as limestone sidewalks, brick streets and iron fences) and the established green space that helps define the City's historical character.
2. Encourage infill construction appropriate to neighborhood context and aesthetics.
3. Preserve and protect significant historical structures and districts through the promotion of local designations and the creation of clearly written design guidelines.
4. Promote methods of identifying and considering archeological resources prior to the development/redevelopment of property.



2. Preserve and enhance the historic character of downtown Winona.

Objectives:

1. Educate and create awareness for celebrating and promoting cultural and architectural heritage.
2. Maintain and improve upon the condition of historic downtown buildings.

3. Recognize the City's diverse heritage. Identify and celebrate the role of diverse peoples in Winona's development and preserve the artifacts of their lives. Recognize the legacy and many contributions of religious, fraternal and other groups to the City.

Objectives:

1. Celebrate the City's pre-settlement and post-settlement ethnicity.
2. Encourage Winonans and visitors to learn about and appreciate Winona's unique stories by collecting oral histories, written records and artifacts.

Policies and Actions

1. Establish a local historic district in downtown Winona. Districts and properties on the National Register of Historic Places, while eligible for federal tax incentives, are not protected against demolition or unsympathetic alteration. A local historic district, by contrast, when combined with a design review process, can protect the character-defining elements of a property, and can provide for review and approval or denial of demolitions.

A downtown local historic district would be located along Third Street from Johnson Street to Franklin Street and along Second Street from Center Street to Lafayette Street, matching the boundaries of the existing National Register East Second Street and Third Street districts. An attempt to establish such a district in the mid-1990s failed due to the opposition of some property owners. A renewed effort should build on the increased awareness of and commitment to downtown revitalization, focus on educating property owners, and offer incentives for renovation of historic buildings.

Related actions include the following:

- Implement design standards for both contributing and non-contributing⁴ buildings,



⁴ Contributing buildings have retained their historic character, whereas the historic character of non-contributing buildings has been compromised.

including uniform signage within the Downtown Local Historic District. (Design standards were developed in 1999 for the East Second Street Historic District, primarily focusing on building renovation standards, and are currently being updated for the Third Street Historic District.)

- Implement design guidelines for the greater downtown area, focusing primarily on achieving compatibility between new infill development and surrounding traditional storefront buildings. Design guidelines can be linked to updated zoning standards (see below) or incorporated into a site plan review process. (This recommendation is also identified in the Downtown Revitalization Plan.)
- Compile reference materials for building owners regarding process and time line for permitting projects within the Downtown Local Historic District and informing them of the existing tax credit attached to the National Historic District and other state, federal and local funding options.

2. Update zoning regulations to encourage preservation and context-sensitive development. Zoning standards, both in downtown Winona and in its traditional neighborhoods and commercial districts, should encourage mixed use development, emphasize pedestrian-oriented design, and encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Zoning standards should provide incentives for such reuse, such as reduced requirements for off-street parking, relaxation of setback requirements, or additional density or intensity of development.

3. Implement financial incentives and resources for historic building rehabilitation and adaptive reuse. Programs should include, but are not limited to, public/private partnerships with financial institutions, grants, revolving loans, tax abatement, and tax increment financing. Programs should focus primarily on downtown Winona, but should also include historic buildings outside the downtown.

4. Develop educational and informational programs that are designed to heighten an awareness and understanding of local history for all citizens and visitors to the City. Examples of such programs may include the development of K-12 curricula, brochures, travel exhibits and specialized seminars, using available media resources.

5. Encourage intergovernmental and interagency partnerships between the City, County, Winona County Historical Society, Visit Winona and others to promote preservation opportunities and programs.