Aurora Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Strategic Plan

2015/2020

The Aurora Historic Commission's Strategic Plan provides an overview of the Historic Preservation Commission, its goals and objectives and identifies plans and strategies for preserving Aurora's history.

Resources
Historic Landmark Map. City of Aurora Website. Available @ https://www.auroragov.org/CityHall/AboutAurora/HistoricSites/ExploretheSites/index.htm


Historic Preservation Office. City of Aurora Website. Available @ https://www.auroragov.org/CityHall/BoardsandCommissions/HistoricPreservationCommission/index.htm

Aurora Comprehensive Plan, 2009


Aurora History Museum available @ www.auroramuseum.org

Aurora Museum Foundation available @ http://www.auroramuseumfoundation.org/

Aurora Historical Society available @ http://aurorahistoricalsociety.org

Aurora Historic Sites: https://www.auroragov.org/CityHall/AboutAurora/HistoricSites/

National Park Service: http://www.nps.gov/history/hpg/local/cg.html

National Park Service Technical Preservation Service: http://www.nps.gov/tps/


Historic Landmark files can be accessed through Liz Boyer: Historic Preservation Specialist Email: eboyer@auroragov.org

Grant Application Tips: http://www.historycolorado.org/grants/grant-application-tips

SHF Grant Fund Application Forms: http://www.historycolorado.org/grants/application-forms

SHF Outreach Support: http://www.historycolorado.org/grants/outreach-assistance State Preservation Plan

The table below provides a temporal framework for the HPC to work within to accomplish each objective and reach each goal.

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The Aurora Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) developed this Strategic Plan to provide a five-year strategy for meeting program needs. Extending from 2015 through 2020, the Plan expresses the goals and objectives of the Commission over the next five years, as well as reiterating its overall mission and vision for historic preservation in the City of Aurora. Working closely with City Council, other City departments, the Aurora History Museum and the Aurora Historical Society, these goals and objectives can be realized.

The Commission recognizes that new and innovative methods are needed to ensure that the community embraces preservation. It is an effective tool for stabilizing neighborhoods, promoting growth and development, and equipping modern cities with sustainable alternatives. As stated in the State of Colorado’s 2020 Historic Preservation Plan:

In keeping with the overall objectives of the State Plan, the Aurora Historic Preservation Commission seeks to broaden its status within the City, in the community-at-large, and to further its mission through effective education, outreach, and preservation efforts. The challenges and opportunities the HPC is likely to face in the future will help establish the context for the choices reflected in this strategic plan. Effective educational outreach efforts are an important part of this process to help promote the importance of historic preservation and what designation means to property owners and the community as a whole.

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**2015/2020 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives**

**A. GOALS**

1. Historic Survey and Designation  
2. Develop Strong Working Relationships with Decision-makers  
3. Community Outreach  
4. Internal Development

**B. OBJECTIVES**

1. Historic Survey and Designation  
   a. Complete survey plan  
   b. Complete an annual report on survey plan progress  
2. Identify and Inform Decision Makers  
   a. Identify decision makers  
      1. City Council  
      2. Staff  
      3. Business community  
   b. Inform decision makers  
      1. Attend Ward meetings  
      2. Submit annual report  
      3. Conduct annual orientation session  
      4. Develop training modules  
      5. Conduct annual tour of landmarks and cultural heritage sites  
3. Community Outreach  
   a. Develop social media efforts to reach a greater audience  
   b. Survey community on historic preservation knowledge, needs and desires  
   c. Develop and implement education and outreach programs  
   d. Promote/develop collaboration with a non-profit to help advocate for historic preservation in Aurora  
4. Internal Development  
   a. Create a recruitment and training plan for HPC members  
   b. Hold an annual retreat  
   c. Provide training opportunities for HPC members  
   d. Provide opportunities for HPC members to network with other commissioners and preservationist throughout the area, region, and nation
The Aurora Historic Preservation Commission’s (HPC) Strategic Plan (Plan) was originally developed in 1995. This update is intended to provide a five-year roadmap for directing the mission and goals of the HPC through 2020.

The original strategic plan, while helpful for providing guidance to the HPC, is in need of revision to meet current and future needs. In order to accomplish this, the Action Steps laid out in the current version of the Strategic Plan require new goals and objectives to help meet the needs of the HPC and the community.

To help assess program needs, two subcommittees within the HPC have been established with specific purposes. These subcommittees are:

- The Survey/Demolition Permit Subcommittee
- The Strategic Plan Subcommittee
- Fitzsimons Subcommittee

Additional subcommittees should be considered. These subcommittees should work in conjunction with other preservation partners and interested citizens to begin the systematic review of the building that occurred in the decades following World War II to ensure that losses do not occur without proactive efforts to determine their importance to the community. The Fitzsimons campus is one such example. As the program evolves over the next five years, more emphasis will need to be placed on the protection, preservation and enhancement of properties that have yet to be identified and designated.
Aurora’s historic landmarks tell the story of the City from its beginnings as a small 19th century “trolley town”, located on the fringes of the emerging metropolis of Denver, to a growing suburb in the 1950s. Homes, businesses, public buildings and points of interest make up the physical memories of Aurora’s history. As illustrated by its buildings, structures, and sites, Aurora’s history is made up of numerous historic resources to be shared with the community and preserved for the future.

The Aurora City Council adopted the first Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1985, at which time the Aurora City Council created the HPC and provided for staff support of its functions. The HPC continues to provide the mechanism for furthering Aurora’s historic preservation mission, as follows: The mission statement of the HPC is to protect and preserve Aurora’s heritage through education, advocacy, and training, as mandated by Aurora’s Historic Preservation ordinance. In order to facilitate this mission, the HPC desires to utilize its Strategic Plan with these important goals in mind while integrating its vision statement to build community pride through the recognition and celebration of Aurora’s heritage. A process for establishing historic landmarks was also created to provide for landmarking of important resources, both archeological and historical. The landmarking process provided a means for both public and privately owned buildings to be preserved for future generations.

In 1988, Aurora became a Certified-Local-Government (CLG). The State Historic Preservation Officer and the National Park Service as having met certain criteria certify a CLG. These criteria include: (1) adopt and enforce a local ordinance providing for the designation and protection of historic properties, (2) establish an adequate and qualified historic preservation review commission, (3) maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties, and (4) provide for adequate public participation in nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. CLGs are eligible for federal matching grants and can participate directly in the National Register nomination process.

In 2015, the Aurora Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Aurora City staff and interested citizens, must work together to achieve the goals and objectives as outlined in the Plan. Much of Aurora’s HPC work in the last decade has been in the survey and designation of properties. Through systematic studies, a general understanding has been gained from the resources that make up the historic core of the community. In addition to landmarking sites, the HPC created the Cultural Heritage Sites program in 2012. The Cultural Heritage Sites (CHS) program recognizes structures in the City that have significance to the community, but are not eligible to be historic landmarks. The first Cultural Heritage Site chosen by the HPC was the Victory Grange. Additional sites are currently being identified to be added to the CHS inventory. This activity is an important goal of the HPC. To further meet its goal of surveying the City, a State Historic Grant to conduct a historic resource plan was obtained from History Colorado in 2013 to initiate a survey plan of the City. This is another priority of the HPC, which will yield valuable information for future planning needs.

In addition to the volunteer members of the HPC, the work of the historic preservation program is also divided between the City’s Historic Preservation Specialist and the Director of the Museum, who have other primary responsibilities. Their dedication to the program and willingness to expend hours beyond their normal work week have supported the current operation of the HPC program.

The ability of staff to continue to meet the growing demand for services related to the HPC program is somewhat limited. With the growing needs of Aurora, a City with a population of almost 350,000, additional staff support (in-house and/or contract) is crucial to sustaining the future needs of the HPC. Cross training and continuing to involve other development staff in HPC program operations is essential. Annual contractual services to support specialized programs or to provide technical assistance should be considered.

Involving residents, students, professional associations, and volunteer groups in the conduct of surveys and the compilation of documentation needed to meet HPC priorities will assist with the City’s identification and evaluation work and facilitate public knowledge and appreciation for Aurora’s historic, prehistoric, and architectural resources.

Aurora Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
An amendment to the Building and Zoning Code passed by the Aurora City Council in 1985 included a provision for the preservation of historic landmarks and properties that fall within historic districts. The code states: No person shall carry out or cause to be carried out any construction, alteration, removal, or demolition of a building or feature or make any changes that would impair the historic association of the landmark building, landmark site, or historic district, pursuant to those qualities in section 1902, without first obtaining approval of such action in accordance with this section. - Sec. 146-1903(A). In order to comply with the City Code, a property owner of a City of Aurora Landmark must get approval from the HPC before certain projects begin.

The Aurora City Code has adopted the U.S. Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties (National Park Service), which is the industry standard for projects involving historic resources. Once a project meets the Secretary’s Standards, a property owner receives a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) that authorizes the work. The HPC’s role is to assist property owners in this process. These review procedures are followed in order to educate, guide, and support property owners and the community to preserve their buildings and neighborhoods.

The City recognizes several categories of historic resources: City landmarks, State historic sites, properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and cultural heritage sites. Each has its importance in the City’s repertoire of historic resources and has distinct processes within the HPC.

The Commission receives approximately $4,800 annually to conduct its business. These funds are used for a variety of purposes, including hosting events, professional dues, and subscriptions, providing funding for various City activities and matching grants.

The HPC budget is administered by the Aurora History Museum. A goal of the HPC is to utilize the budget in a more systematic manner in order to maximize the use of the limited funding available. With this in mind, it is suggested that a portion of the February HPC meeting be dedicated to budgetary concerns. One thought is to appropriate a certain percentage of the allocated funds annually to matching grants in order to further build on the strong foundation that has been laid in survey and designation activities. Efforts should also be made to locate additional sources of funding.

The effective operation of any HPC program requires that a variety of efforts be undertaken to recognize the community’s cultural, historical, and architectural resources; and to protect and preserve these resources. This work cannot be done in isolation. To be successful, any historic preservation program must rely on an informed citizenry and have the support of City leadership that is appreciative of its heritage.

A wide range of programs and projects that integrate historic preservation with the goals of the City is imperative to a successful historic preservation program. The goals of the HPC and the leadership of the City are compatible and must work together in order to successfully weave historic preservation into the fabric of the community. As a CLG, the City has a responsibility to enforce its historic preservation ordinance, to maintain a qualified historic preservation commission, to survey and maintain a detailed inventory of its designated properties and provide for adequate public participation. Strategies and activities intended to garner more public support for the HPC program and raise awareness of preservation of the community’s resources is at the heart of this Strategic Plan. The
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The Commission recognizes that new and innovative methods are needed to ensure that the community embraces preservation. It is an effective tool for stabilizing neighborhoods, promoting growth and development, and equipping modern cities with sustainable alternatives. As stated in the State of Colorado’s 2020 Historic Preservation Plan:

- Historic preservation activities create opportunities for innovation: incorporating sustainable technologies into historic buildings; using new and powerful communication tools to help spread the word about the importance of preservation and the impact that each project creates; and fostering economic development through programs like heritage tourism.

In keeping with the overall objectives of the State Plan, the Aurora Historic Preservation Commission seeks to broaden its status within the City, in the community-at-large, and to further its mission through effective education, outreach, and preservation efforts. The challenges and opportunities the HPC is likely to face in the future will help establish the context for the choices reflected in this strategic plan. Effective educational outreach efforts are an important part of this process to help promote the importance of historic preservation and what designation means to property owners and the community as a whole.

### A. GOALS

1. Historic Survey and Designation
2. Develop Strong Working Relationships with Decision-makers
3. Community Outreach
4. Internal Development

### B. OBJECTIVES

1. **Historic Survey and Designation**
   a. Complete survey plan
   b. Complete an annual report on survey plan progress

2. **Identify and Inform Decision Makers**
   a. Identify decision makers
      1. City Council
      2. Staff
      3. Business community
   b. Inform decision makers
      1. Attend Ward meetings
      2. Submit annual report
      3. Conduct annual orientation session
      4. Develop training modules
      5. Conduct annual tour of landmarks and cultural heritage sites

3. **Community Outreach**
   a. Develop social media efforts to reach a greater audience
   b. Survey community on historic preservation knowledge, needs and desires
   c. Develop and implement education and outreach programs
   d. Promote/develop collaboration with a non-profit to help advocate for historic preservation in Aurora

4. **Internal Development**
   a. Create a recruitment and training plan for HPC members
   b. Hold an annual retreat
   c. Provide training opportunities for HPC members
   d. Provide opportunities for HPC members to network with other commissioners and preservationists throughout the area, region, and nation
Timetable for Implementation of 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

The table below provides a temporal framework for the HPC to work within to accomplish each objective and reach each goal.

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