

Historical Designation FAQ

- The Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has recognized Columbus as a Certified Local Government (CLG) since 1992
 - A CLG is any city, village, county, or town that has applied and been certified by the SHPO and National Park Service (NPS) to meet the **program criteria**:
 - Establish by ordinance a qualified historic preservation commission
 - A historic preservation commission has two key responsibilities:
 - **Designate (or recommend the designation of) properties as local landmarks**
 - **Create local historic districts**
 - Enforce appropriate state or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties
 - Maintain a system to survey and inventory local historic resources
 - Coordinate public participation in the local historic preservation program
- Wisconsin SHPO requires that CLGs:
 - The CLG must enact and enforce a historic preservation ordinance that regulates historic property.
 - A CLG must provide annual reporting to the SHPO on CLG activities.
 - A CLG must send copies of meeting minutes and agendas to the SHPO following each meeting.
 - **The ordinance must not allow historic property owners to "opt-out" of local historic designation.**
 - **Designation must not require owner consent.**
 - The commission must approve work on locally designated properties and recommendations may not be "advisory."
- Benefits of CLG Status
 - Community is eligible to apply for subgrants from the Wisconsin SHPO's federal Historic Preservation Fund allocation for eligible preservation projects. CLG communities in Wisconsin are eligible to apply annually for **no-match grant funding for historic preservation planning projects.** Grants can be used for:
 - Architecture and archaeology surveys to identify and evaluate historic resources, pursue a strategy of survey and designation
 - Nominations of properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or to a local list of landmarks

- **Allows property owners to leverage state and federal tax credit programs for investment in historic residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.**
 - Educational programs focused on local history and historic places
 - Historic preservation plans
 - Design guidelines for historic properties
 - Statewide or regional training events hosted by a CLG for preservation commissioners and staff
- Community may formally submit comment on National Register of Historic Places nominations within its municipal boundaries to the State Historic Preservation Review Board.
- **Benefits of Local Designation**
 - Fostering civic pride
 - Inventory of a city's historic assets
 - Strengthening the local economy
 - Stimulating heritage tourism and branding
 - **Preventing demolition; state and national designation are largely honorary**
 - Provides clear process for alterations when necessary that minimize the impact on historic landmark
 - Property value stability in the area
 - *Over the four-year period, the neighborhood with both a local and a National Register designation had increased sale prices of 157%. The second neighborhood, which had National Register status but no local historic zoning, had increased sale prices of 36%. Property values in the neighborhood without any historical zoning or recognition increased by only 20% during the same period.*
 - *Historic designation and design review not only benefits existing residents of a neighborhood, but it often attracts new buyers who know their investment will be protected.*
 - Priority for technical assistance from the Wisconsin Historical Society for restoring city-owned landmarks