



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 21, 2022

TO: Deschutes County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Tanya Saltzman, AICP, Senior Planner
Kelly Madden, Chair, Historic Landmarks Commission

RE: Historic Landmarks Commission Update

Staff, along with Kelly Madden, Chair of the Deschutes County Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), will provide the Board of County Commissioners (Board) with an annual check-in, including a summary of the 2021-2022 Certified Local Government (CLG) grant cycle, which concluded on August 31, 2022. This summary will include two documents for Board acknowledgement: The HLC Policies and Procedures Manual, and the Historic Preservation Strategic Plan 2022-2027. The HLC Chair will provide a brief update on upcoming efforts for the HLC.

CLG GRANT OVERVIEW

Every twenty-four months, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) offers matching grants to jurisdictions that have been “certified” as historic preservation partners with both state and federal governments. Since 1986 Deschutes County—including the City of Sisters—has been a CLG and is therefore eligible for grant funding. Over several grant cycles, our historic preservation program identified historic resources, offset costs associated with staffing the HLC, educated the public, and preserved historic structures.

The CLG grant is non-competitive, which assures that all CLGs throughout the state benefit. Originally, staff was informed that the maximum grant award for this cycle was \$10,000, but owing to fewer than expected applicants, Deschutes County was ultimately awarded \$12,000 and expected to provide in-kind time/funds to match another \$12,000.

As mentioned above, Deschutes County has been a recipient of CLG funds for decades. CDD staff relies on the professional input and direction of the HLC, an appointed body that provides expertise on historic and cultural resource issues for the rural county and the City of Sisters.

GRANT PROJECTS

This year, the City of Sisters took an active role in providing potential projects for the grant; the majority of the reimbursable funding from the grant was allocated to Sisters projects as follows:

Historic Resource StoryMap/GIS consultant (Anderson Perry & Associates):

The StoryMap platform is a user-friendly platform that provides all viewers information gathered through the 2018 Sisters Reconnaissance Level Survey (RLS) and expands upon it with maps, photos, and narratives put together with the help of the Three Sisters Historical Society. Screenshots of StoryMap highlights, including the required grant language, are provided as attachments.

- The StoryMap is published for public use here:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/43286a6ceb6e453fa9d03da194fac019>

Printing of 1,000 historic walking tour brochures:

These historic landmark brochures are well utilized by the City of Sisters and Three Sisters Historical Society over the summer season. The funds were used to print 1,000 brochures which will help get through the next summer season in 2023. A copy of the brochure is attached to this memorandum.

Three Sisters Historical Society Tour Audio Equipment:

This audio equipment will support the Three Sisters Historical Society in their walking tours of Sisters Downtown historic landmarks and nearby historical sites, such as the Camp Polk Cemetery. With these funds, 20 audio receivers, 2 audio transmitters, and 2 charging stations were purchased.

The other two significant deliverables were completed using County staff time as an in-kind match to develop two HLC documents: the Policies and Procedures Manual and the Strategic Plan (both attached). The HLC voted to recommend approval of both final documents subject to Board acknowledgement of them—this is a similar process to the acknowledgement of the Planning Commission Policies and Procedures Manual in July 2020.

HLC Policies and Procedures Manual

This manual, which was a new undertaking for the HLC, is intended to provide context and background for HLC commissioners with respect to the Oregon land use system, Deschutes County structure, and general procedures, as well as provide a summary of HLC responsibilities. The HLC Manual was loosely based on the structure of the Planning Commission Policies and Procedures Manual, though is slightly more simplified owing to the role of the HLC.

Work on the manual began in June 2021 and included a Manual Subcommittee, which met outside of regular HLC meetings and worked with staff to shape the document. The HLC reviewed and discussed the manual during its 2021 meetings, provided edits to staff in person and through a shared electronic document. The HLC voted to approve the final document at its March 7, 2022 meeting.

Historic Preservation Strategic Plan 2022-2027

The HLC was engaged in the strategic planning process from April through August 2022. The previous Historic Preservation Strategic Plan was adopted in 2015, covering the years 2015-2020. Developing a Strategic Plan enables staff and HLC to reach out to our municipal partners, SHPO, historic landmark property owners, stakeholders, and the public to prioritize preservation programs that build upon existing projects and promote collaboration. While some of the content of the Plan document provides an overview of the HLC, Goal 5 resources, and other elements that are also described in the Policies and Procedures Manual, the Plan aims to help connect the HLC to the communities it serves while being cognizant of the regulatory limitations of the HLC (for instance, beyond the CLG grant funds, which are allocated according to state and federal guidelines, the HLC has generally not been a distributor of funding for other projects), and will help form a foundation for future CLG grant tasks through a series of Goals, Objectives, and Actions.

The Historic Preservation Strategic Plan process kicked off in March 2022. Recognizing the importance of public input, Planning Division staff conducted an outreach campaign focused on historic preservation, consisting of an online survey, public forums, and several stakeholder interviews.

Public forum announcements were provided in a variety of formats to reach the largest population of interested parties, including:

- Press release to the media
- Social media blasts
- E-mail distribution to 12 stakeholders, several of which further distributed the information to their network of members and partners
- CDD /project website, which included meeting information and survey link

Public forums held in April provided an overview of the historic preservation program and the strategic planning process.

- A PowerPoint presentation introduced the history of historic preservation in Deschutes County, project background, and purpose of the meeting.
- Two forums were scheduled; due to technical difficulties only one was held, but staff encouraged participants to reach out to staff to provide more information or ask questions if the cancellation created a scheduling conflict
- Public forums were conducted to allow for both virtual and in-person participation, and the recording of the forum is available at any time to watch online

An online survey solicited input from the public and stakeholders.

- In addition to the open forum, the public was provided an opportunity to complete an online survey to weigh in on historic preservation issues and priorities. This enabled

participants to convey their thoughts privately. Staff also received several emails with input, which were shared with the HLC and taken to account when revising the plan.

- The online survey, which was shared via the project website as well as the press release, was open for approximately one month and received 27 responses. While recognizing that this survey is not intended to be statistically valid, it did succeed in soliciting numerous opinions about preservation and may help inform potential goals. Selected highlights include:
 - The majority (74 percent) of respondents reside in the City of the Bend; only 7.4 percent live in rural Deschutes County and 3.7 percent in Sisters
 - Most highly ranked goal for the strategic plan: increasing public awareness of the benefits of historic preservation
 - The next tier of most highly ranked goals were ranked similar to each other: promoting heritage tourism; preservation training and workshops; funding programs; making the inventory of historic properties more easily accessible to the public
 - Lack of awareness of historic preservation issues was ranked as the most important issue by a small margin
 - Websites/social media, tours, and exhibits were rated the top three methods for providing historic preservation information to the public

Stakeholder Interviews were held for one-on-one engagement.

- Staff reached out to stakeholders for individual interviews to gather their opinions and perspectives on Deschutes County's historic preservation program.
- Staff contacted 12 stakeholders and invited them to participate in a stakeholder meeting independent of the community conversations. Staff met with the City of Bend HLC staff liaison, the City of Sisters Community Development Director, and the Deschutes National Forest – Sisters Ranger District. Responses from potential participants has been relatively limited, but staff has received helpful input nonetheless.

Staff provided a review of the public input received, including all survey responses, at the May HLC meeting.¹ During that meeting, as well as a specially scheduled July meeting² and a final meeting in August,³ the HLC worked with staff to refine existing goals, add new ones, and in some cases, delete ones that were no longer relevant. At the August meeting, the HLC developed concluding edits and voted to approve the plan as final with those changes to be incorporated. That HLC-approved document is provided as an attachment for Board acknowledgement.

¹ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-hlc/page/historic-landmarks-commission-2>

² <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-hlc/page/historic-landmarks-commission-3>

³ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-hlc/page/historic-landmarks-commission-4>

LOOKING FORWARD

Staff recently completed the reporting to the State Office of Historic Preservation for the 2021-2022 CLG grant. The next CLG grant cycle will begin in the spring of 2023; in the period leading up to that, staff will work with the HLC—with a look to the Strategic Plan—to develop new tasks for the next grant cycle. In addition, the HLC continues to be the reviewing body for matters of historic preservation in the rural county.

Attachments

1. Historic Landmarks Commission Policies and Procedures Manual
2. Historic Preservation Strategic Plan 2022-2027
3. Sisters StoryMap screen shots
4. Sisters Historic Walking Tour brochure