

D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

INTRODUCTION

Rochester values its unique architectural and landscape heritage and recognizes the importance of retaining and maintaining our historic buildings and landscapes. Historic properties safeguard the city's heritage, stabilize and improve property values, foster civic pride, enhance the city's attractions for tourists and visitors, and strengthen the economy of the city. Rochester has a long history of protecting these valued resources. During the *Rochester 2034* community engagement process, the city's history and historic buildings were often mentioned as a cherished part of the community.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rochester has one of the most historic housing stocks in the country, and values its historic properties.
- Historic properties safeguard the city's heritage, stabilize and improve property values, foster civic pride, enhance the city's attraction of tourists and visitors, and strengthen the economy.
- Owners of designated historic buildings can receive tax incentives to help rehabilitate their properties.
- Historic preservation efforts can be boosted through collaborations among the City, community partners, homeowners, property owners, and developers.



PUBLIC COMMENT

"My favorite thing about Rochester is..."

our history and
all of our historic
beautiful Buildings

D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION (CONTINUED)

HISTORIC STATUS

Designating properties as historically significant offers regulatory protections for the preservation of that property as well as possible tax benefits. In the City of Rochester, properties can have a designation as one or more of the following:

LOCALLY-DESIGNATED PRESERVATION DISTRICT

The City of Rochester has the authority to designate local Preservation Districts. Construction or rehabilitation within these districts is regulated by the Rochester Preservation Board. Rochester's [8 Preservation Districts](#) are listed at right.

LOCALLY-DESIGNATED LANDMARK

The City also has the authority to designate Local Landmarks. There are approximately [80 properties](#) that are designated Local Landmarks. While some are within the Preservation Districts, others stand alone. Construction or rehabilitation work on these properties is regulated by the Rochester Preservation Board. A full list of these properties can be found [online](#).

STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

While Preservation Districts and Local Landmarks are designated and regulated by the City of Rochester, an additional tool for preservation of culturally important properties is the State and National Register of Historic Places. Properties are listed on the State and National Register by the NYS Historic Preservation Office which is within the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. More information on the State Historic Preservation Office can be found [here](#) and a complete map of National Register Properties can be found [here](#).

DESIGNATED BUILDING OF HISTORIC VALUE

Though it would seem that a property included on the State and National Register would have the most protection, this designation only provides protection if State or federal money is being used to fund the construction or rehabilitation of the property. Most construction, demolition, and rehabilitation projects, however, do not involve State or federal money. The City of Rochester responded to this limitation by developing protective regulations in the City Zoning Code. In 2003, the City created a provision in the City Zoning Code that references "Designated Buildings of Historic Value." All the properties on the National Register or which are contributing properties in a national or local historic district are captured into one list for the purposes of addressing construction and demolition considerations through zoning review. This is an indication that Rochester values its historic resources. The City of Rochester works with the Landmark Society of Western New York to ensure that the list of Designated Buildings of Historic Value remains accurate and concise.

**LOCAL
PRESERVATION
DISTRICTS**

1,750
properties

8
districts



**BEACH
AVENUE**



**BROWN'S
RACE**



**SUSAN B.
ANTHONY**



**GROVE
PLACE**



**CORN HILL /
THIRD WARD**



**EAST
AVENUE**



**MT. HOPE /
HIGHLAND PARK**



**SOUTH AVENUE /
GREGORY STREET**

D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION (CONTINUED)

TAX BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

NYS offers tax credits to owners of income-producing real property and owner-occupied properties for rehabilitating a property that is listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places, or is a contributing building in a historic district that is listed in the state or National Register of Historic Places. The tax credit programs include:

- NYS Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- NYS Tax Credit Program for Income-Producing Properties
- Federal Tax Credit Program for Income-Producing Properties

These programs can be very beneficial for incentivizing or assisting with the cost of rehabilitation in neighborhoods such as the Susan B. Anthony Neighborhood or Maplewood Neighborhood. More information about these programs can be found [here](#).

According to the Tax Credit Program requirements, properties within a district listed on the State or [National Register of Historic Places](#) must also be in a “qualifying census tract.” Fortunately, all census tracts in the City of Rochester, except for 78.02, are qualified.

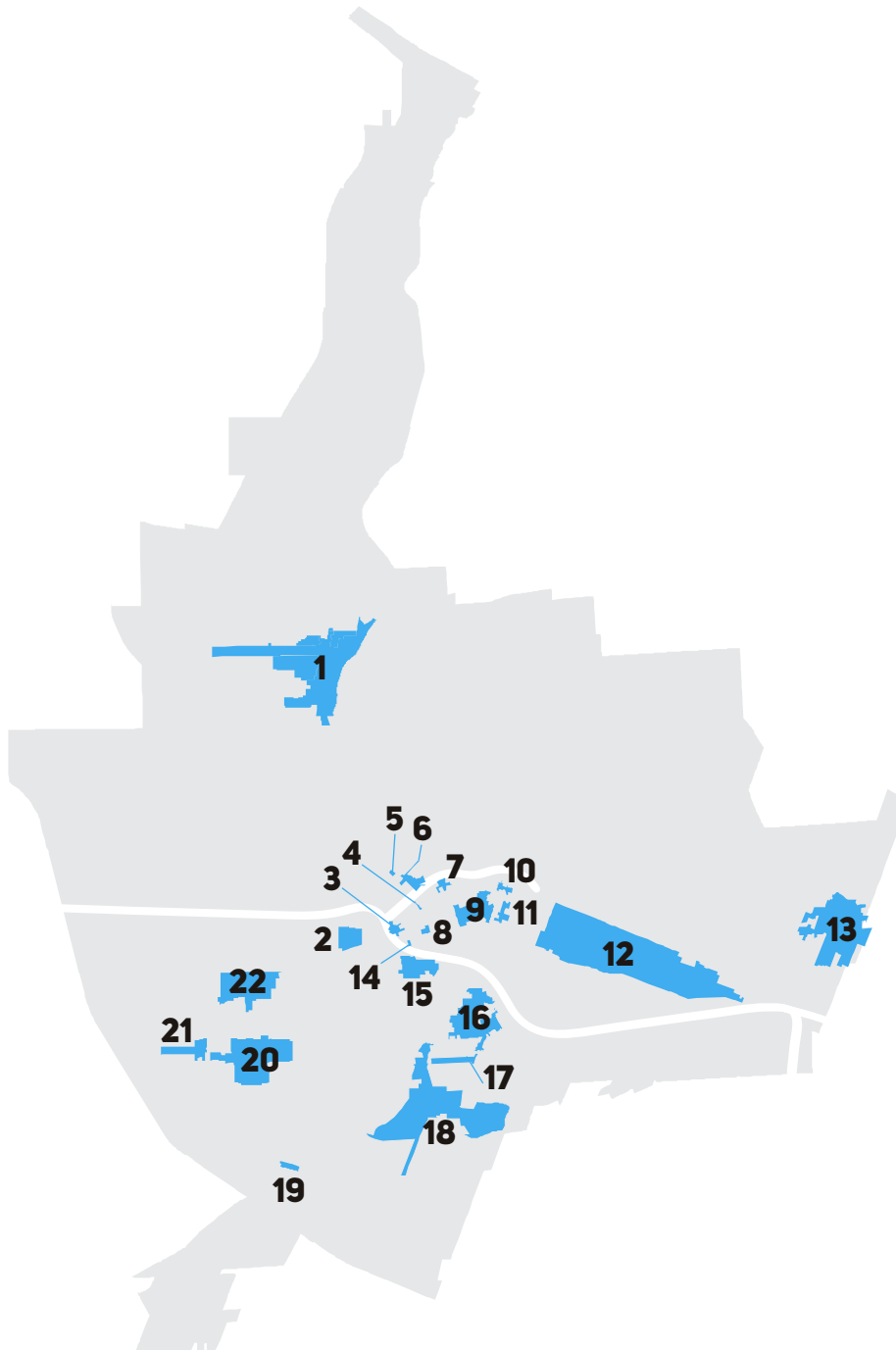
PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS

The City of Rochester also offers a [Historic Improvement Exemption](#) for Historic Properties which offers a five-year freeze on increases in assessment that may result after an owner has rehabilitated an historic property. After five years, the increased taxes will be phased in over the next five years, resulting in a ten-year delay before the full impact of the new assessment is felt.

PUBLIC COMMENT

“Historic preservation – of buildings and other structures, neighborhoods, archaeological sites, landscapes, and other historic properties – can add to a community’s understanding of and pride in its history, and bring economic and other benefits as well.”

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES HISTORIC DISTRICTS



- 1 MAPLEWOOD**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 2 MADISON SQUARE-
WEST MAIN STREET**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 3 BRIDGE SQUARE**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 4 STATE STREET**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 5 TEORONTO BLOCK**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 6 BROWN'S RACE**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 7 ST. PAUL-NORTH
WATER STREETS**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 8 CITY HALL**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 9 EAST MAIN STREET
DOWNTOWN**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 10 GROVE PLACE**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 11 EASTMAN**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 12 EAST AVENUE**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 13 BROWNCROFT**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 14 CHILD, JONATHAN,
HOUSE + BREWSTER-
BURKE HOUSE**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 15 THIRD WARD**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 16 SOUTH WEDGE**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 17 LINDEN-SOUTH**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 18 MT. HOPE-HIGHLAND**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 19 ARVINE HEIGHTS**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 20 SIBLEY-ELMDORF**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 21 INGLEWOOD +
THURSTON**
HISTORIC DISTRICT
- 22 CHILI WEST**
HISTORIC DISTRICT

D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION (CONTINUED)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN PRESERVING ROCHESTER'S HISTORY

LANDMARK SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW YORK



According to their website, the [Landmark Society](#) of Western New York, Inc., is one of the oldest and most active preservation organizations in America. It is a not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to protecting the unique architectural heritage of the Rochester region and promoting preservation and planning practices that foster healthy, livable, and sustainable communities. The Landmark Society's service area covers nine Western New York counties.

Their activities and programming include advocating for a threatened building, promoting smart growth, advising municipal officials, leading school children on tours of the Stone-Tolan House, sponsoring events, and providing information and services focused on education about and preservation of historical and cultural resources.

In 2013, the Landmark Society began publishing the annual Five to Revive list that calls attention to five properties in Western New York that are in need of investment. Whether buildings, landscapes, or structures, they are significant historic aspects of the built environment whose redevelopment is deemed to be potentially catalytic projects. The historic resources listed in Five-to-Revive become priority projects for Landmark Society staff and programs. The Landmark Society works collaboratively with owners, municipal officials, and developers to facilitate investment and foster rehabilitation so that these structures can again play an active role in their communities.

ROCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The [Rochester Historical Society](#) was established in 1860 and has collected and preserved over 200,000 objects and documents. In 2000, the Rochester Historical Society hired its first professional staff and now has three staff, a Board of Directors, and volunteers to carry out the mission to collect, preserve, and interpret the city and region's history. The Rochester Historical Society's On the Road program offers ten one-hour presentations on a variety of topics. They also help neighborhood groups or other groups fund and develop a community archive of stories, photographs, and memorabilia.

The Rochester Historical Society has thousands of documents, images and artifacts concerning residents, properties and events of the City of Rochester and Monroe County. Their librarian will search the catalog to see if they have any materials on your family, house, businesses, organizations or past events. Although an important resource, the organization faces significant funding challenges that will need to be resolved in order to sustain their role in the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

"We should promote, support, and expand historic preservation efforts in our city. Our unique cultural heritage should be a point of pride and something to be celebrated, as well as creatively reimaged for the future."



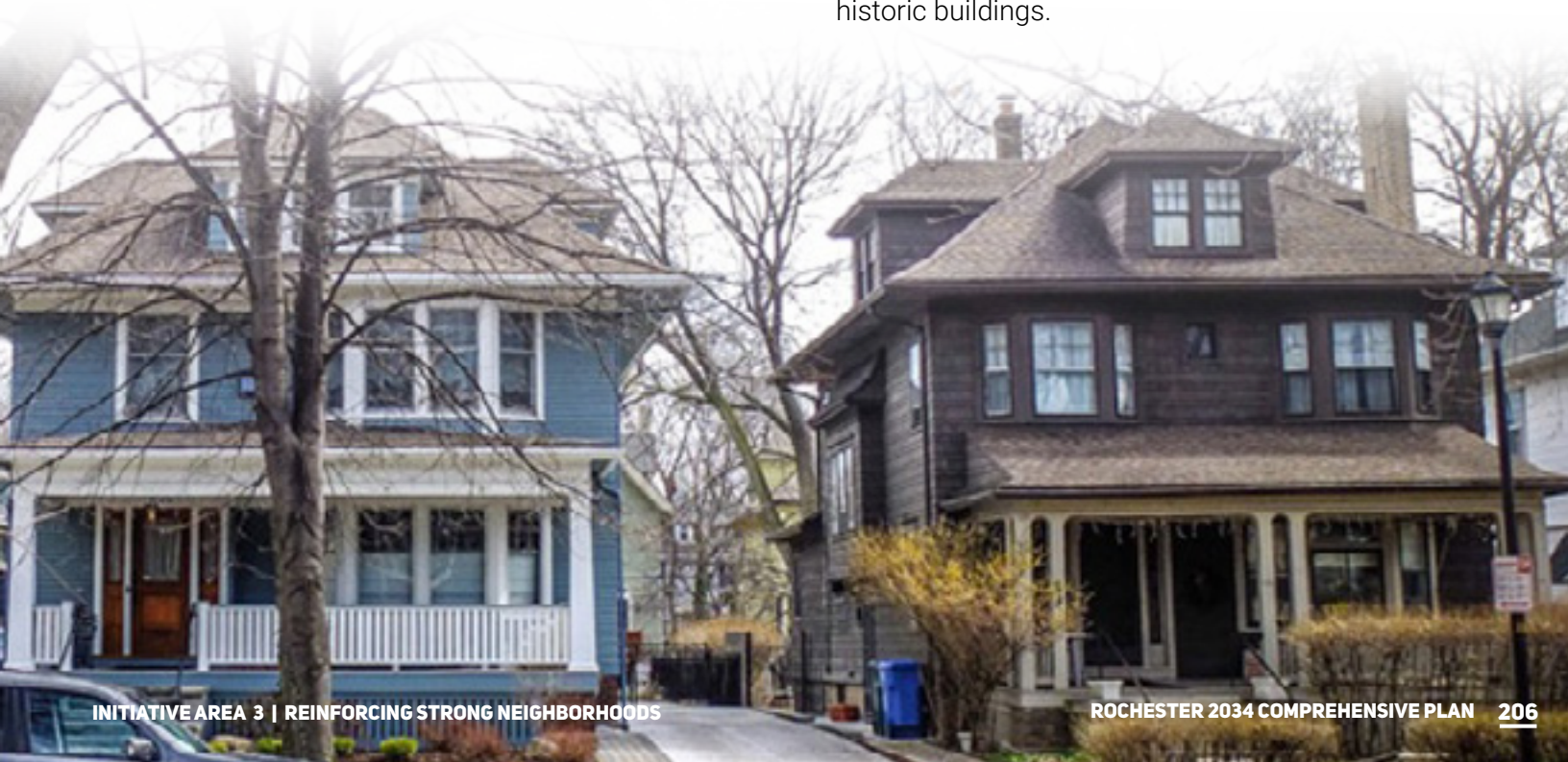
THE HERITAGE TRAIL

The Heritage Trail, a 1.25-mile long walking path that leads to 15 points of historical significance, follows an 8" wide line of either granite or blue paint on city sidewalks in the southwest area of the city. Along the way, historical markers, plaques, and interpretive signs tell some of the stories that make up Rochester's rich history. The trail connects the Susan B. Anthony House (17 Madison Street) to the second Erie Canal Aqueduct Bridge (50 West Broad Street). A future extension of the trail will lead to the Rundel Memorial Library located at 115 South Avenue. It is envisioned that the trail will continue to be incrementally extended as funds are made available.

CHALLENGES

Historic buildings are competing in the marketplace with buildings that are newly built or renovated for an occupant that needs or wants a contemporary design and modern fixtures. It can be costly to upgrade a historic building to meet the needs of a changing demographic in both the residential and commercial market. For that reason, historic properties may be vacant for a long time, falling into disrepair and further increasing costs of reoccupancy. Examples of successful renovations of historic buildings and the value that is added by saving and restoring these buildings should be used for education and promotion purposes.

The state and local tax benefits that are available for improving historic buildings are largely unknown and underutilized. The information is not widely publicized and is not always reaching people who may be in a position to renovate or reoccupy an historic building. Financial resources and tax benefits should be promoted to increase the understanding and possibly encourage people or companies to consider investing in our valued historic buildings.



D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION [HIS]

ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p>HIS-1 Promote and preserve Rochester's rich history.</p>	<p>HIS-1a Connect City staff and the community to the Landmark Society, City Historian, Local history branch of the Rochester Public Library, and the Rochester Historical Society by sponsoring Lunch and Learn events and promoting their programming.</p>	<p>City, Landmark Society, RPL, Rochester Historical Society</p>
	<p>HIS-1b Work with the Rochester Historical Society as they reposition their assets and seek funds to continue the important work they do to preserve the history of Rochester and provide access to a rich collection of historical artifacts.</p>	<p>City, Community Groups/Funders, Business Community, Education Institutions</p>
	<p>HIS-1c Continue to add properties on the Landmark Society's Five to Revive list to the City's inventory of strategic sites. This inventory presents a prioritized list of sites where reinvestment goals are focused.</p>	<p>City, Landmark Society</p>
	<p>HIS-1d Prepare a series of Rochester Historic Walking Tours and Biking Tours and distribute/publicize them in creative ways such as putting them in hotels, passing them out to RCSD students and staff, placing them in Neighborhood Service Centers, and putting them online.</p>	<p>Landmark Society, Rochester Historical Society, City, Visit Rochester, Community Groups/Funders. FLRTC</p>
	<p>HIS-1e Extend the Heritage Trail to include more historic buildings and sites that are significant to telling Rochester's story.</p>	<p>Landmark Society, Rochester Historical Society, City, Visit Rochester, FLRTC, Community Groups/Funders</p>

Notes:

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
HIS-1 Promote and preserve Rochester's rich history.	HIS-1f Support efforts to highlight and celebrate Rochester's role in the Civil Rights movement.	City, Monroe County, NYS, Landmark Society, Community Groups/Funders
HIS-2 Promote the benefits of the NYS tax credit programs for rehabilitation of homes and businesses in historic districts.	HIS-2a Develop a marketing strategy about the tax credit programs and how they work, including a map of eligible areas. Display a digital map of eligible districts on the City's website so individuals can look up their property and cross-promote with the Landmark Society and other partners.	Landmark Society , City, Celebrate City Living Coalition, Realtors, Housing Organizations, Neighborhood Groups
	HIS-2b Promote the tax benefits for rehabilitation in the City Home Buyer Assistance Program and at the City Permit Counter.	City
	HIS-2c Conduct training of city staff and members of the Rochester Preservation Board on the Tax Credit Programs and how they can help foster interest in these programs as tools for redevelopment.	Landmark Society , City
	HIS-2d Consider adding districts to the State and National Register of Historic Places to afford more property owners the opportunity to take advantage of the tax credit programs, particularly in middle neighborhoods where the City is trying to expand and support homeownership and community wealth building.	City, Landmark Society, NYS

D. HISTORIC PRESERVATION [HIS]

ACTION PLAN

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
<p>HIS-3 Reduce barriers to rehabilitating buildings in Preservation Districts and foster enthusiasm for owning homes in these areas of the city.</p>	<p>HIS-3a Conduct a survey of applicants that have had an application reviewed by the Rochester Preservation Board. Specifically ask if the process was supportive of or a barrier to redevelopment. Use the information to determine strategies for process improvement, if needed.</p>	<p>City</p>
	<p>HIS-3b Prepare a brochure that demonstrates how the designation as a Preservation District has protected property values over the years.</p>	<p>Landmark Society, City, Neighborhood Groups</p>
	<p>HIS-3c Start a program to help property owners navigate through the Certificate of Appropriateness process.</p>	<p>Landmark Society</p>

Notes:

1. Partners listed in bold are recommended to lead the implementation of that strategy.
2. For a list of partner acronyms see [Appendix A](#).

GOAL	STRATEGIES	PARTNERS
HIS-4 Use local regulations and programs to supplement the State and federal government's protection of historic resources.	HIS-4a Retain Zoning Code provisions related to Designated Buildings of Historic Value, and maintain and routinely update the list to ensure it is accurately including properties of value.	City , Landmark Society
	HIS-4b Work to build the capacity of the Landmark Society to be a rehab/development partner with access to acquiring City-owned properties that are deemed historically valuable so they can apply additional resources and help rehabilitate these properties to meet historic preservation standards.	City , Landmark Society