

MICHIGAN'S STATEWIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN 2027-2034

This text-only draft of the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO) Statewide Historic Preservation Plan for 2027-2034 is being provided for public comment as part of the SHPO's public engagement process for the plan. This document is available on the SHPO's website at <https://www.miplace.org/historic-preservation/about-shpo/statewide-preservation-plan/>. Comments will be accepted until **5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2026**.

Comments must be submitted via the comment form linked on the website above or provided via hardcopy to Martha MacFarlane-Faes, State Historic Preservation Office, 300 North Washington Square, Lansing, MI 48913. Submitted comments are subject to public disclosure laws.

If you are providing comments via the linked form above, you may:

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- Upload a separate document listing your comments
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Please note the following regarding this document:

- **This is a working draft for the sole purpose of public review and comment.** It has not been formally adopted or finalized and is subject to significant revision based on feedback received and refinements needed for publication in late 2026.
- This document represents the core anticipated text of the statewide plan based on stakeholder input gathered during the public engagement process in 2025 and 2026. Supplemental text and refinements may be made throughout the revision process.

- While all comments are welcome, the review team is specifically interested in feedback on substantive content rather than typographical or grammatical errors, which will be addressed during the final copy-editing phase. In particular, the review team is interested in feedback regarding the identified statewide goals and objectives for 2027-2034 and the accomplishments listed for 2020-2025.
- This is a text-only document with basic formatting. The final plan will include formal formatting and design, including the addition of photographs, charts, tables, graphs, maps, and improved layout for readability. This draft focuses strictly on the core narrative content.
- The document does not include case studies, appendix materials, or other supporting tools. These will be added to the final version to support the final narrative.
- Following the public comment period, revisions, and layout and design, the plan will be submitted to the National Park Service for review and approval. The final plan is anticipated to be available by December 31, 2026.

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a publication of the
Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
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This publication has been financed in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, through the Michigan Strategic Fund, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Interior, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products or consultants constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior. The Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you desire more information, write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Citizens of Michigan and Stakeholders

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would like to extend our deep appreciation to Michiganders statewide for participating in regional meetings, responding to surveys, and providing feedback on a draft of the statewide historic preservation plan. We value and appreciate the input that was provided as it helped to directly shape the goals and objectives for historic preservation in Michigan for the next eight years.

Additionally, the SHPO appreciates the time taken by our stakeholders to join us for our regional and stakeholder meetings and to provide input through surveys. The plan would not have been possible without the perspectives of these organizations. A list of organizations that the SHPO included in outreach and engagement efforts can be found in the appendices.

SHPO Staff

This plan would not have been possible without the incredible support and work of the entire SHPO staff.

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We would also like to recognize Amy Arnold, former SHPO Preservation Planner, who helped set the stage for this plan before she retired from the SHPO in December 2024.

Consultant Team

The SHPO would like to thank Khamai Strategies for all their work leading our statewide public engagement process. The information gathered from stakeholders and the public was critical in developing this plan.

- Candy Isabel, Founder & CEO
- Clarke Henderson, Project Manager
- Javier Cervantes, Consultant
- Leslie Orduna, Consultant
- Carolina Garcia Medellin, Consultant Assistant

Public Meeting Host Venues

The SHPO would like to thank the following venues for hosting our public engagement and stakeholder sessions statewide:

- St. Cecilia Music Center, Grand Rapids
- Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways, Mt. Pleasant
- Wayne County Community College, Detroit
- Northern Michigan University, Marquette
- North Central Michigan College, Petoskey
- Hannah Community Center, East Lansing

Michigan Economic Development Corporation

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) provided financial support for the SHPO's public engagement efforts. Additionally, MEDC staff supported the SHPO team and our consultant partner throughout the public engagement and plan development process.

- Kaitlyn Ahlers, Director of Customer Experience
- Maggie Cox, Project Manager
- Erica Noble, Customer Experience Manager
- Sheila Perrault, Events Coordinator
- Stefanie Pohl, Senior Content Specialist
- Matt Powers, Budget Specialist
- Mark Warner, Manager of Design

State Historic Preservation Review Board

The SHPO would like to thank members of the State Historic Preservation Review Board for their feedback and advice during development of this plan, which was critical to the development of the final vision, goals, and strategies.

- Devan Anderson, AIA, Associate Principal, Quinn Evans
- Daniel Bollman, AIA, Owner, East Arbor Architecture
- Matthew Daley, Ph.D., Professor, Grand Valley State University
- Lane Demas, Ph.D., Professor, Central Michigan University
- Sharon Ferraro, Historic Preservation Coordinator, City of Kalamazoo (Retired)
- Lakota Pochedley, THPO, Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians
- Krysta Ryzewski, Ph.D., Professor & Chair of Anthropology, Wayne State University
- Ann Scott, Ph.D., Principal, Terracon
- Ron Staley, Senior Vice President, Christman Company (Retired)

SHPO STATEMENT

Welcome! I am very excited to present the next statewide historic preservation plan for the State of Michigan! This document is the culmination of over two years of effort by the State Historic Preservation Office to engage the public and stakeholders in developing the goals and objectives for historic preservation over the next eight years. This plan provides a vision for historic preservation in Michigan and helps to focus efforts so that we can work together to preserve and protect historic and cultural resources across the state. In addition, this document provides an opportunity to reflect on what we have accomplished in the past six years, as well as identify areas for improvement. We hope to build on the successes from the last statewide plan, while also trying to address issues both old and new.

Ultimately, no one person or organization can accomplish what is set before us for the next eight years. This effort will take a great deal of collaboration, and I look forward to working with existing partners as well as developing new relationships to highlight and prioritize historic preservation across Michigan. The SHPO welcomes the challenge and looks forward to continuing this important work.

Thank you!

Ryan M. Schumaker
State Historic Preservation Officer

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: A PATH FORWARD

Local Voices. Lasting Impact. These four words are the heart of this plan. We know that history is personal, and that if we want preservation to be successful, top-down mandates don't work. Rather, preservation must start with the people who know their communities best, whether in a city, on a family farm, or as part of a Tribal nation. When local voices lead the way, they provide the momentum for strong partnerships with a lasting impact.

For Michiganders, this has proven true time and time again as people seek to preserve the places that define our people and our communities. In the farthest reaches of the Upper Peninsula, the “Bring Back Calumet Initiative” has shown how a small village can come together to breathe new life into a historic downtown through strategic preservation projects intended to strengthen the local economy and foster community growth. In Detroit, the celebrated restoration of Michigan Central Station converted a long-empty landmark into a world-class technology and cultural hub, driven by a vision of what the adjacent neighborhood could become. And, at the Point Iroquois Light near Brimley in Chippewa County, a unique series of partnerships supported not only restoration of the lighthouse but also the opening of an indigenous history museum celebrating Anishinaabe heritage, ensuring the stories of the Bay Mills Indian Community are told by the people who lived them.

This locally driven path to preservation has never been more important than it is today. Over the last few years, we've seen how quickly our lives can change and our goals can be disrupted. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted how we use our historic downtowns and community spaces such as parks, museums, and libraries. At the same time, as the world closed in, it led Michiganders to rediscover and support the places that matter most in their local communities. The period has also been marked by frequent changes in government budgets and priorities at all levels, which have shown us that we can't always rely on the old ways of doing things. And, through it all, honest conversations about representation in preservation make it clear that we still have a long way to go in telling the full stories of all people and finding ways to support the places that are important to those stories.

Such challenges have reinforced our awareness that the most impactful solutions come from within our communities and that meaningful responses require more than just a list of goals. They require local champions, a coordinated vision, and strong partnerships. As

such, *Michigan’s Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2027-2034* (the Plan) seeks to amplify the local voices that drive informed decisions and practical preservation by helping to focus efforts at the local level, supporting goals statewide to build local capacity and self-sufficiency. By connecting these voices to a statewide network of support, we can ensure that our shared commitment to the historic and cultural places that define all of Michigan helps keep our communities strong, grounded, and ready for the next eight years.

SIDEBAR: What do we mean when we talk about Historic Preservation?

Historic preservation may mean different things to different people. For some, it includes anything “old.” For others, the focus might be on a particular property type or time in history. And, for some, it might include saving everything related to history, from archives and oral histories to important buildings and sites. We also recognize that the term carries a sense of intense pride and accomplishment for some, while for others, it may have a negative association with rigid rules or past exclusions.

For the purposes of this plan, historic preservation refers broadly to the process of identifying, documenting, protecting, investing in, and telling the story of historic and cultural places that matter. This includes buildings, structures, districts, sites, and objects important in history and prehistory across all periods and all people at the local, state, and/or national level(s).

While formal requirements exist for many programs, historic preservation should not be viewed as prescriptive and isolated. Rather, it is responsive to those places that are important to Michiganders and the goal of finding creative ways to plan for and leverage the tools and resources available to support those places and the people who care for them.

WHY A STATEWIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN?

In 1966, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), which recognized the importance of our built and cultural environments and their relationship to community identity. Among other things, the NHPA codified federal preservation policy and established a national framework for historic preservation that relies on and benefits from a strong partnership between the federal government and the states. This partnership is coordinated through the National Park Service (NPS) and a network of state offices, which in turn provide responsive support for preservation activities at the local level. In Michigan, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) manages this partnership under the leadership of a governor-appointed state historic preservation officer, who oversees the

office's core programs, from assisting property owners with listing their properties in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) to offering financial incentives like the federal historic preservation tax credit for income-producing properties across the state and community-based grants through the Certified Local Government (CLG) program.

As part of this partnership, the NPS requires that the SHPO periodically produce and implement a comprehensive statewide historic preservation plan, "providing guidance for effective decision making" about historic preservation throughout the state. Development of this plan is a core responsibility of the SHPO and unlocks continued access to funding from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), which is administered by the NPS and provides support for the SHPO's daily operations and special programs. These plans also help the SHPO to determine its priorities and strategies for the coming years.

However, such a plan is much more than an administrative formality. Grounded in public participation, open dialogue, and honest feedback about what's going well and areas where we still need to improve as a state, statewide preservation plans represent a unique opportunity for the public and preservation professionals to have a high degree of input into the direction of historic preservation in Michigan. Residents, Tribal leaders, local governments, preservation professionals, and others all have the opportunity to proactively share their views on historic preservation and help address three core questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?

It is through the public process of addressing these questions that a statewide preservation plan finds its worth, ensuring it is "by the state" just as much as it is "for the state" and represents a collaboratively designed approach for preservation that supports those on the ground across the state. It's through this lens that the Plan has been drafted so that it is a document for all Michiganders. Rather than providing a rigid set of requirements for preservation in Michigan, the Plan helps establish a path for private citizens, community leaders, the SHPO, and preservation partners statewide to move in coordinated ways. This coordination helps to reinforce and expand the connections and skills we need to be successful over the next eight years, to amplify local voices, and to give every community the confidence and tools necessary to engage historic preservation in a meaningful way.

SIDEBAR: Statewide Preservation Plans – A Helpful Tool for a Shared Vision

Statewide preservation plans do:

- *Provide a basic resource for anyone interested in the current state and future of historic preservation*
- *Include a high-level overview of preservation activities and issues based on public input*
- *Identify coordinating goals for activities statewide that can help stakeholders direct their focus toward a shared vision*
- *Serve as a tool for the SHPO and other groups to develop priorities for assisting local stakeholders*

Statewide preservation plans do not:

- *Mandate that preservation activities be carried out in a certain way or by a certain group*
- *Provide an exhaustive discussion of all preservation activities and issues, which are nuanced and complex*
- *Identify prescriptive activities that must be carried out by the SHPO or other stakeholders for preservation “success”*
- *Provide an explicit work plan or list of required actions for the SHPO or any other organization*

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Preparations for the Plan began in mid-2024, coordinated by an internal steering committee of SHPO leadership and staff. The team looked back at previous planning cycles to see what had worked and where improvements could be made with the goal of building a plan that wasn’t just an administrative sidenote but one that was practical and reflected the interests of all people and communities.

Key to this effort was a partnership with Grand Rapids-based Khamai Strategies, LLC, (Khamai) to implement a community engagement strategy rooted in transparency, accessibility, and meaningful discussion (see Chapter 2: Community Engagement). This collaborative approach gathered broad public and stakeholder feedback from across the state, directly influencing the development of a shared vision and goals for preservation in Michigan.

Combined with an internal review of SHPO programs and ongoing stakeholder discussions, the information gathered during the public engagement process served as the roadmap for the Plan. This roadmap was used to develop the draft content, prepared by SHPO staff. Once the initial draft was complete, it was released for a 30-day public review and comment phase to ensure the content reflected the input received throughout the process.

The SHPO then incorporated revisions and prepared the final content, which received approval from the NPS in [to be determined].

HOW LONG IS THE PLAN ACTIVE?

In the past, the SHPO produced statewide preservation plans covering roughly five- or six-year intervals. Most recently, this has included plans covering 2014-2019 and 2020-2025, the latter of which was extended for an additional year because of staffing and budgetary issues that delayed the start of the next planning cycle. In discussing the current plan, however, it was clear to the SHPO and stakeholders that this timeframe hasn't usually provided sufficient time to implement a plan's goals and objectives before moving on to a new planning cycle. As historic preservation itself is typically the product of long-term, consistent efforts to realize certain outcomes, a longer planning cycle likewise provides the opportunity for a longer-lasting vision and impact, with better efforts to monitor, document, and report on important trends, themes, and achievements.

Thus, the Plan covers a period of eight years, from 2027-2034. With this, the SHPO recognizes that periodic review of the objectives and goals included in the Plan may be needed to reflect changing influences and priorities at the local, state, and national levels. The SHPO also recognizes the value of continuous feedback loops and periods of reflection and will provide updates on the Plan and its implementation during the eight-year period. Finally, the SHPO intends to hold annual stakeholder meetings in order to share updates and track progress. Such updates will be made available through the SHPO's website and social media to maintain engagement with stakeholders statewide.

FINDING YOUR PATH THROUGH THE PLAN

The Plan is organized into four parts:

- **Part 1: Introduction** discusses the Plan's background and the process used to develop it, including the community engagement strategy.
- **Part 2: How Are We Doing?** provides an assessment of the current state of preservation in Michigan, including how well we've met the goals and objectives of the last plan.
- **Part 3: Looking Forward** sets out the shared vision, goals, and objectives for the state over the next eight years, based on the themes identified through public input, and charts a path to amplify local voices and achieve lasting impact.

- **Part 4: Additional Resources** provides helpful resources such as suggested reading lists, websites, maps, and supporting data.

In total, the Plan provides a toolbox for coordination for all Michiganders, no matter where you are on your preservation journey, whether seeking to expand your personal or organizational efforts or just starting to explore how preservation can be used in your community. It helps us to align our efforts across the state so that local voices and state resources move toward a shared vision rooted in common priorities and goals that elevate preservation statewide.

You can use the Plan to identify where your efforts fit into the overall framework. To get the most out of the Plan, we suggest reading Part 2 to understand Michigan’s current preservation landscape, then identifying the objectives and goals in Part 3 that best align with your community or organization’s needs. While the Plan won’t tell you specifically how to restore a building or protect a sensitive traditional cultural place, for example, it’ll help you understand how your efforts bring energy to the statewide preservation movement, what commonalities may exist with other actions happening across the state, and what resources might be available to support you. By moving toward these shared goals, we can work more effectively together, elevating each of the voices that drive preservation forward to the benefit of all people and places.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Effective plans reflect the voices of the people they serve. They don't start with predetermined goals but rather seek to understand real-world challenges and opportunities from the perspective of those on the ground. This approach ensures that a plan is rooted in reality and that the resulting vision and goals are a direct response to local needs. Ultimately, this local emphasis turns a reference document into a useful tool.

This philosophy was the starting point for development of the Plan. The goal was to capture the perspectives of all who interact with Michigan's historic and cultural places: from the property owners who interact with them every day to those who may only visit them occasionally, such as when traveling or eating at their favorite restaurant that just happens to be in a historic downtown building.

Through a partnership with Khamai, the SHPO built a collaborative engagement process where anyone who wanted to participate, regardless of their experience or familiarity with preservation, could help shape the Plan and its priorities. This focus on a broad range of voices helps anchor the Plan so that it addresses not only the physical preservation of important places but also the needs of the people who interact with them. The full record of this feedback is detailed in Appendix #, which captures the community input that served as the foundation for the Plan.

ONLINE SURVEYS

To make sure every Michigander had a chance to contribute to the conversation, wherever and whenever they wanted, the SHPO launched two online surveys. These tools provided the flexibility to try to gather a balanced range of perspectives, blending personal narratives with quantitative data to highlight key trends.

- **Public Survey:** This survey focused on how people across the state perceive and interact with preservation in their daily lives. It explored six core areas, including familiarity with preservation tools and what respondents see as the biggest threats to the places they love. The results also helped illustrate how the public views SHPO programs and whether they are meeting local needs.
- **Preservation Professionals Survey:** This survey targeted those working directly in the field of preservation, including cultural resource management (CRM) professionals, agency staff, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), and

community and nonprofit leaders. The questions were designed to identify preservation workforce trends and gather feedback on specific action steps needed to move preservation forward in Michigan.

To spread the word, the SHPO shared these surveys through the office's website, e-newsletters, direct notices, and social media. SHPO staff also added links to their email signatures to ensure every interaction with a member of the public was an invitation for someone to participate.

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

The SHPO held four regional workshops in the lower peninsula (Grand Rapids, Mt. Pleasant, Detroit, and Petoskey) and one in the upper peninsula (Marquette) to provide Michiganders with dedicated opportunities to learn about the Plan and contribute to its development. While in-person meetings have a more localized reach than online surveys, they offer an important environment for deeper discussion and consensus building. The workshops also provided a valuable opportunity for the public to connect directly with SHPO staff, supporting real-world relationships, an ongoing goal of the SHPO.

Each workshop began with an overview of the SHPO's operations and the purpose of the statewide planning process. The remaining time was devoted to an interactive open house led by Khamai. This component used a variety of discussion prompts and stations designed to:

- **Define Community Values:** Understand how locals define preservation in their personal context
- **Identify Regional Realities:** Pinpoint the specific strengths, challenges, and opportunities unique to different parts of Michigan
- **Envision the Future:** Gather input on important local narratives and desired outcomes for the next eight years

To encourage participation and ensure that each person could contribute in the way that felt most comfortable to them, the open house included drop-in voting boards, storytelling stations, and facilitated activities such as SWOT (strength-weakness-opportunity-threat) analysis and group reflection.

VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

The SHPO hosted two virtual public workshops to expand access to Michiganders who could not attend the in-person sessions. These virtual meetings mirrored the general

structure of the regional workshops. Following a brief overview of the SHPO and the planning process, the sessions transitioned into a structured SWOT facilitation model. To encourage meaningful conversations in a digital space, participants moved into small breakout rooms led by trained facilitators. These smaller groups used guided prompts to:

- **Identify Existing Barriers:** Discuss the practical hurdles to preservation
- **Brainstorm Opportunities:** Identify how preservation can be used as a tool
- **Explore Regional Differences:** Provide space for participants to reflect on how their local needs may differ from those of others

These virtual sessions provided a flexible platform for Michiganders to share their values no matter where they were, ensuring a consistent experience for all participants regardless of how they engaged.

STAKEHOLDER STRATEGY WORKSHOP

To directly engage with professionals and practitioners working across the state, the SHPO hosted a dedicated strategy workshop for a large group of preservation partners, including local government representatives, THPOs, agency staff, consultants, academics, and nonprofit leaders. Designed to build upon the public input gathered earlier in the process, the goal of the workshop was to move from broad community values to specific, actionable goals. Participants were guided through a facilitated series of activities that included:

- **Evaluating Past Successes:** A review of the 2020-2025 State Preservation Plan to identify which goals were accomplished and where barriers remained
- **Goal Prioritization:** Small-group analysis to determine which objectives remain relevant and where new priorities are warranted
- **Actionable Strategy Creation:** Focused discussion dedicated to developing the specific steps needed to implement relevant goals
- **Workforce Exploration:** A discussion into current professional challenges and the creation of pathways to strengthen the preservation field in Michigan

A key component of the planning process, the strategy workshop provided an opportunity to test ideas, align stakeholder priorities, and develop recommendations for a practical roadmap that is grounded in the capabilities and opportunities of the preservation field.

STAKEHOLDER PRESENTATIONS

Complementing the general meetings, the SHPO also met with specific stakeholder groups to solicit feedback. These included:

- **State Historic Preservation Review Board (Review Board):** Khamai and the SHPO provided an overview of the planning process and publicly crafted vision statement and goals to the Review Board, a governor-appointed body of experts in a variety of disciplines related to history and preservation, for consideration and refinement.
- **Michigan Anishinaabek Cultural Preservation and Repatriation Alliance (MACPRA):** The SHPO gave a presentation covering the planning process, vision statement, and goals to MACPRA, which consists of representatives from all the federally recognized Tribes in Michigan as well as two Tribes historically associated with the state.
- **Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN):** The SHPO discussed the planning process, vision statement, and goals with MHPN, Michigan's statewide preservation nonprofit organization.
- **City of Detroit Working Group:** The SHPO presented the plan vision statement and goals to a preservation professionals working group representing the City of Detroit, the largest city in the state.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The public engagement process brought together a broad range of voices, each of which reflected the perspective, needs, and ideas of the person, group, or community represented. These voices made it clear that there are unique challenges and opportunities facing Michiganders across different regions, population densities, and group associations, whether captured in perceived disparities in the scale of preservation activities between rural and urban areas or the range of funding challenges faced by individual property owners who need to fix their properties versus those experienced by nonprofits who are trying to keep the doors open at their sites. Yet, while each voice had a nuanced need, ten major themes emerged during the public engagement process that tie together the most consistent priorities expressed by participants statewide.

- 1. Funding & Resources** The most consistent issue identified statewide was the absence of broad, stable, and sufficient funding sources for preservation activities. This includes funding for physical work on properties as well as organizational support and educational activities. It also includes finding ways to address gaps in the ability of individuals and/or organizations to apply for grants and other financial incentives.

- 2. Education & Public Awareness** Addressing a lack of understanding about historic preservation, its importance and relationship to community well-being, and the tools available to support preservation at the local level is a chronic need. Broad education campaigns that use accessible language and are tailored to the unique needs of individual stakeholders are needed to break down misconceptions, enhance decision-making, and build local support.

- 3. Representation** There is broad recognition that preservation activities have impacted population groups unevenly across history and that preservation tools are not as easily accessible by all groups across the state. This has historically been true for much of the preservation movement, and, while progress has been made, the issue lingers today. A desperate need exists to make further progress toward broader representation in conversations and decisions around historic preservation so that it is truly a tool that helps support the efforts and stories of all Michiganders.

- 4. Complexity & Inaccessibility** Preservation can only succeed when the tools that make it possible are user-friendly, consistent, and accessible. For many across the state, formal program requirements associated with financial incentives, designation processes, environmental review, and other preservation activities remain a barrier. This is particularly true for smaller communities, Tribal nations, and community-led

organizations that may lack formal preservation experience or have limited capacity to devote the necessary resources to figuring out current processes.

5. Community-led Models

Local voices matter most, and preservation priorities should originate at the local level and reflect the needs of those doing the work. Systems should be responsive to the varied local needs across the state and provide support for flexible, grounded approaches that provide meaningful outcomes. While many preservation programs have formal requirements, one-size-fits-all approaches don't always meet the needs of a community.

6. Storytelling & Intangible Heritage

Intangible elements such as the stories, rituals, and memories of those in a community are critical to our collective identity. While preservation typically focuses on the physical components of place, tools should also be better identified and explored with partner organizations for addressing these interrelated components of our history.

7. Preservation as a Priority

Competing community priorities, limited capacity and funding, and a misunderstanding of preservation often put it at odds in the minds of local decision-makers. This is particularly true in rapidly changing communities where preservation may be viewed as a barrier to new development or community growth. Conversations must recognize the dynamic nature of communities and find ways for preservation to be balanced alongside other needs and requirements.

8. Loss of Historic Assets

The ongoing loss of historic and cultural resources due to inaction, neglect, lack of funding, and/or insufficient enforcement of local protections is a constant threat to preservation. Public education, proactive planning, more active networks, and consistently enforced protections

are essential to overcoming the reality that faces many underutilized, vacant, and deteriorated properties throughout the state.

9. Tourism & Identity

Preservation impacts many aspects of our communities, even if most people not engaged in preservation don't think of it that way. For example, historic downtowns, waterfronts, and landmarks like Michigan's lighthouses are points of local pride and serve as the backdrop for tourism campaigns and events like farmer's markets and community festivals. There is a consistent need to make sure there's a more direct conversation about preservation as a concept and how it directly supports community and economic vitality.

10. Rural & Vernacular Heritage

An imbalance often exists in where preservation activities are concentrated in the state, with preservation priorities and tools often focused on more urban areas and high-style architectural works. Preservation needs to find a balance across the state, directing resources more evenly across all geographies and ensuring recognition of everyday heritage such as barns and other agricultural outbuildings, local storefronts, rural cemeteries, and roadside attractions, as the sustaining factor in most of our communities.

It's important to recognize that these themes, and the needs reflected by each, do not exist in a vacuum, isolated one from another. As anyone who has engaged in preservation knows, there are always interrelated patterns that affect the success of a project or activity. For example, funding gaps (theme #1) impact everything from developing educational programs (theme #2) to loss of historic assets (theme #8). Where preservation falls on the spectrum of a community's priorities (theme #7) impacts ongoing concerns such as equal representation in preservation (theme #3) and the retention of a community's rural heritage amongst competing development pressures (theme #10). These patterns are explored below (see table/image ##) based on how themes emerged across the public engagement process.

These are more than just interesting data points. The interrelatedness of the issues affecting historic preservation today, particularly as perceived by Michiganders statewide, is critical in understanding the most deeply felt challenges by those on the ground. It's essential to understand the connectedness of issues impacting the success and/or ability of Michiganders to participate in historic preservation in their communities. Fragmented approaches that only address one element of a multi-faceted challenge or leave a group out of the conversation won't elevate local voices enough for impact. Thus, addressing emerging themes collectively is essential to effective preservation work over the next eight years and underlies the goals and objectives outlined later in the Plan.

SECTION 2: HOW ARE WE DOING?

CHAPTER 3: THE STATEWIDE CONTEXT

Part of looking forward to and planning for the future includes looking back at what has been accomplished. It also requires us to look at past and present influences and trends that not only shape the direction of historic preservation but also partially determine how heavy a lift future goals are to implement. In support of this analysis, this chapter provides an overview of the SHPO's programs over the past six years; identifies influences that have and continue to impact historic preservation at the state, national, and global levels; and highlights and discusses trends impacting threatened resources across Michigan.

STATE PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The SHPO's role in historic preservation is defined under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA). Under the NHPA, the office evaluates, protects and promotes Michigan's historic built environment and archaeological sites. The SHPO leads this effort by helping property owners, developers, agencies, and other stakeholders identify important cultural resources across the state with the hope that identification efforts can allow those same entities to seize opportunities to celebrate, protect, and invest in the historic places that make our state uniquely Michigan.

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: *SHPO and Survey - The NHPA requires all SHPOs to direct and conduct surveys. The act states, "It shall be the responsibility of the State Historic Preservation Officer to administer the State Historic Preservation Program and to—in cooperation with Federal and State agencies, local governments, and private organizations and individuals—direct and conduct a comprehensive statewide survey of historic properties and maintain inventories of such properties."*

BY THE NUMBERS: Over the past five years, over 25,000 acres of reconnaissance surveys and over 2,000 acres of intensive level survey have been reviewed by the SHPO.

NPS and State Funded Survey Projects: Building on efforts started during the last planning cycle, the SHPO made a dedicated effort to proactively seek supplemental funding for documenting and telling the story of important heritage assets across all our communities. Between 2020 and 2025, the SHPO received three survey-related grants from

the NPS African American Civil Rights (AACR) program in 2020, 2021, and 2024, and two survey-related grants from the Underrepresented Communities (URC) program in 2022 and 2025. These grants supported surveys of important sites in Muskegon County, Inkster (Wayne County), and Niles (Berrien County), as well as ongoing surveys of Negro Motorist Green Book sites statewide and buildings designed by famed Detroit architect Nathan Johnson. Such studies have and continue to lead to fruitful partnerships around the state to document and celebrate these important stories and places.

State-funded surveys have also expanded the breadth of important architectural resources identified statewide in recent years. One such example is a statewide context for dams currently underway by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This is being coordinated with the SHPO and will be an important planning tool for these resources for years to come.

Strategic Focus: Such projects represent a planned shift in the types of projects that the SHPO undertakes, with greater emphasis on statewide or regional contexts for a variety of resource types. An internal grant planning document has been created by the SHPO to foster more strategic applications and better collaboration between the survey and National Register of Historic Places (National Register) programs and to advance priorities identified through the statewide planning process.

Section 106 Compliance and Survey: The SHPO's survey program and environmental review (ER) unit have worked through several complex projects that require compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA (Section 106). These have included surveying airports, a scientific lab complex, bridges, and major highway upgrades, for example, among other undertakings. In addition, new or updated programmatic agreements (PAs) intended to streamline future activities have produced survey collaborations with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the City of Detroit, and others. Continued collaboration with other SHPO program areas also continues to be a priority.

Awareness of Survey Data: Staff have been working diligently to increase awareness of the types of surveys in the SHPO's collection and ensure that the information reaches a broad audience. This initiative has included the development of a social media plan to highlight surveys undertaken across the state. It has also included expanding access to materials produced through survey efforts that might have a broader benefit. For example, the SHPO has added materials for local educators related to the SHPO's *Muskegon County Civil Rights Survey Project*, completed in 2024, on the office's website. The SHPO intends to continue these efforts as part of future projects.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: *As the official list of America’s historic places worthy of preservation, the National Register plays multiple roles. For many people, the National Register documents the important places, people, and events associated with our communities. It also helps the SHPO to educate the public, now and in the future, about why a place is significant. For others, the National Register is an important tool that supports investment and can transform communities. For federal, state, and local government agencies, the National Register is an important planning tool that helps them consider important places that might be affected as part of the project development process. Collectively, the National Register is more than just a list or a history program; it guides development in meaningful ways that enhance the places where we live, work, and play.*

BY THE NUMBERS: *Since the first places in Michigan were listed in the National Register in 1966, nearly 2,000 places across both peninsulas have been recognized for their importance to our communities, our state, or the nation. In the past six years alone, the SHPO has partnered with people and organizations across the state to expand this list, the types of places we, as Michiganders, consider to be significant, and how the stories of these important places are told. In that time, 100 historic places were listed in the National Register, representing more than 1,725 individual buildings, sites, structures, and objects; 65 individual buildings or small complexes; 31 historic districts; and 4 structures. This also included the acceptance of two context documents. In addition, documentation for 13 places previously listed in the National Register were updated with new information about their history and significance; updated with information that addressed new areas of significance; or, in the case of historic districts, provided current information for the buildings, sites, and structures.*

MAP: *Among the 31 historic districts listed between 2020 and 2025 were downtown commercial districts in Alpena, Charlevoix, Charlotte, Ewart, Ishpeming, Negaunee, Sault Ste. Marie, Wayland. Residential districts were established in Grand Rapids (Auburn Hills), Kalamazoo (Parkwyn Village), Niles (Ferry Street), and Southfield (Northland Gardens). Also listed were the Vicksburg Historic District in Vicksburg and the East Ludington Avenue Historic District in Ludington, which are comprised of both commercial and residential areas.*

The What, Where, and Why. Like each of the places listed in the National Register since 1966, the places listed between 2020 and 2025 tell us important things about where and

how we live; what brings us together as friends and neighbors; how we built Michigan; what challenges we have faced and overcome; and so much more.

The effort to identify and designate places that better represent Michigan's full history continued with nominations for the Orsel and Minnie McGhee House, Sojourner Truth Homes, Frances Harper Inn, Vaughn's Book Store, Detroit Association of Women's Clubs, the William E. Higginbotham Elementary School, and Alpha House, all in Detroit; the Malcolm X House in Inkster; and Auburn Hills Historic District in Grand Rapids. These resources expand the narrative about the people, groups, and communities that have defined Michigan and help to tell a more complete story of the experiences that shaped the state and its people, highlighting significant sites that some people may not have previously known.

In the past six years, elder care was explored as a significant theme in National Register nominations for the first time in Michigan. Fulton Manor in Grand Rapids and Marian Hall in Flint reveal how caring for our senior citizens evolved over the twentieth century, and how different approaches, influenced in large part by federal legislation and state law, took shape. Care for our veterans was also represented with the nomination for the Iron Mountain Veterans Administration Hospital.

Although not nominated as federal property, several places were listed that are significant for their former association with federal agencies, programs, or activities, including: United States Post Office stations in Plymouth and Detroit; Camp Black Lake, a former Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Presque Isle County; South Fox Island Light Station in Northport; and the Saugatuck Gap Filler Annex, a Cold War-era radar station in Saugatuck.

Places of industry also figured prominently in the National Register program between 2020 and 2025. Former factories buildings in Buchanan, Ludington, Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo embody the inventiveness, ingenuity, and grit of Michiganders throughout the twentieth century.

Recreation, inspiration, and community connection were also important themes. Theaters in Rogers City, Kalamazoo, and Coldwater, including Michigan's first listed drive-in theater; fraternal lodges in Detroit and Hickory Corners; and churches in Detroit, Manistee, and Wyandotte show us their power to bring Michiganders together and their ability to strengthen the bonds between friends and neighbors.

Resource Losses: Over the past six years, 26 places have been removed from the National Register due to demolition or destruction. Removing places from the National Register, when appropriate, ensures accurate records and data are available to both the National Register program and the SHPO.

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROGRAM

CALL OUT BOX: *Local historic districts protect historic resources by requiring that exterior work in a locally designated area be reviewed by a historic district commission (HDC) using the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards). Michigan’s Local Historic Districts Act (Public Act 169 of 1970 (PA 169)) enables communities to adopt a local historic district ordinance and provides the process for creating and administering local historic districts. Importantly, the creation of a local historic district is completely driven by the interests and priorities of a community, thus ensuring a locally-driven approach to historic preservation. The SHPO has no role in suggesting or sponsoring these efforts but does provide advice. As of 2025, 78 Michigan communities have adopted historic district ordinances under PA 169.*

BY THE NUMBERS: *Between 2020 and 2025, 32 local historic district study committee reports across 17 communities were submitted to the SHPO for review. Of these, 16 reports evaluated multi-resource districts and 16 evaluated single-resource districts.*

Technical Assistance: While local historic districts are a product of local initiative, the SHPO supports local communities that made the effort to establish such districts through technical assistance and support, including reviewing ordinances, boundary suggestions, and design guidelines. This has been particularly important in recent years, with SHPO staff traveling the state to meet with local communities to discuss best practices and provide training to HDCs. Training has also been provided through workshops and sessions at the annual Michigan Statewide Historic Preservation Conference hosted by the Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) and workshops held in partnership with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC).

ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: *The SHPO archaeology program records, evaluates, and protects archaeological sites throughout the state and accomplishes these goals through: 1) management of the State Archaeological Site File (SASF); 2) engaging in consultation with stakeholders, Tribal governments, and federal, state, and local agencies; 3) providing*

guidance and support to consultants and researchers; 4) developing outreach programs for communities throughout the state; and 5) conducting federal and state compliance reviews.

BY THE NUMBERS: *The SASF includes a total of 27,040 archaeological sites, both terrestrial and underwater sites spanning all of Michigan history. Of these sites, 1,558 are underwater or submerged cultural resources within the four Great Lakes comprising Michigan's bottomlands. Since 2020, 1,409 new sites have been identified from 68,549 acres of survey. That results in an average of 235 sites added to the site file and 11,425 acres surveyed for federal compliance projects every year. Roughly 96%, or 26,008 archaeological sites, are currently in the SHPO's Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), representing both pre-contact (53.3% or 12,925 sites) and post-contact (40.3% or 9,771 sites) sites. Approximately six percent (1,471 sites) of documented sites include components from both pre-contact and post-contact periods.*

The archaeology program has undergone substantial changes since the last preservation plan was published in 2020, when the SHPO employed a single archaeologist. The program now supports three full-time archaeologists, which has allowed the SHPO to expand its support of archaeological resources statewide and focus on improvements in several core areas that benefit both the public and professional stakeholders.

Data Improvements & Technical Guidance: Over the past six years, the SHPO archaeology program has focused on improvements that enhance the accessibility and quality of the data available to consultants and researchers. Improvements have included developing field and reporting standards to collect consistent and thorough information and coordinating numerous trainings with state and federal agencies, Tribal governments, and archaeology consultants.

Site Reporting & Survey Coverage: Significant improvements have been made to data collection and site reporting, including development of a standardized site form that is required for all newly identified and revisited sites. This has helped to streamline the data entry process and improve data quality. In addition, the SHPO has developed guidance and a standard reporting form for traditional cultural places (TCP) to better account for their significance and role in Michigan's history.

Outreach & Education: The SHPO has sought to broaden the audience for outreach and education efforts in all areas highlighted by the previous state plan. For example, the SHPO has developed a variety of new materials as a part of the annual Michigan Archaeology Day

celebration and created annual Archaeology Month posters that showcase different aspects of archaeology for communities. The archaeology program has also established a user-friendly “Archaeology Answers” bulletin series to explore and provide information about commonly asked questions, provided guidance for practitioners through a variety of professional trainings, both in-person and online, and distributed an annual report to keep stakeholders informed. Social media platforms and the SHPO website provide all this information to the public, along with online webinars and videos.

Trends in Michigan Archaeology

Urban Archaeology: Michigan’s urban centers have seen an incredible amount of redevelopment in recent years. In Detroit, there have been numerous large-scale surveys and mitigation projects that have resulted in documentation of underrepresented working class, African American, and Jewish American communities. These projects were made possible through a programmatic agreement with the City of Detroit’s Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) and partnerships with Wayne State University. Building upon this success, the SHPO is pursuing similar agreements with other urban centers throughout the state.

Traditional Cultural Places: The previous state plan identified TCPs as one of the top five threatened cultural resources. In addition to developing better documentation standards for TCPs, the SHPO initiated an education campaign focusing on the importance of TCPs, which included making TCPs the subject of the SHPO’s 2024 Michigan Archaeology Month poster. The SHPO continues to work with Tribal governments and other communities to prioritize and recognize TCPs throughout the state.

Inadvertent Discoveries: Inadvertent discoveries of human remains on private land or during Section 106 projects is a perennial issue, with an average of six cases every year. These situations are upsetting for descendant communities and can cause project delays. While the SHPO has partnered with Tribal governments, DNR, and other agencies for respectful recovery and repatriation, the lack of a comprehensive burial law remains a barrier to improving recovery options.

Geophysical & Non-Invasive Methods: The need for non-invasive survey strategies, particularly for Section 106 projects, has become increasingly evident. The SHPO has worked with geophysical practitioners and specialists using human remains detection dogs on several projects, which have proven to be successful at addressing cemetery and burial sites in a respectful manner. The archaeology program has also developed preliminary

guidance for geophysical surveys in Michigan and is working with regional experts to develop guidance for specific methodologies, such as magnetic susceptibility and ground penetrating radar.

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: *A federal/state/local partnership administered by the NPS and the SHPO, the Certified Local Government (CLG) program provides a framework for communities to effectively coordinate historic preservation interests with other community initiatives. The CLG program assists communities in supporting a place-based vision for identifying, protecting, and celebrating historic places important to the fabric of their communities.*

BY THE NUMBERS: *As of 2025, 42 municipalities in Michigan participate in the CLG program, 14 of which were certified between 2020 and 2025: Charlevoix, Coldwater, Ewart, Flat Rock, Highland Park, Linden, Livonia, Mackinac Island, Muskegon, Niles, Norwood Township, Pontiac, Royal Oak, and Saginaw. This is a 50% increase in the number of communities in the program since the last plan was created, strengthening preservation throughout Michigan.*

Change in Approach: Beginning in 2019, the structure of the CLG program was revised to identify ways to strengthen the partnership between the SHPO and participating communities. Key to this was increased engagement with local stakeholders, including enhancing opportunities for dialogue about local needs and more frequent visits to participating communities across the state. It also included the periodic introduction of new technical assistance activities and incentives, including technical bulletins, training materials, webinars, and funding opportunities for local training. This push to strengthen connections also included a coordinated effort between the SHPO and the Michigan Main Street (MMS) program, managed by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), to address common needs among participating communities and find ways to leverage technical assistance and funding opportunities to the benefit of both programs. In 2024, the SHPO hired a new CLG coordinator, and the SHPO continues to review ways to make the program meaningful for Michigan’s communities.

CULTURAL RESOURCE DATA

The SHPO’s ongoing effort to digitize existing materials, collected over decades, and make them available online to local, state, and federal preservation partners made significant progress between 2020 and 2025. An above-ground geographic information system (GIS),

in use by staff since 2018, was made available to CRM professionals in 2025 through a new ARGUS CRIS database system. Creation of archaeological GIS layers has been ongoing since 2019 in partnership with the State of Michigan's Center for Shared Solutions (CSS), which scanned approximately 1,300 United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle maps and digitized hand-written markings indicating locations of surveys and reported sites. The project is nearing completion, and these layers will be made available to federally qualified archaeologists when they are ready.

Data Access and Submissions: Development of the ARGUS CRIS database was a significant milestone in making SHPO data available to partners outside of the State of Michigan and will continue to be refined and supported through the integration of additional data. Another key component of the CRIS database was the release of several online portals for different audiences to conduct research in the SHPO's data remotely, leading to significant project efficiencies for SHPO staff, agencies, and other practitioners statewide. Project submission portals are nearing the final stages of testing and will be made available when they are ready.

Digitization Efforts: In 2023, the SHPO began digitization of all site and survey files. Four contractors were hired to prepare the materials for scanning and ensure that corresponding database records existed for each file. The materials were then sent out for scanning and continue to be returned in batches. Once the records are returned, the contractors perform quality control and quality assurance on each batch. These are then uploaded to the CRIS database.

The new database, access to the SHPO's GIS, and the digitization of decades of paper site and survey files, have allowed the SHPO to move into a new era with improved efficiencies available to staff. It has also allowed our partners to access important information without having to travel to Lansing.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW/SECTION 106 PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: *The environmental review (ER) unit of the SHPO is responsible for state and federal compliance. Principally, staff of the ER unit consult with federal agencies under Section 106. This process requires federal agencies to consider the effects of federally assisted undertakings on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register. The SHPO participates in the review process, but final responsibility falls to the federal agency. Projects can range from infrastructure projects like cell tower placements and road construction projects to the application for a permit to cross wetlands. Sometimes federal*

agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provide funding for special projects like window weatherization or lead paint abatement.

If a project is determined to have an adverse effect on historic properties, a legally binding agreement with the federal agency undertaking the project is established to minimize or mitigate impacts. Mitigation can take many forms, from photo documentation and recording the history of a resource to providing funds to survey or designate other historic resources in the community outside the project area.

BY THE NUMBERS: *Between 2020 and 2025, the SHPO reviewed 21,221 Section 106 undertakings and completed 173 reviews for state projects requiring compliance. For comparison, between 2014 and 2019, the SHPO reviewed 18,206 undertakings.*

Work with State Agency Partners: Michigan has few state laws that trigger consultation with the SHPO; however, the ER unit consults on several projects with other state agencies regularly. Among these are the Community Revitalization Program (CRP), administered by the MEDC; State property disposals, administered by Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB); and energy siting reviews under Public Act 233 of 2023 (PA 233), administered by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). Other agencies concerned that their projects may affect cultural resources consult with the SHPO on a case-by-case basis, including the State Land Bank Authority, the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and other units of MPSC.

FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT

CALLOUT BOX: *The federal historic preservation tax credit is a financial incentive program that encourages private sector investment in the rehabilitation of National Register-listed or -eligible income-producing properties. The tax credit provides a 20 percent credit on qualified rehabilitation work that meets the Standards. The program is administered by the NPS and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in partnership with SHPOs. The program has successfully supported the rehabilitation of historic buildings for 50 years, positively impacting communities across Michigan and the country through the revitalization of communities, creation of jobs, enhancement of property values, and generation of housing units and commercial spaces. The tax credit program is a three-part application process and often takes many years to complete depending on the size and the scale of the project.*

BY THE NUMBERS: *Between 2020 and 2025, 122 new federal historic preservation tax credit applications (Part 1) were received in Michigan. The following table (see table #)*

shows the number of projects that were completed each year, reflected in accepted Part 3 applications. The nature of the tax credit review process being split into three parts, sometimes submitted to the SHPO years apart, means that there are usually more Part 1 than Part 3 applications in each period. Additionally, just because an applicant submits a Part 1 application does not mean it will necessarily move forward, with some projects stalling out at the Part 2 stage.

| <i>Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives: Michigan</i> | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Year</i> | <i>Part 3 applications approved</i> | <i>Estimated qualified rehabilitation expenses</i> |
| <i>2020</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>\$148,340,298</i> |
| <i>2021</i> | <i>16</i> | <i>\$230,093,858</i> |
| <i>2022</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>\$143,598,880</i> |
| <i>2023</i> | <i>14</i> | <i>\$267,229,449</i> |
| <i>2024</i> | <i>10</i> | <i>\$433,922,803</i> |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>67</i> | <i>\$1,223,185,288</i> |

Program Highlight: In its fiscal year (FY) 2024 annual report, the NPS featured the successful rehabilitation of Michigan Central Station in Detroit. This rehabilitation project contributed to the more than \$1.2 billion in total qualified rehabilitation expenditures made in Michigan during the reporting period, and the more than \$35.2 billion invested nationally over the same period.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: Public Act 343 of 2020 (PA 343), signed into the law on December 30, 2020, established the new state historic tax credit program, which supports place-based projects while promoting the preservation of Michigan’s historic resources. The credit is for 25 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures, with a \$5 million annual statewide cap broken down into three categories: \$2 million for large-scale commercial developments, \$2 million for small-scale commercial projects, and \$1 million for owner-occupied residential projects. Each application/project has a maximum taxpayer cap of \$2 million for a single

property. State credits are an important funding source for owner-occupied properties and for properties recognized at the state or local level that are not eligible for federal historic preservation tax incentives. They can also be paired with the federal credit on income-producing properties.

The SHPO worked through a year-long process of building the program and establishing rules for how it would be administered. The final rules and guidelines were approved in December 2021, setting the stage for opening the program to its first applicants. Soon after SHPO worked on launching the application itself through an online portal, conducting informational webinars, and promoting the program statewide.

The first application period opened at 9:00 a.m. on June 15, 2022. At 10:00 a.m., the application portal closed for large commercial projects because there were requests for 40 times the credit allowance for the year. Four hours later, the small commercial project portal was closed for similar reasons.

BY THE NUMBERS: *In the first four years, nearly \$20 million in credits were pre-approved for 65 projects, representing over \$171 million in combined qualified rehabilitation expenses. The nature of the tax credit review process being split into three parts, sometimes submitted to the SHPO years apart, means that there is usually more Part 1 than Part 3 applications in a given period. Additionally, just because an applicant submits a Part 1 application does not mean it will necessarily move forward, with some projects stalling out at the Part 2 stage. The following table (see table #) shows the number of projects that were completed each year, reflected in accepted Part 3 applications.*

| STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Year | Part 3 applications approved | Credits | Estimated QREs | Total Project Costs |
| 2023 | 1 | \$1,600 | \$6,400 | \$6,400 |
| 2024 | 14 | \$4,381,027 | \$75,822,260 | \$83,516,481 |
| 2025 | 9 | \$3,474,022 | \$40,270,017 | \$60,149,595 |
| Total | 24 | \$7,856,649 | \$116,098,677 | \$143,672,476 |

Challenges: While the re-establishment of the state historic preservation tax credit was successful, there is still work to be done. The annual cap, especially for the large commercial category, limits the number of projects that can be supported. This limitation creates uncertainty for applicants, who cannot rely on the availability of credits when establishing the funding for their projects. Some proposed projects are never even started because of the lack of tax credit availability.

Notably, the enabling legislation for the state tax credit includes a sunset date of January 1, 2031, for the issuance of certificates of completed rehabilitation (approved Part 3 application). This not only means that 2030 will be the last year for which credits may be pre-approved, but also that any pre-approved project must finish construction and have a Part 3 submitted in 2030, to provide the SHPO with sufficient time to review and execute the certification before the end of the year.

Potential Improvements on the Horizon: The MHPN, with their lobbyist, has proposed revised legislation to increase the annual credit cap to \$100 million and to eliminate the sunset date so that this program can continue to support and encourage preservation of Michigan's resources; however, the legislation has not yet passed. More work is needed to expand and continue this program, which Michiganders deemed highly important in the previous statewide plan.

GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

CALLOUT BOX: *Since 2003, the SHPO has worked with the State Historic Preservation Review Board (Review Board) and the Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) to recognize standout projects that demonstrate the highest standards of historic preservation in Michigan. To qualify for consideration, a project must utilize one of the SHPO's programs. The awards recognize homeowners who rehabilitate their homes; developers who transform underutilized historic structures into vital economic assets; and academic institutions, archaeologists, nonprofits, and units of government who strive to preserve Michigan's important historic and cultural resources.*

Awardees are invited to attend an annual awards ceremony at the Michigan State Capitol each May, which is National Preservation Month. Each awardee receives a framed award, and the property owner also receives a large poster highlighting their project. In addition, each project is recognized on the SHPO's website and through an award video that summarizes each project, narrated by SHPO staff.

Awards typically fall into one of two categories: project awards and stewardship awards. Project awards may recognize standalone rehabilitation projects or other preservation activities such as collaborative preservation strategies or archaeological efforts. Stewardship awards recognize long-term commitments to preservation, sometimes by a single entity and other times by a group of partners, which have saved a particular place. Both preserve Michigan's unique character and educate citizens about our shared past.

BY THE NUMBERS: *Between 2020 and 2025, 27 projects received Governor's Awards (see table #). Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, the awards proposed for that year were instead given in 2021.*

Challenges: COVID-19 changed the nature of the awards for several years, as labor shortages, rising material costs, and other challenges slowed rehabilitation projects. This provided an important opportunity to recognize more of the long-term partnership efforts that protect and preserve places that make our state uniquely Michigan.

GRANTS PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: *The HPF, managed by the NPS, continues to financially support the work of SHPOs across the country, including Michigan. Funded through offshore oil and gas leases, annual formula grants from the HPF account for a significant portion of the SHPO's annual operating costs and are used to support staff across all program areas as they work statewide to identify, document, and protect important historic places in support of our local communities. The HPF also provides support for grants to local communities and their partners through the CLG program and provides funding to SHPOs and other organizations across the country for specialized studies and rehabilitation activities.*

BY THE NUMBERS: *Between 2020 and 2025, SHPO received approximately \$8.5 million through HPF formula grants for operations and programming.*

CLG Grants: SHPO's annual CLG grants are a critical source of funding for foundational preservation planning projects such as architectural surveys and archaeological investigations, National Register nominations, preservation plans, design guidelines, and public educational activities, as well as assessments and physical preservation of National Register-eligible or -listed historic properties. Notably, between 2020 and 2025, the SHPO was able to increase annual funding for CLG grants beyond the minimum required by the NPS with annual allocations rising to \$250,000 by the end of the period. In total, nearly \$1.2 million was awarded across 32 projects during the period (see table #).

Funding increases were accompanied by improvements to the grant program, which include streamlining application and awarding processes and reducing match requirements. These improvements have reduced turnaround times on awards, introduced efficiencies into project implementation, and minimized funding burdens on recipients.

Special Grant Projects: Building on efforts started during the last planning cycle, the SHPO also made a concerted effort to proactively seek supplemental funding from the HPF for special projects. This includes securing funding from the HPF-funded URC and AACR grant programs, which are critical in telling the full story of important heritage assets across our communities. Between 2020 and 2025, the SHPO received three AACR grants totaling \$175,000 for studies in Muskegon County and Inkster as well as a statewide study associated with African American Recreational Tourism during the mid-twentieth century and four URC grants totaling \$170,000 for National Register projects in Detroit and Niles as well as an ongoing study of the work of notable mid-twentieth century architect Nathan Johnson. The grants received by the SHPO complement the more than \$1.7 million in grants received statewide by project partners, who have also worked diligently to secure project funding under the HPF for documenting and protecting important stories and sites in their communities (*see table #*).

Rural Focused Grants: During the period, the SHPO also sought to broaden financial support to the state’s rural areas and small communities, which often lack direct access to preservation funding. In doing so, the SHPO secured a \$750,000 grant from the HPF-funded Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program (PBHR) in 2021, which allowed the SHPO to establish the Resilient Lakeshore Heritage Program. Through this program, the SHPO subgranted money to community partners in rural communities along the lakeshore of the Great Lakes to complete building rehabilitation projects at downtown commercial properties, community theaters, city buildings, and other such properties. Building on this, in 2025, the SHPO secured a second PBHR grant for \$750,000, through which the SHPO will implement the Rural Heritage Partnership Program, providing subgrants to small, rural communities across the state for critical preservation projects.

MICHIGAN LIGHTHOUSE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CALLOUT BOX: Michigan is proud to claim that it has more lighthouses than any other state due to its thousands of miles of freshwater shoreline on four of the five Great Lakes. To ensure the safe passage of maritime traffic through those Great Lakes, these beacons were built in locations on the mainland, on the shores of islands, at the end of piers and breakwaters, and on offshore cribs. They have become beloved icons in their regions yet

are constantly challenged by the whims of Michigan's four-season climate. To continue to preserve, maintain, and rehabilitate the more than 120 historic lighthouses across the state, the SHPO, through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, has offered a “Save Our Lights” specialty automobile license plate since 2001, with a portion of the fee going into a dedicated fund that allows the SHPO to award matching grants through the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP).

BY THE NUMBERS: Between 2020 and 2025, new plate purchases and renewals raised over \$578,000 (see table #). During the same period, almost \$570,000 in grants were awarded to nonprofits and municipalities across the state, resulting in a total investment of nearly \$1.1 million in Michigan’s lighthouses. Eleven projects ranging from rehabilitation work to the development of a historic structure report were completed.

To promote the sale of the “Save Our Lights” license plate, with its 25th anniversary celebration in 2026, the SHPO annually publishes postcards and a historic lighthouses of Michigan map. These publications are sent directly to lighthouse stewards for distribution and are also supplied to MDOT’s fourteen welcome centers to encourage drivers to purchase a plate for their vehicle.

Challenges: The sustainability of the program has been a topic of concern for the SHPO, as there are 16 special cause license plates now offered by the State of Michigan and another 15 for universities across the state. This has resulted in a steady decline in revenues for MLAP over the last six years. The SHPO is working on ways to promote and bolster the program, which includes having recently opened a donation site for anyone to provide support for lighthouses through online contributions. The hope is to try to level off the decline in revenue so that grant funding remains available to these unique resources.

| MLAP Lighthouse Grants 2020-2025 | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---|
| (Total amount awarded: \$569,733) | | |
| Year | County | Project |
| 2020 | Mackinac | St. Helena Lighthouse tower masonry rehabilitation |
| 2021 | Luce | Crisp Point Lighthouse tower masonry rehabilitation |
| 2021 | Leelanau | North Manitou Shoal Lighthouse steel deck replacement |

| | | |
|------|------------|---|
| 2021 | St. Clair | Fort Gratiot Lighthouse lantern rehabilitation |
| 2022 | Mason | Big Sable Lighthouse historic structure report |
| 2022 | Ottawa | Grand Haven Entrance Lighthouse concrete repair and painting |
| 2023 | Keweenaw | Eagle Harbor Lighthouse tower and lantern rehabilitation |
| 2023 | Keweenaw | Rock of Ages Lighthouse masonry rehabilitation |
| 2024 | Ottawa | Grand Haven Inner Lighthouse tower and lantern rehabilitation |
| 2025 | Charlevoix | Charlevoix South Pier Lighthouse painting |
| 2025 | Keweenaw | Gull Rock Lighthouse staining, painting, and door replacement |

PRESERVATION EASEMENTS

CALLOUT BOX: *Preservation easements (also commonly known as covenants) are legal agreements that protect historic properties by requiring ongoing maintenance and review of proposed work or alterations by the SHPO. These agreements typically mandate compliance with the Standards.*

Easements may be perpetual, especially when properties are transferred from federal or state ownership to local governments, nonprofits, or private individuals. Time-limited easements, typically between 5 and 20 years, are often tied to NPS or HPF grant-funded work. In cases where funded work is not visible from the exterior, property owners may be required to provide public access for a set number of days annually to demonstrate the public benefit of the investment.

Other agencies and organizations across the state also hold easements, including the MHPN and the City of Detroit, which provides other opportunities for protecting properties across Michigan.

BY THE NUMBERS: *Between 2020 and 2025, the SHPO added 19 new preservation easements, bringing the number managed by the office to 152. These easements protect a*

wide variety of historic resources across the state, including 70 lighthouses, 8 bridges, 66 buildings, 5 sites, and 3 historic streets. Of these easements, 101 are perpetual, ensuring long-term preservation, while 51 are limited in duration.

In addition to the SHPO's portfolio, the MHPN currently holds 25 easements, and the City of Detroit oversees 9. These additions reflect the expanding role of preservation easements at both regional and local levels.

Challenges: From 2022 to 2025, the SHPO easement program underwent a period of transition. Staffing shortages, internal reorganization, and shifting priorities made it difficult to maintain consistent easement oversight and recordkeeping. The SHPO is now working to rebuild and improve its easement tracking and monitoring systems to create a more reliable, transparent, and responsive process that better supports long-term preservation and collaboration with partners across the state.

INFLUENCES ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN MICHIGAN

The six-year period following publication of the last statewide plan has been one of change, both positive and negative and cutting across all levels of government. Some of the more influential events and actions have occurred in the last year and are continuing to unfold, which will have impacts on the direction of preservation over the next eight years.

STATE LEVEL

SHPO Organizational and Leadership Changes: In late-2019, the SHPO was moved from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF), with administrative oversight through the MEDC, via a governor's executive order. Shortly after, Brian Conway retired as the state historic preservation officer in January 2020, following 22 years of service. This brought a period of change to the SHPO at the leadership level, which continued for several years as the nearly concurrent retirement of the long-term state historic preservation officer and the move of the SHPO to another agency resulted in administrative delays in appointing a replacement. The next state historic preservation officer, Mark Rodman, was not appointed by the governor until May 2021. Unfortunately, his tenure with the SHPO was short, as he passed away suddenly in June 2022. The next individual to be appointed to the position was Ryan Schumaker, who was appointed to the role in September 2023.

FEDERAL LEVEL

Administration Change: With the election of a new president in 2024, the administration took quick action within its first year. These actions included the issuing of several executive orders (EO), several of which have directly or indirectly impacted the field of historic preservation. For example, EO 14154 and 14156 provided emergency declarations that some federal agencies have used to bypass the normal Section 106 process on energy projects, potentially negatively impacting historic resources across the country. EO 14151, “Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing,” resulted in grant agreements that barred funds being used for activities not in line with the administration’s priorities. The implementation of this EO in 2025 caused a significant delay in SHPOs nationwide receiving their annual HPF apportionment, as Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for those funds was delayed for months as the government reviewed it to ensure the grant program complied with the EO.

Most of these EOs have also directly impacted the responsibilities that federal agencies have for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which also requires assessment of impacts to cultural resources. Changes to NEPA have been particularly direct, with federal agencies reassessing how they review projects and excluding whole categories of projects from having to be reviewed. EOs have also had a direct impact on federal staffing and grant funding received from federal agencies.

Federal Agency Staffing Change: Early in the new administration, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was established to streamline the size and cost of the federal government. In the context of historic preservation, the NPS and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP) saw severe reductions in staff through incentivized retirement packages and terminations of employment. There were also reductions in preservation-related staff from many federal agencies, which has made it difficult to work efficiently with federal agencies through the Section 106 process.

Federal Funding Changes: DOGE was also tasked with taking a close look at grant funding and spending by federal agencies. This review created a lot of uncertainty for those who had active grants and for those with pending applications. For the field of historic preservation, this was most directly felt within the context of HPF grants that the NPS administers. In the case of SHPOs, delays in the release of the FY 2025 NOFO for the annual formula grant resulted in some SHPOs having to terminate staff. Fortunately, the Michigan SHPO did not experience a reduction in force. For special project grants, grant

agreements were held in limbo for months, with some grants being completely cancelled. These reviews and changes have created an elevated level of uncertainty for SHPOs and stakeholders across the state who rely on grants for program activities, which will continue over the next several years.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Program Comment: In late 2024, the ACHP issued its first ever, self-generated, Program Comment with the goal of streamlining the Section 106 process for projects for a variety of federal agencies. Program Comments are developed by federal agencies to help better navigate the Section 106 process when they are trying to implement large or complex federally funded programs. This Program Comment has been met with concerns from preservation advocates, SHPOs, and THPOs, particularly as related to the likelihood of severely hampering the effectiveness of Section 106 regulations. Concerns also include the potential for the public, SHPOs, THPOs and other consulting parties to be cut out of the process, which, at its core, is to be inclusive. The Program Comment has been taken up by a handful of federal agencies to consider and potentially use, so it is unclear what the short- and long-term impact will be on the field of preservation.

GLOBAL LEVEL

COVID-19 Pandemic: Early in 2020, the world effectively shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted all aspects of life. These impacts have been far reaching and continue to be felt today. Within the context of historic preservation, the pandemic caused an increase in construction material costs, which increased the costs for rehabilitation projects using state and federal rehabilitation tax credits and grant funding. Concurrently, there was a general exodus of the workforce from many downtown commercial cores over the first two years of the pandemic as many business and government functions moved to remote or hybrid arrangements. The effect was that many improvement projects were shelved and buildings that were normally occupied suddenly became vacant. Moreover, downtown businesses like restaurants and coffee shops saw a dramatic decline in revenue due to the severe decrease in people working in-person. This resulted in many businesses closing their doors, challenging the livelihood of many historic downtowns statewide.

For the SHPO, the COVID-19 pandemic meant pivoting to working from home for the first time for staff starting early in 2020. This created logistical and technological challenges in how to effectively operate the SHPO's programs since many of them require engagement with the public, including regular meetings and site visits to properties statewide. For

instance, Review Board meetings moved from in-person meetings to a hybrid format, and meetings with local stakeholders such as CLGs and property owners had to be postponed or shifted to virtual meetings to comply with COVID-19 restrictions set statewide, which limited the ability of staff to provide on-the-ground support. However, a long-term positive outcome of such changes is that the infrastructure is now in place to make many meetings more accessible to stakeholders who would not otherwise be able to attend in-person meetings. The SHPO also had to move to the rapid development of online platforms like Smartsheet to help manage digital material submissions to the office. This shift also impacted communities statewide, which suddenly had to figure out how best to meet public meeting requirements for activities such as historic district commission meetings. This became a challenge for many communities, particularly those without the infrastructure in place for virtual meetings.

THREATENED RESOURCES

Throughout the public engagement process, participants and stakeholders were asked for their input on which categories of Michigan's cultural resources face the deepest threats and obstacles. This list, while not exhaustive, reveals those resources that were elevated in conversations and surveys as important statewide trends to monitor and account for as part of future goal setting. Noting these threatened assets is just one step on the path to preservation. Action must be taken throughout our communities to identify, protect, and invest in these resources. This will require the hard work of implementing real change in law, land use planning, and community development practices over the long term. Increasing public awareness of these resources and their importance to our communities is also critical to the success of mitigating current trends.

Archaeological Sites

Efforts are desperately needed to better account for potential and known archaeological resources as part of the National Register program as archaeological sites are historically underrepresented in Michigan. To date, less than 1% of all sites, representing only 194 terrestrial sites and 19 underwater sites, are listed in the National Register. An additional 753 terrestrial sites and 14 underwater sites have been determined eligible for the National Register. Even if these eligible sites were listed, only 3.6% of Michigan archaeological sites would be listed. The previous state plan identified underrepresented communities' resources as a top threatened resource type. Currently, more than half of the archaeological sites in Michigan are pre-contact Native American sites and represent a critically threatened portion of Native American history. Thus, additional work is needed to

ensure that pre-contact and historic Native American archaeological sites are better represented in the National Register, which remains a priority for the SHPO's archaeology program.

Moreover, archaeological sites are threatened daily by development pressures and natural forces, and much more could be done to ensure their protection. This could include the development and implementation of local and state laws that require consideration of archaeological resources in land development projects, public awareness campaigns regarding the importance of archaeology and proper actions to take upon the discovery of a suspected archaeological site, adopting archaeological best practices at the local government level, and early coordination with professional archaeologists as large-scale ground disturbing activities are anticipated.

Cemeteries

Large and small historic community cemeteries throughout Michigan are frequently subject to vandalism, missing grave markers, general neglect, and impacts from neighboring development and public works projects. The SHPO is regularly contacted by concerned citizens and local government representatives inquiring how to protect these important resources that have such deep meaning for their communities. Additionally, unmarked graves and cemeteries are frequently encountered accidentally during development projects. Currently, there are no state-level laws that provide protection for unmarked burials on private land. Unfortunately, cemeteries are only recognized by the National Register criteria under certain circumstances and there are limited federal and state laws geared toward protecting them. The Michigan Historic Cemeteries Preservation Guide provides sound recommendations for the preservation of these endangered resources, but more direct action is needed to ensure their preservation.

Rural and Agricultural Resources

Farmland and open space in Michigan are disappearing at a rapid rate due to threats from widespread suburbanization in larger metro areas and large-scale development such as solar arrays and other expanding industries. Approximately 26.6 percent of Michigan's overall landmass is devoted to farming, principally corn and soybean crops, translating into approximately 9.7 million acres. However, Michigan lost approximately 100,000 acres of farmland in 2025 alone, reflecting a decades-long decline that has been true for farming throughout the nation. From 2002 to 2022, Michigan lost six percent of its farmland, or 670,000 acres. According to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Michigan lost 2,000

farms between 2017 and 2020. In 2024, Michigan retained 44,000 farms, down 3 percent from the prior year.

The reasons for this decline in farming are complex and manifold and include high startup costs, changing generational preferences, and challenging economic environments. For example, with no plan for succession, families retire from farming and sell off their homes and farmland to developers to even afford retirement. Carrying debt for high-cost farming equipment also becomes especially challenging in years of poor crop yields. Preservation of historic rural resources becomes a low priority, exacerbated by an absence of local preservation funding or expertise. The Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity was created to address some of the overarching challenges felt in rural communities, but these circumstances continue to have distressing impacts on the farmsteads, barns, and other structures that contribute to the rural landscape and the larger context of the state's important history as an agricultural leader.

Shoreline Resources

Michigan has over 11,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline, including its islands, and 20% of the world's fresh water supply. Michigan's culture has been shaped over thousands of years by its waters and freshwater habitats. Today, however, changing lake levels, shoreline erosion, and lakeside development continue to alter and threaten important cultural resources, including largely undocumented archaeological sites on shoreline and bottomlands as well as maritime resources such as lighthouses and life-saving stations. Many of these resources are under-documented and most lack access to steady supplies of funding. Ongoing maintenance of shoreline resources in the face of severe weather conditions and water infiltration is a continual challenge. While the SHPO provides MLAP funding for lighthouses, the program is limited in its applicability and does not have the means to address the full scale of needs statewide. Since the work involved in maintaining and protecting shoreline resources is often prohibitively expensive, such as moving threatened buildings away from eroding shoreline, more funding sources must be identified to support demand and creative solutions sought so that Michiganders and those who visit our state can continue to enjoy our magnificent coastline.

Tribal Resources

Michigan is home to twelve federally recognized Tribes and dozens more displaced outside of Michigan that retain a keen interest in their homeland. Much of their heritage is known through the state's archaeological record which, as noted elsewhere, is threatened daily.

This is particularly true for pre-contact Native American archaeological sites. In recent years, national and international focus on the multifaceted stories of Tribal history and culture throughout North America has increased. In Michigan, for example, stakeholders have begun to learn and share more about the difficult history of Michigan's Indian Boarding Schools. Even more must be done to study and interpret these sites and others. Increasing numbers of TCPs are also being identified throughout Michigan, from Saugatuck at the mouth of the Kalamazoo River to the Straits of Mackinac and Isle Royale in Lake Superior. Because they often cover large areas of land and water, protection of TCPs is challenging and complex. However, these environments continue to be significant in Tribal heritage, ceremonies, and lifeways and are critical sites worth preserving. Where Tribes have been present across state lines, states have worked together to recognize, honor, and designate significant Tribal lands and TCPs. Much opportunity remains to explore innovative ways to protect Tribal resources in the face of contemporary challenges.

Vernacular Resources

Simple, vernacular buildings and structures that mark daily life for many, including churches, houses, barns, main street businesses, and civic buildings like township halls, are regularly threatened with loss or alteration due to displacement, demolition, development, and natural disasters. In Michigan, entire residential neighborhoods and commercial corridors have vanished due to neglect or redevelopment. Underrepresented communities are often affected as their history is less likely to survive due to a lack of documentation and protection.

Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act, PA 169, is the enabling legislation for the creation of protected historic districts at the local level, and 78 communities across the state have enacted a local historic district ordinance to protect their communities. Conservation districts and neighborhood conservation plans are other tools that can protect historic assets that may not meet traditional preservation criteria. While they have not yet been used in Michigan, there is ongoing interest in the flexibility this approach could offer for land and neighborhood protection, which may warrant additional discussion statewide. Finally, historic preservation easements can be used to protect historic properties at the behest of their owners. These are key tools for the preservation of vernacular resources that define daily life and, in some cases, may not meet National Register criteria. More tools and educational outreach opportunities should be explored, particularly for communities that may not have the capacity to pursue and implement protective measures.

CHAPTER 4: MEASURING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2020-2025 GOAL REVIEW

As part of the October 2025 stakeholder strategy workshop, participants were asked to review the five goals previously included in the 2020–2025 historic preservation plan. This exercise allowed professionals and community representatives to reflect on what progress had been made, where barriers remained, and which components should be carried forward or revised in the current plan. Participants emphasized that while some tangible progress was made in the last six years, implementation of the last plan was uneven, and many systemic issues remain unresolved. This chapter includes the objectives outlined for the prior plan’s goals, along with a summary of what was accomplished and where the state needs to do more work.

Goal 1: Targeted Preservation Education

- Establish historic building trades and sustainable preservation programs
- Provide training on how to conduct historic research
- Make historic preservation education opportunities more widely available to the public
- Hold regular historic preservation trainings for historic district commissions
- Create youth education programs and establish mechanisms to reach the K–12 audience

Accomplishments:

Educational Programming and Materials:

- MHPN and SHPO webinars
- SHPO outreach to communities, including on-demand training for program areas
- SHPO development of archaeology standards and technical guides
- Educational and research resources on the SHPO’s website, including Civil Rights research and initiatives
- SHPO participation at annual MHPN conferences, including tracks on research, survey, preparing National Register nominations, local historic districts, and the CLG program

Outreach and Trainings:

- SHPO training to CLGs and HDCs
- NAPC workshops for HDCs statewide
- HDC trainings provided by the MHPN
- Notable progress in consultant and regulatory training efforts, particularly through state and partner-sponsored programs, including SHPO Section 106 trainings and Tribal outreach
- Advances in education-related outreach, including social media links and notifications regarding educational materials, trainings, and presentations
- SHPO monthly newsletter to CLGs

K-12 Outreach:

- Michigan Archaeology Day expanded for all ages
- SHPO guidance for International Lego Competition Archaeology Focus in 2025

Areas for Growth:

- Establish historic building trades and sustainable preservation programs
- Create youth education programs and establish mechanisms to reach the K-12 audience

The pandemic limited opportunities for in-person educational development around preservation. This created setbacks for many programs that rely on in-person training, including those in the trades, from which the preservation community is still recovering. In addition, identifying funding sources and sponsor organizations to continue these activities has been an ongoing challenge.

Goal 2: Expand Preservation Funding Opportunities

- Reinstate the state historic preservation tax incentive
- Establish a state historic preservation endowment fund
- Increase the number of grants available for historic preservation activities
- Develop funding eligibility criteria and approval processes that address the needs of underrepresented communities
- Secure new funding sources for historic preservation

Accomplishments:

- The reinstated State Historic Tax Credit (2020) was a major milestone
- The SHPO obtained a PBHR grant (2021) to assist smaller lakeshore communities, and a second PBHR grant (2025) to support rural communities statewide
- The SHPO received multiple NPS AACR and URC grants for survey and designation, which are complemented by the dozens of grants received by local communities and other stakeholders statewide for survey, designation, and capital improvement projects
- The SHPO CLG program has grown substantially since 2020, allowing more Michigan communities to take advantage of annual project funding support
- Several funding programs have been created that can assist in preservation efforts, including, for example, Match on Main grants for small businesses, MEDC's Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP) program, and the Main Street Vibrancy program

Areas for Growth:

- Extend the state historic preservation tax incentive
- Establish a state historic preservation endowment fund
- Develop funding eligibility criteria and approval processes that address the needs of underrepresented communities
- Secure new funding sources for historic preservation

Funding for preservation is a constant challenge. Due to restrictions on state employees, the SHPO cannot directly advocate for additional preservation funding, whether for its own operations or elsewhere in the state, and is reliant on outside organizations to do such lobbying. Advocating for preservation funding or endowments and identifying new funding sources is a complex task for the entire Michigan preservation community and its partners. It is important to note that one of the most important financing tools available in Michigan, the state historic preservation tax credit, is due to sunset on January 1, 2031, without extension by the state legislature.

Goal 3: Increase Diversity in Historic Preservation

- Increase diversity in Michigan's National Register of Historic Places nominations
- Diversify membership in Michigan's historic preservation organizations

- Increase the number of minority professionals working in the historic preservation field
- Offer more historic preservation training opportunities to underserved communities

Accomplishments:

- The SHPO and various communities and organizations statewide received multiple URC and AACR grants to list underrepresented properties in the National Register, bolstering efforts to tell the full story of Michigan’s people and places
- SHPO increased outreach to and partnerships with Tribal governments and THPOs, including Tribal representation on Review Board
- The SHPO developed a TCPs documentation form, spurring the documentation of several new TCPs

Areas for Growth:

- Diversify membership in Michigan’s historic preservation organizations
- Increase the number of minority professionals working in the historic preservation field

Increasing minority representation in historic preservation is challenging. Professional interests develop at an early stage in one’s education and preservation is rarely taught in the K-12 environment or at the college level. Incorporating preservation education and building awareness of preservation as a career path at these levels will be key to stimulating further interest in the field. Communities and preservation organizations statewide can also take greater steps to reach out to a broad array of audiences in a targeted manner.

Goal 4: Build Stronger Partnerships

- Partner with stakeholder institutions and local community organizations to work towards implementing the state plan’s goals and objectives and to increase awareness of historic preservation at all levels
- Work to introduce legislation to require the review of state-funded projects
- Build and strengthen relationships between stakeholders to engage the public and bring relevancy to historic resources
- Connect to and reach a broader audience through cultural heritage tourism programs and expand the use of new technologies and social media formats

Accomplishments:

- Increased interagency and partner coordination:
 - The SHPO has increased regular coordination with the MHPN, City of Detroit, and state and federal agencies
 - SHPO participation at the annual statewide preservation conference
 - Growth in interagency coordination with an MDOT Local Agency Programmatic Agreement and a Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) partnership agreement that have introduced efficiencies into the Section 106 process
 - SHPO expansion of CLG participant communities
 - Increased SHPO collaboration with Tribes and THPOs through participation in Michigan Anishnaabek Cultural Preservation and Repatriation Alliance (MACPRA) meetings
 - Tribal representation on the Review Board
- System Improvements to support stronger partnerships:
 - Development of the SHPO CRIS database and broader use of online portals and resources to provide better access to SHPO materials
 - SHPO website, publicity, and publication improvements through collaboration with the MEDC

Areas for Growth:

- Work to introduce legislation to require the review of state-funded projects

Development of state legislation to protect historic resources in a manner akin to Section 106 consultation has been discussed for many years in Michigan.

Unfortunately, this has not been supported by the Michigan legislature and has been treated as a lower priority to more pressing needs such as funding opportunities.

Goal 5: Maximize Communication

- Develop a statewide historic preservation marketing plan
- Increase the historic preservation presence on social media
- Develop historic contexts that engage a new audience through storytelling
- Use historic resource survey and designation of sites associated with underdocumented areas and underrepresented communities to reach a broader audience

- Highlight the connection between historic preservation and environmental sustainability

Accomplishments:

- The SHPO has increased its online presence which has resulted in wider-ranging public awareness campaigns. The SHPO has 11,000 followers on its Facebook page and launched an Instagram channel in 2023 that now has 1,000 followers, 60% of whom are under the age of 45.
- The SHPO has a dynamic and robust website because of its transition to the MEDC. This has enabled SHPO to provide more virtual content including webinars and companion webpages for public outreach such as the annual Governor’s Awards and Archaeology Month.
- Intentional partnerships with Pure Michigan have opened SHPO programs to a wider audience.
- SHPO-led tracks at the annual statewide historic preservation conference have made SHPO staff and programs more accessible to the preservation community.
- The SHPO received multiple AACR and URC grants to support documentation of underrepresented communities. This included survey and designation of individual sites as well as broader studies such as a historic context for Civil Rights resources in Muskegon County. The SHPO also sponsored context studies for other types of underrepresented resources, such as rural areas in Northfield Township in Washtenaw County, that provide models for how these often-threatened resources can be studied.

Areas for Growth:

- Develop a statewide historic preservation marketing plan
- Highlight the connection between historic preservation and environmental sustainability

Development of a statewide historic preservation marketing plan will require intent, strong partnerships, capacity, and funding. This did not become a high priority in the last planning cycle and will require a sponsoring agency or organization to take the lead in its development. Historic preservation and environmental sustainability have been intertwined for decades and yet it is a message that requires continued repeating. Communities and preservation stakeholders at all levels can take ongoing steps to include this information in their promotional materials, educational resources and branding.

CHAPTER 5: SWOT ANALYSIS

THREATS AND CONSTRAINTS

Historic preservation in Michigan faces many threats and barriers to achieve statewide success. During regional, virtual, and stakeholder sessions, participants reflected on these obstacles, ranging from weak or often rigid policies and persistent underfunding to the relative absence of certain voices and populations in the preservation record.

These challenges often overlap and threaten the long-term viability of preservation in Michigan. Local organizations, Tribal nations, and government agencies are limited in their ability to maintain historic assets or launch new initiatives by a chronic lack of funding. Consequently, many organizations and agencies operate with minimal staff or rely on volunteers, leading to burnout and inconsistent services. With a lack of local preservation expertise across the state, communities with minimal financial resources or capacity are at higher risk of losing their cultural heritage. Governments and cultural institutions and organizations often lack capacity to provide individualized guidance on their programs, which is particularly problematic for newer and/or less experienced applicants and smaller organizations and communities. This creates a barrier to program access and discourages many from participating in preservation.

Participants described the preservation system as often disconnected from allied fields such as housing, planning, infrastructure, and education, for example, as well as from the communities it is supposed to serve. Local leaders and the public often view preservation as rigid, elitist, or disconnected from community needs. In some regions, preservation is actively resisted due to perceptions that it hinders development, cannot adapt to changing needs, or caters only to privileged interests. Collectively, the challenges identified below threaten not only the effectiveness of preservation work but also its integration into community development work and long-term relevance.

Disconnection and Lack of Awareness:

- Lack of alignment between program (usually government) messaging and strategies and local realities and experiences
- Disconnected systems for communication, data, permitting, and regulatory action

Lack of Funding, Planning, and Support:

- Funding challenges at all levels of government and organizations are a barrier to operational continuity, effective programming and long-term planning

- Lack of long-term preservation planning which leads to negative effects of demolition and development
- Insufficient support for and outreach to underrepresented and underserved communities
- Inflexible Regulatory Frameworks make it difficult to respond to pressing issues such as housing or climate resilience

Limited Access:

- Lack of or difficulty accessing preservation training, education and opportunities at all levels
- Difficulty accessing programs and funding due to capacity, education, administrative and/or regulatory constraints

Prevailing Attitudes about Preservation:

- Misconceptions, negative stereotypes and mistrust about preservation’s purpose, value, and flexibility
- Preservation is entangled with histories of displacement, disinvestment and gentrification

Workforce and Volunteer Challenges:

- Limited numbers of minority professionals in the field
- Burnout, understaffing, and capacity shortfalls across agencies and commissions
- Lack of transparency in compensation and lower compensation in general

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite these barriers and threats to historic preservation in Michigan, opportunities exist to counteract their impacts over the next eight years. These include actions that can result in greater community representation, the simplification of systems and removal of access barriers, and more adaptive and responsive preservation policies and programs. By taking advantage of these emerging opportunities and possibilities on a statewide basis, preservation can move forward in Michigan. These opportunities have informed the goals, strategies, and objectives in the Plan.

Foster Partnerships:

- Deepen local partnerships to align messaging with reality on the ground

- Integrate preservation principles into housing, education, sustainability, and economic development efforts

Enhance and Diversify Funding Opportunities:

- Strengthen support for new and diversified funding sources
- Improve accessibility and promotion of tax credits
- Develop an endowment fund for long-term sustainability

Improve, Integrate and Streamline Preservation Planning and Regulation:

- Better integrate preservation into broader planning and land use decisions
- Develop consistent and transparent regulatory infrastructure

Invest in Education and Training:

- Expand youth programming and integrate preservation into K–12 education.
- Increase availability and geographic reach of training

Workforce Development:

- Build new pathways for preservation trades and apprenticeships
- Increase pathways for varied professionals
- Invest in staff capacity and administrative streamlining

Technology:

- Use digital platforms such as community-driven mapping, augmented reality, and digital storytelling to document historic assets, gather stories, and engage the public in interactive and accessible ways
- Incorporate tools like GIS, cultural landscape mapping, and public-access story maps to visualize overlapping cultural and historical layers across the state
- Actively explore how AI tools can responsibly and effectively enhance preservation activities.
- Use available environmental, economic, and demographic data to identify historic resources vulnerable to gentrification, demolition, and climate impacts
- Maintain updated engagement portals where community members can continuously add or update sites of significance and emerging threats, ensuring ongoing public input

SECTION 3: LOOKING FORWARD

CHAPTER 6: THE NEXT EIGHT YEARS

VISION FOR MICHIGAN

The public engagement process for *Michigan's Statewide Historic Preservation Plan 2027-2034* (the Plan) involved hundreds of members of the public and preservation stakeholders. Through digital outreach surveys, in-person and virtual public engagement sessions, and a meeting of preservation and preservation-adjacent stakeholders, important and universal themes emerged around the subjects of funding and resources, education and public awareness, fairness and representation, complexity and inaccessibility, community-led models, development and loss of resources, and tourism and economic development.

CALLOUT BOX: *Strong themes also emerged around storytelling and intangible heritage. While of the utmost importance, these latter themes are generally outside the purview of commonly practiced historic preservation, which is site-specific and focused on places. As is true for many areas of historic preservation, it may be necessary to further approach this topic from an interdisciplinary perspective, in concert with historians, sociocultural anthropologists, and stakeholders of various cultural groups.*

These combined themes were carefully considered in the development of a vision statement for the Plan. Draft vision statements were presented to Michigan's State Historic Preservation Review Board (Review Board) and distilled by its members to develop a simply stated and concise vision statement:

We build Michigan's future by preserving all of its past. Through preservation we define who we are and who we are becoming. Our history strengthens the unique character of our communities.

PRIORITY SUMMARY

The Plan builds upon the progress made through prior statewide plans. Some goals, such as expanding funding for historic preservation, are evergreen and will be of recurring concern. In addition, much progress remains to be accomplished for several of the goals from the 2020-2025 plan, such as targeted preservation education, increasing representation in historic preservation, building stronger partnerships and maximizing

communication, which are also included in this Plan. What has emerged going forward is a desire to address gaps in implementation, barriers to access, and the need for more systemic, scalable, and measurable action.

Through public engagement, the SHPO has discerned the core values and principles that have driven the Plan's goals and will guide their implementation going forward. These include the empowering of all voices to lead preservation initiatives, particularly at the local level; preservation driven by and aligned with sustainability and resilience; creating accessible and transparent preservation systems, resources, and decision-making processes that can be grasped by all; constantly innovating and improving processes and technologies to maintain the relevance and impact of preservation; and building preservation on a broad base of partnership and collaboration.

This Plan consolidates priorities into five integrated goals that focus on expanding public participation in historic preservation for all and for a broader array of resources, utilizing technology and new methods to improve accessibility and innovation, growing the preservation workforce, strengthening and investing in preservation systems, and building partnerships to better leverage community and economic resources.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Support Community-Driven Preservation

Public engagement revealed a strong desire to ensure community-based decision-making is derived from those living with and connected to their heritage. Moreover, decisions should involve those impacting as well as impacted by historic preservation. This goal builds on the intent of Goal #3 from the 2020-2025 plan, which called for increased representation in preservation, by aiming to increase access and remove barriers to preservation programs, funding, and leadership opportunities for all communities, including those commonly overlooked in preservation.

Objective 1.1: Increase broad-based representation in preservation decisions

Strategy 1.1.1: Support local initiatives to create and support community-based partnerships related to historic preservation

Actions:

1. Seek funding to provide annual grants to support historic preservation capacity building
2. Host regional listening sessions to ensure continuous input from communities
3. Leverage a wide variety of community partners to creatively support historic preservation at the local level
4. Build up organizational field staff to provide community outreach regarding historic preservation

Strategy 1.1.2: Seek varied representation on grant panels, review boards, and planning processes

Actions:

1. Encourage guidelines for including varied perspectives on historic preservation advisory and review panels
2. Provide orientation and support for new members from nontraditional preservation backgrounds
3. Include archaeology in educational and support initiatives to include broad coverage of all types of historic resources

Objective 1.2: Remove barriers to participation in preservation programs

Strategy 1.2.1: Simplify application and nomination processes for designations and funding

Actions:

1. Redesign grant and designation forms to be more accessible for applicants to the extent allowed by federal and state program requirements
2. Create downloadable, mobile-friendly submission templates
3. Translate essential documents into Spanish and other commonly spoken languages in Michigan
4. Develop and improve existing community guidance documents to reach broader audiences

Strategy 1.2.2: Provide technical assistance related to historic preservation for small communities and non-traditional applicants

Actions:

1. Establish a cross disciplinary technical assistance team to provide webinars, learning sessions, and other services at little to no cost
2. Offer workshops for small towns, Tribes, and first-time applicants
3. Develop a mentorship program pairing experienced preservationists with community applicants
4. Provide materials online or through webinars and trainings regarding technical assistance and preservation funding available through the SHPO or other organizations to support preservation at the community-level

Objective 1.3: Support bottom-up preservation models

Strategy 1.3.1: Fund community-based survey, preservation plans, and storytelling initiatives

Actions:

1. Enhance and grow community-based funding opportunities for preservation initiatives
2. Increase Certified Local Government (CLG) education, awareness, and creation to support local preservation initiatives
3. Provide online clearinghouses regarding community-level funding opportunities
4. Prioritize funding for community-driven applications for state historical markers and National Register nominations
5. Recognize and amplify community-based success stories in preservation through the Governor’s Awards and other forms of popular recognition

Goal 2: Build Innovation and a Resilient Preservation Workforce Through Education

Preservation succeeds when people understand its relevance and have the tools to participate. This goal strengthens public awareness while building a pipeline of preservation professionals through education, training, and mentorship. It addresses a fundamental challenge across the state: many lack information about and appreciation of historic preservation. Moreover, decision-makers, residents, and local officials often lack the foundational knowledge to advocate for or implement effective preservation practices. As one attendee noted, “We need to educate city councils and planning commissions.”

Preservation is often misunderstood and neglected due to a lack of exposure and clarity about its benefits. Notably, this lack of exposure has greatly impacted the future historic preservation workforce, which as of now appears inadequate to meet anticipated needs and demands.

This goal refines and merges several priorities from the 2020-2025 plan, particularly Goal #1 (education) and Goal #5 (communication). It expands these with a future-facing approach that recognizes the need for a skilled, multi-talented, varied workforce and better-integrated educational resources in schools, trades, and professional sectors.

Objective 2.1: Expand public education on the role and relevance of historic preservation

Strategy 2.1.1: Develop statewide toolkits and campaigns for local governments, schools, and media

Actions:

1. Create downloadable educational toolkits tailored for schools, municipal leaders, and planning commissions
2. Partner with local media and influencers to launch a “Preserve Michigan” public awareness campaign
3. Offer mini-grants to community groups to hold local preservation workshops or exhibits

Strategy 2.1.2: Integrate preservation into K-12 and college curriculums

Actions:

1. Work with the Michigan Department of Education to incorporate preservation into social studies and civics standards
2. Develop archaeology and/or history curriculum for K-12 schools in coordination with the Michigan Department of Education
3. Create lesson plans to share online
4. Create modules that staff can use to conduct classroom visits and presentations
5. Develop webinars for continued teacher education training
6. Support pilot projects to test classroom integration
7. Develop curriculum modules and teacher training on historic places

Objective 2.2: Increase training and mentoring for emerging professionals

Strategy 2.2.1: Partner with universities and trade schools to create pipelines into the field

Actions:

1. Create a Preservation Workforce Pathways program in collaboration with trade schools and colleges
2. Partner with universities and government agencies to educate history, architectural history and anthropology majors about career opportunities in cultural resource management (CRM)
3. Provide career-specific training at colleges and other institutes of higher learning and work with faculty to include more CRM-related curriculum
4. Identify opportunities for preservation-related student internships
5. Offer annual stipends for interns or apprenticeships in historic trades and preservation architecture
6. Fund preservation lab development or field school partnerships with institutions

Strategy 2.2.2: Establish mentorship networks across sectors (nonprofit, government, Tribal)

Actions:

1. Launch a statewide mentor-matching program for early-career professionals and students
2. Host virtual “Careers in Preservation” webinars featuring an array of professionals
3. Develop web-based content on careers in preservation
4. Maintain a public-facing directory of professionals open to mentoring or speaking
5. Partner with THPOs and Tribal governments to mentor and assist Tribes with developing Section 106 and other THPO programs

Goal 3: Strengthen Preservation through Investment and Policy

Preservation efforts cannot succeed without a supportive infrastructure that weaves together financial investment and incentives as well as sound and beneficial policy. This

goal addresses preservation’s basic infrastructure, from its legal framework to often complex review and planning processes, together with the funding resources and mechanisms that enable preservation initiatives to unfold. Public engagement sessions revealed a strong desire to modernize preservation processes and make them easier for communities to navigate. In the words of one participant, “The paperwork alone is enough to make people walk away.” This frustration reflects the bureaucratic hurdles that can stall or derail preservation efforts, especially in resource-limited areas. The public also voiced strong support to more readily align historic preservation with local housing and economic development goals.

Building on the implementation intentions of Goals #2 (expand preservation funding) and #4 (stronger partnerships) in the 2020-2025 plan, this new goal also advances calls for modernization and coordination that were voiced but not fully developed in the previous framework. It integrates innovation and practical reform to make preservation not only more accessible but more impactful.

Objective 3.1: Expand sustainable and accessible funding mechanisms

Strategy 3.1.1: Advocate for accessible tax credits and small grants for grassroots preservation

Actions:

1. Work with legislators to simplify the state historic tax credit application process
2. Establish a small-project grant category (\$5K–\$15K) for communities with populations under 25,000
3. Develop outreach materials that demystify preservation funding options

Strategy 3.1.2: Explore new funding sources like endowments, philanthropic partnerships, and cross-sector collaborations

Actions:

1. Convene a statewide preservation philanthropy roundtable
2. Develop partnerships with community foundations, regional economic development agencies, and arts councils
3. Launch a campaign to build a preservation endowment for Michigan communities

Objective 3.2: Address Critical Policy Needs in Historic Preservation

Strategy 3.2.1: Identify and pursue legislative priorities to benefit historic preservation

Actions:

1. Develop legislative priority lists and partner with allied organizations to strategize and comprehensively pursue common legislative goals
2. Develop, invest in, and strengthen state and federal advocacy opportunities such as the annual Historic Preservation Advocacy Week in Washington, D.C.
3. Enlist the support of a broad array of organizations to assist with advocacy
4. Expand the state historic preservation tax credit and remove current sunset requirements
5. Address critical needs for comprehensive burial law(s) that provide protection for unmarked gravesites and burials on both public and private land

Objective 3.3: Align preservation policy with housing and development

Strategy 3.3.1: Streamline review processes without sacrificing integrity

Actions:

1. Develop standardized preservation review guidance for local housing projects
2. Pilot a “fast-track” review process for adaptive reuse projects under a certain threshold
3. Publish model zoning overlays that balance development and heritage goals

Strategy 3.3.2: Encourage adaptive reuse and sustainable preservation practices.

Actions:

1. Provide matching funds for environmentally sustainable preservation projects
2. Offer training to developers on integrating historic fabric into new construction
3. Promote case studies that show housing-preservation synergy

Objective 3.4: Modernize preservation infrastructure

Strategy 3.4.1: Invest in digitization, survey tools, and mapping technologies

Actions:

1. Digitize all existing survey and site inventory records
2. Create a public-facing interactive historic resources map
3. Provide mini grants for communities to purchase digital survey equipment or software

Strategy 3.4.2: Provide training and resources for local government and commissions

Actions:

1. Offer an annual “preservation basics” training for city and township staff
2. Create a digital preservation resource hub with sample ordinances, forms, and guides
3. Publish a local government checklist for preservation-readiness

Goal 4: Protect and Recognize Michigan’s Varied Underrepresented Resources

Michigan has a rich array of cultural resources, but many overlooked resources and those associated with underrepresented cultures are disappearing at an alarming rate. These include simply constructed vernacular structures, archaeological sites, and landscapes representing rural, indigenous, labor, and immigrant histories and more. One participant reflected, “Old barns are disappearing, and no one’s documenting them.” These resources define community identity, are foundational to Michigan’s history, and are deeply valued by many, but are seldom recognized in official records and are likely to fall victim to land development.

This goal commits to actively identifying, documenting, and protecting those resources most at risk of being lost, particularly those types that are rarely formally recognized. This goal advances and deepens the work of Goal #3 (representation) and Goal #4 (stronger partnerships) from the 2020-2025 plan by focusing on visibility, early intervention, and new forms of recognition.

Objective 4.1: Prioritize documentation of at-risk and underrepresented resources

Strategy 4.1.1: Launch targeted survey and inventory projects in rural and underserved areas

Actions:

1. Provide grant assistance specifically for surveying underserved areas
2. Develop a statewide inventory plan to close geographic and cultural gaps
3. Provide training and stipends for local survey teams
4. Collaborate with Tribal governments to document & recognize more Traditional Cultural Places (TCPs)
5. Partner with Tribes and universities to implement a plan to target pre-contact archaeological resources in under-surveyed regions of the state
6. Reassess the most at-risk resources after four years to maintain momentum and relevance

Strategy 4.1.2: Build partnerships with communities to identify what matters to them

Actions:

1. Host “What Matters Here?” workshops in underserved communities
2. Empower and engage communities to do their own investigative work regarding culture, heritage, and historic preservation
3. Offer facilitation and technical support to help residents nominate sites to National Register or create local historic districts

Objective 4.2: Prevent loss through proactive planning

Strategy 4.2.1: Promote preservation emergency planning at the local level

Actions:

1. Create a statewide Historic Resource Risk Assessment tool
2. Host workshops on disaster resilience and emergency response for cultural resources
3. Encourage preservation project plans to include risk-preparedness

Strategy 4.2.2: Fund pre-development studies and stabilization for vulnerable sites

Actions:

1. Bolster opportunities to fund the stabilization of threatened historic structures
2. Prioritize early design, assessment, and feasibility studies in funding decisions

3. Partner with code officials to flag vulnerable sites and incentivize preservation alternatives

Objective 4.3: Expand recognition of nontraditional and vernacular resources

Strategy 4.3.1: Provide updated guidance for the interpretation of non-traditional and vernacular resources

Actions:

1. Seek expertise and host webinars/speaking engagements with national leaders regarding the interpretation of non-traditional resources
2. Establish partnerships with Michigan Humanities and tribal cultural offices
3. Offer technical support for signage, virtual exhibits, and walking tours
4. Develop guidance or assistance programs to build local capacity for grants

Goal 5: Align Preservation to Better Leverage Economic and Community Allies

Preservation is key to the creation of thriving and resilient communities. Through preservation's ties to economic vitality and cultural pride, the preservation of cultural resources fosters a unique sense of place that allows economic development and tourism to thrive. As expressed in a public engagement session during the planning process, "Tourism depends on our charm, and charm depends on preservation."

This goal seeks to integrate preservation more intentionally into economic development strategies, tourism planning, and placemaking initiatives. It highlights how Michigan's historic assets are active contributors to local prosperity, community well-being, and shared identity.

This goal builds upon Goal #4 (stronger partnerships) and Goal #5 (communication) from the 2020-2025 plan but expands the focus to include measurable economic development, cross-sector coordination, and preservation as a strategic tool for community-building.

Objective 5.1: Use preservation to enhance tourism and placemaking

Strategy 5.1.1: Collaborate with tourism boards and Main Street programs on heritage initiatives

Actions:

1. Partner with Pure Michigan to feature preservation-rich destinations
2. Fund preservation-related wayfinding and storytelling materials in tourism corridors
3. Provide matching grants for heritage-based tourism initiatives in small towns
4. Partner with local, regional and statewide tourism commissions to promote historic preservation and the authenticity historic places have to offer.

Strategy 5.1.2: Create toolkits for rural and small-town economic development via preservation

Actions:

1. Develop a “preservation as economic catalyst” guide for local governments
2. Host quarterly peer-learning sessions for communities using preservation in their downtown revitalization
3. Share case studies of communities that have leveraged preservation for local job creation and investment
4. Identify and pursue philanthropic sources of funding to support historic preservation initiatives

Objective 5.2: Strengthen partnerships with planners, developers, and economic agencies

Strategy 5.2.1: Include preservation in comprehensive planning frameworks

Actions:

1. Provide technical assistance to regional planning agencies on integrating historic assets
2. Add preservation data layers to regional and municipal planning geographic information systems (GIS)
3. Develop model language for comprehensive plans that link preservation, housing, and infrastructure
4. Identify potential alliances with a variety of industries and community organizations and learn to speak their “languages” to build trust and partnerships

Strategy 5.2.2: Provide case studies and financial data demonstrating economic value

Actions:

1. Commission an updated statewide economic impact study of preservation
2. Compile data and provide resources for local and state-wide entities regarding the impact of cultural tourism and/or the economic benefits of historic preservation in Michigan
3. Develop an online resource bank of high-impact infographics, research briefs, and return-on-investment calculators
4. Offer webinars and other trainings on preservation incentives, funding tools, and the economic benefits of historic preservation for local governments, historic commissions, and local economic development professionals

CHAPTER 7: WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD SUCCESS

INTRODUCTION

So, what is next? Everything up to this point in the Plan has been about showing where we have been and where we want to go. It has been setting the stage for the actual implementation of the Plan. Can SHPO do this all alone? No, the goals and objectives outlined in the Plan cannot be accomplished in a vacuum or by one individual or entity. It will take partnerships at all levels of government, all levels of advocacy, and from the residents of Michigan who value and want to elevate the preservation of those sites that are important to their communities. The Plan is intended to be a central rallying point for all who value historic preservation and a guiding light for all in its implementation.

WHAT'S NEXT?

For the SHPO, this plan will help guide the work done on behalf of the State of Michigan over the next eight years. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) sets forth the responsibilities of state historic preservation offices across the country. Many of the goals included in this Plan closely align with those responsibilities. Additionally, the SHPO is committed to doing the following in the implementation of the Plan:

- **Annual Implementation Meetings:** Throughout the eight-year cycle of the Plan, the SHPO will hold annual virtual implementation check-in meetings with stakeholders. The goal of these meetings will be to discuss, review, and evaluate where we are as a state in meeting the goals, objectives, and strategies laid out in this Plan. It will serve as a key touch point for collaboration and for sharing updates regarding what stakeholders are doing to further the goals of the Plan.
- **Annual Implementation Report:** After these annual meetings, the SHPO will issue a brief year-in-review report highlighting what has been achieved across the state during the previous year. These reports will also highlight the work that the SHPO is doing to support statewide goals. The hope is that this regular report will help keep the Plan in front of people and demonstrate that the goals are moving forward. The report will not only be shared with stakeholders but also with the public through the SHPO's website and social media channels.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION GUIDE

Below you will find an “Implementation Action Guide.” This guide provides a centralized overview of the Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Actions in the plan. In addition to that information, the SHPO has provided recommendations for potential partners that can support the actions listed. Additionally, the guide includes a proposed timeframe to serve as a goalpost for making meaningful progress toward each action. Finally, the guide provides a rough estimate of the cost of each of these actions to give a better idea of the level of effort involved in implementing those items. The hope is that everyone can use this guide as a quick reference to help stay focused and aligned as much as possible.

| GOAL | OBJECTIVE | STRATEGY | ACTION | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | TIMEFRAME | ESTIMATED COSTS |
|--|---|---|---|--|------------------|------------------------|
| Goal 1: Support Community-Driven Preservation | Objective 1.1: Increase broad-based representation in preservation decisions | Strategy 1.1.1: Support local initiatives to create and support community-based partnerships related to historic preservation | 1. Seek funding to provide annual grants to support historic preservation capacity building in underrepresented communities | SHPO, MHPN, Tribes | 6 Months | \$ |
| | | | 2. Host regional listening sessions to ensure continuous input from underrepresented communities | SHPO, MHPN, Tribes | 1 Year | \$ |
| | | | 3. Leverage a wide variety of community partners to creatively support historic preservation at the local level | SHPO, MHPN, Tribes | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | Strategy 1.1.2: Seek diverse representation on grant panels, review boards, and planning processes | 1. Encourage guidelines for enlisting underrepresented communities on historic preservation advisory and review panels | SHPO | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | 2. Provide orientation and support for new members from nontraditional preservation backgrounds. | SHPO, Cultural Organizations | 1 Year | \$ |
| | | | 3. Include archaeology in educational and support initiatives to include broad coverage of all types of historic resources | SHPO, DNR/MHC, Higher Education Institutions | 3 Years | \$ |
| | Objective 1.2: Remove barriers to participation in preservation programs | Strategy 1.2.1: Simplify application and nomination processes for designations and funding. | 1. Redesign grant and designation forms using plain language principles. | SHPO | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | 2. Create downloadable, mobile-friendly submission templates. | SHPO | 1 Year | \$ |
| | | | 3. Translate essential documents into Spanish and other commonly spoken languages in Michigan. | SHPO | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 4. Develop and improve existing community guidance documents to reach broader audiences | SHPO | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | Strategy 1.2.2: Establish a cross disciplinary Technical Assistance Team (TAT) to provide webinars, learning sessions and other services at little to no cost. | SHPO | 8 Years | \$\$\$ | |

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| | | Strategy 1.2.2: Provide technical assistance related to historic preservation for small communities and nontraditional applicants. | 2. Offer workshops for small towns, tribes, and first-time applicants. | SHPO | 2 Years | \$ | |
| | | | 3. Develop a mentorship program pairing experienced preservationists with community applicants. | SHPO | 3 Years | \$ | |
| | | | 4. Provide materials online or through webinars and trainings regarding technical assistance and preservation funding available through SHPO to support preservation at the community-level. | SHPO | 2 Years | \$ | |
| | Objective 1.3: Support bottom-up preservation models | | Strategy 1.3.1: Fund community-based survey, preservation plans and storytelling initiatives. | 1. Launch a microgrant program for local oral history or heritage interpretation projects. | MHPN | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | | 2. Enhance and grow community-based funding opportunities for preservation initiatives | MHPN; Local Governments; Local Non-Profits | 4 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | | 3. Increase Certified Local Government education, awareness and creation to support local preservation initiatives | SHPO; MHPN | 1 Year | \$ |
| | | | | 4. Provide online clearinghouse regarding community-level funding opportunities beyond SHPO supported grants. | SHPO; MHPN; MML | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | | 5. Prioritize funding for community-driven nominations to state and national registers. | SHPO; MHPN | 2 years | \$ |
| | | | | 6. Inventory current efforts to collect community stories and identify best practices. | MHPN; Local Governments; Local Non-Profits | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | | 7. Identify a host organization and develop a "Community Narratives Archive". | MHPN; Local Governments; Local Non-Profits; Educational Institutions | 2 Years | \$ |
| 8. Recognize and amplify community-based success stories in preservation through the Governor's Awards and other forms of popular recognition | SHPO; MHPN | 1 Year | \$ | | | | |

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| | | Strategy 1.3.2: <i>Promote models that prioritize lived experience and cultural relevance.</i> | 1. Co-create preservation planning templates with community leaders. | SHPO; Local Governments | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | 2. Document and share case studies of successful community-led efforts. | SHPO; MHPN, MML, Local Governments | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | 3. Incentivize collaborative projects between preservation professionals and cultural workers. | SHPO; MHPN | 5 Years | \$\$ |

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|--|--|---|--|--|---------|--------|
| Goal 2: Build Innovation and a Resilient Preservation Workforce Through Education | Objective 2.1: Expand public education on the role and relevance of historic preservation | Strategy 2.1.1: Develop statewide toolkits and campaigns for local governments, schools, and media. | 1. Create downloadable educational toolkits tailored for schools, municipal leaders, and planning commissions. | SHPO; MHPN; DNR/MHC; Local Governments; EDOs | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 2. Partner with local media and influencers to launch a “Preserve Michigan” public awareness campaign. | SHPO; MHPN; Local Governments; EDOs | 3 Years | \$ |
| | | | 3. Offer mini-grants to community groups to hold local preservation workshops or exhibits | SHPO; MHPN; DNR/MHC; Local Governments; EDOs | 3 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | Strategy 2.1.2: Integrate preservation into K-12 and college curriculum. | 1. Work with the Michigan Department of Education to incorporate preservation into social studies and civics standards. | SHPO; DOE; MHPN; School Districts | 6 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 2. Develop archaeology and/or history curriculum for K-12 schools in coordination with Michigan Department of Education. | SHPO; DOE; MHPN; DNR/MHC; School Districts | 6 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Create lesson plans to share online. | SHPO; DOE; MHPN; DNR/MHC; School Districts | 6 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 4. Create modules that staff can use to conduct classroom visits and presentations. | SHPO; DOE; MHPN; DNR/MHC; School Districts | 6 Years | \$\$ |
| | 5. Develop webinars for teacher continued education training. | | SHPO; DOE; MHPN; DNR/MHC; School Districts | 6 Years | \$ | |
| | 6. Support pilot projects to test classroom integration. | | SHPO; DOE; MHPN; DNR/MHC; School Districts | 6 Years | \$\$ | |
| | 7. Develop curriculum modules and teacher training on historic places and cultural storytelling | | SHPO; DOE; MHPN; DNR/MHC; School Districts | 6 Years | \$\$ | |
| Objective 2.2: Increase training and mentoring for emerging professionals. | | 1. Create a Preservation Workforce Pathways program in collaboration with trade schools and colleges. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 6 Years | \$\$ | |
| | | 2. Partner with universities and government agencies to educate history, architectural history and anthropology majors about career opportunities in CRM. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 6 Years | \$\$ | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|----------|----|
| | | Strategy 2.2.1: Partner with universities and trade schools to create pipelines into the field. | 3. Provide career-specific training at Tribal colleges and other institutes of higher learning and work with faculty to include more CRM-related curriculum. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 6 Years | \$\$\$\$ | |
| | | | 4. Identify opportunities for preservation-related student internships. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 6 Years | \$ | |
| | | | 5. Offer annual stipends for interns or apprenticeships in historic trades and preservation architecture. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 6 Years | \$\$\$ | |
| | | | 6. Fund preservation lab development or field school partnerships with institutions. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 6 Years | \$\$\$\$ | |
| | | | Strategy 2.2.2: Establish mentorship networks across sectors (nonprofit, government, Tribal). | 1. Launch a statewide mentor-matching program for early-career professionals and students. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 4 Years | \$ |
| | | | | 2. Host virtual "Careers in Preservation" webinars featuring diverse professionals. | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | 3. Develop web-based content on careers in preservation | | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 2 Years | \$ | |
| | | 3. Maintain a public-facing directory of professionals open to mentoring or speaking. | | MHPN; Trade Schools; Higher Education Institutions | 2 Years | \$ | |

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|--|--|--|---|-----------------------|---------|--------|
| Goal 3: Strengthen Preservation through Investment and Policy | Objective 3.1: Expand sustainable and accessible funding mechanisms. | Strategy 3.1.1: Advocate for accessible tax credits and small grants for grassroots preservation. | 1. Work with legislators to simplify the state historic tax credit application process. | MHPN | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | 2. Establish a small-project grant category (\$5K-\$15K) for communities with populations under 25,000. | MHPN; SHPO | 8 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Develop outreach materials that demystify preservation funding options. | MHPN; SHPO | 3 Years | \$ |
| | | Strategy 3.1.2: Explore new funding sources like endowments, philanthropic partnerships, and cross-sector collaborations. | 1. Convene a statewide preservation philanthropy roundtable in 2027. | MHPN | 4 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Develop partnerships with community foundations, regional economic development agencies, and arts councils. | SHPO; MACC; MHPN | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | 3. Launch a campaign to build a preservation endowment for Michigan communities. | SHPO; MACC; MHPN | 2 Years | \$ |
| | Objective 3.2: Address Critical Policy Needs in Historic Preservation | Strategy 3.2.1: Identify and pursue legislative priorities to benefit historic preservation | 1. Develop legislative priority lists and partner with allied organizations to strategize comprehensively pursue common legislative goals | SHPO; MACC; MHPN | 1 Year | \$ |
| | | | 2. Develop, invest in, and strengthen state and federal advocacy opportunities such as the annual Historic Preservation Advocacy Week in Washington, D.C. | SHPO; MACC; MHPN | 1 Year | \$ |
| | | | 3. Enlist the support of a broad array of organizations to assist with advocacy | SHPO; MACC; MHPN | 2 Years | \$ |
| | | | 4. Expand the State Historic Preservation Tax Credit and lift the current sunset requirements | SHPO; MACC; MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 5. Address critical needs for comprehensive burial law(s) that provide protection for unmarked gravesites and burials on both public and private land. | SHPO; DNR/MHC; Tribes | 3 Years | \$\$ |

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|--|---|---|---|---|---------|------------|
| | Objective 3.3: Align preservation policy with housing and development. | Strategy 3.3.1: Streamline review processes without sacrificing integrity. | 1. Develop standardized preservation review guidance for local housing projects. | SHPO; MEDC; Local Governments; MSHDA; MML | 3 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Pilot a “fast-track” review process for adaptive reuse projects under a certain threshold. | SHPO; MEDC; Local Governments; MSHDA; MML | 2 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Publish model zoning overlays that balance development and heritage goals. | SHPO; MEDC; Local Governments; MSHDA; MML | 3 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | Strategy 3.3.2: Encourage adaptive reuse and sustainable preservation practices. | 1. Provide matching funds for environmentally sustainable preservation projects. | SHPO; MEDC; Local Governments; MSHDA; MML; EGLE | 6 Years | \$\$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Offer training to developers on integrating historic fabric into new construction. | SHPO; MEDC; Local Governments; MSHDA; MML | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 3. Promote case studies that show housing-preservation synergy. | SHPO; MEDC; Local Governments; MSHDA; MML | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | Objective 3.4: Modernize preservation infrastructure. | Strategy 3.4.1: Invest in digitization, survey tools, and mapping technologies. | 1. Digitize all existing survey and site inventory records. | SHPO | 1 Year | \$\$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Create a public-facing interactive historic resources map. | SHPO | 2 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Provide mini grants for communities to purchase digital survey equipment or software. | SHPO; MHPN | 4 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | Strategy 3.4.2: Provide training and resources for local government and commissions. | 1. Offer an annual “Preservation Basics” training for city and township staff. | SHPO; MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 2. Create a digital Preservation Resource Hub with sample ordinances, forms, and guides. | SHPO; MHPN | 3 Years | \$ |
| | | | 3. Publish a local government checklist for preservation-readiness. | SHPO; MHPN | 2 Years | \$ |

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| Goal 4: Protect and Recognize Michigan's Varied Underrepresented Resources | Objective 4.1: Prioritize documentation of at-risk and underrepresented resources. | Strategy 4.1.1: Launch targeted survey and inventory projects in rural and underserved areas. | 1. Provide grant assistance specifically for surveying underserved areas. | SHPO; MHPN | 5 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Develop a statewide inventory plan to close geographic and cultural gaps. | SHPO; MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 3. Provide training and stipends for local survey teams. | SHPO; MHPN | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 4. Collaborate with Tribal governments to document & recognize more TCP/TCL resources. | SHPO; Tribes | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 5. Partner with Tribes and universities to implement plan to target pre-contact archaeological resources in under-surveyed regions of the state. | SHPO; Tribes | 3 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | Strategy 4.1.2: Build partnerships with communities to identify what matters to them | 1. Host "What Matters Here?" workshops in underserved communities. | MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 2. Empower and engage communities to do their own investigative work regarding culture, heritage and historic preservation. | SHPO; MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 3. Offer facilitation and technical support to help residents nominate sites to local or state registers. | SHPO; MHPN | 1 Year | \$\$ |
| | | | 4. Develop story-based data collection tools to gather cultural memory and place significance. | Cultural Organizations | 3 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | Objective 4.2: Prevent loss through proactive planning. | Strategy 4.2.1: Promote preservation emergency planning at the local level. | 1. Create a statewide Historic Resource Risk Assessment tool. | SHPO; MHPN; MML | 3 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Host annual workshops on disaster resilience and emergency response for cultural resources. | SHPO; DNR/MHC; EGLE | 3 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Encourage preservation project plans to include risk-preparedness. | SHPO | 3 Years | \$\$ |

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| | | Strategy 4.2.2: Fund pre-development studies and stabilization for vulnerable sites. | 1. Launch stabilization grants for threatened historic structures. | SHPO; MHPN | 5 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Prioritize early design, assessment, and feasibility studies in funding decisions. | SHPO | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 3. Partner with code officials to flag vulnerable sites and incentivize preservation alternatives. | SHPO; Local Governments; MEDC; MML | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | Objective 4.3: Expand recognition of nontraditional and vernacular resources. | Strategy 4.3.1: Provide updated guidance for the interpretation of nontraditional and vernacular resources. | 1. Seek expertise and host webinars/speaking engagements with national leaders regarding the interpretation of non-traditional resources. | MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Provide templates, recording guides, and training for community documentation teams. | Cultural Organizations; SHPO | 3 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Establish partnerships with Michigan Humanities and tribal cultural offices. | MHPN; MACC; Tribes | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 4. Offer technical support for signage, virtual exhibits, and walking tours. | Cultural Organizations; DNR/MHC | 2 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | Strategy 4.3.2: Support reinterpretation and contextualization of existing listings. | 1. Develop interpretation grants for communities reexamining underrepresented history. | Cultural Organizations; DNR/MHC | 4 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Collaborate with tribal nations, historical societies, and youth groups on new signage or exhibits. | Tribes; Cultural Organizations; Higher Education Institution | 3 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 3. Create digital storytelling tools tied to Michigan's historic places map. | Tribes; Cultural Organizations; Higher Education Institution | 6 Years | \$\$ |
| | | 4. Fund interpretation grants for underrepresented communities. | Cultural Organizations; DNR/MHC | 6 Years | \$\$\$\$ | |

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| Goal 5: Align Preservation to Better Leverage Economic and Community Allies | Objective 5.1: Use preservation to enhance tourism and placemaking. | Strategy 5.1.1: Collaborate with tourism boards and Main Street programs on heritage initiatives. | 1. Partner with Pure Michigan to feature preservation-rich destinations | MEDC; SHPO | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 2. Fund preservation-related wayfinding and storytelling materials in tourism corridors. | MEDC; SHPO; MACC | 4 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Provide matching grants for heritage-based tourism initiatives in small towns | MEDC; SHPO; MACC | 4 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 4. Partner with local, regional and statewide tourism commissions to promote historic preservation. | MEDC; SHPO; MACC; Local Governments; EDOs | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | Strategy 5.1.2: Create toolkits for rural and small-town economic development via preservation. | 1. Develop a "Preservation as Economic Catalyst" guide for local governments. | MEDC; SHPO; MML; MHPN | 5 Years | \$\$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Host quarterly peer-learning sessions for communities using preservation in their downtown revitalization. | MEDC; SHPO; MML; MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Share case studies of communities that have leveraged preservation for local job creation and investment. | MEDC; SHPO; MML; MHPN | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 4. Identify and pursue philanthropic sources of funding to support historic preservation initiatives. | MHPN; SHPO | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | Objective 5.2: Strengthen partnerships with planners, developers, and economic agencies. | Strategy 5.2.1: Include preservation in comprehensive planning frameworks. | 1. Provide technical assistance to regional planning agencies on integrating historic assets. | SHPO; Local Governments | 1 Year | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 2. Add preservation data layers to regional and municipal planning GIS systems. | SHPO; Local Governments | 2 Years | \$\$\$ |
| | | | 3. Develop model language for comprehensive plans that link preservation, housing, and infrastructure | SHPO; Local Governments; MEDC; MML | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 4. Identify potential alliances with a variety of industries and community organizations and learn to speak their "languages" to build trust and partnerships | SHPO; MML | 2 Years | \$\$ |
| | | | 1. Commission an updated statewide economic impact study of preservation. | SHPO; MEDC; MML | 4 Years | \$\$\$\$ |

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| | | <p>Strategy 5.2.2: Provide case studies and financial data demonstrating economic value.</p> | <p>2. Compile data and provide resources for local and state-wide entities regarding the impact of cultural tourism and/or the economic benefits of historic preservation in Michigan.</p> | <p>SHPO; MEDC; MML; MHPN</p> | <p>4 Years</p> | <p>\$\$\$</p> |
| | | | <p>3. Develop an online resource bank of high-impact infographics, research briefs, and ROI calculators.</p> | <p>SHPO; MEDC; MML; MHPN</p> | <p>4 Years</p> | <p>\$\$\$</p> |
| | | | <p>4. Offer webinars and other trainings on preservation incentives, funding tools and the economic benefits of historic preservation for local governments, historic commissions and local economic development professionals.</p> | <p>SHPO; MEDC; MML; MHPN</p> | <p>2 Years</p> | <p>\$\$\$</p> |