EXAMPLE SCOPE OF WORK – HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Project Summary

The City proposes to hire a professional preservation consultant specializing in preservation planning and architectural history to develop an updated, cohesive set of design guidelines consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation for the City’s local historic districts. The updated guidelines will replace the City’s current guidelines, which were adopted in 1996. While the current guidelines have long served the Historic District Commission (HDC), they lack the detail of modern design guidelines and fail to address emerging trends in preservation such as alternative materials and sustainability. Moreover, the existing guidelines are text-based only and do not include illustrations that help the reader understand the principles presented. The combination of these issues often leads to lengthy application reviews and extensive plan revisions. These problems have been exacerbated in recent years by increased development pressure and controversial decision making, which have reinforced the need for new guidelines. The finished product will be a comprehensive, user-friendly set of design guidelines intended to provide HDC members with the information necessary to make consistent, defensible decisions regarding proposed alterations in the City’s local historic districts. The updated guidelines will also enhance understanding on the part of property owners, architects, contractors, and others working with them as they plan future work for properties.

Project Need and Goals

The City’s current guidelines, although serviceable, are dated in their approach to providing guidance for the appropriate treatment of historic resources in the City’s local historic districts and are often vague, offering generalized guidance that is not tailored to the specific context of the city’s resources. The result is that current guidelines are deficient as an effective planning and decision-making tool, thus undermining their purpose and use. This is incredibly problematic for the HDC, which must be able to provide consistent, defensible decisions grounded in approved preservation treatments but is often left making subjective and/or inconsistent decisions that have the potential to not only contribute to the erosion of the City’s historic fabric but also to leave the HDC open to problems. The existing guidelines also fail to provide property owners—who are the day-to-day stewards of our community’s heritage assets—with easily understood, user-friendly guidance for undertaking work in the historic districts. The existing guidelines, which are text-based only, lack illustrative drawings and photographic examples of important concepts, which are critical to facilitating understanding of appropriate and inappropriate treatments. Finally, the existing guidelines fail to address advancing techniques in preservation and do not adequately address topics such as energy efficiency and alternative materials, critical concepts that can help sustain use of our historic resources if appropriately incorporated. In the absence of such information, the HDC is forced to make decisions on limited guidance, which often leads to decisions that are inconsistent or not as well thought out as they should be. A copy of the City’s existing guidelines is provided as an attachment to this application.

It is important to note that in 2011 the City and HDC had established a working group to review the existing guidelines and begin to prepare an updated document for presentation to the public. However, it quickly became apparent that the City lacked the capacity and professional knowledge to complete such a project on its own. As such, as other priorities arose, work on the updated guidelines stalled out. The goal of this grant project then is to see through the efforts to update the guidelines by bringing in a preservation consultant that can successfully lead the project and develop a clear set of guidelines that will better equip City staff, HDC members, property owners, and others to make informed decisions about proposed alterations in the City’s historic districts. A focus will be placed on preparing guidelines that are: (1) in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation; (2) easy to understand and well-illustrated with examples that are tailored to the specific building types, materials, architectural styles, and site characteristics of the City’s historic districts; and (3) thorough in their inclusion of topics related to common rehabilitation projects in the City’s historic districts.
Summary of Study Area

The City of Evanston is the county seat of Burlington County. As a result, the community has historically served as the hub for government and administrative activity for the county, which has supported the community’s population growth since its founding in 1884. The City has seen considerable growth and change over the last 10 years as additional investment has spurred a series of redevelopment projects in the downtown core and at the fringes of established areas, particularly to the north and east. Such change has spurred the City to undertake an update to the community master plan and to review its zoning ordinance in recent years with the goal of making sure that continued change is consistent with the community vision for the identity and character of the city.

The City presently has four local historic districts, all of which are residential in character: Ridgewood Neighborhood, Broadmoor Neighborhood, Irvington Neighborhood, and Meadowbrook Neighborhood. These districts, which represent the residential growth and build-out of the community form the late-nineteenth through early-twentieth centuries, are the focus of the guidelines to be prepared under this project. These districts collectively represent changing patterns in residential development over the course of more than 50 years and the evolution of domestic architectural styles and building forms, from richly-detailed Italianate mansions to modest bungalows. Representative photographs of resources and maps of each district are included as attachments to this application.

Proposed Methodology

The survey project will be carried out in coordination with SHPO to ensure that the guidelines comply with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and related technical guidance, including, for example, the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and guidance provided in the National Park Service’s Preservation Briefs. The City anticipates that the project will proceed according to the timeline outlined in the Work Schedule and include the following tasks:

1. **RFP and Consultant Selection:** Once a grant agreement is executed with SHPO, the City will begin working on the Request for Proposals (RFP), which will be used to competitively select a consultant who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR 61) for Architectural Historian and/or Historic Architect and possesses the following: (1) thorough knowledge of and familiarity with late-nineteenth through mid-twentieth century residential architecture; (2) thorough understanding of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards; (3) demonstrated experience in preparing sound design guidelines documents meeting professional standards; (4) expertise in digital photography and the creation of high-quality illustrations; and (5) a proven record of effective public engagement and outreach in association with preservation projects. The City will work closely with SHPO for review and approval of the RFP, as well as selection and approval of the consultant for the survey. The selected consultant will ultimately be responsible for all technical work associated with the project, including hosting public and HDC workshops; content development for the design guidelines; photography and creating illustrations; and design and layout of the document.

2. **Consultant Kick-Off Meeting:** At the start of the project, the City, SHPO, and selected consultant will participate in a kick-off meeting to discuss the goals of the project, tasks to be completed, and anticipated timelines. Following the meeting, the City will invite the consultant to visit the historic districts or portions thereof to get a better understanding of the character of the districts to be addressed by the guidelines and to discuss specific topics of concern as well as past successes.

3. **Internal Stakeholder Work Session(s):** At the outset of the project, the consultant will participate in the first of a series of working sessions with the City. It is anticipated that during this session the consultant will engage in discussions with the HDC, planning and zoning staff, and other relevant stakeholders from the Community Development Department that participate in or influence decisions related to activity in the historic districts. While the format and activities for this work session are to be determined by the consultant, the City anticipates that, at minimum, the consultant will engage with City stakeholders to discuss, for example, the
strengths and weaknesses of current guidance, pros and cons of various formatting options, prioritization of needs for the new guidelines, and issues of particular concern to be discussed. The group will also discuss and finalize a plan for engaging public stakeholders in the process to ensure that all affected parties are represented in the project, thus working toward building an ethic of understanding for preservation and local historic district administration. At this time, the City will provide to the consultant existing documents that may be of use in preparation of the guidelines, including inventories and survey information, summaries of past discussions related to updating the guidelines, and the City’s database of past COA decisions, which will facilitate an understanding of project trends witnessed by the HDC. It is anticipated that up to two (2) additional work sessions may be required during the course of the project to gather feedback from internal stakeholders on proposed updates and changes to the guidelines.

4. **Initial Public Meeting:** The City and consultant will also coordinate to host a public meeting at the outset of the project, either as part of a regularly scheduled HDC meeting or a specially called meeting. Information on the meeting will be sent to property owners in the districts and related groups (e.g., neighborhood associations) and advertised on the City’s website, on the community notice board at City Hall, and on social media. The purpose of this meeting will be to introduce the project to property owners and other stakeholders and to discuss the proposed methodology, goals of the project, and anticipated final products. This meeting at the outset of the project will also present an ideal opportunity for soliciting input from property owners as it relates to their use and understanding of the design guidelines and processes affecting their properties. The consultant will prepare a PowerPoint presentation for this meeting and plan and execute relevant exercises and discussion activities.

5. **Review of Existing Documentation and Completion of Photography:** The consultant will collect and review pertinent information related to the historic districts in addition to the existing guidelines. Such information may include but is not limited to master plans, zoning information, property maintenance codes, histories, historical photographs, historic resource surveys and inventories, Study Committee reports, National Register nominations, and cartographic resources. The consultant will also complete digital photographic documentation of the character and context of the historic districts for use in preparing the updated guidelines. Such photography will include individual buildings, individual components and materials, streetscapes, and district-level characteristics such as spatial relationships, organization, and other trends that define the character of the districts.

6. **Preparation of the Guidelines:** In consideration of the collected materials and discussions with internal and external stakeholders, the consultant will develop a new design guidelines document. The final product will be a user-friendly handbook that will expand and elaborate on content covered in the current guidelines and incorporate information on additional preservation techniques and common design review topics; the updated guidelines also will identify and address (or reconcile) any conflicts between the guidelines and current building codes. An emphasis will be placed on accessible language free from unnecessary jargon and concepts that promote a consistent, defensible approach in consideration of the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. The narrative component of the guidelines will be complemented by diagrams, photographs, and other illustrations necessary to clearly convey the appropriate design principles, thus facilitating understanding on the part of end users, including the HDC, property owners, architects, contractors, and others. All photographs and illustrations used will be tailored to the character of the districts covered by the document. The updated document will include, at minimum:

- Introductory information including a table of contents, project acknowledgements, and summary of the districts covered by the guidelines;
- Summary of the role of the design guidelines and the importance of protecting the character of the historic districts;
- Explanation of the historic district commission and the review process, including timelines, how to apply for design review, differences between administrative review and HDC review, decisions that can be reached, appeals process, and other related guidance, as applicable;
• Identification of important concepts such as character-defining features, massing, scale, orientation, visibility, routine maintenance, rehabilitation, the Standards, and contributing and non-contributing status;
• Guidelines for existing buildings, to include discussion of appropriate treatments for features and materials such as masonry, wood, ornamental metal, windows, doors, roofs, foundations, exterior walls, porches, fences, retaining walls, utility and auxiliary equipment placement, and other such items as determined appropriate based on the characteristics of the districts;
• Guidelines for additions and new construction to include discussion of concepts such as placement, setbacks, massing, scale, styles, materials, and design of building components such as windows, doors, and roofs;
• Guidelines for demolition and relocation of buildings;
• Glossary of terms;
• District maps; and
• References.

The City anticipates that the consultant will submit the following for review as part of the project:
Deliverable #1, proposed outline of the design guidelines document (25% submittal);
Deliverable #2, first draft of the design guidelines, including illustrations (50% submittal);
Deliverable #3, revised draft of the design guidelines, including illustrations (95% submittal); and
Deliverable #4, final drafts of all materials (100% submittal). The consultant will be required to address all SHPO comments and corrections at each review phase. The City and consultant will meet with SHPO, as necessary, after submission of the deliverables to discuss the comments prior to making adjustments for the remainder of the work.

7. Public Review Meeting: Concurrent with development of the 95% submittal, the City and consultant will coordinate to host a follow-up public meeting to present the general content of the proposed document. The consultant will prepare a presentation that outlines the new document; identifies substantial changes made to the document, including new guideline components and substantively revised language in existing guidelines or altered processes; and presents samples of the new formatting of the document. Additional feedback from public stakeholders will be collected as part of this meeting and a subsequent 30-day review period and will be incorporated into the 95% submittal, as appropriate.

8. HDC Presentation: In coordination with preparation of the 100% submittal, the consultant will assist the City in presenting the updated guidelines to the HDC. This presentation will provide a walkthrough of the new design guidelines and provide an opportunity for HDC members to ask questions about using the new document and applicability of certain guidelines.

It should be noted that the City anticipates that the project will end upon preparation of the 100% submittal and presentation to the HDC. Given the limited time afforded by the grant period, formal adoption of the updated design guidelines by the municipality will be completed outside of the grant project.

Final Deliverables
Upon completion of the project, the City will provide SHPO with:

• One (1) hardcopy of the final guidelines document;
• Two (2) sets of CDs/DVDs or flash drives including electronic copies of the guidelines document and photographs and illustrations collected or prepared as part of the project.

Anticipated Public Outreach

Given the role that the public plays in stewardship of resources in the historic districts and that property owners are one of the primary users of design guidelines, the City truly believes that this project can only be successful when the public is appropriately engaged. The City anticipates taking an “early and
often” approach to discussion with property owners and the public. As noted above, the City will host at least two dedicated public meetings in association with this project and provide a 30-day public review period for the updated guidelines. Additional information can be gleaned from HDC meetings, which are open to the public and will be complemented by information posted on the City’s website and social media. All draft and final products resulting from the project will be made available on the municipal website and in hardcopy at City Hall.

In addition, if appropriate interest is identified at the first public meeting, the City will consider use of a steering committee to help direct development of the design guidelines. Such a steering committee could include representatives from each historic district, which would be incorporated into discussions as part of the internal stakeholders’ meetings discussed above. At the consultant’s discretion and as agreed upon with the City, additional outreach may include online surveys or other forums for discussion.

**Anticipated Outcomes**

The updated guidelines will provide a critical planning tool that will bring a level of certainty and predictability to HDC members, HDC staff, property owners, architects, contractors, and others by reducing or eliminating the subjectivity that can often emerge during a review. By providing consistent, sound guidelines presented in a user-friendly, easy-to-understand format, the updated guidelines will make review processes and discussions more efficient, which will benefit HDC members and applicants alike. Through inclusion of discussion outlining the importance of design review and associated processes, the document also will enhance public understanding of how decisions are made and the applicability of considerations throughout the design review process. Such improvements will have a long-term positive impact on perception of historic preservation and the role of the HDC in the community. Equally important, the public dialogue that will be engaged through this project will benefit the City’s efforts to further engage preservation activities beyond the scope of this project. The project will provide an opportunity for the City to talk about historic preservation in a directed way and show how it can positively impact the character and vitality of the community in which we live. While these conversations will primarily be with property owners in existing historic districts, anyone in the city will be able to attend the public meetings and access the materials developed through the product. As such, the project has the potential to reach audiences beyond those who are already located in historic districts, which contributes to the City’s long-term goal to build a broad ethic of awareness and appreciation of the City’s historic resources.