EXAMPLE SCOPE OF WORK – NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Project Summary

The City proposes to hire a professional consultant to prepare a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination for the Evanston Commercial Historic District. The district was previously determined eligible for listing in the NRHP following submission of a Preliminary Questionnaire to SHPO in 2018, through which the district was identified as significant at the local level under Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture; the period of significance was determined to be c. 1904 to 1963. The area to be nominated corresponds to the boundaries previously presented in the Preliminary Questionnaire and is roughly bounded by Martin Street on the north, Bon Air Avenue on the east, Carriage Street to the west, and Monroe Avenue to the south (see Figure 1). The district encompasses 90 commercial properties, 72 of which (90%) date to the period of significance.

Project Need and Goals

While the City of Evanston already has several individual properties and a residential district listed in the National Register, past efforts to move forward with nomination of the downtown failed to garner substantial interest on the part of property owners. However, this has changed in recent years, particularly as efforts to revitalize the economic core of the community have intensified alongside a new community master plan and an initiative to establish a Main Street program in Evanston. This interest has also been spurred by the recent listing and subsequent rehabilitation of the nearby James School, which utilized historic tax credits to secure a positive future for the historic school as an incubator space for new businesses. This project showcased how National Register designation can be a useful tool in the redevelopment of historic buildings by opening up opportunities for federal rehabilitation tax credits or other grant funds. Given past trends and the current economic climate, it is important to capitalize on this positive view of preservation and move forward with nomination of the Evanston Commercial Historic District to not only recognize its importance within the developmental history of the community but also to enhance the ability of property owners to take advantage of economic incentives available to historic properties, thus providing for their continued use.

The goal of the project is to prepare a National Register nomination that effectively captures the historical and architectural significance of the district, bringing recognition to this portion of the city as an integral component of the community’s identity and validating the efforts of those that have worked diligently toward encouraging preservation interests. Furthermore, the project will meet the goal of contributing to economic revitalization of the commercial core of the community by enhancing the ability of property owners to capture federal historic rehabilitation tax credits for projects that meet the respective program requirements. The project will also enhance the ability of property owners to take advantage of current incentives offered by the City and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), which include a new façade rehabilitation grant offered to buildings that are either in locally or nationally designated historic districts.

Summary of Property to be Nominated

The property to be nominated is the Evanston Commercial Historic District, centered on Morgan Avenue and roughly bounded by Martin Street on the north, Bon Air Avenue on the east, Carriage Street to the west, and Monroe Avenue to the south (see Figure 1). The district encompasses 90 commercial properties, 72 of which (90%) date c. 1904 to 1963, the period of significance for the district. Most buildings are two- and three-story, although a few four-story buildings were constructed as infill during the late twentieth century. Most buildings can be described as vernacular one- or two-part commercial blocks, although the district includes notable examples of Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, and International Style-influenced architecture. Notable community landmarks include, for example, the historic Lincoln Hotel, Fisher Bank Building, and Evanston Building. Eligible under Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture, the historic district forms a cohesive core defined by a unified streetscape and common palette of nationally prominent commercial forms that reflects the strong interrelationship between the buildout of the community and its commercial past and captures the city’s commercial growth from its establishment through the mid-twentieth century. Representative streetscape photographs are included with this application.
The community of Evanston is located in western Bale County and situated along the Powell River, which flows north to south through town. Established as a railroad stop in 1890 by the Blue and Crimson Railroad, the community was incorporated in 1900 after a period of sustained growth. Morgan Avenue, the principal artery passing through the Evanston Commercial Historic District, has served as the town’s primary commercial thoroughfare ever since; nearly all of the historic commercial buildings in Evanston can be found in this area. The range of businesses in the district grew quickly. By 1915, the local gazetteer identified more than four general stores and fifteen unique retail business, including, for example, dress shops, shoe stores, milliners, furniture stores, and markets. Building construction continued at a rapid pace in the district into the 1920s, reflecting the growth of the town despite larger economic downturns impacting communities elsewhere. While new construction stalled in the 1930s and 1940s, the district remained Evanston’s primary commercial center. In 1952, however, this changed with the realignment and expansion of the main highway through Evanston as a bypass, which effectively pulled traffic away from the traditional core. Efforts to reinvigorate the commercial district were undertaken in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which included subsidized construction of new buildings with the hopes of bringing new tenants to downtown. While this had a temporary impact, the district fell into a period of disinvestment as money was increasingly spent in other locations in Evanston and surrounding areas. As incoming money decreased, building vacancies and neglect increased. The result was that by 1980 the district was but a ghost of its former self with many storefronts vacant.

It was such disinvestment here and in other parts of the city that led to the first citywide reconnaissance survey of historic resources, which was undertaken in 1982 by the planning department in an effort to better understand the history of the community and what was being lost as a result of changing developmental patterns. At this time, basic information was collected on each property in the city and preliminary recommendations for future preservation activities were made for areas throughout the city. The study included a recommendation that a more substantial survey of the downtown core be completed with the goal of informing decisions about potential National Register eligibility and local historic district designation. Yet, while some of the recommendations of the 1982 study were carried out in other parts of the city, no additional work occurred within the downtown core at this time due to a lack of support from business and property owners.

It was not until recently that interest began to shift. In 2017, the City retained a consultant to prepare an updated historic context statement for the city and to prepare an intensive-level survey for the downtown. While the survey identified that many storefronts had been altered, some buildings had been demolished, and others had been added, it recommended that the Evanston Commercial Historic District retained a high degree of architectural integrity overall and continued to reflect the historic build-out of the downtown core. As such, the survey recommended the district as eligible under Criteria A and C and proposed a boundary for the district. In January 2018, the City submitted a Preliminary Questionnaire to SHPO requesting a determination of eligibility for the Evanston Commercial Historic District based on the recommended boundary from the 2017 study. In March 2018, SHPO staff responded affirmatively that the district was eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as a cohesive commercial district that represents the business history of Evanston; and Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a district that embodies the distinctive characteristics of commercial development of the period, possessing high artistic values representing prominent architectural styles of the early- to mid-twentieth century and representing the work of regionally important architectural firms such as Grafton and Bulger, Cross and Cross, and Morgan and Langford.

This grant project will build upon these recent efforts to recognize the importance of the downtown core by formally nominated the district to the NRHP, using the previously collected and prepared information as a baseline for the nomination. Consistent with the information presented in the Preliminary Questionnaire, the City anticipates that the nomination will include a period of significance ranging from c. 1904, when the community was incorporated, to 1963, when the last substantial building was constructed along Morgan Avenue, the primary thoroughfare through the district. There have been no substantive changes to the district or individual properties since the Preliminary Questionnaire was reviewed by SHPO in 2018.
Project Methodology

The project will be carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines of National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form and all requirements outlined in SHPO's NRHP guidance, including but not limited to “Listing Property in the National Register of Historic Places in Michigan: An Overview of the Process” and the “National Register of Historic Places Nomination Submission Checklist.” The project will be coordinated by the City’s historic preservation specialist. She will work closely with the selected consultant and SHPO to ensure that the grant requirements and purpose of the project are appropriately met. The City anticipates that the project, inclusive of the following tasks, will proceed according to the timeline outlined in the Work Schedule.

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 Historian and possesses the following: (1) thorough knowledge of and familiarity with early- to mid-twentieth century commercial architecture; (2) demonstrated experience in completing primary and secondary research and preparing NRHP nominations; and (3) familiarity with documenting and evaluating Michigan’s historic resources in accordance with Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) standards and guidelines and the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. 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 conducting research, completing necessary documentation, and preparing the nomination and related materials.

2. **Consultant Kick-off Meeting and Initial Public 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 and consultant will host a public information meeting to provide property and business owners and other stakeholders with an opportunity to learn more about the project, nomination process, what listing means for included properties, and related preservation and economic activities that might benefit from the listing. The selected consultant will prepare a presentation for the meeting.

3. **Archival Research:** Following the kick-off and public meeting, the consultant will proceed with the archival research necessary to complete the nomination. The primary purpose of the research will be to develop a historic context for the Evanston Commercial Historic District that appropriately conveys its relationship to and significance within themes and trend of the period. To better enable the consultant to focus on research necessary to place the district within its appropriate context, the City will provide the consultant with electronic copies of all previously prepared materials related to the district, including survey forms and report, the Preliminary Questionnaire, and collected research, including documentary resources and known historical photographs and maps. While the City anticipates that local information is duplicative with the information collected in SHPO’s files, the City will also require that the consultant complete a records review in the files of SHPO. The City will also provide contact information for the local historical society, historic district commission, and others who might have relevant historical information. In consideration of the materials provided by the City, the consultant will conduct additional research as determined necessary to satisfactorily prepare the developmental history and related contexts for the nomination. The City anticipates that such research will include newspapers, Sanborn fire insurance maps, city directories, published histories, and other such resources available through local libraries and historical societies, as well as various databases and repositories available through the internet (e.g. HathiTrust).

4. **District Documentation:** While an intensive-level survey of the district was recently completed as previously discussed, the consultant will complete a visual review of all properties in the district (see Figure 1 for a map), to include basic photographic documentation of exteriors and compiling of descriptive information required for an adequate inventory of resources in the nomination. If the selected contractor identifies that any substantive changes have occurred to a property following the 2018 intensive-level survey, the consultant will be responsible for preparing an updated architectural inventory form for the subject property in accordance with SHPO
requirements and collecting updated photographs of the property, to include at least one view of
the façade and two oblique views. For properties where no change is identified, no new inventory
forms will be provided. Rather, the consultant will use a combination of existing information and
visual inspection to gather sufficient data to prepare the nomination form. Photographs showing
general streetscapes and character-defining features of the district such as the spatial relationship
of buildings will be collected in addition to the photographs of individual properties.

5. NRHP Nomination: Using the collected research and results of the documentation, the consultant
will prepare a complete set of National Register nomination materials meeting NPS and SHPO
standards and guidelines. Emphasis will be placed on developing a thorough building inventory
that appropriately categorizes properties as either contributing or non-contributing to the historic
district and situating the Evanston Commercial Historic District within its appropriate historic
context(s) so that its significance is fully understood.

Section 7 will include an introductory paragraph that summarizes the property being nominated,
its appearance, and its integrity. This will be complemented by an overview of the historic district
and its character-defining features, followed by a resource inventory. This section will provide
general descriptive information on the district including but not limited to its general character,
street plan, spatial relationships, and infrastructure and landscaping features. The inventory will
include a summary of prevalent architectural styles and property types followed by a listing of
individual properties accompanied by brief synopses of character and integrity. Each resource will
be identified as either contributing or non-contributing to the district.

Section 8 will include summary of the property’s eligibility in consideration of the National
Register Criteria for Evaluation and the district’s areas and period of significance. Following,
Section 8 will document the historic contexts pertinent to the district and its significance in
consideration of the district’s developmental patterns and associated trends. At minimum it is
anticipated that Section 8 will discuss the commercial and architectural development of the district
in detail. Additional pertinent contexts may be identified for inclusion through the research phase.
The nomination will include footnotes for all cited resources and bibliographic references for major
sources.

In accordance with SHPO’s “National Register of Historic Places Nomination Submission Checklist,”
the nomination will be accompanied by a selection of photos that accurately capture the character
of the district and representative properties. Photographs will include streetscapes, examples of
predominant architectural styles, examples of predominant forms, examples of non-contributing
resources, and significant landscape features.

The nomination will include a series of maps, including: a district map that includes prominent
streets and geographic features, building footprints, and photographic key and delineates each
property as either contributing or non-contributing (these maps may be one or a series of maps);
two locational maps that show the boundaries of the district and meet the specifications described
in the 2012 National Register Draft Electronic Map Policy Factsheet from the National Park Service.
The nomination will also include a spreadsheet of properties and property owner information.

The City anticipates that the consultant will submit components of the nomination in four intervals:
Deliverable #1, first draft of nomination cover and section 7 (50% submittal); Deliverable #2,
first draft of remaining sections (75% submittal); Deliverable #3, revised draft of complete
nomination (95% submittal); and Deliverable #4, final draft (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.

6. State Review Board Presentation: Upon completion of the nomination and prior to grant
completion, the consultant will present the nomination at a meeting of the State Historic
Preservation Review Board. Prior to the meeting, the consultant will provide SHPO with a
PowerPoint presentation including representative maps and photographs. The presentation will
include a brief discussion of the history, character, and significance of the district. The consultant
will be responsible for addressing any substantive comments from the Board.
Final Deliverables

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

- One or more flash drives, as necessary, that include all items identified in SHPO’s National Register Submission Checklist, including a completed nomination in Microsoft Word format; locational maps; district maps; digital photographs; PowerPoint presentation; copies of relevant research, historical photographs, and maps; and spreadsheet with property owner information.

Efforts to Engage Property Owners/Known Support or Opposition

The City has proactively engaged property owners and other community stakeholders as part of the aforementioned activities in 2017 and 2018, with the goal of being transparent about potential decisions related to preservation actions. In 2017, in association with the intensive-level survey of the district, the City hosted an open house for property and business owners to learn about the historical and architectural significance of the area, potential preservation planning activities, and the City’s initial intent to move forward with National Register designation. This included a discussion of potential benefits of listing in the National Register as well as clarification of common myths and misconceptions. In addition to the open house, information on the survey activities was included on the municipal website and social media. The result of such outreach was overwhelmingly positive, with most property owners speaking in favor of listing in the National Register as a potential economic tool alongside other revitalization activities underway in the city. Sample newspaper clippings and social media posts highlighting such outreach activities are included as an attachment to this application alongside letters of support from various property owners and the DDA.

Anticipated Outcome

The City anticipates that the proposed project will provide a mechanism for planning staff to continue conversations with the community about the importance of community identity and preservation and their role in promoting economic vitality. The City will engage such conversations through the public meeting held in association with this project, as well as through press releases at various stages of the project. The City will also share stories on the history and architecture of the district on its various social media channels to engage varied audiences. In total, the project will reinforce perception of downtown as a vital part of the community, both historically and currently, and convey the importance of preservation to the authenticity of the city, which attracts residents, businesses, and visitors.

More directly, the project will promote preservation as a critical economic tool and will support efforts of the DDA and the emerging Main Street interests to sustain a vibrant and healthy downtown. This has the potential to benefit not only the work of such organizations but also the property owners who are the day-to-day stewards of the historic resources in our community. With designation, property owners undertaking certain projects will be able to benefit from federal rehabilitation tax credits or local façade grants afforded through our DDA, thus maximizing their ability to maintain the character of their properties and the district overall. As individual buildings are returned to their historic character and vacant buildings are returned to use, this will in turn have the potential to increase property values, boost heritage tourism, and create an attractive sense of place for patrons.