



CITY OF ERIE

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

MARCH 26, 2024



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# ERIE IS...

The **fourth largest city in Pennsylvania**, home to more than **92,000 residents**, committed to revitalizing its historic core neighborhoods and districts.

A community traditionally held by the **Eriez Indians, the Iroquois Confederacy, and the Seneca Nation**, later settled by a succession of European-Americans, including **Italians, Poles, Germans, Irish, Russians, as well as African and Hispanic Americans**, and many more who helped shape Erie's **built landscapes**.

A place that **developed and prospered as a shipping center and an industrial powerhouse** in northwestern Pennsylvania from its strategic location along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway.

A city with a rich array of **distinctive, quality architecture and places of compelling meaning that tell the diverse stories** of Erie's heritage and peoples.

Known for its **historic districts and landmark properties, sites, and structures** worthy of preserving for the next generations.

Poised to use **historic preservation** to achieve a **sustainable future** by **maintaining heritage assets, adapting buildings** for new uses and intentions, and conserving neighborhoods as places of choice.

A **strong and dedicated network of preservation partners** from the **City of Erie down to its stakeholder institutions and residents** who work diligently to build and advance an ethic of preserving the past for the benefit of the future.

# FOREWARD

## LEADING ERIE'S FUTURE WITH ITS PAST

In 2022, the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission launched a new community-wide planning effort to shape a living and flexible framework for preserving the community's historic buildings and places. This **Erie Historic Preservation Plan** documents the results of a year-long planning process — a journey that invited the collective input and collaboration from a range of stakeholders across the community, including the everyday Erie citizen who has the most to benefit from the Preservation Plan's initiatives. All preservation partners and stakeholder participants played a critical role in shaping the Preservation Plan's contents.

Now, after careful study of available information, and many meetings and conversations with property and business owners, local institutions, developers, philanthropists, elected leaders, municipal staff, neighborhood leaders, and preservation advocates, the **Erie Historic Preservation Plan** offers a blueprint for preservation action and decision-making. Most importantly, however, the decision-making does not solely rest with the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission, or for one mayor or one commission at this point in time. The Preservation Plan is for the entire community, outlining roles for a variety of stakeholder partners to participate in its implementation now and in the years going forward. Together, all stakeholders can realize a vision of a sustainable and resilient future for Erie that capitalizes on its architectural, cultural, and historical assets.

Ambitious and aspiring in its scope, but attainable and realistic with dedicated patience and collective effort, the Preservation Plan starts with an understanding of what buildings and places merit preservation and stewardship as part of Erie's heritage legacy. From there, the Preservation Plan maps pathways forward in coordinating resources,

tools, and investments to promote property rehabilitation, adaptive use, and regenerated neighborhoods and traditional commercial districts. This emphasis on preservation-based community development will complement the City of Erie's concurrent efforts to create jobs, maintain and enhance existing infrastructure, improve the overall quality of life, and build economic prosperity.

Alongside acknowledging its usefulness beyond just the present generation of preservation advocates, the Preservation Plan is not the end of one finite process but rather the beginning of another - its ongoing implementation. As part of that process, the roles of the Historic Review Commission and other key preservation partners will need to evolve to serve as resource providers and mentors to those who want to use the Historic Preservation Plan and participate in its implementation. Furthermore, new partnerships forged among public, private, and non-profit sector agencies and entities can help leverage and coordinate incentive programs and resources for targeted preservation projects aligning with Erie's community and economic development goals. Last and just as important, the Preservation Plan contains many on-the-ground, foundational projects that will help set the stage for long-term preservation success.

The City of Erie and the preservation community look forward to a bright future where historic buildings, neighborhoods, and places contribute to Erie's broader vitality and the greater engagement of stakeholders in historic preservation's benefits.

27 S. PARK ROW, ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY





**Chapter I**

# The Erie Preservation Vision

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEFINED  
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**A VISION FOR HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION**

**WHAT WE VALUE**

**THE PLANNING PROCESS AND  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**WHAT WE LEARNED**

**KEY IMPERATIVE ACTIONS**

**THE PRESERVATION PLANNING  
FRAMEWORK**

**HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT**

# THE ERIE PRESERVATION VISION

This Historic Preservation Plan outlines a compelling vision and a strategic policy and action framework for the future of historic preservation in Erie, Pennsylvania. This vision and framework are the results of a year-long community engagement program that garnered the thoughts, aspirations, and ideas of stakeholders across the community, from civic and elected leaders to neighborhood residents and preservation advocates. The results of these engagement efforts provided the background and support for creating a preservation vision that defines the roles historic preservation will play in revitalizing and sustaining places of importance to the citizens of Erie. With this, the vision helped to shape specific strategies and actions, refined over the planning process with additional information and stakeholder insight to determine a realistic and attainable roadmap to success.

The work in creating the Historic Preservation Plan involved not only a cross-section of stakeholders from around the community but also a talented and dedicated Steering Committee of individuals knowledgeable in Erie history and architecture, nonprofit community and economic development work, arts and culture, urban planning, and downtown and neighborhood revitalization. Building a workable roadmap for the many preservation challenges facing this architecturally and culturally diverse city required local expertise and perspective. Their participation and assistance made the planning vision and action framework more authentic and practical.





400 FRENCH ST. ERIE STEAM BAKERY



“

**Many of our  
oldest citizens  
could tell us  
stories about  
places that  
should be  
preserved.**

”

**Erie Resident**



## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEFINED**

In the most practical sense, historic preservation serves to retain the properties, sites, neighborhoods, and districts of cultural, historical, and architectural value in continuing, productive use while accommodating change where necessary to achieve those ends. In turn, the ongoing use and stewardship of historic places contribute to a city's overall economic vitality and sense of place.

From a planning perspective, historic preservation is a process and dialogue with community residents and stakeholders regarding what buildings, places, sites, traditions, and cultural assets are worth retaining and enhancing for the benefit of future generations. Preserving such assets helps us understand the many facets of local history, the people and events that shaped it, and the noteworthy buildings and places that embody reminders of shared stories and memories.

# ERIE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite a history of local preservation efforts, the City of Erie only recently created the Historic Review Commission by municipal ordinance in 2021. Among its responsibilities, the Commission serves to “[p]rovide for the **designation, protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of historic properties and historic districts,**” and to “[s]timulate **revitalization of the business districts and historic neighborhoods**” (City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, 2021, 141). The ordinance also allows the Commission to prepare landmark and district nominations “...as an **outcome of a Preservation Plan completed by the [Commission] and duly adopted by the City Council which includes an inventory of historic resources within the City**” (City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, 2021, 140).

Apart from the Commission, previous preservation efforts resulted in several individual property listings in the National Register of Historic Places, among them the Warner Theater (1931) and the Erie Armory (1920, 1929) - both landmark icons in the Erie community. In addition, the West 6th Street, West Park Place, Federal Row, and West 21st Street National Register Historic Districts showcase the rich architectural, historical, and cultural dimensions of Erie’s built heritage. In all, Erie’s National Register landmarks and districts encompass 194 properties ranging from Italianate commercial buildings to single-family Queen Anne homes. Administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (Pennsylvania SHPO), the National Register is this nation’s official inventory of significant buildings and places deemed worthy of preservation and stewardship. Beyond these, there are many more properties and places eligible for the National Register, those known presently and those yet discovered by surveys and investigative work.

However, National Register landmarks and districts are not the only valued places in Erie. Many parts of Erie feature intact neighborhoods, commercial corridors, schools, industrial complexes, parks, and open spaces that contribute to Erie’s historic character and urban design. They also serve as places to live, invest in, and start new businesses and ventures that add to the community’s quality of life and vibrancy.





While many buildings and places are of special interest and importance among Erie residents and stakeholders, many face challenges to their long-term stewardship. Many properties have diminished integrity due to façade alterations. Others face demolition due to extensive deterioration or abandonment. Such challenges come in part from owners not understanding the significance of their properties or the proper measures for maintaining the architectural features of their homes. Others simply lack the resources and wherewithal to maintain them. And, in the background, is the larger macro issue of ongoing population loss in Erie, which lowers property values and the demand for housing and commercial spaces throughout the city.

Going forward, a key purpose of this Historic Preservation Plan is to identify buildings and places of historic, architectural, and cultural significance that merit future preservation, whether they are National Register-listed or designated as future City of Erie Landmarks or contributing resources to an Erie Historic District. However, while this Preservation Plan outlines historic resources of special importance and worthy of preservation, future survey, and documentation efforts will identify and recognize others that may be eligible for formal designation and protection from the Historic Review Commission.

Beyond landmarking and designation responsibilities, the City of Erie and the Historic Review Commission will need to respond to the broader preservation challenges by coordinating resources, creating new partnerships, and providing information and assistance to those who want to participate in the community's preservation program. The City of Erie sees clear opportunities for integrating historic preservation as a strategy for neighborhood conservation and revitalization and for adapting existing buildings as catalytic investments in the city's business and industrial districts. Such a strategy will complement the City's other economic and community development initiatives focused on quality of life and job creation. Above all, there is now a present understanding among local stakeholders and decision-makers that historic preservation will make Erie more livable and resilient.

## A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

*During the course of the planning process, Erie residents and stakeholders envisioned a clear and compelling preservation future — one where historic preservation makes Erie a more vital, desirable city. The following statement summarizes this vision.*

In the future, historic preservation in Erie will become an integral part of the local quality of life, its living and working environments, and its long-term sustainability in light of evolving economic, social, and environmental challenges. Erie's preservation program helped preserve a diverse heritage — from its maritime and archaeological sites to its downtown district, industrial complexes, and traditional housing stock — helping to provide tangible links to Erie's eminent past and the stories of the various peoples who settled and built the city. Along the way, adopted policies and pursued strategies facilitated investments in historic properties, making them useful and key contributors to vibrant neighborhoods and places. These successes would not be possible without conscientious efforts to identify significant properties and resources, educate the public about preservation's benefits, and implement needed tools and programs to manage appropriate change for historic properties and districts. Most importantly, Erie's preservation program is community-based with the support and participation of many different stakeholders, institutions, and residents. It is this strong commitment to historic preservation that allows the community to be pragmatic and forward-looking — it achieves a prosperous future while making the best use of its existing built environments.

# WHAT WE VALUE

The vision statement serves as the benchmark for measuring the long-term realization and success of the Erie historic preservation program. The following statements express the particular values, principles, and standards in which the Erie community will undertake its preservation efforts.

1

## VALUE STATEMENT #1

**Erie's heritage story is diverse and inclusive, encompassing the places and sites of known histories and those not known and underrepresented in the past.**

In the years ahead, as the City of Erie and its preservation partners embark on surveying and documenting properties as worthy places to preserve, the focus of efforts should be on understanding an all-inclusive narrative of the different sites, peoples, events, and customs that shaped the community's built character and cultural traditions.

2

## VALUE STATEMENT #2

**Leadership and philosophical commitment build a strong and effective local preservation program.**

Preserving and revitalizing historic neighborhoods and downtowns requires ongoing management, stewardship, and most importantly, patience. Just as important, it involves and necessitates long-term commitment and collaboration on the part of the City of Erie, its elected leaders, and a diversity of partners to build and sustain a successful preservation program.

3

## VALUE STATEMENT #3

**Adapting and investing in historic buildings is critical to community resiliency and sustainability.**

Rehabilitating older homes and adapting commercial and industrial buildings to new uses helps to maintain existing infrastructure and to conserve existing materials and the embodied energy inherent in all existing buildings. Retrofitting historic properties can also make them more energy efficient in a time of rising energy costs.



# 4

## VALUE STATEMENT #4

**Erie's preservation program is accessible to stakeholders and responsive to preservation challenges.**

Erie's preservation program serves as an effective and intelligent provider of information and resources to all people in the city who desire to participate in preservation endeavors. Erie citizens can also engage stakeholders in different ways as volunteers, mentors, researchers, investors, conveners, and motivators for preservation action. With engaged partners, the City of Erie can mobilize the talent, expertise, and enthusiasm needed to address what preservation challenges lie ahead.

# 5

## VALUE STATEMENT #5

**Historic preservation is critical to enhancing community quality of life.**

Old buildings are the witnesses to the architectural and cultural evolution of a city. They also provide a sense of comfort and familiarity, serve as the background stage for events and traditions, and promote local identity and civic pride. Erie residents and citizens recognize and embrace the positive roles historic preservation contributes to the quality of life.

301 FRENCH ST



UNION STATION, 123 WEST 14TH



# HOW DID WE GET HERE - THE PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Creating the Erie Historic Preservation Plan involved two discrete phases of information collection and analysis, an assessment and mapping of the community's heritage resources, the development of preservation planning strategies, and the engagement of various stakeholder groups to help shape and inform the Historic Preservation Plan's contents, vision, and goals. This process occurred 18 months from August 2022 to February 2024



## 1 PHASE 1: STATE OF THE CITY

**August - December 2022**

- ▶ Information Collection
- ▶ Mapping
- ▶ Community Outreach
- ▶ Analysis
- ▶ Interim Report

## 2

## PHASE 2: PRESERVATION PLAN

**January 2023 - February 2024**

- ▶ Draft Preservation Plan
- ▶ Community Outreach
- ▶ City Council Adoption



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To help guide and serve as astute and intuitive voices in the development of the Preservation Plan, the City of Erie formed a Steering Committee of key stakeholders, meeting with chosen preservation professionals several times over the course of the planning process to review findings and refine planning strategies.

Community outreach efforts included a series of key stakeholder interviews and focus group sessions, community meetings and workshops, online surveys, and strategy discussions with elected leaders, city departments, and preservation advocates. Specifically, these outreach efforts included the following:

- Project start meeting with City of Erie staff and key preservation stakeholders (August 2022).
- Mayor's weekly press conference (August 2022).
- First Steering Committee discussion session (September 2022).
- Second Steering Committee discussion session (October 2022).
- Discussion sessions with the Mayor of Erie, the Planning, Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments, the Office of Code Enforcement, and the City Grants Administrator (October 2022).
- Discussion session with the Historic Review and Planning Commissions (October 2022).
- Discussion session with Preservation Erie, the Hagen History Center, the Erie Maritime Museum, the Erie Art Museum, and other key preservation advocates and cultural institutions (October 2022).
- Discussion session with the Downtown Erie Partnership and the Erie Convention Center Authority (October 2022).
- Discussion sessions with realtors, housing organizations, and developers.
- Discussion session with community organizations and representatives of Erie's underrepresented populations.
- Community workshops at the New Life and Spirit Revival Center, the Performing Arts Collective Alliance (PACA), and the Cathedral of St. Paul (December 2022).
- Online workshop and survey (January and February 2023).
- Community workshop at Erie City Hall (September 2023).
- Online workshop and survey (September 2023 - February 2024).



## WHAT WE LEARNED

The collaborative planning process and community engagement work provided insights and perspectives into key historic preservation issues facing Erie and priorities and directions for future preservation planning efforts.

---

1

Erie's preservation efforts should encompass buildings and places associated with the full spectrum of the city's history — from its early Native-American inhabitants to its African Americans and various ethnic groups.

2

New partnerships between public and private agencies, institutions, and entities are critical to educating and informing stakeholders on how preservation works in the larger effort of making Erie an attractive place to live and invest in.

3

Addressing the real estate value gap — the cost of rehabilitating historic properties amidst a setting of declining property values and limited resources — is the central preservation challenge to facilitating neighborhood and downtown revitalization.

4

Erie stakeholders regard design quality and the visual relationship between old and new buildings as important to creating compelling places steeped in authenticity and meaning.

5

The Erie community overlooks its extant maritime and industrial resources, including their archaeological dimensions, as essential aspects of the Erie heritage story.

6

The lack of youth involvement as well as skilled local carpenters and tradesmen pose significant obstacles to realizing quality preservation results along with preparing the next generation of preservation leaders.

7

Establishing Local Historic Districts will take extensive community engagement and consensus-building with property owners, but the City of Erie needs additional tools to enact a more prudent and measured pace to demolitions that avoid the loss of key pieces to Erie's history.

8

Removing barriers to preservation — such as regulatory red tape and the lack of awareness of preservation programs and tools — can go a long way to making adaptive use and property rehabilitation more feasible.

“

**Preservation needs to be demystified. While there is strong support for preservation from elected officials, there is also a public perception that historic preservation is out of reach to most people.**

”

Erie Resident

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF IMPORTANCE

The following icons represent the historic and cultural resources deemed important to preserve by Erieites during the community engagement process:



**Archaeological Resources**



**Industrial Buildings and Complexes**



**Maritime Resources**



**Neighborhoods**



**Religious Buildings**



**Schools**



**Social Halls**



**Parks**



**Commercial Buildings**

# KEY IMPERATIVE ACTIONS

Erie stakeholders worked together over the planning process to identify core preservation values and priorities, preservation priorities, and key project goals over the course of the planning process. Stakeholder engagement revealed that preserving Erie's significant architecture and history important to residents of the city is critically important to promoting community identity and regenerating neighborhood and commercial district vitality. Stakeholders across the community spectrum desired a future where historic preservation plays an integral, essential role in a better quality of life.

The results of the conversations and dialogues with city leaders, preservationists, and community residents led to the creation of five planning priorities—or focus areas of short and long-term initiatives—and 10 key imperatives that serve as mandates the Erie community must follow and implement to achieve positive change.

We, as the Erie preservation community, must:

1. Complete a comprehensive inventory of historic buildings and places within Erie as a basis for understanding their value and worthiness for future preservation.
2. Make information about Erie's significant historic and cultural resources widely available and accessible to serve a variety of preservation and community planning needs.
3. Identify and preserve places representative of Erie's diverse ethnic and racial history and their architectural and visual qualities.
4. Adopt new preservation tools and programs that advance the preservation and revitalization of Erie's traditional commercial areas and neighborhoods.
5. Create new partnerships and collaborations that leverage resources and facilitate investments and stewardship of Erie's heritage resources.
6. Use historic preservation and historic districts as a central strategy for mitigating housing loss and population decline.
7. Encourage meaningful community participation in the local historic preservation program through outreach, advocacy, and engagement efforts.
8. Ensure quality new development that complements and reinforces the authenticity and visual character of Erie's historic places.
9. Build awareness of historic preservation's various social, economic, and environmental benefits.
10. Dedicate our community to the long-term implementation and stewardship of this plan.





# THE PRESERVATION PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Erie Historic Preservation Plan presents a framework for strategic action that achieves long-term preservation aims while making Erie a vital, desirable, and sustainable city. This framework encompasses six Key Planning Elements along with an implementation and civic engagement chapter. The Key Planning Elements described more fully in Chapter 5, include:

- **Identifying Erie’s Historic and Cultural Heritage**—Having an accurate and systematic record of the built environment in Erie will provide a broad understanding of what buildings and places may constitute new landmarks, neighborhoods, and districts that merit preservation and long-term preservation.
- **Telling Diverse Stories**—Revealing the different dimensions of Erie’s heritage, including the histories of its many ethnic and racial groups, will help increase our knowledge of the diverse people that shaped Erie’s built environment, places, and neighborhoods.
- **Protecting and Conserving Places**—Preserving buildings, sites, and neighborhood character will often require new measures, tools, and programs that protect heritage resources while encouraging their rehabilitation, adaptive use, and reinvestment.
- **Revitalizing Neighborhoods**—Spurring neighborhood conservation and regeneration will require a conscientious approach to managing neighborhood heritage resources and assisting property owners in their property investment and preservation endeavors.
- **Promoting Vital Places**—Pursuing historic preservation-based economic development in downtown Erie and neighborhood commercial nodes can help encourage new uses for historic buildings while providing attractive and attainable spaces for new businesses and social and cultural activities.
- **Building the Program and Strengthening the Ethic**—Fostering a strong base of support for historic preservation in Erie will require informed and engaged stakeholders and an ongoing program of outreach and education that promotes preservation’s benefits and relationship to community quality of life.

# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

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The Erie Historic Preservation Plan presents a shared vision and action framework designed to guide decision-making and implementation from a spectrum of participants and stakeholders, not just the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission. These participants include owners and managers of historic properties; local businesses; developers and investors; institutions such as schools, colleges, medical centers, and cultural and religious organizations; public sector departments and agencies; and advocates for preservation. Each of these participants can use this Preservation Plan to guide their own decisions, create needed partnerships, and plan for investments in historic properties, education, and advocacy.

1

**For Property Owners and Neighborhood Groups**, the Preservation Plan provides important background information on Erie's important architectural and historical resources and the potential for neighborhood preservation and revitalization endeavors that enhance neighborhood livability. Grassroots neighborhood groups can use the Preservation Plan to organize and enable more localized preservation efforts.

2

**For Businesses, Non-Profits, and Institutions**, the Preservation Plan identifies opportunities for investments and partnerships between institutions and preservationists in making existing historic buildings more functional and profitable. Historic preservation should become an everyday part of many different community interests, including housing, economic development, tourism, and resiliency.

3

**For Preservation Advocates**, the Preservation Plan outlines proactive programs and initiatives by which to raise awareness of Erie's diverse heritage and to educate and inform local stakeholders and decision-makers on preservation's benefits.

4

**For Developers and Investors**, the Preservation Plan outlines prospects for investments in historic resources and pathways to financing and undertaking property rehabilitation and adaptive use projects. The Preservation Plan also provides clarity on the types of public and private collaborations that can occur to advance investor participation in local preservation efforts.


5

**For Public Agencies**, the Preservation Plan proposes policy and regulatory recommendations that help in managing heritage resources in Erie along with directing investments and resources in publicly-owned historic and cultural resources. Public agencies may include the City of Erie, Erie County, federal and state agencies, and local authorities.

328-330 WEST 6TH ST







**Chapter 2**  
**Our Erie  
Heritage**

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

**ERIE HISTORIC RESOURCES  
AND ARCHITECTURE**

**KEY DEFINITIONS**

**INTANGIBLE HERITAGE**

**ERIE LOCAL LANDMARKS  
AND DISTRICTS**

**HISTORICAL LANDMARKS**

# OUR ERIE HERITAGE

Erie's historic and cultural heritage encompasses over 200 years of development and its built environment, cultural landscapes, and ethnic traditions reflect this heritage. Historic contexts help to place Erie's numerous historic and cultural resources within the context of the city's development and play a role in determining their significance when identifying future historic landmarks and districts. Chapter 2 provides an overview of Erie's historic context periods and architectural, historical, and cultural resources accompanied by a timeline identifying significant events, places, people, and buildings occurring before 1980.

520 WEST 6TH ST





“ We need  
a broader  
discussion of  
Erie’s industrial  
history and how  
to incentivize  
and reuse  
the buildings.”

”

Erie Resident



## HISTORIC CONTEXT

There are innumerable ways to categorize Erie's periods of development as Erie was at the center of many of this country's settlement, manufacturing, and cultural touchpoints. This overview organizes Erie's history under four broad periods: indigenous occupation, the rise of industry, the maturation and growth of the community, and post-World War II and modern reimagining.

### ERIE'S INDIGENOUS PERIOD AND FIRST CONTACT (PRE-1753)

Indigenous people have inhabited the area now known as Erie, Pennsylvania, from time immemorial. Beginning in the 12th century the Erie, or Eriez, people (also known as Nation du Chat), an Iroquoian-related group lived in this area. French, English, and Dutch fur traders developed competing trade networks with the Algonkian, Huron, and Iroquoian tribes of the eastern Great Lakes region; the resulting tensions led to inter-tribal wars beginning in 1609. Between 1654-1656 the Iroquois (aligned with the English and Dutch) defeated the Erie Confederacy, ironically clearing the way for an aggressive French presence in the mid-1700s.

### MARITIME INDUSTRIES AND RAILROADS (1753-1870)

Lake Erie has been a formative influence in Erie's evolution and development. The deep-water harbor at Presque Isle facilitated shipping across numerous industries for over two hundred years, and the lake's position within the Great Lakes system brought the city into the heart of transportation networks, both maritime and railroad. Erie became a center of shipping and trade of both raw materials and goods beginning in the mid-17th century, shipbuilding beginning at the turn of the 19th century, and commercial fishing beginning in the early 19th century. Railroad construction boomed in Erie, beginning in the 1870s, facilitating exponential industrial growth.

## **MANUFACTURING DOMINANCE: IRON AND STEEL AND THE GROWTH OF COMMUNITY (1870-1950)**

The United States developed its industrial might bolstered by the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869, ongoing technological advances during the latter half of the 19th century, and an enormous immigration influx beginning in 1870. Erie became a microcosm of these national trends developing its robust foundry and machine shop industries and manufacturing a staggering variety of products. The immigrant labor that fed these industries imprinted Erie with diverse ethnic neighborhoods and cultural traditions that remain evident today.

## **POST WORLD WAR II AND MODERN REIMAGINING (1950 – TODAY)**

Despite the nationwide industrial downturn of the late twentieth century, Erie remained an industrial center with continued manufacturing expansion through the 1970s. Erie has held on to its industrial base though at a smaller scale, challenged by its first-ever registered population decline in 1970. Although population decline continues, Erie maintains a strong commitment to attracting new residents, including immigrants, and transitioning to more diverse employment sectors such as education, healthcare, and tourism. Manufacturing remains one of its four strongest sectors of employment (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).



# Erie's Indigenous Period and First Contact (pre-1753)

Erie is part of an expansive southern Great Lakes region composed of the current-day states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio where Indigenous people lived from time immemorial. The region is part of the Erie Plain, a lacustrine plain formed from sediment accumulation of past lakes that existed from ca. 25,000 to 12,000 years ago. The Erie Plain surrounds the entirety of Lake Erie (Cushing, Leverett & Van Horn 1931, 4). An important archaeological district located west of Erie and along the southern shore of Lake Erie contains evidence of six distinct archaeological sites demonstrating human occupation from over 10,000 years ago. One might conclude these early people were ancestors of the Erie or Eriez, people but archaeological artifacts suggest a broad range of cultures. During the Archaic Period (8,000 BCE to 1,000 BCE) people of fishing and hunting cultures left evidence of their tools and houses suggesting seasonal occupation. Additional sites within the district show evidence of people from the Early and Middle Woodland Period (1,000 BCE to 500 CE). American Indian archaeological sites are rare in the southern portion of the Lake Erie Plain, in part explaining our limited knowledge of these early people (Johnson 1986, n.p.).

The Erie people lived along the southern edge of Lake Erie between New York and Ohio prior to 1656. They were an Iroquoian group, sharing a language heritage with other Iroquois-related tribes but with a unique cultural identity and language. The Erie people lived in long houses, cultivated crops of corn, beans, and squash, and hunted and fished. Defensive palisades often enclosed their homes and crops. The Iroquois was a powerful confederation of eastern and upstate New York tribes including the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca peoples. The French, English, and Dutch fur traders that arrived in New York in the early 17th century each aligned themselves with Indigenous tribes to facilitate their access to furs.

The fur trade created fierce competition and eventually warfare among tribes. The Iroquois aligned with the Dutch and English, and the Huron aligned with the French. The powerful Iroquois moved into the Huron region and warfare pushed the Huron people further west. The Erie tribe took in the retreating Huron people which led to warfare with the Iroquois Confederacy. Known as the Beaver Wars, the Iroquois decimated the Erie tribe by 1656. By the time of French arrival in 1753 in Presque Isle, due to the sequence of prior tribal warfare, there is no recorded evidence of any Europeans encountering the Erie people (Sherry 2022, n.p.).

8,000 B.C.



**1100s-pre-1657:** Erie, or Eriez, people (also known as Nation du Chat, an Iroquoian group) lived in the region, part of an affiliation of neighboring tribes known as the Erie Confederacy.

8,000 BCE to 1,000 BCE (Archaic Period) and 1,000 BCE to 500 CE (Early and Middle Woodland Period) represented in a group of six archaeological sites of the Sommerheim Park Archaeological District, in Millcreek Township. Listed in the NRHP.

SOURCE: CRAIG BIRD

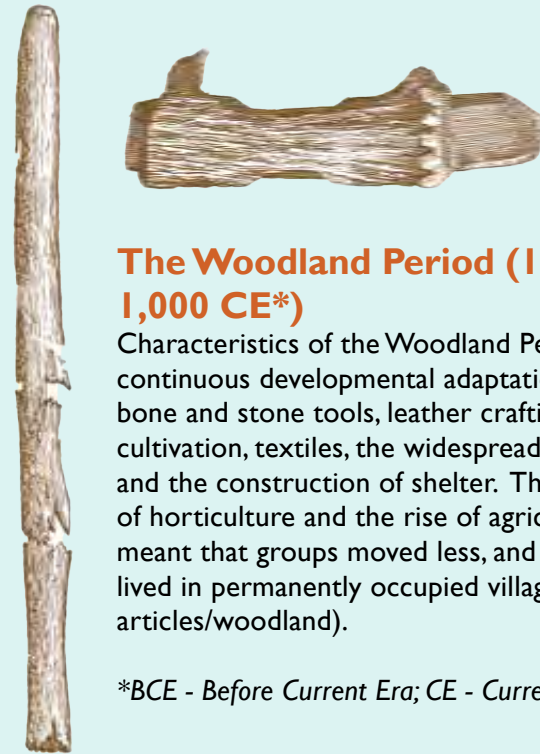




ERIE INDIAN SETTLEMENT - SOURCE: HAGAN HISTORY CENTER

### The Archaic Period (8,000 BCE – 1,000 BCE\*)

Characteristics of the Archaic Period include nomadic hunter-gatherers and subsistence traditions. There is evidence of trade during this period and in some regions including Mound Building cultures. The emergence of farming practices that eventually ended nomadic traditions defined the end of this period ([nps.gov/articles/archaic-period](https://www.nps.gov/articles/archaic-period)).



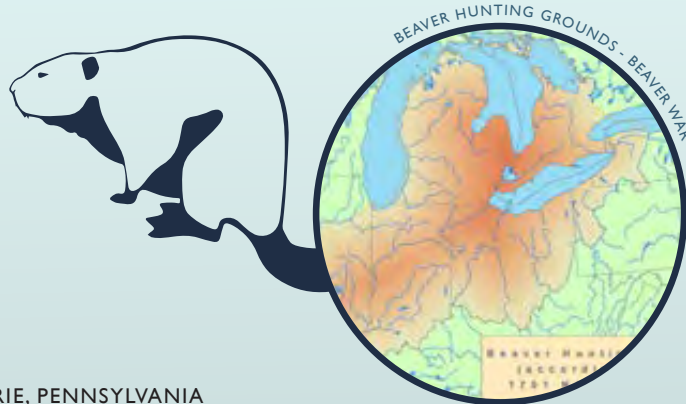
### The Woodland Period (1,000 BCE – 1,000 CE\*)

Characteristics of the Woodland Period include continuous developmental adaptations in the use of bone and stone tools, leather crafting, plant and food cultivation, textiles, the widespread use of pottery, and the construction of shelter. The development of horticulture and the rise of agricultural practices meant that groups moved less, and in some places lived in permanently occupied villages ([nps.gov/articles/woodland](https://www.nps.gov/articles/woodland)).

\*BCE - Before Current Era; CE - Current Era

## 1640

The fur trade attracted European traders to the region. The resulting decimation of the beaver population intensified conflict for hunting grounds.



ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

## 1654 - 56

Iroquois attack and destroy the Erie Confederacy, taking control of their territory.



SOURCE: CRAIG BIRD

# Maritime Industries and Railroads (1753-1870)

Erie's early epicenter was its waterfront, and logically the plat for the earliest part of the city encompassed the adjacent land. Early transportation routes depended on lakes, rivers, and canals to transport people, and import and export raw materials and finished products to distant regions far more efficiently than overland routes. The Appalachian Mountains were a significant barrier between the east coast and the interior of the country with few crossing spots, making the trip long and arduous. The Erie Canal resolved this barrier. The Erie Canal opened in 1825, the first navigable waterway linking the East Coast to the Great Lakes with dramatically reduced travel times. For example, an overland route between Albany and Buffalo took fourteen days, but on the canal, the trip took five. Erie's other great advantage was its protected deep-water port on Lake Erie, a favorable transport environment attractive to maritime shipping given the Great Lakes' connections to the interior and western reaches of the country.

Maritime industries of shipbuilding and repair, and fishing grew in Erie making the waterfront a center of activity. Piers, lighthouses, warehouses, boatyards, and fish houses were among the buildings and structures to aid both sailors and industries. The abundance of fish including Pike, Whitefish, and Herring drove an expansive industry where at its peak in the 1920s witnessed millions of pounds of fish caught, processed, and shipped (Applegate and Van Meter 1970, 10). After World War II, industry faded due to overfishing, lake pollution, and consumer shifts. Today, there are still commercial fishing companies alongside sports fishing and recreational boating.

Railroad construction proliferated across the country between 1827 and 1915, gradually creating a network of lines that linked the United States from coast to coast and with thousands of cities and small towns between. In Erie, the railroad allowed for an enormous rise of industry because, along with the local port, there was easy access to any needed raw materials and shipping of products from Erie's foundries and factories to any location.

Erie was one of many cities with connections to the Underground Railroad between 1830 and 1865. Abolitionists used homes and churches to shelter enslaved people fleeing across Lake Erie to Canada and freedom.

## 1780

1753-59

French soldiers construct and occupy Fort Presque Isle in present-day Erie.

1753



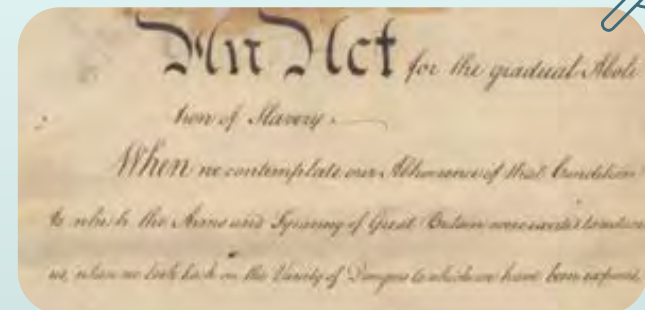
1754

French and Indian War begins, resulting in France's defeat and expulsion from the region.

1760

British established a garrison on the site of former Fort Presque Isle and remained until Pontiac's Rebellion of 1763, driving the British out of the territory.

**Pennsylvania banned the importation of slaves into the state.**



SOURCE: DAVID TRISTAN



1795

City of Erie surveyed and laid out in grids for development by Andrew Ellicott.

Lt. Colonel Rufus Seth Reed and his family are the first Yankee settlers at Fort Presque Isle.

African Americans brought to Erie as enslaved people by white settlers, including Rufus Seth Reed.



SOURCE: ERIE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION



1813



U.S.S. Niagara, a wooden-hulled brig, built in Erie's shipyards. A 1988 reconstruction currently resides along Erie's bayfront.



394 ERIEITES

1815



Dickson Tavern (201 French Steet) built in the Federal style by builder William Himrod. Greek Revival addition added in 1841.

FEDERAL STYLE (1795-1840)



635 ERIEITES



Pierre S.V. Hamot House (302 French Street) built in the Federal style.

1789

Iroquois signed a deed relinquishing their ownership of the territory to Americans.



81 ERIEITES



1809

Erie to Waterford Turnpike completed.

1812

Erie played a central role in naval operations during the War of 1812 as an important shipbuilding and port city. Erie became an important maritime center.

1813

Commodore Perry defeats a British naval squadron during the Battle of Lake Erie.

African American sailors make up 25 percent of Commodore Perry's crew. Many stayed, helping to establish Erie's African American community.

1825

Erie Canal opens connecting Albany, NY to Buffalo, New York



ERIE CANAL, SOURCE: JOHNNY MILANO, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE

**1827**

William Himrod establishes the Jerusalem community for free persons of color and destitute whites. The neighborhood is located north of West 6th Street and west of Sassafras Street.



**1830**

**1,465**  
ERIEITES

**1836**

Anti-slavery Society formed in Erie County.

**1839**



*The United States Bank, Erie Branch (409 State Street), constructed. The building later served as the Customs House for the Port of Erie. Greek Revival style, designed by architect William Kelly of Philadelphia.*

**GREEK REVIVAL (1825 - 1860)**



**1840**

**3,412**  
ERIEITES

**1844**

Erie Extension Canal (Beaver & Erie Canal) opened in Erie. This canal connected Erie to Pittsburgh and onto the Ohio River.



**1846**

Erie's earliest Jewish cemetery founded, now known as the Anshe Hessed Cemetery, located on West 26th Street between Cherry and Poplar Streets.



ANSHE HESSED CEMETERY,  
SOURCE: PNOBLE805

**1849**



*Charles Manning Reed Mansion (524 Peach Street, now the Erie Club), designed in the Greek Revival style by architect Edward B. Smith of Buffalo, New York.*

**1850**



**1850**

**5,858**  
ERIEITES

**1850**

Irish and Germans arrived in an early wave of immigrant settlement.



**1836**



*John Hill House (230 West 6th Street) designed in the Italian Villa style.*

**1839**



*The Cashiers House and Coach House (413 State St/11 East 4th Street) constructed in the Greek Revival style with a rare Egyptian Revival style interior.*





**1851**

Erie is incorporated as a City

**1851**



Schneider/Kessler Chandlery (401-403 State Street) constructed, part of what is now known as Chandlery Corner, including the Rockwell House, (405 State Street, 1832, Federal style) and the Schneider House (1846, 3 East 4th Street, Greek Revival).

**INDUSTRIAL LOFT  
(1850 - 1920)**



1303 French St, Lovell Manuf. Co.

**PRODUCTION SHED  
(1850-1960)**



1310 East Ave\_Erie City Iron Works

**1860**

Erie rose to dominance in the foundry and machine shop industry, thriving well into the 20th century.

**1861 - 65**

American Civil War.

**1862**

Anshe Hased incorporated as one of the oldest Jewish Reform communities in Pennsylvania, constructing their first synagogue in 1882. The congregation moved in 1930 and again in 2018.



**1860**

**9,419  
ERIEITES**

**1860**

**1855**

Railroads arrive in Erie with the opening of the Erie & North East Railroad.



ERIE UNION DEPOT C. 1925, SOURCE: OLDTIMEERIE.BLOGSPOT

**TWO-PART  
COMMERCIAL BLOCK  
(1850-1960)**



1310 East Ave\_Erie City Iron Works

**1861**



Thayer-Thompson House (605 West 8th Street) constructed in the Tuscan Villa-Italianate style.

# Manufacturing Dominance: Iron and Steel and the Growth of Community (1870-1950)

Erie's early industries thrived and with the technological advancements of the Industrial Revolution, the city soon achieved manufacturing dominance. Success was due, in part, to product diversification. This same diversification helped Erie weather the Great Depression without the total collapse of its economy. Industries included iron and steel manufacturing, flour mills, brass foundries, leather goods, breweries, furniture, marble works, printers, soap makers, meat packers, lime and cement works, and many others. Forges, foundries, and machine shops manufactured hundreds of products including engines, locomotives and locomotive components, tools, springs, cookware, and machinery components to name only a few (Kidder 1997, Section 8).

Immigrants supplied the labor so critical to the success of Erie's businesses. As flourishing businesses and industries provided jobs, people arrived in Erie to work, including African Americans, Germans, Irish, Russians, Poles, Swedes, Italians, Scots, Finns, and Austrians, among others (U.S. Census Bureau). The demand for housing grew as neighborhoods proliferated across the city, the variety of housing keeping pace with and reflecting the variety of Erie jobs including worker housing, larger homes for the management and professional middle class, and large homes for wealthy business owners. Immigrants often settled in neighborhoods reflecting their own ethnic identity where a church or synagogue, and social club strengthened new community ties.

Observances of celebrations, festivals, and food and music traditions celebrated in these ethnic neighborhoods deepened cultural roots while simultaneously contributing to a rich tapestry defining Erie as a unique community. Schools constructed throughout Erie educated the growing numbers of children, and social, arts and cultural, and recreational institutions provided enrichment for Erie's citizens.

## SECOND EMPIRE (1855-1885)



332-334 West 6th St

### 1865 - 1957

Griswold Manufacturing founded in Erie, producing cast iron kitchen products.



### 1866

Harry T. Burleigh born in Erie. An African American, Burleigh rose to become one of America's greatest composers and baritone vocalists.



SOURCE: ERIE READER

*The Erie Land Lighthouse constructed as one of the first lighthouses on the Great Lakes.*



1867

1870

### 1870

Russian immigrants arrive and help develop Erie's port and shipbuilding industry.



19,646  
ERIEITES

Historically, the Russian Town neighborhood extended from Parade to French Streets and Front to Third Streets.



247 EAST FRONT ST, RUSSIAN TOWN MARKER

**QUEEN ANNE  
(1880 - 1910)**



510 Parade St

**GOTHIC REVIVAL  
(1840-1880)**



134 West 6th St., Cathedral of St Paul



**1880**

**27,737  
ERIEITES**

1880s: Italians, Poles, and other immigrant groups arrived in Erie.



**1883**



Villa Maria Academy (819 West 8th Street) designed in the Late Gothic Revival style by David K. Dean & Sons of Erie.

**1892**



1892 John S. Hicks, African American local "ice cream king," built a three-story building on State Street for his ice cream manufacturing business, one of the most successful in the state.

**1890**

East Erie Turnverein building constructed at 829 Parade Street. German Turnvereins were social organizations promoting athletics and exercise.

**1891**

Eagle Brewery (2131 State St) highlights "Germanesque-Teutonic" industrial architecture.

SOURCE: HAGEN HISTORY CENTER



**1880**

**1890**

**1872**

The Colored Masons organized, now known as Bay City Lodge #68.

**1880**

Erie Public Library (3 South Perry Street) constructed in the Beaux Arts style, designed by architect Alden & Harlow, Pittsburgh, PA.

**1884**

Electricity introduced in Erie.



**1890**

**40,634  
ERIEITES**

**1873**

Philharmonia Hall, a German social club, constructed; later taken over by the East Erie Turnverein in 1880.



829 PARADE ST, PHILHARMONIA HALL, SOURCE: EAST ERIE TURNVEREIN

**1892**



**ROMANESQUE REVIVAL  
(1880 - 1900)**

Watson-Curtze Mansion (356 West 6th Street) constructed in the Richardson Romanesque style, designed by Green and Wicks of Buffalo, New York.

1895



Modern Tool Company (333 State Street) constructed as the People's Market House, designed by architect H. R. Dunning.

COLONIAL REVIVAL (1880 - 1955)



538 West 6th St

CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW (1905-1930)



2125 Lakeside Dr

Erie Armory (6th and Parade streets) constructed in the Colonial Revival style, architect Joseph F. Kuntz of the WestG. Wilkins Company, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1920



52,733 ERIEITES

1906

Emma Lawrence opens Lawrence Cleaning and Dyeing, the first Erie business owned and operated by an African American woman. She lived at 402 West 3rd Street.



1917 - 18

US joins World War I.

1918

Erie Chapter of NAACP founded; Jessie Pope serves as its first president.

1900



1910

1920

1903

Erie County Historical Society formed.



WOOD-MORRISON HOUSE, PART OF HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMPLEX (HAGEN HISTORY CENTER), 356 WEST 6TH ST



66,525 ERIEITES

C. F. Adams Building (101 East 6th Street) constructed with Romanesque Revival and Craftsman influences. Designed by architects Donaldson & Meier of Detroit, Michigan. Now known as the Erie Insurance Exchange.

1911



CLASSIC REVIVAL / NEO-CLASSICAL (1895 - 1950)



1330 West 8th St, Strong Vincent Middle School



93,372 ERIEITES



**1925**

Gannon University founded.



**1926**

Mercyhurst University founded.



**TUDOR REVIVAL  
(1895 - 1930)**



324 West 6th St

**1928**

Hotel Pope, a legendary African American entertainment venue for 50 years, opens at 1318 French Street.



HOTEL POPE, SOURCE: HAGEN HISTORY MUSEUM

**1929**

Start of the Great Depression

*Erie Trust Company Building (1001 State Street) constructed in the Art Deco style, designed by architect Dennison and Hiron, New York City, New York.*



**1925**

**1930**



*Warner Theatre (811 State Street) opens, designed by Rapp and Rapp, of Chicago, Illinois with French Renaissance and Art Deco influences.*

**1931**



*Boston Store (716-728 State Street) opens, designed by Erie architects Shutts & Morrison in the Art Deco style.*



**1930**

**115,967  
ERIEITES**

**1930**

**ART DECO  
(1920 - 1940)**



St. Mary's Auditorium, 320 East 10th St

**1934**

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission conducts archaeological excavations on East 28th Street under the Federal Works Administration's *Frontier Forts and Trails Survey*.



SOURCE: PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

**1936 - 56**

The African American baseball team The Pontiacs play in the Glenwood League, with Bayview Park as their home field.



SOURCE: HAGEN HISTORY CENTER

# Post World War II and Modern Reimagining (1950 - today)

The post-World War II era marked a shift in most American communities, as people adjusted to social and economic changes. In the decades following the war, people moved to the suburbs, suburban shopping malls supplanted traditional downtown shopping districts as the preferred shopping destination, and over time, manufacturing and production industries lost their dominance to a rising service economy.

Erie has had the good fortune to have retained a manufacturing base, which remains one of its four strongest employment sectors while expanding other employment categories such as biofuels, environmental research, education, healthcare, and tourism (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Societal changes that intensified in the 1960s and 1970s cast an important light on equal rights for African Americans, but societal and political gains have not come without costs. Residential shifts to the suburbs impacted Erie's urban housing, churches, and schools. Retail centers moved away from the traditional downtown and repopulated in car-centric developments away from the city.

While societal changes always bring challenges, they can also bring opportunities, especially as more recent generations assert their ideas about employment, home, and social preferences. Younger people are returning to urban centers, often living in converted commercial and industrial spaces, reinvigorating downtowns with energy and vitality. Small businesses and arts communities are finding opportunities in the historic buildings of downtown, and the waterfront transformation to add tourism, museum, and recreational use is growing. Erie leadership is pursuing initiatives to attract new residents and strengthen the community's economic and social fabric.

**RANCH**  
(1935 - 1975)



2316-2322 East 33rd St

## 1940

1937



*Federal Courthouse and Post Office (17 South Park Row) constructed in the Moderne style, designed by Cleveland architect Rudolph Stanley-Brown, consulting architect of the U.S. Treasury Department.*



116,955  
ERIEITES

1941 - 45

United States in World War II.



*Erie GE plant begins making Howitzers during WW2.*



1950

130,803  
ERIEITES



1951

Polish Falcons Club building constructed at 431 East 3rd Street.



1970

129,231  
ERIEITES



1977

Larry D. Meredith is the first African American elected to the Erie City Council. Harold Shields is the first African American elected to the Erie School Board.

c1975

Erie Times hires its first Black journalists: Mili Roberts, Fred Rush, Jr., and Bobby Harrison.



FRED RUSH, JR. SOURCE: A SHARED HERITAGE

1960

138,440  
ERIEITES



1980

119,123  
ERIEITES



1990: Population 108,718  
2000: Population 103,717  
2010: Population 101,786  
2020: Population 94,831

2021

City of Erie adopts its first historic preservation ordinance

2023

PACA building designated as Erie's first Local Landmark



## ERIE HISTORIC RESOURCES AND ARCHITECTURE

Erie's historic and architectural resources reflect its various historic context periods dating back over two centuries. Previous National Register nominations, local designations, and survey projects help to identify these contexts. For example, the West Park Place Historic District represents Erie's mid-19th century downtown commercial development while also identifying the Italianate style as one prominent in commercial buildings of the period. Resources such as the Pierre S.V. Hamot House (1831, 302 French Street) and the Thayer-Thompson House (c. 1861, 605 West 8th Street), are also significant for their associations with significant people. The following section summarizes historic and architectural resource types found in Erie through information provided by National Register nominations, surveys, the Hagen History Center, Preservation Erie, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and other sources.

# KEY DEFINITIONS

The following are key terms used in this document:

- Building** Created principally to shelter any form of human activity.
- Contributing Property or Resource** A building, structure, object, or site within the boundaries of a historic district that contributes and adds to the district’s historic context or period of significance or historic architectural or archaeological qualities.
- Cultural Resource** A prehistoric or historic remains or indicators of past human activities, including artifacts, sites, landscapes, and objects of importance to a culture or community for scientific, traditional, religious, or other reasons.
- Historic Resource** A historic resource is any building, site, structure, object, district, place, or landscape considered to have historical, architectural, or cultural importance.
- Intangible Cultural Resource** An intangible cultural resource includes the traditions, knowledge sets and skills, expressions, objects, and cultural spaces associated with a particular racial or ethnic group or community.
- Local Historic Overlay District** A Local Historic Overlay District is a portion of a community - a downtown or neighborhood commercial district, residential neighborhood, industrial area, or park, for instance - containing a coherent collection of significant historic resources that, as an ensemble, is worth preserving for their architectural, historic, and cultural attributes or contributions toward understanding a community’s history. The City of Erie designates Local Historic Overlay Districts under its Historic Preservation Ordinance.

<b>Local Landmark</b>	A historic landmark is an individual historic resource considered significant for its architectural, historical, or cultural merits, and worthy of recognition, preservation, and designation under the City of Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance.
<b>National Register of Historic Places</b>	The National Register of Historic Places is this nation’s official list of historic and cultural resources and places worthy of recognition. Administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the Pennsylvania SHPO, a National Register listing is honorary only and does not restrict a property’s use or disposition.
<b>National Register Historic District</b>	Similar to a Local Historic District, a National Register Historic District may comprise a downtown, neighborhood, park, or other collection of historically or architecturally significant resources listed together as a district having met certain criteria for eligibility, among them that a property must be at least 50 years old. Properties within a National Register Historic District are not subject to municipal design review as they are in Local Historic Overlay Districts.
<b>Non-Contributing Property or Resource</b>	A building, structure, object, or site within the boundaries of a historic district that does not contribute to the district’s period of significance or historic architectural or archaeological qualities due to alterations, date of construction, or other factors.
<b>Object</b>	Constructions or compositions that are primarily artistic in nature, small in scale, and associated with a specific setting or environment, such as a park or plaza.
<b>Site</b>	A location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value.
<b>Structure</b>	A construction made primarily for functional purposes and not for human shelter, such as a bridge or lighthouse.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

With over 200 years of development history and thousands of years of Indigenous history, sites within the City of Erie have the potential to yield important archaeological and cultural resources - both historic and pre-historic. Areas of early development in Erie, such as downtown, along the bayfront, and in early residential and industrial areas, provide the greatest opportunities for archaeological resources. While archaeological excavations within the city are not a common occurrence, there have been several over the last century. As part of the Federal Works Administration's *Frontier Forts and Trails Survey* of the 1930s, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission excavated a site on East 28th Street in 1934, uncovering Native American objects from the early- to mid-17th century. Excavations on the site of Fort Presque Isle, built by the French in 1753 during the French and Indian War, and the site of later British and American forts – now part of the grounds of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home (560 East 3rd Street) – uncovered one of the American fort's blockhouses. Known as the Wayne Blockhouse, the reconstructed building completed in 1880 sits near the site of the original forts.

In 2002, the City of Erie conducted a rehabilitation and new construction project at the Erie Federal Court House and Post Office (17 South Park Row) which included monitoring of construction activities by archaeologists. The project discovered artifacts, architectural debris, outbuildings, and buried pipes from residential and light industry activities dating between 1800 and 1919 (*This Week in Pennsylvania Architecture – Erie County*, 2012). Archaeological resources may exist in areas people have occupied over time and which recent human activity may have disturbed. Therefore, it is important that the City of Erie, the Historic Review Commission, and the community take care to identify, recognize, and plan for archeological monitoring and investigations when large-scale ground disturbances take place.



1934 E. 28TH STREET EXCAVATION (PHMC)

## RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES

Erie's oldest residential architecture dates to the early 19th century centering around downtown and the 1795 original street grid by Andrew Ellicott. These early homes, constructed of brick, represent the development styles and construction methods of the period. The Federal Row National Register Historic District at Holland and East 5th Streets consists of five Federal style rowhouses dating from 1823-1842. Other early homes include the Pierre S.V. Hamot House (1827-31, 302 French Street), a vernacular home influenced by the Federal style, and the Joseph Sterrett House (1838, 414 State Street), the Cashier's House (1839, 417 State Street), and the Frederick Schneider House (1846, 3 East 4th Street), all designed in the Greek Revival style (Sands 1991, Section 8-2).

The latter half of the 19th century witnessed a rise in industrial manufacturing in Erie. Thousands of immigrants moved to Erie seeking work, resulting in a substantial residential building boom. Erie grew to the east and west of State Street in downtown Erie within the originally planned street grid, encompassing the neighborhoods of West Bayfront, East Bayfront, and Pulaski-Lighthouse, with 12th Street as the southern boundary. By the late 19th century, growth south of the industrial corridor along 12th Street encompassed Little Italy (originally South Erie) and Trinity Park. Many of Erie's wealthiest residents built large homes on West 6th Street beginning in the 1840s, known as "Millionaire's Row," including the Watson-Curtze Mansion (1892, 356 West 6th Street), designed in the Romanesque Revival style. The rusticated brownstone mansion features corner turrets and a large brownstone carriage house.

The West 21st Street corridor, in the Little Italy neighborhood, also developed as a wealthy enclave beginning in the 1850s and includes the Liebel House (1882, 139 West 21st Street), designed in brick with Classical and Queen Anne influences, and the Shenk House (209 West 21st Street), designed using brownstone in the Romanesque Revival style. Both areas are now National Register historic districts. Erie homes feature most of the prominent architectural styles popular during this period, including Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Romanesque Revival, and Classical Revival, constructed of wood or brick.

The early 20th century saw the expansion of the city outwards into neighborhoods such as Frontier, Arbor Heights, Greengarden, Lakeside, Glenwood, Academy-Marvintown, and Fairmount-McClelland. Popular architectural styles during this period include Craftsman Bungalows, Prairie, Art Deco, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival. Vernacular housing types are prominent throughout Erie's early residential neighborhoods; the most prominent of them are the Gable Front and the American Foursquare. Multi-family housing types such as the two-story duplex with two-story front porches and larger apartment buildings provided lower-cost housing for many of the city's working class. By the mid-20th century, modest Ranch, Minimal Traditional, and Cape Cod filled out Erie's outer edges, including the Mercyhurst and East Grandview neighborhoods. Most neighborhoods in Erie include examples of brick and fram20th-century architectural styles and vernacular building types.



## COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

As the city grew prosperous as a port and shipbuilding center in the early 19th century, its commercial district developed near Lake Erie centered around State and French Streets. One of the earliest remaining commercial buildings is the three-story frame Dickson Tavern (1815/1841, 201 French Street), designed in the Greek Revival style. The Old Customs House (1839, 411 State Street) is an imposing limestone Greek Revival commercial building that served as the customs house for the Port of Erie. As the city grew, the downtown commercial district expanded south centered along State Street where many of the city's most important commercial buildings reside. Chandlery Corner, listed in the National Register, includes the three-story brick Schneider/Kessler Chandlery (1851, 401-405 State Street). The West Park Place National Register Historic District, along North Park Row and State Street, contains an intact collection of brick commercial buildings built from 1857 to 1865.

Downtown Erie experienced significant growth throughout the late 19th century and early 20th century due to a booming industrial economy. Large brick commercial buildings such as the Erie Trust Company Building (1925, 1001 State Street), with Renaissance Revival and Art Deco design influences, and the Boston Store (1931/1950, 716 State Street), designed in the Art Deco style, transformed downtown Erie's skyline and cemented its reputation as a regional shopping center.

In addition to the central downtown business district, smaller neighborhood commercial districts such as those at West 8th Street and Chestnut and along East Avenue north of East 10th Street, as well as individual corner stores like the one at 702 Poplar Street in the West Bayfront neighborhood, were common in early neighborhood development. Local stores and shopping districts allowed residents to walk for essential goods and to travel downtown for larger shopping and commercial needs.





## CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

As the county seat, the City of Erie is home to several prominent civic and government buildings, including the imposing Erie County Courthouse (1855/1890, 140 West 6th Street), located in the West 6th Street National Register Historic District. The smooth limestone-clad building features two wings attached at the rear with identical Temple Front facades and two-story Corinthian columns designed in the Classical Revival style. The Old Griswold Post Office (1932, 1314 Griswold Plaza) displays a brick façade with arched openings supported by two-story columns and a clay tile roof designed in the Beaux Arts style. The building, now privately owned, serves as office space. The Erie Federal Court House and Post Office (1937, 17 South Park Row), listed in the National Register and designed in the Art Moderne style, features a smooth limestone façade with decorative stone panels.

The number and variety of religious buildings in Erie are a testament to the importance of religion in the city's heritage. Several congregations trace their origins back to the early 19th century. In many cases, Erie's ethnic immigrant communities raised funds to construct churches to serve their faith needs. St. Mary's Church (1854, 310 East 10th Street), constructed by the German community, features onion dome towers, a stone façade, and a slate roof. Designed in the Gothic Revival style, it now serves as the New Life and Spirit Revival Center. St. Patrick's Church and Rectory (1903, 130 East 4th Street), serving the Irish community, features a stone façade, arched openings, and square towers designed in the Romanesque Revival style.

St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church is Erie's oldest African American congregation, founded in 1844. They are now located in a modern building at 236 East 11th Street. Shiloh Baptist Church (1964, 901 East 5th Street), a later African American congregation formed in 1915, now resides in a modest one-story brick church with a central tower. The Cathedral of St. Paul (1866, 133 West 6th Street), designed by Detroit architect William Gordon Lloyd and located in the West 6th Street National Register Historic District, features a Gothic Revival tower, stone façade, and slate roof. Considered the oldest congregation in Erie with its founding in 1808, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church (1861/1883, 2216 Peach Street) also served Erie's large German community. The brick church features an arched opening, rose windows, and three spires designed in the Gothic Revival style.



## CULTURAL AND FRATERNAL BUILDINGS

Erie's strong cultural and ethnic heritage is evident in the historic theaters and social clubs found in downtown Erie and throughout the city's neighborhoods. The Warner Theater (1930, 811 State Street) is an extravagant movie palace designed by famed Chicago theater architects Rapp and Rapp and commissioned by the Pennsylvania Theater Company, a subsidiary of the Warner Brothers Company. The terra cotta façade features a French Renaissance design with Art Deco influences dominated by a four-story "Warner" marquee. Also downtown, the Strand Theater (1948, 13 West 10th Street) opened as a movie theater and now serves as the Erie Playhouse. The two-story brick theater features an Art Deco brick façade and marquee.

Erie's ethnic immigrant groups typically settled near others of their native land, bringing their own culture and language to their neighborhood. Social clubs formed in the heart of each neighborhood to provide a place to gather and socialize, as well as serve as beneficial societies providing insurance and other benefits to its members. Many of these clubs remain in operation, including the Moniuszko Club and Singing Society established in 1891 (Polish, 1209 Reed Street), the Slovak National Club organized in 1936 (1942, Slovakia, 902 Hess Avenue), the Nuova Aurora Society organized in 1907 (1907, Italian, 1518 Walnut Street), the Siebenbuerger Club organized in 1898 (1928, German, 2114 French Street), the National Club (Italian, 1623 Cherry Street), and the Polish Falcon's Nest organized in 1914 (1951, Polish, 431 East 3rd Street) who moved from their earlier building at 602 East 19th Street.

Other social club buildings remain though the organizations no longer exist or operate elsewhere, including the East Erie Turners, originally the Erie Turnverein, organized in 1890 (1890, German, 829 Parade Street), the Old Romanian Club, officially the United Transylvanian Beneficial Society (Romanian, 1133 Pennsylvania Avenue), and the Maennerchor Club organized in 1871 (German, 1607 State Street). Most of the clubs are modest one- and two-story brick buildings, though several, such as the Maennerchor Club and the East Erie Turners building, are larger in scale with Classical Revival stylistic references.





## EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Erie has a strong tradition of education dating back to its founding. Many of the city's public schools remain from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, most two-to-three stories and constructed of brick and limestone, including Public School No. 2 – Jones School (1899, 150 East 8th Street), designed by architect Joseph Frank with a brick and limestone façade. It now serves as private offices. Public School No. 7 – Washington School (1875, 128 West 21st Street), designed by architect D. K. Dean, is now part of the West 21st Street National Register Historic District. Public School No. 6 – Irving School (1897, 2310 Plum Street), designed by architect Joseph Frank, features a central pedimented tower and arched opening. One of the most recognizable schools in Erie is Academy High School and Veterans Memorial Stadium (1920, 2825 State Street), a three-story brick and limestone building with a central tower designed in the Collegiate Gothic Revival style. The school now serves as the Northwest Pennsylvania Collegiate Academy. Central Tech High School, created from combining two adjoining schools – Memorial Junior High School (1956) and Technical Memorial High School (1959) – is a sprawling campus comprised of low-rise two-story brick buildings with an open two-story entrance with square columns reinterpreting the common Classical Revival entrance portico. The building now serves as Erie High School (Old Time Erie, 2012).

Gannon University, established in 1925 as Cathedral College by Archbishop John Mark Gannon, has strong ties to Erie. The private Catholic university owns an impressive collection of historic and modern buildings along the west end of downtown Erie, purchased over the years due to the University's expansion. Their first acquisition was the Strong Mansion (1891, 109 West 6th Street), now known as the University's Old Main and located in the West 6th Street National Register Historic District. The three-and-one-half-story brick and brownstone mansion features an arched entrance, multiple gables and chimneys, and a slate roof, designed in the Romanesque Revival style. Scottino Hall/Schuster Theater (1921, 620 Sassafras Street), originally the Christian Science Church and part of the West 6th Street National Register Historic District, features a large front pediment and two-story Ionic columns designed in the Classical Revival style. Wehrle Hall (1957, 209 West 6th Street) is a Mid-Century Modern brick residence hall with ribbon windows and metal panels.

Mercyhurst University, founded in 1926 as Mercyhurst College, is a private Catholic university located in the Mercyhurst neighborhood. The campus features Old Main (1926, 501 East 38th Street), a two-and-one-half-story brick and limestone building designed in the English Gothic Revival style.

## INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

Erie's industrial economy drove the city's tremendous growth throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, securing the city's reputation as a center for manufacturing. Many of those early brick and steel factories remain – some vacant and some still in use – adding to the industrial character found along 12th Street, the city's main industrial corridor. The Erie City Iron Works (1880/1900, 1310 East Avenue) is a significant example of a production shed and is part of a larger complex of manufacturing buildings at East Avenue and East 12th Street. The Lovell Manufacturing Company (1883-1946, 1301 French Street), located just south of the 12th Street corridor, was a successful manufacturer that expanded its products and facility multiple times through the 1940s. The building was one of many in Erie that switched to war-time production during World War II. Now known as Lovell Place, the mixed-use building, listed in the National Register, houses commercial space, offices, and apartments.

Erie's brewery industry in the late 19th century included numerous lager, ale, and porter plants including the Jackson Koehler Eagle Brewery (1892/1936, 2136 State Street). The brewery, run by the Koehler family, reflects the significant German presence in Erie's immigrant population and later merged with three other breweries to form the Erie Brewing Company, which remained in operation until 1978. The one-story brick brewery features arched windows and brick corbelling.

The Erie Water Works (1913) reflects the city's response to a rapidly expanding population through the construction of a large water pumping and sewer facility. Designed in the Romanesque Revival style, the brick and limestone building features two-story arched windows and a clay tile roof.





## PARKS, SQUARES, AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

The original 1795 street grid created by Andrew Ellicott laid out Perry Square, Gridley Park, and Wayne Park at the center of each of three one-square-mile sections. The parks developed separately as the city developed around them. Perry Square, at the heart of downtown Erie, first received improvements in 1808. State Street divides the park into east and west. Buildings, including the original County Courthouse, market houses, and housing, developed in the west park through the first half of the 19th century, though by 1866 the park was clear of buildings. The park received additional improvements in 1846, including the planting of many of the trees that remain today. Also in 1846, the park received the name Perry Square in honor of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, a hero of the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. The west park includes a Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument erected in 1872. The Edison Electric fountain, installed in the east park in 1929, later received alterations in the 1980s and 2016. The park includes other monuments and markers. (Perry Square Alliance, n.d.)

Gridley Park – originally named Cascade Park – developed after 1900 and includes a monument to Captain Charles Vernon Gridley, erected in 1913. The park later received the name Gridley Park to honor Gridley, who served in the Spanish-American War. Liberty Street divides the park into east and west. (Our West Bayfront, n.d.) Wayne Park, the only one of the three original parks not divided into halves, received its name in honor of General Anthony Wayne, who served in the Revolutionary War.

Erie Cemetery opened in 1851 in the heart of the Little Italy neighborhood and is the burial place for many of Erie's most notable citizens. The cemetery, which covers 75 acres, has a rural landscape design with circular drives and an expansive tree cover. The cemetery includes numerous and elaborate stone mausoleums, tombs, and obelisks, including an 1887 chapel, and the William L. Scott Mausoleum, erected in 1891 with Gothic Revival influences. A wrought iron fence surrounds the cemetery, meeting at a formal entrance gate facing Chestnut Street. Lakeside Cemetery and Gardens, established in 1898 along Lake Erie in the Lakeside neighborhood, has a traditional design with gravesites laid out in rows. It is the final resting place of Captain Charles Vernon Gridley. Four bronze cannons captured in the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War flank his gravesite along Lake Erie.

Erie's bayfront was a significant factor in its rapid development. At the beginning of the 19th century, the bayfront served as the site of public docks, shipbuilding facilities, and other maritime uses. As the city developed into an industrial center, the bayfront developed with railroad yards, factories, power and water plants, and other industrial uses. In 1884, the Erie

Extension Canal opened west of downtown, connecting Lake Erie to Pittsburgh. The canal closed in 1871. While most of these early uses are gone, the bayfront redeveloped in 2007 with hotels and a convention center, a public library, restaurants, a marina, a park, and the addition of the Bayfront Parkway. The Port of Erie remains active, as do several light industrial and maritime industries, such as a shipbuilding and repair facility. There are also recreational opportunities and a campground, as well as boating and fishing.

The Erie Land Lighthouse (1867, 1200 Lighthouse Street) is a round brick tower clad in sandstone and is open to the public. Three smokestacks, known as “The Three Sisters,” remain along Lake Erie as remnants of the former Hammermill Paper Company facility, constructed in 1899. The Erie Yacht Club, founded in 1894, moved to its current location in the Frontier neighborhood in 1917. The original temporary clubhouse from 1917, known as the Canoe House, remains in use as a boat rental office and office of the Dockmaster. The existing clubhouse is the second on the site, constructed in 1968 and rehabilitated in 1993 (Erie Yacht Club, Club History, n.d.).

Following a 2015 nomination, the proposed Lake Erie Quadrangle National Marine Sanctuary, under consideration by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, seeks to preserve and promote Erie’s maritime heritage through the protection of underwater shipwrecks, expand the current campus of maritime museums and environmental organizations, and create strong partnerships with state and federal agencies to expand Erie’s tourism economy.



# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places promotes public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and preserve important historic and cultural resources across the country. Listing in the National Register includes individual properties and historic districts.

## NATIONAL REGISTER LISTED BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

As of April 2023, the City of Erie includes 24 properties individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

- **Boston Store** (716-728 State Street, listed 1996, National Register #96001194)
- **C.F.Adams Building** (101 East 6th Street, listed 2015, National Register #14001132)
- **Cashier's House and Coach House** (411 East State Street, 11 East 4th Street, listed 1972, National Register #72001121, Expanded 1983, National Register #83002241)
- **Chandlery Corner** (401-405 State Street, listed 1987, National Register #87000030)
- **Charles Manning Reed Mansion** (524 Peach Street, listed 1982, National Register #82003786)
- **Dickson Tavern** (201 French Street, listed 1990, National Register #89002256)
- **Erie Armory** (350 Parade Street, listed 1989, National Register #89002073)
- **Erie County Public Library** (27 South Park Row, listed 1979, National Register #79002225)
- **Erie Federal Courthouse and Post Office** (17 South Park Row, listed 1993, National Register #92000468)
- **Erie Land Lighthouse** (1200 Lighthouse Street, listed 1978, National Register #78002397)
- **Erie Masonic Temple** (32 West 8th Street, listed 2020, National Register #100005518)
- **Erie Trust Company Building** (1001 State Street, listed 2000, National Register #00000967)
- **John Hill House** (230 West 6th Street, listed 1979, National Register #79002224)
- **Koehler, Jackson, Eagle Brewery** (2109 State Street, listed 1982, National Register #82003785)
- **Lovell Manufacturing Company** (1301 French Street, listed 1997, National Register #96001551)
- **Mayer Building** (1501-09 State Street, listed 2021, National Register #100006881)
- **Modern Tool Company** (333 State Street, listed 1987, National Register #87000382)
- **Old Customs House** (417 State Street, listed 1972, National Register #72001122)
- **Pierre S.V. Hamot House** (302 French Street, listed 1991, National Register #91001707)
- **Thayer-Thompson House** (605 West 8th Street, listed 1985, National Register #85003443)
- **U. S. S. Niagara** (State Street at Lake Erie, listed 1973, National Register #73001628)
- **Villa Maria Academy** (819 West 8th Street, listed 1996, National Register #96001193)
- **Warner Theater** (811 State Street, listed 1982, National Register #82003787)
- **Watson-Curtze Mansion** (356 West 6th Street, listed 1983, National Register #83002244)

FIGURE 1: NATIONAL REGISTER LANDMARKS





# NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

As of April 2023, there are four National Register historic districts in the City of Erie.

## Federal Row National Register Historic District

Listed in 1984, the Federal Row National Register Historic District comprises five buildings located at the northwest corner of East 5th and Holland Streets. The five buildings, designed in the Federal style of architecture, are all constructed of red brick and are two stories or two-and-a-half stories in height. The buildings include the Charles M. Tibbals House (1842, 146 East 5th Street), the Alexander Brewster House (1852, 156 East 5th Street), the two halves of the Kennedy Row Houses (1836, divided in 1880, 158 East 5th Street), the two halves of the David Kennedy House (1832, divided in 1880, 162 East 5th Street/430 Holland Street), and the Kennedy Double House (1840, 424-426 Holland Street). All five of the buildings contribute to the character of the historic district and are significant as the most intact collection of Erie’s early Federal rowhouses.

Properties within the historic district are located within the **RLB Residential Limited Business District** under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, which allows residential uses, home occupations, and limited commercial uses. Under the current zoning, the buildings within the historic district meet the use requirements but are non-conforming as the existing zoning requirements allow less building lot coverage, greater building height, and larger setbacks than those found in the existing historic buildings. Amending the existing zoning for the Federal Row Historic District to align the regulations with the existing buildings would be more appropriate to maintain the character of the historic district.

FEDERAL ROW HD		
Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	5	-
Sites	-	-
Structures	-	-
Objects	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	



FIGURE 2: FEDERAL ROW NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT





## West Park Place National Register Historic District

Bounded by North Park Row, West 5th, West 6th, and State Streets, and facing Perry Square to the south, the West Park Place National Register Historic District, listed in 1980, is a collection of intact mid-19th century commercial buildings in the heart of downtown Erie. The district includes 12 three-story brick buildings wrapping the block, with one vacant lot, representing the early commercial prosperity of the city. All 12 of the buildings contribute to the character of the district and include Italianate design and architectural ornamentation.

Properties within the historic district are located within the **C-3 Central Commercial District** under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, which allows commercial, office, and entertainment facilities and related uses. Zoning regulations within downtown Erie do not require front or side yard setbacks and allow 100 percent building lot coverage, which is appropriate for the historic district. However, maximum height requirements downtown allow much taller buildings than appropriate for the historic district, and amending this regulation would help to maintain the character of the district.

### WEST PARK PLACE HD

Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	12	-
Sites	-	-
Structures	-	-
Objects	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	

FIGURE 3: WEST PARK PLACE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT



## West 6th Street National Register Historic District

Roughly bounded by West 6th Street and parts of West 7th Street between Peach and Poplar Streets, as well as parts of West 5th Street between Peach and Sassafras Streets, the West 6th Street National Register Historic District, listed in 1984, comprises both single-family residences and multi-family buildings, as well as institutional and religious buildings. The district’s period of significance – 1821-1930 – reflects a variety of architectural styles, including the Second Empire, Greek Revival, Federal, Prairie, Tudor Revival, and Craftsman Bungalow. Of the district’s 117 building resources, 103 (88 percent) contribute to the character of the district. The majority of buildings in the district utilize brick materials, while other buildings include wood frame, stone, and stucco materials. The district includes several historic secondary buildings, including carriage houses and garages.

Originally known as “Millionaire’s Row,” the district is significant for its association with Erie’s wealthy business and community leaders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The district also includes three buildings individually listed in the National Register – the John Hill House (230 West 6th Street, listed 1979), the Charles Manning Reed Mansion (524 Peach Street, listed 1982), and the Watson-Curtze Mansion (356 West 6th Street, listed 1983).

Properties within the historic district are located within several zoning districts under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, including the following:

- **RLB Residential Limited Business District**, which allows residential uses, home occupations, and limited commercial uses, along West 6th Street between Peach and Walnut Streets and for the property at 558 West 6th Street. Existing zoning requirements allow a greater building height than those found in the majority of existing historic buildings. Amending the existing zoning for the West 6th Street Historic District to align the regulations with the existing buildings would be more appropriate to maintain the character of the historic district.
- **R-2 Medium Density Residential District**, which allows one-to-four-family low-to-moderate density residential developments, along West 6th Street between Walnut and Cherry Streets (except for 558 West 6th Street) and along the north half of the 600 block of West 6th Street. The majority of buildings within this zoning district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.
- **R-1 Low Density Residential District**, which allows low-density single-family residential development, along the south half of the 600 block of West 6th Street. Buildings within this one-block section of the historic district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.

WEST 6TH STREET HD		
Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	103	14
Sites	-	-
Structures	-	-
Objects	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>14</b>

FIGURE 4: WEST 6TH STREET NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT





## West 21st Street National Register Historic District.

Bounded by West 21st Street between Peach and Myrtle Streets, and including part of Sassafras Street, the West 21st Street National Register Historic District, listed in 1990, comprises late 19th and early 20th century single-family homes, as well as one school and one church. The district's building resources, constructed from 1857-1939, include both wood frame and brick construction that are two- and two-and-a-half stories in height except for the three-story school (Washington Education Center, 1910) and church (Table of Grace Methodist Church, 1893). The buildings reflect a variety of architectural styles including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Italianate, as well as Gable Front and American Foursquare vernacular forms. All 35 of the buildings contribute to the character of the district which is significant as a collection of intact middle and upper-class homes of prominent Erie residents from the late 19th and early 20th century.

Properties within the historic district are located within several zoning districts under the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, including the following:

- **RLB Residential Limited Business District**, which allows residential uses, home occupations, and limited commercial uses, along the 100 block of West 21st Street and for the property at 209 West 21st Street. Properties along the block within this zoning district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.
- **R-2 Medium Density Residential District**, which allows one-to-four-family low-to-moderate density residential developments, along the 200 block of West 21st Street (except for 209 West 21st Street). Buildings within this one-block section of the historic district appear to conform to the zoning regulations.

WEST 21ST STREET HD		
Building Resources	Contributing	Non-Contributing
Buildings	35	-
Sites	-	-
Structures	-	-
Objects	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	

FIGURE 5: WEST 21ST STREET NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT



# ERIE LOCAL LANDMARKS AND OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Under the Historic Preservation Ordinance adopted in 2021, the Historic Review Commission and the Erie City Council can designate Local Landmarks and Historic Districts. Local designation protects significant historic and cultural resources while helping to revitalize commercial and residential neighborhoods and encourage the adaptive use of vacant historic buildings. There is currently one Local Landmark, the Mayer Building (1899), located at 1501-09 State Street, designated on March 1, 2023.

## PROPOSED LAKE ERIE QUADRANGLE MARINE SANCTUARY

In 2015, Erie County submitted a nomination to the National Marine Sanctuaries Program administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to designate the Lake Erie Quadrangle, approximately 740 square miles of Pennsylvania's Lake Erie waters, from the 75 miles of Erie County shoreline to the Canadian border, as a National Marine Sanctuary. Sanctuary designation would help to recognize and protect Lake Erie's significant maritime heritage, including its many shipwrecks and other archaeological resources. Formal designation is still pending by the NOAA.

## HISTORICAL MARKERS

For nearly 100 years, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's (PA-SHPO) Historical Marker Program commemorates events, people, and places significant to the history of the state through the installation of cast aluminum markers. There are currently more than 2,500 historical markers across Pennsylvania with 18 located in the City of Erie. The markers commemorate various aspects of Erie's history from the Battle of Lake Erie to important military figures, science and medical professions, scholars, and musical performers. Three of the markers recognize contributions from African Americans and related historic resources, including the St. James A.M.E. Church. One marker for Otto Mayer, a champion bicycle racer from the last turn of the century, is currently missing.

- African American Sailors in the Battle of Lake Erie (Marker #1996HM00016; dedicated September 10, 1996)
- Anthony Wayne (Marker #1946HM00047; dedicated: November 1, 1946)
- Canal Basin (Marker #1948HM00068; dedicated: April 5, 1948)
- Captain C.V. Gridley (Marker #1946HM00048; dedicated: November 1, 1946)
- Captain Daniel Dobbins (Marker #2003HM00017, dedicated: September 13, 2003)
- Cashier's House (Marker #1980HM00003, dedicated: January 1, 1980)
- Colonel Philip Cochran (1910-1979) (Marker #2001HM00017, dedicated: November 11, 2001)
- Erie County (Marker #1981HM00001, dedicated: August 21, 1981)
- Erie Land Lighthouse (Marker #2004HM00015, dedicated: June 19, 2004)



- Flagship Niagara (Marker #1948HM00071, dedicated: January 1, 1948)
- Fort Presque Isle (Marker #1946HM00054, dedicated October 1, 1946)
- Harry Kellar (1849-1922) (Marker #2008HM00016, dedicated: May 9, 2008)
- Harry T. Burleigh (Marker #2019HM00011, dedicated: December 6, 2019)
- Otto Maya (Marker #2002HM00009, dedicated August 17, 2002)
- Paul Allman Siple (1908-1968) (Marker #2007HM00018, dedicated October 14, 2007)
- Pennsylvania National Guard 112th Infantry Regiment (Marker #2015HM00011, dedicated July 2, 2015)
- Perry's Shipyards (Marker #1946HM00063, dedicated November 1, 1946)
- Sr. Bernard Sheridan (Marker #2003HM00018, dedicated September 26, 2003)
- St. James A.M.E. Church (Marker #1994HM00018, dedicated January 1, 1994)



# ERIE'S INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

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During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Erie's population grew as it rose to prominence as a maritime industrial center in the region. Much of this growth is due to an influx of ethnic immigrants seeking work in the city's factories and industrial plants. As a result, Erie's cultural heritage reflects various racial and ethnic groups, including African Americans, Asians, Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Germans, and Irish. Ethnic festivals are a popular method of celebrating that culture. Churches and community organizations, the heart of most ethnic communities, sponsor most cultural festivals. There are over a dozen ethnic festivals held annually or every other year in Erie. Following is a partial list of Erie's ethnic and cultural festivals.

1

## St. Paul's Italian Festival

celebrates Italian-American heritage in Erie through food, music, and Italian dancing. St. Paul Roman Catholic Church in Erie's Little Italy neighborhood sponsors and hosts the annual festival.

2

## Zabawa Polish Festival

held annually, celebrates Erie's Polish heritage through Polish food and beverages, vendors, games, music, and a Polish Mass held in Holy Trinity Church, which sponsors the festival.

3

## St. Patrick's Irish Festival

begun in 1993 to celebrate Celtic culture, features Irish food, music, art, and vendors selling clothing and crafts. St. Patrick's Church sponsors the annual festival held on East 4th Street in front of the church.

4

## AmeriMasala

is a multi-cultural festival held in Perry Square celebrating cultures from around the world and includes a parade, art, music, food, and fashion. Erie Arts and Culture, The Erie Community Foundation, Erie Art Company, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, Mercyhurst University, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts sponsored the festival in 2022.

5

## Erie World Refugee Day

begun in 2016, honors and celebrates international refugees fleeing conflict and persecution. The annual gathering provides food, music, and crafts. The International Institute of Erie sponsors the event.

6

## Multi-Cultural Asia Day

highlights the diversity of Asian Pacific cultures, including Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Pakistan, and Vietnam, and promotes inclusion. The event includes family activities, arts, and crafts, demonstrations, and performances displaying the different Asian cultures. The Asian Pacific American Forum of General Electric and Wabtec founded the event in 2008. The Erie Asian Pacific American Association currently sponsors the event.

7

## Oktoberfest

is a traditional German celebration with food and beverages, music, and activities, held in Erie since 2006. St. Joseph Church/Bread of Life Community sponsors the annual event.

8

### St. Patrick's Day Parade

runs along State Street to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and Irish heritage. St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. The parade, which includes floats, bands, and participation from community groups and organizations, institutions, local businesses, and others, ends in front of St. Patrick Catholic Church on East 4th Street. The Knights and Ladies of St. Patrick and the Erie Zoo sponsor the parade which began in 1979.

9

### Troika Russian Festival

began in 2000 to celebrate Russian heritage and includes traditional performances, church tours, mass, food, beverages, and merchandise. Church of the Nativity sponsors the annual event.

10

### Slavic Festival

celebrates Slavic heritage through Eastern European food, music, and dancing. The Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church has sponsored the festival since 2003.

11

### Juneteenth

celebrates the end of slavery, announced on June 19, 1865. Originating in Galveston, Texas, Juneteenth is now a federal holiday. Erie's Juneteenth celebration includes a block party on State Street with live music and vendors. Erie's Juneteenth Celebration, the Booker T. Washington Development and Education Center, and Erie's Black Wall Street sponsor the annual event.

12

### Ubhauri Sakela

held in Perry Square, celebrates the traditions of the Kirat Rai people, an ethnic group indigenous to Eastern Nepal and the Sikkim, Kalimpong, and Darjeeling regions of India. The Bhutanese Kirat Rai Organization of America sponsors the festival.

13

### Taste of Asia

began in 2016 and held every other year, features traditional food from various Asian cultures. The Erie Asian Pacific American Association sponsors the event.

TROIKA FESTIVAL (TROIKA FESTIVAL)



AMERIMASALA 2022 (LYNN JOHNSON)



# DOCUMENTATION AND SURVEY SUMMARY

The following is a summary of previous survey and documentation efforts conducted within the City of Erie. Survey reports and documents are available from the City of Erie.

## **Frontier Forts and Trails Survey (1930s)**

The Frontier Forts and Trails Survey conducted archaeological excavations of various Native American sites and gathered and documented historical records within the region of northwest Pennsylvania. Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the project is part of the Works Project Administration.

## **Erie County Bicentennial Survey (1976)**

The Erie Historical Society initiated an independent survey to identify architecturally significant sites within Erie County constructed before 1865 to commemorate the U. S. Bicentennial. The survey identified close to 400 sites of which 48 were located within the City of Erie, including seven properties currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the Kennedy Row Houses, now part of the Federal Row National Register Historic District.

## **Erie County Historical and Architectural Preservation Plan – Historic Sites Inventory (1976)**

As part of a countywide preservation plan prepared by the Erie County Metropolitan Planning Department, a survey of 110 individual sites within the county identified properties thought to have historical or architectural significance. The survey categorized the sites into nine classifications, including agriculture, arts and literature, commercial and industrial development, education, government, military history, religion, and transportation. All other properties received architectural dwelling classification. The inventory included public and private properties in a variety of architectural styles.

The survey identified 41 sites within the City of Erie under the following classifications:

- Architectural Dwellings – 27
- Commercial and Industrial Development – 3
- Military History - 3
- Religion – 3
- Transportation – 2
- Arts and Literature – 1
- Education – 1
- Government – 1

## City of Erie Historic Sites Survey (1982)

On behalf of the City of Erie, the Northwest Institute of Research conducted a survey to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings, sites, and historic districts within the central portion of the City of Erie. The survey boundary consisted of Cranberry Street on the west, 26th Street on the south, East and Hess Avenues on the east, and Lake Erie on the north. Divided into 13 zones, a reconnaissance-level survey provided a general description of each zone and identified individual properties for an intensive-level survey. A total of 830 properties received intensive-level documentation. The City of Erie used Community Development Block Grant funds to underwrite the survey initiative.

The survey identified 215 individual properties and sites as well as five historic districts as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. The five potential historic districts include:

- **Lower State Street Historic District** includes the area between 3rd Street, French Street, North Park Row, and Peach Street, and is a collection of commercial and residential buildings dating from the early 19th to the early 20th centuries. Several properties within the district are eligible for National Register listing.
- **West 6th Street Historic District** includes West 6th Street between Perry Square on the east and Gridley Park on the west. The district comprises residential and institutional buildings including what is known as Erie's "Millionaire's RoWest" Several residences within the district are listed in the National Register.
- **Upper State Street Historic District** centers on the east side of State Street between 10th Street on the north and 16th Street to the south. The commercial buildings within the district range from the mid-19th century through the 1930s.
- **West 12th Street Industrial Historic District** spans West 12th Street between Myrtle Street on the east and Weschler Avenue on the west and includes a concentration of industrial buildings dating back to the mid-19th century.
- **West 21st Street Historic District** includes a variety of residential and institutional buildings along West 21st Street between Peach and Myrtle Streets. The district includes a variety of architectural styles from the late 19th century.

## Historic Resources Protection Plan for the Lake Erie Coastal Zone (1983)

Conducted by the Northwest Research Institute on behalf of the Erie County Department of Planning, the purpose of the survey was to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts within the Lake Erie Coastal Zone study area, which includes sections of the City of Erie between Lake Erie and South Shore Drive, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, 6th Street, and East Lake Road. The survey project relied on previous surveys for existing identified properties and conducted an original windshield survey of the east-eastern one-third of the coastal zone study area. The survey project received funding from the National Coastal Zone Management Program, administered by the Office for Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The survey identified over 494 properties at least 50 years old and three historic districts within the coastal zone study area as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register, including 78 properties and two historic districts within Erie. The two potential historic districts include:

- **Lower State Street Historic District** - a collection of approximately 50 commercial properties ranging from the early 19th century to the early 20th century.
- **West 6th Street Historic District** - over 100 residential and institutional buildings known historically as “Millionaire’s RoWest” The district includes a variety of architectural styles.

## Erie County Historic Resource Survey – Phase II (1987)

The second phase of the Erie County Historic Resource Survey, prepared for the Erie County Planning Department by the Erie County Historical Society, included seven townships, the Borough of Wesleyville, and portions of the City of Erie not previously surveyed (east of East Avenue, south of 26th Street, and west of Cranberry Street). The project received funding from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the Erie County Planning Department.

The survey identified 101 properties as potentially eligible for individual listing in the National Register and two potential National Register historic districts:

- **Glenwood Historic District** - consisting of historic single-family and multi-family residential resources of early 20th-century styles and building types (number of properties not indicated).
- **Frontier Place Historic District** - consisting of historic single-family residential resources including early 20th-century Revival styles (number of properties not indicated).



## Erie County Industrial Resources Survey, Phase I: City of Erie Foundries and Machine Shops (1993)

The Erie County Planning Department and the Erie County Historical Society conducted a survey to identify, document, and evaluate extant historic resources within Erie County associated with the foundry and machine shop industry, including those still in operation and those vacant or adapted for a new use. The project received funding from the National Park Service, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Erie County Planning Department, and the Erie County Historical Society. The final survey report is not currently available for review.

The survey identified 51 historic foundries and machine shops within the City of Erie; five received reconnaissance-level documentation and 45 received intensive-level documentation. The Modern Tool Company (1895, 333 State Street), listed in the National Register in 1987, was not re-surveyed. The survey identified 19 properties as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the survey identified three potential National Register Historic Districts:

- **East 16th Street Industrial Historic District**, incorporating four foundry and machine shop complexes dating from the 1880s to the 1930s, including the individually listed Lovell Manufacturing Company (listed 1996), and three additional contributing industrial buildings.
- **East 12th Street Industrial Historic District**, consisting of six foundry and machine shop complexes dating from the 1880s to the 1990s
- **West 12th Street Industrial Historic District**, including 25 foundry and machine shop complexes dating from the 1860s to the 1990s.





## Erie County Historic Resources Survey (2013-2015)

Seeing the need for comprehensive documentation of Erie County's historic resources, Preservation Erie conducted a reconnaissance-level survey that included two phases: a survey of the cities of Erie and Corry in Phase I and a survey of the remaining county in Phase II. The purpose of the survey was to identify, document, and evaluate properties constructed before 1940. The survey did not examine bridges, structures, objects, and known archaeological sites. The project received funding from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, the Perry 200 Bicentennial Committee, Preservation Erie, and individual donors.

In total, the survey documented 31,471 properties in Erie County municipalities. The survey included individual properties and historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Within the City of Erie, the survey identified 51 properties and four historic districts as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. The survey information is available to the public on a website hosted by Preservation Erie. The four potential historic districts include:

- **East 12th Street Industrial Historic District** consisting of six foundry and machine shop complexes dating from 1880 to 1930.
- **Adamstown Historic District** incorporating 76 residential properties built between 1910 and 1945 including bungalows, American Foursquares, and Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles.
- **Lakeside Historic District** is a subdivision developed between 1910 and 1945 with 280 single-family homes consisting of Bungalows, American Foursquares, Cape Cods, and Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival styles.
- **Glenwood Hills Historic District** includes a development platted in 1919 by real estate developer Truman O. Andrews with continuous development through the 1960s consisting of Bungalows, Ranches, and Prairie, Craftsman, Colonial and Tudor Revival, and Minimal Traditional styles.



## Additional Surveys

The following survey reports were not available for review:

- **West Erie County Historic Sites Survey (1979).** The Erie County Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs engaged the Erie County Historical Society to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites on the west side of Erie County, which included portions of the west side of the City of Erie.
- **Urban Development Action Grant Survey (1979).** The City of Erie obtained a federal Urban Development Action Grant for improvements within the East Bayfront neighborhood, which required a survey to identify historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites. The Urban Development Action Grant also provided the funding for the survey project.

3016 STATE ST



1300 GRISWOLD PLAZA, OLD POST OFFICE





## Chapter 3

# Trends Impacting Preservation

POPULATION CHANGE

HOUSING PROFILE AND HOME OWNERSHIP

AGE AND GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES

DEMOGRAPHICS IN ERIE'S NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND EQUITY

BUILDING INVESTMENTS, ALTERATIONS, AND DEMOLITION

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

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# TRENDS IMPACTING PRESERVATION

The most important story impacting preservation in Erie is one of demographics, not buildings. It is well known that Erie's population has been shrinking from its peak of 138,000 in 1960 to about 94,000 today, a loss of about 32 percent over 60 years. The rate of population loss has varied from decade to decade but averages around 0.6 percent per year.

Population changes - whether upward or downward - often impact preservation at a local level. In rapidly growing cities, new residents place pressure on housing markets, causing land values to rise. Higher land values can create development pressures on historic neighborhoods, where homebuyers often want to maximize the square footage on a given parcel. (These situations lead to teardowns of historic homes which are replaced by new, larger homes.) When there is a population decline, on the other hand, it creates a situation where there is more housing inventory than can be occupied. This housing surplus can happen in any neighborhood – not just historic neighborhoods. With more inventory than potential occupants, values decline, making it harder to justify investment in upkeep and repairs.





ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

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**Homeownership  
tends to increase  
the occupant’s  
commitment to  
maintenance and  
preservation.**

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The soft market means homeowners and landlords will not recoup their investments, at least in the foreseeable future. Low home values, combined with low incomes, lead to declining home maintenance.

It is impossible to know how Erie's population will change in the future. A 60-year linear trend could reverse itself for any number of reasons – even absent a new, large employer moving to the city. With the changing nature of office work, many knowledge workers can move further from large cities. Small and midsize cities, with their lower cost of living and high quality of life, have been the beneficiaries as this trend accelerated during the pandemic. With many jobs now more portable, making a city a great place to live can, in itself, draw new residents.

Other factors can mitigate the adverse effects on historic housing stock in a period of negative population growth:

- Homeownership tends to increase the occupant's commitment to maintenance and preservation. Homeowners generally take better care of their homes than renters, since they have a strong interest in maintaining the value of their assets.
- Smaller household sizes effectively translate into higher occupancy of available housing units. The household size in the US has been declining for more than 60 years. In 1960, the average household size was 3.3 persons; today, it is 2.5 persons. Erie's household size is also shrinking, from 2.36 in 2010 to 2.28 in 2022. In a hypothetical situation where the population remains stable and household size decreases, the same population will occupy more housing units. Today, there are almost 40 million single-person households in the US – more than at any other time in history.

A positive example of preservation in Erie, and one which is trying to counter demographic trends, is the investment Historic Erie Preservation Trust is making throughout the National Register Listed West Sixth Street Historic District. The Trust, created by Erie businessman and preservationist Thomas B. Hagen, was inspired by the Newport Restoration Foundation in Newport RI. The purpose of the Historic Erie Preservation Trust is the acquisition, restoration, preservation, maintenance, and operation of historically important or architecturally significant houses, buildings and other 19th and early 20th Century structures located in and around the West Sixth Street historic neighborhood. Mr. Hagen is purchasing and renovating structures and then donating them to the Trust. The renovated properties generate income as rental apartments, offices, and commercial spaces. This income will be used to pay expenses and maintain the properties in perpetuity. The West Sixth Street Historic District has 33 significant and 68 contributing historic buildings built between 1830 and 1940's.

The Trust's work is unusual in any city but particularly in a city of Erie's size. The projects set an example of high standards, a dedication to preservation, and a belief that historic buildings have an important place in Erie's fabric.



# POPULATION CHANGE

Negative population growth has remained a challenge for Erie’s economy for 60 years – an entire lifetime for many of Erie’s current residents – since the decline of the manufacturing industries, starting in the mid-20th century.

1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
119,123	108,718	103,717	101,786	<b>94,831</b>

SOURCE: US CENSUS, VIA ESRI

The 2022 population was estimated to be 93,527 (ESRI).

Cities with shrinking populations face many challenges, most significantly a loss of tax revenues without a proportional drop in expenses. (Roads, water and sewer, and other infrastructure systems, along with city services, must still cover the same land area.) In addition to being an economic challenge for City government, it can be argued that population loss is Erie’s biggest preservation challenge, too: decreased demand for housing affects all residential districts, but the impacts can be even more significant among older housing stock, which may need more investment in maintenance than newer housing stock. The overall availability of housing choices may lead buyers to options where less maintenance is needed. In the broader context of Erie’s historic preservation aims, however, an ongoing program of surveying, data collection, and analysis, can help identify places where targeted efforts at housing rehabilitation can help retain older housing while preserving the architectural and historical character of Erie’s traditional neighborhoods.



Population  
loss is Erie’s  
biggest  
preservation  
challenge.



## HOUSING PROFILE AND HOMEOWNERSHIP

Homeownership in Erie is relatively low at 46 percent of occupied units. While Erie County is at 60 percent and the US at 65 percent, cities generally have lower rates of homeownership than small or rural communities. Erie’s housing vacancy rate of 11 percent is of greater concern than its homeownership rate, but boosting the ownership rate in Erie (e.g., through incentives and first-time buyer assistance programs) would almost certainly have a positive impact on the preservation of historic homes and neighborhoods.

Housing Units by Occupancy Status and Tenure (Erie City)		
Total housing units	43,543	
Occupied	38,713	89%
Owner-occupied	19,838	46%
Renter-occupied	18,875	43%
Vacant	4,830	11%

SOURCE: ESRI

The weak housing market in Erie—largely a function of population in relation to housing inventory—means home prices are also low, having a median value of \$98,974 in 2022. With a median household income of \$40,007 (2022) in Erie, homeownership is surprisingly attainable. A \$90,000, 30-year mortgage at a fixed rate of 7 percent yields a monthly payment of \$600—only 18 percent of the median monthly gross income.



# AGE AND GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES

Erie's population is relatively young for a legacy city, with a median age of 35.6 (2022). This compares favorably to 40.6 for the county and 38.1 for the US. A younger median age suggests that many in Erie are still in their household formation years, which include lifecycle events like marrying, having children, and buying homes.

Erie Generations			
	Born between	Ages in 2022	% of Population
Gen Z	1995-2012	10-27	24.6%
Millennials	1980-1994	28-42	21.3%
Gen X	1965-1979	43-57	15.4%
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	58-76	19.1%
Silent Generation	1925-1945	77-97	6.5%

Some preservation attitudes correlate with certain generational attributes. Nationally and in Erie, Millennials are currently the largest living adult population. (Gen Z, though a larger cohort, are not all adults yet.) Among their notable characteristics, Millennials are the first generation to grow up with the Internet and they tend to take less (or later) interest in some of the goals of previous generations, like marrying, having children, buying a house, or owning a car.

In 2017, Millennials were the subject of an unusual study by the National Trust for Historic Preservation examining generational attitudes toward historic preservation. According to this research, Millennials:

- Highly value historic preservation and living in older neighborhoods
- Highly value authentic experiences and places
- Prefer historic downtowns to malls and shopping centers
- Want to support businesses in historic buildings and places

Gen Xers have had financially less-secure lives than the Boomers that preceded them and the Millennials who followed, and their early career years were particularly adversely affected by the housing bubble and the Great Recession. This has had lingering effects and impacted the ability of some Gen Xers to own a home. However, Gen Xers are also credited with being early movers from the suburbs back to cities.



Boomers, once the largest generation, are now largely retired and their numbers are shrinking, making them a less influential cohort for preservation trends.

## DEMOGRAPHICS IN ERIE'S NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS

Erie's four National Register districts (three are residential) house a higher proportion of the population by land area because of their naturally dense development form. By area, the four National Register districts comprise a tiny fraction of the city. In aggregate, they account for just one-tenth of a square mile or 0.005 (0.05 percent) of Erie's 19.5 square miles. The total population in National Register districts makes up 1.4 percent of the city's population. While still a tiny proportion of the population, it is 28 times what would be predicted by land area. The explanation is that the National Register districts are denser than many other parts of the city.

## RACE, ETHNICITY, AND EQUITY

Erie's National Register Districts are also inherently diverse – or, almost as diverse as the city as a whole. Their population makeup, in the aggregate, is about 15 percent Black compared to 18 percent for the city. The proportion of non-white residents in National Register districts is almost the same as in the city overall: 34 percent in both cases. The Hispanic population in the districts is slightly lower at six percent, compared to nine percent for Erie overall.

	Erie City	National Register Districts (in aggregate)
White Alone	66%	66%
Black Alone	18%	15%
American Indian Alone	0%	0%
Asian Alone	4%	3%
Pacific Islander Alone	0%	0%
Some Other Race Alone	4%	3%
Two or More Races	9%	6%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	9%	6%

SOURCE: ESRI; THE LAKOTA GROUP





## BUILDING INVESTMENTS, ALTERATIONS, AND DEMOLITION

Building permit data supplied by the City of Erie provides insight into the investment and losses of buildings in National Register districts compared to the city as a whole. The data available covers the period from 2011 to 2022. Permits cover a specific alteration type, such as electrical, plumbing, roofing, furnace, demolition, etc., along with the cost of the alteration.

Within the four National Register districts are about 250 properties; 150 of those properties, or 60 percent, pulled at least one building permit during the 12 years.

- **Demolition.** During the 12 years, the City issued 1,143 demolition permits citywide including 19 demolition permits issued in National Register districts. Demolitions in these districts represent 1.7 percent of all demolitions permitted during the period. However, as a reference point, buildings in National Register districts account for only 0.5 percent of all buildings in Erie, meaning demolitions in National Register districts outpace demolitions in other parts of the city by more than three-fold. Overall, the annual number of demolition permits issued citywide has been fairly consistent at around 100, with a slight dip in 2020 and 2021, presumably due to the pandemic (City of Erie; ESRI ArcGIS; Lakota).
- **Investments.** All permits, other than those for demolition, are tangible signs of investments in properties. In Erie overall, improvements to buildings totaled about \$1.4 billion over the 12 years, based on building permit data. National Register districts accounted for only about \$3.1 million (0.2 percent) of all improvements. (City of Erie; Lakota)



## CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Apart from the ongoing socioeconomic trends that impact historic preservation in Erie, climate change is an increasing risk to the preservation of historic and cultural resources in all states and localities across the country, including Erie, Pennsylvania. Planning for future climate-related impacts can help Erie become more resilient to disaster events as well as more capable and adept at addressing the impacts of weather-related events, such as ice and winter storms, lightning strikes, and riverine flooding.

The *Pennsylvania Climate Impacts Assessment*, prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2021, outlines several new climate change projections and their potential impacts across Pennsylvania. Like many other states around the country, projections reveal by 2050 that Pennsylvania will get warmer and wetter with more extreme heat events (Pennsylvania Climate Impacts Assessment, ix). Increasing temperatures will add to the number of days people will need to cool their homes, stressing local power grids. It will also lead to drier weather but also the increasing likelihood of severe rainfall events and flooding (Pennsylvania Climate Impacts Assessment).

For Erie, with warmer and wetter weather on the horizon, the Lake Erie coastline may also undergo substantial changes to water levels leading to more coastal erosion, including the potential for greater bluff instability as runoff erodes the bluff face in Erie over time. In 2019, Lake Erie already experienced its highest water levels (Pennsylvania Climate Impacts Assessment, 23).

However, with these predictions at hand, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Risk Index (NRI), Erie County, including the City of Erie, is currently at low to moderate risk for disaster hazards except for lightning strikes and winter weather events, which have a higher probability during a given year. The National Risk Index is a Geographic Information Systems-based tool used by FEMA and other agencies and entities for assessing local disaster risk. Overall, the NRI scores Erie County as a relatively low risk for future disasters but a higher risk for social vulnerabilities, signifying that natural disasters may especially affect certain socioeconomic groups in both Erie and the County (National Risk Index, Erie County).

At present, while the NRI projects a low risk for disasters in the Erie area, it does not discount the potential for a severe weather event to impact heritage resources in the future. While Erie is familiar with winter weather, the winter storms of 2017 and 2022 not only blanketed the city with significant snowfall but also led to widespread power outages. Winter storms and freezing temperatures can also result in freezing water pipes, which can cause interior flooding. Abnormally high snow loads can also lead to collapsing roofs.

Erie County's Disaster Mitigation Plan, prepared and adopted in 2018, includes buildings and places listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the inventory of assets vulnerable to potential disaster events. The City of Erie will need to work with Erie County on updating the inventory over time as more buildings and districts receive listings in the National Register. The County should also consider incorporating locally designated landmarks and districts in Erie in addition to those listed in the National Register. Furthermore, the vulnerabilities identified by the Nation Risk Index, the County's Disaster Mitigation Plan considers fires from industrial-related explosions as a significant risk factor.

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ERIE WATER WORKS AND SEWER BLDGS SASSAFRAS AT BAYFRONT



1498 WEST 6TH ST







**Chapter 4**

# Historic Preservation In Erie

**HOW DOES HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION HAPPEN?**

**PLANNING EFFORTS**

**PRESERVATION  
ADMINISTRATION**

**INCENTIVE PROGRAMS AND  
BENEFITS**

**AGENCIES, COMMISSIONS, AND  
PRESERVATION PARTNERS**

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN ERIE

Historic preservation in Erie is a relatively new venture and undertaking. Time and opportunity going forward will allow the City of Erie to consider and implement new policies, tools, and initiatives - several recommended in this Preservation Plan that will form essential elements of an effective local historic preservation program. Such elements and initiatives may include the active surveying and documentation of important heritage resources, providing assistance and information in different capacities to property owners and community groups, and managing new systems and mechanisms that support long-term heritage stewardship. In the meantime, the City of Erie has already established a program operating framework, including a Historic Preservation Ordinance and professional preservation planning staff in place to administer and guide daily activities and future initiatives.

13-31 WEST 10TH ST





ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

“ Building  
rehabilitation  
won’t occur  
until the building  
has a use.

”

Erie Resident

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This chapter describes the various preservation policies that enable historic preservation in Erie. These include state and local level legislation as well as federal programs, such as the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the chapter also outlines local planning efforts and financial incentives that support the preservation and reuse of historic buildings. It concludes by summarizing existing and potential partners and entities in local preservation.

## HOW DOES HISTORIC PRESERVATION HAPPEN?

Different enabling legislation and adopted planning and preservation policies at the federal, state, and local levels enable both public and private historic preservation efforts. Policies and legislation at the local level provide a higher level of protection and management for historic and cultural resources than do state and federal laws and policies.

### FEDERAL-LEVEL PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

**Tenth Amendment, U. S. Constitution**—While the U.S. Constitution makes no specific reference to historic preservation, the Tenth Amendment delegates the “police power”—the right to enact laws that protect the health, safety, and general welfare in communities—to the states, and in turn, to local communities. The enactment of local zoning and historic preservation regulations is a valid exercise of a state’s police power.

**National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the National Register of Historic Places**—Passed by the U.S. Congress in 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) established one of the more identifiable preservation programs in the country, the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register recognizes properties and cultural resources significant to local communities, states, and the country. Listing in the National Register, whether individually or as part of a historic district, is honorary only.

**National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Section 106 Review Process**—In addition to the National Register of Historic Places, Section 106 of the NHPA mandates that all federal agency-sponsored or permitted projects identify and assess the potential impacts of such projects on National Register-listed or eligible properties or resources. Section 106 also requires that the federal agency involved consult with the SHPO and the public when making final project decisions.

**National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980 and the Certified Local Government Program**—In 1980, the U.S. Congress amended the NHPA to add the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, a partnership between the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania SHPO to provide technical assistance and federal pass-through monies in support of local preservation efforts. To become a CLG in Pennsylvania, a local community must adopt and establish a local historic preservation ordinance and preservation commission. Erie is one of 50 CLGs in Pennsylvania.

**National Environmental Policy Act of 1970**—The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) serves as the primary national policy regarding federal efforts to eliminate adverse impacts on the natural environment. Managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (Pennsylvania DEP), NEPA provisions encourage federal agencies to consider the impacts on historic resources as well as the environment from federally funded or licensed projects.

**Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972**—Ratified by the U.S. Congress to provide direction on the management of the country’s coastal areas, including the Great Lakes, the Coastal Zone Management Act, provides funding to states and local governments for the planning and protection of coastal and estuarine lands. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) administers the program in partnership with the Pennsylvania DEP. The identification and documentation of historic and cultural resources within coastal areas is an eligible grant-funded activity.

## STATE-LEVEL PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

**Article I, Constitution of Pennsylvania**—Section 27, Article I of the Pennsylvania Constitution declares that the people of the state have a “*right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.*”

**Title 37, Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Pennsylvania History Code**—Title 37, the Pennsylvania History Code, formally establishes the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which serves as the Pennsylvania SHPO. Its core duties as the Pennsylvania SHPO—mandated by the NHPA—include maintaining a statewide inventory of historic resources, nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places, managing the CLG program, preparing a statewide preservation plan, and reviewing federal and state undertakings for adverse impacts on National Register-listed or eligible properties.



JOSEPH STERRETT HOUSE, 414 STATE ST (1838)



**Local Historic District Act of 1961**—Passed by the Pennsylvania Legislature, the Local Historic District Act of 1961 authorizes local counties, towns, and cities to establish historic preservation commissions with the express purpose of identifying, creating, and managing historic districts. The Act also permits local commissions to issue permits or Certificates of Appropriateness (COAs) for any alterations or demolitions to properties located inside designated historic districts.

**Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code of 1968 As Amended**—The Pennsylvania Municipalities Code enables local governments to prepare comprehensive plans and preservation plans that address the preservation of important historic and cultural resources. Article VI of the Planning Code authorizes the adoption and implementation of local zoning ordinances that also incorporate the “...*protection of places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value.*”

## LOCAL-LEVEL PRESERVATION LEGISLATION

**Article 7, Historic Resource Protection, City of Erie Zoning Ordinance**—Adopted by the Erie City Council in 2021, Article 7 of the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance permits the City to implement zoning overlays, as allowed under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Code, in the “... *preservation of this heritage [as] essential to the promotion of the health, prosperity, and general welfare of the people.*” The Ordinance also establishes the Historic Review Commission (HRC) with the authority to undertake a survey and inventory of historic resources and to manage alterations and demolitions to landmarks and properties located within historic districts.

409 STATE ST. OLD CUSTOMS HOUSE



# PLANNING EFFORTS

In addition to legislation, both state and local planning efforts can outline policies and initiatives that can help advance preservation efforts for cities, neighborhoods, downtowns, and cultural landscapes. The following section summarizes existing plans that guide and impact Erie's preservation planning program.

## 2018-2023 PENNSYLVANIA STATEWIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

The NHPA of 1966 and the Pennsylvania History Code mandate that the Pennsylvania SHPO prepares a statewide historic preservation plan every five to 10 years to address a range of historic and cultural resource preservation issues in the state. The 2018-2023 Pennsylvania Statewide Historic Preservation Plan proposes a framework of four planning goals related to using the Statewide Plan as a resource for creating local preservation solutions, incorporating preservation as an essential element to maintaining vibrant and diverse communities, undertaking active local programs in preservation planning and education, and investing in the protection and celebration of historic places.

Among several action items recommended in the Statewide Plan with relevance to the preservation issues facing Erie, include:

- Encourage local preservation advocacy and planning groups to consider hazard planning as a natural and integral part of preservation.
- Support the preparation and use of local design guidelines for rehabilitation (consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards) allowing for new, innovative design that is contextually sympathetic to the surrounding historic districts.
- Provide owners of buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places with information packets and technical assistance on maintenance and restoration best practices.
- Encourage grant-funded projects that develop youth-based local heritage education programs in a variety of settings, including museums, libraries, parks, historic sites, environmental centers, historical marker locations, etc.





- Identify and engage in “lighter, quicker, cheaper” projects to show immediate solutions and impacts. Use these projects to support arguments for increased funding.
- Encourage public and non-profit property owners through incentives like grants or recognition to have preservation plans or historic structures reports prepared for their properties, addressing all historic and archaeological resources on the property, including archaeological sites, landscapes, and viewsheds.

The Pennsylvania SHPO is currently preparing the 2024-2029 Statewide Historic Preservation Plan.

## **2020 ACADEMY-MARVINTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

Carrying forward the healthy neighborhood planning goals and objectives from Erie Refocused, the 2020 Academy-Marvintown Neighborhood Plan outlines several high-priority implementation initiatives, including proactive code enforcement, lot clean up and debris removal, and the demolition of properties considered and rated as unsound by the City of Erie’s Blighted Property Review Committee. The Neighborhood Plan also maps and identifies properties suitable for rehabilitation—principally along the 26th, 28th, and Ash Street corridors—with potential funding through the City of Erie’s HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program.

## **2020 EAST BAYFRONT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN**

Similar to the Academy-Marvintown Neighborhood Plan, the plan for the East Bayfront neighborhood focuses on both blight removal, code enforcement, and targeted housing rehabilitation along with enhancing the Parade Street business corridor. A central proposal in the plan is developing a more extensive neighborhood park and trail network within the neighborhood, made feasible through the demolition of distressed and blighted properties.



## 2018 FEDERAL HILL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network in collaboration with the Independence Hill Collaborative of Erie, known as Federal Hill, the Federal Hill Strategic Plan for Development outlines goals, and strategies for revitalizing the Federal Hill commercial district along Peach Street between Hill Road and West 22nd Street, an area that serves as an important gateway to downtown Erie. The Plan's key recommendations include implementing streetscape improvements, investing in placemaking elements such as murals and gateways, facilitating the rehabilitation of building façades and storefronts, and the design and installation of signage. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority was the primary sponsor of the plan.

## 2017 ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA CULTURAL HERITAGE PLAN

As an element of the Erie County Comprehensive Plan, the Cultural Heritage Plan seeks to ***“...ensure that the assets targeted for preservation in Erie County are being considered equitably and with an eye to the future”*** Heritage Plan, p. ES-1. The Cultural Heritage Plan describes key resources located in the City of Erie, such as its maritime and manufacturing complexes, and those related to the Erie Extension Canal and the coming of the railroads. The Plan also focuses its planning strategies on county-level efforts and partnerships in facilitating local community preservation action, including providing technical assistance for nominating historic districts and for assisting owners and developers in the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings. Other planning strategies include raising public awareness of preservation's benefits, promoting heritage tourism, and recognizing legacy businesses in the county.



# ERIE REFOCUSED: 2016 CITY OF ERIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING GUIDE

Underwritten with funds from a Federal Coastal Zone Management Grant provided by the Pennsylvania DEP, *Erie Refocused* serves as the overarching policy plan for the City of Erie regarding its long-term growth and regeneration. The plan emphasizes both historic preservation efforts for key anchor landmark buildings and targeted demolition strategies for blighted properties in several distinct Erie planning areas. Specifically, the planning area strategies include:

- **Downtown Erie**— establishing a National Register Historic District to take advantage of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits for income-producing properties.
- **12th Street Corridor**— encouraging the reuse of historic industrial complexes as makerspaces or “innovation nodes” and “flex” spaces for research, commercial, or new manufacturing and technology uses.
- **West Bayfront**—facilitating homeowner property improvements through matching grants and other forms of financial assistance.
- **Academy-Marvintown, Arbor-Heights, Frontier, Greengarden, Glenwood, Mercyhurst, East Grandview, Fairmont-McClelland, and Lakeside**— implementing different dimensions of a “healthy neighborhoods’ program entailing demolition of distressed properties, proactive code enforcement, and the rehabilitation of homes in stable clusters and blocks.
- **Little Italy, Pulaski-Lighthouse, and Trinity Park**—undertaking more aggressive efforts at stabilizing neighborhood blocks through the demolition of vacant buildings and consolidation of vacant lots while investing in key landmarks.

Erie Refocused also includes an inventory of Erie’s historic resources.

## 2016 EASTSIDE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PLAN

Prepared and sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network, with additional funding from the United Way of Erie County, the Eastside Multicultural Community Revitalization Plan outlines several planning initiatives focusing on the removal of blighted properties and the reuse of vacant lots, new streetscape improvements and placemaking initiatives, providing new affordable



housing units , and on facilitating business retention and expansion opportunities in Erie's Eastside. Enhancing parks and green space and promoting neighborhood history and ethnic and cultural diversity are also key plan elements.

## 2016 OUR WEST BAYFRONT COMMUNITY PLAN

Created through an extensive community engagement program managed by the Our West Bayfront organization, the West Bayfront Community Plan seeks to spur neighborhood revitalization and investment in the Bayfront neighborhood by concentrating reinvestment initiatives in 10 specific neighborhood areas. The plan's six strategies focus on enhancing, housing, parks and open space, infrastructure, social programming, local business, and public art. The Plan also encourages the rehabilitation of existing historic housing, storefronts, and commercial facades, as well as interpreting local heritage through placemaking efforts, such as murals and markers.

## 2015 ERIE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Commissioned by the Erie Downtown Partnership, the Erie Downtown Master Plan seeks to make Downtown Erie a "...thriving center of civic, government, finance, arts and culture, history, retail, health care, education, entrepreneurship, dining and entertainment for the Erie region" (Master Plan, 2). Of its major planning goals, the Master Plan proposes new housing for the upper floors of existing downtown buildings, building and façade improvements in the Renaissance District between 8th and 12th Streets, and adaptive use efforts in the Union Square District. Such preservation efforts aid in adding new housing and diversifying the business and entertainment mix in the downtown district.

## 2012 HISTORIC LITTLE ITALY REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

Funded through a Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, as well as grants from the Erie Community Foundation and the Saint Vincent Health System, the Erie Redevelopment Authority, the City of Erie, and the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network worked with the community to prepare a revitalization strategy that seeks to prioritize affordable housing strategies including rehabilitation and new construction, streetscape improvements, business development, and new commercial construction.



4004 TRASK AVE



11 EAST 4TH ST. COACH HOUSE FOR CASHIERS HOUSE

## RELATED ERIE COUNTY PLANS

In addition to the previous plans, there are two Erie County plans that address certain aspects of historic and cultural resource preservation in the City of Erie.

### 2017 ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA CULTURAL HERITAGE PLAN

As an element of the Erie County Comprehensive Plan, the *Cultural Heritage Plan* seeks to “... ensure that the assets targeted for preservation in Erie County are being considered equitably and with an eye to the future” (Erie County, Pennsylvania Cultural Heritage Plan, ES-1). The Cultural Heritage Plan describes key resources located in the City of Erie, such as its maritime and manufacturing complexes, and those related to the Erie Extension Canal and the coming of the railroads. The Plan also focuses its planning strategies on county-level efforts and partnerships in facilitating local community preservation action, including providing technical assistance for nominating historic districts and for assisting owners and developers in the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings. Other planning strategies include raising public awareness of preservation’s benefits, promoting heritage tourism, and recognizing legacy businesses in the county.

### 2018 ERIE COUNTY DISASTER MITIGATION PLAN

Prepared by the Erie County Departments of Public Safety and Planning, the Erie County Disaster Mitigation Plan identifies potential disaster risks in Erie County and outlines several mitigation strategies and actions. The Mitigation Plan includes an extensive inventory of critical assets and facilities vulnerable to natural disasters, including a listing of all National Register-listed properties and districts located within both the county and its municipalities, including the City of Erie. Of all potential types of disaster risks, the Mitigation Plan concludes that urban fires and industrial explosions, tornadoes and wind storms, and winter weather pose the greatest risks to properties. Enhancing coordination amongst stakeholders relative to hazard mitigation needs and actions, practicing resilient development and construction, and educating community leaders and the public regarding hazard mitigation and risk reduction are key mitigation planning goals and objectives.

# PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATION

Legislation and planning policies establish the operating framework for local preservation, including, most importantly, the work and daily activities of Erie's Historic Review Commission, its supporting staff, and other departments and agencies of the City of Erie.

## HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION

As noted previously, Article 7 of the City of Erie Zoning Ordinance, otherwise referred to as the Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance creates the Historic Review Commission, authorized to protect and manage the inventory of Erie's important historic and cultural resources. The HRC consists of seven Erie resident members, three at-large commissioners appointed by the Erie City Council, and two commissioners and two ex-officio members selected by the Mayor of Erie. In addition, three commissioners must have professional credentials in historic preservation or related fields, including architectural history, architecture, archaeology, or real estate, while others must have a demonstrated interest in historic preservation. The HRC's primary responsibilities include designating buildings and places as Local Landmarks or Local Historic Districts and reviewing Certificates of Appropriateness for building alterations and demolitions. Other important duties of the HRC include:

- Refer to municipal staff for the administrative review of certain COAs for routine property maintenance, masonry repointing, and in-kind replacement of certain building materials.
- Maintain a historic resources inventory.
- Implement a process for reviewing economic hardship claims in the event of a COA denial.
- Mandate penalties in the event of COA permit violations.
- Create and adopt design guidelines and standards for designated Local Historic Districts.
- Seek recommendations from community groups on decisions involving COA applications.
- Organize and produce educational programs that promote and describe the various benefits of historic preservation and Local Landmark and Historic District designations.
- Serve in an advisory capacity on preservation matters to City departments and agencies.

While the Historic Preservation Ordinance outlines the parameters of authority and responsibility for the HRC, the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure for the HRC, adopted in 2022, provide additional guidance on HRC operations, including the conduct of meetings, the review of COAs, and the process for nominating Local Landmarks and Districts.





## DESIGN MANAGEMENT

A key motivation for local historic preservation programs is to encourage private sector investment and stewardship in historic properties. Alongside that aim is promoting the sensitive preservation and rehabilitation of properties to retain their integrity and historic appearances as landmarks and contributing buildings within historic districts. To achieve that aim, historic preservation commissions adopt several tools among them, a set of design guidelines for reviewing the architectural qualities of proposed alterations to historic buildings according to their appropriateness to the surrounding historic setting and context. Such guidelines also review the architectural and urban design attributes of new construction. Commissions may base their design guidelines on commonly accepted preservation standards described in the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Other design management tools include special zoning overlays and sign ordinances.

The City of Erie and the Historic Review Commission have yet to create and adopt a set of design guidelines for its COA review process, although it is a high priority going forward. Such a set would likely apply to future designated Local Landmarks and properties within Local Historic Districts while serving more as an educational and advisory tool for National Register-listed buildings and districts not locally designated. An effective set of design guidelines would include information on building material maintenance and repair, preserving existing architectural features, and designing additions and new construction. In addition, design guidelines can also offer guidance on making buildings more energy efficient and sustainable.

While there are no municipally adopted historic preservation design guidelines, the *Bayfront Place Development Plan*, prepared in 2017 for the Erie County Convention Authority, outlines design guidelines related to new development within the area, including building façade design, height, and form, as well as storefront level treatments, such as awnings, signs, and lighting. In 2022, the Erie Downtown Partnership received funding from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority to complete the *Downtown Erie Design Guidelines*. The Downtown Design Guidelines, based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, focus on the appropriate methods for maintaining, repairing, and rehabilitating historic commercial buildings, including storefronts and exterior facades. In addition, the Guidelines also address code compliance, accessibility, new construction, and demolition. The Guidelines are voluntary and serve as a useful resource for downtown property owners planning a building rehabilitation project.

## BUILDING CODES

Zoning and historic preservation ordinances can shape the physical dimensions, qualities, and authenticity of the built environment. Building codes, in turn, make buildings safe from fire and other hazards while helping to provide adequate ventilation, light, and basic facilities for heating and sanitation. Currently, the City of Erie administers various building codes under its Unified Construction Code, including the International Building Code and the International Existing Building Code 2018 editions. Both codes include provisions applicable to historic buildings, providing flexibility for preserving architectural and historical features while also meeting code requirements. In addition, the Erie Uniformed Construction Code also permits local building inspectors to waive compliance from certain code requirements if the property is a designated historic resource or if the preservation or rehabilitation of historic building features does not compromise health and safety.

## INCENTIVE PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS

Incentive programs are a critical element to successful local preservation programs as they stimulate and make more feasible investments in historic properties. Incentives can provide direct financial benefits and technical assistance, or offer relief from local regulatory requirements, such as building and zoning codes. A truly effective incentive program can offer a range of assistance initiatives that meet local needs.

The following summarizes current incentives available to local property owners, developers, and investors:

## TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

State and federal tax credit programs offer a dollar-to-dollar deduction in income tax liability, making them effective tools in attracting investors for rehabilitation and adaptive projects designated as landmarks or located within historic districts.

**20 Percent Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program**—Authorized by the U.S. Congress under the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and administered by the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania SHPO, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (Federal HPTC) provides a 20 percent tax credit to owners and developers of income-producing buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places or considered contributing buildings in a National Register or state or local historic district certified by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

333 STATE ST. MODERN TOOL COMPANY



350 PARADE ST. ERIE ARMORY



**Low-Income Housing Tax Credit**—Ratified by the U.S. Congress as part of the U.S. Tax Reform Act of 1986, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (Federal LIHTC) provides a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for investors for attainable housing projects. The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency oversees the Federal LIHTC program as part of the annual allocation of credits from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Developers may use the program solely or in combination with the Federal HPTC for rehabilitating certified historic residential buildings or buildings adapted for housing.

**New Markets Tax Credit Program**—Established under the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000, the New Markets Tax Credit Program (Federal NMTC) offers a tax credit of 39 percent paid out over seven years for job creation and business investment projects located in underresourced communities. The program can also invest in historic building rehabilitation as part of local community development initiatives. The U.S. Treasury allocates NMTCs to qualified community development entities serving as financial intermediaries to developers and investors.

**Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program**—Administered jointly by the Pennsylvania SHPO and the Department of Commerce and Economic Development (Pennsylvania DCED), the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (Pennsylvania HPTC) offers a 25 percent credit not to exceed \$500,000 in any given year for qualified building rehabilitation expenditures approved by the SHPO. Only \$5 million in tax credits are available from the State of Pennsylvania every year.

**Neighborhood Assistance Program Enterprise Zone Tax Credit**—Like the Pennsylvania HPTC Program, the Neighborhood Assistance Program Enterprise Zone Tax Credit, managed by Pennsylvania DCED provides a tax credit of up to 25 percent of state income taxes for rehabilitating buildings located in the Erie Enterprise Zone, bounded by Pittsburgh Avenue on the west, Water Street to the east, and the bayfront north to East 24th Street on the south. The maximum tax credit per project is \$500,000.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS

HAS LEVERAGED

**\$117,633,687**

IN BUILDING  
REHABILITATION  
PROJECTS IN

**ERIE**

SINCE 1984

500 BLOCK STATE STREET, WEST PARK PLACE NR DISTRICT





## TAX ABATEMENT PROGRAMS

Unlike tax credits programs that reduce income tax liability, property tax abatements decrease the amount of property taxes owed for a specified period of time.

**Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance**—Created in partnership between the City of Erie, the Erie Public Schools, and other Erie County taxing districts, the Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance Program (LERTA) offers a 10-year abatement of any increases in future taxes due to the rehabilitation of commercial, industrial, and residential properties in Erie. Approved plans and a building permit must accompany an application to the LERA program.

## GRANTS AND LOAN PROGRAMS

Grants help to defray a portion of building rehabilitation expenses, sometimes offered on a matching or rebate basis while low or no-interest loans require repayment to the loan originator, agency, or institution.

**City of Erie Enterprise Development Zone Revolving Loan Fund**—Although principally focused on projects related to business and industrial expansion projects, including the purchase of machinery and equipment, applicants may use loan proceeds for building acquisition and rehabilitation initiatives. The Loan Fund fulfills a gap financing role between bank financing and a company's or investor's existing equity of up to 50 percent of the total project cost with a maximum of \$500,000.

**Erie County Renaissance Block Grant Program**—The matching grant program, funded and administered by the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, focuses on reversing blight and improving deteriorated residential and mixed-use properties in Erie County. Local governments, municipal authorities, and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for up to \$100,000 for distribution to local property owners up to \$5,000. Eligible activities include exterior rehabilitation or replacement of doors, windows, soffits, gutters, downspouts, porches, siding, chimneys, lighting, sidewalks, and landscaping. Municipal streetscape improvements are also eligible.

**Mission Main Street Grant Program**—Focused on the revitalization of commercial Main Street corridors, the matching grant program provides annual planning grants up to \$10,000, including planning studies, design, and engineering services, and three-year implementation grants up to \$250,000, including marketing and social media, storefront and façade improvements, streetscape improvements, development of design guidelines, and special events. Eligible grant recipients include non-profit organizations, municipal authorities, and local governments. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority funds and administers the program.



456 KAHKWA BLVD



426 EAST 6TH ST



**Anchor Building Grant Program**—The matching grant program provides funding to local governments, municipal authorities, and non-profit organizations up to \$100,000, with a minimum required application of \$25,000, to rehabilitate and reuse existing vacant or underutilized historic buildings to strengthen the tax base and serve as a catalyst for future commercial investment. The Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority funds and administers the program.

**Community Development Block Grant Housing Rehabilitation Program**—Funded through Erie County’s Federal Community Development Block Grant allocation and managed by the Erie Redevelopment Authority, the Housing Rehabilitation Program focuses on repairing and rehabilitating residential dwellings for health and safety, weatherization, and mechanical issues concerning plumbing, electrical, and other structural systems.

**Historic Building Improvement Grant Program**—Funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Act) and managed by the Erie Redevelopment Authority in partnership with the Historic Review Commission, the Historic Building Improvement Grant Program provides grants up to \$15,000 with a 10 percent cash match for exterior improvements to historic commercial and residential buildings. While, this program will end in 2026 with the expenditure of all ARP Act funding, all projects sponsored under the grant program must be under contract by December 31, 2024.

**Keystone Historic Preservation Construction and Preservation Planning Grants**—The Pennsylvania SHPO manages two preservation grant programs. The first, the Keystone Historic Preservation Construction Grant Program underwrites preservation-related construction activities for National Register-listed or eligible property sponsored by local governments and non-profit organizations. Grants amounts range from \$5,000 to \$100,000 on a 50 to 50 matching basis. The second, the Keystone Historic Preservation Planning Grants, support projects that identify and preserve historic properties with grant awards ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 on a 50 to 50 matching basis.

**National Park Service Grants**—The National Park Service administers several grant programs related to disaster recovery, underrepresented communities, and brick-and-mortar projects. Among these programs, the NPS also administers the CLG Grant Program with the Pennsylvania SHPO as pass-through monies for preservation projects planned and undertaken by CLGs in the state. The City of Erie is one of 50 CLGs in the Commonwealth. National Park Service grant programs receive their funding from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), first created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, and underwritten by federal oil and gas lease revenues.

## REGULATORY PROGRAMS

While there are avenues to providing regulatory relief through the Erie Construction Code, the City of Erie does not have a formalized program of regulatory incentives to facilitate preservation and adaptive use.

## OTHER INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

In addition to grants, loan programs, and tax credits, a preservation easement is a legal agreement between a property owner and an easement-holding organization assigning the right to review exterior façade changes and alterations to that organization. In return, the property owner receives a one-time charitable federal income tax deduction equal to the appraised value of the easement.

## AGENCIES, COMMISSIONS, AND PRESERVATION PARTNERS

The Historic Review Commission has the vested responsibility for managing the municipal historic preservation program. However, other City of Erie departments, volunteer commissions, and boards, along with private and non-profit agencies and organizations, also serve important roles in facilitating preservation efforts. The following section describes key preservation partners.

## MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS

**Blighted Properties Review Committee**—Established in 2006, the Blighted Properties Review Committee reviews the condition of derelict, vacant, or abandoned properties for rehabilitation or for disposition, as prescribed by state law, to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Erie. The Committee consists of five members appointed by the Mayor of Erie.

**Building Code Board of Appeals**—Comprising nine members and two alternates appointed by the Erie City Council, the Building Code of Appeals reviews and conducts hearings related to appeals and time extension requests for building code violations.

1947  
ERIE PLAYHOUSE THEATER (ERIE PLAYHOUSE)  
13 WEST 10TH ST  
17 WEST 10TH ST



**City Planning Commission**—Erie’s City Planning Commission prepares and adopts urban plans for Erie’s long-term revitalization as well as zoning and land use regulatory tools to ensure the city’s proper and efficient development and enhancement. It also holds public hearings for planned developments, rezonings, and special uses. The Planning Commission also reviews HRC recommendations for establishing Local Historic Districts under the Historic Preservation Ordinance zoning overlay provision.

**Design Review Committee**—Consisting of five members, the Design Review Committee, reviews the design of new residential, commercial, and recreational uses in addition to alterations to existing historic buildings located within the Waterfront Commercial District.

**Erie Land Bank**—Established in 2016, the Erie Land Bank acquires, manages, and sells, in a streamlined, expedited process, vacant or tax-delinquent properties located within the City of Erie. A five-member board of directors appointed by the Mayor of Erie governs the Land Bank’s operations.

**Housing Authority of the City of Erie**—First created in 1938, the Erie Housing Authority maintains and provides attainable housing units, rental assistance, and other social services for low to moderate-income households, seniors, and people with disabilities. The Authority has a five-member board of directors appointed by the Mayor of Erie.

**Redevelopment Authority of the City of Erie**—The Redevelopment Authority manages several programs related to housing rehabilitation, lead hazard control, and blight mitigation, funded by CDBG monies and other sources. The Authority has a five-member mayor-appointed board of directors.

**Visit Erie**—Formerly known as the Erie Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, Visit Erie is the official tourism entity for Erie County. In addition to its marketing and promotion programs, such as publishing a regular visitors guide and maintaining its digital trip planner, Visit Erie also operates and staffs three visitor centers and the Erie Sports Commission, charged with attracting and supporting sporting events in Erie.

**Urban Forest Committee**—Created in 2005, the seven-member Urban Forest Committee’s key responsibility is to maintain and protect trees located on public streets and property within Erie.





## MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS

**Code Enforcement Department**—The Code Enforcement Department ensures that property owners and businesses comply with the Erie Construction Code, the Zoning Ordinance, signage provisions, and other relevant regulations.

**Planning and Neighborhood Resources Department**—The Planning and Neighborhood Resources Department oversees the implementation of the Erie Refocused Comprehensive Plan, administers the municipal Zoning Ordinance and its provisions, and staffs and supports the Planning and Historic Review Commissions and other City of Erie entities.

**Department of Public Works**—Among its responsibilities, the Public Works operates and maintains public infrastructure systems and plans and implements various capital improvements.

## PRESERVATION PARTNERS

**Erie Downtown Development Corporation**—A private, non-profit real estate and business development entity, the Downtown Development Corporation focuses on facilitating catalytic investments in downtown Erie, including adaptive use and building rehabilitation projects.

**Erie Downtown Partnership**—Created in 2004, the Erie Downtown Partnership, governed by an 11-member board of directors, serves as an independent downtown revitalization organization with programs focused on business promotions and development, advocacy, and downtown design and placemaking enhancements.

**Our West Bayfront**—Our West Bayfront formed in 2014 to promote revitalization and community pride in Erie's West Bayfront neighborhoods. The focus of the organization, governed by a 14-member board, includes improving housing conditions and community spaces, fostering partnerships, empowering residents, and promoting economic development opportunities to create jobs for neighborhood residents.

**Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network**—Established by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania in 2000, the organization initially focused on providing services, advocacy, and promoting neighborhood revitalization in the Little Italy neighborhood, expanding in 2014 to serve all of Erie's neighborhoods.



**Bayfront East Side Task Force** — Organized in 1978 to oversee the restoration of the historic Federal Row House development, now a National Register historic district, the organization was inactive until its reorganization in 2000. Known as B.E.S.T., the organization’s 15-member board focuses on creating affordable housing opportunities for homeowners and renters, commercial revitalization, and neighborhood beautification within the area from Front to East 6th Streets between Holland Street and East Bayfront Parkway.

**Hagen History Center** — Formerly known as the Erie County Historical Society, the Hagen History Center, located in a four-building campus within the West Sixth Street National Register Historic District and the Gannon University campus, maintains archival collections and sponsors various educational programming on Erie County history. The Center also offers facility rentals, organizes exhibits, and sponsors books, a speakers series, and community events.

**Erie Maritime Museum and U. S. Brig Niagara** — Owned and operated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the museum opened in 1998 in the former Pennsylvania Electric Station, built in 1917. The museum showcases Erie’s significant maritime heritage including the 1990 reconstruction of the U. S. Brig Niagara located adjacent to the museum in Presque Isle Bay.

**Heritage Room of the Raymond M. Blasco, M.D. Memorial Library** — The Heritage Room houses a significant collection of local and regional history as well as numerous genealogical resources, including family histories, obituaries, and local high school yearbooks.

**Preservation Erie** — Preservation Erie is a private, non-profit preservation advocacy organization serving to educate Erie County stakeholders on historic preservation’s various contributions to community quality of life. The organization’s advocacy efforts have led to the establishment of the City of Erie’s historic preservation program, including the adoption of the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance.

**Preservation Pennsylvania** — Preservation Pennsylvania serves as the only statewide non-profit preservation advocacy organization, established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1982 as the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania. The organization serves its members through a variety of educational and advocacy programs including the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards, Pennsylvania At Risk, webinars and workshops, publications, access to preservation and funding resources, and advocacy with state legislators.

**Pennsylvania Route 6 Alliance** — Representing local governments, chambers of commerce, local visitors’ bureaus, and property owners within the 11-county Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor, including all of Erie County, the Alliance promotes marketing, community development,

planning, and preservation efforts through its 2016 Management Action Plan. Established in 2003, the Alliance encourages efforts to preserve and promote the area's historic and cultural heritage through education, recreation, culture, economic development, and tourism.

**Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA-SHPO), Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission** — The PA-SHPO, housed within the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, administers the state's historic preservation programs including state and federal grants and tax credits, Certified Local Governments, the National Register of Historic Places, historic resource surveys, Community Preservation programs, historical markers, education and outreach, and environmental review of projects utilizing state or federal funding. The PA-SHPO also hosts Pennsylvania's State Historical and Archaeological Resource Exchange (PA-SHARE), a GIS-based online database of the state's historic and cultural resources.

**National Scenic Byway Foundation** — The mission of the national non-profit foundation is to promote, strengthen, and sustain national byways through education, advocacy, and providing a connection for local and regional partners. The Great Lakes Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway, which traverses the shore of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence River in New York and Pennsylvania, includes a variety of important environmental, historic, and cultural resources, including those within the City of Erie.

**Historic Route 20 Association** — The non-profit organization, founded in 2012, promotes the preservation and continued use of the highway through education and outreach highlighting the local communities, sites of interest, and historic and cultural heritage along U. S. Route 20, considered the longest highway in the country since its creation in 1926. In Erie, U. S. Route 20 runs along 26th Street and Buffalo Road.

**Arts and Culture Entities**—There are several arts and culture organizations in Erie, such as the Performing Artists Collective (PACA), that could participate in different cultural preservation-related activities, including heritage festivals and events.



8TH ST W. 32 AT PEACH, MASONIC TEMPLE







**Chapter 5**

# Erie Historic Preservation Plan

**WHAT THIS HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION PLAN IS**

**A TIME FOR ACTION**

**GUIDE TO THE PLAN**

**IDENTIFYING ERIE'S HISTORIC AND  
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**TELLING ERIE'S DIVERSE STORIES**

**PROTECTING AND CONSERVING  
PLACES**

**INVESTING IN HISTORIC ASSETS**

**ENGAGING THE ERIE COMMUNITY  
AND STRENGTHENING THE ETHIC**

**ORGANIZING THE PROGRAM**

# ERIE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

The Introduction to this Historic Preservation Plan describes the community's vision and values regarding the future of historic preservation in Erie, setting the stage for stakeholder participation and collaborations to take place both now and into the long term to achieve desired preservation planning outcomes. The Introduction also outlines key preservation issues and priorities, which helps in shaping a planning action framework focusing on creating a comprehensive inventory of significant historic properties and historic resources, promoting and celebrating Erie's diverse heritage, pursuing preservation-based approaches to downtown and neighborhood revitalization, and building a strong base of stakeholder and community support for preservation efforts. Finding ways and means in which to protect and conserve neighborhoods and places of authenticity and meaning is also an important preservation priority.



GRISWOLD PLAZA 1300, POST OFFICE



ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

“ This Historic Preservation Plan is not just a municipal policy guide—it serves as a broad-based program for engaging all sectors of the Erie community to participate in a variety of preservation endeavours.

”



## WHAT THIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN IS

This chapter, organized along the identified preservation priority themes, presents a series of planning goals, strategies, and specific action steps designed to achieve sustained implementation success. First and foremost, this Historic Preservation Plan will serve as a guide for decision-making regarding the preservation and stewardship of Erie's historic and cultural resources. It also seeks to align with the planning policies and recommendations included in the Erie Refocused: 2016 City of Erie Comprehensive Plan and Community Decision-Making Guide, and other recently adopted neighborhood and district plans. Last, this Historic Preservation Plan is not just a municipal policy guide—it serves as a broad-based program for engaging all sectors of the Erie community to participate in a variety of preservation endeavors.

However, as straightforward as the Historic Preservation Plan is as a policy guide, the Plan is also adaptable to an unpredictable future where economics and social trends are constantly changing and impacting the physical environment. For instance, the recent pandemic may spark demand for new office spaces as knowledge-based businesses and workers seek places with a lower cost of living and with amenities such as historic neighborhoods. Or, a new industry may arrive in Erie. No one knows for certain what the future will bring but the Historic Preservation Plan provides flexibility and opportunities for both mutual collaborations and independent actions that make historic resources valuable assets in any change of circumstances. This is an actionable Historic Preservation Plan with adaptable goals, strategies, and implementation actions and with distinct actors and stakeholders responsible and accountable for its successful implementation.



## A TIME FOR ACTION

As noted several times, the City of Erie has only recently pursued historic preservation as a means to an end—can historic preservation play an integral role in reviving the fortunes of a legacy city? Surely the time is now for action. Given the backdrop of 30 years of population decline and deindustrialization, Erieites have known for many years that business as usual is not acceptable. The City of Erie and other agencies and entities have created and adopted revitalization plans and new protocols and programs for addressing the challenging issues of blighted and vacant buildings and the loss of industry and vitality. The time is now to continue a sense of urgency in promoting Erie's regeneration with historic preservation serving as a needed approach to revitalizing buildings, places, and neighborhoods. This Historic Preservation Plan expresses the public consensus to make that happen.



# GUIDE TO THE PLAN

The Erie Historic Preservation Plan addresses key preservation priorities determined by community stakeholders during the planning process. As described in the Introduction, this Plan organizes these priorities according to major themes that aim at building a successful and impactful historic preservation program for the Erie community. These planning themes include:

- Identifying Erie's Historic and Cultural Heritage
- Telling Diverse Stories
- Protecting and Conserving Places
- Revitalizing Neighborhoods
- Promoting Vital Places
- Building the Program and Strengthening the Ethic

In this chapter, each goal is described along with a more specific objective and targeted actions, in this format:

- A **Goal Statement** is a general intention and proclamation of a desired future that addresses critical priorities and advances preservation aims. For the most part, goals are long-term aspirations that require sustained efforts and stewardship to realize.
- An **Initiative** outlines the methodology, approach, and means by which to achieve the planning goal. Initiatives are meant to be feasible and attainable within the lifespan of this Historic Preservation Plan.
- **Implementation Actions** are key, integral activities undertaken to implement the initiative, often involving one or several lead actors or groups. Many actions are defined, concrete tasks to which the City of Erie and its preservation partners can devote resources and time while others may require the creation of new programs that involve ongoing management into the future. Actions also establish targets for measuring implementation progress.

Over the last decade, a continuous cycle of planning efforts offers new trajectories for reinvestment and revitalization in the places and neighborhoods that define Erie. Each planning initiative envisions ways to enhance physical spaces, address blighted conditions, improve economics, and promote a high quality of life. Now, with the recent adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and the establishment of the Historic Review Commission, this Historic Preservation Plan will continue to build on these foundations by integrating the preservation of heritage resources in planning and revitalization initiatives and in everyday decision-making.



## A. IDENTIFYING ERIE'S HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Although Erie's historic preservation program is new, the community has a long history of recognizing important historic and cultural resources through its four National Register historic districts and 22 National Register properties. The recent designation of the National Register-listed Mayer Building (1501-09 State Street) as a local landmark by the City of Erie is the first step in protecting Erie's significant places, as local landmarks are protected from unsympathetic alterations or demolition. Past survey efforts have identified numerous properties and districts eligible for listing in the National Register, providing recognition and access to incentives for future revitalization efforts. Listing properties and districts in the National Register of Historic Places, although an honorary designation, provides recognition and awareness of important historic and cultural resources, creates avenues toward financial incentives for rehabilitation not previously available, and creates pride in ownership and in the city. Providing protection for these important resources through local landmark and district designation will help to ensure their long-term protection through the Certificate of Appropriateness review process and provide access for property owners to technical advice through the Historic Review Commission, and includes the same benefits afforded to National Register-listed properties.

**GOAL STATEMENT: IDENTIFY, DOCUMENT, AND DESIGNATE ERIE'S SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.**

### **Initiative #A1: Undertake and complete a citywide historic and architectural resources survey.**

Surveys and documentation are the first steps toward identifying and preserving Erie's historic and cultural resources. Multiple past survey efforts dating back to the 1970s, and most recently the Erie County Historic Resources Survey completed in 2015, have identified important buildings, sites, and districts worthy of preservation. Conducting a citywide survey will result in a comprehensive inventory of Erie's significant buildings and places and provide direction for future local designations and National Register listings, education and outreach initiatives, and revitalization efforts. Ongoing survey and documentation efforts by the Historic Review Commission will also meet the requirements of the Pennsylvania Certified Local Government program, of which Erie is one.

Conducting a citywide survey may seem a daunting task, but prioritizing areas and working in phases is a logical step toward completion. Prioritize areas with higher levels of identified blight and deterioration, areas seeing development pressures and increased demolition, areas already identified as holding significant resources, as well as areas previously surveyed. Creating a phased survey program in advance will assist in planning, outreach, and funding efforts. Due to the size and complexity of a citywide survey, the City of Erie should hire preservation professionals knowledgeable in Erie's architectural history. Suggested phases in the survey program include the following neighborhoods:

- Phase 1: Downtown, East Bayfront, West Bayfront
- Phase 2: Trinity Park, Little Italy, Arbor Heights
- Phase 3: Greengarden
- Phase 4: Frontier Park
- Phase 5: Glenwood, Academy-Marvintown, Mercyhurst, East Grandview
- Phase 6: Lakeside, Fairmount-McClelland

Figure 5.1 shows a recommended phasing program for conducting a citywide survey.

### Implementation Actions

- Coordinate with preservation partners regarding survey project planning, neighborhood outreach, and potential survey volunteers.
- Secure funding for survey projects.
- Create a Request for Proposals to hire a professional survey team.
- Utilize survey technology consistent with the City of Erie's GIS software.

### Initiative #A2: Conduct a thematic-based survey of Erie's schools and educational facilities.

Erie's historic schools are significant to the city's social, architectural, historic, and cultural heritage and are prominent landmarks within Erie's neighborhoods. Diminishing student enrollments have rendered some schools redundant, vacant, and unused. Conducting a thematic survey of Erie's schools and educational buildings may identify facilities potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, enabling them to receive federal and state historic preservation tax credits that could aid in their adaptive use. Around the country, cities have worked successfully with developers and investors to convert schools into apartments, senior housing, live-work spaces, and community centers. This survey effort could be a joint initiative with Erie County if documenting historic schools is also a countywide concern.

## SURVEY FUNDING SOURCES

A variety of federal, state, and local funding sources are available to assist with survey and documentation projects, including:

- City of Erie municipal general funds
- Community Assets Grants from the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority
- Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Certified Local Government (CLG) grants
- Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Keystone Historic Preservation Planning Grants
- National Park Service's Underrepresented Communities Grant Program (URC)
- National Park Service's African American Civil Rights Grant Program



FIGURE 5.1: CITYWIDE HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY: PRIORITY SURVEY PHASES

**LEGEND**

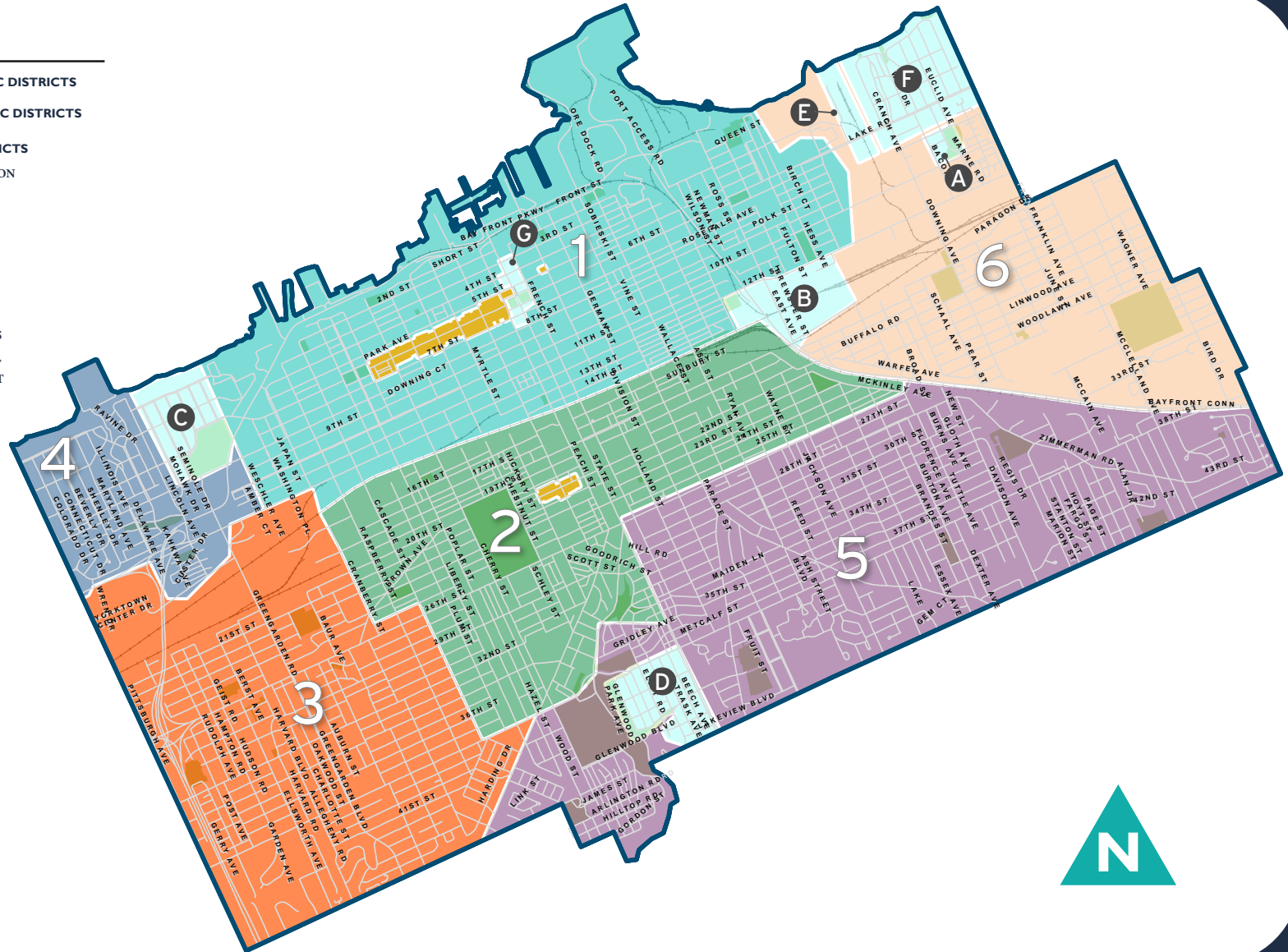
- ELIGIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICTS
- EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICTS

**ELIGIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

- A. ADAMSTOWN SUBDIVISION
- B. EAST 12TH STREET
- C. FRONTIER PLACE
- D. GLENWOOD HILLS
- E. LAKESIDE CEMETERY
- F. LAKESIDE SUBDIVISION
- G. LOWER STATE STREET

**PRIORITY SURVEY PHASES**

- PHASE 1: DOWNTOWN, EAST BAYFRONT, WEST BAYFRONT
- PHASE 2: TRINITY PARK, LITTLE ITALY, ARBOR HEIGHTS
- PHASE 3: GREENGARDEN
- PHASE 4: FRONTIER PARK
- PHASE 5: GLENWOOD, ACADEMY-MARVINTOWN, MERCYHURST, EAST GRANDVIEW
- PHASE 6: LAKESIDE, FAIRMOUNT-MCCLELLAND



## Implementation Actions

- Consult with the Pennsylvania SHPO on potential CLG funding for a city or countywide survey of historic schools.
- Review previous National Register nominations and surveys to gather relevant context and property information.
- Develop an RFP for professional services or form a volunteer survey team for the purpose of completing the survey assignment.
- Use survey technology as a data management tool compatible with the City of Erie's GIS platform.
- Share survey information with Erie Public Schools and other interested parties.

## Initiative #A3: Update the 1993 Erie Industrial Resource Survey

Erie's industrial resources play an important role in telling the city's heritage story. As Erie's industrial economy has changed over the past decades, many of the community's industrial resources have been demolished or sit vacant. Preserving industrial resources is vital to retaining the city's unique character, and designating significant buildings and complexes in the National Register brings eligibility for historic tax incentives, creating opportunities for their rehabilitation and adaptive use. For example, the Lovell Manufacturing Company (1883-1946), listed in the National Register in 1996, utilized federal historic tax credits to adapt the building for new commercial and residential uses. In 1993, the Erie County Planning Department and the Erie County Historical Society conducted a thematic survey of industrial foundries and machine shops throughout Erie County, including within the City of Erie. Although the Erie Historic Preservation Plan recommends conducting a phased citywide survey, updating the 1993 Industrial Resources Survey for properties within the City of Erie should be a priority.

## Implementation Actions

- Coordinate with preservation partners regarding planning and community outreach.
- Identify volunteers or potential funding sources for a professional consultant.
- Select the survey team.
- Utilize survey technology consistent with the City of Erie's GIS software.

### **Initiative #A4: Maintain a significant property inventory.**

Historic property inventories include buildings, objects, structures, sites, and districts identified through intensive-level survey initiatives. A significant property inventory would focus on individual properties identified as potential local landmarks and those considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The significant property inventory would assist the Historic Review Commission in prioritizing future planning and designation efforts and allow the Commission to focus educational initiatives to property owners regarding the benefits of designation and preservation. The Commission can also add properties to the inventory as it completes the citywide survey.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Review past historic resource surveys for individual properties identified as significant.
- Coordinate with preservation and community partners, such as the Hagen History Center, Preservation Erie, the Erie Downtown Partnership, Erie Public Schools, neighborhood organizations and cultural institutions, African American community leaders, and others, to identify significant properties associated with Erie's prominent citizens, institutions, churches, schools, industrial sites, cultural sites, parks, cemeteries, archaeological sites, ethnic groups, and the African American community.
- Coordinate with Gannon University and Mercyhurst University to identify significant university-owned historic buildings worthy of preservation.

### **Initiative #A5: Designate new Local Landmarks and Local Historic Overlay Districts.**

One important way to preserve important local buildings and places is to designate them as Local Landmarks and Local Historic Overlay Districts through the City of Erie's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Erie's existing National Register landmarks and districts help to highlight some of its significant architecture and tell the community's heritage story. However, listing in the National Register is an honorary designation that does not provide protection from future unsympathetic alterations or demolition. The Historic Review Commission should prioritize designation efforts first with National Register-listed properties and districts, and then properties and identified as significant from previous and ongoing survey and documentation efforts and that meet the criteria for designation under the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The significant property inventory (see Initiative #A4 above) should incorporate all properties and places considered priorities for preservation and protection.

Past survey and documentation efforts identified the following potential historic districts:

- Adamstown Subdivision
- East 12th Street
- Frontier Place
- Glenwood Hills
- Lakeside Cemetery
- Lakeside Subdivision
- Lower State Street

### Implementation Actions

- Conduct energetic stakeholder outreach and consensus-building programs with property owners of National Register Landmarks and Districts regarding the benefits of local designation. See Strategy #C2 for additional insight on conducting effective community engagement for designating Local Landmarks and Local Historic Overlay Districts.
- Review past historic resource surveys for individual properties and districts identified as significant.
- Include properties and districts identified in a future citywide historic and architectural resources survey.
- Host community meetings to discuss the importance of local landmark and district designation and seek community input regarding designation priorities.

### Initiative #A6: List new properties and districts in the National Register of Historic Places.

Erie is home to a diverse range of buildings and places that possess significant architectural, historical, or cultural value, making them eligible for consideration for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. There are three buildings with an official determination of eligibility from the National Park Service, and 22 additional buildings identified as eligible through survey and documentation efforts. Reviewing past survey recommendations and conducting future surveys may identify other eligible properties. Usually, it is the responsibility of individual property owners to list their properties in the National Register, although community groups and preservation organizations may also sponsor and prepare nominations. However, the Historic Review Commission can still

provide technical assistance to property owners to help them start and complete the nomination process. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (State Historic Preservation Office) also determines whether a property is eligible for National Register listing. Once a property is determined eligible, a nomination form is prepared and submitted for review, with final approval by the National Park Service. National Register listing is an honorary designation and properties must meet certain criteria in order to be eligible.

Pennsylvania's Historic and Archaeological Resource Exchange (PA-SHARE), managed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) which serves as the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA-SHPO), is an online platform that integrates the PA-SHPO's historic and cultural resource data. PA-SHARE includes information such as historic and archaeological resource surveys, historical markers, properties, and districts eligible for the National Register, and other project information. The following list provides information from PA-SHARE on properties and districts identified as eligible for listing in the National Register through survey and documentation projects. Listed below are properties with an official National Park Service determination of eligibility (DOE).

Individual properties and districts with an official determination of eligibility (DOE) from the National Park Service:

- Captain John Richard's House (1820), 121 East 2nd Street
- First Ward Firehouse, 414 French Street
- Wright's Block (1858), 425-431 State Street

Individual properties identified as eligible through past surveys:

- 401 Peach Street
- 902-904 Parade Street
- Academy High School (1919), 2825 State Street
- Chestnut Street Waterworks, Pump House, Filtration Plant, and Boathouse, 340 West Bayfront Parkway
- Columbus Elementary School (1915), 655 West 16th Street
- Dobbins Lane, 100 State Street (structure)
- East Erie Turners (1926), 829 Parade Street
- East Side Boys Club (1920), 521 East 12th Street
- Emerson/Gridley Elementary School (1914), 814 Park Avenue
- Erie Malleable Iron Company (1880-1915), 603 West 12th Street
- Jones School Building (1898), 150 East 8th Street



- Kraus Department Store (1886), 810-816 Parade Street
- Mill Creek Tube (structure)
- Nagle-Corliss Engine Works (1907), 953 East 12th Street
- Pennsylvania Boiler Works (1890-1975), 1015-1103 East 12th Street
- Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, 560 East 3rd Street
- Reavley Building (1891), 914-918 Parade Street
- Reavley House (1900), 522 East 6th Street
- St. Benedict's Academy (1889/1948), 327-345 East 9th Street
- St. Joseph's Catholic Church Complex (1882-1922), 147 West 24th Street
- St. Stanislaus Roman Catholic Church and School (1892-1915), 1203 Wallace Street
- Wilson Middle School (1927), 718 East 28th Street

Potentially eligible Historic Districts identified through past surveys:

- Adamstown Subdivision
- East 12th Street
- Frontier Place
- Glenwood Hills
- Lakeside Cemetery
- Lakeside Subdivision
- Lower State Street

### Implementation Actions

- Coordinate with the Pennsylvania SHPO to verify National Register eligibility for properties and districts without an official Determination of Eligibility.
- Prioritize property and districts for listing based on architectural and/or cultural significance and physical integrity.
- Conduct education and outreach to property owners on the benefits of listing in the National Register.

## **Initiative #A7: Enhance recognition of Erie's maritime heritage resources.**

There is an inexorable link between Erie city and Lake Erie — a landscape of significant maritime history and heritage reflecting the human use of Lake Erie from Indigenous times to military activity, to the growth of Pennsylvania and its industries. While the Erie Maritime Museum offers access and insights into maritime resources through exhibits, research information, and hands-on learning experiences with the Brig Niagara and the U.S. Paddle Frigate Michigan, there is interest in Erie in exploring different dimensions of maritime archaeology and building its wider public appreciation. The Erie community may accomplish this by sponsoring public maritime archaeology appreciation events, participation in nearby maritime investigations, new online exhibits, and youth education programs.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Convene an ad-hoc or standing committee between the Historic Review Commission, the Erie Maritime Museum, and other related local and statewide maritime archaeology to discuss and determine opportunities for enhancing the recognition of Erie's maritime resources.
- Create Erie maritime history lesson plans using models prepared by the National Park Service for use in local public schools.
- Organize additional educational workshops and storytelling events leading up to and during the triennial Tall Ships Erie Festival.



SOURCE: LYNN JOHNSON

## B. TELLING ERIE'S DIVERSE STORIES

Erie's history is inextricably linked with the many ethnic and racial groups that settled in Erie, worked in its industries, and helped define Erie's cultural character. The African-Americans, the Irish, the Germans, Russians, Italians, Swedes, and many others also shaped Erie's social life, its institutions, and its many neighborhoods, creating exceptional places of meaning, memories, and authenticity. Indeed, this wealth of histories and the places associated with them present new opportunities for compelling and inspirational storytelling efforts that illuminate the past to new generations of Erieites. In turn, such efforts will build a greater understanding of Erie's diverse histories—both known and unknown—by providing new perspectives on how such groups and ethnic communities contributed to Erie's development, growth, and prosperity. While engaging broad segments of the Erie community in the local preservation program aims to raise awareness of preservation's varied benefits, a particular focus on communicating the stories of Erie's diverse heritage serves to acknowledge an ever-evolving, all-encompassing Erie history that helps foster the preservation of places significant to all Erie residents. It also helps make for a more inclusive and equitable historic preservation program.

**PLANNING GOAL STATEMENT: IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE THE HISTORIES AND PLACES OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO ERIE'S DIVERSE PEOPLES.**

### **Initiative #B1: Undertake thematic studies of Erie's diverse communities.**

Surveys provide a baseline of information related to the physical resources that may be architecturally and historically important to a given community—resources deemed worthy of some level of recognition and preservation. However, surveys in themselves do not often provide opportunities for fully exploring specific narratives of the people, movements, and events that shaped a community's historical trajectory. It is these histories that provide a more thorough context for understanding what buildings and places associated with those narratives merits preservation. Among those histories are the diverse communities that settled in Erie over the decades, contributing substantially to the city's urban landscape through social halls, religious buildings, and residential neighborhoods, among others. Nonetheless, not all stories of past events



and Erieites are known. Some have been overlooked, especially those who suffered discrimination or who recently arrived in Erie over the last 50 years. By conducting additional documentation work and thematic studies, the Historic Review Commission and its preservation partners can build on previous work—such as the ‘A Shared Heritage’ webpage devoted to African American history in Erie County—to illuminate the different dimensions of Erie’s cultural narratives. In turn, this can lead to new landmarks and districts, helping to build a more equitable and inclusive representation of Erie’s heritage assets. Given the rich array of ethnic and racial groups that settled and made Erie a home over time, the topics for future context studies may be limitless. For more practical purposes, perhaps several key themes common to all Erie ethnic and racial groups may be more useful in organizing information on related stories and associated properties. The Historic Review Commission may also use these context themes for various survey initiatives. These themes may include:

- Emigration and Arrival in Erie
- Segregation and Redlining
- Residential Development
- Commercial Development
- Industries and Businesses
- Religion and Spirituality
- Social Clubs and Organizations
- Civil Rights Movement

Thematic studies also provide opportunities for active involvement on part of local neighborhoods, cultural leaders, artists, schools and universities to conduct workshops, roundtables and oral histories that gather information important to crafting the thematic study. From there, new buildings and places worthy of recognition can comprise future landmark designations or serve as a basis for further recognition and commemoration.

### Implementation Actions

- Form a working committee of the Historic Review Commission, cultural leaders, historians, educators, and other interested parties to formulate a work plan of action for undertaking and completing important thematic studies.
- Apply for grant funding, including a Pennsylvania SHPO CLG grant, to engage professional historians as needed to assist in preparing thematic studies.
- Conduct engagement activities and workshops that facilitate meaningful input on local histories from Erie’s diverse communities.
- Make context studies widely available and accessible through the City of Erie’s website.

## **Initiative #B2: Identify property and resource types absent from previous inventories, surveys, and National Register nominations.**

Undertaking thematic context studies will offer avenues for discovering the places and untold stories associated with Erie's diverse communities. This in turn should lead to a more comprehensive understanding of Erie's different cultural dimensions and their related buildings, neighborhoods, and other resources worthy of preservation and recognition.

With such information at hand, the Historic Review Commission and its preservation partners can review prior National Register nominations and their statements of significance and property and historic resource inventories to determine if heritage assets important to Erie's diverse communities are absent. The National Register nominations for West Park Place, Federal Row, West 6th Street, and West 21st Street (1990) are 30 to 40 years in age and merit updates at some point in the future to incorporate any missing narratives and revised resource inventories. Future survey efforts should also employ inventory forms that capture and include relevant information on existing cultural resources and context themes. While it is important to review past inventories and nominations to consider more inclusive narratives, the Commission and its partners will need to weigh their priority versus new nominations that can also recognize places of significance to Erie's diverse communities.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Review prior National Register nominations for missing content and narratives while conducting cultural thematic studies.
- Discuss with Pennsylvania SHPO the potential for receiving CLG grants to underwrite National Register revisions and updates.
- Incorporate survey form fields for documenting cultural resources and context themes as part of survey initiatives.

## **Initiative #B3: Design and implement a cultural marker initiative as part of a broader interpretive programming.**

The Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program serves as a valuable and publicly accessible means in which to tell a community's heritage stories. In the years ahead, the Historic Review Commission can explore possibilities for new Pennsylvania Historical Markers that recognize people, places, and events important to Erie's history but also possess significant associations to the state's history in addition to other eligibility criteria. Future context research may unveil new stories and places worthy of recognition and interpretation through the state marker program.

However, the Commission and its partners could consider designing and implementing its own local marker program that can publicly elevate new dimensions of Erie history, including the untold narratives of underrepresented communities, as well as artists, professionals, local activists, entertainers, scholars, religious leaders, legacy businesses, food culture businesses, and many others. Such a program could feature different signage designs—one specifically recognizing important works of local architecture and the second for landmarks and places of cultural importance. The cultural markers could offer a unique opportunity to engage artists, arts and cultural entities, and neighborhood preservation advocates in their design and the selection of sites and stories for recognition and interpretation. The City of Erie and the Commission may also underwrite a portion of a historical marker or wall plaque installation if a property owner conducts research and documentation demonstrating how the building or resource meets adopted eligibility criteria.

### Implementation Actions

- Review the results of surveys and thematic research to determine properties and places worthy of meeting Pennsylvania Historic Marker Program criteria.
- Convene an ad-hoc committee of the Historic Review Commission to assess interest and support for a locally-managed historical marker program.
- Consider and adopt eligibility criteria and identify potential funding sources for marker fabrications.
- Conduct periodic workshops and engagement efforts to collect compelling stories for future marker narratives.
- Integrate historical markers as part of any public art planning and undertaking.
- Create an add-on webpage that publicizes the locations of all historical markers in the City of Erie.

### Initiative #B4: Seek opportunities for cross-cultural and history programming involving festivals, local museums, and arts entities.

The number of museums and ethnic festivals in Erie presents opportunities for new collaborations that leverage the celebrations of local culture and traditions and the learning experiences offered by area museums and heritage entities. Such collaborations can help promote a greater awareness of local history and engage new audiences for local museums, culture providers, festival organizers, institutions, and other heritage-related entities in Erie. Coordinating festivals and related exhibitions in Erie museums can highlight certain historical themes or undertold heritage stories. For example, the Zabawa Polish Festival, held at Holy Trinity Church and celebrating Erie Polish heritage, could partner with the Hagen History Center on exhibits related to key luminaries and personalities in the local Polish community.

Other collaborations may include:

- Storytelling sessions and exhibits describing aspects of African American heritage during the annual Juneteenth celebrations.
- The Erie Maritime Museum, the Erie County Historical Society, and others can conduct “Mapping Erie” workshops that explore local places and stories that uncover new histories and historical and cultural resources of significance.
- The Erie Art Museum could organize pop-up booths for Erie festivals to exhibit copies of paintings and objects related to associated festivals and historical themes.
- Encourage the use of digital platforms for museums that host online interactive exhibits targeted to students.

### Implementation Actions

- Conduct a convening session between the Historic Review Commission and other preservation partners to discuss and assess opportunities for collaboration among Erie Museums and festival organizers.
- Explore and seek funding opportunities to enhance museum exhibits and festival activities through arts and humanities agencies, foundations, and other potential sponsoring institutions.
- Engage local artists, folklorists, historians, and culture advocates in the creation and production of new cross-programming activities.

### **Initiative #B5: Use digital platforms and traditional communication tools to promote Erie’s diverse heritage.**

As newly discovered narratives bring new perspectives and dimensions on local history, making those narratives more accessible to the public will help promote a broader understanding of the different ways in which diverse communities contributed to Erie’s development and built environment. Communicating this newly-discovered heritage through printed materials, online content, and virtual videos helps broaden awareness and brings the narratives out to the public in a more consistent manner.



SOURCE: MUSLIM CITY FEST

## Implementation Actions

- Partner with African American and ethnic community leaders, the Hagen History Center, Preservation Erie, Blasco Public Library, community organizations, local educational institutions, and others, to identify and share information on Erie's diverse history and architecture in printed materials, online, and through educational seminars.
- Utilize a crowdsourcing platform for the public to share house histories, family stories, historic photos, and other aspects of Erie's diverse heritage. Partners can include the Hagen History Center, Preservation Erie, neighborhood organizations, Downtown Erie Partnership, Blasco Public Library, museums and cultural institutions, local colleges and universities, African American community leaders, and others.
- Create StoryMaps using ArcGIS, a cloud-based software, telling the story of the development of Erie's African American community and other ethnic groups, including its significant people, places, and events, through maps, photos, videos, and other content.
- Offer programs and other relevant materials in multiple languages to broaden the relevance of Erie's diverse histories and associated preservation efforts.

## C. PROTECTING AND CONSERVING PLACES

Erie initiated its historic preservation program to catalyze building reuse and community revitalization, to interpret and broadcast the stories of Erie's history and to recognize the places of architectural, historical, and cultural distinction. To fulfill these aims, protecting and conserving historic and cultural resources for the long term will be an important priority. While the Historic Preservation Ordinance enables the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission to designate local landmarks and districts, Local Historic Overlay Historic Districts have yet to be nominated and there is no consensus on what neighborhoods and places merit protection or even if there is stakeholder support for such efforts. Against this is the backdrop of vacant housing and rightsizing planning efforts that may impact the conservation of historic resources that could once again serve as housing units and spaces for business start-ups and creative enterprises.

In the years ahead, the City of Erie and the Historic Review Commission will need to take an intentional and well-defined pathway forward to protecting landmarks and districts important to the citizens of Erie. This pathway and process must be open, transparent, and fair. It must also



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reflect a true consensus of stakeholders who acknowledge the benefits and responsibilities that come with landmarking and historic district designations. In addition, there should also be sufficient public understanding of why nominated buildings and sites merit protection, how they meet certain designation criteria, and what advantages designation brings to maintaining historic context and supporting visual character and revitalization potential. Last, a clear and predictable nomination and designation process can take immediate action for eligible properties at risk. The City of Erie and the Commission may also need new tools to conserve buildings and places that offer reuse possibilities in areas where adopted land use policies prioritize blight mitigation.

## **GOAL STATEMENT: IMPLEMENT CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES FOR PROTECTING ERIE'S HERITAGE RESOURCES.**

### **Initiative #C1: Prepare and disseminate information on preservation protections.**

Initiative #F2 described in Theme F, Organizing the Program, outlines the need for a robust online presence for the Historic Review Commission, allowing public access to sources of information regarding the Commission and its operations and procedures. Such a website should also incorporate text and downloadable PDF documents that explain the processes for Certificate of Appropriateness reviews, economic hardship proceedings, and the landmarks and historic district designation processes. Well-designed flow charts and straightforward writing can also help simplify what might appear to be complex procedures for some. Continued enhancements to the Historic Review Commission website should serve as a principal and adequate place of information for many in the community. Printed brochures and occasional outreach efforts to neighborhoods and community groups through on-site meetings, online videos, and other engagement methods can help demystify preservation for many others.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Prepare flow charts and other information materials as part of the creation and ongoing development of the Historic Review Commission website.
- Prepare a calendar of engagement opportunities to discuss preservation procedures, the designation process, and the benefits of historic preservation.
- Secure funding and prepare brochures and flyers for digital and on-site distribution.

## **Initiative #C2: Conduct community engagement and consensus-building for establishing local historic districts.**

Designating local historic districts provides many advantages to cities, including raising the awareness of local heritage, maintaining pride of place, and enhancing the visual and aesthetic character of neighborhoods and commercial districts. From a practical standpoint, it offers municipalities, residents, and other local stakeholders a chance to manage design change in a more deliberate, curatorial manner where good preservation practices can extend the life and usefulness of historic buildings well into the future.

Erie currently has four historic districts and 24 individual landmarks listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register offers no legal protection against building alterations and demolitions. While Erie stakeholders acknowledge the immediate priority of preserving the important resources in National Register Historic Districts as well as other significant buildings and places throughout Erie. Other resources are vulnerable to loss due to blight mitigation and other planning and revitalization efforts in selected neighborhoods. However, above all, for many the need for building consensus and support on protections is more paramount. Building that consensus will require an ongoing commitment to stakeholder engagement, deep listening practices, and finding allies among traditional and non-traditional preservation partners.

In the event that the City of Erie determines that designating a Local Historic Overlay District is necessary, its Historic Review Commission and other preservation partners will need to take the first steps toward generating support among key community stakeholders. These steps can include:

- **Find Allies.** Local preservation advocates, economic development entities, and even elected officials can serve as partners and allies in advocating local district designation. Even non-traditional partners such as arts and culture organizations, environmental groups, and housing organizations can offer supporting information on how preserving historic buildings provides spaces for creative endeavors, conserves naturally occurring attainable housing, and reduces the amount of demolition debris entering local landfills.
- **Get Organized.** Once the Historic Review Commission identifies and convenes partners and allies, the real work of community engagement begins. Forming a steering committee or task force comprised of district residents and other key stakeholders can help bridge the communication gap with building owners and help sell the benefits of preservation. Workshops and smaller group meetings can also serve as open forums for asking questions and answering concerns. Partnering with social clubs, religious entities, and cultural organizations can assist as convenors and engagement facilitators.

- **Tell the Preservation Story.** Alongside stakeholder engagement, active publicity efforts that tell a neighborhood or district’s heritage story and the positive impact designation will bring will help build local support and awareness. Online videos and presentations, information flyers, and public meetings can be useful in making the cases.

### Implementation Actions

- Pursue Local District Overlay Districts for National Register Historic Districts or other areas of Erie meeting specific designation criteria, neighborhoods of significance identified by surveys, or initiated through building owners and resident interest.
- Form a steering committee or ad-hoc working group to explore stakeholder support and engagement needs.
- Conduct information and digital outreach campaigns.
- Assess stakeholder support for local district designation before beginning designation proceedings.

### Initiative #C3: Use conservation districts to facilitate neighborhood preservation.

Going forward, as the City of Erie and the Historic Review Commission undertake an ongoing survey and documentation program, the results of such survey efforts should outline and recommend eligible landmarks and districts within Erie. However, there may be areas of Erie that may not meet the eligibility criteria for the National Register of Historic Places or those outlined in Article 7 of the City’s Zoning Ordinance. These areas may simply not possess architectural and historical integrity. However, these neighborhoods may still retain elements of their original design and character-defining features, such as property setbacks, porches, roof shapes, and façade building materials, that warrant some form of preservation and design management. Such design management would not occur at the same level of design review for a Local Historic Overlay District that aims at preserving original integrity. Rather, conserving the principal character features of a neighborhood may help to stabilize neighborhoods, improve conditions, retain affordable housing, and stimulate reinvestment.

In Pennsylvania, municipalities may use their zoning authority to create neighborhood conservation district overlays as a method for protecting and managing a neighborhood’s unique character if such places are not deemed eligible for historic district designations. Since these neighborhoods would not be bound to follow preservation standards, the City of Erie could develop design guidelines tailored and more customized to each neighborhood’s physical conditions and



conservation needs. Conservation districts may also review and approve building demolitions along with improvements to streets, carriage walks, and other neighborhood infrastructure. Like historic preservation districts, the City may adopt conservation district eligibility criteria and procedures for establishing them within the Zoning Ordinance. In some places, municipalities may adopt them as part of neighborhood planning processes or by the initiative of local neighborhood groups and associations. Local planning or historic preservation commissions may administer them. Several Pennsylvania cities currently employ or are in the process of creating neighborhood conservation districts, including Pittsburgh, Bethlehem, and Lancaster, among others.

### Implementation Actions

- Review architectural and historical survey results and adopted land use plans and policies to assess what neighborhoods would benefit from a conservation approach.
- Convene a working group or task force to research and determine the feasibility of a neighborhood conservation district program.
- Consult with other Pennsylvania communities with conservation district programs to understand best practices and staffing and administration requirements.
- Adopt zoning legislation enabling the establishment of a neighborhood conservation district program.

### **Initiative #C4: Update community plans with preservation elements, including Erie County's Disaster Mitigation Plan.**

Periodically, cities and communities will review and update their planning policies for relevancy as economic and social conditions change. The Historic Review Commission should participate in those planning processes to ensure the preservation and conservation aims are well considered and integrated. The City of Erie should also work with the County on related preservation planning matters, most importantly with any updates to the County's Disaster Mitigation Plan that incorporate newly documented and designated historic and cultural resources.

### Implementation Actions

- Include Historic Review Commission participation in processes to revise or update the Erie Refocused: 2016 City of Erie Comprehensive Plan, the Erie County Cultural Heritage Plan, neighborhood area plans, and Erie County's Disaster Mitigation Plan.



- Prepare white papers on preservation's impacts and achievements to inform policy and decision-makers during plan rewrites and updates.
- Update the City of Erie Historic Preservation Plan every five years to measure progress and adjust strategies to meet current conditions and other community-wide planning priorities.

## D. INVESTING IN HISTORIC ASSETS

Interestingly, unlike other cities of its size, Erie is in an uncommon situation in that it faces significant market obstacles to preservation-based real estate development while, at the same time, it has very generous and civic-minded preservation benefactors making positive impacts in its downtown and traditional neighborhoods. The preservation and philanthropic entities involved in real estate development and revitalization in Erie are well-known locally and include, among others, the Erie Downtown Development Corporation, Erie Community Foundation, and Erie Downtown Partnership. While it is not the purpose of this Historic Preservation Plan to set priorities for these independent organizations, this Plan recognizes that the most significant players in downtown and community development will continue to have critical and expanded roles to play in preservation-based real estate development.

The following strategies and tools support the rehabilitation and reuse of Erie's historic building stock. As discussed in the "Trends" chapter of this report, solutions to preserving buildings in Erie must work in the absence of a strong real estate market. City leaders have been working to "right-size" the building stock to Erie's current population needs through strategic demolition, and the planning team acknowledges that carefully targeted and managed demolition will continue to be one tool for addressing surplus building stock. On the other side of the equation, it may also be possible to stanch further population loss by making Erie attractive to newcomers who seek the benefits of living in a smaller city with an affordable lifestyle and historic neighborhoods. The planning team recognizes that most building rehabilitation projects in Erie will require subsidy. At the same time, carefully structured incentives can help to generate new markets for historic homes and commercial buildings. The following strategies support the goal of stimulating investment in Erie's historic buildings.





## GOAL STATEMENT: STIMULATE INVESTMENT IN ERIE'S HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL ASSETS.

### **Initiative #DI: Establish targeted assistance programs to increase homeownership in historic districts.**

Homeownership has often been called “the American dream,” an investment to which everyone should aspire. Erie’s overall homeownership rate is 46 percent, compared to a national rate of 66 percent. Homeownership is not for every individual or household, but in addition to the financial incentives homeownership offers to individuals (such as mortgage interest and property tax deductions), it also brings public benefits: Owner-occupants tend to invest in the maintenance of their home, adding value to the property and the neighborhood. Owner-occupants also tend to settle in a neighborhood for longer periods of their lives; this builds social capital by fostering interpersonal connections.

Based on available housing market data from ESRI, Erie’s housing market is very affordable, with the median household paying only 14 percent of its gross income toward a mortgage for a median-priced home, valued at \$100,474. The biggest obstacle to homeownership for many families is the downpayment.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Work with the philanthropic community to explore the potential for establishing a downpayment assistance program. A loan of \$5,000 to \$10,000 would be enough to make homeownership achievable for a greatly expanded set of Erie individuals and families.
- Design a 10-year forgivable loan program.
- Pair the downpayment assistance with the Keystone Advantage Assistance Loan Program. This loan is an income-qualified second mortgage at up to four percent of the home price or \$6,000, whichever is lower. The interest-free loan has a 10-year repayment schedule.
- Pair the downpayment assistance with technical training for first-time homebuyers.

## **Initiative #D2: Explore establishing a local Community Land Trust or partner with Erie County's Cornerstone Community Land Trust.**

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is one tool for preserving both housing affordability and neighborhood integrity. A Community Land Trust is more commonly used in gentrifying places but can have value in Erie, bringing the dual purpose of preservation within Erie's historic districts and housing affordability. A CLT could purchase, or receive as a donation, vacant homes in designated historic districts. The CLT would own the land while the occupants would own the buildings. The home then sits on land that is long-term leased by the CLT, typically for 99 years. The lease should include covenants that the homeowners will maintain the existing building. The CLT model can make homeownership more attainable by removing the cost of the land and thereby making the home itself significantly less expensive. Erie County recently established the Cornerstone Community Land Trust, which could become a partner for the City of Erie.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Identify the best opportunities for parcels to include in a Community Land Trust.
- Build local support for an investor or consortium of investors.
- Establish or identify a nonprofit that would hold the land for the Community Land Trust.

## **Initiative #D3: Create a program that enhances developer capacity for small-scale projects.**

The development community in Erie, especially for small-scale projects like the rehabilitation of individual homes consists of a few nonprofit and for-profit players. Blue Rock Development offers construction training apprenticeships for young people seeking a career in the building trades. However, there are fewer resources for growing the local developer sector.

A Philadelphia program for small-scale development, Jumpstart Germantown, could serve as a model for expanding local developer capacity. A sole developer founded Jumpstart Germantown in 2015 to capitalize a revolving loan fund, which has since attracted additional investments from organizations like Reinvestment Fund, also based in Philadelphia. Jumpstart trains first-time or fledgling developers in the skills they need to purchase, renovate, and sell Philadelphia rowhomes. The program provides a brief educational course paired with mentorship and a 12-month construction loan. The course covers sourcing of properties, pro-forma analysis, management of subcontractors, and other subjects. Since 2015, Jumpstart has financed hundreds of rowhome renovations. The innovative and central strength of the program is that Jumpstart pairs training and handholding with a construction loan. Only loan applicants qualify if they complete the Jumpstart course of study or have equivalent experience as demonstrated by a substantial development portfolio.

## Implementation Actions

- Research Jumpstart Germantown. Extensive information about the program is available online.
- Work with local philanthropies to capitalize a revolving fund for construction loans.
- Establish a training program for aspiring developers and preservation trades persons. Explore developing training programs at Erie County Community College. Many of Jumpstart Germantown's training materials are available online.
- Start small, with just two or three initial developer-apprentices.

## Initiative #D4: Pursue collaborative efforts that advance the revitalization of downtown Erie.

The City of Erie can serve as a convener and periodically pull together nonprofit and development agencies with the purpose of fostering collaboration and communication. For example, The Erie Downtown Development Corporation and the Erie Downtown Partnership have spearheaded downtown Erie's renaissance. The EDDC in particular acts as a nonprofit real estate developer in converting several historic buildings to housing, office, and ground-floor retail. Playing separate but important functions, EDP has served as a downtown management agency, running events, clean-and-safe programs, streetscape improvements, and other activities. Erie can assist by bringing these agencies and others together to collaborate and effectively address the revitalization of downtown.

## Implementation Actions

- Convene revitalization organization executives.
- Organize a social hour for the boards of EDDC, EDP, and other relevant organizations.
- Begin to map out areas of potential collaboration and support.
- Work toward organizing a joint planning retreat. In the ideal arrangement, all organizations agree on the same goals and strategies for downtown, and each organization takes responsibility for implementing those pieces of the plan for which it is best suited.
- Pursue a National Register nomination for the Lower State Street Historic District, which would provide access to rehabilitation tax credits and Pennsylvania SHPO Keystone Historic Preservation Planning grants, as applicable.

### **Initiative #D5: Continue conversions of historic downtown office buildings to residential.**

Demand for office space in downtown Erie was not strong pre-pandemic and has further eroded as a result of work-from-home policies and hybrid work environments. One solution to reduced office demand is to convert office buildings to residential use. Downtown residential conversion projects in recent years have required significant subsidies due to the complexity of the projects and the limitations on the market's willingness to pay higher rents. In contrast to projects requiring a change of use and significant retrofitting, some real estate and downtown development professionals report rehabilitation of existing apartments – less costly projects than office conversions – as feasible at prevailing market rates for apartments. Downtown Erie's historic commercial buildings are often well-suited for adaptive use because their smaller floor plates can more readily suit residential uses.

The absorption of new downtown residential units has been steady and has thus far matched production rates. No one knows how much unmet demand exists for similar products largely because this housing typology is not widely available in Erie. Nearby anchors like Gannon University and Erie Insurance should provide well-matched audiences. Further downtown housing development can incrementally assess the limits of unmet demand. New downtown loft-style and modern apartments may even generate new demand (e.g., among people who would have never considered living downtown) because of the unusual nature of the product.

#### **Implementation Actions**

- Assess recent absorption rates for new downtown residential units.
- Meet with EDDC to better understand barriers, review tax credit incentive opportunities, and assess pro forma development gaps.
- Prepare a National Register nomination for the Lower State Street Historic District, which would provide access to rehabilitation tax credit programs, making downtown office building conversions financially feasible.

### **Initiative #D6: Pursue downtown and waterfront tourism, arts, and placemaking efforts.**

For downtown Erie, activating public spaces and generating foot traffic, while not directly preservation-related, are essential to support the economic viability of the buildings. The EDP runs a large number of events that generate foot traffic. It is also implementing an alley activation program to bring vitality to overlooked spaces and is working with restaurants and city officials to encourage outdoor dining. Additional interventions to bring vitality to the center of downtown will be essential.



Erie can also attract visitors to the waterfront to learn more about Erie's maritime history and resources. The Lake Erie Quadrangle is designated as a National Marine Sanctuary due to underwater shipwrecks off the shoreline. This can be leveraged to draw additional visitors to the region.

### Implementation Actions

- Explore the viability of short-stay apartments such as those rented on Airbnb, catering to tourists, business visitors, Gannon University, and Erie Insurance.
- Plan regular, temporary, interactive art installations downtown and at the waterfront. Rather than permanent public art, temporary pieces generate buzz and new visits.
- Refresh the downtown event calendar as “evergreen” events may become stale over time. Ideally, events build on something unique to Erie, such as the lake and waterfront, the city's ethnic enclaves, or its industrial heritage.

## E. ENGAGING THE ERIE COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHENING THE ETHIC

Maintaining and preserving Erie's significant historic and cultural resources requires a strong historic preservation program that relies on a broad range of partnerships to successfully implement. Strengthening these partnerships – whether they are government entities, private organizations, businesses, or property owners – requires effective communication through education and outreach. Understanding the benefits of historic preservation can help to create support for an expanded preservation program, including survey and documentation efforts and the designation of local and National Register landmarks and districts. It will also create an informed community that can take advantage of available preservation incentives to assist in maintaining their properties, reducing blight, reusing vacant buildings, and preserving neighborhood character, advancing the local preservation movement. Involving Erie's youth and young adults in preservation education and initiatives will help to ensure that Erie's preservation movement remains strong for years to come.





## **GOAL STATEMENT: UNDERTAKE AN INCLUSIVE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM THAT FOSTERS GREATER AWARENESS OF PRESERVATION'S BENEFITS.**

### **Strategy #E1: Undertake educational programs on available preservation incentives and preservation methods.**

Education and outreach programs that highlight available resources for property owners are necessary for maintaining a successful preservation program. Community residents and owners of historic properties are valued partners in maintaining Erie's historic resources. Providing them with the tools and resources they need to maintain their homes is vital to protecting neighborhood character and improving the quality of life for Erie's residents. Some ideas for educational programming include:

- Available financial incentives for exterior maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- Appropriate methods for the repair of historic building materials.
- Hiring and collaborating with contractors for historic home repair.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Create a Homeowner Toolkit that includes information on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, repairing and preserving historic building materials, the downside of vinyl siding, working with a contractor, Erie's architecture and history, and financial incentives for home repair, among other topics.
- Work with partners such as Preservation Erie, neighborhood organizations, and local architects and contractors to host workshops and seminars on building maintenance and home repair, including wood siding and windows.
- Promote training in the building trades through partnerships with Erie High School, Erie County Technical School, Erie County Community College, Erie Center for Arts and Technology, and other learning institutions to increase the available pool of contractors to repair Erie's historic homes.



## **Initiative #E2: Strengthen preservation advocacy networks through partnerships with traditional and non-traditional partners..**

While the Erie Historic Preservation Plan will direct the Historic Review Commission, city staff, and decision-makers regarding future historic preservation efforts, implementation cannot rely solely on the City of Erie. Partnerships and collaboration with preservation advocates, community and neighborhood organizations, the Downtown Erie Partnership, museums, cultural institutions, and, most importantly, owners of historic properties, will help to ensure that preservation initiatives are successful and beneficial to the entire community. While the City of Erie currently enjoys a good working relationship with many community partners, strengthening those bonds through education and outreach, collaboration on preservation programs and initiatives, financing, and in other ways will strengthen the City of Erie's historic preservation program and broaden support for preservation activities.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Include existing community partners when planning a preservation project or initiative, including survey and documentation, historic district designation, promotion of preservation tools and incentives, and educational programming activities.
- Identify potential new partners to assist in implementing future preservation work, such as community development organizations, Erie Public Schools, arts and culture groups, social club organizations, African American community leaders, religious institutions, and others.
- Collaborate with partners such as Preservation Erie, the Hagen History Center, neighborhood organizations, African American community leaders, and others, to broaden the preservation advocacy movement in Erie through the creation of a committee of dedicated stakeholders that can advocate for preservation issues across the community.

## **Initiative #E3: Implement programs that engage the next generation of Erieites.**

Erie's youth and young adults are the key to ensuring the long-term preservation of Erie's heritage and culture. Outreach and education initiatives and involving Erie's youth in activities about the community's history, architecture, and people that are significant to the city's heritage can help to create future preservation advocates and spark interest in the preservation field. Telling the diverse stories of people and events will create connections to a historic building or site, providing the means for young people to find a connection with their own story.



## Implementation Actions

- Partner with the Erie Public Schools, Preservation Erie, the Hagen History Center, and others to host a Youth Heritage Summit that will bring together Erie's youth and young adults to provide hands-on learning about the community's heritage, important places, and significant events. Identify funding sources to assist in the planning and implementation.
- Create new hands-on learning opportunities for Erie's youth and young adults to experience and interact with community heritage, providing content aimed at younger generations.
- Partner with Erie Public Schools, the Hagen History Center, Preservation Erie, and others, to bolster the local history and culture curriculum in the schools and encourage class visits to important heritage sites.
- Provide opportunities for student input in the City of Erie preservation initiatives and programs, including the creation of a student representative seat on the Historic Review Commission.



## F. MANAGING THE PROGRAM

A capable and effective community-driven historic preservation program works at sustaining efforts in identifying and inventorying significant historic and cultural resources, providing incentives and benefits to spur preservation investments and revitalization, and in educating the broader community on how historic preservation contributes to local economic vitality and quality of life. While these are key aspects of local preservation efforts largely intersect with property owners and other community stakeholders, the day-to-day management and direction of the program largely rest with the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission. Empowered under the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City and the Commission can proactively plan for and protect important heritage resources, offer assistance, and work in partnership with other entities to leverage resources and build commitment to the Erie preservation endeavor. However, good program management requires the adoption and use of best-practice policies and procedures and effective community engagement to ensure the City of Erie and the Commission discharge responsibilities competently and equitably, providing access to information and equal treatment to all who participate in the program.

## **GOAL STATEMENT: FOSTER AN ERIE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM WITH EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND SYSTEMS.**

### **Initiative #F1: Prepare and adopt a citywide set of historic preservation design guidelines.**

Under the provisions of the Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Historic Review Commission can create and adopt design guidelines for designated Local Landmarks and Districts to help retain the historic design character of buildings and neighborhoods in Erie. Design guidelines can also serve as an educational resource that informs Erieites on appropriate procedures and methods for maintaining and preserving historic properties, helping to build a “rehab” and “preservation ethic” within Erie neighborhoods.

Given the Erie preservation program’s recent launch, the Erie Historic Review Commission has yet to designate a Local Historic District, although there is one designated landmark building. Consequently, the Commission has yet to have a priority need for design guidelines for use in Certificate of Appropriateness reviews. The only other design management tools in use in Erie include the Downtown Erie Partnership’s Downtown Erie Design Guidelines, largely voluntary and serving mainly as a resource for downtown property owners, and the Erie County Convention Authority’s guidelines for Bayfront Place, a 29-acre waterfront redevelopment area.

While the Historic Review Commission has no design review workload at present, the Commission can take the initiative to create a design guidelines publication not only in anticipation of future Local Landmarks and Districts but also to serve in the interim as an informative manual for property owners on building preservation and maintenance practices. A design guidelines publication, written concisely with straightforward narratives based on the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*—the baseline set of preservation rehabilitation standards used by most communities—and supplemented by photos and illustrations, can outline specific recommendations on topics related to:

- Ongoing maintenance and preservation procedures for common building materials.
- Appropriate replacement or replacement-in-kind materials.
- Roofs, roofing materials, and chimneys
- Porches, doorways, windows, and other architectural features

- Building additions
- Garages and accessory buildings
- Energy efficiency and alternative energy systems
- Site design and landscape features
- Commercial building and storefront rehabilitation and reconstruction
- Code Compliance
- Building design features, wall murals, and other elements reflective of local ethnic and cultural groups
- Infill and new construction.

A set of design guidelines prepared and adopted by the Historic Review Commission would likely address historic residential and industrial resources as the Downtown Design Guidelines already focus on traditional commercial buildings in the downtown business district. If the Commission designates downtown as a Local District in the future, the Commission could readily adopt the Downtown Design Guidelines as a companion document in future design review work.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Identify funding sources, such as a Keystone Historic Preservation Planning Grant, to underwrite the development of a citywide design guidelines manual.
- Secure professional design and architectural service for design guidelines preparation.
- Upload the design guidelines to the City of Erie website for easy accessibility.
- Seek Historic Review Commission training from the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office on conducting effective design reviews.

### **Initiative #F2: Design and create a robust municipal webpage for historic preservation.**

As a relatively new program, the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission have yet to devote time to creating a dedicated webpage as a central, accessible source of information on historic preservation for Erie. Such a website can present several layers of information to build a deeper understanding among Erieites about the implications of historic designations, the varying types of heritage resources within the community, and the various benefits available to owners and managers of historic properties.

While a key focus of the webpage is to provide access to Historic Review Commission agendas and meeting proceedings, over time, the website could also incorporate information and quick links regarding:

- Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Maps of the National Register Historic Districts
- Frequently asked questions on historic preservation
- Existing Historic Preservation Incentive Programs
- Links to related agencies and organizations
- Design guidelines, including the Downtown Erie Design Guidelines, and others developed for education purposes
- Copy of the City Historic Preservation Plan
- Downloadable version of Commission newsletters and publications.

Other items to include over time as the Historic Review Commission and the City designate districts and landmarks:

- Certificate of Appropriateness permit flow review chart
- Design guidelines used for COA design review purposes
- Links to historic resource inventories and databases
- Links to relevant information in PDF format
- Online submittal portals for COA applications and case reviews
- Properties eligible for National Register and Local Landmark listing

Materials linked to the website should also include multi-lingual versions to enhance accessibility to all Erie residents and property owners.

## Implementation Actions

- Secure time commitments from City of Erie staff to create and manage the Historic Review Commission webpage.
- Regularly update and expand the webpage contents over time as the Commission completes new surveys, designate new landmarks and districts, when new publications or other relevant information becomes available, or as part of any major revision or redesign to the City of Erie's website.

## Initiative #F3: Review and update the Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance on an ongoing basis.

Periodically, the Historic Review Commission should review and assess the effectiveness of Article 7 of the Erie Zoning Ordinance in achieving the community's historic preservation goals. As presently constituted, Article 7 provides the major provisions necessary to begin and maintain a landmark and district designation program along with a design review component. However, going forward, the Commission may determine the need for additional mechanisms that streamline and provide more clarity to designation and design review procedures or enhance the Commission's capabilities in managing the Community's historic and cultural resources. Updates to the historic preservation code may include:

- **Expanded designation criteria**—An expanded set of designation criteria may consider the pure cultural dimensions of a property or place and any associations with Erie's ethnic and racial groups, social movements, institutions, or patterns of growth and development.
- **Demolition delay**—A demolition delay provision ensures that an identified and important historic resource not currently designated a Local Landmark or located within a Local Historic District is not lost to demolition without consideration as to whether it merits preservation.
- **Demolition by neglect**—Preservation code revisions may incorporate demolition by neglect provisions that empower the Historic Review Commission to fine and require property owners to maintain landmarks and buildings within historic districts if they fall into a significant state of disrepair or in imminent danger of becoming structurally compromised.

Ideally, the Historic Review Commission, along with other City of Erie planning staff and legal personnel should conduct an ordinance review every five years.

## Implementation Actions

- Schedule and conduct a Historic Review Commission special working session every five years to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of Article 7 in meeting local preservation program aims.
- Undertake stakeholder engagement efforts where necessary to gain support for needed code changes.
- Update website content and other information materials as needed to incorporate narratives on recent code changes.

## **Initiative #F4: Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff.**

While Article 7 of the Erie Zoning Ordinance requires that members of the Historic Review Commission possess certain skills and expertise related to historic preservation and preservation architecture, ongoing training in the Commission operations and preservation best practices and decision-making can help to serve local needs and sustain an effective and successful long-term preservation program. This also applies to municipal preservation planning staff who must have the practical and technical knowledge to work and intersect with the public on designations, design reviews, and various other preservation issues. Commission members should strive to participate in training sessions at least once annually while newly-appointed commissioners should receive an introductory orientation on Commission duties and responsibilities, contents and provisions of Article 7, meeting procedures, and existing landmarks and districts. The Pennsylvania SHPO, the National Association of Preservation Commissions, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the American Planning Association are several entities that provide training and education services useful for local historic preservation commissions. Today's digital communication technologies make many of these trainings more affordable and accessible.

## Implementation Actions

- Prepare orientation materials and binders of practical information for new commissioners.
- Conduct an annual orientation and training session for new and currently-serving commissioners as well as for related municipal staff.
- Incorporate a short and concise training module on a particular topic for every regular Historic Review Commission meeting.

- Secure a yearly budget appropriation for educational and training opportunities.
- Take advantage of any outside funding, such as CLG scholarships, to underwrite access to training and education opportunities offered locally, statewide, and nationally.
- Review Commission participation efforts annually to ensure all commissioners and preservation planning staff meet the minimum four hours of continuing education and training required as part of Erie's inclusion in the Pennsylvania SHPO Certified Local Government program.

### **Initiative #F5: Undertake an annual program review.**

A yearly review of the Erie historic preservation program can help the City of Erie and the Historic Review Commission track and recognize progress and milestones while assessing challenges and opportunities in the implementation of this Historic Preservation Plan and in the day-to-day administration of the program. The review would also ensure the City of Erie is meeting the ongoing performance standards and metrics established by the Pennsylvania SHPO that Erie must meet to retain its Certified Local Government status. Preferably, the Commission should conduct the annual review with the involvement of other municipal departments and related agencies so that the Commission and preservation partners can determine potential pathways to addressing issues and obstacles to progress.

### **Implementation Actions**

- Schedule an annual Historic Review Commission study session to review the Historic Preservation Plan implementation progress and other concerns related to program administration.
- Conduct a yearly staff and partner organization discussion meeting on preservation needs and progress.
- Create and manage a framework for measuring the economic impact of historic preservation, including changes to property values in historic districts, new businesses established, tourism growth, and environmental sustainability.
- Produce a yearly report on review findings and achieved preservation milestones and distribute through municipal communication channels and partner networks.



139 W. 21ST ST







**Chapter 6**

**Plan  
Implementation**

# ACHIEVING THE VISION

This chapter describes an action plan for achieving Erie's preservation vision involving both concerted efforts on the part of the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission and partnerships and collaborations with many different individuals, stakeholders, and organizations. Among these stakeholder partners are federal and state agencies, property and business owners, developers and investors, local schools and universities, and non-profits and community organizations. While the Historic Preservation Commission will lead, champion, and manage many preservation efforts and programs presented in this Preservation Plan, its partners will play important roles in engaging a broad segment of the community in preservation endeavors and in encouraging and supporting the stewardship of Erie's built and cultural heritage.



337 W. 12TH ST, MURAL



“

I want to make sure we can do everything in our power to preserve Erie's historic resources.

”

Erie Resident



## **HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION CORE FIVE-YEAR WORK PLAN**

The City of Erie Historic Review Commission is a new and vital preservation entity in Erie eager to take the next steps in building an effectual and successful local historic preservation program. The Commission will serve as a manager of preservation, landmarking, and design review programs, as a consultant and advisor to the Planning Commission, the Erie City Council, and other agencies on preservation matters, and as a convener of partners and collaborators that drive forward preservation initiatives into the future. Given community aspirations to preserve and protect Erie's heritage and to promote transformational change in historic places and neighborhoods, the Historic Review Commission will need to pursue a work plan of programs and initiatives that over the long term, in incremental but sustaining actions, will help make historic preservation a key and indispensable ingredient to city vitality and quality of life.

The following is a five-year Historic Review Commission work plan aimed at focusing the Commission's work on key Preservation Plan implementation priorities and on building Commission capacities to manage and protect Erie's historic and cultural resources. The Commission can add additional tasks and activities going forward as it responds to local preservation needs, issues, and opportunities.

# HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION CORE FIVE-YEAR WORK PLAN

	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
<b>YEAR I</b>	<p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Hire and retain a City of Erie historic preservation planner.</li> <li>» Require and encourage City staff and Historic Review Commission members to participate in available training opportunities.</li> <li>» Conduct an orientation session for new Historic Review Commission members.</li> <li>» Schedule and conduct an annual program review.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4).</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Survey and Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Consult with Pennsylvania SHPO and other partners on planning and organizing a citywide survey.</li> <li>» Identify and secure funding sources for Phase I citywide historic and architectural resources survey, focused on Downtown, East Bayfront, West Bayfront neighborhoods.</li> <li>» Create a Request for Proposal for Phase I citywide historic and architectural survey.</li> <li>» Initiate Phase I survey pending receipt of funding.</li> <li>» Oversee and manage consultant-survey team.</li> <li>» Review past historic resource surveys for individual properties identified as significant to generate the first historic resource inventory list that incorporates National Register and Local Landmark eligible properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Undertake and complete a citywide historic and architectural resources survey (Initiative #A1)</li> <li>» Maintain a significant property inventory (Initiative #A4).</li> <li>» Identify property and resource types absent from previous inventories, surveys, and National Register nominations (Initiative #B2)</li> </ul>

<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>Key Work Plan Items</b>	<b>Related Preservation Plan Strategies</b>
	<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Create a comprehensive municipal historic preservation webpage.</li> <li>» Prepare informational and collateral materials on Erie’s National Register Historic Districts, incentive programs, and other relevant information.</li> <li>» Produce a yearly Historic Review Commission program review report for public distribution.</li> <li>» Prepare a calendar of engagement opportunities to discuss preservation procedures, the designation process, and the benefits of historic preservation for the website and other collateral materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4).</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5).</li> </ul>
<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>Key Work Plan Items</b>	<b>Related Preservation Plan Strategies</b>
	<p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Require and encourage City staff and Historic Review Commission members to participate in available training opportunities.</li> <li>» Conduct an orientation session for new Historic Review Commission members.</li> <li>» Schedule and conduct an annual program review session.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4)</li> </ul>



	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
<b>YEAR 2</b>	<p><b>Survey and Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Complete survey for the Phase 1 neighborhoods.</li> <li>» Integrate survey results in City GIS or other accessible digital platforms.</li> <li>» Conduct community engagement efforts that publicize the citywide survey and results.</li> <li>» Consult with Pennsylvania SHPO and other partners on planning and organizing a survey for neighborhoods within the Phase 2 survey area, including Trinity Park, Little Italy, Arbor Heights.</li> <li>» Create a Request for Proposal for Phase 1 or Phase 2 citywide historic and architectural survey.</li> <li>» Initiate Phase 2 survey pending receipt of funding.</li> <li>» Oversee and manage consultant-survey team.</li> <li>» Update historic resource inventory list that incorporates National Register and Local Landmark eligible properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Undertake and complete a citywide historic and architectural resources survey (Initiative #A1).</li> <li>» Maintain a significant property inventory (Initiative #A4).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Designation and Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Develop and provide information to owners of properties deemed individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places</li> <li>» Implement an outreach strategy for owners of locally eligible buildings considering local designation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» List new properties and districts in the National Register of Historic Places (Initiative #A6).</li> </ul>

<b>YEAR 2</b>	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
	<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Maintain and update municipal historic preservation webpage.</li> <li>» Prepare informational and collateral materials on Erie’s National Register Historic Districts, incentive programs, and local history</li> <li>» Produce a yearly Historic Review Commission program review report for public distribution.</li> <li>» Plan and undertake one or two community engagement activities that promote the Historic Review Commission’s programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Prepare and disseminate information on preservation protections (Initiative #C1)</li> <li>» Design and create a robust municipal webpage for historic preservation (Initiative #F2)</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5)</li> </ul>

<b>YEAR 3</b>	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
	<p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Require and encourage City staff and Historic Review Commission members to participate in available training opportunities.</li> <li>» Conduct an orientation session for new Historic Review Commission members.</li> <li>» Schedule and conduct an annual program review session.</li> <li>» Explore funding sources and issue an RFP for the preparation of a design guidelines manual for Erie’s residential neighborhoods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4)</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5).</li> <li>» Prepare and adopt a citywide set of historic preservation design guidelines (Initiative #F1).</li> </ul>

	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>YEAR 3</b></p>	<p><b>Survey and Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Complete and undertake survey for Phase 2 neighborhoods.</li> <li>» Integrate survey results in City GIS or other accessible digital platforms.</li> <li>» Conduct community engagement efforts that publicize the citywide survey and results.</li> <li>» Consult with Pennsylvania SHPO and other partners on planning and organizing a survey the Phase 3 survey area, the Greengarden neighborhood.</li> <li>» Create a Request for Phase 3 citywide historic and architectural survey.</li> <li>» Initiate Phase 3 survey pending receipt of funding.</li> <li>» Oversee and manage consultant-survey team.</li> <li>» Update historic resource inventory list that incorporates National Register and Local Landmark eligible properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Prepare and disseminate information on preservation protections (Initiative #C1)</li> <li>» Design and create a robust municipal webpage for historic preservation (Initiative #F2)</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5)</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>YEAR 3</b></p>	<p><b>Designation and Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and offer a workshop for property owners on nominating and listing a building in the National Register.</li> <li>» Continue outreach efforts for owners of locally eligible buildings considering local designation.</li> <li>» Consult with the Pennsylvania SHPO on potentially eligible National Register districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» List new properties and districts in the National Register of Historic Places (Initiative #A6).</li> </ul>

	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>YEAR 4</b></p>	<p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Require and encourage City staff and Historic Review Commission members to participate in available training opportunities.</li> <li>» Conduct an orientation session for new Historic Review Commission members.</li> <li>» Schedule and conduct an annual program review session.</li> <li>» Explore funding sources and issue an RFP for the preparation of a design guidelines manual for Erie’s residential neighborhoods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Survey and Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Complete and survey Phase 3 neighborhoods.</li> <li>» Integrate survey results in City GIS or other accessible digital platforms.</li> <li>» Conduct community engagement efforts that publicize the citywide survey and results.</li> <li>» Consult with Pennsylvania SHPO and other partners on planning and organizing a survey for neighborhoods within the Frontier Park Phase 4 survey area.</li> <li>» Initiate Phase 4 survey pending receipt of funding.</li> <li>» Oversee and manage consultant-survey team.</li> <li>» Update historic resource inventory list that incorporates National Register and Local Landmark eligible properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Undertake and complete a citywide historic and architectural resources survey (Initiative #A1)</li> <li>» Maintain a significant property inventory (Initiative #A4).</li> </ul>

	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
<b>YEAR 4</b>	<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Maintain and update municipal historic preservation webpage.</li> <li>» Prepare informational and collateral materials on Erie’s National Register Historic Districts, incentive programs, and local history</li> <li>» Produce a yearly Historic Review Commission program review report for public distribution.</li> <li>» Plan and undertake one or two community engagement activities that promote the Historic Review Commission’s programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4)</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Designation and Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Offer a workshop for property owners on nominating and listing a building in the National Register.</li> <li>» Create an online toolkit for property owners interested in nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places</li> <li>» Continue outreach efforts for owners of locally eligible buildings considering local designation.</li> <li>» Seek funding to prepare a National Register Historic District nomination.</li> <li>» Conduct research and prepare nomination report for Local Landmark designation.</li> <li>» Conduct design review for designated Local Landmarks.</li> <li>» Initiate engagement and outreach activities for designating Erie’s first Local District.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» List new properties and districts in the National Register of Historic Places (Initiative #A6).</li> <li>» Conduct community engagement and consensus-building for establishing local historic districts (Initiative #C2).</li> </ul>

	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>YEAR 5</b></p>	<p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Schedule and conduct an annual program review session.</li> <li>» Require and encourage City staff and Historic Review Commission members to participate in available training opportunities.</li> <li>» Conduct an orientation session for new Historic Review Commission members.</li> <li>» Conduct a study session on updating the Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4)</li> <li>» Review and update the Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance on an ongoing basis (Initiative #F3).</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Survey and Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Complete and undertake survey Phase 4 neighborhoods.</li> <li>» Integrate survey results in City GIS or other accessible digital platforms.</li> <li>» Conduct community engagement efforts that publicize the citywide survey and results.</li> <li>» Consult with Pennsylvania SHPO and other partners on planning and organizing surveys for remaining Phases 5 and 6 neighborhoods, including Glenwood, Academy-Marvintown, Mercyhurst, East Grandview, Lakeside, and Fairmount-McClelland, or a new thematic-based survey of Erie’s schools and educational facilities.</li> <li>» Oversee and manage consultant-survey team.</li> <li>» Update historic resource inventory list that incorporates National Register and Local Landmark eligible properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Undertake and complete a citywide historic and architectural resources survey (Initiative #A1)</li> <li>» Maintain a significant property inventory (Initiative #A4).</li> </ul>

	Key Work Plan Items	Related Preservation Plan Strategies
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>YEAR 5</b></p>	<p><b>Designation and Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Offer a workshop for property owners on nominating and listing a building in the National Register.</li> <li>» Create an online toolkit for property owners interested in nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places</li> <li>» Continue outreach efforts for owners of locally eligible buildings considering local designation.</li> <li>» Seek funding to prepare a National Register Historic District nomination.</li> <li>» Conduct research and [prepare nomination report for Local Landmark designation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Undertake and complete a citywide historic and architectural resources survey (Initiative #A1)</li> <li>» Maintain a significant property inventory (Initiative #A4).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Community Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Maintain and update municipal historic preservation webpage.</li> <li>» Prepare informational and collateral materials.</li> <li>» Produce a yearly Historic Review Commission program review report for public distribution.</li> <li>» Plan and undertake one or two community engagement activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff (Initiative #F4)</li> <li>» Undertake an annual program review (Initiative #F5).</li> </ul>

## ACHIEVING THE PRESERVATION VISION

Beyond the core work of the Historic Review Commission, other partners and collaborators will participate in Preservation Plan implementation, helping to build a real and cohesive network of preservation stakeholders and advocates within the Erie community. The section presents an action plan that describes potential partners and yearly targets with five and ten-year achievement benchmarks. At the end of every year, the City of Erie, the Historic Review Commission, and its preservation partners can assess the progress of Preservation Plan implementation yearly and report the results to the broader community.

### Key implementation partners and actors include:

- **City of Erie Historic Review Commission** will lead many key program objectives related to historic and cultural survey and inventory, landmark and historic district designation, design review, and public outreach and engagement.
- **City Agencies and Departments**, such as Planning and Neighborhood Resources and Public Works, for instance, help assist and coordinate revitalization and reinvestment activities in Erie's historic neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- **County Agencies and Departments**, such as the Division of Emergency Management, retain responsibility for disaster preparedness and Geographic Information Systems.
- The **Pennsylvania SHPO** will provide information and assistance on local program management, support related to conducting local surveys, preparing National Register nominations, and serve as a resource provider and participant for community outreach and engagement.
- **Federal and State Agencies** in Erie own and manage properties as well as provide various assistance and funding programs for historic preservation, planning, and community revitalization.
- The Erie Downtown Partnership, Downtown Development Corporation, and the Erie Land Bank, among others are key public and private partners in preservation-based **Economic Development Entities** that can lead and facilitate revitalization programming, adaptive use projects, and neighborhood housing conservation and preservation efforts.
- Gannon and Mercyhurst Universities, the Hagen History Center, and Erie Maritime Museum are three of many **Museums, Libraries, and Education Institutions** that are keepers of Erie's history knowledge, working to expand that knowledge through research and investigation, and to generate enthusiasm and curiosity in Erie's heritage among residents.
- Neighborhood associations, foundations, and arts and culture and preservation advocacy groups are integral **Non-Profit Organizations** that with their representative boards and volunteer corps, can build local awareness of historic preservation as a powerful tool to transform people, neighborhoods, and places.
- **Social Service, Civic Organizations, and Religious Institutions** offer pathways to engaging community leaders and diverse populations.
- **Property Owners, Developers, and Business Owners** are the bedrock of local preservation by rehabilitating, investing, and preserving historic buildings, sites, and places.



# A. IDENTIFYING ERIE’S HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

While identifying and documenting Erie’s historic and cultural resources will comprise a major focus of work for the Historic Review Commission over the next five to ten years, other stakeholders and preservation partners will play key roles, including:

- Historic preservation professionals, historians, architectural historians, cultural leaders, and folklorists will help the Historic Review Commission with context and property research, oral history efforts, and other documentation to inform and enrich the understanding of historic and cultural resources and their significance.
- Museums and libraries can supply archival maps, histories, newspaper clippings, biographies, and other materials that expands the knowledge of Erie’s built fabric and the people that made the city.
- Non-profit organizations that can provide volunteers and manpower to aid survey and documentation projects.
- Other cooperative partnerships that promotes survey efforts and illumines local history to Erie residents.

<b>THEME A. IDENTIFYING ERIE’S HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>				
<b>Goal: Identify, document and designate Erie’s significant historic and cultural resources.</b>				
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Primary Action Agent</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>2029 Target Benchmark</b>	<b>2034 Target Benchmark</b>
<b>Initiative #A1: Undertake and complete a citywide architectural survey.</b>	Historic Review Commission, Historic Preservation Professionals opportunities	Historians and Researchers, Museums and Libraries, Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners	Complete Phases 1-4 historical and architectural surveys.  Create and update a historic and cultural resource inventory.	Complete Phases 5-6 historical and architectural surveys.  Update the historic and cultural resource inventory.

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #A1: Undertake and complete a citywide architectural survey (cont.)</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, Historic Preservation Professionals opportunities</p>	<p>Historians and Researchers, Museums and Libraries, Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners</p>	<p>Make determinations of Local Landmark and National Register properties.</p> <p>Ensure data is publicly accessible through the City of Erie website.</p> <p>Undertake active community engagement and public relations efforts.</p>	<p>Make determinations of Local Landmark and National Register properties.</p> <p>Ensure data is publicly accessible through the City of Erie website.</p> <p>Undertake active community engagement and public relations efforts.</p> <p>Recognize and designate eligible properties.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #A2: Conduct a thematic-based survey of Erie's schools and educational facilities.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, Historic Preservation Professionals opportunities</p>	<p>Historians and Researchers, Educational Institutions, Museums and Libraries, Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners</p>	<p>Develop a survey plan and scope of work.</p> <p>Secure funding for survey.</p> <p>Complete survey, update inventory, and make determinations of property eligibility.</p>	<p>Nominate and designate eligible schools and educational buildings.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #A3: Update the 1993 Erie Industrial Resource Survey.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, Historic Preservation Professionals</p>	<p>Historians and Researchers, Museums and Libraries, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners</p>	<p>Develop a survey plan and scope of work.</p> <p>Secure funding for survey and undertake survey when time and resources permit.</p>	<p>Complete survey, update inventory, and make determinations of property eligibility.</p> <p>Nominate and designate eligible industrial buildings.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #A4: Maintain a significant property inventory.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Historians and Researchers, Museums and Libraries, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners</p>	<p>Create and update the significant property list after completion of citywide survey phases.</p> <p>Consult with the SHPO on properties potentially eligible for the National Register.</p> <p>Make significant property and inventory lists publicly accessible.</p>	<p>Update the significant property list after of citywide survey and other research.</p> <p>Consult with the SHPO on properties potentially eligible for the National Register.</p> <p>Make significant property and inventory lists publicly accessible</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #A5: Designate new Local Landmarks and Historic Districts.</b></p>	<p>Erie City Council, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Property Owners</p>	<p>Conduct outreach and engagement efforts to owners of National Register Landmarks or properties within National Register Historic Districts regarding the benefits of local designation.</p> <p>Review past completed historic resource surveys for individual properties and districts identified as significant.</p> <p>Prepare nomination reports and proceed to designation for property owners interested in designation.</p>	<p>Review and update surveys and significant property lists and target properties and their owners interested in Local Landmarks designation.</p> <p>Conduct outreach, deep listening sessions, and community engagement campaigns that build support for designating Local Historic Districts.</p> <p>Prepare nomination reports and proceed to designation for property owners, neighborhoods, and places interested in local designation.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #A6: List new properties and districts in the National Register of Historic Places.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Historians and Researchers, Museums and Libraries, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners</p>	<p>Prioritize National Register nominations for properties and districts already determined eligible.</p> <p>Identify and secure funding sources for National Register nominations.</p> <p>Conduct education and outreach activities to owners of eligible buildings and resources.</p>	<p>Review completed surveys and inventories for potential National Register eligible properties and districts.</p> <p>Seek Determinations of Eligibility from Pennsylvania SHPO.</p> <p>Conduct outreach and education activities to property owners on the benefits of National Register listing.</p>

## B. TELLING ERIE'S DIVERSE STORIES

Erie's heritage and its physical dimensions in buildings, structures, sites, and objects embody community memories and stories on the city's vast cultural make-up and tapestry. In the desire to embrace and honor all histories, preservation stakeholders and partners will work collaboratively on various initiatives that discover new history narratives worthy of celebration and recognition.

### Key preservation partners in these initiatives include:

- Historians, cultural historians, ethnographers, folklorists, researchers and storytellers that can research and document local histories.
- Community and neighborhood organizations that can generate resident and stakeholder participation.
- Archaeologists and anthropologists that can provide insight into Erie's ancient, Native American, and settlement and growth periods.
- Universities, museums, and libraries can offer resources and research materials, as well as assist with community outreach and engagement.
- The Historic Review Commission can help convene partners in pursuit of context studies and recognition programs.
- Foundations and funders and underwrite projects and activities that illumine the different diverse dimensions of Erie history.

THEME B. TELLING ERIE'S DIVERSE STORIES				
Goal: Implement programs and activities that promote the histories and places of special significance to Erie's diverse peoples.				
Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<b>Initiative #B I: Undertake thematic studies of Erie's diverse communities.</b>	Universities, Museums, Libraries, and Archives, Non-Profit Organizations, Historic Review Commission	Archaeologists, Historians, Ethnographers, and Researchers Foundations and Funders Neighborhood Organizations Pennsylvania SHPO State and Federal Agencies.	Form a working committee of the HRC to formulate a work plan for undertaking and completing important thematic studies.	Complete context studies widely available through the City of Erie's website.

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #B1: Undertake thematic studies of Erie’s diverse communities. (cont.)</b></p>	<p>Universities, Museums, Libraries, and Archives, Non-Profit Organizations, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Archaeologists, Historians, Ethnographers, and Researchers, Foundations and Funders, Neighborhood Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO, State and Federal Agencies</p>	<p>Determine funding needs and secure funding sources for specific theme studies.</p> <p>Engage professional historians, researchers, and other participants as needed.</p> <p>Conduct engagement activities that facilitate meaningful input on local histories from Erie’s diverse communities.</p>	<p>Review the conclusions and information provided in context studies for updating the significant properties list and determining the eligible properties and places.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #B2: Identify property and resource types absent from previous inventories, surveys, and National Register nominations.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Archaeologists, Historians, Ethnographers, and Researchers, Neighborhood Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Use the Thematic Survey working committee of the Historic Review Commission to review prior National Register nominations for missing content and narratives.</p>	<p>Update inventories to include resources of cultural importance.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #B2:</b> Identify property and resource types absent from previous inventories, surveys, and National Register nominations. (cont.)</p>	<p>Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Archaeologists, Historians, Ethnographers, and Researchers, Neighborhood Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Discuss with Pennsylvania SHPO the potential for receiving CLG grants to underwrite National Register revisions and updates.</p> <p>Incorporate survey form fields for documenting cultural resources and context themes as part of survey initiatives.</p>	<p>Seek and secure funding for National Register nomination revisions and updates.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #B3:</b> Design and implement a cultural marker initiative as part of a broader interpretive programming.</p>	<p>Historic Review Commission City Agencies and Departments</p>	<p>Federal and State Agencies, Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Convene an ad-hoc HRC committee to assess interest in a local historical marker program.</p> <p>Create work plan, including eligibility criteria for a local historical marker program.</p> <p>Secure funding for creating a local marker program.</p>	<p>Install historical markers on an ongoing basis.</p>



Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #B3: Design and implement a cultural marker initiative as part of a broader interpretive programming. (cont.)</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, City Agencies and Departments</p>	<p>Federal and State Agencies, Non-Profit Organizations Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Use ad-hoc committee to determine potential properties and places eligible for the Pennsylvania Historic Marker Program.</p> <p>Conduct community outreach that publicizes both the Local and Pennsylvania Historic Marker program.</p>	<p>Organize and implement regular engagement and public relations on the marker programs.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #B4: Seek opportunities for cross-cultural and history programming involving festivals, local museums, and arts entities.</b></p>	<p>Museums and Educational Institutions, Neighborhood Associations, Non-Profit Organizations, Religious Institutions</p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission, Foundations, State and Federal Agencies, Business Owners, Volunteers</p>	<p>Conduct a convening session with preservation and non-preservation partners to discuss collaborative opportunities for cross cultural programming.</p> <p>Explore funding opportunities for enhanced festivals, museum exhibits, and collective public relations.</p>	<p>Organize and produce new events, enhanced museum exhibits and history programming that elevates the public profile of Erie history and heritage.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #B5:</b> Use digital platforms and other traditional communication tools to promote Erie’s diverse heritage.</p>	<p>Museums, Libraries, and Educational Institutions, Neighborhood Associations, Non-Profit Organizations</p>	<p>Archaeologists, Historians, Ethnographers, and Researchers, Neighborhood Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Discuss with Pennsylvania SHPO the potential for receiving CLG grants to underwrite National Register revisions and updates.</p> <p>Incorporate survey form fields for documenting cultural resources and context themes as part of survey initiatives.</p>	<p>Seek and secure funding for National Register nomination revisions and updates.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #B3:</b> Design and implement a cultural marker initiative as part of a broader interpretive programming.</p>	<p>Historic Review Commission City Agencies and Departments</p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Archaeologists, Historians, Ethnographers Researchers, Historic Review Commission, Foundations, Business Owners, Religious Institutions, Economic Development Entities, Volunteers</p>	<p>Convene key partners and stakeholders to identify and share information on Erie’s diverse history in printed materials, websites, and educational seminars.</p> <p>Consider and employ crowdsourcing platforms and digitize archival data and materials to make diverse history narratives more publicly accessible.</p>	<p>Continue expanding and enriching the content of digital platforms and other materials, including translations to multiple languages.</p>

## C. PROTECTING AND CONSERVING PLACES

Cities and communities across the country designate landmark buildings and historic districts not only to protect important icons and places but also to achieve other aims that enhance local livability, such as access to quality housing and walkable environments. Effective local historic preservation programs have processes that designate and protect important historic and cultural resources but also other measures that also advance the conservation of places that make Erie more livable and a place of choice.

**Key stakeholders and preservation partners that will play important implementation roles, include:**

- City of Erie elected officials and leaders that will approve landmark and district designations and adopt other policies in support of preservation and conservation efforts.
- The Historic Review Commission prepares designation nominations, participates in consensus-building programs, and collaborates with partners on creating and distributing information materials regarding designation and its benefits.
- City agencies and departments that will propose new preservation tools and assist in preservation policy implementation
- Non-profit advocacy and economic development entities, organizations, neighborhood groups, and individuals serving as key consensus-building collaborators.
- Property and business owners that maintain, preserve, and maintain their historic resources.

### THEME C. PROTECTING AND CONSERVING PLACES

**Goal: Implement clear and understandable policies, procedures, and practices for protecting Erie’s heritage resources.**

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<b>Initiative #C1: Prepare and disseminate information on preservation protections.</b>	City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission	Economic Development Entities, Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO	Prepare information materials on preservation protections for the HRC website.	Review and update preservation protection information on the HRC website.

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #C1: Prepare and disseminate information on preservation protections. (cont.)</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Economic Development Entities, Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Schedule and conduct public outreach, meetings, and workshops on the designation process and historic preservation’s benefits.</p> <p>Prepare a work plan and secure funding and for producing information pieces and digital content.</p>	<p>Continue ongoing public outreach, meetings, and workshops on the designation process and historic preservation’s benefits.</p> <p>Consult with foundations, non-profit organizations and the Pennsylvania SHPO on underwriting and distributing new print and digital content.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #C2: Conduct community engagement and consensus-building for establishing local historic districts.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, City Agencies and Departments, Economic Development Entities</p>	<p>Non-Profit and Neighborhood Organizations, Housing, Environmental and Arts and Cultural Groups, Educational Institutions, Religious Institutions, Property Owners</p>	<p>Identify and pursue Local District Overlay Districts for National Register Historic Districts or other areas of Erie meeting specific designation criteria, or where there is property owner interest.</p>	<p>Continue expanding and enriching the content of digital platforms and other materials, including translations to multiple languages.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #C2: Conduct community engagement and consensus-building for establishing local historic districts. (cont.)</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, City Agencies and Departments, Economic Development Entities</p>	<p>Non-Profit and Neighborhood Organizations, Housing, Environmental and Arts and Cultural Groups, Educational Institutions, Religious Institutions, Property Owners</p>	<p>Form a steering committee or ad-hoc working group to explore stakeholder support and engagement needs.</p> <p>Conduct information and digital outreach campaigns.</p> <p>Designate Local Districts where there is strong property owner and stakeholder support.</p>	<p>Designate Local Districts where strong property owner and stakeholder support exists.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #C3: Use conservation districts to facilitate neighborhood preservation.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, City Agencies and Departments, City Council, Economic Development Entities</p>	<p>Non-Profit and Neighborhood Organizations, Housing Groups, Property Owners, Religious Institutions</p>	<p>Convene a task force to review survey results, adopted plans, and available research to assess neighborhood conservation district feasibility in places targeted for conservation in the City of Erie Comprehensive Plan.</p>	<p>Undertake planning studies to determine eligibility in targeted neighborhoods.</p> <p>Draft and adopt a conservation district enabling ordinance if not already undertaken.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #C3: Use conservation districts to facilitate neighborhood preservation. (cont.)</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, City Agencies and Departments, City Council, Economic Development Entities</p>	<p>Non-Profit and Neighborhood Organizations, Housing Groups, Property Owners, Religious Institutions</p>	<p>Draft and adopt a conservation district enabling ordinance.</p>	<p>Adopt design guidelines and administer designated conservation districts.</p>
<p><b>Strategy #C4: Update community plans with preservation elements, including Erie County's Disaster Mitigation Plan.</b></p>	<p>Historic Review Commission, City and County Agencies and Departments</p>	<p>Economic Development Entities, Non-Profit Advocacy Organizations</p>	<p>Participate in steering committees and other task forces charged with revising and updating community plans and policies.</p> <p>Participate and include historic resources data and inventories in efforts to update the Erie County Disaster Mitigation Plan.</p> <p>Update the Historic Preservation Plan to include relevant disaster mitigation programs for Erie's historic resources</p>	<p>Continue participating in initiatives that update community plans and policies.</p> <p>Include historic resources data and inventories in efforts to update the Erie County Disaster Mitigation Plan.</p> <p>Update the Historic Preservation Plan to include relevant disaster mitigation programs for Erie's historic resources.</p> <p>Prepare white papers and reports on preservation's positive community impacts to inform policy and decision-makers during plan rewrites and updates.</p>

## D. INVESTING IN HISTORIC ASSETS

Erie already benefits from having several organizations and entities that promote preservation and adaptive use and their continued work will be key drivers of ongoing preservation activity and investments in historic resources. However, these efforts, as much as they are critically important, still may not be enough to address critical needs in rehabilitating historic housing and converting downtown office buildings to new uses. New programs and initiatives created and managed by the City of Erie and several other partner groups can help establish and promote a supportive environment for preservation-based revitalization.

### Key partners and actors in this effort include:

- The Erie Downtown Development Corporation and the Downtown Partnership can create, administer, and leverage programs that promote small business development, storefront improvements, upper-floor conversions, and adaptive use schemes.
- The Erie Land Bank, the Redevelopment and Housing Authorities of the City of Erie, non-profits and housing groups, and other related City of Erie departments can collaborate preservation-based housing and neighborhood revitalization initiatives.
- City planners and agencies can review codes and ordinances to make adaptive use more feasible and cost effective for developers, investors, and property owners as well as suggest policies and initiatives that sustain investments in historic places over the long-term.
- The Historic Review Commission and its preservation partners can play vital roles in educating building owners, architects, and developers on the use and practicality of incentive and financial assistance programs.

THEME D. INVESTING IN HISTORIC ASSETS				
Goal: Stimulate investment in Erie’s historic residential and commercial assets.				
Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<b>Initiative #DI:</b> <b>Establish targeted assistance programs to increase homeownership in historic districts.</b>	City Agencies and Departments, Housing Organizations, Developers and Investors, Property Owners	Economic Development Entities, Historic Review Commission, Neighborhood Organizations, State and Federal Agencies	Convene an ad-hoc housing working group to explore the potential for establishing a downpayment assistance or forgivable loan program for historic neighborhoods.	Administer and maintain targeted assistance programs.

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #D1:</b>  <b>Establish targeted assistance programs to increase homeownership in historic districts. (cont.)</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments,  Housing Organizations,  Developers and Investors,  Property Owners</p>	<p>Economic Development Entities,  Historic Review Commission,  Neighborhood Organizations,  State and Federal Agencies</p>	<p>Use the ad-hoc to examine the feasibility of pairing the downpayment assistance with technical training for first-time homebuyers.</p>	<p>Administer and maintain targeted assistance programs.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #D2:</b>  <b>Explore establishing a local Community Land Trust or partner with Erie County's Cornerstone Community Land Trust.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments,  Housing Organizations,  Non-Profit and Neighborhood Organizations,  Property Owners,  Housing Developers and Investors</p>	<p>Economic Development Entities,  Advocacy Organizations,  Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Use an ad-hoc working group to explore the need and feasibility of a local Community Land Trust, including appropriate locations and what non-profit group will hold the land.</p> <p>Work to build local support for an investor or consortium of investors to establish the Land Trust.</p>	<p>Continue working to build local support for a Community Land Trust investor consortium.</p> <p>Operate and maintain the Land Trust and prepare five-year strategic development plan.</p>



Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #D3: Create a program that enhances developer capacity for small-scale projects.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Housing Organizations, Economic Development Entities, Non-Profit Organizations, Property Owners, Developers and Investors</p>	<p>Advocacy Organizations, Foundations, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Use an ad-hoc working group to research and consider the feasibility of programs that grow the local historic preservation developer sector.</p> <p>Work with local philanthropies to capitalize a revolving fund for construction loans.</p> <p>Establish a training program for aspiring developers.</p>	<p>Operate and maintain a local historic preservation developer training program and prepare five-year strategic development plan for its growth and development.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #D4: Pursue collaborative efforts that advance the revitalization of downtown Erie.</b></p>	<p>Economic Development Entities, Non-Profit Organizations, Property Owners, Developers, Business Owners, and Investors</p>	<p>Advocacy Organizations, City Agencies and Departments, Financial Institutions, Foundations Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Conduct an exploratory meetings and planning retreat to discuss areas of potential collaboration and support.</p>	<p>Implement and sustain initiatives that advance preservation-based economic development in downtown Erie.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #D5: Continue conversions of historic downtown office buildings to residential.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Economic Development Entities, Non-Profit Organizations, Property Owners, Developers, Business Owners, and Investors</p>	<p>Advocacy Organizations, Financial Institutions, Historic Review Commission State and Federal Agencies</p>	<p>Work collaboratively on an ad-hoc basis with economic development and preservation to assess absorption rates for new downtown residential units and to better understand barriers, review tax credit incentive opportunities, and assess pro forma development gaps where new financing programs could potentially address.</p>	<p>Continue assessing absorption rates and development financing needs.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #D6: Pursue downtown and waterfront tourism, arts, and placemaking efforts.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Economic Development Entities</p>	<p>Arts and Cultural Organizations, Museums, Educational Institutions, Non-Profit Organizations, Property Owners, Developers, Business Owners, and Investors State and Federal Agencies.</p>	<p>Convene key stakeholders to explore the viability of short-stay apartments targeted to tourists and visitors.</p> <p>Create a work plan or guidebook on installing interactive art installations in historic districts and places.</p> <p>Review and assess the downtown promotions and event calendars to potentially create new events that celebrate different aspects of Erie’s heritage.</p>	<p>Promote new art installations and enhance existing events or create new heritage festivals.</p>

## E. ENGAGING THE ERIE COMMUNITY

Strong public support is absolutely essential to realizing historic preservation’s transformative impacts and benefits on places and neighborhoods. Building that support takes concerted and sustained efforts at engaging with and increasing public awareness among property and business owners, institutional stakeholders, and other traditional partners <sup>¾</sup> museums, advocacy organizations, and preservation practitioners, for instance <sup>¾</sup> as well as non-traditional entities, such as housing, arts and culture, and social justice organizations. Over time, they can all become advocates for preservation.

### Key partners include:

- Planners and economic development and historic preservation professionals who can supply data, insight, training, and information on the positive impacts and benefits of historic preservation in Erie.
- Schools, museums, and educational institutions that can research preservation issues, provide expertise, and offer facilities for trainings, workshops, and other engagement activities.
- Arts entities, religious institutions, and neighborhood, social service and civic organizations that can convene and involve artists, community leaders, youth, and people of diverse backgrounds in preservation advocacy.
- Local media that can broadcast preservation success stories.
- The Historic Review Commission and City of Erie departments and agencies that can help organize engagement programs.
- State and Federal agencies that can participate as resource and expertise providers in public education and awareness efforts.

### THEME E. ENGAGING THE ERIE COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHENING THE ETHIC

**Goal: Undertake an inclusive public education and community engagement program that fosters greater awareness of preservation’s benefits**

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<b>Initiative #E1: Undertake educational programs on available preservation incentives and preservation methods.</b>	City Departments and Agencies, Historic Review Commission	Business Owners, City Departments and Agencies, Economic Development Entities	Create a Homeowner Toolkit on home repair and other topics.	Continue yearly workshops and aim for ever broader and more diverse public education.

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #E1: Undertake educational programs on available preservation incentives and preservation methods. (cont.)</b></p>	<p>City Departments and Agencies, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Business Owners, City Departments and Agencies, Economic Development Entities, Historic Preservation Professionals, Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO, State and Federal Agencies</p>	<p>Organize a yearly workshop on property maintenance and preservation.</p> <p>Explore paths and avenues to creating a local building trades program focused on preservation techniques.</p>	<p>Consider new and additional workshop topics and programs.</p> <p>Implement and maintain a building trades program.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #E2: Strengthen preservation advocacy networks through partnerships with traditional and non-traditional partners.</b></p>	<p>City Departments and Agencies, Historic Review Commission, Non-Profit Advocacy Organizations</p>	<p>Arts Entities, Libraries, Museums, and Educational Institutions, Economic Development Entities, Foundations and Funders, Neighborhood Organizations Religious Institutions Social Service and Civic Organizations</p>	<p>Identify potential new partners and solicit their participation in City or partner -initiated preservation initiatives.</p>	<p>Assess needs for increased partner participation and strengthening the preservation advocacy network through new collaborations with traditional and non-traditional preservation partners.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative E3: Implement programs that engage the next generation of Erieites.</b></p>	<p>City Departments and Agencies, Historic Review Commission, Libraries, Museums, and Educational Institutions, Non-Profit Advocacy Organizations</p>	<p>Economic Development Entities, Social Service, Civic, and Cultural Groups.</p>	<p>Consider and plan for an Erie Youth Heritage Summit in partnership with local schools, Preservation Erie, and the Hagen History Center.</p> <p>Convene a working group with preservation partners on adding hands-on learning experiences and school curriculum updates.</p> <p>Create a student representative position for the HRC.</p>	<p>Continue support and management of the Erie Youth Heritage Summit.</p> <p>Coordinate work plans among preservation partners on funding internships, adding new learning opportunities, and the creation of new initiatives that involve youth in local preservation.</p>

## F. MANAGING THE PROGRAM

A well-informed public is critical to generating stakeholder support and participation in local preservation endeavors and actions. A well-managed and directed historic preservation commission is also key to engendering confidence and predictability in the government-led efforts to maintain and preserve buildings and places. For the City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission, sound administration, adequate reflection, program refinements, and forward-thinking planning can help build trust and long-lasting participation in Erie’s preservation program.

### Key actors and partners in managing the local program include:

- The Historic Review Commission and City of Erie elected officials, administrators, and planners in setting policies, pursuing related preservation initiatives, and assessing, evaluating, and adjusting the direction of the municipal preservation program.
- Preservation professionals and advocates who assist in creating new tools that address specific preservation issues and program management needs.
- Non-profit organizations that advocate for positive change, new policies, and programs that deepen commitment to preservation and advance the cause.
- Traditional and traditional preservation partners that offer ideas on collaborations and partnership opportunities.
- Property owners and businesses that offer feedback on balancing public and private interests in preservation.

<b>THEME F. MANAGING THE PROGRAM</b>				
<b>Goal: Foster an Erie Preservation program with effective programs, policies, and systems.</b>				
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Primary Action Agent</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>2029 Target Benchmark</b>	<b>2034 Target Benchmark</b>
<b>Strategy #F1: Prepare and adopt a citywide set of historic preservation design guidelines.</b>	City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission	Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners	Identify funding sources to underwrite citywide design guidelines manual development.	Review and update the design guidelines manual, as necessary.

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Strategy #F1: Prepare and adopt a citywide set of historic preservation design guidelines.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Non-Profit Organizations, Pennsylvania SHPO, Property Owners</p>	<p>Write RFP and secure professional design and architectural service for design guidelines preparation.</p> <p>Upload the design guidelines to the City of Erie website for easy accessibility.</p> <p>Seek training from the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office on conducting effective design reviews.</p> <p>Conduct public workshops on planning preservation projects and using the design manual.</p>	<p>Continue public workshops and engagement efforts.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #F2: Design and create a robust municipal webpage for historic preservation.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission</p>		<p>Secure time commitments and resources to create and manage the HRC webpage.</p> <p>Manage and build website content.</p>	<p>Regularly update and expand the webpage contents over time as the HRC completes new surveys, designates new landmarks and districts, and when new publications become available.</p>

Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #F3: Review and update the Erie Historic Preservation Ordinance on an ongoing basis.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Non-Profit Organizations Pennsylvania SHPO Property Owners</p>	<p>Conduct a five-year review of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and engage with key preservation partners on potential changes and updates</p> <p>Update website content and other information materials as needed to incorporate narratives on recent code changes.</p>	<p>Conduct a five-year review of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and engage with key preservation partners.</p> <p>Update website content and other information materials as needed to incorporate narratives on recent code changes.</p>
<p><b>Initiative #F4: Organize and participate in ongoing training opportunities for the Historic Review Commission and municipal staff.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Preservation Professionals, Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Prepare and distribute orientation materials for new HRC members.</p> <p>Conduct an annual orientation and training session for the HRC.</p> <p>Incorporate a short training modules for every regular HRC meetings.</p> <p>Secure a yearly budget for HRC training opportunities.</p>	<p>Continue ongoing and regular HRC training and orientation activities.</p> <p>Maintain a regular budget line item for HRC training opportunities.</p>



Initiatives	Primary Action Agent	Partners	2029 Target Benchmark	2034 Target Benchmark
<p><b>Initiative #F5: Undertake an annual program review.</b></p>	<p>City Agencies and Departments, Historic Review Commission</p>	<p>Preservation Partners, Pennsylvania SHPO</p>	<p>Schedule an annual HRC study session to review Preservation Plan implementation progress and other program administration concerns.</p> <p>Conduct a yearly staff and partner organization discussion meeting on preservation issues.</p> <p>Create and use a framework for measuring the economic impact of historic preservation in Erie.</p> <p>Produce and distribute a yearly report on preservation milestones.</p>	<p>Continue annual HRC study sessions to review Preservation Plan implementation and partner organization progress on preservation issues.</p> <p>Produce and distribute a yearly report on preservation milestones and the economic impacts of preservation in Erie.</p>

## FUNDING NEEDS AND SOURCES

A successful and well-executed and administered municipal-led historic preservation must have available financial resources to accomplish many of its stated goals and aspirations. The City of Erie and its Historic Review Commission will lead many of the initiatives described in this Preservation Plan <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> therefore, it will need adequate staffing as well as other funds to carry out its roles and responsibilities in Preservation Plan implementation and in everyday program administration. Other City of Erie agencies and departments may need resources for other preservation activities that focus on downtown and neighborhood revitalization, adaptive use efforts, and other preservation-based economic development initiatives. Beyond municipal funding, there are federal and State of Pennsylvania grant programs, and private sources of financing for underwriting a variety of local preservation activities.

### Federal Funding Sources

The National Park Service, the lead federal management and stewardship agency for the nation's historic and cultural resources, manages several grant programs in support of historic preservation efforts to both State Historic Preservation Offices and local governments. As described previously, the NPS provides such grant through the Historic Preservation Fund, created in 1977 as part of the preservation policy framework established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The U.S. Congress authorized \$150 million annually to the Fund through 2023. Although a new funding appropriation and reauthorization of the Fund is pending in Congress, appropriation levels are likely to remain steady or potentially increase in the coming years.

#### **Key NPS grant programs supported through the Historic Preservation Fund include:**

- African American Civil Rights Grants that help interpret and preserve the sites and places of the African American struggle to gain equal rights in communities across the United States.
- History of Equal Rights Grants help to preserve buildings and sites related to the struggle of all people to achieve equal rights in America.
- Save America's Treasures Grants provides funding for bricks and mortar or conservation work on nationally significant historic buildings, sites, and artifacts.
- Underrepresented Communities Grants offer funding to support new listings in the National Register of Historic Places associated with underrepresented communities. The National Park Service manages other pass-through preservation funding programs to the Pennsylvania SHPO, including Disaster Recovery and Certified Local Government grants. The Pennsylvania SHPO in turn makes these grant programs available to local communities on a competitive basis. Other federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development administer grant programs that advance both local community development and historic preservation aims.

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program, administered by the NPS, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and the Pennsylvania SHPO, is a key federal-level incentive used by private property owners, developers, and investors in adaptive use and historic building rehabilitation projects. Developers can use other Low Income Housing and New Markets Tax Credit Programs with the Historic Preservation Tax Credits to make adaptive use projects feasible. Chapter 4 of this Historic Preservation Plan provides additional information on these programs.

## State Funding Sources

In addition to the CLG grant program, the Pennsylvania SHPO offers the Keystone Historic Preservation Construction and Planning Grant Programs aimed at underwriting planning, construction, and rehabilitation activities for National Register-listed or eligible properties sponsored by local governments or non-profit organizations. Beyond these programs, the SHPO and the Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development administer the State Historic Preservation and the Neighborhood Assistance Program Enterprise Zone Tax Credit Programs, both designed to spur private investment in buildings and places. Chapter 4 of this Historic Preservation Plan provides additional information on these programs.

## Local Funding Programs

Chapter 4 describes several City of Erie, Erie County, and other local agency-sponsored funding and incentive programs that can facilitate building rehabilitation and downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Going forward, the City, the Historic Review Commission, and preservation partners will need to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of these programs to adjust their aims and objectives accordingly. Most importantly, besides these funding programs, to generate and sustain momentum for local preservation, the City of Erie will need to maintain adequate staffing levels <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> including a full-time preservation planner <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> to assist the Commission as well as other relevant City departments in their preservation-related work. When budgeting permits and workload demand require additional staff, the City of Erie could benefit with additional planners and other personnel with experience and expertise in preservation-based community and economic development.

## Private Sector Funding

Local foundations and non-profit organizations can be important allies and funding partners in initiatives presented in this Historic Preservation Plan. One key to gaining the participation of such entities is to demonstrate that historic preservation provides pathways to addressing other important community concerns related to quality housing and neighborhoods, equity and social justice, small business development, and economic vitality and cultural engagement and enrichment. To gain new partners and funding, the City and the Historic Review Commission will need to communicate the power and potential that historic preservation has in enhancing community quality of life and in transforming buildings and places that comprise Erie's heritage.



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