

STAFF MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 10, 2011

TO: Planning and Economic Development Committee

VIA: Cathy Ball, Executive Director of Planning and Multimodal Transportation.

FROM: Stacy Merten, Director of Historic Resources

SUBJECT: Historic Preservation Master Plan

The Historic Resources Commission (HRC) of Asheville and Buncombe County has embarked on a planning process to develop a Historic Preservation Master Plan for the Asheville Buncombe region. Although the HRC currently has a successful preservation program that has been in place since 1979, the commission is interested in furthering historic preservation efforts as supported through the city's adopted comprehensive and downtown master plans, and ensuring that historic preservation remains integral to the strategic planning vision of Asheville and Buncombe County.

Funding for the plan was obtained via a Certified Local Government pass through grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. Matching funds were obtained through private donations and proceeds from the reprint of the published architectural survey *Cabins and Castles*. The HRC has hired Heritage Strategies, LLC to prepare the plan and has formed an Advisory Committee to guide the planning process. The process got off to a great start at the well attended kick-off event at the Basilica of St. Lawrence in November, 2013. Since then the Advisory Committee has continued to work with Heritage Strategies, gathering community input through a series of public meetings, focus groups and individual interviews which are now being synthesized into a draft plan for further community review. The final draft of the master plan will be sent to the Advisory Committee at the end of June for review at their meeting on July 8th. The HRC will review and comment on the plan at their meeting of July 9th and the Planning and Zoning Commission will review the plan at their meeting on August 6, 2014. The grant guidelines call for the final draft of the plan to be completed by August 22, 2014.

The Historic Preservation Master Plan will outline a vision, and propose strategies, actions and priorities describing how Asheville and Buncombe County's distinctive character and historic assets can play a role in the planning and urban design process. It will highlight issues the community is facing regarding the viability of historic buildings and landscapes and seek to embed a preservation ethic within the wide range of community interests and activities as outlined in the comprehensive and downtown master plans. The Historic Preservation Master Plan will specifically seek to identify strategies for enhancing historic commercial areas and neighborhoods using heritage, the arts, cultural resources and community character to strengthen the local economy and enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike.