

What is a Downtown Historic Preservation Plan?

A Downtown Historic Preservation Plan is a policy document, a strategic plan that identifies downtown historic properties and sites, establishes policies, and proposes action items to preserve, enhance and market historic properties downtown.



3002 Wetmore Avenue

Why Adopt a Downtown Historic Preservation Plan?

Historic preservation has emerged as having a positive economic impact on the community. This impact is measurable and has been demonstrated in cities like Everett around the world. People are drawn to a city's unique character created by a backdrop of historic buildings, sites and streetscapes. Everett has a downtown rich with history and the sense of place created by streets and buildings built up to a hundred years ago or more. The area is striking in the breadth of the history it contains.



1507 Wall Street

Historic downtown properties tell a remarkable story that is unique to Everett. This sense of place is a powerful marketing tool.

And there are other benefits to historic preservation:

Downtown Revitalization:

A restored historic commercial district serves as a centerpiece of community life, a place to shop, invest, recreate, and live.

Tourism:

Tourism is big business. Heritage tourists spent an estimated 8.7 million visitor days in Washington state in 2004, spending about \$630 million statewide. Heritage tourists take longer trips, spend more money, and stay longer than other visitors.

Environmental Sustainability:

Preserving historic buildings saves energy and resources and is now recognized as one of the most important proactive methodologies available for reducing carbon emissions. It has been said that the most environmentally green building is one that is already built.

Increased Property Values:

Studies show that property values in local historic districts appreciate at greater rates than the local market, especially in districts with local regulatory controls.

Job Creation:

A typical historic building rehabilitation spends more on local labor costs than new construction. Local architects, suppliers and real estate brokers benefit, among others. More dollars stay local and are put into the pockets of working men and women.

Tax Advantages:

Tax benefit programs for properties which have been restored include Special Valuation, a property tax reduction program, and federal Tax Credits. To qualify, the properties must be listed on the Everett Register or National Register, respectively.

Suggested Action Items for Plan



1915 Hewitt Avenue

The following section suggests a broad range of example **action items** that could be incorporated into a Downtown Historic Preservation Plan. Action items target strategies to preserve, enhance and market the historic character of downtown.

We need creative input from individuals and groups such as you to identify action items for Everett’s plan.

Historic Property Identification and Documentation

The city has two existing historic property inventories for downtown, the Hewitt Avenue Corridor (1989) and Central Business District (1993) inventories. These inventories identify and compile information on buildings built before 1941. In addition, basic information has been added on buildings built from 1941 to 1965 as part of this project.

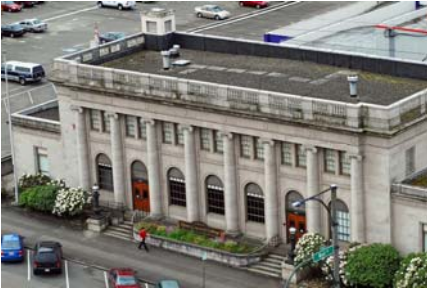
The buildings have been rated for their historic significance according to a set of criteria. This process helps identify buildings that may qualify for historic registers and concentrations of historic buildings that may qualify as historic districts.

To identify and document existing historic buildings and sites, action items could include:

- Applying for grants to complete research on 1941-1965 properties
- Developing an electronic mailing list of historic property owners and businesses and sending updates on preservation issues/events



1801 Hewitt Avenue



3006 Colby Avenue

Historic Property Preservation and Enhancement

Preservation is sustaining the existing form, integrity and materials of a historic property. Downtown preservation benefits the whole city. Designation and protection of historic properties is mostly placed on property owners, so collaboration between the public and private sectors is key to the implementation of effective preservation strategies.

To preserve and enhance historic properties, action items could include:

- Ongoing education and outreach to downtown stakeholders on the value to themselves and the community of preservation
- Reviewing codes and regulations to ensure that design guidelines protect and preserve unique character of downtown buildings without placing undue hardship on property owners
- Proposing properties and districts for listing on the Everett and National Registers of Historic Places to help preserve downtown character and attract tourists
- Identifying current preservation incentives such as tax abatement and low-interest loan programs and seeking new incentives
- Finding adaptive reuses for vacant or distressed buildings
- Enhancing and interpreting historic buildings with signage and plaques, public art, walking tours and advertising

Marketing

The City has identified historic preservation as a key element in downtown revitalization. Appropriately restored and interpreted buildings set the stage for specialty shops, events, restaurants, recreation, and markets, a hub of activity, a destination for shopping, eating and socializing for residents and visitors alike. Preservation helps create economic vitality for downtown businesses.



1508 Hewitt Avenue

To enhance marketing of downtown, action items could include:

- Adopting a name for the downtown core or a historic district to solidify identity, such as Pioneer Square in Seattle or the Pearl District in Portland
- Working with appropriate partners to develop a strong visitor-oriented internet presence for downtown
- Incorporating local history information into appropriate visitor activity guides and event publicity
- Integrating historic preservation into a broader downtown revitalization initiative which includes organization, promotion and economic development elements. Partners would include business/property owners, residents, bankers, public officials and the Downtown Everett Association
- Developing strategies to help find tenants for historic buildings