

ITEM #: 20
DATE: 02-24-26
DEPT: P&H

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION APPROVING HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND 2026 WORK PLAN

BACKGROUND:

Under the Certified Local Government (CLG) Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), local governments and their Historic Preservation Commissions (HPCs) are responsible for submitting an annual report documenting the City's and Commission's preservation work during the previous calendar year (Attachment A). The report documents that the City has met the requirements of the CLG program and is in good standing. The report also includes a proposed Work Plan for 2026 (Attachment B).

SHPO requires that an HPC representative provide details of the HPC's 2025 accomplishments and the Work Plan for 2026 to the City Council, followed by the Mayor acknowledging completion of this requirement. The Ames Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) met on December 8, 2025 and January 12, 2026, to develop and approve a recommended 2026 Work Plan based upon the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Goals and Objectives (updated in 2021). The HPC also documented its accomplishments for 2025.

Attached is the portion of the CLG Report that addresses the accomplishments, successes, and challenges of the previous calendar year (2025).

With City Council's approval of the CLG report, the 2026 Work Plan will also be approved. It does not include any specific requests for funding beyond the annual \$2,000 appropriation for awards, outreach, and education.

The 2026 Work Plan focuses on the following items:

1. Secure a speaker to address tax credit opportunities for historic properties in Ames.
2. Look for ways to engage the community to inform property owners about how the historic review process works.
3. Collaborate again with the Ames History Museum to host a second "Glimpse Inside" event, a tour of historic properties and architecture, in 2026.
4. Facilitate the dissemination of historic preservation information.
5. Consider changes to historic material requirements for substitute materials and for replacement of non-compliant materials

The education items are work tasks for the Commission to undertake with staff administrative support as needed. The HPC likely will utilize subcommittees to address some of the tasks in the Work Plan. Many of the items on the Work Plan are consistent with prior initiatives. HPC had a concern about disclosure of historic requirements in relation to Old Town and added a specific measures to investigate what can be done in coordination with the Neighborhood Association and Realtors.

Item #5 is potentially a significant initiative based upon the discussion by the Commission of their interest to create more flexibility in relation to applying design criteria and guidelines focused on historic materials. Historic materials requirement is a foundational requirement of the structure of Chapter 31 that applies to all contributing resources and types of alterations, e.g., siding, windows, doors, etc., unless a stated exception as a substitute material is allowed. In general the Commission has discussed revising the overall requirements of Chapter 31 in the past, but at this time the discussion focused on the the application of specific design standards related to historic materials, with the most common examples being window materials and siding materials. **Staff believes that due to the complex nature of this issue and the likely significant neighborhood interest in the issue, this type of project would require prioritization by City Council in the Planning Division Work Plan to define the Council's interest in this issue, staff resources, and the process that it would employ for stakeholder involvement.**

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the 2025 accomplishments of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Work Plan for 2026, as described in the 2025 Certified Local Government Report and direct the Mayor to acknowledge presentation of the report and authorize the report to be submitted to the State.

Note that subsequent Planning Division Work Plan prioritization by City Council would apply to significant Chapter 31 updates.

2. Direct staff to modify the Work Plan.
3. Refer the Work Plan and Report back to the HPC for additional information.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The HPC has documented its accomplishments for 2025 and has developed a 2026 Work Plan that represents its priorities for the current calendar year. The Work Plan focuses on resources utilized by the HPC. Most of the work can be accomplished within current budgets and support levels, with the exception of any expectation for significant neighborhood engagement regarding significant changes to Chapter 31.

Approval of the Work Plan with the understanding that Chapter 31 updates regarding Item 5 above would require more discussion with the Council and prioritization would be acceptable to comply with CLG requirements. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Attachment A - 2025 CLG Annual Report Excerpts.pdf](#)

[Attachment B - Work Plan - 2026.pdf](#)