

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

Franklin, Tennessee



**Prepared For**  
The City of Franklin

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# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
City of Franklin: A Rich and Deep History.....	3
Franklin’s Historic Preservation Context.....	7
Issues Affecting Historic Preservation.....	17
Historic Preservation Goals.....	23
Strategies for Historic Preservation.....	25
Action Agenda.....	42
Conclusion.....	44
Acknowledgments.....	45

# Introduction

Franklin’s history and historic resources are fundamental components of the community’s character. Historic resources, including historic buildings, archaeological sites, and historic landscapes, give a community a sense of identity, stability and orientation. Franklin’s reputation as a small town of great charm and character is founded on its physical setting. People choose to live here because of it. As the area grows and new development takes place, Franklin’s popularity is accompanied by a rising concern among residents that important aspects of community character may be at risk.



## Balancing Preservation and Development

Savvy communities have realized that the question is not preservation vs. development. Rather, the issue is achieving a balance: retaining those elements deemed by the community as important to identity and character, while managing the pace, scale and impact of new development in ways that are sensitive to context. Achieving balance is difficult to accomplish without conscious planning and public policies that support preservation goals. Having a plan is essential. The purpose of a preservation plan is to clearly articulate the community's preservation goals and to develop a set of strategies that will help the community to achieve those goals.

## Why does Franklin need a Preservation Plan?

Franklin and Williamson County residents voice strong concern for maintaining the community's heritage. During the last decade especially, a healthy economy and growing population has led to significant growth and suburban development. The rapid pace of change is heightening the risk of losing important historic buildings and landscapes. Respondents to the City's annual opinion survey have strongly (better than 90%) indicated preservation of historic character as a top concern. And, in the recent Franklin Tomorrow public forums, 'preservation of our small town character' was among the top priorities.

In response, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen called for a plan for preservation. Timing is appropriate, for within the year, the City of Franklin will be engaged in a major update of its long-range plan and land use policies. The preservation plan is envisioned as informing the long range plan; the strategies of this plan enable historic resource preservation efforts to be undertaken in a more

coordinated fashion. Having a cogent preservation policy and plan will help the City balance decisions to accommodate both preservation and development.

## Planning Process

To assist with the plan's development, the City retained Mary Means & Associates, a community planning and heritage development firm from Alexandria, Virginia. During a six-month period, the consultants worked with an ad-hoc committee of residents appointed by the Mayor to develop this plan. Bob Martin, City Planning Director, and Jay Johnson, City Administrator, were active participants. A public workshop held mid-way through the planning process provided valuable community insight into the draft goals and strategies, and helped to shape the plan recommendations.

## Plan Timeline



# City of Franklin: A Rich and Deep History

For a community relatively small in size, Franklin has a remarkable history of local, state, and national significance. Franklin is located in Williamson County in Middle Tennessee approximately fifteen miles south of Nashville. The Town of Franklin was established by Act of the Tennessee legislature on October 26, 1799 and later incorporated in 1815. Abram Maury laid out Franklin, the County seat of Williamson County, using a grid system around a public square. Franklin was named after American Patriot Benjamin Franklin, a close friend of Dr. Hugh Williamson, a member of the Continental Congress for whom Williamson County was named.

Many of the historic homes in Franklin and the surrounding countryside were built in the decades preceding the Civil War, during a time of agricultural prosperity. The town's first subdivision, Hincheyville, was named after Hinchey Petway, a wealthy merchant living in Alabama who purchased the land for the purpose of forming a subdivision and reselling it as town lots in 1819. Although the ninety-acre subdivision, located between 5th and 11th Streets and Main and Fair Streets has existed since 1819, most construction took place in the latter half of the 19th century. Today there remains a wealth of gingerbread porches, gabled roofs and a mixture of styles all demonstrating the eclecticism of the neighborhood.

The Town of Franklin is known for a number of firsts in Tennessee history. Williamson County's first courthouse was a log building built in 1800 in the center of Franklin, replaced nine years later by a

brick structure. The third courthouse, completed in 1858, is one of seven remaining antebellum courthouses in Tennessee. It was used as the Federal headquarters during the Civil War and as a hospital after the Battle of Franklin. In 1823 construction began on the first Masonic Lodge in Tennessee. The Gothic style temple was built using funds from the first legal lottery in Tennessee history. The Lodge was the first three-story building in the State and the tallest building west of the Allegheny Mountains. In 1827, Bishop James H. Otey organized the St. Paul's Episcopal Church in the Lodge. St. Paul's the first Protestant Episcopal Church in Tennessee, moved to its own building on Main Street in 1831, the oldest Episcopal church in continual use west of the Appalachians.

The Civil War put Franklin in the middle of conflict. After the fall of Nashville in early 1862, Franklin became a Federal military post. During the late summer of 1864, the Confederate forces mounted a great drive. Under the command of General John Bell Hood, the Army of Tennessee moved up through Georgia and Alabama, crossed the Tennessee River, and then entered Tennessee. The November 30, 1864 Battle of Franklin, located on the banks of the Harpeth River, has been called both "the Gettysburg of the West" and "the bloodiest hours of the American Civil War."

Franklin was one of the few night battles in the Civil War. It also took place on one of the smallest battlefields, a mere 2 miles long and 1½ miles wide. The main battle lasted about five hours, during which Federal forces lost 2,500 casualties and the Confederates lost

another 7,000 as casualties. The nearby 1830 Carter House was used as Federal Headquarters during the Battle. The Confederate Army used Carnton Plantation as a field hospital during and after the Battle. The Courthouse, the First Presbyterian Church, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church all served as hospitals.

Reminders of the Battle of Franklin and the Civil War remain throughout the City. The ladies of Chapter 14 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) raised more than \$2,700 to purchase and erect a forty-three foot tall monument in the center of the town's public square. From atop a tall column, the statue of a Confederate infantryman gazes wearily to the South. The monument was unveiled on November 30, 1899. Ten thousand people traveled to Franklin for the ceremony.

As the twentieth century began, Franklin remained a small country town that increasingly seemed to be less isolated from the world. Franklin's rural location was served by the railroad, and gradually



as the century turned, other hallmarks of modernity arrived – motorcars, telephones and electricity. In 1901 most of the dirt or loose macadam roads leading in and out of Franklin were officially known as turnpikes and were private toll roads. Overseers were appointed for county owned roads, the maintenance of the turnpikes was primarily a private concern, as were the amount of tolls charged. The 1920s saw a movement to eliminate the toll roads gathering momentum despite worries over tax burden. By 1924 the Williamson County government had begun the slow process of purchasing the various toll roads. Throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s, Franklin remained a farming community with an economy based primarily on agriculture with tobacco as the dominant cash crop. By the 1960s, highways from Nashville were starting to bring new development to the region. The construction of Interstate 65 in the 1960s accelerated the pace of change and development as farming became less attractive economically than housing and commercial development.

Similar to what was taking place in many older historic cities and towns around the country, the rapid change fostered by I- 65 sparked an active historic preservation movement in Franklin and Williamson County. A small group of citizens recognized the need for an organization to protect and preserve the area's architectural, geographic and cultural heritage. The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County was founded in 1967 to perform activities such as: survey historic resources, nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places, sponsor educational programs, and buy and sell historic buildings.



In 1960 four properties associated with the Battle of Franklin were designated National Historic Landmarks. In 1972 the Franklin Historic District, the original sixteen-block town plat, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance. Architectural surveys completed in 1976 and 1982 in Williamson County noted 37 rural properties in the City of Franklin. In 1982, the area known as Hincheyville was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1986 the first survey of architectural resources was completed for Franklin and resurveyed in 1999. As a result of the 1999 survey, the Franklin Historic District was expanded, and several other properties were listed on the National Register including the Adams Street Historic District.

Today visitors to Franklin enjoy an award-winning Great American Main Street town. The Franklin Main Street program began in 1978 as a project of The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County. The Foundation, concerned about economic decline and disinvestments in the downtown area, organized field trips to learn how other cities were dealing with downtown revitalization. Property owners completed twenty-eight building rehabilitation projects stimulated by 25% Federal Tax Credits. The Foundation assisted with renovation projects by advocating for money to replace broken sidewalks and curbs and by organizing volunteers to donate materials and labor. The downtown buildings were marketed to investors who renovated them to house restaurants, shops and professional offices.

The preservation community's efforts were recognized when Franklin became an official Tennessee Main Street Town in 1984. Today, the Victorian commercial district, with commemorative brick sidewalks and beautifully renovated historic buildings housing elegant shops is the heart of Franklin and Williamson County. A once solely agricultural community, Franklin has gradually evolved into an active suburb of Nashville. The area still retains strong vestiges of its agricultural roots – farm implement dealers, horse farms, and fields of corn and beans. Along with the concentrations of historic buildings and sites, these surrounding landscapes are also important elements in the historic character of Franklin.

## **Historical Timeline for the City of Franklin**

- 1799** Town of Franklin established
- 1799** Williamson County's first Courthouse is built in Franklin
- 1815** Town of Franklin is incorporated
- 1819** 1st subdivision (Hincheyville) is laid out southwest of town
- 1823** Construction of the first Masonic Lodge in Tennessee begins
- 1823** Carnton Plantation is built
- 1830** President Andrew Jackson travels to Franklin for the Treaty of Chickasaw negotiations
- 1830** Carter House is built
- 1859** Completion of the Tennessee and Alabama Railroad
- 1862** Franklin becomes a military post after the fall of Nashville
- 1864** Battle of Franklin
- 1899** Confederate statue unveiled in the middle of the public square
- 1960** Four properties associated with the Battle of Franklin are designated National Historic Landmarks
- 1967** Heritage Foundation of Franklin & Williamson County founded
- 1972** Original 16-block town plat is listed on National Register of Historic Places
- 1976** First inventory of historic properties in Williamson County is conducted
- 1978** Carnton Plantation opened to the public
- 1982** Hincheyville District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 1982** A survey of 726 historic properties in Williamson County included rural sections of Franklin
- 1984** Franklin becomes a National Main Street Town
- 1986** Historic Preservation Ordinance creating Historic Zoning Commission enacted
- 1986** Multi-resources nomination submitted to the National Register of Historic Places
- 1988** Franklin Historic District expanded
- 1988** Lewisburg Avenue District listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 1999** First thorough inventory of historic properties in Franklin updated
- 2000** Franklin Historic District expanded
- 2000** Adams Street District listed on National Register of Historic Places
- 2001** City of Franklin Historic Preservation Plan completed



# Franklin’s Historic Preservation Context

Franklin has a long history of preserving its historic resources. For decades, Franklin’s citizens have taken steps to protect and celebrate their historic resources, using tools that range from recognition to regulation. The framework for preservation includes policies and programs at the federal, state and local levels. Following is a brief overview of the policies and programs currently affecting historic resource preservation in Franklin.

## Federal Policies & Programs

The federal government, chiefly through the National Park Service, provides several policy and program guidelines that seek to encourage historic preservation, principally through incentives rather than regulation. Key federal programs that Franklin has participated in are:

- National Register of Historic Places
- Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program
- Certified Local Government Program

## National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places, authorized under Section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act, is the Nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archaeological resources. The National Park Service, under the Secretary of the Interior, is charged with maintaining and expanding the list of properties including, sites, buildings,

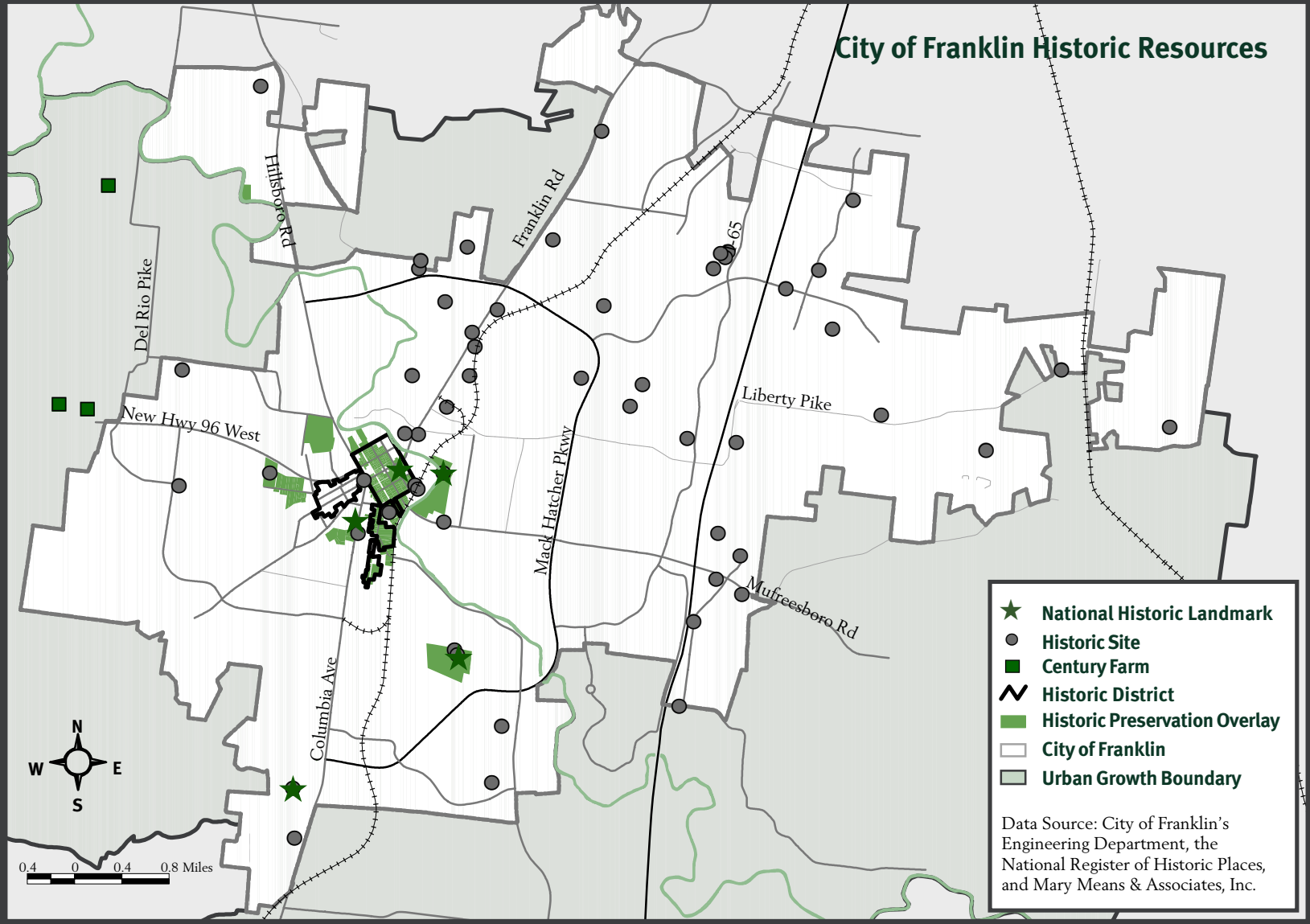
structures, objects, and districts that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture.

National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the Nation, the State, or the community.
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects.
- Eligibility for Federal tax benefits.
- Qualification for Federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

Listing on the National Register does not place federal restrictions on what the owner may do with the property, unless the owner receives a federal grant or tax benefits.

Franklin has actively pursued listing its historic resources on the National Register. Within the City limits there are four National Register Historic Districts, two National Historic Landmarks, and more than sixty individually listed National Register Properties. The greatest concentration of these properties is in and around the original 16-block plat for the City. Information about these properties was compiled by the Heritage Foundation in a 1995 book entitled, National Register Properties, Williamson County, Tennessee.



## **Preservation Tax Incentives**

Federal tax incentives are available through the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, also administered by the National Park Service. The tax credit program was created to encourage private investment in the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and to promote economic revitalization. Specifically, a property owner can receive a:

- 20% tax credit for the “certified rehabilitation” of “certified historic structures,” or
- 10% tax credit for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936.

The tax credit program reduces the amount of federal income tax owed by the property owner. A “certified historic structure” includes buildings that are designated as a National Historic Landmark, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, identified as a contributing building in a National Register Historic District, or located in a local historic district that is certified by the National Park Service. Furthermore, the tax credit is available for buildings that will be used for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but is not available for buildings used exclusively as the owner’s private residence. In order to receive the tax credit property owners must submit an application that is reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service to ensure that the rehabilitation work is done in accordance with the “Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.” The IRS generally requires that a minimum of \$5,000 be spent on rehabilitating a building in order to qualify for the tax credit. Approximately forty-five properties have been rehabilitated federal preservation tax

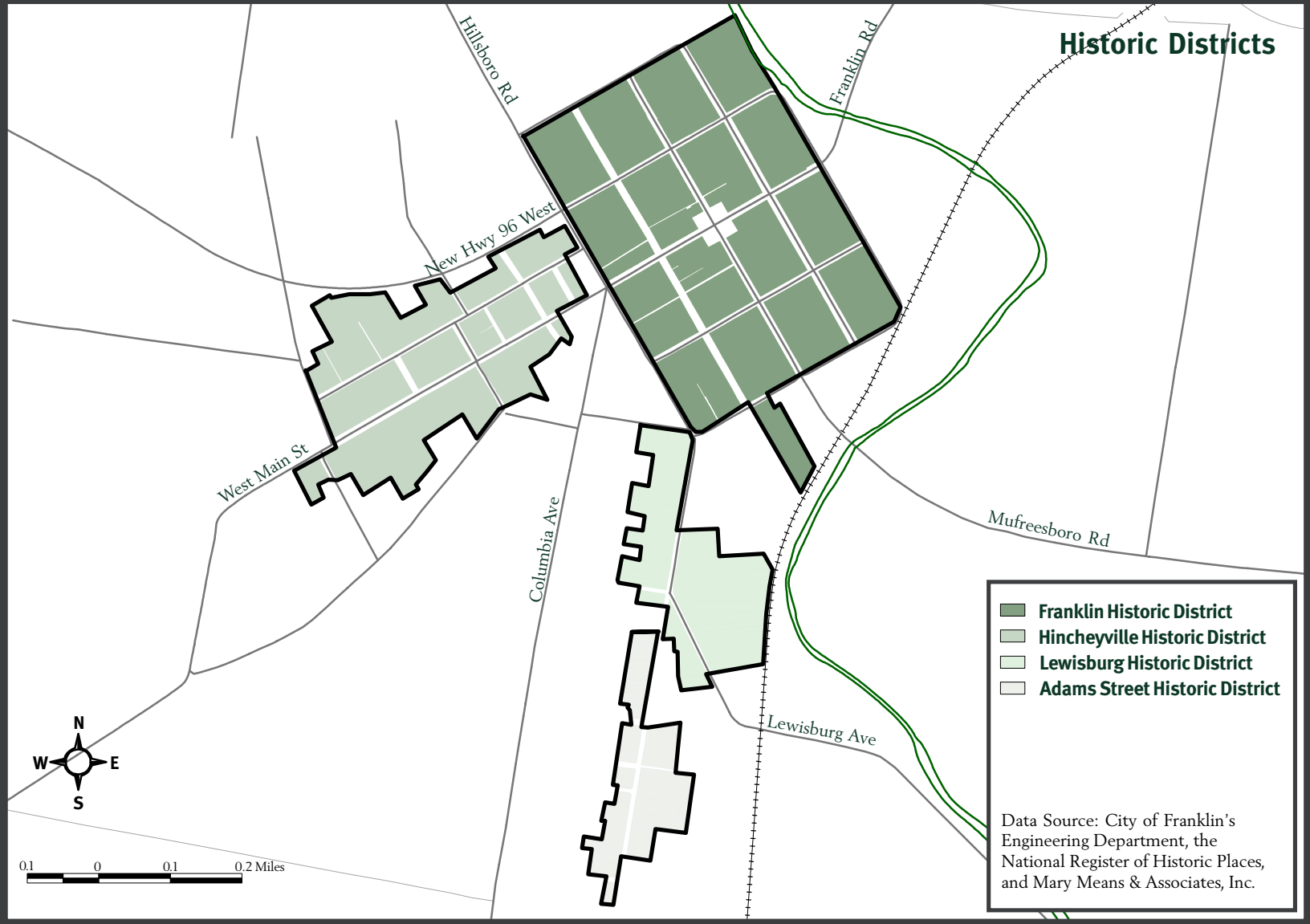
incentives, particularly to defray the costs of rehabilitating buildings along Main Street.

## **Certified Local Government Program**

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program integrates local governments with the national historic preservation program through grassroots preservation activities. The Program, jointly administered by the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) provides technical assistance and small matching grants to communities whose local governments are taking steps to preserve for future generations what is significant from their community’s past. Once CLG status is attained from the National Park Service, local governments are required to enforce State or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties, establish and maintain a qualified historic preservation commission, and maintain a system for survey and public participation. Projects eligible for funding and the criteria used to select them are developed annually by the SHPO. Funding decisions are made by the State not the National Park Service. Franklin has been a member of the CLG Program since 1990.

## **State Policies & Programs**

The Tennessee Historical Commission is the primary state agency in the areas of history and historic preservation. The mission of the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) is to “record, preserve, interpret, and publicize events, persons, sites, structures, and objects significant to the history of the State and to enhance the public’s knowledge and awareness of Tennessee history and the importance of preserving it.” The Commission also carries out activities and programs authorized under federal legislation, namely the National



Historic Preservation Act. These programs are under the direction of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), an official appointed by the Governor to administer the Act.

### **Tennessee Register of Historic Places**

In 1994, the State passed legislation requiring that properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places simultaneously be listed on a Tennessee Register of Historic Places. The Tennessee Register of Historic Places is a listing of historic sites, landmarks, districts and zones. Consent of the owner is required for listing, and the state register provides no protection for the historic property. All properties listed on the Tennessee Register of Historic Places are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Historical Markers**

One of the most highly visible programs of the THC is the Historical Markers Program. The program, which began in the 1950s has erected over 1400 markers commemorating and marking the locations of sites, persons, and events significant in Tennessee history. The THC publishes a Tennessee Markers Guide that is valuable in introducing travelers to Tennessee history. The Commission has published the 9th edition of the guide. In addition to the THC Historical Markers, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, and the Williamson County Historical Society all have their own marker programs. The Williamson County Historical Society produced a comprehensive guide to all County historical markers in 1999.

## **Local Policies & Programs**

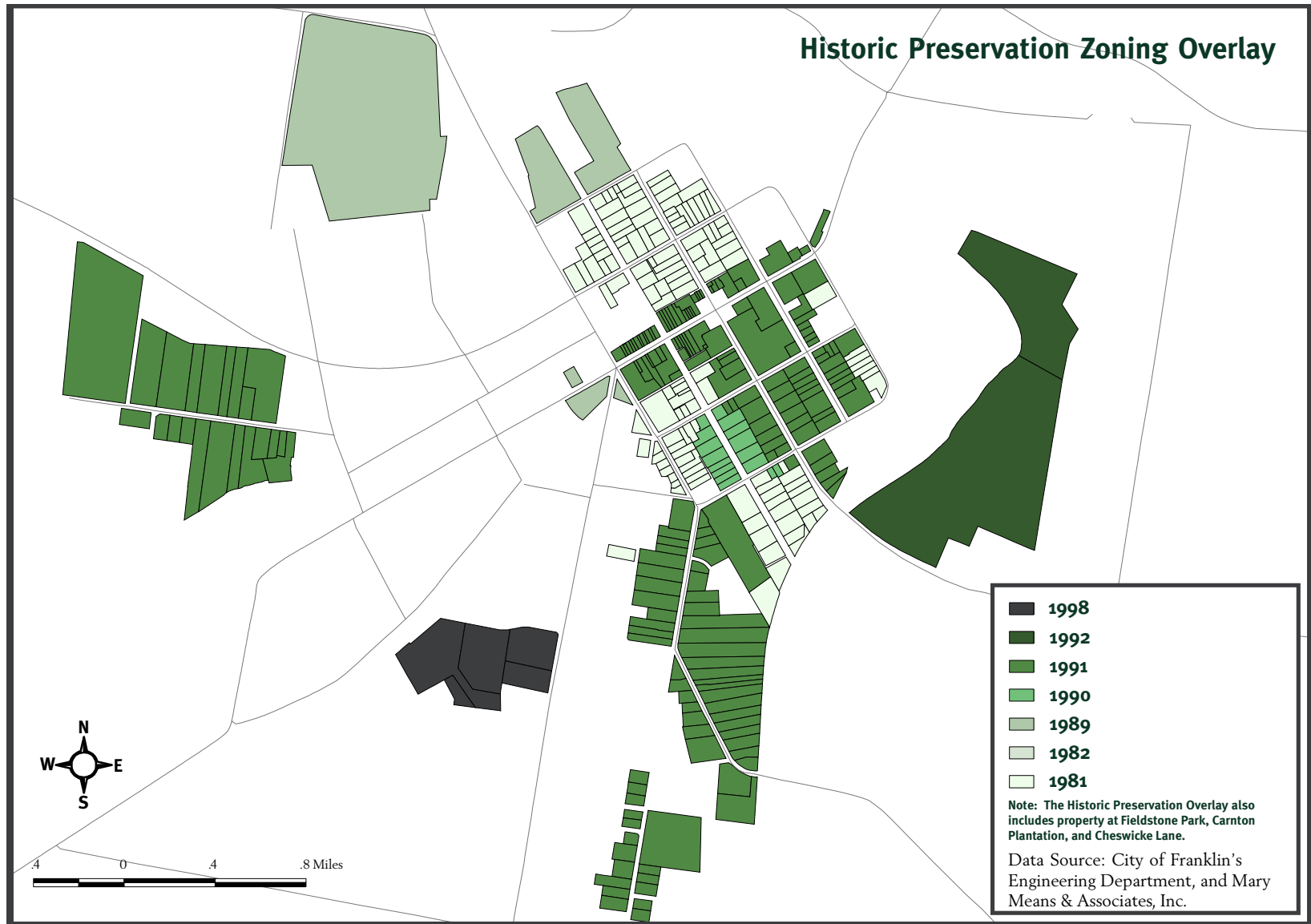
The City of Franklin and interested citizens have taken steps to assure that preservation remains a priority in Franklin. Local tools include historic district zoning, the Historic District Commission, the National Register of Historic Places, the Tennessee Register, and the Franklin and Williamson County register.

### **Zoning Ordinances**

#### **Historic Preservation Overlay Districts**

The City's zoning ordinance includes a historic preservation overlay district (Section 6.7.1). The purpose of the district is to preserve Franklin's historic resources by assuring that changes to the historic fabric are compatible, to enhance property values and stimulate the local economy, and to promote education and understanding among Franklin's citizens about the City's heritage. Historic zoning districts can only be designated at the request of property owners and by the approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

A Historic Zoning Commission comprised of nine residents appointed by the Mayor, including one member of the Planning Commission, is responsible for ensuring compliance with the historic preservation ordinance. The Director of the Codes Department and one of his staff assists the Commission in its duties. No permit can be issued by the Codes Department for construction, alteration, rehabilitation, moving, or demolition for a property within the Historic Preservation District until the project has been submitted to, and receives a written certificate of appropriateness from, the Historic Zoning Commission. The Historic Zoning Commission reviews only those proposed changes to the exterior appearance of



historic properties that are visible to the public. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the most common issues that come before the Commission involve signs, additions and accessory buildings.

The Commission routinely provides free architectural advice to property owners, and Codes Department staff often will refer property owners to the Heritage Foundation, which has members who are architects and willingly provide free design assistance. Residents who fail to comply with the findings of the Historic Zoning Commission must correct their work, and may be subject to fines. The Heritage Foundation, Historic Zoning Commission, and the City of Franklin are working to develop a brochure about the historic preservation overlay district for distribution to local property owners to clarify the process and extent of regulation within the overlay district.

### **Farmstead Preservation Ordinance**

The City’s zoning ordinance also provides design guidelines for shaping the character of new development located on, next to, or across the street from National Register sites (Section 4.10). The Planning Department and Planning Commission, as part of the standard site plan and subdivision review process, oversee compliance with the ordinance. Historic sites that the Tennessee Historical Commission deems eligible, but that have not been formally listed on the National Register, are also subject to the farmstead preservation ordinance. City planners rely upon the National Register site survey information that is collected and updated by the Heritage Foundation to provide relevant information. Appropriate remedies include landscape buffering, cluster development, and architecture that is compatible in style and scale. The City has contracted with the

Nashville architecture and planning firm, Looney Ricks Kiss, to provide design review assistance on an as-needed basis.

### **Archaeological Site Preservation Ordinance**

Archaeological sites within the City limits are protected under Section 20-301 of the Zoning Ordinance. The City adopted the archaeological statutes developed by the Tennessee Historical Commission and granted the Codes Director responsibility for maintaining records identifying the location of archaeological resources. The Codes Department is also responsible for ensuring that construction or excavation activities do not adversely impact archaeological sites, artifacts, burial objects, burial grounds or human remains.

## **City Planning**

### **Long Range Plan**

The city’s Long Range Plan serves as a policy framework for land use issues in the City of Franklin. Historic preservation is among the issues addressed in the plan. The plan recognizes the region’s historic character as an important factor in the quality of life for residents, identifying historic character as “perhaps the single most important factor that distinguishes the area from other competing markets.” Many of the plan’s recommendations recognize the important role played by private organizations such as the Heritage Foundation in educating residents about preservation issues and advocating on behalf of Franklin’s preservation interests. Policies articulated in the Long Range Plan emphasize the need to avoid unduly burdensome regulation on private property owners and developers. The Long Range Plan recommends that “ the City and private organizations concerned with the economic development of the area should

adopt a program for managing historic resources as important community-wide assets, recognizing that, like other assets, the historic resources can be enhanced and marketed or mismanaged and depleted.”

### **Design Standards**

Franklin is considering the adoption of design standards that would amend the City’s zoning ordinance to encourage development consistent with the City’s unique community character. Specifically, the design standards seek to:

- Encourage high quality development as a strategy for investing in Franklin’s future
- Emphasize Franklin’s unique community character
- Maintain and enhance the quality of life for Franklin’s citizens
- Shape the City’s appearance, aesthetic quality and spatial form
- Reinforce civic pride of its citizens through appropriate development
- Increase awareness of aesthetic, social, and economic values
- Protect and enhance property values
- Minimize negative impacts of development on the natural environment
- Provide property owners, developers, architects, builders, business owners and others with a clear and equitable set of parameters for developing land
- Encourage a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly environment
- Enhance the City’s sense of place and contribute to the sustainability and lasting value of the city.

If approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, the Planning Department and Planning Commission would be responsible for ensuring consistency with these standards.

### **Franklin Tomorrow Vision Plan**

Franklin Tomorrow is a community wide effort designed to allow interested individuals an opportunity to shape the future of Franklin. The visioning process includes a look at growth and development trends over the next twenty years, community values and priorities, and seeks a citizen-based consensus on Franklin’s future. The final vision plan is scheduled for public release in November 2001. A preliminary report has identified historic preservation and retaining the region’s unique “community character” as major concerns of the community.

### **Historical Register of Franklin & Williamson County**

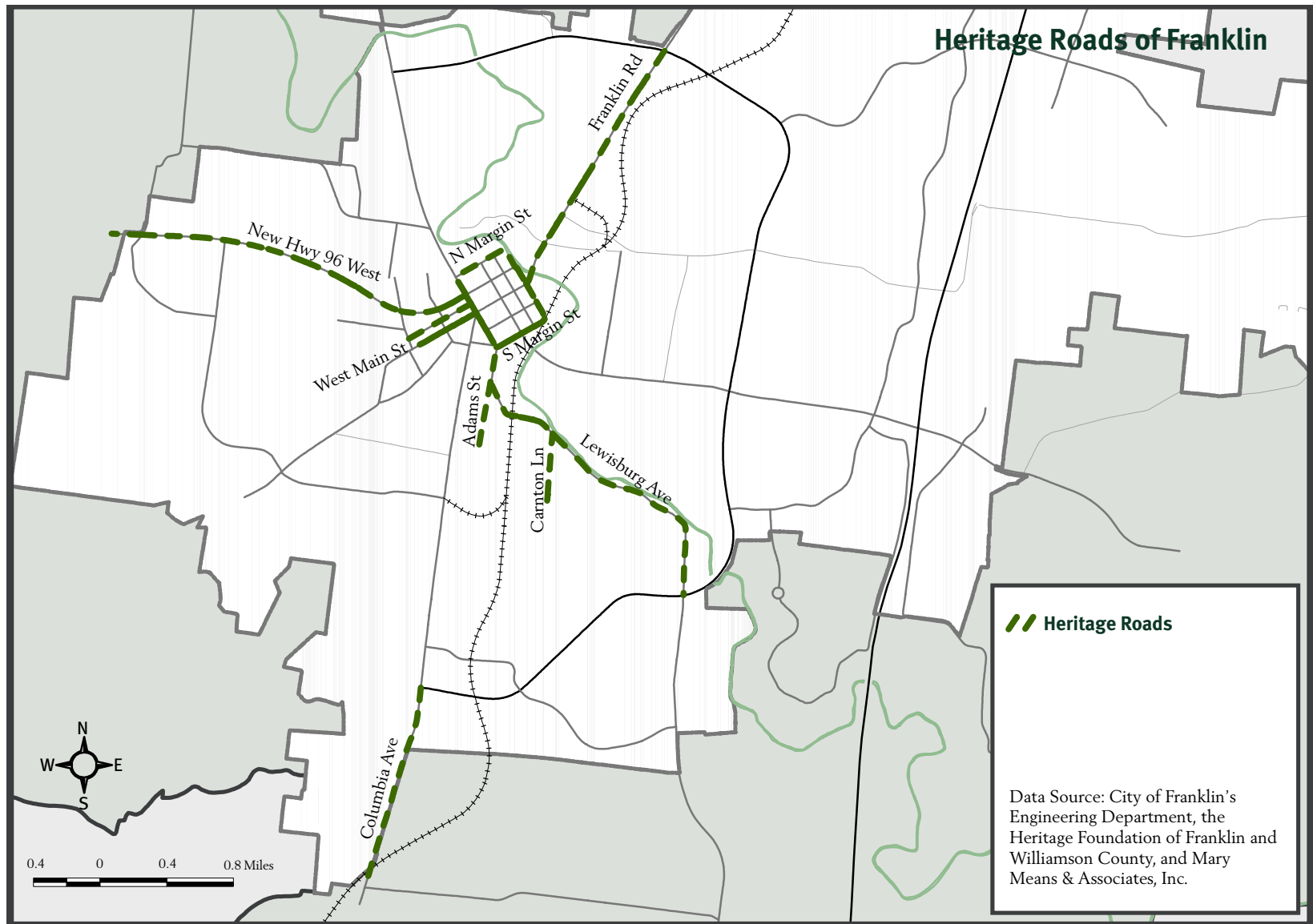
The Historical Register of Franklin and Williamson County provides another means of recognizing important historic community assets. The primary criteria for listing on the Historic Register of Franklin and Williamson County Structures are that the structures must have been built before 1940, have local historical or architectural significance, and have no major facade changes. The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County maintains this list.

### **Heritage Roads Identification Program**

The City of Franklin has adopted a list of roads that have been identified as the Heritage Roads of Franklin. These historic roads were identified by the Heritage Foundation according to the following criteria:

- The road must be located in an area where natural, agricultural, or historic features are predominant.
- The road must be narrow, intended for predominantly local use; or a historic gateway.





- The road must possess one of the following characteristics:
- Provide access to historic resources, follow historic alignments, or highlight historic landscapes.
- Outstanding natural features along its borders, such as vegetation, tree stands, or stream valleys.
- Provide outstanding views of farm fields and rural landscape or buildings.

There are no guidelines or standards in place to specifically protect these listed historic roads.

### **Main Street Program**

The Main Street Program is a comprehensive, strategic public/private approach to downtown revitalization that encompasses organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Franklin has been a Main Street town since 1984. In 1995, Franklin was honored as one of the best downtowns in the nation when it received one of the five “Great American Main Street” awards in the first year of the annual national competition. Through a combination of public and private funds, approximately \$3 million was invested along Franklin’s Main Street in the 1980s to improve facades and to add street trees, parking, appropriately scaled and styled furnishings, lighting, hanging planters, and banners. Upper story apartments were renovated, restaurants and shops opened, and pedestrian traffic increased significantly. Downtown retail businesses experienced a rebirth.

However, in recent years markets have changed and downtown retail has a lot more competition in the region. Changing retail demands and retail development along the I-65 corridor have led to a gradual shift of more tourist-oriented offerings away from

downtown. Markets for professional offices, partly drawn by the county courthouse, have increased pressure to convert first floor space from retail to office. While this provides building owners with rental income, office uses tend to dampen the lively pedestrian environment in which retail store windows are a major component. There is concern about the long-term economic viability of Main Street. Economic Research Associates (ERA) recently completed a retail study of downtown, commissioned by Downtown Franklin Association and The Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County. ERA concluded that there is significant regional demand and opportunities to attract new retailers to the downtown shopping district that would service local residents. Retaining economic viability is an important precursor to preservation. Restoration and adaptive reuse retain the practical relevancy that historic resources have in a community.

The Downtown Franklin Association (DFA) provides marketing and management services for Franklin’s Main Street program. Unlike many other Main Street communities across the country, Franklin’s Main Street does not currently receive funding support from the City. Franklin has benefited from participation in the Tennessee Main Street program, but state budget constraints eliminated the State Main Street program.

# Issues Affecting Historic Preservation

An important part of any planning process is to assess the existing resources and the larger trends about community capacity, land use patterns, demographics, and the economy in order to craft an appropriate response. There are several issues worth noting that influence preservation in Franklin:

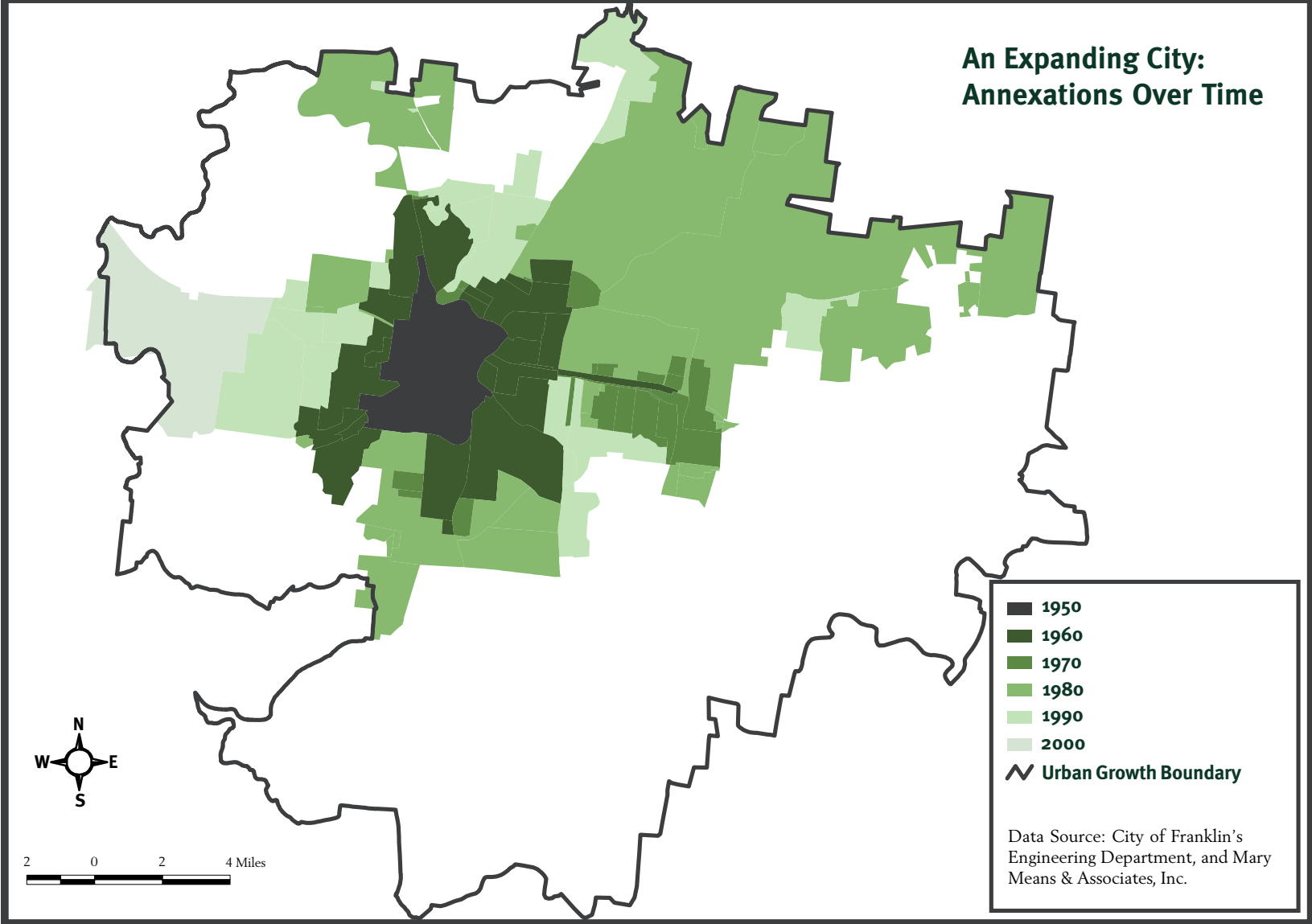
- Outstanding quality of historic resources
- A community preservation ethic and legacy
- Active preservation organizations
- A range of preservation tools in place
- Increasing growth pressure, historic resources at risk
- Determining sites for new public facilities
- Preservation responsibilities and public perceptions

## Outstanding Quality of Historic Resources

There is a wonderful array of historic resources in the City of Franklin, ranging from the charming 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings along Franklin’s historic Main Street, to the historic African-American Toussaint L’Overture Cemetery, to working farmsteads set amidst the rolling countryside, to the Civil War battlefields where important military and political events took place. Together, these tell an evocative story of Franklin’s past, present and future potential. The core of Franklin is comprised of mostly pre-World War II housing stock in an array of architectural styles including Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Bungalow styles. The scale of the buildings, modest lot sizes, sidewalks, and mature landscaping create a charming small town atmosphere.

Much like the pattern in other communities, Franklin’s preservation movement focused its initial efforts on the city’s oldest buildings and on its remarkably intact downtown. Not surprisingly, National Register recognition seems to have focused on the better-preserved, traditionally affluent neighborhoods. One can get a more complete picture of the City’s developed form, however, by examining a series of maps that depict the City’s boundaries at various points in time. The City had several significant bursts of geographical expansion with neighborhoods quickly filling in the landscape. Most of these late 19th century, early to mid-20th century neighborhoods are characterized by





orderly elements of comfortable street widths, sidewalks, street trees, and building size and lot setbacks characteristic of 'traditional town' design. Today, these pre-WWII neighborhoods comprise the older core of the city.

A number of these neighborhoods have interesting histories or possess distinctive character. An example is Hard Bargain, a traditionally African-American neighborhood whose continuity is visible in the mix of very early stone or frame houses and the occasional well-scaled contemporary house or even an occasional mobile home. Community institutions like churches and fraternal orders are anchors. An important house built by a former slave, Harvey McLemore, is being renovated and restored as a museum highlighting African-American heritage in Franklin.

### **A Community Preservation Ethic & Legacy**

Franklin has a widespread community preservation ethic. For more than fifteen years, historic preservation has been an underlying current among community activities. Most of the historic Main Street and downtown neighborhoods have been restored and are in active use. Recent community events surrounding the Franklin Tomorrow Community Vision Plan confirmed that residents continue to feel a tremendous source of pride in Franklin's distinct community character, which many specifically describe as 'historic downtown Franklin.' Moreover, there seems to be growing recognition that the rural landscapes and roads that link the countryside to the downtown are all part of what makes Franklin special.



### **Active Preservation Organizations**

Franklin's legacy of preservation is due in large part to the efforts of non-profit organizations that have played a critical role in preserving the heritage resources of Franklin. There are several preservation organizations in Franklin, an indication of the strong level of commitment by local residents to preserve their community's historic resources. Local preservation organizations include:

- **The Heritage Foundation of Franklin & Williamson County.** The oldest preservation organization in Franklin, the Heritage Foundation is committed to protecting and preserving the architectural, geographic, and cultural heritage of Franklin and Williamson County. In addition, the Foundation strives to promote the ongoing economic revitalization of historic downtown Franklin. The non-profit organization has a full-time

staff. Its preservation activities include public education, resource surveys and plans, easement acquisition, property acquisition, and advocacy.

- **African-American Heritage Society.** This non-profit volunteer organization works to preserve and celebrate Franklin's African-American heritage. The Society is currently working to restore the home of the former slave, Harvey McLemore, which will become a museum/education center.
- **Save the Franklin Battlefield.** A non-profit volunteer organization working to preserve portions of the Franklin Battlefield and other Civil War sites in Williamson County through public education and property acquisition. The purpose of Save The Franklin Battlefield, Inc is to focus the national attention of all concerned citizens on the need to save this Civil War Site. The organization's activities include a monthly newsletter, public education events, battlefield tours, and interpretive panels. Save the Franklin Battlefield also collaborates financially with other non-profit groups to buy battlefield parcels.
- **Downtown Franklin Association.** Founded in 1984, the Downtown Franklin Association is now part of the Heritage Foundation. Since its inception, it has worked to revitalize Franklin's historic downtown using the principles of the National Main Street Program.
- **Carnton Association, Inc.** This non-profit organization serves as steward of one of Franklin's most historic sites, Carnton Plantation. Located near the Franklin Battlefield, the Carnton

Plantation House served as an observation post, hospital and temporary morgue during the Civil War battle. Since 1978, the Association has worked to restore, maintain and interpret the plantation.

- **The Carter House.** Caught in the center of the Battle of Franklin, the Carter House served as the command post for the Union Army during the bloody battle. The homestead, which is comprised of the 1830 Classical Revival brick house and several outbuildings including slave quarters, has been restored and operates as a non-profit museum and interpretive center for the Battle of Franklin.
- **Williamson County Historical Society.** The County Historical Society is the principal steward of Franklin's historical records, and works with individuals and organizations to research and share information about local history. Among its many activities is its annual journal featuring aspects of history in the City of Franklin and Williamson County.

These organizations play a critical role as stewards, educators and advocates for historic preservation in Franklin.

## **A Range of Existing Preservation Tools in Place**

As noted earlier, there are number of policies and programs in place at the federal, state and local level that seek to preserve historic resources in Franklin. Relative to many other communities, Franklin has been proactive in pursuing local regulatory mechanisms to facilitate historic resource preservation. Recent efforts to adopt design standards should further these efforts.

Among the local preservation organizations, the Heritage Foundation has been especially active in educating residents about preservation issues in Franklin and Williamson County, ranging from local workshops to publications to school history programs. What appear to be less available are local incentive programs such as low-interest loans, grants, and tax incentives.

### **Increasing Growth Pressure, Historic Resources At Risk**

Projections for continued population growth and demand for housing and jobs will result in development pressure that may be at odds with preserving the sites and settings of Franklin’s historic resources. Over the next twenty years, the population is expected to almost double, increasing from 42,000 to 78,000. The City is likely to expand in size through annexation, taking in land that includes significant historic resources. Rapid growth increases the risk of changes that will erode the special qualities valued by residents and visitors.

Despite a legacy of preservation, many of the community’s historic resources face an uncertain future. A report for Franklin Tomorrow warns that Franklin’s historic properties may not survive periods of rapid growth similar to those Franklin is currently experiencing. Moreover, the report observes that, “as the area grows it will be increasingly difficult to physically distinguish the City of Franklin from surrounding jurisdictions.” For a community that takes enormous pride in its distinctive character and preserving its historic resources, this does not bode well. Moreover, according to the preservation report prepared by Thomason and Associates, it is the rural historic resources that are at greatest risk of degradation



or destruction. This is not surprising given that new development predominately occurs in the “green fields” beyond existing urban areas where there tend to be fewer development constraints.

Areas adjacent to I-65 have experienced the most recent losses of historic resources. There, several properties have been demolished or damaged beyond repair in order to make way for new development. An inventory completed in 1982 identified 37 properties of historic significance within what are now Franklin’s City limits. Of these, seventeen were demolished because they stood in the way of new development. Determining how and where growth should be accommodated appears to be an issue very much in the minds of local residents.

## **Determining Sites for New Public Facilities**

Schools, libraries, fire stations, and civic buildings all represent significant investment of public funds. Traditionally, civic buildings play symbolic roles as well, often sited in prominent locations or intentionally used for place making. Increasingly, communities are viewing historic buildings as assets for public uses, and are considering how public facilities can be catalysts for revitalization and/or neighborhood stabilization.

A preservation plan is intended to enable a longer-term view, to reduce the incidents of case-by-case, seemingly last minute efforts to influence development decisions. Public facility issues in Franklin and Williamson County often are accompanied by conflict and sometimes result in lost opportunities. The issue of public facilities is one that merits a more conscious approach by city and county government, and the two school boards.

Williamson County is an owner of historic property in the City, including the fine 1858 Courthouse. The County is planning a significant expansion project, yet there would not appear to be a consultation process about the design, massing and configuration of servicing and parking facilities. The County Board of Education's recent experience in selecting the site for a new elementary school has been filled with an unfortunate level of conflict.

## **Preservation Responsibilities & Public Perceptions**

There would seem to be little clarity about what it means to be in the historic district covered by the Historic Zoning Commission, and how the Commission operates. The visibility of the Heritage Foundation with its activist profile, causes it to be seen by some as the arbiter of preservation decisions in the City. The official mechanism for design and development review in the historic district is the Historic Zoning Commission. The City does not have a trained preservation planner on staff. While generous on the part of its architect members, the practice of the Heritage Foundation providing no-cost design advice to HZC applicants can lead to misunderstandings, even conflicts of interest.



## Historic Preservation Goals

In response to the issues, trends and opportunities, the following goals were recommended and adopted:

Goal 1: Celebrate and promote the diverse history and culture of Franklin.

Goal 2: Preserve Franklin's significant historic sites, settings and linkages in ways that assure retention of long-term residents, affordable housing choices, and diversity.

Goal 3: Maintain an accurate and easily accessible inventory of Franklin's historic resources, including buildings, sites and landscapes.

Goal 4: Increase awareness of preservation incentives and regulations.

Goal 5: Enhance downtown management and marketing efforts to enable downtown Franklin to remain competitive in the regional market place while preserving the historic resources that provide its distinctive identity.

Goal 6: Promote heritage tourism that is compatible with community interests and capacity.

Goal 7: Enhance the capacity of Franklin's preservation community.

These goals serve as the organizing framework around which the preservation strategies for Franklin have been developed.



# Franklin’s Strategies for Historic Preservation

Following are strategies, organized around the goals, for continued preservation of Franklin’s historic resources. These strategies should not be seen as actions to be undertaken solely by the City of Franklin, rather, they presume a community-wide response as appropriate

## Goal 1: Celebrate and Promote the Diverse History and Culture of Franklin

Historic preservation is not simply about preserving old buildings. Historic preservation is also about identifying and celebrating a community’s history, which in turn provides greater understanding of a community’s past, as well as a context for making decisions about the future. Franklin’s historic resources are tangible reminders of a way of life that has shaped what the City is today. Bringing more attention to the history and culture of Franklin is an important step toward increasing awareness and appreciation for preserving its historic resources.

### Organize an Annual Franklin Heritage Festival

An excellent way to celebrate and promote the unique history and culture of a place is to create an annual Heritage festival. In addition to giving residents and visitors of Franklin a fun-filled day of activities, a heritage festival provides an opportunity for community building. The Downtown Franklin Association, a division of the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, currently sponsors an annual Main Street festival. This

festival could be enhanced to more directly reflect the history and heritage of Franklin while still achieving its goal of raising funds for continuing economic revitalization of the downtown. The Heritage Festival could include living history, arts and crafts, historic architecture, music, and food related to Franklin’s heritage.

Actors portraying residents from the past can bring history to life. The historic architecture of Franklin can be highlighted through walking tours, games such as architectural bingo, lectures etc. At the King County, Washington Annual Heritage Festival one of the highlights is a genealogy search. Festival participants are assisted by the Seattle Genealogical Society to discover their heritage through the Internet and CD-roms. In addition to special appearances by descendents of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings the festival includes talks from genealogy experts throughout the festival.

- Strategies to Celebrate and Promote the Diverse History and Culture of Franklin**
- Organize an Annual Franklin Heritage Festival
  - Publish a calendar of heritage events
  - Document the History and Culture of Franklin: An Oral History Project
  - Create a Community Heritage Center

### **Publish a Calendar of Heritage Events**

With so many museums and historical societies in the area, there are many opportunities to learn more about facets of Franklin's history and to even unearth your own family genealogy. A quarterly calendar of heritage events published in the local newspaper would provide both residents and visitors with ready access to the myriad of opportunities. It could also provide greater visibility and increase visitation at sites such as Carnton Plantation.

### **Document the History and Culture of Franklin: An Oral History Project**

The City of Franklin has a long and diverse history. Many of the previous efforts to document the history and culture have focused mainly on the Civil War. While an important part of Franklin's history, there is a need to support efforts for documenting local history beyond this short period of time. Projects such as oral histories and history-related public events should be used to document topics such as the Revolutionary War, African-American heritage, and agricultural history.

The culture and history of traditional African American neighborhoods like Hard Bargain largely remain in the memories of long-time residents. Oral histories are spoken memories, stories, and personal commentaries of historical significance that living individuals tell about their own past. The histories may include anecdotes, family traditions, songs, and information associated with pictures, documents, and other records. Because those who provide the information are generally elderly members of the community, both their lives and their memories are at risk of being lost to time. Oral histories are



particularly useful when the information does not exist anywhere else. Therefore, oral histories should be carefully researched, tape-recorded, and transcribed creating an archival history intended for the widest possible use. These oral histories could be especially useful for the African American Heritage Society's museum/education center currently being developed.

### **Create a Community Heritage Center**

With a history as rich and lively as Franklin, one would expect to have a centrally located museum or center that orients residents and visitors and provides programming on local heritage. Yet, such a facility is lacking in Franklin. How can a new resident, a visitor –

or a native, for that matter, find their place and understand what Franklin and Williamson County are all about?

Community Heritage Centers provide exhibits, workshops, and educational programs about important themes in a city's history. A center for the community can be a place to share and collaborate to advance knowledge and understanding. A heritage center in Franklin could perhaps be combined with efforts to create a county museum.

A working group should be convened to explore creating a community heritage center at an appropriate location in Franklin. The working group should include historians with diverse interests, educators, museum directors, and representatives from the Convention & Visitors Bureau. The Franklin story is much more than the Civil War battle. Exhibits and programs at this location afford the opportunity to include the perspectives of all races, all social classes and economic levels. A good example is the Massie Heritage Interpretation Center in Savannah. The Center, housed in c.1855-56 buildings, is owned by the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools and includes exhibits of Savannah's City Plan, Savannah in the Victorian Era and elements of Savannah architecture.

Franklin's community heritage center could also serve as an expanded visitor center, providing visitors with an orientation to Franklin's unique heritage, as well as information about things to see and do. The Heritage Center needs to be in close proximity to Franklin's Main Street, in a location that affords visibility, convenience and nearby parking.

## Goal 2: Preserve Historic Sites, Settings & Linkages

Franklin's significant historic sites, settings and linkages need to be preserved in ways that assure retention of long-term residents, affordable housing choices, and diversity. The following strategies seek to accomplish this.

### Develop a Master Plan for Downtown Franklin

Residents have identified downtown Franklin as the heart of the City. Much has been invested in its revitalization, which brought it back to life in the 1980s. Since that time, it has become a symbol of the City's identity. It is also an important portion of the City's tax base, representing significant public and private investment. Since the original revitalization effort, the regional market has changed and there is significantly more competition for downtown. Fortunately, the regional market is an affluent one in terms of disposable incomes, meaning there are unmet

#### Strategies to Preserve Historic Sites, Settings & Linkages

- Develop a Master Plan for Downtown Franklin
- Develop a Neighborhood Conservation Program
- Conserve Historic Landscapes
- Evaluate the Effectiveness of Design Standards
- Explore Financial Incentive Programs
- Enhance Historic Cemeteries
- Develop Corridor Management Plans for Historic Roads
- Improve Gateways and Linkages

opportunities for downtown—if there is a conscious strategy in place.

A strategic plan is needed for downtown, the commercial and office heart of the City. It should address:

- Present and future land uses
- Under-utilized parcels and opportunities for redevelopment
- Market opportunities for specialty retailing, restaurants
- Upper story uses
- Public facilities and services
- Parking (long and short-term) and circulation
- Pedestrian amenities
- Transition to adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Gateways and entrance corridors



- Sources and uses of funds for capital improvements, management services
- Implementation strategies

### **Develop a Neighborhood Conservation Program**

Within the City limits there are long-standing pre-World War II neighborhoods that represent important aspects of Franklin’s history, but may lack the degree of architectural integrity required to become National Register Historic Districts. These neighborhoods, like Hard Bargain, are important heritage resources and could benefit from targeted assistance in the form of a neighborhood conservation program that would engage residents of older neighborhoods in community-based planning.

Such a program should focus on identifying funding sources and providing technical assistance to help stabilize neighborhoods and rehabilitate heritage resources in a manner that retains affordability and ensures social cohesion. In addition, the program should seek to preserve historic fabric by fostering rehabilitation and new construction that is compatible with the neighborhood’s character. The program should also provide a framework for the City to provide targeted and coordinated investment in public infrastructure. Thus, the focus would be on retaining community character rather than on meeting more stringent historic preservation guidelines. The program could be a partnership between City agencies, preservationists, local non-profit service providers and community leaders.

It is recommended that the Natchez Street and Hard Bargain neighborhoods be considered as early opportunities for the

neighborhood conservation program. In addition to these established neighborhoods, pockets of deterioration and poverty in housing projects and trailer parks near Franklin’s historic areas should be included in early opportunities.

An initial step would be to convene representatives from City departments to explore the types of technical and financial assistance that might be available, and to identify how they might work together in a coordinated effort in a pilot neighborhood conservation program. Meetings should also take place between city staff, community organizations, preservation organizations, and social service organizations.

### **Conserve Historic Landscapes**

The historic cultural landscapes throughout the City of Franklin and surrounding County are as much a part of the City’s history as its buildings. The National Park Service defines cultural landscapes as, “a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein), associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.” Finding ways to stem the loss of Franklin’s cultural landscapes, particularly remnants of the Franklin Battlefield, should be a high priority.



Strategies to conserve Franklin’s historic landscapes include:

- Conduct a broad survey to identify the location, historical importance, and degree of threat to Franklin’s historic landscapes within the City limits and urban growth boundary. Set conservation priorities based upon historical significance and degree of threat. The survey also should identify the range of conservation tools that are available, including easements, acquisition, zoning changes, conservation development models, and transferable development rights.

## **Strategies to Conserve Historic Landscapes**

*Communities across the country have utilized tools ranging from incentives to regulation to conserve historic landscapes, which Franklin may want to consider implementing. A brief description of some of these tools follows. Note: Many of these tools have been developed for natural resource conservation purposes. However, they may be adapted to suit the needs of conserving historic resources.*

### **Recognition Programs**

*Raising awareness and appreciation for historic landscapes can be a powerful approach toward building support for a regulatory approach to conservation. Tennessee's Century Farms Program identifies, documents, and recognizes farms that have been owned by the same family for 100 years or more. Three Century Farms have been identified in Franklin (River Grange, Gentry Farm, and Short Farm) and others may be eligible. A local program could be developed, perhaps recognizing 50-100 year old family farms, focusing on raising awareness about the history and importance of farming to Franklin's landscape and culture.*

### **Conservation Easements**

*Another successful tool for preserving historic landscapes is a preservation easement program. A preservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that provides assurance that a historic resource will be preserved through subsequent ownership, while providing tax benefits to the property owner. A qualified community land trust or preservation organization is typically responsible for developing and operating an easement program.*

### **Land Banking**

*In some instances it may be preferable to pursue the outright purchase of key historic landscapes by a nonprofit organization or public agency that will ensure the lands are never developed. In many cases a land trust fills this need by negotiating with the landowner, raising funds, administering the easement, and maintaining the property. In some instances, these properties are transferred to a public agency for maintenance as part of a public parks system that allows access, typically in the form of passive recreation.*

### **Conservation Development Guidelines & Standards**

*A technique also known as cluster development, open space preservation, and landscape preservation, conservation development techniques seek to conserve natural resources while allowing meaningful economic return for sensitive development of the land. The process typically involves the creation of a site analysis map that identifies historical, cultural and natural resources, potential open space corridors, views, etc. that should be preserved, and excludes these areas from development and targets construction on the rest of the parcel. In communities where this analysis is compulsory, it is typically limited only to certain zoning districts or when particular resources are present, such as a significant historic landscape.*



### **Real Estate Transfer Tax**

*Residents of some fast growing communities have voted to establish a transfer tax (typically 1% of the selling price) that is levied on the sale of certain types of property for the purposes of land conservation. The tax can be levied on the seller, or the buyer. Reviews have been mixed on the effectiveness of such a tax. According to the Trust for Public Land, "At the local level, the real estate transfer tax can create substantial funds for park and open space acquisition, particularly in fast-growing communities. On the other hand, it can also inflate real estate values and slow the market."*

### **Transferable Development Rights (TDRs)**

*The Tennessee State Legislature recently passed legislation authorizing localities to establish TDR programs. Under a TDR program, development rights are transferred from "sending zones" that are designated for protection to "receiving zones" that are designated for future growth. Conservation easements provide permanent protection from development in the sending zone. Communities have used this approach with mixed success, largely because it can be politically and physically challenging to identify receiving zones where more dense development can occur.*

- Undertake more detailed cultural landscape studies for high priority historic landscapes. The studies should include a thorough understanding of the site's history, assess notable landscape features, evaluate the condition of the site, and recommend strategies for conserving the historic landscape.

### **Evaluate the Effectiveness of Design Standards**

The City will soon adopt new urban and suburban design standards that focus on ensuring that compatible new development will take place. Once the standards have been in place for two years, the City might appoint an independent citizen advisory committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the new design standards, especially as they relate to the local historic districts, and recommend modifications if warranted.



## **Examples of Financial Incentives**

### **Property Tax Abatement**

*Property tax abatement exempts all or part of the increase in the value of improvements and personal property, except inventory and supplies. Tax abatement may begin when a city or county designates a particular area as a “reinvestment zone”—an area where private investment will promote economic development and public welfare. A property owner within the zone who makes specified improvements receives an exemption for all or part of the value of the new improvements.*

### **Property Tax Freeze**

*An alternative to the property tax abatement program is a property tax freeze. A property tax freeze program typically provides that property tax assessments are frozen at pre-rehabilitation values for a certain period of time. During this period, taxes may increase annually due to fluctuations in the tax rate. Unlike a 100 percent abatement program, the taxpayer will pay some taxes annually during the period of the property tax freeze but will not pay property taxes on the increased value resulting from the rehabilitation of the property. The Oregon Special Assessment of Historic Property Program, administered by the State Historic Preservation Office, offers a 15-year property tax freeze on the true cash value of property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The purpose of the program is to encourage owners of historic property to preserve or improve the condition of the property without incurring an increase in property taxes.*

### **Easements**

*Historic Preservation easements, also known as Conservation or Façade easements, are a voluntary method to preserve valuable resources including significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resources. Under the terms of an easement, property owners donate or sell a portion of their rights in perpetuity to a non-profit or government agency whose mission it is to protect those resources. The easement can be tailored to fit an owner's needs and assures the owner that their property will be cared for even after a transfer of ownership. In most cases the easements are donated rather than sold. In exchange for giving away a portion of their property rights an owner may be eligible for tax benefits including reduced federal income, estate, and gift taxes.*

### **Investment Tax Credit for Low-Income Housing**

*The Investment Tax Credit for Low-Income Housing provides a tax credit for the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of low-income housing and can be applied to historic structures. This tax credit rewards property owners for providing low-income housing to the community. Franklin should use the Ellen Wilson Neighborhood Redevelopment project in Washington, DC as a case study for compatible mixed income housing. The Ellen Wilson Community was an abandoned public housing site surrounded by the Capital Hill Historic District. Neighborhood residents concerned about the crime and drugs at the site formed a corporation and secured a \$25 million Hope VI grant to redevelop the site. The result is 134 townhouses for households earning 25% to 115% less than the area's median income.*

## Explore Financial Incentive Programs

Today historic districts and sites throughout the country are experiencing unprecedented revitalization as communities use their cultural monuments as catalysts for neighborhood and commercial revitalization. Frequently, efforts to preserve and revitalize historic buildings run up against financial obstacles that create challenges in preserving and reusing historic buildings. Fortunately there are a variety of financial incentives offering tangible advantages to historic property owners. Incentives help offset additional costs sometimes incurred by property owners to comply with the preservation ordinance and its design guidelines. In addition, there are instances where denial of a Certificate of



Appropriateness could be considered an unconstitutional undertaking, and incentives may help mitigate economic hardships that could constitute a taking. Incentive programs are also a useful mechanism to enable older or less affluent residents to remain in neighborhoods that might otherwise not be affordable.

The City should appoint an advisory committee to identify and evaluate potential financial incentive programs to encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Initially, incentives should be targeted to the neighborhood conservation program and to encourage ground floor retail on Main Street. Preservation incentive programs are widely used throughout the country to offset the cost of preserving historic sites and buildings by providing income and property tax reductions. Local incentive programs may include tax abatement, tax freezes, tax credits, grants, and low-interest loans.

## Enhance Historic Cemeteries

Franklin has a number of historic cemeteries scattered throughout the City that constitute an important feature of Franklin's heritage. Most prominent are Toussaint L'Overture, McGavock Confederate, Rest Haven, Mt. Hope, and Old Franklin cemeteries; two of these, Toussaint and McGavock are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are many more small family cemeteries scattered throughout the City and urban growth boundary. These historic settings yield valuable information about social, religious, artistic and cultural heritage while simultaneously providing a wealth of genealogical information. Unfortunately, many threats (weathering, commercial development, neglect, vandalism, and theft) face historic cemeteries.

Greater attention to these historic resources is warranted. At a minimum:

- Preservation organizations could inventory historic cemeteries in the City and urban growth boundary.
- The City could add this information to its GIS system, and share the data with the Williamson County Planning Department.

Additional actions could include:

- Enhance the physical setting of the recognized historic cemeteries, Toussaint and McGavock, with landscaping, fencing and interpretation. The historic setting of both of these cemeteries has been compromised by adjacent development. Local preservation organizations could assist the cemetery owners with raising awareness and funds, while the City could contribute by planting trees and shrubs to screen their maintenance yard located next to Toussaint.
- Organize a special event tour of the City's historic cemeteries around Halloween to raise awareness and funds for preservation.

### **Develop Corridor Management Plans for Historic Roads**

The City of Franklin has adopted a list of roads that have been identified as the Heritage Roads of Franklin. Although not formally designated as scenic byways, these roads have met criteria similar to those for the Tennessee Scenic Byway program. The Heritage Foundation selected the roads for their access to historic resources, outstanding natural features, and scenic views. Franklin should work with the Tennessee State Scenic Byway Coordinator to designate these roads as scenic byways.



After designation as a state scenic byway, corridor management plans and policies should be developed to preserve historic resources along Franklin's most significant and intact historic roads. Corridor management plans can be used to identify strategies to enhance key gateways to downtown Franklin as well as connections between historic districts and sites. Completion of a corridor management plan makes the byway eligible for grant funding under the National Scenic Byway Program. Unlike other transportation grant programs, byway grants require localities and organizations to pay only a 20% match in funds. Scenic byway's inclusion on state and national maps and guides supports local efforts to strengthen local economies through heritage and eco-tourism.

### **Improve Gateways and Linkages**

Roads leading into historic Franklin have gradually become corridors of spotty commercial development, for the most part indistinguishable from most of the rest of the country. In particular, sections of Columbia Road (which links several

important historic sites—downtown Franklin, Carter House, and Winstead Hill) and 5th Avenue (between N. Margin Street and the historic Toussaint L'Overture Cemetery) are characterized by a physical appearance that erodes the historic context. More and more, communities that seek to retain their identity and compete for investment take steps to enhance the appearance of gateways and important thoroughfares.

Doing so takes a combination of public and private actions. There are regulatory approaches that can lead to better site planning, building and sign design, and landscaping for new development. What about existing development? Some communities have made significant headway through voluntary actions guided by a broadly supported vision and plan. Along the Midlothian Turnpike west of Richmond, Virginia, for instance, a well-developed landscape and beautification plan sparked citizen activists and land owners to engage in voluntary efforts that over a five-year period have led to dramatic improvements. Similarly, along Williamson Road in Roanoke, Virginia, the city offered to fund public improvements at key eyesore intersections if private owners pitched in on their properties. Two years later, six of the corridor's worst concentrations of 'road rash' had been transformed.

The City has commissioned a gateways and corridors study, which is intended to lead to standards. In addition, the Heritage Foundation commissioned designed standards for Columbia Avenue. It is recommended that the City convene business and civic groups and explore the collaboration necessary to implement a gateways and corridors enhancement program. Enhancing Franklin's gateways and linkages between sites that are an important part of the community's identity could go a long way toward stemming

the erosion of historic character now taking place along the important entrance corridors.

### **Goal 3: Maintain an Updated and Accessible Inventory of Franklin's History Resources**

Opportunities for preservation vs. development conflicts increase when there is uncertainty. Early knowledge is important. The following strategies seek to ensure that historic resources are identified and that this information is readily accessible to the public.

#### **Update the Historic Resources Inventory**

The City of Franklin needs to maintain an accurate and easily accessible inventory of the City's historic resources, including sites and landscapes. Through the on-going efforts of individuals and local preservation organizations, many of the City's historic resources have been identified and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. To date, the Heritage Foundation has taken the lead in maintaining and updating an inventory of historic resources. However, this is more typically a role for local

#### **Strategies to Maintain an Updated and Accessible Inventory of Franklin's Historic Resources**

- Update the Historic Resources Inventory
- Create a digital inventory
- Identify and nominate historic landscapes
- Periodically evaluate local historic district overlay zone boundaries

government. Once the City hires a preservation planner, the planner should work in partnership with the Heritage Foundation to update the historic resources inventory. The most recent inventory, completed in 1999, identified several concentrations of pre-1950 properties along Columbia Avenue, Franklin Road, and Natchez Street that have not yet been recorded. It is estimated that up to two hundred properties could be eligible for inclusion on the local and National Register. These areas should be the focus of future survey efforts as well as potential National Register nominations.

### **Create a digital inventory**

With technology, the historic resources inventory can be made more accessible to property owners, City staff, and developers. Currently, this information is available in paper form on USGS maps. As the City implements its ambitious GIS program, information on historic resources can be field checked, digitized and a computer database developed that is compatible with the City's GIS software. The database could link inventory information (property name, date of construction, architectural style, condition, etc.) with tax assessor data (owner, appraised value, etc.). The data could also be linked to a digital photo archive, all of which could be made accessible to the public via the City's web site.

### **Identify and nominate historic landscapes**

For the purposes of the National Register a rural historic landscape is defined "as a geographical area that historically has been used by people, or shaped and modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possesses a significant concentration, linkage,

or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features". Historic landscapes have developed and evolved in response to both the forces of nature and the need to make a living. Historic landscapes are listed on the National Register as sites or districts and include farms, battlefields or designed landscapes. Today the rural character of Franklin is threatened by growth and development. Fortunately there are still a number of historic landscapes within Franklin's urban growth boundary that remain intact. These sites should be carefully inventoried and studied to determine eligibility for listing in the National Register.

### **Periodically evaluate local historic district overlay zone boundaries**

Once the inventory is updated, the City should reassess the extent of the local historic district overlay zones and identify areas of possible expansion. This reassessment should include a look at properties that have previously been deemed "non-contributing" or otherwise excluded to see if these should now be included in the overlay. The Hiram Masonic Lodge on Second Avenue South (a National Historic Landmark) is one such property that is not part of the overlay zone, but logically should be. Once identified, the City should work with local preservation organizations on education and outreach to residents in the potential expansion areas.

## **Goal 4: Increase Awareness of Preservation Incentives & Regulations**

Often, people want to do the right thing, they just aren't sure what that is. There is a wealth of information currently available from a variety of sources that describe available incentives, demonstrate best practices, and illustrate the "don'ts" of preservation. Much of this information could be consolidated and made easily available to residents in a variety of ways.

### **Send an Annual Notice**

The City should, via the Historic Zoning Commission, send a letter annually to notify property owners about their inclusion in the historic preservation district overlay zone and advise them of actions that may warrant review by the Commission.

### **Create a Historic Zoning Commission Web Site**

More and more cities are using the Internet as an easy way to provide information to residents. Franklin already has an official City site. The Zoning Commission should develop a web page as part of the City's web site to serve as a one-stop-shop for residents who are rehabilitating historic buildings. Information that could be

#### **Strategies to Increase Awareness of Preservation Incentives & Regulations**

- Send an Annual Notice
- Create a Historic Zoning Commission Web Site
- Develop an Updated Visual Reference Guide
- Host an Orientation Program

posted includes basic material about the historic district overlay zones, meeting dates, and links to other resources on the web like This Old House, the National Park Service Preservation Briefs, Illustrated guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Structures, Old House Journal, Books on Restoring and Preserving Old Houses, Old House Chronicle Magazine, and Preservation Web.

### **Develop an Updated Visual Reference Guide**

The Historic Zoning Commission has compiled a visual guide for residents in the historic overlay districts to illustrate "appropriateness" with regard to issues such as scale, architectural style, building materials, signs, and landscape treatments. This material should be updated and made readily available at City Hall and on the Internet.

### **Host an Orientation Program**

Sometimes residents, particularly newcomers, are not aware of the implications of owning property in a historic district. This may result in confusion about permitting procedures for work done on their property and lack of information about resources that may be available, including financial incentives and technical assistance. To alleviate this problem, the Historic Zoning Commission, in partnership with local preservation organizations, could host a bi-annual historic district orientation program targeted to homeowners, builders and developers to share information about financial incentives, code requirements, review processes, and success stories. These events should be open to anyone in the City and County who is interested, particularly property owners who may be considering petitioning for the creation of a new historic district overlay zone or working on new developments.

## Goal 5: Enhance Downtown Management & Marketing Efforts

The economic health of downtown Franklin got its first boost in the 1980s when a substantial investment was made in the physical appearance of Franklin's Main Street. These efforts, combined with the establishment of the Downtown Franklin Association, were critical to improving the condition of this community asset. Sustaining and building on commitments heretofore made to downtown Franklin on the part of the private and public sector will be critical to its continued preservation. Thus, downtown management and marketing efforts should be enhanced to enable downtown Franklin to remain competitive in the regional market place while preserving the historic resources that provide its distinctive identity.



### Strategies to Enhance Downtown Management and Marketing Efforts

- Encourage Ground Floor Retail on Main Street
- Invest in Downtown Marketing and Management

### Encourage Ground Floor Retail on Main Street

The viability of Franklin's Main Street as a retail destination and activity generator plays a critical role in the overall health and preservation of downtown Franklin. A healthy downtown must have a solid retail core. The presence of retail businesses, rather than offices, on the ground floor of Main Street's buildings is an important factor in generating economic activity. According to a 2001 study of downtown retail commissioned by the Heritage Foundation, downtown Franklin is experiencing pressure to convert first floor retail spaces into professional offices. Moreover, as the study points out, the relocation of traditional activity centers like the County library away from downtown places even greater import on retaining ground level retail that will facilitate a good pedestrian environment for downtown shoppers. Working in partnership, the City and Downtown Franklin Association should make a commitment to encouraging ground floor retail along Main Street by:

- exploring possibilities for tax incentives.
- identifying alternate locations for commercial office space.
- developing an Internet-accessible database of market-oriented information on downtown properties and use it to attract targeted retail niches as identified in the 2001 retail study.



## **Invest in Downtown Marketing and Management**

Building on success, a more aggressive downtown management and marketing program seems in order. Some of the more successful Main Street programs have a well-researched market strategy and pro-actively seek businesses that would complement the mix of downtown offerings. Some even have a fund that can ‘hold’ prime locations—paying the owner for the several months it might take to find the right tenant. Downtown Franklin provides important services. With additional resources, including public support, the Main Street marketing and management activities could be brought into scale with the need.

## **Goal 6: Promote Heritage Tourism**

Heritage tourism is travel experiences that build on the arts, history and special character of a place. It differs from other types of tourism in that it has higher appeal for discerning visitors, those who appreciate and understand history and who seek authenticity. Heritage tourism offers genuine opportunities for both the cultural and tourism industries to work together and, over time, to build business, stimulate economic growth, showcase resources and encourage international and domestic visitors to explore America by experiencing the richness of its culture. Franklin has the right mix of assets that makes it an ideal experience for heritage tourists.

Economic impact studies show that the typical heritage tourist shops more, spends more, stays in hotels more often, travels longer and visits more destinations than typical travelers. They are often referred to as “high yield” tourists; fewer tourists spending more money, and, therefore, resulting in less impact on the local

community but a high economic return. Communities that have preserved their historic buildings and rural landscapes, tell compelling stories about their history and culture, and provide opportunities for “outsiders” to experience the uniqueness of a region are more successful at attracting heritage tourists, often for repeat visits. Heritage tourism is important for the local economy. The money spent on heritage tourism translates directly into revenue for localities in the form of sales and hotel taxes, as well as jobs and wages.

## **Create the Franklin Heritage Trail**

There are several historic sites scattered throughout Franklin that would enjoy greater visitation and visibility if marketed as part of a larger experience. Franklin is already a part of two other larger trail systems; the Antebellum Trail and Tennessee’s Civil War Heritage Trail. However, both of these focus only on Franklin’s Civil War history. The Heritage Foundation’s downtown walking tour highlighting the historic homes near Main Street could be refreshed and made part of an expanded self-guided heritage tourism experience. The system should include development of an interpretive information system – with informative and well-designed kiosks and interpretive panels in historic neighborhoods, near ‘landmark’ buildings, and where important events took place.

### **Strategies to Promote Heritage Tourism**

- Create the Franklin Heritage Trail
- Enhance the Visitor Center
- Market the Heritage Tourism Experience

Once the Heritage Trail is established, travelers need information about the locations of attractions, operating hours, what to expect when they arrive, the availability of restrooms, and the distance and time it takes to get there. A coordinated set of informative, fun and concise print and web information, including a map, about Franklin’s history and heritage sites and events is required.

### **Enhance the Visitor Center**

The current downtown visitor is quite modest, serving primarily as a place for visitors to ask directions and pick-up brochures. There is an opportunity to make much more of it as a place to orient visitors to Franklin’s rich history and heritage sites. Ideally, visitor center functions could be incorporated into the Community Heritage Center described earlier.

### **Market the Heritage Tourism Experience**

While overall tourism has been impacted significantly by world events, industry experts predict that travel will recover, and that heritage tourism will be especially strong, especially where there are good ‘drive’ markets like middle Tennessee. Franklin is perfectly situated to take advantage of the region’s sizable tourist population. According to the Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau, more than 10.5 million people visited Nashville in 2000, which resulted in over \$2.7 billion in revenues for the city. Franklin could package its heritage tourism experience as an intriguing day trip or weekend getaway and market it through the Nashville CVB and high-end hoteliers who cater to leisure and business travelers.

## **Goal 7: Enhance the Capacity of Franklin’s Preservation Community**

Implementing the Preservation Plan will take actions by both the City and Franklin’s preservation organizations.

### **Strengthen City Capacity**

Among the recommendations for the City are:

- Strengthen the role of the City in setting preservation policies and administering the preservation review process. It is time for the City to have a professionally qualified preservation planner on staff. Among the preservation planner’s responsibilities will be to provide technical preservation information and support to citizens, businesses, architects, building contractors, and owners of historic properties. After an appropriate transition period, the City should no longer rely on the Heritage Foundation for pro bono services.
- Incorporate the preservation plan into the City’s Long Range Plan, and assure that other plans (open space, housing, public facilities, etc.) are compatible with preservation goals.
- Imbue a preservation ethic throughout the City. Provide training and other learning activities for City staff, planning commissioners, historic zoning commissioners and City Council members, to increase awareness of nation-wide best practices and encourage greater understanding of the important role historic buildings and preservation play in Franklin’s identity and economy

- Convene a roundtable meeting between City and County planning staff to share inventory information and to identify historic resources and preservation issues in the UGB but outside of City limits.
- Convene a series of meetings involving City Council and the County Commissioners to find common ground around preservation issues, especially regarding the preservation of historic sites and compatibility of new development within the urban growth boundary. With commitment and persistence, these discussions could ideally lead to a memorandum of agreement and a more coordinated approach that could head off avoidable conflicts.

### **Strengthen Local Capacity**

Franklin would not be what it is had not a handful of caring people banded together to form the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County. The Heritage Foundation and the region's other not-for-profit preservation organizations are essential partners to government in caring for heritage. As such, they should continue their essential roles as stewards, educators and advocates for historic preservation in Franklin.

The Heritage Foundation has played the seminal role in the creation of the historic district and the revitalization of the downtown. Members of its board and its supporters have generously supported production of handsome publications and well-attended public events celebrating Franklin's heritage. It has provided expertise and been a powerful advocate for preservation sometimes when it was not the popular thing to do.

As the City hires additional staff and takes on official responsibility for maintaining historic inventory records, overseeing the design review process, and otherwise implementing the public policy aspects of the Preservation Plan, the role of the Heritage Foundation will inevitably need to change. Its Board is wisely engaged in strategic planning, and the many recommendations for enhanced interpretive and heritage activities presented here provide important opportunities for leadership from the Heritage Foundation.

Additionally, the Heritage Foundation is enhancing its advocacy efforts on behalf of preserving the remaining battlefield lands, particularly those that lie between Carnton and the Battleground Academy. This major project should receive the strongest possible support by the City and County. The opportunities for honoring the bravery on both sides, for interpreting and exploring the consequences of the Civil War in American life merit significant investment.

The stewardship provided by the owners of Carnton Plantation and other historic sites is also vital to preservation. Support from the City, county, state and philanthropic community will accelerate the development of enhanced interpretive program and restoration at these important historic sites.

# Action Agenda

WHO					WHAT	WHEN		
City	CVB	DFA	HF	PO		YR 1-2	YR 3-4	YR 5+
<b>Goal 1: Celebrate and Promote the Diverse History and Culture of Franklin</b>								
○	○	●	⊙	⊙	Organize an Annual Franklin Heritage Festival		◆	◆
	○	●	⊙	⊙	Publish a calendar of heritage events		◆	◆
			●	○	Document the History and Culture of Franklin: An Oral History Project	◆	◆	
⊙	⊙	○	●	⊙	Create a Community Heritage Center	◆	◆	◆
<b>Goal 2: Preserve Historic Sites, Settings and Linkages</b>								
●		○			Develop a Master Plan for Downtown Franklin	◆		
●			○	○	Develop a Neighborhood Conservation Program	◆		
●		○	○		Explore Financial Incentive Programs			◆
○			●	⊙	Conserve Historic Landscapes	◆	◆	◆
⊙			●	○	Enhance Historic Cemeteries			◆
●					Develop Historic Roads Corridor Management Plans		◆	
●					Improve Gateways and Linkages	◆		
<b>Goal 3: Maintain an Inventory of Franklin's Historic Resources</b>								
●			⊙	○	Update the Historic Resources Inventory			◆
●			⊙		Create a digital inventory	◆		
			●	○	Identify and nominate historic landscapes	◆		
●					Periodically evaluate local historic district overlay zone boundaries			◆
<b>Key</b> City: City of Franklin      DFA: Downtown Franklin Association      PO: Other Preservation Organizations CVB: Convention & Visitors Bureau      HF: Heritage Foundation of Franklin & Williamson County      ● Lead    ⊙ Partner    ○ Involve								

WHO					WHAT	WHEN		
City	CVB	DFA	HF	PO		YR 1-2	YR 3-4	YR 5+
					<b>Goal 4: Increase Awareness of Preservation Incentives and Regulations</b>			
●					Send an Annual Notice	◆	◆	◆
●					Create a Historic Zoning Commission Web Site		◆	
●			○		Develop an Updated Visual Reference Guide		◆	
●			○		Host an Orientation Program			◆
					<b>Goal 5: Enhance Downtown Management and Marketing Efforts</b>			
○		●			Encourage ground floor retail on Main Street	◆	◆	◆
○		●			Invest in Downtown Marketing and Management	◆	◆	◆
					<b>Goal 6: Promote Heritage Tourism</b>			
○	⊙	○	⊙	⊙	Create the Franklin Heritage Trail		◆	
	●	○			Market the Heritage Tourism Experience		◆	◆
○	●	⊙	○	⊙	Enhance the Visitor Center		◆	
					<b>Goal 7: Enhance the Capacity of Franklin's Preservation Community</b>			
●					Hire a City preservation planner	◆		

# In Conclusion

In approaching the Preservation Plan, the intent has been to reach beyond a traditional regulatory policy approach. The City of Franklin has many of the needed regulatory tools in place or under consideration. Rather, the intent has been to look more broadly at what is being preserved and for what purpose. This is a community that knows why it values historic buildings and their settings. The goals and strategies articulated in the plan will assure that generations from now, Franklin's exceptional heritage will remain a strong part of its identity.

# Acknowledgments

## Ad-hoc Committee Members

Marcia Allen, Alderwoman

Ernie Bacon, Alderman

Frank Baugh, Realtor

Julian Bibb, Stites & Harbison

Helen Carter, Williamson County Association of Realtors

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