

Future Historic Resources



SECTION 22 – FUTURE HISTORIC RESOURCES

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide the City of Navasota with policies and procedures for the protection of its historic properties. The current regulatory system for historic preservation has not been implemented successfully; therefore a plan focusing on implementation is desirable. Legal justification for historic preservation is provided in Chapter 212 of the Texas Local Government Code.

Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Maintain public and governmental interest in Navasota's historic structures.

- Objective 1: An educational framework should be created for owners of historic structures to explain the benefits of preserving a structure.
- Objective 2: The City should make historic preservation information available through public facilities such as the Navasota Library and the Horlock Center.
- Objective 3: Navasota should utilize new technologies such as a multi-media Internet website to publish the historic resources survey (including historic photographs, documentation and oral histories of each building/site).
- Objective 4: A welcome center should be established, staffed by volunteers, to provide information to visitors about Navasota's historic resources (historic walking tours, etc.).

Goal #2: Provide incentives wherever possible to protect, preserve and maintain the City's heritage.

- Objective 1: Navasota should provide information on loans and grants for façade upgrades and exterior maintenance.

- Objective2: The City should investigate programs such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Enterprise Zones as tools to aid in the preservation and redevelopment of Downtown.

Goal #3: Preserve and maintain sites and structures that serve as significant visible reminders of the city’s social and architectural history.

- Objective1: Navasota should identify multiple historic districts, which represent unique development styles within the City (e.g. Downtown Navasota).
- Objective 2: A regulatory system should be created to implement this historic preservation plan, including historic districts, a citizen committee, and zoning enforcement.
- Objective 3: Voluntary regulations should be created for structures outside of denoted historic districts.
- Objective 4: Navasota should update city codes, including building and zoning, to facilitate the rehabilitation of historic buildings (i.e. “smart codes”), while still protecting the safety of their users.
- Objective 5: A schedule of updates to the historic resources survey should be created to ensure all potential historic structures will eventually be considered for designation.
- Objective 6: The City should prepare a maintenance program for city-owned historic properties following the guidelines established by the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC).

Goal #4: Develop practical regulation that can be utilized by the City.

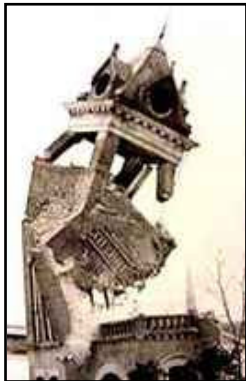
- Objective 1: Navasota should establish an HLC to guide the City Council with specific recommendations pertaining to historic preservation. Additionally, this commission will provide high levels of public involvement.

- Objective 2: The current zoning ordinance should be revised concerning historic preservation.
- Objective 3: The City should maintain a historic resources survey.
- Objective 4: Navasota should create historic preservation districts
- Objective 5: Approval for demolition, modification, or new construction should be required within historic districts.
- Objective 6: The City should maintain awareness and promote education of the historic resources survey.

Implementation

Public Sector Responsibilities

Decisions regarding the maintenance and character of municipally owned historic properties might have substantial impacts on how local historic resources are maintained by the private sector. The City of Navasota



Razed: Navasota
City Hall - 1958

should act as a steward of its historic resources through the preservation of municipally owned property. Such recognition is necessary to add legitimacy to this preservation effort.

The municipality will have only limited success in the implementation of the preservation plan if it does not take the responsibility for the City owned historic resources – city hall, libraries, museums, and parks.



Razed: First Jail of Navasota

Municipal Policies

The City zoning regulations and building codes should be revised and enforced to promote the preservation of historic buildings. The codes affecting historic properties should be flexible in order to promote rehabilitation. Such building code amendments are often referred to as “smart codes”. For example, the International

Building Code (IBC) often acts as a significant deterrent to the conservation of older buildings. The IBC is primarily aimed at new construction, thus making it more difficult and expensive to bring existing buildings up to modern standards. The City of Navasota should amend these codes such that adopted regulatory policies are conducive to historic preservation. All City departments should consider the potential impacts of preservation in the development and enforcement of land use, building code, fire code, environmental review, and other City regulations.

Zoning and Land Use

The zoning ordinance should be compatible with and promote the protection of historic resources, and be consistent with the objectives and policies of the preservation plan. The ordinance should not allow incompatible uses and densities that conflict with the existing resources in an historic district. Particular attention should be paid to the CBD zoning classification and the land uses within the Old Town neighborhood.

Historic Landmark Commission (HLC)

An HLC should be established to make recommendations to the City Council regarding historic preservation regulations. Specifically, its duties would include recommendations on the establishment of districts, granting permission for development in historic districts, property maintenance and design guidelines, landmark designation, and other duties as necessary.

Historic Districts

In order to facilitate the implementation of the historic preservation plan, historic districts should be identified by the HLC. A historic district is an area that includes a collection of structures of a similar location and land use. Historic districts may also include similarities among design, workmanship, and material. However, due to Navasota's varied and eclectic development history, drawing districts along these lines would be difficult. The districts are most effective when integrated through a zoning ordinance.

Boundaries of historic districts should be determined in accordance with Article II, Section II of the Navasota Zoning Ordinance. It may be necessary to create several different historic districts in order to accommodate the land use and development patterns within the City of Navasota. Similar uses should be grouped such as primarily residential neighborhoods, integrated churches and homes, as well as the Central Business District (CBD). The HLC should adopt design guidelines for each district, after soliciting public participation of both property owners and the citizens at large. These guidelines would allow for the control of appearance and preservation of historic buildings. In addition, these guidelines would provide for historic neighborhood integrity by regulating to a lesser degree other non-historic buildings in a district. Image 22.1 demonstrates fifty years of development within Downtown Navasota. The first photograph was taken in 2004, with the second taken in 1950. Development patterns in Downtown have resulted in the razing of several blocks including the southwest corner of LaSalle Street and McAlpine Street, Farquar Street and McAlpine Street, as well as the block presently occupied by the First National Bank of Navasota. Rather than replacing demolished structures, vacant lots or parking lots have become more common.

The following districts (Map 22.1) are recommended for the HLC's approval or modification:

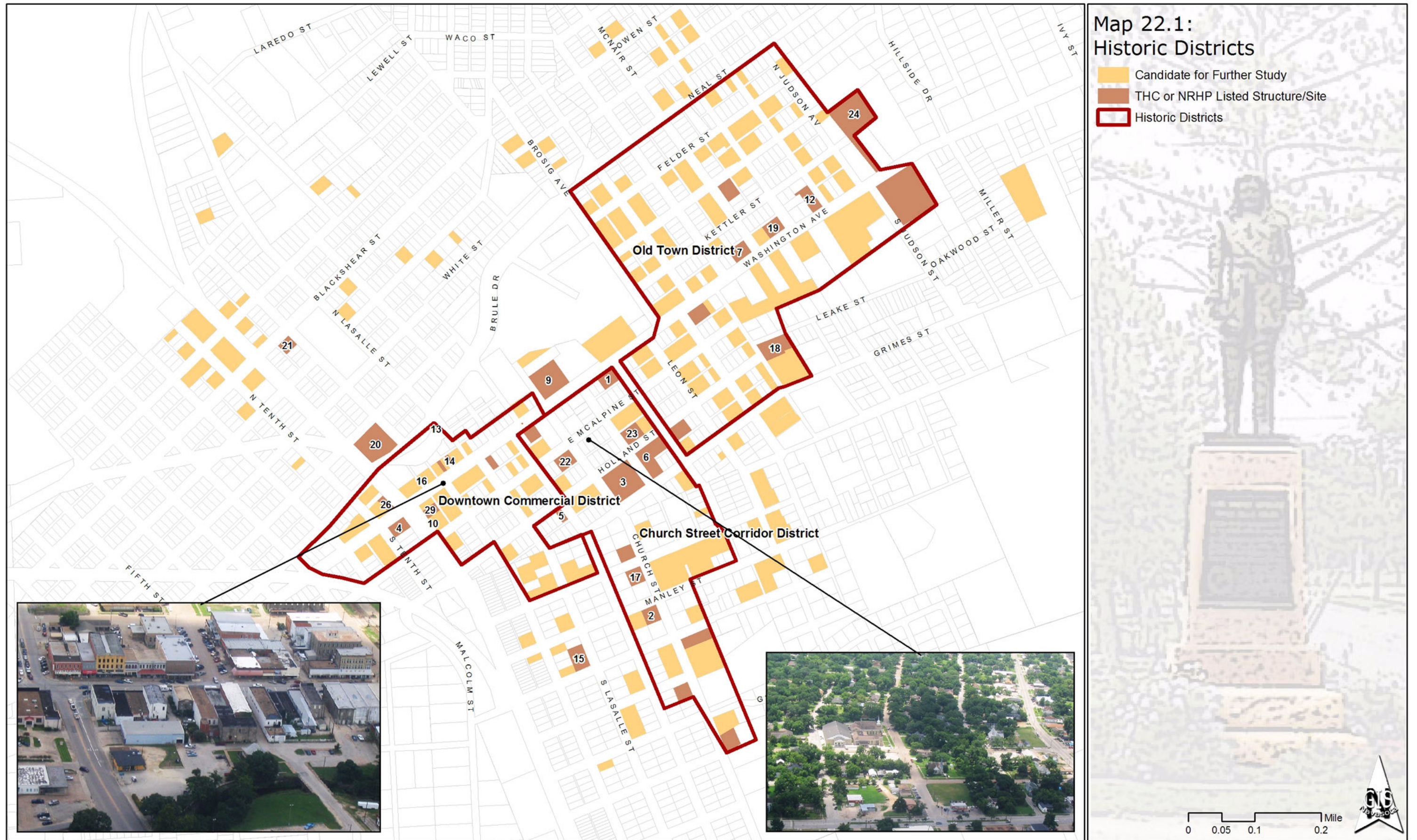
- Old Town District – This district primarily includes the Old Town Neighborhood oriented along Washington Avenue.
- Church Street Corridor District – This district is oriented along Church Street encompassing some Old Town residential development and several historic churches.
- Downtown Commercial District – This district includes the area traditionally considered to be Downtown, extending along South LaSalle to include similar commercial development.

Some individual and clustered historically significant structures are not included in a district due to their location within the City. For example some structures along South LaSalle and homes in or around the Cemetery Hill Neighborhood have historic significance, but cannot be feasibly included in a district.

Downtown Navasota in 2004



Downtown Navasota in 1950



Historic Resources Survey

Ongoing maintenance of the historic resources survey, identified in the Existing City Section, is key to this preservation strategy. In addition to the obvious aid in locating the structures most in need of preservation, the survey can further serve to mobilize the public and act as a benchmark for the future.

While the exact implementation methods suggested here may change, the structures listed in the survey should serve as the basis for all preservation education and regulation efforts. Examples might include the formation of historic districts, demolition delays within established historic preservation districts, and public/private preservation projects (e.g. paint program).

One failing of Navasota's current preservation effort is a lack of recognition of what resources exist within the City. In Article XIII, the zoning ordinance provides for preservation and landmark status for historic structures. However, no structures within the City currently have a historic landmark designation. A comprehensive survey would give staff and the possible appointed commission a benchmark to gauge preservation progress.

A historic resources survey may also be employed as a tool to involve the public in historic preservation. This participation is critical to a successful preservation effort, particularly if heritage tourism is desired. Facilities such as the Horlock Center, the Navasota Public Library, and other municipally funded agencies could distribute reference brochures with a historic resources map and listing of significant structures.

Another tool to involve and educate the public is an Internet website. A potential website might be utilized to distribute the survey in a more complete manner as compared to the previously mentioned brochure. The focal point could be a city map marking each identified building. The map could be set up to allow visitors to click on a property and view a complete historic record. Examples of this

information could be modern and historic photos, historic documentation (such as building date, architect, modification history, etc), and possibly oral histories. These oral histories could be recorded memories about buildings and events from Navasota's citizens. If successful, the program could be expanded to serve as an online museum of Navasota's people, places, and events. Most citizens would be likely to contribute their photographs to be scanned. The City Staff could host "Scan and Visit Days" to scan photos and record oral histories.

This survey should be considered a working document. It identified approximately 70 structures with documented historic significance, including sites identified by the National Register of Historic Places and the Texas Historical Commission. This classification also includes other non-listed but well preserved structures.

Currently there are almost 200 other potential sites that have yet to be documented in Navasota. The documentation of these sites is an example of potential updates by the proposed HLC of this survey. In order to keep the document current, the HLC should keep a regular schedule of maintenance. This maintenance includes information concerning the structures currently included in the survey in addition to the coordination of the effort to add other justifiable structures. The HLC should regularly monitor the historic properties list to ensure that properties are being maintained.

Financial Incentives

The municipality should consider providing incentives to offset additional expenditures that may be necessary to comply with this preservation effort. Incentives could encourage otherwise skeptical property owners to participate in historic preservation and be more receptive to regulation. The City should provide flexible and diverse incentive programs to accommodate the eclectic nature of the community's resources.

Facade loan/grant program – If implemented, property owners can apply for low-interest loans and grants to be used for exterior rehabilitation, preservation, and the restoration of historic properties. Additionally, grant

programs are available for façade improvements to buildings within the CBD that are consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The City of Navasota can provide for these programs through other city revenue sources in addition to applying for financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Community Development Block Grant. Emphasis should be placed on commercial structures, for economic development reasons.

TIFs – Tax Increment Financing permits taxing agencies (e.g. NISD, City of Navasota, Grimes County) to apply potential increases in taxes as a result of redevelopment toward public improvements such as infrastructure. Therefore, the property owner can utilize this revenue to pay off bonds that have been issued for capital improvements. Such capital improvements can also include Downtown streetscape enhancements, parking, street furniture, lighting, and other redevelopment projects deemed appropriate by the affected taxing agencies.

Property tax abatements – An alternative to TIF is to combat the perception that improvements will needlessly raise ad valorem property taxes, an abatement program may be desirable. A time limited program of this type can drastically reduce property taxes paid by income-producing buildings and owner-occupied homes.

Property tax deferrals – Under this program, the taxes resulting from an increase in assessed value from the rehabilitation of a historic structure are deferred for a period of years or until sale of the property. The deferral allows for the recapture of the property taxed due over the period of the deferral. The deferral functions as a no-interest loan to the property owner in the amount of the property taxes resulting from the improvement of the historic property.

Continued evaluation of the incentive programs would assure effective use of funds. Other grant and loan programs are identified in Appendix 22-A.

Education

The City of Navasota should outline a plan for community-wide education on preservation issues and policies. Preservation groups and the HLC should recognize the opportunity to bring preservation values and policies into the public schools, educating students about and creating an appreciation for their historic resources. Annual awards programs could be created to provide recognition to individual preservation efforts, gather good press, and provide opportunities to educate residents about the benefits of preservation.

The following 5 year action agenda is suggested for implementation of this section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action Agenda

Year 1:

- Create a Historic Landmark Commission (HLC).
- Draw proposed historic districts with the assistance of the HLC.
- Create a shared or part time staff position for historic preservation duties.

Year 2-3:

- Adopt by ordinance historic preservation districts and district design guidelines as proposed in year 1.
- Organize the HLC to comprise the following sub-committees.
 - Naming Sub-Committee: Several structures in the resources survey have multiple names. For example, the Hill-Cochran House is also known as the Steele-Cochran House. To eliminate this confusion, a subcommittee should be created to determine official names for all structures by seeking citizen suggestions and researching historic documents.
 - Nomination Sub-Committee: As many structures remain to be documented for inclusion in the historic resources survey, a sub-committee should be formed. This committee can act proactively and take suggestions from the public to investigate historic structures for inclusion in the survey.
 - Maintenance Aid Sub-Committee: A staff or citizen group should be charged with coordinating public/private projects to maintain and beautify historic structures. These projects may include efforts like a free or at cost paint program. Such a program could allow local hardware stores to receive publicity through sponsorship in exchange for providing low cost paint or other materials to the owners of historic structures.
- Identify grant/loan programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Community Development Block Grant.
- Implement property tax abatement/deferral programs.

Year 4:

- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Texas Enterprise Zone in conjunction with a Tax Increment Financing Zone.

Year 5:

- Determine the need for updates to the Historic Preservation Plan and Ordinance.
- Hire a full time staff position for historic preservation, heritage tourism, and/or Main Street program.

Ongoing Activities:

- Complete and maintain historic structure survey.
- Develop a website.
- Develop and distribute historic preservation literature.
- Pursue preservation related conferences such as the Texas Downtown Association or the Texas Historical Commission.

Sources:

Garnham, Harry Launce. 1985. Maintaining the Spirit of Place: A process for the Preservation of Town Character. PDA Publishers Corporation: Mesa, Arizona.

History of Grimes County: Land of Heritage and Progress. 1982. *Grimes County Historical Commission*. Taylor Publishing Co: Dallas, TX

The Navasota Bluebonnet: Commemorating 100 years of City Growth and Development. 1954. *Grimes County Chamber of Commerce*. Taylor Publishing Co: Dallas, TX

Phone interview with Boggess Lovett T, current Chair of the *Grimes County Historical Commission* April 19, 2004

APPENDIX 22-A

Historic Preservation Grant Opportunities

- 1. Historic Preservation Grant Fund – NPS:** provides matching grant funding to encourage historic preservation efforts.

For more information contact:

Historic Preservation Fund
Heritage Preservation Services
National Park Service
1201 Eye St., NW 2255
Washington, D.C. 20005
Fax: 202-371-1791
Email: nps_hps-info@nps.gov
Website: <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/hpf/>

- 2. Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives – NPS**

For more information contact:

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives
Heritage Preservation Services
National Park Service
1201 Eye St., NW 2255
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: Michael Auer at 202-354-2031
Fax: 202-371-1616
Email: nps_hps-info@nps.gov
Website: http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/tax_p.htm

- 3. Certified Local Government Grants – Texas Historic Commission:** grant money can be used for training of local preservation commissions, completing or updating surveys of historic resources, producing brochures, preparing preservation plans, and preparing National Register of Historic Places nominations.

For more information contact:

Texas Historic Commission
Email: bratten.thomason@thc.state.tx.us (grant coordinator)
Phone: 512-463-5997
Website: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/grantsincent/gracig.html>

- 4. Heritage Tourism Grants – Texas Historic Commission:** Offers matching grant funding for heritage tourism oriented projects such as interpretation, signage, publications, websites, or education. Grants are one-to-one with in-kind and/or cash matches. Counties in the Lakes and Brazos Regions will be eligible for the next round of grants. Grimes County is included in the Brazos Region.

For more information or an application contact:

Texas Historic Commission
Email: amber.nunez@thc.state.tx.us (grant coordinator)
Phone: 512-463-1236
Website: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/grantsincent/graht.html>

Other Financial Sources:

State Resources

- 1. Texas Preservation Trust Fund:** A grant program administered by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Funds can be applied to preservation planning activities, like Historic Resource Surveys or Historic Structures Reports, as well as "bricks-and-mortar" projects for physical work on historic properties.

Public, nonprofit and private entities are all eligible to apply, but most funded projects have a clear public benefit. <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/grantsincent/gratptf.html>

2. **History Museum Grants:** THC awards small grants to qualified history museums for conservation and preservation projects. Although these grants do not address the buildings themselves, collections of historical materials are also important resources that face a variety of threats. <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/grantsincent/gramus.html> or call 512-463-5853 or fax 512-475-3122.
3. **State Sales Tax Exemption:** Repair and rehabilitation work on Texas properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places qualifies for a state sales tax exemption on all labor (not materials) for the project http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxpubs/tx94_116.html

Federal Resources

1. **Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives:** Property owners who undertake a substantial rehabilitation of a qualified historic building for income-producing use can qualify for an income tax credit equal to 20 percent of the amount invested in the rehabilitation. A 10 percent tax credit is also available for properties built before 1935 that do not meet the criteria for historical designation. <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/historicprop/hpcredits.html>
2. **Save America's Treasures Grants:** Administered by the NPS, this is the primary federal grant program for historic properties. A competitive application process is open to properties with national significance, with a percentage of funds earmarked for projects selected by members of Congress. <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/treasures/>
3. **National Trust for Historic Preservation:** The National Trust offers several grant and loan programs to assist with a variety of preservation projects including planning, education, professional services and certain rehabilitation projects. Most grants are reserved for non-profits and public agencies, but some private owners may qualify. <http://www.nationaltrust.org/help/grants.html>
4. **Preservation Texas:** Preserves the historic resources of Texas by direct action and by empowering individuals and local and state organizations through education, communication, advocacy and collaboration <http://www.preservationtexas.org/>
5. **National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH):** The NEH has a number of grants such as the Preservation Assistance grant. <http://www.neh.fed.us/>
6. **Private Entities:** Funding can also be available from charitable foundations, private donors, banks, corporations, etc. Many preservation projects involve collaborative and creative funding arrangements that can utilize public and private resources.