

Context Study Recommendations and Future Actions General Summary

As mentioned in the Introduction, the primary purpose of historic contexts is as a framework for evaluating historic resources, a set of organizational tools for categorizing the past, as a planning tool for guiding future development while incorporating the past, and as a rallying point for educational and outreach activities. These contexts will help Chaska with “building its future from its past.” They will also grow and change as the city develops its cultural resource priorities.

Each individual context in this study contains its own list of “Recommendations and Future Actions,” which can be changed, amended, added to, or deleted as priorities change. These recommendations offer specific, context-related suggestions to further the historic preservation agenda in the City of Chaska, particularly with regards to increasing the number of locally and nationally designated properties.

The most important next preservation step that the city could take would be to complete a full cultural resources survey. Such an initiative is quite large and time-consuming, but could be done by a team of enthusiastic volunteers under professional leadership. Some smaller surveying efforts have already been completed.

Based upon this survey and other efforts, the City of Chaska should investigate increasing its inventory of locally designated properties. This should be accompanied by expanded interpretation of these properties. A corollary would be increasing the number of national register properties, based on suggestions made within the individual context discussions.

Although the city already has a design manual for the downtown core, it may want to consider other design guidelines, such as for residential structures.

The City should continue its low interest loan program for historic buildings, and add a technical assistance component.

Chaska also needs to be cognizant of its lost resources and diligent in retaining important remaining ones.

The Chaska Historical Society is an important interpretive resource, and these efforts should be encouraged and expanded.

Other cities have been successful in using completed context studies as a kind of training and introduction manual for new HPC members. Such a use would be an excellent way to ensure that the Commission has a standard basis of knowledge and shared goals for the future.

