



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

AGENDA REPORT

January 23, 2023

ITEM 4.II: Discussion on Conservation Overlay Districts

BACKGROUND:

The National Alliance for Preservation Commission (NAPC) held a webinar late last year on the benefits and regulations of conservation overlay districts. After the webinar, there was interest in the benefits of it within Warrensburg. Conservation districts are tailored to conserve a neighborhood or area's character by creating design guidelines that focus on form, density, and open space rather than architectural features such as materials, colors, and protection of original materials like a historic overlay district.

Conservation districts assist with conserving and revitalizing neighborhoods from incompatible additions or new construction. The neighborhoods are historic, 50 years or older, and feature distinctive and similar architectural characteristics found throughout the neighborhood. Design guidelines for conservation district review elements such as reduced building setbacks, building orientation, height, scale, roof pitch, landscape features, etc.

Staff has reviewed ordinances of six Missouri cities that have conservation overlay districts or its equivalent. The findings below show who can initiate a conservation overlay district application, the criteria to establish a conservation overlay district, and design elements that are reviewed within a conservation overlay district.

Who can initiate start the process to create a Conservation Overlay District?

Based on the findings, City Council was listed as the main governing body that could initiate the process for a conservation overlay district. Some cities allowed another body such as the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Historic Preservation Commission to initiate the process. All the cities allowed an application made by property owners in the area, such application must contain signatures of property owners representing at least 50 percent of the property owners within the boundary.

What criteria are used to determine if a neighborhood or area meets the requirements to be a Conservation Overlay District?

Below is a list of criteria that was used by six Missouri cities. The number next to the criteria indicates how many cities used this or similar language.

- The area contains similar land uses and densities, displays unifying elements, and possesses cohesive physical, social or economic relationships – 4
- There is evidence that neighborhood conservation designation would be an appropriate and effective method for conserving and revitalizing the area – 4
- There is evidence of structural deterioration, encroachment of incompatible land uses, or erection of incompatible structures which are contributing to the changing of the area – 2
- District property owners or residents desire and support neighborhood conservation efforts – 2
- District designation conforms to city plans and policies – 2
- The area was developed at least fifty (50) years ago and retains distinctive architectural and historical characteristics that are worthy of conservation, but which have less historical, architectural, or cultural significance than a historic district – 2

- The area exhibits revitalization potential, but coordinated action or treatment is needed – 1
- The area has a relationship to an identifiable urban or neighborhood center or historic area where preservation of this relationship is determined to be critical to the protection of such center or historic area – 1
- Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics represents an established and familiar visual feature or development pattern of the neighborhood, community, or City – 1
- The area must be either "stable" or "stabilizing." – 1

What elements are reviewed in a conservation overlay district?

Below is a list of elements that was used by six Missouri cities. The number indicates how many cities review this elements within their ordinance.

SITE ELEMENTS.

Building orientation and separation	4
Floor area	4
Building setbacks	4
Lot coverage	4
Lot size and width	4
Landscaping and screening	3
Size and placement of accessory structures	3
Signage	3
Lighting	2
Walls, fences, retaining walls and walkways	2
Open space	1
Land Use	1

BUILDING ELEMENTS.

Height, number of stories	5
Roof type, pitch, and materials	5
Scale	4
Window and door type, proportion, and arrangement	4
Vertical and horizontal alignments	3
Parking lots and driveways	3
Architectural detail	2
Massing/Building Form	2
Exterior wall materials, texture, and color	2
Foundations height and materials	2
Porches, decks, and awnings	2
Dumpsters	1
Orientation	1
Sense of entry	1
Service and mechanical areas	1

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission discuss conservation district overlay and provide direction to staff.