

Department of Historic Resources
Work Plan Summary
October 2015-September 2016

Mission:

The Department of Historic Resources fosters, encourages, and supports the stewardship and use of Virginia's significant architectural, archaeological, and historic resources as valuable assets for the economic, educational and cultural benefit of citizens and communities.

Agency Vision:

In a world where experiences are all too often “virtual” in nature, Virginia is blessed with places where historic events actually took place and where historic people – both founding fathers and ordinary men and women—lived their day to day lives. Not only do authentic historic places connect us with the people and events that shaped who we are today, the use of historic places as assets for a more vital future builds on the connectivity of groups and individuals who work to preserve these places, to interpret them, or to ensure their use as homes for families and businesses well into the future.

In recognition that this year 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of both the National Historic Preservation Act and the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, we envision Virginia as a place where public and private partners join hands as stewards of historic lands and landmarks, where people recycle buildings as routinely as they recycle cans and glass, and where DHR is recognized for its role in fulfilling the charge of Article XI of the Virginia Constitution to conserve, develop, and use historic sites and buildings for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth.

We envision a future where Virginia's historic places are fully valued and used as essential assets for education, tourism, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality, as well as underlying cultural, social, and civic benefits; where pride of place lifts people's spirits and well-being in communities large and small throughout the Commonwealth; and where the preservation of those places is so accepted that it is integrated into daily life and decision-making at all levels.

Agency Goals:

DHR's programs support both public and private efforts to make the most of irreplaceable historic resources that can and should benefit Virginia communities for generations to come. The Department is guided by issues, challenges, and goals adopted as part of *Today's Treasure – Tomorrow's Trust: Virginia's Statewide Comprehensive Preservation Plan 2016-2021*. While, the goals and objectives from this plan and its predecessors shape overall agency actions, the Department refines its efforts in two related, but shorter planning processes.

Every two years, DHR updates its strategic plan. Using the Comprehensive Plan goals and objectives, the strategic plan establishes biennial priorities as well as measures by which success

can be assessed. The strategic plan is made public on the Commonwealth of Virginia website and is linked to the state's biennial budgeting process. In addition, each year DHR sets annual priorities based on perceived need, and partnership opportunities as well as current fiscal and staff constraints, outlining more specific tactics by means of which it will address goals and objectives cited in both the statewide comprehensive plan and the agency strategic plan.

In this year the Department's revised work plan takes into account the transition from one comprehensive plan to another with an increased emphasis on: improving the quality of and access to information about historic places and ways to preserve and use them effectively; helping the public and private entities deal with the effects of climate change; and an increased commitment to serving all of Virginia's varied geographic areas and cultural communities.

Goal 1: Improve appropriate management of historic assets.

The Department will work to identify and protect Virginia's historic assets and work towards fulfilling its mission to support communities, organizations and agencies at all levels in efforts to make historic resources a viable part of our environment and our communities well into the future.

Objective A: Lead by example—stewardship of buildings/properties/records/archaeological and museum collections by both public agencies and private non-profit leaders.

In order to accomplish this objective, DHR will record approximately 15 new easements and perform approximately 196 easement inspections. Additionally, staff will continue to manage Clermont, Clarke County, and the Wilderness Tract, Orange County, in collaboration with private partners to meet preservation and educational objectives as well as use Clermont as a preservation training facility for current and future generations of Virginians. The Department will also continue to manage archaeological collections in accordance with federal guidelines and to meet agency fiduciary responsibility. Further, DHR will continue to educate constituents to be better stewards of historic properties and to provide education to state land management agencies regarding public use of historic structures and cultural landscapes.

Objective B: Expand statewide and local survey data.

DHR and its partners will add records for approximately 3500 buildings, structures, objects, sites or districts to its historic resource inventory. Staff will prioritize, facilitate and conduct surveys based on geographic area, history-related theme, property types, and known climate change and development pressures as well as conduct survey and planning projects through Cost-Share, Certified Local Governments and other grants and partnerships. Additionally, staff will identify core areas of anticipated sea level rise, threat of severe flooding and target surveys of historic places in those areas.

Objective C: Evaluate and register (or otherwise designate) significant historic properties.

DHR staff will submit roughly 62 nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (and/or the Virginia Landmarks Register). DHR also aims to register at least 5 State-owned historic properties to the VLR. Staff will continue to work with property owners, consultants and local governments to assist in the completion and presentation of NR nominations.

Objective D: Strengthen the accuracy, accessibility and security of survey data and its use through managing electronic and other information media.

DHR staff anticipates serving more than 4000 customers conducting research in the DHR archives or using DHR research services. The Department will refine/expand the capacity of VCRIS, GIS and other electronic data tools and continue the effort to enter legacy data from paper records and older databases into VCRIS. Staff will also continue to conduct training for potential VCRIS users and commit to protecting security and integrity of sensitive locational data.

Objective E: Improve the preparedness and resilience of historic places, archaeological and museum collections and records to address hazard mitigation and long-term climate change.

Climate change impacts are also targeted to be assessed by identifying historic properties that are within defined climate change impact areas.

Goal 2: Connect with broader constituencies.

The Department will engage with public and private organizations, traditional and non-traditional partners, educational partners, communities and the general public to educate them about the values and benefits of historic preservation.

Objective A: Redirect and “Rebrand” historic preservation to speak to broader and younger audiences.

To accomplish this objective, DHR will examine the changing face of Virginia demographics and the potential effect on historic places, both statewide and in key regions. Examples of specific tactics include developing contact lists and information for key players within these targets to serve as a first step in conducting surveys and other studies in the near future. DHR will convene an internal LGBTQ Committee to identify important places for possible VLR and/or NRHP nominations and potential highway marker topics.

The Department will also work to update the message of historic preservation to be more relevant in a changing Virginia and commit to partnerships through public participation to start to determine how that message needs to be updated.

Using social media to effectively expand the agency’s reach will also assist in accomplishing this objective as well as developing ongoing strategies to include non-traditional stakeholders and using outdoor recreation as a platform to reach youth and younger audiences about the value of preserving historic places.

Objective B: Weave the message of historic preservation values and benefits as well as Virginia’s complex social history into broader educational programs at all levels.

Integrating an ethic of conservation as early as possible by the sharing of resources and materials with educational partners and entities will be an important strategy in reaching this objective. Continuing to create and distribute Archaeology Month posters and Archaeological Resource Kits are examples of ways that we will do this. Accepting invitations by teachers and professors at all levels to make presentations to school groups to promote local history, local historical properties, research, and visitation to public historical attractions will be important. To make inroads into the public school systems, the Department will work to establish a partnership with the Department of Education with the long-term goal of creating historic preservation educational materials to supplement SOLs. Further, DHR will work to increase internship and volunteer opportunities to train future preservation professionals and teachers to accomplish this objective.

Objective C: Reach out to public and private stakeholders to improve awareness of historic preservation values, benefits, programs and tools.

DHR aims to reach more than 12,000 of our public and private stakeholders through their participation in DHR training and environmental education programs. We also have a goal to educate more than 350,000 visitors to our exhibits at, as examples, the Virginia State Fair and the Virginia Historical Society and by offering technical assistance and archaeological artifact loans to museums and other institutions. Archaeology staff also has a goal of educating more than 100 participants in archaeological field schools and lab sessions.

Objective D: Include Virginia’s geographically and culturally diverse communities as active stakeholders.

To accomplish this goal, the new listings on the VLR and/or the NRHP, DHR aims for 20% of those properties to reflect Virginia’s rich and diverse cultural heritage. In addition, it is our goal that 30% of the new or replacement Historical Highway Markers reflect Virginia’s rich diversity as well. Lastly, we are targeting 25% of our educational programs to incorporate themes emphasizing the rich variety of peoples and cultures in Virginia history. The Department will continue to post on the agency Facebook page and emphasize diversity-related themes.

Goal 3: Building strong and sustainable statewide and community economies using historic assets.

The Department will support Virginia’s economy through the administration of and education about preservation incentives with a focus on recreation and tourism.

Objective A: Integrate sustainability and historic preservation practices to ensure that historic assets are used to support a vital and viable future.

To this end, DHR will support the use of environmentally sustainable practices at historic properties where such practices are consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and associated guidance. Also, DHR plans to promote preservation as recycling historic buildings as well to educate the public through workshops about how environmentally sensitive and sustainable practices can be implemented at historic properties in a manner consistent with the *SOIS* to preserve and retain significant historic fabric and character.

Objective B: Strengthen the role of Rehabilitation Tax Credits and revitalizing historic residential, commercial and industrial neighborhoods.

To this objective, DHR anticipates that more than 175 historic rehabilitation projects qualifying for tax credits will be completed this year, leveraging at least \$300 million in private investment in historic buildings. Staff will continue to provide expert guidance and training to help private property owners rehabilitate and reuse historic assets by conducting monthly Tax Credit Open House sessions. Staff will continue to provide sound data and analysis of the economic impacts of historic rehabilitation and the rehab tax credits in addition to promoting the use of these tax credits and educating state and local leaders about the benefits of Virginia's rehabilitation tax credit program.

Objective C: Increase availability and use of tools and programs that use historic assets for public and private benefit.

The Department will leverage the Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund to protect battlefield lands from all wars fought on Virginia soil by acquiring lands and easements in partnership with both the public and private sectors.

Objective D: Reinforce the contribution of historic assets to outdoor recreation.

DHR plans to work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation in the development of the *2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan* to incorporate historic places and attractions. Continuing to identify, evaluate, register and manage significant historic places in Virginia's State Parks will be an important strategy to accomplish this objective. Specifically, DHR staff will continue to work with the managers of Natural Bridge to ensure that good historic preservation policies and plans are implemented. Further, staff will work with the John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and Civil War Trails to promote outdoor recreation through heritage trails.

Objective E: Strengthen the use of historic places as assets in support of Virginia's tourism industry.

DHR staff will work to ensure that tourism, education and training programs at all levels integrate the value of historic places and to integrate these assets into the full range of tourism activities. Specifically, staff is working to secure funding to create a Historical Highway Marker App to assist motorists and cyclists in learning about Virginia's history along our roadways. In addition, the Department will strategies to commemorate the 50th anniversary of both the

National Historic Preservation Act and the independent creation of the Virginia Historic Landmark Commission.

Goal 4: Incorporate historic places and their preservation effectively into planning and policy decision-making.

The Department will support state and local governments in their efforts to protect and sustain the value of Virginia's historic assets.

Objective A: Increase communication, planning and coordination among government entities.

To accomplish this objective, DHR aims to develop a minimum of 5 state or federal agency-specific standard operating procedures, programmatic agreements or programmatic exclusions to streamline the review process. Staff will continue to provide 106 Review responses within 30 days as well as to provide targeted training in the Section 106 process and consultation procedures to enhance relationships and to achieve efficiencies in review. Staff will also use a wide range of mitigation strategies encouraging the protection of historic properties through deed restrictions, preservation covenants, or conservation easements in a minimum of 1 Memorandum of Agreement/Programmatic Agreement. Additionally, staff will encourage the appropriate treatment of state-owned historic properties through our participation in the state review process and the biennial State Stewardship Report.

Objective B: Strengthen local planning and decision-making tools and processes.

To meet this objective, DHR staff aim to certify at least 1 new local government into the HPF-funded CLG program and evaluate at least 6 current Certified Local Governments. The staff's target is to ensure that 20 CLGs submit annual reports to the NPS. Further, staff will begin a bi-annual newsletter for CLGs to foster better communications between DHR and CLGs and among all CLGs.

Goal 5: Sharpen tools for historic preservation.

The Department will work to educate our preservation partners and enhance communications leading to the increased awareness and protection of all of Virginia's diverse historic resources.

Objective A: Fortify state and local programs and incentives.

The Department will work to educate state and local decision makers to ensure that state rehabilitation tax credits and land conservation credit programs remain strong and effective and to ensure that sensitive reuse of older buildings plays a greater role in creating affordable housing by providing technical guidance on the appropriate treatment of historic resources according to the *SOIS*.

Objective B: Address gaps in preservation of threatened property types through legislative, programmatic and educational measures.

To accomplish this goal, DHR aims for a 100% completion rate for projects that salvage or analyze data from archaeological sites threatened with major damage or destruction through human or natural forces. An additional strategy includes focusing attention on threatened property types such as aging school buildings, slave cemeteries, underwater archaeological resources as well as sites relating to LGBTQ, African-American, Native-American and women's history. Staff will also continue to administer the HPF-funded Hurricane Sandy grant.

Objective C: Improve training for preservation stakeholders and craftsmen.

The Department will provide targeted training workshops for preservation and museum professionals and craftsmen to educate property owners and tradesmen on appropriate treatment of historic properties. In order to do this, staff will continue to conduct monthly Tax Credit Open House sessions to provide informal guidance and conduct meetings and site visits with property owners and their design professionals to understand the historic resources affected and to offer guidance on appropriate treatment. In addition, staff will hold two workshops for tax credit applicants, consultants, architects and others involved to provide administrative updates and guidance on a range of rehabilitation topics such as application process, subdivision of large industrial spaces, and considerations for the repair or replacement of windows. DHR will also continue to conduct annual lab workshops in conjunction with the Archaeological Certification Program as well as conduct an annual field school for volunteers and students on the Chesapeake Bay or Atlantic Coast focusing on threatened sites.

Objective D: Expand networks and collaboration to meet common objectives.

Towards accomplishing this objective, DHR will coordinate ongoing public participation by reconstituting the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and holding a minimum of 1 meeting to facilitate and to report on progress made in implementing the plan's broader goals and objectives. Additionally, staff will hold at least 1 regional planning workshop to ensure continued public engagement as well as identify target audiences and conduct at least 1 short survey on preservation issues independently or in partnership with Preservation Virginia and other appropriate partners. DHR will continue to use social media and other alternatives to gather opinions on an on-going basis by using the agency Facebook page to query the public about issues of concern. The Department will also continue to participate in key annual conferences such as the Preservation Virginia Conference and participate in joint projects by both public and private partner organizations. For example, DHR will partner with Preservation Virginia to develop and conduct a Courthouse Symposium as well as conducting an archival study of the slave market area.