

Introduction

What Is the Purpose of the Historic District Plans?

Sacramento is full of historic places that contribute to the city's unique character and identity and enhance its livability. Among the city's most important historic places are its historic districts, areas that contain resources that have been identified as holding collective historic value, integrity, and an association to an important theme(s) in Sacramento history.

Sacramento has 30 historic districts that are officially recognized and listed on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources (Sacramento Register), in addition to individual Landmark properties. The City Council has found that, "The preservation and continued use of historic resources are effective tools sustain and revitalize neighborhoods and business districts within the city, enhance the city's economic, cultural and aesthetic standing, its identity and its livability, marketability and urban character."¹

The Historic District Plans are an important part of the City's historic preservation program. They plans advance the City's goals to recognize and preserve its significant and diverse historic districts, and thereby foster an understanding of local heritage, promote public health and safety, and further the economic and general welfare of the citizens of Sacramento. The plans seek to provide a basis for managing growth and change in many of the city's historic districts by guiding alterations to existing buildings and new development that respect the historic character that defines these special places.

Sacramento City Code § 17.604.300(A) Historic district plans.

A. The preservation commission shall promulgate and recommend to the council for adoption a historic district plan for each preservation area existing as of the date of enactment of Ordinance No. 2006-063, and for each historic district designated pursuant to this chapter. Each historic district plan shall include:

1. A statement of the goals for review of development projects within the historic district;
2. A representation of the historical development of land uses, existing land uses, and any adopted plans for future land uses;
3. A statement of findings, including the following:
 - a. The historical or pre-historical period to which the area is significant;
 - b. The predominant periods or styles of the structures or features therein;
 - c. The significant features and characteristics of such periods or styles, as represented in the historic district, including, but not limited to, structure height, bulk, distinctive architectural details, materials, textures, archeological and landscape features and fixtures; and
 - d. A statement, consistent with article II, of the standards and criteria to be utilized in determining the appropriateness of any development project involving a landmark, contributing resource or noncontributing resource within the historic district.

Refer to Appendix A for the full sections of the Sacramento City Code.

¹ Sacramento City Code § 17.604.100 Findings and declaration of purpose, Ord. 2013-0020 § 1; Ord. 2013-0007 § 1.

This document includes Historic District Plans for 27 of the historic districts in the City. Three historic districts are currently in the process of having separate historic district plans developed or are not within the City's jurisdiction, and therefore are not included in the enclosed Historic District Plans.²

Many of the existing historic districts are in geographical proximity to each other, within the Central City, and are facing evolving planning and development objectives. To serve the community and the City's planning staff, and to encourage best practices in preservation and design, the Historic District Plans provide design standards and criteria that are intended to manage change in the historic districts in a way that protects Sacramento's history and character. The Historic District Plans will help residents, property owners, City staff, and members of the design community understand the significance of each historic district so that they can develop design approaches that consider the historic context early in the design process. Implementation of the design standards and criteria within the Historic District Plans will bring greater clarity about what kind of development is compatible for each historic district.

	Historic District Name	Ordinance No.
1	1200-1300 Q Street	85-076
2	20th and N Street	85-076
3	Alkali Flat Central	2004-048
4	Alkali Flat North	85-076
5	Alkali Flat South	2004-048
6	Alkali Flat West	2004-048
7	Boulevard Park	85-076
8	Bungalow Row	2004-009
9	C Street Commercial	85-076
10	C Street Industrial	85-076
11	Capitol	85-076
12	Capitol Mansions	2004-009
13	Cathedral Square	85-076
14	Central Shops	2007-103
15	East End (formerly Capitol Avenue)	85-076
16	Fremont Park	85-076
17	Historic City Cemetery	2012-038
18	Marshall Park	85-076
19	Merchant Street	85-076
20	New Washington School (formerly Washington School)	85-076
21	Newton Booth	2015-0012
22	North 16th Street	2011-011
23	Oak Park	2007-094
24	Old Washington School (formerly Washington)	85-076
25	Plaza Park [Cesar Chavez Plaza] (formerly [Cesar Chavez Memorial] Plaza Park/CBD Historic District)	85-076
26	Poverty Ridge	85-076
27	R Street	85-076
28	Sacramento City College	96-009
29	South Side	85-076
30	Winn Park	2004-009

² A separate historic district plan is being completed for the Central Shops Historic District, and a separate historic landscape plan is being prepared for the Historic City Cemetery Historic District. The Sacramento City College Historic District is not under City jurisdiction.

What is a Historic District Plan?

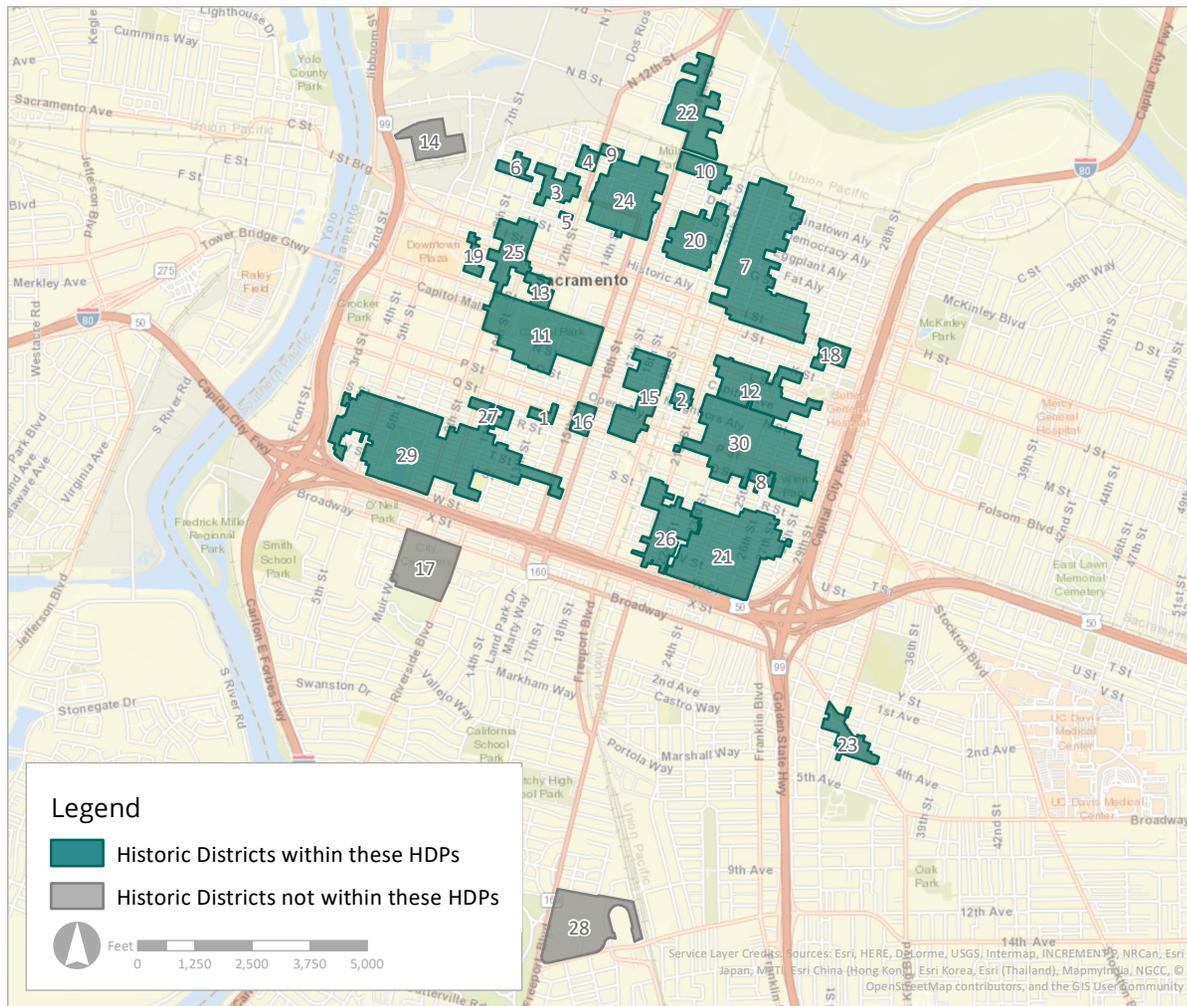


Figure 1. Map of the 30 historic districts listed on the Sacramento Register, labeled per previous table. Source: Page & Turnbull and City of Sacramento, 2019.

A Historic District Plan is a historic preservation and project planning tool for residents, property owners, City staff, and members of the design community. For each historic district, a Historic District Plan provides the brief historic district context, significance, period of significance, predominant architectural styles and property types from the period of significance, character-defining features, contributing and non-contributing resources, and design standards and criteria to guide further development that is appropriate within the context of the district. An individual, district-specific Historic District Plan from Section 2 of this document is only complete with Section 1, which includes the Historic District Standards & Criteria Common to Sacramento's Historic Districts and other pertinent information.

Key Concepts

The following concepts are fundamental elements in the Historic District Plans.

Brief Historic District Context

While the historic districts relate to larger, city-wide historic contexts and even nation-wide contexts, each has its own individual history. A Historic District Plan begins with a brief historic district context catered to the area to provide a narrative and understanding of how the historic district developed and any events, trends, designs, persons, or periods important to Sacramento history. Most essentially, the district context helps determine the significance evaluation.

Sacramento City Code § 17.604.210(C) Criteria and requirements for listing on, and deletion from, the Sacramento Register.

B. Listing on the Sacramento Register—Historic districts. A geographic area nominated as a historic district shall be listed on the Sacramento Register as a historic district if the city council finds, after holding the hearing required by this chapter, that all of the requirements set forth below are satisfied:

1. Requirements.

- a. The area is a geographically definable area; or
- b. The area possesses either:
 - i. A significant concentration or continuity of buildings unified by: (A) past events or (B) aesthetically by plan or physical development; or
 - ii. The area is associated with an event, person, or period significant or important to city history; or
- c. The designation of the geographic area as a historic district is reasonable, appropriate and necessary to protect, promote and further the goals and purposes of this chapter and is not inconsistent with other goals and policies of the city.

2. Factors to be considered. In determining whether to list a geographic area on the Sacramento Register as a historic district, the following factors shall be considered:

- a. A historic district should have integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and association;
- b. The collective historic value of the buildings and structures in a historic district taken together may be greater than the historic value of each individual building or structure.

Refer to Appendix A for the full section of the Sacramento City Code.

Significance

With an understanding of the historic district context, the significance section in the Historic District Plan explains why the historic district is important to Sacramento history. The section provides a current evaluation of significance for the historic district according to the requirements and factors for listing on, and deletion from, the Sacramento Register set forth in the city code. Historic districts must satisfy all of the criteria under this code section to be listed on the Sacramento Register.

Integrity

Integrity is defined by the California Office of Historic Preservation as “the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance,” or more simply defined by the National Park Service as “the ability of a property to convey its significance.”¹ Per the Sacramento City Code, six variables, or aspects, that define integrity are used to evaluate a historic district’s integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association.

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed. Integrity of location refers to whether the property has been moved or relocated since its construction;

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the property;

Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s);

Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form the historic property;

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory; and

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and the historic property.

Period of Significance

After the significance of a historic district is determined, a **period of significance** should be established. The period of significance is the time span during which the historic district attained its historic significance. It is based on the historic district context.

Character-Defining Features

The **character-defining features** are the essential physical elements from the period of significance that enable a historic district and its contributing resources to convey their collective historic identity and the historic district’s significance. They must be evident for a historic district and its contributing resources to retain their status on the Sacramento Register. A historic district and its contributing resources must clearly contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative example of a particular type, period, or method of construction, and these features must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity. These distinctive physical traits commonly recur in property types, architectural styles, property landscapes, and streetscapes. Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials.

Original vs. Historic

The terms “original” and “historic” are often used interchangeably in everyday conversation; however, they mean subtly different things. For the purposes of this document, the term **original** describes elements or features that date to the contributing resource’s initial date of construction. The term **historic**, on the other hand, describes elements or features that date to the historic district’s period of significance, which, in many cases, may span several years or even decades. A feature or element may be considered historic even if it is not original to the resource.

Contributing vs. Non-Contributing Resources

Each historic district has a list of contributing and non-contributing resources, which are determined according to the requirements and factors for listing on, and deletion from, the Sacramento Register set forth in the Sacramento City Code. The historic district contexts, significance, period of significance, character-defining features, field survey, and previous survey assessments provide information to assist with the criteria assessment. Properties must satisfy all five of the criteria under this code section to be listed on the Sacramento Register as a contributing resource to the historic district. Contributing and non-contributing resources may also be listed as individual landmarks according to the Sacramento City Code section for “Listing on the Sacramento Register—Landmarks.”

A **contributing resource** is significant and adds historic

1 California Office of Historic Preservation, Technical Assistance Series No. 7: How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources (Sacramento: California Office of State Publishing, 4 September 2001), 11; National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1995), 44.

value to the historic district. It was constructed during the historic district's period of significance and retains integrity. Contributing resources may at times be referred to as "contributing buildings" or "contributing properties" to add clarity to individual design guidelines that are intended to address only a building or the property as a whole.

A **non-contributing resource** is not significant and does not add historic value to the historic district. It was either constructed outside of the period of significance or its primary features have been so altered that it no longer retains integrity. However, because changes to non-contributing resources have the potential to affect the character of the historic district, proposed changes are reviewed for compatibility.

Public vs. Private Realm

The design standards and criteria for the historic districts and their contributing and non-contributing resources recognize a distinction between the "public" and "private" realms of properties. The **public realm** generally refers to the portion of a property that is visually accessible from the street. Views of a proposed project from the public realm typically include the front yard, front façade, roof, and portions of the side façades and side yards. They may also include elements within the public realm, such as street trees and park strips. There are commercial and civic buildings that have publicly accessible interior spaces, such as lobbies, that may also be considered part of the public realm.

The **private realm** generally refers to the interior of privately-owned buildings that are not publicly accessible (primarily residential, industrial, and office buildings) while **semi-private** refers to the side and rear exterior areas, such as those that are visible from the alley. These areas are private to the property owner and/or resident, and do not directly contribute to the experience of the historic district by the public. Nonetheless, what occurs at the rear and side of the building and property may have the potential to affect neighboring properties. For instance, a large accessory dwelling unit (ADU) could overlook a neighboring yard or block the windows of a neighboring building.

The design of alterations and additions made in the semi-private realm are allowed greater flexibility than those in the public realm. Interior alterations of private residences, industrial buildings, or office buildings, which do not generally contain publicly-accessible interiors, are not considered "development projects" per the Historic Preservation chapter of the Sacramento City Code and are thus not reviewed under the design standards and criteria. Work inside commercial or civic buildings involving significant, publicly accessible interiors, however, is considered a "development project" and is subject to preservation review.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards & Guidelines

The design standards and criteria within the Historic District Plans expand on, and are consistent with, the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (Secretary's Standards), and the associated *Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (Secretary's Guidelines).

Established by the U.S. Department of the Interior and National Park Service, the Secretary's Standards and Guidelines are nationally-recognized best practices for historic preservation. Federal agencies use the



Figure 2. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>.

Secretary's Standards and Guidelines in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities. State and local officials use them in reviewing both federal and non-federal rehabilitation proposals.

The Secretary's Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. The Secretary's Standards address four treatments for historic properties: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

The Secretary's Guidelines offer general design and technical recommendations to assist in applying the Secretary's Standards to a specific property while the design standards and criteria within the Historic District Plans provide guidance specific to Sacramento's historic districts and community values and expectations.

The design standards and criteria for Sacramento's historic districts are written to be consistent with the Secretary's Standards and Guidelines, so projects found to conform with the Historic District Plans generally are considered in conformance with the Secretary's Standards. A project does not need to meet all of the Secretary's Standards and design standards and criteria in the Historic District Plans in order to be approved.

Preservation is the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work generally focuses on ongoing maintenance and repairs of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement or new construction.

Rehabilitation is the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

Reconstruction is the act or process of depicting, by means or new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.¹

¹ The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, accessed November 21, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-rehabilitation.htm>.

Compatible and Differentiated

Standard 9 of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation states that new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction “shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.”²

The standard’s intent is to provide guidance on the broad factors that determine whether a new construction project is appropriate for a historic property or not. The concept of creating a design that is both **compatible** with and **differentiated** from historic properties in a historic district may initially seem contradictory; however, historic districts, themselves, are often useful examples of this concept.³ Many historic districts contain buildings that were constructed in different architectural styles during different periods of time, but the buildings are compatible with one another because they share the same underlying principles of proportion, composition, articulation, and materials, and they respect established setbacks, street frontage, rhythm, and circulation patterns. Like contributing buildings in a historic district from different time periods, compatible new projects use “the influence of place to create continuity of character regardless of style.”⁴

The concept of compatible and differentiated provides

2 The Secretary for the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.
3 According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the definition of “compatible,” is “able to exist or occur together without problems or conflict.”
4 Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, “Sense of Place: Design Guidelines for New Construction in Historic Districts,” 2007, 10, accessed November 28, 2018, http://www.preservationalliance.com/publications/SenseofPlace_final.pdf.

direction for the design of appropriate new work in historic districts, while also allowing for creative flexibility and new artistic visions.

Some Points Regarding Compatibility

A compatible design for new additions or infill should consider and reflect the surrounding contributing resources in massing, size, scale, and spatial relationship.

- Buildings on the same street that were built in different styles and during different eras may be compatible if they share the same overall underlying principles of proportion, composition, and spatial relationships.

Compatible does not mean it is necessary to replicate the style, form, massing, materials, features, or architectural detailing of a contributing resource.

- It is important that the contributing resource remains visually distinguishable from any new work in order to prevent new elements from being interpreted as historic elements.
- The differences between new and historic features can be subtle, but they must be clear.

New work (including additions and new buildings) that is differentiated or distinguishable from the contributing resource(s) should remain subordinate to the contributing resource(s).

- New work should not be so different from the historic features that it becomes the primary focus or visually competes with the contributing resource(s).



Figure 3. 1813 Capitol Avenue is an example of an infill development that is both compatible with and differentiated from surrounding historic properties in the East End Historic District.



Figure 4. The Hall of Justice building includes an example of a compatible and differentiated addition to a historic building.

How Were These Historic District Plans Developed?

From 2018-2019, Page & Turnbull prepared Historic District Plans for the following 27 historic districts: 1200-1300 Q Street, 20th and N Street, Alkali Flat Central, Alkali Flat North, Alkali Flat South, Alkali Flat West, Boulevard Park, Bungalow Row, C Street Commercial, C Street Industrial, Capitol, Capitol Mansions, Cathedral Square, East End, Fremont Park, Marshall Park, Merchant Street, New Washington School, Newton Booth, North 16th Street, Oak Park, Old Washington School, Plaza Park [Cesar Chavez Plaza], Poverty Ridge, R Street, South Side, and Winn Park.

Page & Turnbull prepared the Historic District Plans in collaboration with City of Sacramento staff, the City's Preservation Commission, members of the public, architectural historians, and architecture and planning professionals. Page & Turnbull focused on 29 of Sacramento's locally listed historic districts (two have since been delisted due to lack of integrity), which required updated documentation to meet the city code requirements. The Historic District Plans were developed in two primary phases: the Historic Contexts & Surveys phase and the Standards & Criteria phase. Throughout the course of this project, the City and Page & Turnbull sought and incorporated public input from various meetings, workshops, online platforms, and comment periods. Work completed for the two phases is summarized below. For a more detailed methodology, please see Appendix B.

Page & Turnbull and the City of Sacramento took all photographs and created all drawings in 2018 and 2019, unless otherwise noted. All maps were created by the City of Sacramento with assistance from Page & Turnbull.

Historic Contexts & Surveys Phase

For the Historic Contexts & Surveys phase of the project, Page & Turnbull began by reviewing existing planning policies and documents, historic contexts, and available background information. Page & Turnbull summarized the city-wide historic context and developed individual historic contexts, significance evaluations, and periods of significance for the districts based on the review of existing documentation and additional research. This was then used to inform the 2018 historic districts surveys that ultimately confirmed the significance and period of significance; determined the character-defining features and contributing and non-contributing resources; and shaped recommendations for the historic districts. Recommendations that resulted from this phase of work were provided to the City for incorporation into the Sacramento Register.

Standards & Criteria Phase

For the Standards & Criteria phase of the project, Page & Turnbull began by reviewing the city's existing design standards and guidelines documents, as well as other strong precedents, such as the "Interim Principles for the Protection of Historic Districts and Landmarks with Respect to Infill Development within the Central City." The document review, the Historic Contexts & Surveys Portion, and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* were all then utilized to develop the Standards & Criteria Common to Sacramento's Historic Districts in Section 1 and the District-Specific Standards & Criteria for each historic district in the individual Historic District Plans of Section 2.

Where and When Do the Historic District Plans Apply?

The Historic District Plans apply to all properties in City-designated historic districts, with the exception of the Central Shops, Historic City Cemetery, and Sacramento City College historic districts, which are governed by separate historic district plans, design guidelines, or other preservation review processes. A different range of design guidelines within the Historic District Plans are used for contributing versus non-contributing resources in each historic district, which are listed in the individual historic district plans for each historic district in Section 2.

The Historic District Plans are intended to help property owners and members of the design community plan for and design projects within Sacramento's historic districts. They should be reviewed as early in the planning process as possible in order to ensure that the proposed work will preserve and be compatible with the characteristics that define the historic district. While the Historic District Plans provide essential guidance for these types of projects, they should also be used in conjunction with the Sacramento City Code, such as the Zoning Code and Building Code, and other laws and regulations pertaining to development projects, including the California Environmental Quality Act and the California Historical Building Code, as appropriate.

Only when a property owner proposes a specific project do the Historic District Plans and their standards and criteria apply. Changing the paint color of a building, undertaking routine maintenance, or altering interior spaces (with the exception of significant publicly-accessible interiors) are not regulated by the standards and criteria. Additionally, there is no requirement for property owners to change their existing buildings or to bring their buildings into alignment with the standards and criteria.

Unless and until property owners bring forth proposed changes, the Historic District Plans require no action.