

# Memo

**To:** City of Charlotte City Council  
**From:** Bryan Myrkle, Director of Community Development  
**Date:** December 8, 2015  
**Re:** Nominating Downtown Charlotte and nearby locations to the National Register of Historic Places

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As a result of Charlotte's participation in Governor Snyder's Project Rising Tide, and thanks to a personal connection made through Courthouse Square Association, **Downtown Charlotte has an opportunity for a special historic designation.**

[The National Register of Historic Places](#) is a list of historic American sites deemed worthy of preservation kept by the National Park Service. The program is administered in Michigan by the [State Historic Preservation Office](#).

Listing on the National Register could provide opportunities for special grants and assistance that are not currently available to us.

Bob Christensen, the program's coordinator in Michigan, has contacted me to say that **SHPO has funds now available to undertake the extensive nomination process on our behalf.** For a district to get listed, for example, every structure in it has to be photographed from multiple angles and details of the structures cataloged; historic uses need to be researched, etc. It is this research and documentation necessary for application that is being offered to us by SHPO. I am told that downtown nominations to the National Register often cost \$30,000-\$45,000 to put together.

In the past, Charlotte has been skeptical of historic district designations that limit the rights of private property owners. But, I have been assured that this is not that kind of historic designation. Property owners would not be prohibited from making changes to their buildings or properties, and there is no review board or outside authority telling owners what they can or can't do. You can read more about the program in the links above.

The program is for commercial, residential and local institutional properties and, if approved, we will be working to create a contiguous district that includes the downtown central business district as well as those nearby historic homes and properties that are also worthy of inclusion.

I organized a meeting of people and organizations I thought might be interested in this issue, including several downtown property owners, the Courthouse Square Association, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, Can Do!, etc. to hear more about the proposal from the State Historic Preservation Office and ask any questions they might have.

No one identified any pitfalls or drawbacks to this historic recognition, and I believe some or all of these individuals and organizations will be providing official letters of support for this nomination.

SHPO will need an authorizing resolution from the City Council before it will commit the funds and staff time necessary to undertake the project. That resolution will come before the council for a first reading at your December 14 meeting. Courthouse Square Association will make a presentation that night regarding the National Register and our potential inclusion on it.

Should you have any questions about this prior to that meeting, please feel free to contact me at (517) 543-8853.