



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Planning Division*

### m e m o r a n d u m

**TO:** The Urbana Historic Preservation Commission  
**FROM:** Kevin Garcia, AICP, Planner II  
**DATE:** May 31, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** Potential National Register District

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### Background

In December, City staff spoke with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) staff to discuss the potential for Downtown Urbana to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Around the same time, Dan Maloney, the new owner of the Cohen Building (136 W. Main St.), was working with City staff on a redevelopment agreement to help turn his building into a new restaurant/bar space, with apartments or offices on the second story. Mr. Maloney expressed an interest in keeping the architectural features of the building intact and inquired about potential historic tax credits that could apply to his project. While many buildings downtown could qualify for a 10% tax credit for rehabilitating older commercial buildings, a National Register District would unlock the potential for 20% tax credits for many of those same buildings. With that in mind, staff spoke to the IHPA to discuss the potential next steps to designating a district.

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, staff from the IHPA, Alice Novak, and planners from the City of Urbana toured Downtown Urbana and the Cohen Building. The tour was a preliminary step to help IHPA staff determine whether Downtown Urbana could qualify for listing as a district on the National Register of Historic Places. After their visit, and upon further review, IHPA staff has indicated that Downtown Urbana is a likely candidate for inclusion as a district on the National Register of Historic Places (*see attached "Preliminary Boundary Recommendation"*). If approved, the district would be made up of around 40 buildings.

### Next Steps

The full process for designating a district is described in the attached document. We have completed through Step 3. The next step will be to prepare and submit a nomination to the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council (IHSAC), the body that reviews all National Register nominations in Illinois. The council only meets three times a year. The next meeting where a Downtown Urbana nomination could be heard is on **October 27<sup>th</sup>**. The deadline to submit all required materials for the October meeting is **July 29<sup>th</sup>**.

Several options are being explored to complete the nomination by July 29<sup>th</sup>. One option is to hire a consultant or intern to assist with researching the historical and architectural significance of buildings, photographing significant architectural features, and writing summaries of each property. Another option is to complete the work in-house with assistance from volunteers.

*Attachments: The National Register Process in Illinois; Map of Proposed District; Photo Inventory*

# The National Register Process in Illinois

*Note: The National Register of Historic Places is a federal program, and all applicants go through similar procedures. Except for properties located on federal or tribal lands, applications for properties are initiated in the state in which the property is located. For additional information, visit the home of the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the National Park Service at the following: <http://www.nps.gov/nr>*

**Step 1:** The applicant reviews information about the National Register on this web page and the National Park Service's web page.

**Step 2:** The applicant contacts staff if they have any questions. The applicant is required to fill out the [Preliminary National Register Evaluation Form.pdf](#) first, unless the property has been determined eligible for listing previously.

**Step 3:** The applicant receives an advisory staff opinion as to whether the place is a likely candidate for the National Register.

**Step 4:** The applicant submits a completed nomination form along with additional supporting materials (see below). Detailed instructions on how to complete the form is located here: [How to Complete the NR Form](#)

- [NRForm\\_Illinois.doc](#)
- [IL Digital Photo Policy.pdf](#)
- [Illinois National Register Submittal Policy\\_2017.pdf](#)
- [Illinois Notification Form.pdf](#)
- [GIS Digital Map Guidance.pdf](#)

**Step 5:** The complete and correct nomination form will be scheduled for the next meeting of the [Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council](#). There are deadlines throughout the year for the Council meetings. The owner of the property and the relevant local government are notified of the Council's pending consideration and are given at least 30 days before the Council's meeting to comment on the proposed designation. In cases where there are more than 50 owners within a proposed historic district, owners will be given general notice by newspaper legal notice. At the Council meeting, the applicant and other interested parties can address the Council relative to the proposed designation, according to the Council By-Laws.

[Procedure for Supporting or Objecting.pdf](#)

**Step 6:** If the Council advises for designation of the property, the nomination will be forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Officer of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, who evaluates the place and can nominate it to the National Register.

**Step 7:** The Keeper of the National Register, Washington, D.C., who has the final authority to designate a place, will review the nominated place. All interested parties will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed designation. If the nomination is approved, the place is designated in the National Register of Historic Places.

Preliminary Boundary Recommendation  
Urbana Commercial Historic District







