

**From:** Scanlon, Amy  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 31, 2013 11:54 AM  
**To:** Parks, Timothy  
**Cc:** Fruhling, William  
**Subject:** Plan Commission clarification

Tim,

Please provide this email to the Plan Commission. I have been informed that the Plan Commission might benefit from some clarification of the definitions of National Register historic districts and local historic districts in response to the discussion that occurred at the meeting on January 14.

### **Historic Districts**

There are two types of historic districts in Madison.

#### **1. National Register historic districts:**

*The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.*

A National Register historic district is one that has been designated for its significance by the State Historic Preservation Office in conjunction with the National Park Service.

The following passages are taken from the National Park Service:

*A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.*

*A district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity. It must be important for historical, architectural, archeological, engineering, or cultural values.*

*The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties.*

The properties included in the development proposal at the corner of Henry and Iota are located in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District. Four of the five properties included in the development proposal are considered contributing structures in the Langdon Street National Register Historic District. Properties determined to be contributing to the National Register historic district are eligible for tax credit incentives for restoration projects as administered by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Plan Commission members are encouraged to view the definitions at the National Park Service website [www.nps.gov/nr/publications/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/index.htm).

#### **2. Local historic districts:**

A local historic district is one that has been designated for its historic, architectural or cultural significance as determined by the Landmarks Commission and as designated by the Common Council. See MGO 33.19(6)(d) 1. for more information.

Properties in a local historic district are protected by the Landmarks Ordinance as administered by the Landmarks Commission. The properties included in the development proposal at the corner of Henry and Iota are not located in a local historic district; however, the recently adopted Downtown Plan recommends that a local historic district be considered to support the National Register designation and clarify the desire to preserve the historic character of the area.

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A local historic district is created and administered through City Ordinances, while a National Register historic district is not. However, the presence of a National Register historic district can be a useful tool to help inform and guide City boards and commissions in land use decisions. Although the location of the development proposal in the National Register historic district is not in and of itself a criteria to be considered by the Plan Commission to make a decision, the recommendations related to the Langdon Area in the adopted Downtown Plan make the National Register historic district more relevant.

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