

# ANNUAL WORK PLAN

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**RALEIGH HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION (RHDC)**

FY 2025

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## INTRODUCTION

The Raleigh Historic Development Commission's (RHDC) predecessor organization was established by the Mayor December 18, 1961. The historic districts commission was established by Ordinance (1973) 484 and revised by Ordinance (1992) 66 TC 399.

The duties and responsibilities of RHDC are outlined in the North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS 160D, Article 9, Part 4) and Raleigh Unified Development Ordinance (Section 10.1.4). Within this body of legislation, RHDC has established Design Guidelines for Raleigh Historic Districts and Landmarks and Council-ratified Rules of Procedure.

As part of its responsibilities, RHDC performs the duties required to maintain the city's federal Certified Local Government status.

RHDC consists of twelve volunteers appointed by City Council for up to three consecutive two-year terms. It manages its activities through the work of four standing committees:

- Certificate of Appropriateness
- Community Awareness
- Research
- Nominations

The duties and responsibilities of the RHDC includes the following items of regular business:

- Review and make decisions on Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications in quasi-judicial evidentiary hearings.
- Review and make decisions on applications in quasi-judicial evidentiary hearings for subdivisions Historic Overlay Districts and Raleigh Historic Landmarks.
- Review rezoning cases, right-of-way closures, recombinations, and other code required reviews as they arise.
- Act on Demolitions by Neglect
- Maintain an inventory of properties of historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance.
- Identify, prioritize, and recommend historic properties and neighborhoods for Raleigh Historic Landmark, Raleigh Historic Overlay District, and National Register designation.
- Conduct educational programs with respect to historic properties and districts. This includes launching mobile app tours of Raleigh Historic Landmarks, actively engaging the community through social media, and holding events.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Raleigh Historic Development Commission serves as the City Council's official historic preservation advisory body to identify, preserve, protect, and promote Raleigh's historic resources.

## GOALS AND PROJECTS FOR FY 2025

While a specific theme was not selected, this year's goals are all rooted in Education and Outreach.

### Outreach at Events

Table at multiple events to share information about the benefits of historic preservation, Raleigh Historic Landmark designation, and the history of the Historic Overlay Districts. Past events attended and possible future events include the following:

- The Greater Raleigh Chamber Annual Meeting
- NC African American Cultural Celebration
- Celebrate Oberlin! Annual BBQ
- Artsposure
- African American Cultural Festival of Raleigh and Wake County



**Sir Walter Awards for Community Appearance:** At the 2025 Sir Walter Awards event, present plaques to owners of newly designated Raleigh Historic Landmarks.

### Celebrate Preservation Month

RHDC celebrates Preservation Month annually to highlight the work people are doing to protect places that are important to them and share Raleigh's locally designated historic places.

**Raleigh Historic Bike Ride:** Hold the 2nd Annual Raleigh Historic Bike Ride in May to celebrate Preservation Month. This public group ride will lead cyclists of many skill levels through downtown Raleigh to learn about Raleigh Historic Landmark properties. Partner again with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission as well as other interested groups such as Raleigh Sister Cities.



**Mayoral Proclamation:** Request that the Mayor proclaim May 2025 as Historic Preservation Month.

## Preserve Black Churches

The Black Heritage and Historic Places: 1945-1975 report recommended further study of Raleigh's Black Churches. This was supported by attendees of the final community meeting where the report was presented.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has created the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund in 2017. In 2023 the fund established the Preserving Black Churches grant program. Past grants have included activities such as:

- Endowment growth to ensure restoration efforts are sustained in the future.
- Organizational capacity building.
- Planning for and prioritizing of preservation, restoration, and maintenance projects.
- Programming projects for murals, oral histories, and educational programming related to faith and culture.
- Capital projects to repair and restore historic churches.



**Making Connections:** Host a two-part series of events to build relationships with pastors of Black churches, share information about the National Trust's Preserving Black Churches grant program, and about historic designations. Information will also be shared about other relevant grants including Conserving Black Modernism, Action Fund National Grant Program, and National Fund for Sacred Places. These events will bring together the people of Raleigh's Black churches with previous grant recipients, historic groups, and more.

## Improve Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Process

Once a Historic Overlay District (HOD) is established, exterior changes within the HOD require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). To determine congruity of a COA applications, review must be made using the associated HOD's design guidelines and the character of the entire district.

Periodically a historic district's design guidelines and special character essay is reviewed and amended. Revisions may provide more descriptions and add clarity to the character defining elements of the historic buildings in the HOD and allow for a better understanding by owners and applicants of the likelihood of COA approval. The last updates were adopted in 2017.

**Update HOD's Design Guidelines:** Historic preservation staff is already working with the City Attorney's Office to update design guidelines and special character essays for all Raleigh Historic Overlay Districts in association with a previously authorized text change. It is the RHDC's role to review and adopt the Design

Guidelines. The Commission will work with staff on the community engagement for and review of each HOD's amended design guidelines.

## Preservation Reports Review and Adoption

This year there are two research projects underway. RHDC will review and adopt the reports as they are submitted by staff.

**LGBTQIA+ Historic Context Phase II:** This project is a first step to document and recognize historic places important to Raleigh's LGBTQIA+ community. Although not a comprehensive LGBTQIA+ history of Raleigh, the report will include a brief history of Raleigh's LGBTQIA+ communities, suggestions for future research and ideas for celebrating the identified places. Phase I of this project created a preliminary roster of Raleigh's LGBTQIA+ historic places (both existing and lost). Phase II takes a closer look at 20 of these existing places through a short site history and current photo.

**Biltmore Hills National Register Nomination:** As part of the Black Heritage and Historic Places: 1945-1975 study, the Biltmore Hills neighborhood was inventoried and determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. At the neighborhood's request, the Commission is funding the research and documentation for the nomination.

## RHDC's Routine Work

As a historic preservation commission authorized by State Statutes and the Unified Development Ordinance, RHDC performs multiple routine activities.

- Review and Recommend
  - Historic Landmark designation applications
  - Right-of-Way Closure
  - Rezoning cases
  - Comprehensive Plan
- Review and Decide
  - COA applications
  - Subdivisions in HODs/RHLs
  - Demolition by Neglect petitions

## RALEIGH HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEMBERS

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