

**City of Viroqua**  
**Historic Preservation Plan Background and Scope**  
**9/30/2024**

The Viroqua Historic Preservation Commission (VHPC) was formed in 1989 because “the protection enhancement, perpetuation, and use of improvements or sites of special character or special architectural or historical interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety, and welfare of the people.”

The VHPC's purpose is to:

- safeguard the city's historic and cultural heritage
- foster civic pride
- stabilize and improve property values
- protect and enhance the city's attractions to residents, tourists, and visitors
- improve and enhance the visual and aesthetic character of the city
- educate the public regarding the need and desirability of a city historic preservation program and its enhancement of the quality of life.
- effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of such improvements, sites and districts which represent or reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history.

The purpose of Viroqua's Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) is to identify, maintain, protect and enhance Viroqua's cultural, historical, social, economic, architectural, agricultural, archeological and scenic heritage. In so doing, Viroqua will preserve its unique character and beauty, foster community pride, conserve the character and architecture of its neighborhoods and commercial and rural areas, enable citizens and visitors to enjoy and learn about local history, and provide a framework for making appropriate physical changes.

Viroqua's Historic Preservation Plan will be a user-friendly reference document integrated into the Comprehensive Plan and guiding the Viroqua Historic Preservation Commission, City officials and staff, as well as the public, private, and nonprofit sectors of the community in regard to the preservation of historic resources.

The HPP should include:

1. A brief history of the City of Viroqua including an overview of the preservation efforts that have taken place in the City's history and the benefits of historic preservation in the City of Viroqua;
2. An assessment of the effectiveness of Viroqua's Historic Preservation Ordinance, a review of the Demolition Permit Ordinance, and recommendations for new policies and preservation-based tools to better allow the VHPC to effectively manage Viroqua's landmarks, historic districts and significant historic resources;
3. A clear and concise articulation of Viroqua's long-range vision for historic preservation that will enhance the character of the community, preserve economic and critical historical resources, encourage heritage tourism, and minimize loss either through neglect, poor planning, inappropriate remodeling, or demolition. The vision will prioritize specific initiatives, identify potential preservation implementation partners, and key funding sources;
4. Goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for historic preservation;
5. An exploration of the opportunities for developing and integrating preservation planning policies within other community development initiatives related to downtown and

commercial district revitalization, economic development, housing and neighborhood stabilization, and parks and recreational assets;

6. Establish a basis for judging development proposals, zoning and land use, and whether public projects are consistent with historic preservation;
7. Provide clear standards for City Officials to consider when making the decision to renovate or tear down structures within the City from a perspective of its value to the character of the City, and consideration of the value of the embodied energy and environmental sustainability effects as decisions are made on saving or razing buildings;
8. Propose an engaging and ongoing program of outreach, education, and advocacy efforts that builds community awareness and stewardship of Viroqua's diverse historic resources and will include the roles and responsibilities of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with regard to the preservation of historic resources.
9. Identify areas in the community that have been surveyed and prioritize areas for future research and survey;
10. Create a map showing the geographic area and the contributing status of historic properties (buildings, sites, districts) within the city limits that are on the National and Wisconsin Register of Historic Places, and properties designated as Local Historic Landmarks;
11. Include an appendix referencing relevant terms and definitions, ordinances or other legislation, policy, and survey information as appropriate.  
(Viroqua Historic Preservation ordinance, Viroqua Municipal Code Chapter 17.44; Permit – Demolition, Viroqua Municipal Code Chapter 15.04.080; Inventory of Viroqua's designated Local Historic Landmarks; Wisconsin State Statutes for Comprehensive Plan for historical and cultural resources, 66.1001 (2)(e))