

Historic Preservation Campaign

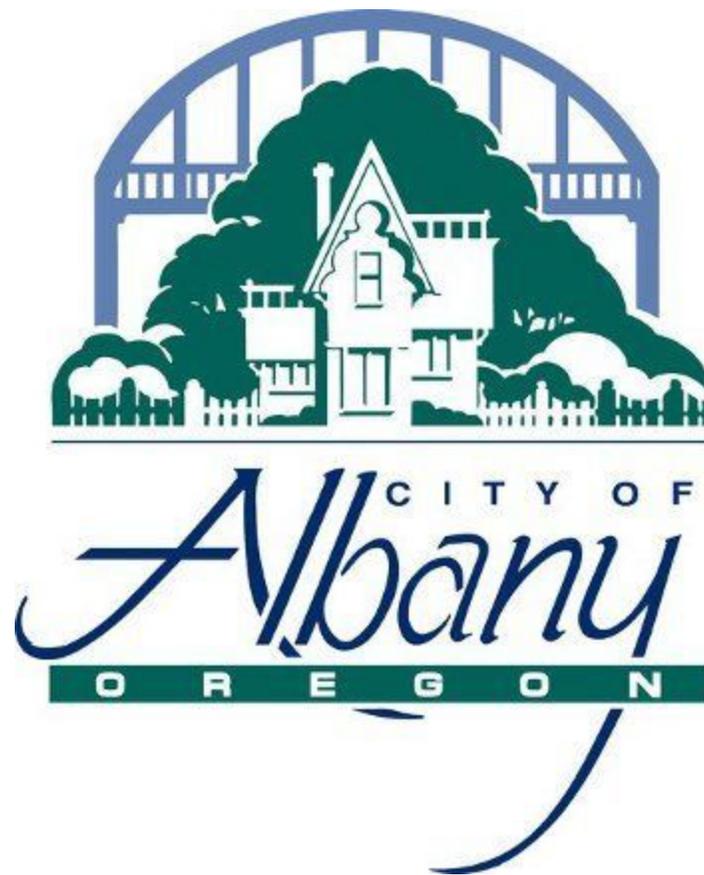
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Historic Preservation



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Background: City of Albany

The City of Albany, founded in 1848 as a river town with a prime location along the Calapooia River, is a tributary of the Willamette River and located in the heart of the Willamette Valley. Albany is the 11th largest city in Oregon, with a population of 51,270.¹ Albany is in both Linn and Benton Counties; it serves as the Linn County seat and is the second-largest city in Benton County.² The city is home to the largest variety of historic homes and buildings in the state of Oregon, featuring styles dating from the 1840s to the late 1920s.³ Four historic districts, Monteith (1849), Hackleman (1845), Downtown Commercial (1948) and the Municipal Airport District (1909), are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Hackleman was officially recognized as a historic district in 1982.

Due to the large number of historic homes and buildings, the City of Albany passed an ordinance in 1985 requiring building listed on the historic registry to go through a review process for all renovations -- including exterior alterations, additions and demolition.⁴ The purpose of this ordinance was to ensure that the appearance and authenticity of the buildings is honored and kept intact. To preserve the city's history and renowned architectural beauty, it is the City of Albany's mission to educate, inform and guide homeowners and business owners through the historic preservation process.

Situation Analysis

The City of Albany primarily uses its website to provide information and resources concerning the historic districts for homeowners. However, the homeowners have to seek this information out themselves rather than the City of Albany reaching out and having a proactive communication strategy. We recommend a communication strategy that targets historic building owners, current and prospective, and begins the line of communication so that the City of Albany's mission is disseminated efficiently.

While general awareness about the historic districts is high, misconceptions and false information are common due to the lack of proactive communication from the Historic Preservation Department. Instead of having Historic Preservation as its own section on the city's website, users have to click on *Departments*, click on *Community Development*, then go on to *Historic Preservation*. Even though *Historic Preservation* does not need to be the featured page on the website, having to search for the information does not help create awareness. It would be beneficial for the City of Albany to create a Facebook page specifically for the Historic District and Preservation and link it to the front page of the City of Albany's site or create a tab for the department that isn't hidden.

¹ Welcome to Albany, Oregon. (2015, December). Retrieved March 9, 2017.

² Welcome to Albany, Oregon. (2015, December). Retrieved March 9, 2017.

³ Welcome to Albany, Oregon. (2015, December). Retrieved March 9, 2017.

⁴ Historic Preservation. (2017, January 27). Retrieved March 9, 2017.

Since historic homeowners are the target audience, the historic department needs to be constantly seeking these individuals out. Creating an open line of communication with new and prospective homeowners from the beginning will increase the awareness of the responsibilities homeowners have and from there, positively build the department's reputation.

SWOT Analysis

We conducted multiple interviews to determine the City of Albany's communications needs. Our goal is to create an informational poster that can be handed out as well as placed on the windows of stores downtown to inform the public of the benefits of owning a historic home. The purpose of the literature is to inform residents how they can easily access rules, permits and other information if they wish to pursue construction on their home, as well as learn about the benefits that come with owning a historic home.

Developing information to address the issues mentioned is important because our client has expressed that one of the main barriers faced is that residents are unaware of the benefits of owning a historic home. Residents also are not always aware that there are certain rules they have to follow if they want to pursue construction on a historic home, and we hope to address that issue so that residents are not caught off guard.

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In-depth knowledge of historic preservation ● Up-to-date processes and forms ● Quarterly newsletter ● Database of historic homeowners ● Town meetings 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Little design knowledge ● No digital communication platform (i.e., Constant Contact) ● Homeowners lack awareness ● Information not condensed
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digital communication platform ● Email group ● Condensed forms, newsletter ● Mailings ● Aesthetic content 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government interfering with homeowner decisions ● Educating versus enforcing

Opportunity Statement

The City of Albany: Historic Preservation requires new communication methods as well as an aesthetic way of disseminating information to historic homeowners to positively enforce renovation regulations.

Audiences

The Monteith and Hackleman districts are two districts within the City of Albany that house more than 140 historic landmarks. The Monteith district houses 86 of these landmarks. Many historic homeowners also reside within these two districts. The Monteith district was named after Thomas and Walter Monteith, founding members of Monteith. The Monteith district is located on the west side of downtown. The major difference between the two districts is that Monteith homeowners keep up with codes and strictly follow rules while Hackleman homeowners do not find this as important. The Hackleman district was recognized in 1982 by the National Register of Historic Places. Unlike Monteith, the Hackleman district is located on the east side of Albany and includes 28 city blocks. The district is named after Abner Hackleman who was one of the first settlers in the area. It is important that we chose these two districts because while they are similar, they also differ drastically between the types of residents that reside in these two districts.

Monteith Homeowners

- There are 86 historical registered landmarks in the Monteith district
- Residents are predominantly Republican
- Residents are typically more affluent than Hackleman residents
- Planning manager, Bob Richardson, believes that residents of the Monteith district take housing codes more seriously than Hackleman residents
- Less than three percent of the neighborhood is a race other than white

Hackleman Homeowners

- Doesn't value the upkeep of their homes as much as other homeowners.
- Shawna Adams suggests that Hackleman is more of a "flipping" market than the Monteith district
- Residents tend to be less knowledgeable about the regulations that come with owning a home in a historic district
- Residents of the Hackleman district are predominantly white

Prospective Homeowners

- A new audience that hasn't yet been introduced to historic home owning
- A chance for the City of Albany to be proactive and educate residents prior the home buying process
- The potential for a stronger relationship to be formed because both sides will be on the same page

- This will eliminate the chance of negative backlash if homeowners are aware of rules and regulations

Strategies and Tactics

Objective: To have 75 percent of historic homeowners sign-up for a monthly e-newsletter within the next two years.

Strategy: To accomplish this objective, we recommend a marketing strategy that informs and encourages homeowners in a succinct way.

Tactic: Send a postcard by mail to all historic homeowners encouraging them to sign-up up for the e-newsletter and print newsletter. (*See Appendix I for postcard*)

Sub-tactic: Create an account with Constant Contact to input all emails and create monthly e-blasts. Follow this link <https://blogs.constantcontact.com/improve-email-open-rates/?M=CB321894-311E-4E3-9B5B-025396414AC2> for tips on successful email campaigns.

Tactic: Develop a forum on the website for homeowners to sign-up for the e-newsletter and print newsletter.

Tactic: Create Historic Preservation Facebook page that is linked to website.

Sub-tactic: Boost facebook posts and events to increase reach. (*Amount boosted depends on budget*).

Objective: To specifically reduce unapproved construction and renovation by 50 percent within the next two years.

Strategy: To accomplish this objective, we recommend a marketing strategy that creates positive influence towards renovation regulations.

Tactic: Revise renovation applications for concise, easy-to-read vocabulary.

Sub-tactic: Send out surveys either through Survey Monkey or Qualtrics asking for feedback from homeowners who have gone through the application process to gauge areas of improvement.

Tactic: Prepare information for prospective buyers detailing the pros to owning a historic home (i.e. historic homes add value). Information will be provided in print and online through the website and linked social media accounts.

Tactic: Prepare a “Welcome” packet (print) to be sent by mail to new homeowners. Include infographic, postcard, information sheet listed above and application for future renovation.

Tactic: Host a Historic Preservation booth at community events (i.e. farmer’s markets) for a proactive stance on disseminating information to the public.

Timeline

April 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1.
2.	3. Send out postcard and infographic via mail to all historic homeowners	4. Set-up Historic Preservation on FB account and link to website Create Constant Contact account and begin inputting emails from historic homeowners	5. Revise application forms and make user-friendly	6.	7.	8.
9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.
23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	29.
30. Welcome packets and info. sheets to be created by this date and uploaded to website						

as well as printed for new homeowners.						
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*** Planning Facebook content and inputting emails into Constant Contact**

May 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1. Send out e-blast to all emails in Constant Contact. Send out print newsletter to mail list.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.
28.	29.	30.	31.			

Continue sending out e-blasts and print newsletters monthly. Post on Facebook 1-3 times a week and audit social media accounts as well as send out surveys to evaluate quality of content.

Budget

Item	Timeline	Cost
Intern	Part-time for 3 mos. intervals	\$15-20/hr. DOE
Constant Contact	Starting April 2017	500 contacts: \$20/month 10,000 contacts: \$90/month
Facebook Advertising	*Starting April 2017	Depends on budget (Approx. \$30 for a reach of 5,000)
Qualtrics/Survey Monkey	Starting May 2017 (after first month of Facebook and Constant Contact)	Free

**Depends on need/purpose of ad*

Evaluation

Objective: To have 75 percent of historic homeowners sign-up for a monthly e-newsletter within the next two years.

Criteria: Through sending out a postcard encouraging homeowners to sign-up for an e-newsletter and creating a Facebook page.

Tools: Track number of returned postcards and sign-ups for e-newsletter, as well as Facebook advertising results.

Objective: To specifically reduce unapproved construction and renovation by 50 percent within the next two years.

Criteria: Through revising application forms, creating a welcome packet and hosting a Historic Preservation booth at community events.

Tools: Track amount of unapproved construction and renovation as well as track areas of improvement and confusion through audits and surveys.

Executable Element

To Whom it May Concern,

Our campaign for the City of Albany and their Historic Homes Districts aims to bridge the knowledge gap between homeowners (both current and prospective) and the city, in order to reduce the number of misconceptions. Our plan will also foster a positive attitude in regards to the historic districts and homes, as well as encourage current homeowners to follow the correct procedures when deciding to remodel.

We decided to go with a mailer/handout that will go out to the entire historic district, and also have the flexibility to be printed out in a large poster format. We chose this because during the course of our interviews it became clear that the city needed something that could be flexible in its uses, but that would generally be a strong first point of contact for both current and prospective homeowners. People often have misconceptions about historic homes and the districts and have no idea where to go for more information. The document would help with both of these problems at once.

The document has three categories: Explore, Maintain, and Connect. The “Explore” category explains to prospective buyers how/where to tour the historic district as an introduction to Albany’s historic homes. “Maintain” lets historic home owners know where to go to find the regulations and necessary steps if they wish to renovate their home. “Connect” encourages readers to sign up for the upcoming email list, and below the City of Albany’s and the Visitor Center’s websites are linked.

The document will be distributed in a variety of ways due to its flexibility, including direct mail, public posting, handed out at events, and uploaded online. It will also be included in the welcome packet for new historic homeowners, and be included in an email blast. Effectiveness for the document can be evaluated in part by the number of people that sign up for the email list, and also by any increase in the number of visitors to the websites that are listed on the flyer itself.

Best,

Sydney Erbez
Shelby Strout
Brooke Stewart
Jackson Dulzo
Kate Klosno

Albany's Historic Homes



More than 700 homes make up Albany's historic districts!
Learn more and get involved:

Explore

Visit the Albany visitors website for information about historic district tour dates and other events. You can also find maps to explore Historic Albany on your own!

Maintain

Learn about ownership or start fixing up your historic home by visiting the City of Albany planning department for information, rules and procedures!

Connect

Subscribe to our email list to get the latest about news and events, and visit the Albany Regional Museum or the Albany Library to learn about the historic districts!

AlbanyVisitors.com | CityofAlbany.net

Primary Research

After our initial meeting at City Hall, we realized that the historic district is constantly changing and if we wanted to get the most accurate data, we needed to go directly to the source. We chose to conduct one-on-one interviews with our subjects based on their ties to the community and roles inside and outside of the historic district. This allowed us to have a clear insight on what messages the City of Albany wanted to portray to its residents.

Our initial interview was with Jim Janson. Janson has owned a home in Albany's historic district for one year and is a member of the annual Christmas Home Tour group. Janson had no prior knowledge of renovation regulations, and feels that neighboring homeowners either do not know about the regulations or do not care. According to the residents, real estate agents are not informing buyers of these regulations and the city does not put forth an effort to educate current owners.

Next we chose to interview Rebecca Bond, Historic Resources Coordinator for the Albany Visitors Association. While Bond maintained that awareness of the regulations is high, she agrees that misconceptions are common and people are unaware of the specifics related to owning a historic home. Bond mentioned that the attitude towards homeownership has worsened in previous years, and she wants to cultivate "positive peer pressure." She thinks it would be helpful to have a simple, one-step introduction of some sort to historical housing renovations.

Our final interview was with Bill Ryals, an independent contractor in Albany and Landmarks Commission Member. He agrees with Janson that awareness of renovation regulations is very low, and there are many misconceptions about what it means to own a historic home. Ryals believes that the historic downtown area has potential and it can be used to draw in younger crowds. Similar to Bond, Ryals acknowledged that the only place to get information is City Hall, so having a handout or mailer is a necessity.

After collecting the concerns from all three interviews, we decided that it was necessary to make a handout which could also be used as a mailer. This way, it could be put up in storefronts downtown and handed to people with ease with all the instant information they would need to know.

We found that these interviews backed the City of Albany's view of homeowners being relatively unaware of the rules and regulations that come along with historic home ownership. All three interviewees agreed that there is an overall lack of knowledge on renovation procedures through the city.

In addition, we found that real estate agents are a factor when it comes to lack of knowledge for Albany home buyers. Since real estate agents aren't regulated to disclose what houses are historic, home buyers are unaware that they are purchasing

a historic home, let alone the conditions that come with it.

We chose current historic homeowners and potential historic homeowners as our audiences due to obvious reasons. Though we found that real estate agents have an effect on historic homes, we decided that they are not an adequate target audience due to their lack of regulations to disclose which houses are in historic districts. Therefore, it's important that the City of Albany targets current and potential historic homeowners, so they become educated of the historic districts and what goes along with the purchase of a historic home.

Long-Term Recommendations

Our most pressing recommendation would be to hire an intern to work on graphic design and marketing content for the historic homes district. Albany City Hall is 20 miles away from Western Oregon University and 12 miles away from Oregon State University, so we recommend the city of Albany reach out to those universities' career centers specifically looking for journalism or communications students. Start the intern part-time (approx. 15-20 hours per week with a pay of \$15-20 DOE).

The intern's duties would include updating the mailer, keeping track of e-newsletter sign-ups, and other social media-related tasks. They would also complete a monthly audit of e-newsletter results, so the city can gauge the success of these tactics. Having a student manage the account is a cost-effective way for the City of Albany and the historic district to stay current on social media trends and media of communications.

Another long-term recommendation is to conduct monthly audits. The city should regularly update the regulations and application forms and use its social channels to inform citizens of the changes. One of the problems facing the historic community is the high rate of misconceptions about filing the proper construction/renovation forms. The city has the opportunity to use tools like social media and Constant Contact to not only increase awareness of required paperwork but also to advertise tours and other events happening within the city.

Our final recommendations are focused on improving community relations. Albany Historic District should hold booths at community events to hand out fliers, mailers, business cards, welcome packets and other relevant materials. A way reach more members of the community is to cultivate relationships with local real estate agents. Create a list of local real estate agents and initiate contact. Inform them on the value of historic homes and send them the welcome packet for new homeowners. Creating a positive relationship with agents will bridge the gap in miscommunication and start new homeowners off with the correct and necessary information they need when owning a historic home.

Appendix

1. Example of the e-newsletter sign-up postcard to send to homeowners.

**Join our
Community!**

Stay informed on current information and regulations with the Historic Preservation Department by signing-up for our monthly e-newsletter.

Please sign me up!
Name: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Return Address:
City Hall
333 Broadalbin St SW
Albany, OR 97321

