



City of Shelby
Downtown Historic
Preservation Plan



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City of Shelby
112 1st Street South
Shelby, Montana 59474

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Acknowledgments

Cushing Terrell acknowledges that no work is performed in isolation. Much of the preparation of this report included coordination with many individuals who have been working closely with the town over a number of years. Cushing Terrell wants to thank the City of Shelby, particularly Lorette Carter, the Community Development Director, Gary McDermott, the Mayor, and Larry Bonderud, the former Mayor. These individuals, together with Chelsea Holling, Preservation Specialist with Cushing Terrell (chelseaholling@cushingterrell.com 406.922,7135), comprise the City of Shelby Downtown Historic Preservation Plan Team. The authors of this report also wish to thank members of the Shelby community.

The Preservation Plan began with the City's distribution of a community survey, which received tremendous input. This Plan is based on the community's input, background information, and current and future needs. Public involvement allowed community members to share their thoughts about issues facing Shelby now and in the future. The following is a summary of the survey that was distributed.

Illustrations

Unless noted otherwise, all photographs included herein have been provided by the City of Shelby and Cushing Terrell. Additional images used throughout are credited accordingly.



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Introduction



Project Framework

Shelby's downtown defined in this report as Main Street between 3rd Avenue and Montana Avenue has a variety of architectural features including single and multi-story historic buildings, surrounded by adjacent residential and community gathering areas. Unfortunately, these significant community assets have suffered as a result of the loss of downtown businesses and lack of maintenance.

The purpose of this Historic Preservation Plan is to identify the strengths and opportunities of present in the existing architecture of downtown Shelby. These buildings are resources that will contribute to the larger community and economic development goals when it comes to sustaining and growing the business community.

This plan relied heavily on community input regarding how the residents of Shelby envisioned the future of their downtown, as well as identifying the "gems" that define the character of downtown.

Community Preservation Goals

Community input, discussions with the City, and the requirements of the Montana Main Street program have informed the community preservation goals. This plan identifies three primary goal areas:

- **Historic Preservation and Design**
Downtown Shelby's unique historic buildings are a tremendous asset. They inspire community pride and bring in visitors from across the country. Preserving and restoring these structures for modern uses should be a top priority for the City. The appearance of the downtown can attract new businesses and opportunities for the residents of Shelby. The design of public amenities and private improvements should be pursued in addition to Historic Preservation.
- **Let's Stay Organized**
A plan is only as good as the community and leadership behind the plan and its implementation. The leadership given the responsibility for promoting and supporting Downtown Shelby will be vital to its success.



Project Purpose & Planning Process



The Purpose of a Historic Preservation Plan

The purpose of this Historic Preservation Plan is to identify and catalogue historic city assets and to examine historic preservation opportunities. This plan is the guiding document for the City of Shelby to use in the development of a historic preservation program.

According to the Secretary of the Interior, preservation planning is a process that organizes preservation in a logical sequence. Preservation activities typically include:



IDENTIFICATION

Identify historic assets in a community. Historic assets may include buildings, structures, archaeological and cultural places.



EVALUATION

Evaluate the architectural integrity of the asset. Through an evaluation process a community may better understand what assets are best suited for preservation and when additional efforts can improve preservation.



REGISTRATION

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Through a formal review process, the National Park Service uses this registry to protect historic resources. Once listed, historic properties may qualify to receive preservation benefits and incentives.



TREATMENT OF HISTORIC ASSETS

Once a historic asset is identified how that asset and its historic qualities is maintained in the future is vital. For example, a community may require additional review for construction or demolition of historic properties.



The City of Shelby has identified that historic preservation is important to their community. The creation of a historic preservation plan will enhance local preservation efforts and provide guidance to develop additional historic planning in the future. Specifically, the City has asked that the plan include the following elements:

1. **An Existing Conditions Assessment**
 - Identifies significant buildings & character defining features
 - Is coordinated with previous planning documents
2. **Goals & Objectives for Historic Preservation**
3. **Vision for Downtown Preservation**
 - Identifies an actionable implementation schedule
 - Prioritizes tasks
4. **An Outline of Historic Preservation Incentive Strategies, inclusive of:**
 - Local Facade Improvement Program
 - Tax Programs
 - Zoning Regulations
 - External Funding Opportunities
5. **A List of potential rehabilitation opportunities**
 - Identifies compatible reuses of existing buildings



Ways to Accomplish the Planning Process

1. Evaluation of Existing Planning Efforts

The Shelby 360* report discusses how the unique integrity of the downtown area, with its neon signs and historic storefronts, is being compromised. The plan suggests that to avoid compromising existing assets Shelby should strengthen the relationship of buildings to the street, preserve the existing neon signs, and promote a diverse tourist base. The plan also suggests enhancing Shelby's web presence by improving the city's website.

The Downtown Development plan makes similar suggestions, and also states that Shelby should utilize existing buildings in the downtown area to their full potential and highlight the "gems" that make downtown Shelby unique. This could include improving the pedestrian environment by filling empty storefronts and creating consistent signage. The plan suggests implementing streetscape improvements like hanging flower baskets, and rehabilitating the existing neon signs as other ways to enhance the visitor experience. This report also discusses potential redevelopment opportunities and suggests facade improvement projects at the Mint Club and the Roxy.

2. Defining the Plan Area

The plan area was identified by the City of Shelby. Defining the plan area created a focused approach to asset cataloging and analysis. The plan area is bounded by Front Street on the north, the alley to the south of Main Street, Montana Avenue to the east, and 3rd Avenue to the west.

While the boundary was provided by the City of Shelby, based on public input, a historic district boundary could be expanded in the future to include buildings between 5th Avenue and 3rd Avenue.

3. Public Engagement

Efforts to engage the public were made throughout the planning process. Through an in-person public meeting and a city-wide paper survey, community members voiced what was important to them.

Public Inquiry Survey

During a community questionnaire in early July 2020, residents of Shelby were given the opportunity to share their thoughts about local historic preservation and to provide insight into issues facing their community now and in the future.



The survey responses gave a personal insight to downtown Shelby. Shelby residents overwhelmingly expressed support of keeping and restoring the existing neon signs. Ideas generated for possible solutions to reuse of existing abandoned buildings include the following:

- A brewery or a beer and wine bar at the Rainbow Hotel
- Seasonal food truck parking at the Conoco Station
- Residential apartments on Main Street
- Restore the old Sportsclub in some manner, such as a micro brew
- Relocate the Marias Museum to the Larson Brothers Department Store

Complete survey responses are available in the Appendix.

4. Creation of the Existing Conditions Assessment

In the existing conditions assessment, each building within the plan area was inventoried and assessed. Depending on the type of improvement required for each building, whether it was a new facade or minor maintenance, the buildings were given a condition assignment of 'good,' 'fair,' or 'poor.'

5. Goals for Historic Preservation in Shelby

Goals are broad and are meant to establish a broad, overarching vision for historic preservation efforts in Shelby. The goals listed in this plan reflect public comment and the historic context unique to Shelby.

6. Recommendations

Incentives, program initiative and regulatory improvements are all included in this plan. The implementation schedule identifies whether the recommendation is short-term, mid-term and long-term.



Vision for Preservation



A Vision For Downtown Shelby

A Vision Statement describes shared beliefs about the potential of a town or organization. In Shelby, the following vision statement was created based on sentiment collected during public engagement:

In Shelby, we work hard to preserve and showcase our heritage while keeping an eye on the future. We are the Toole County seat and strive to be the commercial center for the area's farmers and ranchers. Our community symbolizes what is great about rural Montana. We value our unique history and believe in preserving the stories of the people and places that make Shelby the resilient and friendly community it is.

Historic Preservation Goals

The following goals were collected through information gathered from the community survey:

- Maintain 100% Occupancy for Buildings Located on Main Street
- Create a Vibrant and Active Destination on Main Street for Visitors and Residents
- Protect Shelby's Historic Character
- Develop Main Street into a historic destination by preserving historic structures and features

Historic Context



General History of Shelby

History of Shelby & Setting

Shelby was established in 1890 when the railroad connected Lethbridge, Alberta with Great Falls, Montana. Serving as a distribution center for sheep and cattle ranchers, Shelby was named after Peter Shelby, who was the General Manager of the Montana Central Railway. The railroad remains a prominent feature of the town. Since 1891, Shelby has had a rail station that serves the Great Northern as it make its way to the Marias Pass and further westward. The railroad has also been used for Amtrack passenger trains. According to local lore, a catastrophic fire destroyed numerous buildings downtown in the 1950s/60s which became a turning point to rebuild downtown to what is seen today.



Types of Historic Properties

As defined in the 2008 Downtown Development Plan, at least 70% of Shelby's architecture is associated with the Art Deco building style. While many of the buildings have been remodeled in ways that do not align with the Art Deco style, the clean, simple lines that characterize Art Deco design are still prevalent.

As of 2020, Shelby has three designated historic resources. Approximately 12 structures are subject to historic preservation provisions. Most communities use a "50 years old or older" threshold when determining eligibility for designation to be in accordance with National Park Service.

These resources include a wide variety of structures, cemeteries, and building types and styles, such as commercial or civic buildings.

Historic commercial and civic buildings in downtown Shelby are generally brick construction. Important historic commercial and civic buildings include the BPOE, which was built in 1949 and the Aronow Building, built in 1960, both of which represent the Art Deco style.



Period of Significance

A period of significance is a length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities or people. The period of significance for the architecture in downtown Shelby is between 1923 and 1960. This was determined based on the age of the buildings; these dates were found on the buildings themselves either as corner stones or a stone set above the main entry.

Plan Area

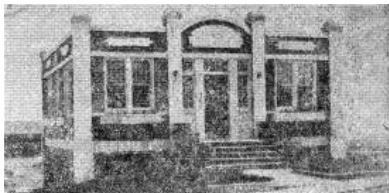
The Plan Area was largely guided by the City of Shelby. On the map on page 14, the buildings are individually numbered with associated descriptions and maintenance recommendations later in the report. The map also highlights existing passageways that can be used as Pocket Parks.

Existing Landmarks

Shelby has three historic structures that are officially recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. Although located outside of the downtown core, these structures are included in the Plan Area.

Shelby Town Hall

The Shelby Town Hall, built in 1923, is a one-story, stucco building that is situated in the north-west corner of the original Town Square. This building was individually listed on January 6, 2006 in the National Register of Historic Places.



Early day Town Hall



Shelby Town Hall today

Marias River Bridge

The Marias River Bridge, built in 1936, is a steel girder bridge. The Bridge was individually listed on February 17, 2012 in the National Register of Historic Places.

Rainbow Conoco

The Rainbow Conoco, built in 1936 with an addition built in 1941, has a steeply pitched gabled roof with perpendicular gabled service bays. This building was individually listed on July 11, 1994 in the National Register of Historic Places.

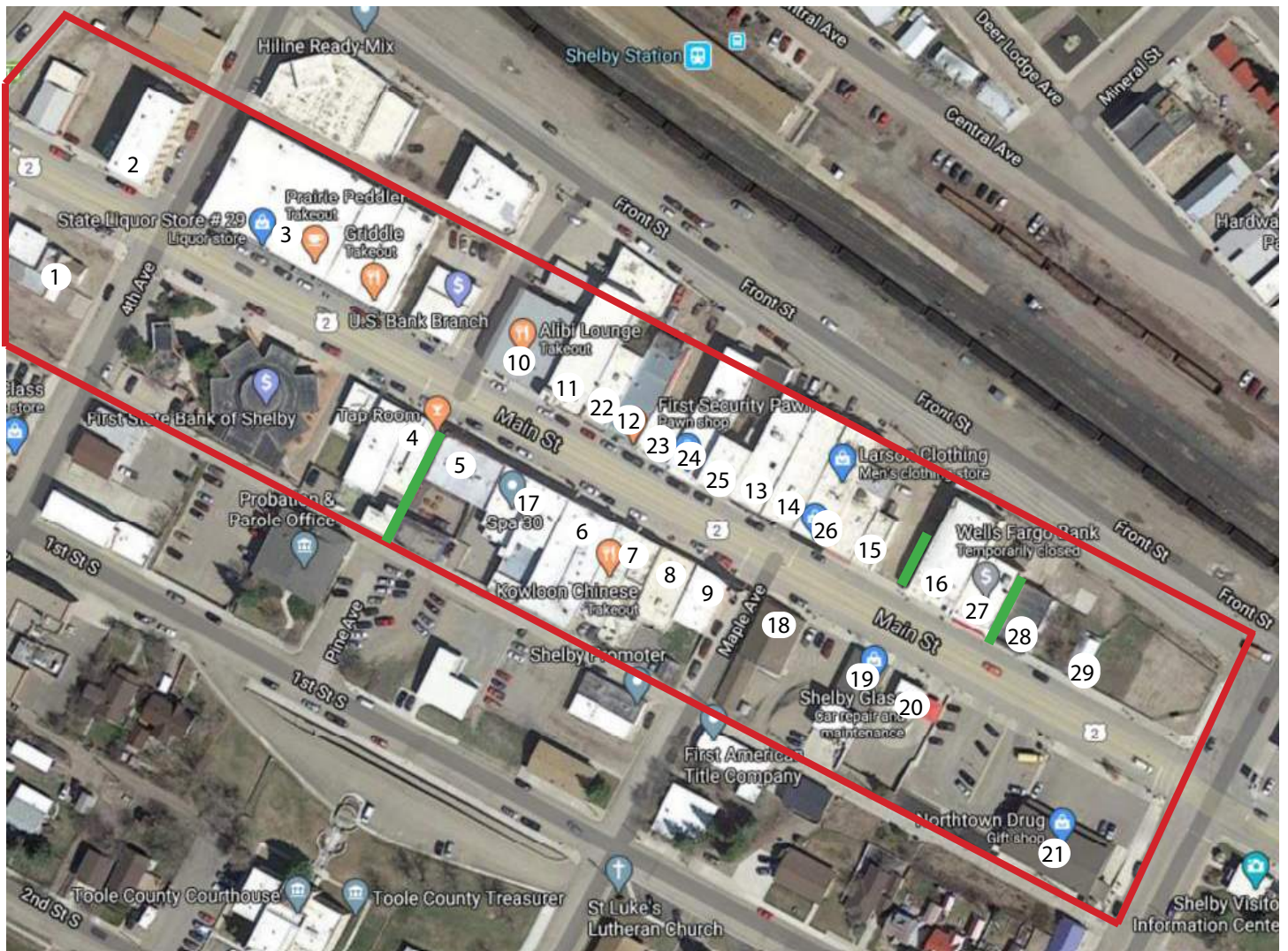
Other Notable Historic and Cultural Resources

In addition to the historic resources designated and recommended in this report, another historic asset was identified during public outreach efforts. This building contributes to the unique history and landscape of Shelby, and is recognized by the community members as important to the city.

- Rainbow Hotel

The Rainbow Hotel is located on Main Street & Third Avenue. The hotel was built in 1922 (according to city records, the building was complete on January 1, 1923), and was a vital destination for the town of Shelby up until the early 1990s. Historians believe the structure was originally a two-story building and the third floor was added shortly after new spread of the impending World Heavyweight Championship Fight to take place in Shelby on July 4, 1923.





VICINITY MAP

NUMBER	BUILDING	NUMBER	BUILDING
1	RAINBOW CONOCO	16	BPOE
2	RAINBOW HOTEL	17	SPA30/YOUTH DYNAMICS
3	LARSON BROTHER'S BLOCK	18	LEE LAW OFFICES
4	TAPROOM	19	FIRST AMERICAN TITLE COMPANY
5	OLD COURTHOUSE	20	RUSSELL CELLULAR
6	MALLETTE BUILDING	21	NORTH TOWN DRUG
7	TORTENSON BUILDING	22	JIVITAYA
8	LEAVITT GROUP INSURANCE	23	SMILE SHOP/SALON MOSAIC
9	TIBER AGENCY	24	1ST SECURITY PAWN
10	ALIBI LOUNGE	25	WOLDTVEDT BUILDING
11	ROXY THEATER	26	SHELBY FLORAL & GIFT
12	MONTANA CLUB	27	WELLS FARGO
13	MERCANTILE MALL	28	MCR LLC
14	LARSON CLOTHING	29	MARIAS REALTY CORP.
15	ARONOW BUILDING	PASSAGEWAYS <div style="background-color: #4CAF50; width: 100px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></div>	

Property Descriptions



1. RAINBOW CONOCO

The Rainbow Conoco, located on Main Street and Fourth Avenue, was constructed in 1936 with an addition built in 1941. It has a steeply pitched gabled roof with perpendicular gabled service bays. This building was individually listed on July 11, 1994 in the National Register of Historic Places.



2. RAINBOW HOTEL

The Rainbow Hotel is located on Main Street and Third Avenue. The hotel was built in 1922 and was a vital destination for the town of Shelby up until the early 1990s. The building now sits abandoned efforts may be underway to re-use the building. The Rainbow Hotel is a three-story brick building that has symmetrical punched openings on the east, south, and west facades. The building has horizontal brick banding, which divides each floor, and has a simple stepped parapet.



3. LARSON BROTHER'S BLOCK

The Larson Brother's Block is a prominent presence in downtown Shelby. The Block is made up of multiple building that were built in the 1920s, with the latest being built in 1928. True to its name, it takes up one block between Second Avenue and Third Avenue. This single story, red brick building features blonde end brick detailing, in a rectangular and diamond shape, at the columns and parapet along the south and west. Currently, there are various businesses located in this building, including a few key anchor businesses, such as The Griddle and Prairie Peddler.



5. OLD COURTHOUSE

The Old Courthouse was Toole County's first courthouse after the county was established in 1914. The building is on Main Street at Third Avenue, is a two-story red and tan brick building that has symmetrical punched openings on the second floor. The first floor appears to have been remodeled. It is detailed with tan brick, punched openings, and a few storefronts. The building has upper brick detailing below the second-floor windows and at the parapet.



6. MALLETTE BUILDING

The Mallette Building, in the middle of the Main Street block between Maple and Third Avenue, was built in 1960 and is a prime example of the Art Deco design style and the use of neon signs. This two-story tan brick building has uniform punched openings on the first and second levels. The brick detailing between the first and second floors is a prime example of stacking bond; the neon signs are located within this 18-row band.



7. TORTENSON BUILDING

The Tortenson Building, also on Main Street, was built in 1953 and is a prime example of a 1950s facade detailing. Neon signs extend across the front facade and a large vertically oriented sign extends to the parapet. This two-story brick building has a red and tan Roman brick, both are set in a running bond. The first floor has asymmetrical detailing, but the openings are equally spaced; the punched openings on the second floor are of equal size.



10. ALIBI LOUNGE

The Alibi Lounge, built in 1935, is a single-story masonry building with a stucco facade between the brick columns, and below the parapet. This building sits on the corner of Main Street and Third Avenue and is identified with a large neon sign on the south facade that fronts Main Street.



11. ROXY THEATER

The Roxy Theater, built in 1935, is a prime example of theaters with marquee and neon on the front facade. Red running bond brick is used at the street level with wood detailing above the marquee. This facade is a unique form as it is not symmetrical but is balanced with the multi-stepped wood detailing on the left above the front door and a large neon sign on the right portion of the facade. It is understood that the multi-stepped wood detailing is currently covering up the original facade.



12. MONTANA CLUB

The Montana Club building is a single-story brick building, with a large wooden awning. This building is located near the middle of the block between Maple and Third Avenue and, like others along Main Street, has red and tan brick – the tan brick is solely used for the parapet detailing. The punched openings are not centered in the facade but are equally spaced on either side of the entry.



13. MERCANTILE MALL

The Mercantile Mall, also on Main Street and near the Maple Avenue intersection, is a single-story brick building with large punched openings and significant parapet detailing. The length of the building has a metal awning covering a large portion of the main facade. The parapet has a centralized gable form and stone caps. A decorative shield is centered on the parapet immediately below the cap.



14. LARSON CLOTHING

The Larson Clothing building, on Main Street directly across from Maple Avenue, is a single-story brick structure with intricate brick facade detailing and a large neon sign. It has a large, flat awning. The transom area is still visible above it, but has been covered up with a siding material. The storefront runs the full width of the building and is nicely balanced on either side of the entrance door.



15. ARONOW BUILDING

The Aronow Building, just east of the Main Street and Maple Avenue intersection, was built in 1960 and is a simple, single-story red brick building. The only punched opening is the entrance door. The building has a flat awning running the full length of the building.



16. BPOE

The BPOE, immediately west of the Wells Fargo building on Main Street, was built in 1949 and is another fine example of the Art Deco style in its form and material use. The two-story tan Roman brick is set in running bond, with stucco facing a large recessed second-story balcony. There are large punched openings, filled with glass block on the west side of the facade. The entrance is symmetrically balanced with smaller punched openings on either side of the doors, and a smaller punched opening on the east upper story.



Existing Conditions Analysis



Character Defining Features

Significant structures are comprised of components that indicate their historic use, quality, and style. The most important of these character-defining features, defined by the National Park Service as a “prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a historic property that contributes significantly to its physical character.”¹

The following inventory highlights the significant structures within the plan area and summarizes building features and contributing components that most clearly express the architectural and historical significance inherent to downtown Shelby. This inventory provides a foundational understanding of the historic qualities that need to be protected and remain unharmed.



Looking South, portion of the Historic Buildings In Downtown Shelby.

The following descriptions summarize the major themes and architectural details found as Character Defining Features for buildings in the plan area.

Style

Most of the buildings in downtown Shelby were built in the Art Deco style² with long, elegant and unconventional horizontal lines. Most of the buildings are rectangular in mass, have flat roofs and symmetrical Main Street facades.

Massing

The mass of buildings in the plan area is simple. Typical to historic downtowns and commercial areas, most of the buildings are rectangular in shape, with the short side of the building facing Main Street. Building entrances are designated with typical storefront detail (awnings, windows and signage) and have a single entrance point with large window displays. The second story window openings are linear, evenly spaced and vary in size.

Masonry Walls

The multi-wythe masonry walls have a sturdy appearance that is physically lightened with storefront details and windows across the various facades. The brick is laid in patterns from running bond to horizontal stack. The second story windows typically have brick lug sills.

Storefront

Street level interiors are illuminated with the natural light provided by storefront windows and doors. It is clear that there are several variations of storefronts when walking downtown, but all are intended to light the buildings' interior.

Windows

The buildings are illuminated with natural light provided by multiple windows on the first and upper floors. The upper floors have regular symmetry, and most are standard one-over-two lite windows.

1 U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

2 The Downtown Solutions Team. City of Shelby, Montana: Next Steps Plan for Downtown Development. 2008.

General Conditions and Recommendations for Repair

The General Conditions and Recommendations for Repair chart on the following pages was defined by a visual inspection that was conducted while on site. This inspection included looking at general building material and fabric condition based on overall deterioration and how much life the materials and fabric have left. The following are definitions that are used in the chart.

- Good
Repairs/maintenance not needed for 5-10+ years
- Fair
Repairs/maintenance needed within 2-5 years
- Poor
Repairs/maintenance needed within 1-2 years
- Brick Tuckpointing/Tuckpoint
Required when existing mortar joints are failing and need to be removed and replaced, in-kind
- Parapet
Upper part of the wall, above the roof plane
- Gable-end
End of a wall that follows the roof-line

Facade Improvements

Facade improvements would allow Shelby to capitalize on and enhance existing historic resources. Care should be taken to execute facade improvements in a way that preserves the historic features of building. A facade improvement can include anything from general maintenance (such as tuckpointing and masonry cleaning) to complete replacement, in-kind (such as the wood on The Roxy). The buildings recommended for facade improvements are as follows:

General Conditions and Recommendations for Repair

BLDG	CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES	HISTORIC	CONDITION	RECOMMENDATION	FACADE IMPROVEMENTS
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masonry walls punched openings roof line 	yes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clean, tuckpoint, and paint brick as necessary
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masonry walls punched openings masonry banding 	yes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clean, tuckpoint, and replace brick as necessary replace boarded up windows as necessary
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masonry walls punched openings brick detailing 	yes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general brick cleaning and repair as needed replace upper storefront lites with a material more sympathetic with the period of significance
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masonry walls 	yes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clean brick at parapet and tuckpoint as necessary 	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masonry walls punched openings brick detailing 	yes	good/fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clean brick under second floor windows brick tuckpointing replace windows with units visually aligned with the period of significance (remove infill above second floor windows) 	
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masonry walls punched openings storefront (60s) 	yes	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon to working condition tuckpoint as necessary examine upper courses of brick for deterioration (parapet leak suspected) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon tuckpoint brick as necessary examine upper brick courses for damage

BLDG	CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES	HISTORIC	CONDITION	RECOMMENDATION	FACADE IMPROVEMENTS
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> masonry walls punched openings storefront (delineated outline) 	yes	good/fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon to working condition tuckpoint as necessary replace any spalled brick as necessary repair/replace second floor windows as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon to working condition tuckpoint as necessary replace any spalled brick as necessary repair/replace second floor windows as necessary
8		yes	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuckpoint as necessary replace storefront 	
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wall mass brick columns 	yes	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuckpoint as necessary 	
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> massing (low profile) cornice 	yes	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon to working condition clean brick, tuckpoint, and replace brick as necessary 	
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wall mass neon marquee 	yes	fair/poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon, lights, and marquee to working condition remove wood siding, exposing original facade. repair as required clean, tuckpoint, and replace brick as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon, lights, and marquee to working condition repair or replace wood detailing in-kind clean, tuckpoint, and replace brick as necessary
12		yes	fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon to working condition tuckpoint, repair, and clean brick as necessary repair windows as necessary, replace if required 	

BLDG	CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES	HISTORIC	CONDITION	RECOMMENDATION	FACADE IMPROVEMENTS
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> storefront cornice/parapet detailing 	yes	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clean original parapet detailing, repair as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general brick cleaning and repair as needed
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wall mass & detailing storefront cornice/parapet 	yes	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon to working condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon replace upper storefront lites with a material more sympathetic with the period of significance
15		yes	fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuckpoint, clean, and replace brick as necessary 	
16		yes	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair neon to working condition tuckpoint and clean brick as necessary character defining features: wall mass (coloring and layout), punched openings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general brick and stucco cleaning repair neon clean glass-block tile and repair/replace any blocks and caulking
17		-	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair/replace second floor windows as necessary tuckpoint as necessary 	
18		no	good	-	
19		no	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> replace gable-end shingles as necessary 	
20		no	good	-	
21		no	good	-	
22		-	fair	-	
23		-	fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuckpoint and clean brick as necessary 	
24		-	fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repair parapet to original condition (remove blue siding) tuckpoint, repair, and clean brick as necessary 	

BLDG	CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES	HISTORIC	CONDITION	RECOMMENDATION	FACADE IMPROVEMENTS
25		-	good	• tuckpoint and repair brick as necessary	
26		-	good	• tuckpoint brick as necessary	
27		no	good	-	
28		-	good	-	
29		-	poor	• repair plaster, replace window	



Example of Masonry Walls.



Rainbow Hotel.



The original Courthouse/City Hall is a prime example of the Masonry Wall Massing, Detailing, and Punched Openings.



Historic Preservation: Strategies & Rehabilitation Opportunities



Rehabilitation Opportunities

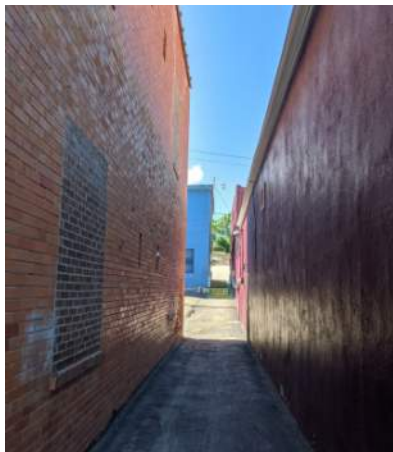
Rehabilitation Opportunities are modifications that can be made to adjust to changing community needs while maintaining historic character. Ideas generated for possible solutions to reuse of existing abandoned buildings include the following:

- A brewery or a beer and wine bar at the Rainbow Hotel
- Seasonal food truck parking at the Conoco Station
- Residential apartments on Main Street
- Restore the old Sportsclub in some manner, such as a micro brew
- Relocate the Marias Museum to the Larson Brothers Department Store

Improve Historic Preservation through education

- Capitalize on existing Passageways to Entertain and Inform

There are three passageways on Main Street (see green rectangles on map on page 7) that could be re-purposed as pocket parks or serve as potential locations for a kiosk or wall mural. A pocket park is a small park typically created on a single, vacant lot or on a small, irregular peice of land that is accessible to the general public. These spaces can provide a location for public gathering. By providing historic information on a kiosk or in the form of public art, they could become “mini-history locations”. Likewise, pocket parks could be used to host annual events to celebrate Shelby’s history. The below images were selected to showcase the ability to transform small, underutilized vacant spaces into public meeting spaces or green spaces.



Existing passageways that could be used for a Pocket Park.



Pocket Park examples.



Photo by Deb Schnee

Neon

The public has stated their support for the role that neon signs play in showcasing the identity of Shelby. They provide a snapshot in time of what this little downtown used to be. After a discussion with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Pete Brown, and the Historic Architecture Specialist, Eric Newcombe, all parties agreed that the neon will need repair or replacement in-kind. Replacing and maintaining this neon is expensive, and we recommend that the City utilize funding from the downtown incentive grant.

Cushing Terrell spoke with the SHPO to explore the possibility of replacing the neon with LED lighting. The following are reasons why neon replacement needs to be in-kind:

- Neon tubes are heated and bent to any desired radius; LED tubes can only bend to a certain radius before they crimp
- Neon tubes have black paint that creates gaps between lit sections; LEDs are continuous
- Neon produces a uniform light; LED produces hot spots where each of the light emitting diodes (LEDs) is lit
- Neon does not sag when its mounting hardware fails; LED tubes sag
- Neon requires special skill with standard mounting hardware for tubes; imitation neon with LED is not a skill, but rather an improvised pursuit
- Neon is timeless and draws positive attention; imitation neon with LEDs looks cheap and draws negative attention



Various neon examples along Main Street and beyond.



MOTEL

Sport
Club

Now Low
Chinese
Restaurant

The
MINT
CLUB

SHREVEPORT

Cinderella Shop

WELCOME
TO
SHREVEPORT

Historic Preservation: Incentive Strategies



Economic incentives are commonly used to enhance historic preservation efforts in a community. When considering what type of incentive programs to use, it's important to understand whether the program will support rehabilitation efforts that align with Shelby's priorities and support the continued use of historic resources. A successful incentive program will assist property owners in preserving and enhancing the historic nature of their property and align with Shelby's vision for historic preservation.

Internal Funding Options

An Internal Funding program is a tool that is created and implemented or supported by the City to provide financial incentives that stimulate investment in historic properties at the local level. Revenue generated by these programs could be used to directly fund rehabilitation projects or program administration. Below is a list of Internal Funding programs the City of Shelby should consider to improve Historic Preservation:

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- **Business Improvement District (BID)**
A BID is a tax district that collects funds from property owners in a specific geographic area that are then allocated for projects and improvements located within the district boundary; appropriate projects may include maintenance and beautification of historic resources and streetscape or beautification efforts. In Montana, the BID may create and administer Facade Improvement programs.
 - **Special Improvement District (SID)**
Similar to BIDs, a SID is a tax that is collected from property owners in a specific geographic area. The funding collected from the SID is allocated to property owners to finance the costs of public improvements and services beyond what is currently provided. These funds may be used to target a specific purpose, such as infrastructure, streetscapes and parks.



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- **Urban Renewal District/Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**
An Urban Renew District /TIF is a public financing method that is used to offset the costs for community-oriented infrastructure improvement projects. Typically associated with blighted areas and economic revitalization, TIF funding may be used for a number of improvement projects including historic preservation efforts.
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- **Downtown Business Owner Association**
A Business Owner Association is a non-profit organization made up of business owners. Unlike a BID or SID, a Business Owners Association works alongside but separate from local governments to create programs that enhance business opportunities. Local business owners would pay a membership fee, which would then be used to pay for improvement projects and downtown events.
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- **Historic Preservation Permit Program**
The creation of a Permit Program would provide Shelby with a way to generate revenue specifically targeting historic preservation efforts. By updating Shelby's Zoning Regulation, a permit may be required prior to any demolition, construction or reconstruction of buildings located within a designated historic area. Permit fees collected under this permit program may then be used to pay for an additional historic preservation efforts.

External Funding Options

External Funding Options can finance and encourage historic preservation in Shelby. The following is a list of potential grants the City of Shelby could explore to fund maintenance or improvement projects:

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- **Montana Office of Tourism Grant Program**
This grant is available to assist communities in digital development and tourism infrastructure. This grant is awarded on a first come, first served basis. Preference is given to projects that are identified as key tourism projects in a master planning process, undertaken with other programs within the Montana

Department of Commerce, such as the Main Street Program. A matching fund is required.

- **Main Street Grants**

Main Street member communities may apply for grants to assist in completing revitalization projects. A local match is required and communities may apply on an annual basis. While Shelby currently participates in this program as an “Affiliate” becoming a Certified Community could increase funding opportunities.

- **The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)**

The Montana SHPO is eligible to receive grants from the National Park Service and re-issues funds as sub-grants to eligible Montana communities. SHPO can also fund brick-and-mortar projects.

- **Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits**

The owner of a property listed in the National Register of Historic Places may qualify for a federal rehabilitation tax credit. The credit is equal to 20 percent of the owner’s cost of rehabilitating listed commercial and residential buildings. To qualify, the properties must be income-producing; for instance, a dwelling used solely as the owner’s residence would not be eligible.

An additional rehabilitation tax credit, totaling 10 percent, is available only for certain non-historic commercial buildings constructed before 1936. The buildings must be located in historic districts listed on the Nation Register, but they must also be noncontributing to the district. Historic buildings in the district are not eligible for this tax credit.

- **Federal Rehabilitation Grants**

Federal grants may be available for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. All rehabilitations must adhere to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.



Priorities for Action & Implementation Schedule

Priorities for Action

- Complete the Certified Local Government (CLG) Program
The CLG Program is a local, state and federal partnership program that provides support to certified communities engaged in historic preservation efforts. Once the CLG application is complete, Shelby will be eligible for technical assistance and small grant opportunities to further enhance historic preservation efforts. The requirements to complete the CLG certification process can be found on the Montana State Historic Preservation Office website.
- Facilitate the creation of a Downtown Business Improvement District
The City of Shelby may establish a Business Improvement District (BID) when 60% or more of the property owners within the proposed district boundary sign a petition of support. The BID will provide Shelby with a revenue source necessary to implement streetscape and beautification projects within the district boundary. The BID could implement and administer programs and projects that align with historic preservation including: tenant occupancy, facade improvements as well as initiatives to enhance downtown like holiday decor, flowers and trash removal.
- Establish a Historic District under the City Zoning Code
The addition of a Historic District within the existing zoning code will create the regulatory framework necessary to implement a permit program and design standards. The regulatory program and zoning overlay should reflect Shelby's needs and available resources. Regulations should focus on preserving historic assets identified in this plan and may be expanded in the future to include design standards for new construction. This local legislation is also a necessary step in the CLG certification process.

- Shelby can continue to work with the State Historic Preservation Office to list key properties on the National Register. Potential buildings Shelby may consider prioritizing for this process are:

- Create an Urban Renewal District/TIF
An Urban Renewal District is a tool used by communities to encourage economic growth in areas that have been impaired or neglected due to a lack of improvement and investment. Establishing the District is also the initial step needed in order to initiate Tax Increment Finance opportunities. While primarily created to improve public infrastructure and streetscape improvements, TIF funds could also be used for historic preservation projects.
- Create a Facade Improvement Program
Facade improvements listed in the report may include minor improvements, such as material cleaning or painting, or more intensive efforts like storefront awning or window replacement. A Facade Improvement Program will provide a framework under which the City could encourage building restoration and



improvements. A successful program includes an incentive for participation and clear guidelines for qualifying projects. Using a matching grant program, Shelby can jump start improvement efforts. The first step is to secure a funding source. Shelby should consider maximizing funding opportunities through tax revenue collected through the BID and consider applying for additional Main Street Grants.

- **Evaluate existing Master Plan & Zoning Regulation**
Initiating a review of the City Master Plan and current zoning regulations to ensure that historic preservation is encouraged in both and that they do not impede preservation efforts is an efficient way to ensure city policy does not impeded preservation efforts. Particular attention should be given to the following: City goals, Permitted Uses, Parking, Landscape, Infill & architectural design standards.
- **Establish a Shelby Downtown Association**
This membership driven association could develop and administer community programs that would encourage historic preservation in Shelby through creating a vibrant and inviting downtown environment. Events and programs drive visitation to Main Street and will encourage tenant occupancy and building maintenance. The association can also develop a Downtown Shelby brand and lead marketing efforts.
- **Create a city-wide heritage tourism program**
Millions of people travel to Montana every year to visit natural attractions and they want to experience the places, traditions and culture that are uniquely Montana. Through the development of historic interpretative attractions like self-guided walking tours, or temporary installations in pocket parks, Shelby could directly benefit from existing state tourism. Partner with the Shelby Chamber of Commerce to tap into existing resources needed to develop a program to encourage visitors to Historic Shelby.



Implementation Schedule

Several factors were considered in creating the list of rehabilitation opportunities below, the most important being public input and the City of Shelby's priorities. Included are Priority Time Frames; short-term projects can typically be done right away, mid-term projects can be done within a few years with some resources and planning, and long-term projects will need continuous funding and extensive planning. The following is a summary of the historic preservation rehabilitation opportunities listed previously.

REHABILITATION OPPORTUNITY	PRIORITY
Evaluate and update existing Master Plan & Zoning Regulation	Short-term (0-2 years)
Modify or create architectural design standards for all new building construction and building renovations/modifications	Long-term (5+ years)
Investigate & Initiate Certified Local Government program with SHPO	Short-term (0-2 years)
Create a Downtown Shelby Business Improvement District & Shelby Downtown Association	Short-term (0-2 years)
Establish a Facade Improvement Program	Mid-term (2-4 years)
Establish a Historic District under the Zoning Code	Long-term (5+ years)
Inventory existing vacant storefronts, including size and location	Short-term (0-2 years)
Create an Urban Renewal District & TIF	Long-term (5+ years)
Develop a city-wide heritage tourism program	Long-term (5+ years)
Continue to pursue listing historic resources on the National Register	Long-term (5+ years)



Appendices

Survey Responses

National Register Listings

