

**Community Planning & Economic Development
Planning Division**

250 4th Street South, Room 300 PSC
Minneapolis, MN 55415



City of Minneapolis
*Department of Community Planning
& Economic Development - CPED*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: John Smoley, CPED-Planning
DATE: February 15, 2011
RE: Archaeology Policy Implementation

Background

The recent approval of the City's comprehensive plan calls us to start considering how to implement its policies (Attachments B1-B2). The City's Comprehensive Plan, as well as its Heritage Preservation Regulations and Certified Local Government agreement, indicate the City's intent to identify, protect, and promote significant archaeological resources.

Archaeological resources are the primary evidence of Minneapolis' past. While written records only detail portions of the past 330 years, archaeological evidence documents over 12,000 years of human activity in the City. Unfortunately, the difficulty inherent in seeing and interpreting archaeological sites makes them far less known and appreciated than above-ground historic features such as buildings.

In July 2010 CPED convened an ad-hoc advisory group of local archaeologists to advise CPED's Preservation and Design Team as it considered possibilities for how to implement these policies. The team consisted of:

Kent Bakken, University of Minnesota
Jada Hansen, Hennepin History Museum
Christina Harrison, Archaeological Research Services/Minneapolis HPC
David Mather, SHPO Archaeologist
Amy Ollendorf, Aecom
Michelle Terrell, Two Pines Resource Group

Dubbed the Archaeology Advisory Team, the participants met with CPED-Planning-Preservation and Design staff once per month in a five-meeting cycle during the second half of 2010. Together the group developed a series of recommendations detailed in this report. These recommendations are meant to advance consideration and treatment of archaeological resources in the coming years. Recommendations are listed in order of their anticipated implementation time, beginning with short-term, less expensive changes and ending with longer-term changes that bear a greater financial impact.

It is important to note that these recommendations are designed to improve the City's identification and protection of significant archaeological resources. Like above-ground resources, subsurface remnants of human activity must be historically significant to be considered worthy of preservation.

Staff has developed suggested time frames for implementing each recommendation, as indicated below, so that these recommendations would be fully implemented prior to the next scheduled comprehensive plan update in 2020.

Recommendations

Short-term

1. *Gather existing data on significant and potentially significant archaeological sites and develop maps, land management software parcel flags, and other tools to identify and properly treat these resources.*

Like most communities, the City of Minneapolis does not possess detailed maps or records of significant and potentially significant archaeological sites, beyond those available to qualified professionals through the State Office of Historic Preservation. Indeed, the number of locally designated properties with significant archaeological components is not completely clear, but none of Minneapolis' one hundred and fifty landmarks or eleven historic districts have been designated solely for their archaeological components. The State Historic Preservation Office has identified at least twenty-one archaeological sites in Minneapolis that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Attachments B3-B9).

Compiling and making useable maps or records of significant and potentially significant archaeological sites will help ensure the City meets the most basic of its stated goals related to archaeology.

2. *Consider how to establish disclosure policies for significant and potentially significant archaeological sites.*

Currently, records of the City of Minneapolis' potentially significant and significant historic properties are available for public review during business hours, Monday through Friday. For a small fee photocopies of these records, to include descriptions, photographs, maps, and significance statements, can be obtained during such visits. Notices of Heritage Preservation Commission hearings involving historic properties are published in a local newspaper, *Finance and Commerce*, and mailed to all property owners within 350 feet of the subject site. Staff reports involving such resources are posted online and distributed at public hearings.

Such disclosure is not appropriate for archaeological resources because it can inadvertently aid looters seeking to collect and/or sell artifacts. Yet some level of public input, and hence public notification/disclosure, is appropriate, given the fact that historic properties in general are protected for the public's benefit. A revision of disclosure policies, informed by local, state, and federal laws and best practices, should be undertaken.

Medium-term

3. *Develop the expertise needed to identify and properly treat significant archaeological resources in a timely manner.*

Currently, the City relies upon consulting archaeologists (whether hired by the City or Applicants) for the identification and treatment of archaeological resources. Being consultants with multiple clients, these professionals cannot respond as quickly to review requests initiated by Applicants as City staff, who routinely determine the completeness of applications within ten days of their submittal.

Fortunately, the City does have a practicing archaeologist on the Heritage Preservation Commission. Such expertise improves the Commission's ability to make informed decisions related to subsurface resources. Archaeological interest among at least one commission member is encouraged, but not required, by the Heritage Preservation Regulations. Ideally the City would possess archaeologists both on staff and on the Commission to help identify archaeological concerns during administrative reviews and prior to a public hearing. Establishing a permanent Commission seat for an archaeologist might help to ensure a minimum level of commission expertise in this area. Currently, the Heritage Preservation Regulations include similar requirements for registered architects (a least two required), licensed real estate agents or appraisers (at least one required), and landmark or district property owners or residents (at least one required). Finding a practicing archaeologist who lives in Minneapolis and is willing to serve on the Commission may, at times, be challenging. Other alternatives include improving retainer (archaeological consultant) response times to staff requests by maintaining a larger list of pre-approved consultants. Staff could also be trained to better identify and review proposed alterations to archaeological sites. The Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification standards for archaeology are the basic qualification used in hiring archaeological consultants. The Archaeology Advisory team recommends the City continue to use the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification standards for archaeology when seeking appropriate archaeological expertise. The team also recommends that Preservation and Design staff be trained to perform basic research designed to identify when a professional archaeologist needs to be consulted.

4. *Revise the Heritage Preservation Regulations to protect potentially significant archaeological sites.*

The City's Heritage Preservation Regulations are the most legally-binding tool for protecting historically significant properties, but this ordinance is primarily focused upon above-ground resources. Article VIII protects historic resources (properties eligible for designation) from demolition. As defined in section 599.110, demolition is limited to buildings.

This ordinance needs to be revised to also protect subsurface historic resources. Yet demolition is an inappropriate term to apply to archaeological sites, which are often remains of demolished structures. Additionally, the substance and significance of archaeological sites are not usually known until they have been excavated. Some safety net akin to the demolition of historic resource provisions in the Regulations needs to be established to protect potentially significant archaeological sites.

Long-term

5. *Initiate a series of archaeological reconnaissance surveys to identify potentially significant archaeological resources.*

Sections 599.130(7) and 599.450 of the Heritage Preservation Regulations task the planning director with identifying historic resources.

During the 1990s the City of Minneapolis conducted a series of context studies designed to document the history of the City and thereby provide context for decisions about preserving above-ground resources. During the first decade of the twenty-first century the City conducted a series of reconnaissance surveys designed to identify potentially significant historic above-ground resources worthy of more in-depth study.

Conducting a series of archaeologically-based reconnaissance surveys, one of the next logical steps in the City's effort to identify historically significant properties, would help broaden Minneapolis' preservation program to subsurface resources. Funding could be achieved through SHPO-administered Certified Local Government grants (the primary source of funding for past studies) and Legacy Amendment grants.

Ongoing

6. Periodically reconvene the Archaeology Advisory Team to advise the City as plans for context studies, reconnaissance studies, and other work progress.

The team members are very willing to continue advising the City as plans progress.

Attachments

- A. Staff Memorandum – A1-A4
- B. Materials Submitted by CPED – B1-B9
 - a. Archaeological Resources section of comprehensive plan's Heritage Preservation element – B1-B2
 - b. SHPO Roster of Archaeological Sites in Minneapolis - B3-B9