



# What's The difference?

While they both recognize our historic built environment, there are substantial differences between Local Historic Districts and a National Register Historic District. The goal of this brochure is to help clarify these differences.

## **National Register Districts**

A National Register District is an historic district that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of our nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Managed by the National Parks Service and authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is a key part of our national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic, cultural, architectural, and archeological resources.

### **What a National Register District is and does:**

- It's an honorary designation. It recognizes that the area is important to the history of the community, state, or nation AND that the resources within the district are worthy of preservation.
- It's an eligibility requirement to access financial incentives like historic tax credits and some state, federal, and private grants.
- It provides for a required review process for state and federal projects, or projects with state and/or federal funding sources, that may adversely effect the district.

### **What a National Register District is not and does not do:**

- It does not limit private ownership. As long as there are no state or federal monies involved, the National Park Service does not regulate what property owners can and can't do with their buildings, unless the owner wants access to tax credits or other public funding sources.

Today there are over 600 National Register Districts in NYS.

## **Local Historic Districts**

A Local Historic District is an historic district designated through a local preservation ordinance which is managed by a local preservation board or commission. A local historic district is generally an zoning overlay which requires the review of proposed changes to the exterior of a designated property.

### **What a Local Historic District is and does:**

- It's an honorary AND regulatory designation. It recognizes that the area is important to the history of the community, AND that the resources within the district are worthy of preservation.
- It requires review of exterior changes. If listed, an owner must submit an application to the preservation board to do exterior work on the property. Depending on the municipality and the project, the application may be approved by the assigned staff person or it will be set for a public hearing before the full preservation board.
- It provides neighborhoods a voice in their future and the ability to intervene in the demolition and inappropriate development of their community.

### **What a Local Historic District is not and does not do:**

- It does not qualify property owners for state or federal funding sources.

Local historic districts in New York State were first established in 1962 by the City of Schenectady and now there are over 175 municipalities that use local level landmarking to save historic structures, neighborhoods, and villages from inappropriate alterations and demolitions.

# Landmarking

# FAQ

## **Can a property be designated in both a National Register District and in a Local Historic District?**

Yes, National Register and Local Historic Districts can, and often do overlap. By doing so, property owners have access to all the financial benefits of the federal listing and the protection of the local ordinance.

## **If my property is in a National Register District, will it eventually or automatically be designated as a Local Historic District?**

No. The National Register and local designation are administered by different agencies at different levels of government. Many historic districts are listed at both levels, but that was done through their separate, respective processes.

## **Does being part of an historic district make my taxes go up?**

No, being in a historic district does not change the method municipalities use to set property taxes. Property taxes are tied to real estate values and properties in historic districts are taxed no differently than those outside of a district.

## **Is it going to cost me more to make alterations to my property?**

It might, but it doesn't have to. There is no blanket answer to this question. How much your project costs depends on the condition, materials, and design of your property. If your building is in good shape and you're just looking to do regular repairs or upgrades, as long as you're repairing and replacing in-kind, there shouldn't be a big difference in cost.

## **Do property owners have a voice in the designation process?**

Yes! For Local Historic Districts, holding a public hearing is usually required as part of the designation process outlined in the municipality's preservation ordinance. For National Register Districts, SHPO is required to notify affected property owners and local governments and solicit public comment. If the majority of owners for a district nomination objects, the property cannot be listed but may be forwarded to the National Park Service for a Determination of Eligibility (DOE).



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