

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

Narrative Report

HPF Grant #: 23008

Project Title: Local Historical Resources Survey Database

Reporting Period: Final Report

Describe the status of the project: Complete

Project Summary

The Historic Preservation CLG grant provided essential funding for the Municipality of Anchorage to create a local historic and cultural resource survey inventory and a local landmark database. This inventory has been transformed into a GIS dataset that the Municipality will maintain and update as a permanent data layer within its GIS system. This supports the historic preservation program and facilitates greater consideration of historic resources in municipal decision-making processes.

Local heritage surveys and inventories are foundational to historic preservation programs. Subsection B.3. of the Alaska Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Program's State Guidelines requires that local governments maintain a system for surveying and inventorying local properties. This inventory will serve as a key resource to inform public project decisions in Anchorage. Integrating the local inventory with the Municipality's other GIS data layers will make updated information about historic and cultural resources more accessible within municipal workflows. Additionally, this database will serve as the official registry of eligible and listed landmarks in the Municipality's Local Landmarks Register. Finally, it will make information about Anchorage's historic resources more accessible to the public.

Database

The Municipality of Anchorage's Historic Inventory is a geodatabase using ESRI ArcGIS Pro, consisting of 5,036 sites, compiled from three primary sources:

1. The Municipality of Anchorage's 2012 inventory
2. Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs): Complete Inventory
3. AHRs: Sites with SHPO Determination of Eligibility (DOE) or Listed on National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The Municipality of Anchorage’s 2012 inventory explored a variety of features of properties located primarily in Government Hill, Downtown, South Addition, and Fairview. The database consisted of 3,822 individual sites and 117 fields, ranging from the parcel ID and address to historic surveys and building materials.

The AHRS is “a collection of reported cultural resources, including archaeological sites, buildings, structures, objects, or locations, etc., from prehistoric to modern times, and some paleontological sites, from throughout the State of Alaska.”¹ It is maintained by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Office of History and Archaeology (OHA).

The original AHRS dataset received from the OHA included 3,109 unique sites across 40 fields, with high character limits to preserve data integrity. However, it lacked specific fields for NRHP designation or SHPO determinations. To address this, the OHA provided an additional dataset to the Municipality, containing 1,549 sites with fields for DOE and NRHP status. Due to character limits, some text-heavy fields (e.g., “Significance” and “Description”) experienced data loss. The project team used the original AHRS dataset to fill these gaps.

The final consolidated dataset includes 29 fields and 5,036 unique sites. Duplicate entries between the MOA and AHRS datasets were merged. The data can be filtered by Historic Inventory/Historic Register status and SHPO determinations (eligible, ineligible, or pending). In the next phase (CLG Grant #24002), the database will expand to include public/private site distinctions and historic properties no longer extant, helping to educate residents about lost historical resources.

AHRS_Number	Dates_of_Significance	AHRS_Update
Parcel_ID	Year_Built	Submitting_Agency
Site_Name	Culture_Code	DOE_Evaluation
Significance	Site_Condition	Historic_Function
Determination_of_Eligibility	Architect_Builder	AHRS_Comments
Eligibility_Filter	Original_Owner	Images_Documents
Historic_District	Destruction_Status	Public_OK
Description	Year_Destroyed	Designation_Type
Location	Ownership	Source
Historic_Period	Original_Date_AHRS	

Table 1: Fields for MOA Inventory of Historic Sites

¹ May 2024. *The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey – Policies and Guidelines AHRS Data Limitations*.
<https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/ahrs/forms/ahrsportaldatalimitations.pdf>

The database will be updated annually in coordination with AHRS, using the “modified by” field in AHRS to track updates made by the State of Alaska in the previous 12 months. This process ensures the database remains current and relevant.

Stakeholder Engagement

MOA staff regularly updated the Historic Preservation Commission and sought feedback throughout the project. After consolidating the dataset to 29 fields, staff met with representatives from the Village of Eklutna and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to review project goals, current data, and identify “red flag” sites that should not be publicly disclosed. All feedback was incorporated, and stakeholders agreed to participate in beta testing the map app in phase II prior to its public release.

Phase II Goals

CLG Grant #24002, *Local Historic Resources Inventory Phase II*, will pick up where the current project left off. The project team will complete the inventory database, and landmarks register in consultation with the OHA and stakeholders. Its objectives will be to complete unfinished data entry, refine the database design, and launch an online map application. Historic preservation staff, commissioners, and the public will be able to interact with the local historic inventory and register as an outcome of phase II.

Tasks will include:

1. Fill data gaps for public-facing sites through an outreach project with participation by ASD school students studying Alaska history.
2. Add the remaining 1,560 sites from the original AHRS dataset that lack a Determination of Eligibility or NRHP listing. This was not feasible within the time and budget constraints of Phase I.
3. Create a public-facing map app with stakeholder beta testing that shows:
 - a. NHRP sites
 - b. MOA Local Landmarks
 - c. Buildings no longer extant
4. Launch the public-facing map, including an engagement feature that allows residents to nominate sites to the Local Landmarks Register, share stories about historic locations, and recommend corrections, additions, and updates to the resource inventory.

Attachment: Local Historic Inventory Database Slides with Visuals