

# The City of McMinnville



## Historic Downtown District

Established in 1810, the City of McMinnville was named in honor of Joseph McMinn, the speaker of the Tennessee State Senate who later became governor. The original town village was located just southeast of its current location known as Tanyard Springs. From 1875 to 1920 the downtown experienced a building boom as citizens moved to the area. At this time commercial development was predominate on Main Street including several building that can still be found today. The downtown area remained popular until the 1960's when businesses began to relocate to more heavily traveled streets.

Recognizing the historic significance of McMinnville, the City Council embarked on a major revitalization project designed to retain the city's historical value while promoting economic development and investment.

In 1999, the "Main Street McMinnville" program was organized by members of the Warren County Heritage alliance with the goal to preserve McMinnville's historical significance by creating an historic overlay district. Following several public meetings where valuable input was collected, the overlay was in place and historic guidelines were approved by the City Council and the State of Tennessee.

The guidelines contain recommendations intended to help owners as they plan modifications to properties that are more than buildings. They are the heritage of McMinnville.





## ***What is an Historic District?***

An historic district is a geographically definable area with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, sites, spaces, or objects unified by past events, physical development,

design, setting, materials, workmanship, a sense of cohesiveness, or related historic association. Historic districts may be recognized by local designation and/or listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

## ***What is the Difference Between National Register Districts and Local Historic Districts?***

A National Register historic district is one that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A local historic district is established by local ordinance under City Council or County Commission authority. With the aid of the Historic Zoning Commission, the local district establishes guidelines which specify types of appropriate exterior changes or other alterations in the district's visual character.

## ***Who is the Historic Zoning Commission?***

The Historic Zoning Commission (HZC) consists of five to nine members appointed by the mayor with approval of the city council. The Historic Zoning Commission reviews applications for exterior alterations, public improvements, new buildings, signage, demolition, and other related changes in the district.

## ***What are Design Guidelines?***

Design guidelines are the standards that protect the integrity and cohesiveness of the neighborhood. The guidelines are written under the direction of property owners in the local district with the aid of the Historic Zoning Commission.

## ***Do Design Guidelines Apply to Interiors?***

No. Design guidelines and design review apply only to the exterior of structures and their surrounding environment. Preserving original interior features is encouraged.

## ***If I Want to Build a New Structure, Do I Have to Copy Existing Historic Buildings in the District?***



No. New structures should not copy existing historic structures. However, they must comply with the guidelines regarding new construction in the district. The scale, proportion, set-back, and materials should be compatible with surrounding structures.

## ***Will I be able to Make Changes to My Property if it is in a Local Historic District?***

Yes. Local designation allows the property owner to make changes to the property. These changes must conform to the design guidelines adopted by the Historic Zoning Commission. The HZC will work with property owners, architects, and/or contractors to determine the best solutions for proposed changes, alterations, additions, and new construction.

## ***What are the Advantages of Local Historic Designation?***

Local historic district designation protects the architectural and visual character of an area. It controls changes and channels progress by protecting the integrity of buildings and the cohesiveness of the area, according to the guidelines adopted by the neighborhood. Local designation creates a sense of neighborhood and community pride, stabilizes the neighborhood, and directs growth by encouraging maintenance and discouraging inappropriate changes. Several recent studies have shown that local historic designation has a positive affect on property value.

## ***Will Local Designation Affect My Property Taxes?***

No. Property will not be reassessed based solely on historic district designation.

## ***Does Historic Zoning Change Zoning or Land Use?***

No. Historic zoning is an overlay zoning and will not affect base zoning or land use laws already in effect.



**For more information contact:**  
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