

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
300 WEST CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
APRIL 8, 2025 – 4:30 P.M.
AGENDA
www.monroenc.org

1. Discussion of Proposed City of Monroe Insurance Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (*Tabled from March 11, 2025*)
 - A. Tucker Administrators to Administer Health Plan and Cafeteria Plan
2. State Historic Preservation Office Grant Application for Architectural Survey of Monroe's National Historic Boundary for Downtown
3. Code of Ordinances Amendment to Chapter 160 titled Downtown District to Add Section 160. 04 titled Murals in Downtown
4. Occupancy Tax Discussion
5. City Hall Space Needs Analysis Update
6. Historical Marker Request for Henry Hall Wilson

- **Agenda** is tentative and is subject to change up to and including the time of the meeting.
- At the discretion of City Council, **Agenda Items** listed above that are not discussed at the Strategic Planning Meeting or moved at the request of Council, may be carried forward to the City Council Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. to be considered.
- **Cell Phones/Pagers:** As a courtesy, please turn off cell phones and pagers while Meeting is in progress.

STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: April 8, 2025

FROM: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

PREPARED BY: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Health Plan and Cafeteria Plan for FY 2025-26

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The City Council approved the Fiscal Year 2025-26 renewal expectations presented by Mark III at the February 11, 2025 Strategic Planning Meeting. There were discussions regarding receiving additional information for claims administration. The topic was tabled at the March 11th Strategic Planning Meeting for Staff to obtain additional information.

REVIEW

The Council reviewed the Fiscal Year 2025-26 expectations, which included 3% increase for the City with the employee's cost remaining the same, claims funding, administrative expenses, stop loss insurance, wellness program, risk assessment, and other cost associated with the operation of the City's plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully requests that City Council approve Tucker Administrators to administer the Health Plan and Cafeteria Plan for FY 2025-26, as is currently in place for FY 2024-25 with no changes at this time.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: April 8, 2025

FROM: Lisa Stiwinter, Planning and Development Director

PREPARED BY: Keri Mendler, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Request to apply for State Historic Preservation Office Grant for an Architectural Survey of Monroe's Historic Downtown

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Planning and Development Department requests approval to submit a grant application to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office for an Architectural Survey. The purpose of the Architectural Survey is to survey buildings within Monroe's Historic Downtown to update and expand the boundary of the National Register of Historic Places.

REVIEW

The City of Monroe has been a Certified Local Government since March 10, 1986. The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). One benefit of being a CLG is the opportunity to apply for grants for a variety of projects including Architectural Surveys and National Register Nominations.

The Monroe Downtown Historic District was established as a National Register Historic District (NRHD) in November 1987 and included a total of 35 structures; 26 contributing and 9 noncontributing. The period of significance in the original survey is listed as 1874-1935. The purpose of re-surveying the existing and proposed NRHD boundary is to provide information on gained resources within the boundary area. As part of the update, we would be increasing the period of significance through the mid 1970's. Due to the increased period of significance, additional structures may be considered significant that may not have been considered as such

in the late 1980's when first surveyed.

The first step in the update and expansion process was to apply for the area to be placed on the National Register Study List, which was reviewed by the National Register Advisory Committee and unanimously approved on February 13, 2025. Staff is now looking to apply for a CLG grant in order to offset costs associated with hiring a consultant to research and prepare an architectural survey for the existing boundary area and proposed expansion area as shown in Attachment 1. By updating and expanding the National Historic District we highlight the importance of our historic assets, while offering property owners the opportunity to apply for tax credits for renovations and rehabilitations.

The CLG grant is a reimbursable grant which typically cover up to sixty percent (60%) of the total costs. Staff believes the architectural survey for the National Historic District area will cost approximately \$20,000.

The grant applications are due April 30, 2025. Depending on federal appropriation timing, awards will be announced in June 2025. Assuming a grant is awarded, the project would need to be under contract by fall 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting authorization to proceed with grant application to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office for an Architectural Survey for the Monroe Historic District Downtown.

Attachment(s):

1. Existing and
Proposed National
Boundary Area
2. CLG Guidelines

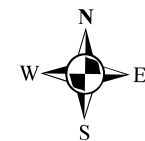
Existing and Proposed National Register Boundary

-  Existing Boundary
-  Proposed Expansion Area

Existing Boundary: 5.85 acres

Proposed Expansion Area: 7.77 acres

**Total Existing & Proposed:
~ 13.62 acres**



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Feet

**State Historic Preservation Office
Office of Archives and History
North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

**INSTRUCTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETING THE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION FUND CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT APPLICATION**

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, 2025

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is a federal matching grant program that supports state and local preservation programs and projects. HPF funds are made available to the State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) through the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior and are passed through to Certified Local Governments (CLGs).

Eligible projects include, National Register nominations, local preservation design standards, survey publication manuscripts, preservation plans, architectural and archaeological surveys educational activities related to historic preservation or archaeology, and pre-development planning and restoration of National Register-listed properties owned by the local government or by a not-for-profit or educational institution within the jurisdiction of the CLG (privately-owned buildings are not eligible). All projects must address one or more goals in North Carolina's historic preservation plan. A copy of the goals is included. Applications must be **received by Thursday, April 30, 2025**. Depending on federal appropriation timing, awards should be announced in June of 2025. ***All funded projects should be completed no later than Friday, February 26, 2027.***

Total funding for CLG pass-through grants for local projects in 2025 is estimated to be approximately \$140,000, depending on Congressional action. This amount is at least ten percent of the estimated 2025 HPF allocation to North Carolina and is reserved for projects in municipalities and counties that participate in the CLG program, in accordance with federal requirements. Funds for successful applicants will be available on a reimbursement basis. A list of CLGs is attached. *Unfortunately, funds for non-CLG projects are not available.*

****Before submitting an application, potential applicants must speak with a member of the HPO staff to discuss their proposed project.** Please contact HPO staff by the middle of March 2025 to allow time to develop a feasible project along with a realistic scope of work and budget. A site visit may be necessary. Staff contact information can be found on page 5.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office receives federal funds from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in federally assisted departmental programs on the basis race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), age, disability, sexual orientation, or genetic information in its federally assisted programs. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should contact the Equal Opportunity Program Office, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW MS 2505, Washington, D.C. 20240; visit <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eo> or phone (202) 354-1871.

SPECIAL DEADLINES FOR PROJECTS BY NONPROFITS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN CLG AREAS

CLGs apply directly to the HPO. Nonprofits and educational institutions may initiate an application for a project in a CLG's jurisdiction but must submit the application to the local preservation commission which will, in turn, submit the application to the HPO. **The nonprofit or educational institution should contact the local CLG staff as soon as possible, to discuss the project and should submit the application to the local commission as recommended,** to allow time for the commission and governing board to evaluate the application and submit it with comments to the HPO by the April 30, 2025, deadline. If a grant is awarded for the project, the CLG will be the grant recipient and will administer the grant project, even if the nonprofit or educational institution is providing the local matching funds.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

- **Grant recipients must sign a grant contract and follow state and federal procurement requirements before selecting a consultant to carry out project activities.** Professional qualifications of the staff, consultants, or principal investigators undertaking grant projects must meet applicable minimum federal professional qualifications in 36 CFR 61.
- **Disbursement of grant funds is on a cost reimbursement basis.** In other words, the grant recipient pays the expenses and then requests reimbursement from the HPO on a percentage basis during the project or for the full grant amount at the end of the project.
- Grant funds generally pay up to sixty percent (60%) of total project costs. The nonfederal local matching share should pay forty percent (40%) of total project costs. Please contact the grants coordinator if your CLG has a project in mind but may not be able to match at the 40 percent level.
- *All projects must address one or more of the goals in North Carolina's historic preservation plan.* Reference to specific goals and objectives and a statement of how the project will accomplish them must be included in the abstract of the project. The goals are attached.
- All federal grant applications must include an Equal Opportunity Statement form, which must be completed and returned with the application. Applications without this form will not be considered for funding.
- Activities funded under this program will be performed in compliance with the applicable Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservation/standards.htm> and shall be conducted under the supervision of the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Federal and state standards, accounting procedures, and reporting requirements apply to the grant funds and matching share. The grants are subject to the requirements of North Carolina General Statute 143C-6-21 through 143C-6-23.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based the following:

- Does the project address one or more goals in North Carolina's historic preservation plan?
- Soundness of project application, including budget, clarity, feasibility, local commitment, and ability of the applicant to carry out the project successfully.
- Comprehensive planning considerations.
- Number and quality of resources in project area.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND ACTIVITIES

Eligible Applicants:

Eligible applicants are CLG governing boards and CLG historic preservation commissions. A list of current CLGs can be found here. [About Historic Preservation Commissions | NC HPO](#). Green pins on the map denote CLGs. Nonprofits and educational institutions may propose an application for a CLG grant, but must submit the application through the CLG commission, and the CLG would be the applicant.

Eligible Activities:

Architectural/Archeological Survey and National Register Nominations. Consideration for funding will be given to projects for comprehensive architectural or archaeological surveys and to nominations of eligible properties or districts to the National Register of Historic Places. Preparation of publishable manuscripts from approved architectural surveys are also eligible for consideration. The publication of survey books, museum exhibits, signage, and research are not eligible for funding.

Preservation Planning and Design Standards. Historic preservation plans and creating/updating design standards are eligible projects.

Predevelopment projects for properties listed in the National Register may include archaeological investigations, architectural plans and specifications, engineering services, or feasibility studies for restoration.

Development projects for properties listed in the National Register may include archaeological excavations or restoration/rehabilitation of historic resources. Structures or sites *must* be listed in the National Register of Historic Places (either individually or as a contributing property within a National Register historic district) and be owned by the local government, a not-for-profit, or an educational institution. Preservation Agreements are required for all grant-assisted development projects. Deed Covenants are required on an escalating scale for development grants in excess of \$10,000 and are recorded with the deed to the property.

Public Education and Training workshops and education programs pertaining to historic preservation, archaeology, or for a historic preservation commission.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Projects in CLG Areas: CLGs apply directly to the HPO. A nonprofit or educational institution that wishes to apply for a project in a CLG's jurisdiction must work through the CLG governing board which, in turn, submits the application to the HPO. **The nonprofit or educational institution should contact the local CLG staff as soon as possible, to discuss the project and should submit**

the application to the local commission as recommended, to allow time for the commission to evaluate the application and submit it with comments to the HPO by the **April 30, 2025**, deadline. If a grant is awarded for the project, the CLG will be the grant recipient and will administer the grant project.

Complete and sign both the application and the Equal Opportunity Statement and email to:

Michele McCabe, Grants Coordinator, State Historic Preservation Office:

michele.patterson.mccabe@dncr.nc.gov; 919-814-6582. *You should receive email confirmation within 48 hours, if not, please contact the Grants Coordinator to make sure that your application was received.*

**** Please do not send applications through the mail.**

Grant awards should be announced in June of 2025. *Please note that we cannot announce grants until federal funds are made available to the HPO. This could postpone the announcement until later in 2025.*

Upon award, the grant recipient and the Office of Archives and History will sign a grant contract. The grant recipient will then procure, with the assistance of the HPO, a consultant or principal investigator following federal procurement requirements and execute a project contract. The HPO will prepare all contract documents and will ensure that all services and products meet federal and state standards, while the grant recipient will coordinate and administer the grant project and will be responsible for accounting and reporting requirements. All projects should be underway by the fall of 2025. **Projects should be completed by February 26, 2027.**

SAMPLE PROJECTS

Examples of recent HPF matching grants to CLGs include:

- A \$24,000 grant to support an architectural survey of a large neighborhood.
- A \$24,000 grant for a survey update and National Register nomination of a historic cemetery.
- A \$20,000 grant to update design standards for a historic preservation commission.
- A \$15,000 grant to prepare a conditions assessment of a historic building.
- A \$ 14,000 grant to prepare a National Register nomination for a downtown historic district.
- A \$12,000 grant to conduct a historic structure report.
- A \$11,000 grant for repairs of a historic house museum.
- A \$7,000 grant for workshops teaching proper cemetery maintenance and headstone repair.
- A \$6,000 grant for a ground penetrating radar (GPR) investigation of a National Register-listed cemetery.
- A \$4,500 to create a virtual walking tour of a historic district.
- A \$2,900 grant to conduct a public workshop at a historic cemetery to demonstrate proper gravestone repair.
- A \$1,200 grant for a wooden window repair and masonry repair workshop.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: April 8, 2025

FROM: Terry Sholar, Senior Staff Attorney

PREPARED BY: Terry Sholar, Senior Staff Attorney

SUBJECT: Title XV, Chapter 160, Section 160.04 Murals in Downtown District

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Council is requested to consider and adopt Title XV, Chapter 160, Section 160.04 Murals in Downtown District.

REVIEW

The painting of murals in Downtown Monroe has received much attention in recent years. The purpose of this new ordinance is to define murals versus signs and provide for the commissioning and painting of murals as public art approved by the City of Monroe. The ordinance prohibits the commissioning and painting of murals on buildings by private individuals or entities. The ordinance provides a civil enforcement procedure by the City with an appeal process. This matter was presented to the Downtown Advisory Board on February 19, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

The Downtown Advisory Board and Staff recommend that City Council adopt Title XV, Chapter 160, Section 160.04 Murals in Downtown District.

Attachment(s): O-2025-12

ORDINANCE TO AMEND CITY OF MONROE CODE OF ORDINANCES
TITLE XV: LAND USES
CHAPTER 160: DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
O-2025-12

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MONROE THAT TITLE XV: LAND USAGE OF THE CITY OF MONROE CODE OF ORDINANCES BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

TEXT AMENDMENT

Section 1. Add §160.04 MURALS IN DOWNTOWN to read as follows:

Murals are permitted in the Downtown District as defined in Section 160.04 herein as follows:

(A) *Public Policy and Purpose.* The Monroe City Council finds that the painting of art or murals on buildings located in the Downtown District can enhance the quality of life, vitality, and appearance of Monroe's Downtown. Murals are a form of public art in that they are by design intended to be public displays. Therefore, the commissioning, painting, and maintenance of public art as murals in the Monroe Downtown District should be carried out on behalf of the public only by the City of Monroe utilizing a well-designed process involving public input and approval by Monroe City Council.

(B) *Definitions.* The following definitions shall apply in this Section:

(1) Mural – A picture or design painted on or otherwise attached to an exterior surface of a structure or building.

(2) Sign – A picture or design clearly related by language, logo or pictorial depiction to a business, or advertisement of any product or service of any business. Such Signs are not Murals and are regulated as a sign by the sign provisions of the Monroe Unified Development Ordinance.

(3) Private Mural – Any Mural as defined herein commissioned with or without consideration for painting or attachment to the exterior of a structure or building by a private individual or entity and not commissioned or approved by the City of Monroe.

(4) Public Mural – Any Mural commissioned through the City of Monroe's Downtown Mural Policy and approved by Monroe City Council.

(C) *Private Murals Prohibited.* The commissioning and painting or attaching Private Murals is hereby prohibited in the Downtown District.

(D) *Public Murals.* Only Public Murals commissioned and approved by the Monroe City Council may be painted or attached to a structure or building in the Downtown District.

(E) *Enforcement.*

(1) Civil Enforcement. The Monroe City Manager is authorized to appoint and designate one or more Enforcement Agent(s) to enforce the provisions of this ordinance. Any Mural in the Downtown District observed violating any provision of this ordinance and upon written Notice of Violation by a duly appointed City of Monroe Enforcement Agent is subject to the following civil penalty in the following amounts:

First Citation	\$250.00
Second Citation For Same or Similar Violation	\$500.00

Upon issuance of a notice of violation of this ordinance, the owner of the building or structure on which the Mural is painted or attached shall have thirty (30) days from the date of the Notice of Violation to remove the Mural.

Notices of violation of this ordinance shall be in writing and may be served by personal delivery to the building owner or served by US Mail addressed to the owner of the building as shown on the Union County tax records. Service is complete upon personal delivery or depositing the notice by first class United States Postal Services mail.

(2) Injunction and Abatement. If the building owner fails to remove a Mural that is the subject of a Notice of Violation within the time provided above, the City may apply to the General Court of Justice seeking an injunction and order of abatement pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 160A-175(c). Upon failure of the building owner to comply with the order of the court, the City may abate the violation and any cost incurred by the City be assessed as a lien against the property as provided by state statute.

(3) Appeal. A Notice of Violation of this ordinance may be appealed for a hearing by the building owner upon written notice to the City of Monroe with ten (10) days of receipt of the Notice of Violation. Upon receipt of a notice of appeal, the City Manager and/or their designated Hearing Officer shall schedule a hearing to be held within thirty (30) days of receipt of the notice of appeal. The building owner shall be sent written notice of the date and time of the hearing. The City Manager and/or their designated Hearing Officer shall conduct the hearing during which the building owner shall be given an opportunity to offer evidence or testimony regarding the violation. After conclusion of the hearing, the City Manager and/or their designated Hearing Officer shall make a written determination and provide copies to the building owner. The written decision of

the City Manager and/or their designated Hearing Officer is final and no additional administrative appeals are available. Appeal of the Notice of Violation issued pursuant to paragraph E above shall stay the removal requirement pursuant to (E)(1) above until the date the written hearing determination letter is mailed to the building owner. If the Violation is upheld as a result of the hearing, the building owner shall have thirty (30) days from the date of mailing the notice of violation to remove the Mural.

Section 2. This Ordinance shall be effective upon adoption.

Adopted this 8th day of April, 2025.

Attest:

Robert A Burns, Mayor

Bridgette H. Robinson, City Clerk



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: April 8, 2025

FROM: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

PREPARED BY: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Occupancy Tax Discussion

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The City of Monroe has an occupancy tax of 5%; Staff is asking City Council to consider a request to the Legislature to adjust the occupancy tax to 6% effective passage of a law.

REVIEW

The authority for local governments to collect an occupancy tax comes from the North Carolina General Assembly. SL 2001-439 authorized the City of Monroe to collect 5% on the gross receipts from the rental of any room, lodging, or accommodation by a hotel, motel, inn, etc. within the City. The law directed proceeds to be used at 2/3rds for tourism related activities, 1/3rd for promotion of travel and tourism for the first 10 years. Thereafter, the funds are to be used 2/3rds for promotion and 1/3rd for tourism-related activities. Additionally, funds may be used for administration and accounting by the Finance Department at 3% of the first \$500k and 1% above this level.

The City of Monroe has used the funds for the acquisition of property for the Science Center and exhibits, Dowd Theatre renovations, purchase of “Tinker Belle” a C-46 Military Aircraft (bought in 2011 and sold in 2023), providing operating funds for the Science Center and funds for the promotion of travel and tourism.

The anticipated fiscal impact of increasing the rate from 5% to 6% is an additional \$184,500 in revenue, as each 1% generates \$184,500 in the current fiscal year. The City of Monroe collected \$848,193.12 in FY 2023-24 and is projected to collect around \$922,000 in FY 2024-25, reflecting an 8.75% growth over the previous year. Additional funds are needed to support the City's promotional efforts and sustain the operations of the Science Center as it works towards achieving full revenue self-sufficiency.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager is seeking direction from the Council on whether to request Council to seek an adjustment of the occupancy tax to 5%. The General Services Committee discussed this topic and has approved it to be presented to Council.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: April 8, 2025

FROM: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

PREPARED BY: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: City Hall Space Needs Analysis Update

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The City Manager and Staff are sharing information on the update of the space needs analysis for a new City Hall to keep City Council members, the residents of Monroe, and other stakeholders informed about the project's objectives, progress, and potential impacts on the community.

REVIEW

In 2012, Creech and Associates conducted a space needs analysis that recommended several capital projects, some of which have since been completed or are currently under contract, including the construction of a new Police Department and the Energy Services Building. However, projects such as the replacement of City Hall and the construction of a Fire Department Headquarters have not yet been initiated.

As the Council has identified the replacement of City Hall as a top priority for 2025, City staff has reached out to Creech and Associates for an updated space needs analysis. A scope of work has been received, and the City plans to contract with Creech and Associates to conduct the analysis which will begin by May 2025; at a cost of \$46,155.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager is providing regular updates on this upcoming project to ensure the City Council is well-informed about its progress, key milestones, and any significant developments. No action by Council is necessary.