

CITY OF NAPERVILLE

DATE: July 23, 2026

TO: Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Allison Laff, AICP, Deputy Director – TED

SUBJECT: Potential HPC Survey

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide staff's feedback on a draft survey form that was presented at the May 28, 2026, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meeting.

BACKGROUND:

At the May 28, 2026, HPC meeting, Commissioners Bufort and Wills presented a proposed survey that could be distributed to Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applicants to gain their feedback on the City's COA process. The Commissioners asked for staff's feedback on the proposed survey form.

DISCUSSION:

Following the HPC meeting, staff from Planning and Communications met to review the proposed survey form. Staff used the City's philosophy on issuing surveys to help evaluate the proposed COA survey.

In general, the City of Naperville issues surveys to gauge the effectiveness of existing programs and initiatives *and* to obtain potentially actionable feedback from the public. While reviewing the survey, staff had the following high-level questions:

- *What is the goal of this survey? Will it gather public input that City staff can act on, either through a process or policy change?*
- *Is there a specific problem we are trying to address with this survey?*
- *Have multiple complaints been received that are prompting the need for a survey at this time?*

Staff is not aware of significant problems with the existing COA processes that have prompted this survey.

In addition to the above questions, the following concerns were raised with the survey, as drafted:

- Given the limited number of COAs processed per year (5 in 2024; 6 in 2025), the survey results would not be statistically valid (i.e., very low sample size).
- No other City board/commission provides a post-process survey.
- Many of the questions posed are subjective and responses may be heavily

influenced by the outcome of the COA case regardless of the actual process used.

- Many of the questions as posed would not generate public input that city staff could act upon.

Overview of Current COA Process

The Naperville Municipal Code, together with the application form and supporting documents (guidelines and surveys), provides a comprehensive overview of the COA process and historic district requirements. Applicants can also contact the staff liaison to the HPC at any time for additional information and clarification. Finally, the Naperville Municipal Code establishes an appeals process to the City Council for instances in which a COA applicant is dissatisfied with the COA review process or outcome.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the information above, staff does not find a post-COA process survey necessary, beneficial, or statistically sound. Should the HPC still wish to proceed with a survey, staff would recommend developing a revised survey in 2027 with a more actionable focus.