

5. HERITAGE PRESERVATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Anoka has over 150 years of rich local history. From civic and social organizations to the built and natural environments, Anoka has adapted and prospered through economic, natural, and historical changes. As in any community both sanguine and seasoned, healthy growth and change are guided by the markings of character – those stories, memorials, structures, natural features, social institutions, and aesthetic styles that shape and adorn life in the city today. From the vibrant historic Main Street and downtown, to the endless unique houses along neighborhood streets, to the industrious workers in factories, workshops, and along the river, local heritage propels the city forward.

Anoka recognizes its distinctive spirit and the need to preserve the artifacts of its heritage amidst increasing redevelopment. In the face of many physical and social changes, historic elements must be not only preserved, but also communicated as a living history. This interactive style of preservation

includes pursuing a complete historical perspective, making the benefits of preservation accessible to everyone, proactively inviting current community storytelling, and facilitating innovative, adaptable historic interpretation activities. Anoka's living history can be enhanced with ties to parks and recreational activities, holiday festivities, arts and culture events, downtown establishments, community institutions, and regional initiatives around the Twin Cities Metro and State of Minnesota.

The city's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, published in 2008, established preservation goals, policies, and action steps via its Heritage Preservation Plan (HPP). This chapter of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan updates and expands on the earlier HPP. It contains plans and programs to preserve cultural resources and engage residents and visitors through interactive storytelling techniques and heritage tourism.

HISTORY OF ANOKA

Prior to the 17th century, the area now called the City of Anoka was populated by the Sioux Native American tribe called the Dakota. French and English settlers were pushing westward forcefully, pressing the Dakota and other tribes toward present-day North and South Dakota and exacerbating ethnic tensions with territorial appropriation and a tangle of trade deals. By the 18th century the northern Ojibwe peoples, an Anishinaabeg tribe, had descended into present-day Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, and pushed the Dakota westward with the help of French guns and other European goods. Anoka derives its name from the Dakota word meaning “both sides of the river” and Ojibwe word meaning “working waters”.

The area is first mentioned in European history in 1680 when Father Louis Hennepin traveled up and down the Rum River exploring the area for France. He was followed by many other explorers who noted the natural features and natural resources of the area. The discovery of major stands of timber along the upper Rum River made Anoka an enticing place for investment in the lumber milling industry. Westward American migration and European immigration produced this settlement in 1844; by 1856 it was described by a new resident as a “large and handsome village”, and it was incorporated as a city in 1878.

In the ensuing decades, Anoka developed a major milling and food production economy, constructed a state hospital (now Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center), and established ferries, bridges, a horse-drawn streetcar system, and rail service to St. Paul. However, five major fires in the late 19th century severely impeded development, the worst of which destroyed 86 buildings in August of 1884. The original wood-framed buildings were rebuilt

in notable 1890’s architectural stylings. Fifty years later in 1939, a tornado destroyed many homes, a church, and the armory on the east side of town. The city completely rebuilt the damaged area.

As the county seat and the agricultural market center in the area, Anoka was a significant regional community from settlement until the 1940’s. As St. Anthony and the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul became the economic center of the state, Anoka took on the role of a distant suburban town.



During the 1970’s and 1980’s, Anoka was considered a free standing growth center in the Metropolitan area. However, by 1990 Anoka was reclassified as a developing area because it was surrounded by geographically expansive, rapidly growing bedroom suburbs that would soon have populations greater than the City of Anoka. As a bustling county seat built out to its edges, Anoka is presently in a period of strategic and sensitive redevelopment, cultural growth, economic innovation, and reinvestment in housing and transportation systems.

Anoka

A brief history.

Pre-1800s

Westward Expansion

European and American forces push native tribes westward; Father Louis Hennepin and two others are captured by the Dakota and brought to the confluence of the Rum and Mississippi Rivers.



1878

Anoka Incorporated

Anoka is incorporated as a City; gains representation in State Legislature; volunteer fire department purchases first steam engine due to recent bout of fires.



1920

First Halloween

To curb runaway Halloween antics, the city hosts the nation's first official festivities for the holiday.



2018

2040 Comprehensive Plan

As Anoka's population pushes 18,000, this small community charges into another 150 years of prosperity.



1844

Anoka Settled

French-Canadian trader Joseph Belanger, born in 1816, builds the first house with four other men.



1884

Fire Destroys Downtown

The fifth major fire in forty years destroys 84 buildings in downtown Anoka, which are rebuilt in significant late-19th Century architectural styles.



1950-1960

Population clears 10,000

Anoka's population begins to skyrocket past 10,500 in 1960 as the Twin Cities region booms.



FACTORS AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT

The major historical factors shaping the development of Anoka include: natural features and location, early transportation routes, natural resources available for development, migration and immigration trends, economic cycles, and significant historical events. All of these factors have influenced the development of the community.

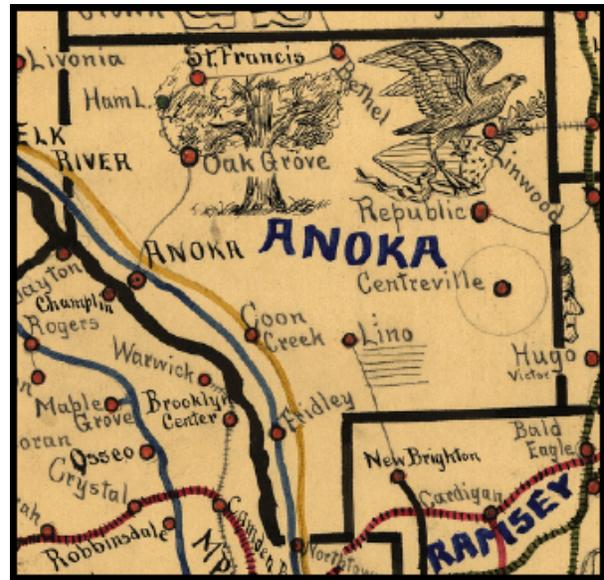
Natural Resources

The primary natural features effecting development of the City are the Rum and Mississippi Rivers. At first, these rivers served as highways of transport for Native American hunting parties, explorers of the rivers' tributaries, steamboats bearing settlers and immigrants, and log drivers guiding their harvest to market at the mills in Anoka and St. Anthony. Later these rivers became barriers as overland travel became the predominant mode of transportation.

Nearby natural resources have also played an important role in the economic growth of Anoka. With the discovery of vast stands of white pine on the upper Rum River, Anoka became a logical place for investment by New England lumber interests. The numerous lumber mills established in Anoka in the 1850's and 1860's fueled economic growth for nearly four decades. The surrounding sand plain area also provided appropriate soil for production of potatoes. The potato became a major agricultural industry in Anoka after the turn of the century.

Transportation Routes

The development of Anoka was enhanced by its location along early transportation routes including the Red River Trail (see map of historic transportation routes) and Military Road, which later became U.S. Highway 10. In addition, one of the first extensions of railroad out of St. Anthony reached Anoka in 1864 and was later extended westerly. Today this route is a main line for the



An 1889 map of Anoka County that shows the Northern Pacific Railroad (yellow) and St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway (blue; later named the "Great Northern Railroad").

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. Construction of a bridge over the Rum River in 1853 made it possible to develop commercial property on both sides of the Rum River. After this bridge and later bridges were washed away, new bridges were continually constructed to replace them. In 1884 a bridge was constructed over the Mississippi River to provide access to Anoka from Hennepin County. Replacement and expansion of these river crossings and related access roads have always been key elements in fostering economic growth in Anoka.

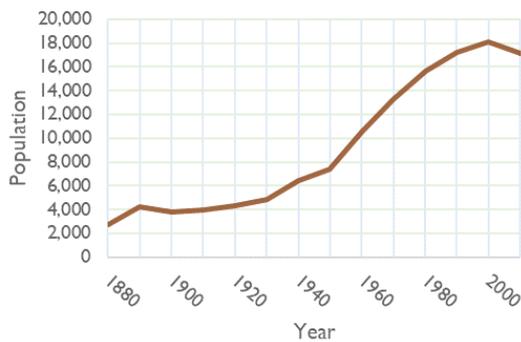


Union Station, built in 1915 and demolished in the 1980s.

Migration and Immigration

Like many Midwestern communities, Anoka benefitted from westward migration and European immigration. New England lumber barons settled the town and established the basic industry of lumber milling. They were followed by Scandinavian immigrants who came to work in the logging camps and lumber mills. During the period of 1860 through 1885, the City grew dramatically from 600 to over 4,600 people as the logging and milling industry and related wood products companies grew rapidly. This rapid industrial growth fueled residential construction and commercial development in the Central Business District. However, when the forest resources were exhausted the lumbering industry declined and the City population fell below 3,800 people. It was not until 40 years later in 1925, that the population again exceeded 4,600.

TABLE 5-1: POPULATION GROWTH IN ANOKA 1880 TO 2010



The largest increase in population began just after 1950, seeing around 3,000 new residents added every decade into the 1980s. This was a result of the construction of the national highway system – when suburbs became quickly accessible by automobile – as well as federal government actions to make home-ownership more available to certain people across the country. Additionally, during this time Minnesota experienced an influx of migrants from southern states such as Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas, causing demographic shifts around the Metro.



Family plays croquet on the front lawn in a stereotypical suburban neighborhood.



Senior usher board at St. Peter's AME Church, in the 1960s.

Economic Factors

The major economic factors affecting the City during the last 40 years have included several major industrial companies, including Hoffman Engineering Company, Federal Cartridge Company, West Bend Thermo-Serv, and Cornelius Company. These companies employed over 3,500 people. During the mid-1990's the development of the Anoka Enterprise Park added 35 additional companies. These additional companies now employ over 1,500 people.

Meanwhile, the Central Business District has been going through substantial change as it evolves from a general retail district to a service and specialty shop district. An anchor of the Central Business District is the Anoka County Courthouse which employs over 1,100 people. The County Government Center anchors other businesses in the Central Business District, such as law firms, real estate agencies, and other service businesses. Large area retailers such as grocery stores and auto dealers, have moved out of the downtown seeking larger sites in response to competition from regional malls and retail power centers. In response to this, the City and Anoka's small businesses are focusing on strengthening the downtown district, exploring experiential retail, and investing in special events and festivals.



Workers at a VEERAC building in Anoka, circa 1912. The company made several different kinds of vehicles and even small motors to power pumps, washing machines, and small farm implements such as a fanning mill.

HISTORIC PLACES

Preserved physical locations are vital to inducing memories and the mood of an era. In addition to reminiscing on the past, the architecture, urban form, and location of Anoka's older settlements also contribute to a more livable community by encouraging more vibrant street life, bringing heritage tourism to Anoka, and inspiring current residents and workers to continue the city's sophisticated physical character. Certain site, structures, and districts have been registered as important historical treasures to receive extra attention through preservation resources and initiatives. This happens at the National, County, and City level.



409 Van Buren Street, built 1925, is a well-kept example of the popular Craftsman architectural style.

HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

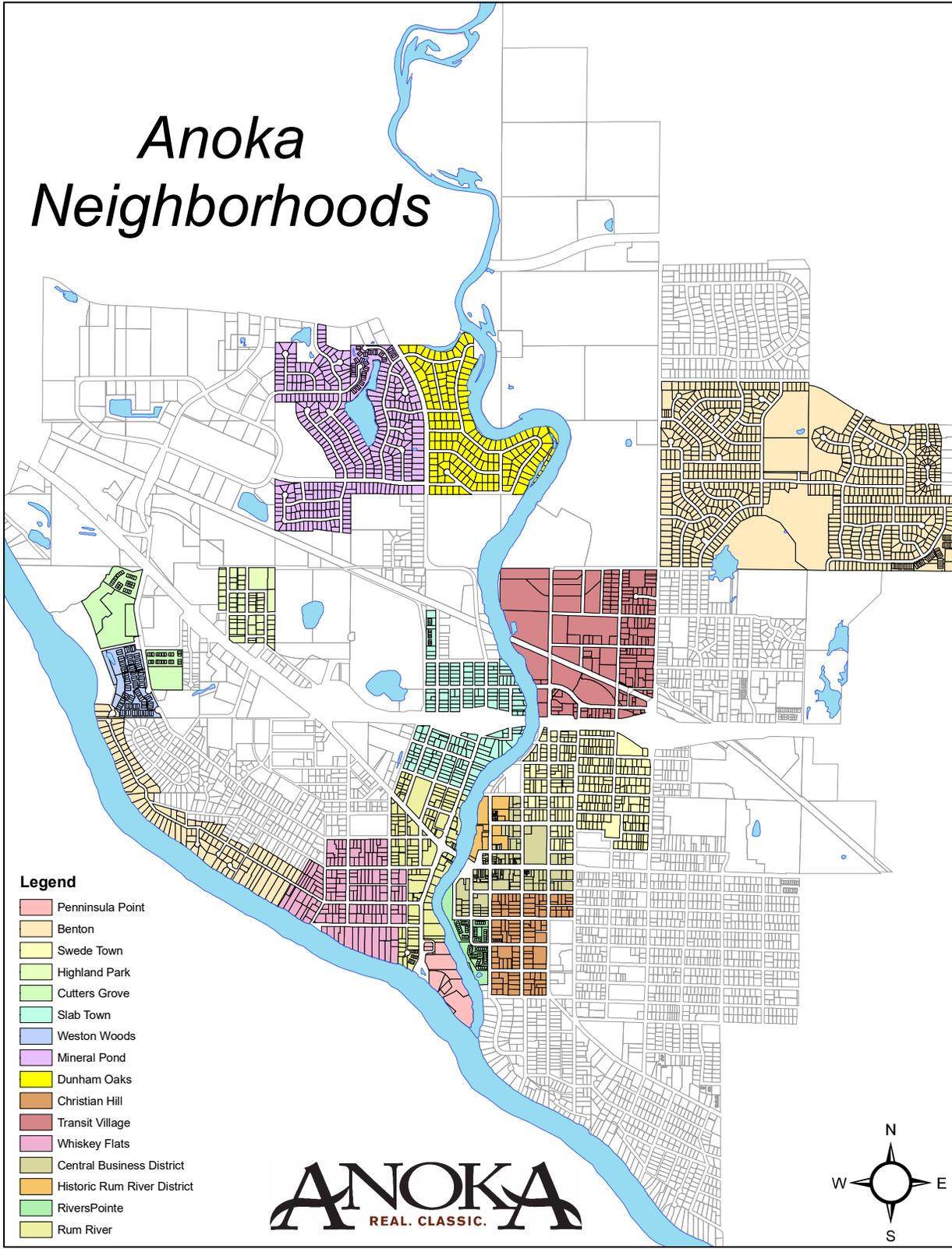
The City of Anoka has a historically diverse community identity. Prior to the impact of post-war suburbanization, Anoka featured neighborhoods of different ethnic and social identity. For example, the east side of the Rum River was known as Christian Hill. This area was southeast of downtown and on both sides of Third Avenue. The area contained several churches and homes of many New Englanders who originally founded the City.



North of Main Street between Fourth and Seventh Avenue, was Swede Town. This area was settled by Scandinavian immigrants. In addition, the smaller neighborhoods of Wet Flats and Cutterville Flats were along the banks of the Rum River.

On the north end of the City near the railroad tracks was Northtown or Uppertown, which included both residential and commercial development near the railroad depot. On the west side of the Rum River were several neighborhoods including Slab Town, which was located north of Main Street along the Rum River. Slab Town was primarily inhabited by workers from the neighborhood lumber mills. Just north of Slab Town was a small French settlement known as Frog Town. Residents near Main and Ferry Street considered themselves to live in Rum River, which was the original settlement area of the community. South of Rum River was Firemen's Grove and the Point. West of Rum River was an area known as Whiskey Flats. This area was known for its early brewing of whiskey and its location adjacent to the ferry dock. These neighborhoods maintained their separate identity through the 1940's and over the years fielded athletic teams that competed with each other in the community.

MAP 5-2: HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS OF ANOKA



CITY HERITAGE PRESERVATION DISTRICTS

The City of Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission and City Council have officially designated two Heritage Preservation Districts in the City of Anoka as allowed by Chapter 20 of the Anoka City Code. The purpose of a Heritage Preservation District is to provide for the preservation of buildings, lands and areas that possess historical and architectural significance and promote educational, cultural, and general welfare of residents of the City of Anoka.

development of the City. While a neighborhood may be the general site of any of these criteria, a Historic District is made of specific sites its border may not coincide with the border of the neighborhood of the same name.

The two officially-designated historic districts in Anoka are Christian Hill Historic District and Van Buren Historic District, located within the neighborhoods of the same name.

1. Christian Hill Historic District

The Christian Hill Neighborhood is one of the oldest and most historic in Anoka. The neighborhood is located along the east side of the Rum River. This area extends along the river southeast of downtown on both sides of Third Avenue. The neighborhood featured several churches and the homes of many New Englanders who originally founded the City. Christian Hill is located at a higher elevation than the rest of the original settlements of Anoka and was also the most fashionable neighborhood with its grand residences of professional people and community leaders.

MAP 5-2: HISTORIC DISTRICTS - CITY OF ANOKA

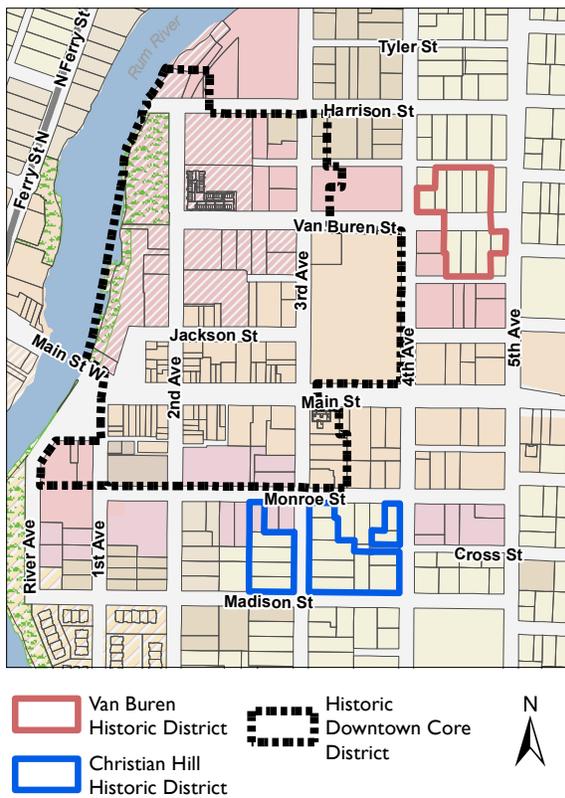


TABLE 5-3: PROPERTIES IN THE CHRISTIAN HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

1802 3rd Avenue	1832 3rd Avenue
1803 3rd Avenue	321 Madison Street
1808 3rd Avenue	230 Monroe Street
1809 3rd Avenue	334 Monroe Street
1815 3rd Avenue	1801 4th Avenue
1816 3rd Avenue	1815 4th Avenue
1821 3rd Avenue	1821 4th Avenue
1828 3rd Avenue	

A district must meet two of the criteria specified in the City Code, such as embodying a distinguishing characteristic architectural type, being located on the site of a significant historical event, or being identified with a person who or persons who have significantly contributed to the culture or

2. Van Buren Historic District

The Van Buren Street District is generally located on Van Buren Street between 4th and 5th Avenues and includes the following properties:

TABLE 5-4: PROPERTIES IN THE VAN BUREN HISTORIC DISTRICT	
403 Van Buren Street	421 Van Buren Street
408 Van Buren Street	426 Van Buren Street
409 Van Buren Street	427 Van Buren Street
410 Van Buren Street	432 Van Buren Street

lumber boom period, the Scandinavian immigration, the agricultural town period, the suburban growth period, and the decades in which the City was engulfed in the metropolitan area by surrounding growth and development. Many buildings have been demolished or altered as a result of the City’s evolution. Consequently, the community identity of Anoka has been threatened, or at least changed. Storefronts in the Central Business District have had many different faces applied and removed by succeeding owners and tenants. Residential properties have been remodeled or demolished for new commercial or apartment development. Therefore, a heritage preservation plan is necessary to preserve the historic character of the community for future generations.

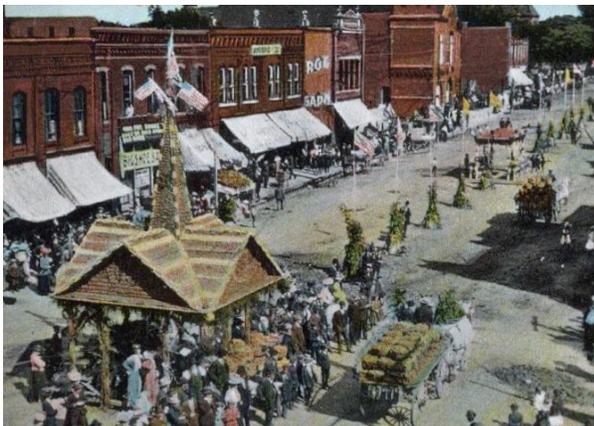
HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

The major historical event that shaped the direction of the City, particularly the Central Business District, was the major fire in August of 1884. This fire destroyed most of the downtown area. Brick structures, which now create the characteristic 1890’s identity of the Central Business District, later replaced the wood framed structures destroyed by the fire. The brick used to construct these buildings is soft and subject to deterioration due to changing weather conditions.

As a result of historical trends, buildings have been constructed in Anoka in every decade since the 1850’s. These buildings reflect the New England



In December 2017, Anoka’s City Christmas Tree made the newspapers for not only its colossal size, but also the tremendous turnout to the annual Christmas Tree Lighting.



A postcard showing Anoka’s Corn and Potato Palace in 1907.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is part of the national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archeological resources. In Minnesota the NRHP is administered by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office.

The following nine properties have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places:



The Herman L. Ticknor House, built in 1867 and remodeled in 1901, was placed on the National Register based on its association with three generations of an influential local family and three architectural styles: Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and Neoclassical.

TABLE 5-2: LOCATIONS IN ANOKA ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Property	Street Address	Date Listed	Construction/ Renovation Date(s)
Anoka Post Office	300 E. Main Street	12/31/79	1916
Anoka-Champlin Mississippi River Bridge	U.S. Hwy. 169 over Mississippi River	12/31/79	1929
Colonial Hall and Masonic Lodge No. 30	1900 3 rd Avenue S.	12/31/79	1904, 1922
Jackson Hotel	241 Jackson Street	12/08/78	1884, 1888, 1905
Kline Sanitarium	1500 S. Ferry Street	12/26/79	1902
Shaw-Hammons House	302 Fremont Street	12/26/79	Ca. 1852, 1870
Ticknor, Herman L., House	1652 3 rd Avenue S.	12/27/79	1867, 1901, 1930
Windego Park Auditorium/Open-air Theater	Between S. Ferry Street and Rum River	01/08/80	1914
Woodbury House	1632 S. Ferry Street	12/26/79	1857

National Register of Historic Places Location Map



METRO-REGIONAL TREATMENT CENTER AND THE EAGLE'S HEALING NEST

In September of 2017, a selection of the beautiful historic cottages at the Metro-Regional Treatment Center were leased from Anoka County and turned over to Eagle's Healing Nest for renovation. Eagle's Healing Nest is a nonprofit that offers housing and services to challenged veterans.



Community members from around the state donated time, money, and expertise to renovating the first cottage as a dormitory-style residential hall. Within 57 days, the Nest was operational, with cottage #3 open to men and #2 open to women soon after. Cottage #4 and the auditorium will be renovated in the coming years. This project accomplished three goals: saving veterans' lives, preserving the historic cottages and auditorium from demolition, and saving tax-payer dollars through using only private and in-kind donations to fund the rehabilitation and maintenance.



Originally built by the State of Minnesota as the First State Asylum for the Insane in 1899, the facility quickly became women-only. By 1960, nearly 1,100 people lived there. Along with their treatments, the patients worked jobs such as farming and sewing, and had access to amenities such as an on-site beauty parlor, movies, and religious services. The name eventually changed to the Anoka State Hospital and then the Metro-Regional Treatment Center until it closed in 1999. Finally, the State gave the property to Anoka County, which operates half of it as the Rum River Human Services Center and leases three cottages and the auditorium to Eagle's Healing Nest.



HERITAGE PRESERVATION PLAN

As the earliest settlement, county seat, and major agricultural and commercial center in Anoka County, the City of Anoka contains the majority of historic properties identified in the County survey. However, these properties are being threatened by deterioration and redevelopment.

The heritage preservation plan is necessary to preserve community identity and specific cultural resources that reflect the heritage of our community.

PROGRAMS

Façade Easement

A historic façade easement is a legal agreement that permanently prevents demolition, neglect, and insensitive alterations to the exterior of the historic building. This easement enables the owner of a historic building to establish certain preservation restrictions while retaining possession and use of the building. The goal of these restrictions is to maintain the unique architectural character of Anoka that powers the city's regional appeal and contributes to resident satisfaction. In return for agreeing to the façade

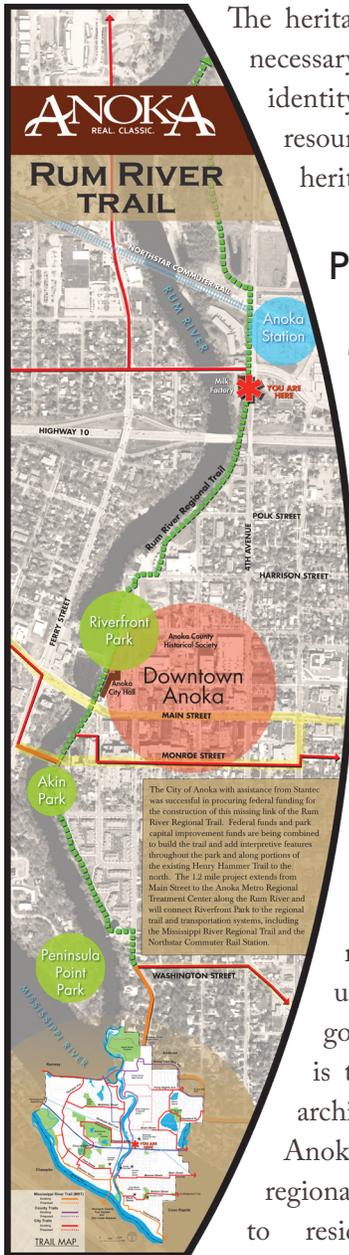
easement, the building owner may benefit from a charitable contribution deduction that can be applied to federal income and gift and estate taxes. To qualify for a historic preservation easement, a property must be either a certified historic structure or occupy a historically important land area.

Rum River Trail Plaques

Interpretive signs and features have been designed for and placed along the stretch of Rum River Regional Trail between Main Street and the Anoka Regional Treatment Center along the Rum River. They identify sites of significant historical establishments, events, and individuals. This is a rewarding example of incorporating storytelling and historical interpretation into other land uses and developments around Anoka.

Historic Home Plaques, Sandwich Boards, and Preservation Awards

Owners who want to aid in displaying Anoka's history may apply for a wall-mounted plaque or free-standing sandwich board sign recognizing the age and historic integrity of their property. To qualify for a display, a building must be an original structure over 75 years old (50 years old for a sandwich board) with either historical and/or architectural merit; this includes structures that have been maintained in their original form or have been returned to their original configuration. Furthermore, any existing



The Woodbury House on Ferry Street exemplifies the benefits of a façade easement to the neighborhood and city.



Plaques along the Rum River Trail tell the story of Anoka and its development.

alterations and additions to the original structure must preserve the architectural integrity of the structure and appear as logical progressive add-ons to the original.

The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) also recognizes commercial and residential properties in the City that exemplify historic preservation through restoration or remodeling of a building or home. The Commission awards properties with a Heritage Preservation Award annually.

Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tours

A cherished annual tradition with as many as 600 ticket-buyers each year, the Anoka Heritage Home and Garden Tour has put Anoka's unique architectural treasures on display for the last fifteen years. The Tour is a fundraising event for the Anoka County Historical Society and Anoka Heritage Preservation Commission, and provides valuable exposure to local businesses.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION

GOAL HP-1

Preserve the distinctive historic character and identity of Anoka as a small town.

- Consider heritage preservation goals as part of land use planning, rezoning, and redevelopment.
- Monitor zoning of areas to protect historically significant structures.
- Work in partnership with the Anoka County Historical Society.

GOAL HP-4

Preserve and protect the historic aspects of the community.

- Encourage expansion of the Commercial Rehab Revolving Loan Fund.
- Encourage the use of the Revolving Loan Fund for housing rehabilitation.
- Promote architectural guidelines for funded projects which emphasize historically significant rehabilitation.

GOAL HP-2

Preserve the identity of the historic neighborhoods in the City.

- Promote historically sensitive rehabilitation and infill redevelopment of compatible architectural styles in residential neighborhoods.

GOAL HP-5

Encourage and promote preservation of local history relating to businesses, civic, social and religious organizations and resident individuals and families.

- Identify and honor Anokans who have made significant contributions to the community.

GOAL HP-3

Recognize the unique character of the downtown area and preserve the historic “Main Street” image of the Central Business District and residential neighborhoods.

- Promote historically sensitive rehabilitation and infill redevelopment of compatible architectural styles in the Central Business District and residential neighborhoods.

GOAL HP-6

Research and interpret local history to residents, visitors, and tourists.

- Continue the development of the Rum River Heritage Trail on the east bank of the Rum River.
- Research and create heritage walks in the Central Business District and other appropriate locations.
- Continue to promote the location and maintenance of historical markers or plaques

on appropriate historic resources, along trails, and in City parks to interpret local history.

- Encourage tours or events which interpret local history.

GOAL HP-7

Maintain and update official controls and administration of heritage preservation in the City.

- Review and strengthen the Historic Preservation ordinance.
- Review proposed Heritage Preservation districts and sites.
- Review and update design guidelines for existing and proposed Heritage Preservation districts and sites.
- Update the inventory of historical aspects of the community.



The Anoka HPC partners with the Anoka County Historical Society to memorialize Anoka's cherished historic sites.