

DEFINING CHASKA PROPERTIES FOR HISTORIC NOMINATION

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT | RCP 50

About the Partner

Chaska is an outer ring suburb located southwest of Minneapolis. It is Carver County's largest city and the county seat. The land was originally occupied by the Mdewakaton Dakota people and, according to the Minnesota Historical Society, the name "Chaska" is derived from a common Dakota name given to a first-born son. The city encompasses 17.7 square miles, and its historic downtown is adjacent to the Minnesota River, which played a significant role in its early identity as a trading post and commerce hub. Chaska was incorporated as a city in 1891, and its industry was first centered on brick manufacturing and agricultural processing. Rapid growth and transition to a metropolitan community began in the 1950s and 60s. In 2020, Chaska had a population of roughly 27,800 people, with a median age of 37.2 and a median household income of \$99,988. The three largest racial/ethnic groups in Chaska are White (Non-Hispanic) (82.2%), Multi-Racial (Hispanic) (3.59%), and Multi-Racial (Non-Hispanic) (3.46%).



City of Chaska

Project Description

The City of Chaska is seeking research assistance to identify properties for local historic nomination. Chaska contains a historic downtown with buildings and sites that are 100+ years old, many of which have historical significance and were built with locally made bricks. The City also contains the notable Jonathan neighborhood, which embodies the "New Town" movement of the 1960s. Preservation of Chaska's local architectural resources has been successful through a local historic register. The local register, which currently contains a total of 55 properties, is governed by the City's heritage preservation ordinance and Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), which seeks to protect and preserve Chaska's significant resources. One of the HPC's goals is to expand the local historic register by including more properties worthy of preservation.

For a property to be included in the local register it must be nominated and approved by the HPC and City Council. Nominations require extensive research of a property, looking at significant architectural character, cultural resources, notable persons associated with the site, embodiment of certain architectural styles, etc. Assistance is needed to gather information, coordinate with staff and property owners, and prepare nomination reports for properties that are eligible to be added to the City's local register. This project would advance the goals and objectives of preserving the City's heritage and identity.



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Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas for Students to Explore

1. Identify priority properties for research (downtown Chaska & Jonathan neighborhood).
2. Conduct research of various properties to understand and define architectural style, architectural integrity, cultural resources, and significant persons occupying the property, possibly including interviews or oral histories with current or former property residents.
3. Assist in writing nomination reports for warranted properties.

How Student Work Will Build Community Resilience

Expanding the local historic register supports the City’s objective to preserve its historic buildings. Through this project Chaska will identify buildings that might otherwise be torn down in the future, encouraging repairs and adaptive re-use. At nearly 60 years old in its oldest areas, the Jonathan neighborhood is starting to become an area of focus for preservation efforts and this project may encourage a more sustainable future for its aging buildings.

Potential Partners or Stakeholders

- Heritage Preservation Commission
- Chaska History Center
- Carver County Historic Society
- Property Owners

Existing Plans and Reports

- [Downtown Chaska Master Plan \(2014\)](#)
- [Heritage Preservation Ordinance](#)
- Eitel House Local Nomination Report

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