

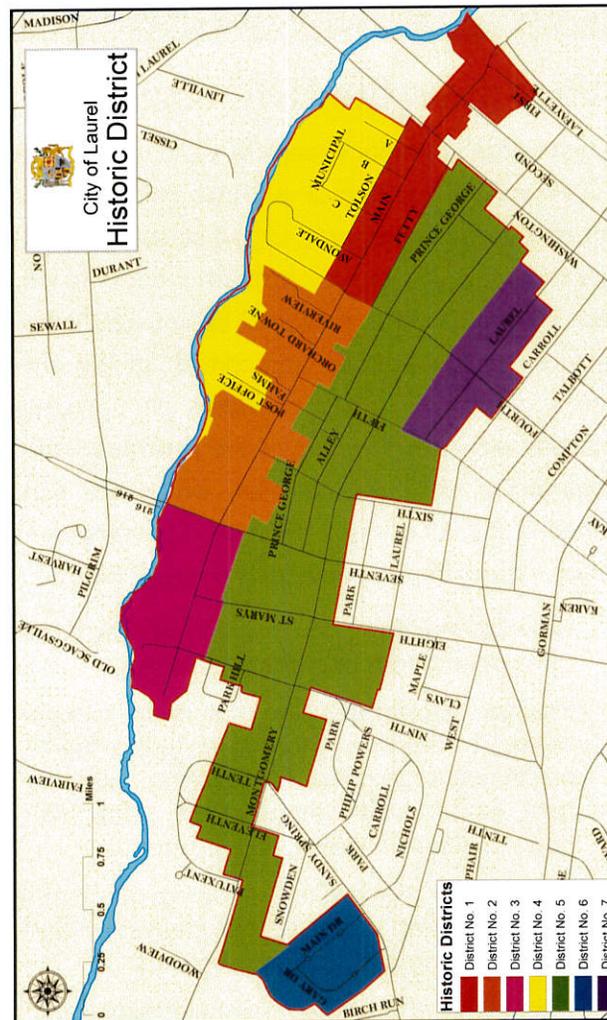
What is the City of Laurel Historic District?

A historic district is an established area which contains resources such as buildings, objects and sites whose distinct character conveys a unique architectural or cultural heritage. Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code authorizes local communities to create historic districts to safeguard and preserve their cultural, social, and architectural histories.

The Mayor and City Council of Laurel have exercised this power by establishing the City of Laurel Historic District Commission (HDC) and seven individual, contiguous historic districts, collectively known as the City of Laurel Historic District. Located in the northern most part of the City.

What is the City of Laurel Historic District Commission?

The Historic District Commission is a seven member volunteer citizen body charged with aesthetic and design review in the Historic District. Composed of six commissioners appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council and one *ex officio* member of the City Council, the HDC normally meets the Third Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Laurel Municipal Center



Mayor and City Council of **LAUREL**



“Government to the People”

Historic District



Laurel Municipal Center

8103 Sandy Spring Road | Laurel MD 20707
Ph. (301) 725-5300 | Fax (301) 490-5068
www.cityoflaurel.org

The HDC Review Process

To have a project reviewed by the HDC, a Certificate of Approval application must be submitted with the appropriate materials to the Historic District Commission Coordinator at least two weeks before any scheduled meeting. The HDC normally meets the Third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Laurel Municipal Center. Its recommended that applicants or a representative attend the HDC meeting.

Prior to the HDC meeting, the application is reviewed by staff to provide a recommendation to the HDC. At the meeting, the HDC can recommend approval as submitted or with conditions; tabling for further consideration or pending additional information and/or materials; or denial (with recommendation of changes to achieve approval).

Once the HDC issues a Certificate of Approval, the Department of Economic and Community Development can issue any required permits to the applicant. Please be advised, obtaining an HDC Certificate of Approval does not alleviate an applicant from the responsibility of obtaining any permits required under the Unified Land Development Code. Staff will review all completed work to assure compliance with the approved HDC Certificate of Approval. Any work completed that is not in compliance with the Certificate of Approval is subject to municipal infractions and possibly fines.

What does the HDC review?

Any proposed exterior change to a property within the Historic District which is visible from a public street, sidewalk, alley way, or public space is subject to review by the Historic District Commission. The review includes the general design, aesthetics, texture, color, materials, and context of the proposed work. The HDC considers all proposed changes within the context of the Historic District Commission Design Guidelines, which are contained in Div. 13 of the Unified Land Development Code. Typical items reviewed by the HDC include:

- **New Construction:** construction of new structures or additions to existing buildings
- **Exterior Alterations:** any physical exterior change to building materials including the replacement or addition of structural, architectural, or decorative elements; i.e. siding, windows, mailboxes, railing, fences, etc.
- **Demolition:** dismantling or razing all or part of any building including the removal of character-defining architectural elements
- **Signage:** aesthetic and design elements for all signs including color, font, material, illumination, and placement
- **Landscaping:** major landscaping projects and reconfigurations including the removal of mature trees and foliage

For projects subject to HDC review, an HDC Certificate of Approval is required prior to proceeding with any work. Any required permits are not issued with an HDC Certificate of Approval.

What doesn't the HDC review?

There are some types of work that the HDC does not review, including:

- **Maintenance:** work that does not alter the exterior features of a structure or affect the architectural or cultural significance of a building, such as cleaning of gutters and masonry
- **Repair:** rehabilitation that includes work beyond maintenance such as patching, piecing in, or otherwise reinforcing existing materials which does not visually change a structure
- **Interior Alterations:** any work that does not change the exterior of a building such as removing walls or finishing a basement

Although some work does not need to be reviewed by the HDC, any exterior changes must still be reviewed by staff for in-kind approval and possible issuance of an HDC Certificate of Approval.



Historic District Commission Tax Credit

The City of Laurel offers tax credits for qualifying and HDC approved projects located in the Historic District. The tax credit is ten percent (10%) of the total expense of the approved work. The work must conform to the criteria outlined by the HDC Certificate of Approval. An HDC Tax Credit Application must be submitted after a Certificate of Approval has been obtained.