



Advocacy Policy

Approved October 8, 2025

Cincinnati Preservation's Advocacy Policy provides a clear framework to guide the organization's engagement in preservation-related issues, ensuring that all actions align with our mission to protect and promote the Greater Cincinnati region's historic resources. This policy outlines the types of advocacy we engage in, how decisions are made, and the process for responding to emerging and urgent issues. While this document serves as the standard for advocacy activity, the Board of Trustees retains ultimate discretion and may override or adjust this policy on a case-by-case basis as circumstances require.

I. Mission-Driven Advocacy

Cincinnati Preservation empowers and educates people to value, preserve, and save Greater Cincinnati's historic buildings, communities, landscapes, and stories. Our advocacy efforts are guided by this mission, ensuring that the region's historic places remain vital, vibrant, and valued community assets.

II. Geographic Scope

Our advocacy covers the nine counties in the tri-state region that make up the Greater Cincinnati area, specifically:

- Ohio Counties: Hamilton, Butler, Clermont, and Warren
- Kentucky Counties: Boone, Kenton, and Campbell
- Indiana Counties: Dearborn and Ohio

While our region spans a broad geographic area, we prioritize advocacy within the I-275 beltway, where the greatest concentration of historic resources, urban development pressure, and community partners reside. Outside of the I-275 loop our efforts are currently limited to providing letters of support or concern for issues and will provide in person testimony when new preservation ordinances or districts are going through an approval process.

III. Guiding Principles

- **Mission-Focused:** We engage in issues directly related to historic preservation, cultural heritage, neighborhood character, and sustainability.
- **Place-Based:** We advocate for the preservation of individual sites, districts, and cultural landscapes with historic, architectural, and community significance.

- **Collaborative:** We work in partnership with local governments, community organizations, and residents.
- **Non-Partisan:** We advocate based on issues, not politics, in accordance with our 501(c)(3) status.
- **Equity-Centered:** We advocate for histories and places historically underrepresented and under resourced by preservation practice, reflecting the full diversity of our region's history.

IV. Areas of Advocacy

- Historic Designations and Landmarking: Promoting local, state, and national recognition of historic places and supporting communities through the designation process, including not limited to local historic and conservation districts.
- Funding and Incentives: Advocating for robust preservation funding, tax credits (including the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit), direct government budget allocation for local preservation programs and grant programs at all levels.
- Threatened Resources: Publicly advocating for the protection and preservation of at-risk historic buildings, sites, and landscapes (e.g. places that are individual local landmarks, individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and National Historic Landmarks).
- New Construction/Infill Development: Advocacy for infill projects will be limited to projects within existing local historic districts where there is a legal framework to determine compatibility, including, but not limited to, local historic and conservation districts.
- Planning and Urban Design Policies: Supporting zoning, planning, and design guidelines and review processes that protect historic resources and support context-sensitive development.
- Community Empowerment: Ensuring that all communities are represented and served by recognizing underrepresented histories, supporting community-led preservation efforts, and protecting cultural and intangible heritage.
- Public Education and Awareness: Providing expert commentary and information to educate decision-makers and the public on the value of preservation.
- Sustainability and Reuse: Promoting historic preservation as a key tool for environmental sustainability, smart growth, and reuse and sensitive green retrofitting of existing buildings.
- Economic Development: Advancing preservation as a catalyst for economic vitality through heritage tourism, small business growth, job creation, affordable housing and reinvestment in historic neighborhoods and communities.

V. Advocacy Channels and Activities

Cincinnati Preservation engages in a range of advocacy activities to advance its mission and influence preservation outcomes. Advocacy channels and activities will be tailored based on how Cincinnati Preservation may be able to successfully influence decision-

makers and how our audience can support the action. Cincinnati Preservation's advocacy may include one or more of these activities:

- Public comment and testimony (written and in-person statements) before planning commissions, city councils, or legislatures.
- Strategically utilize email, phone calls, letters, petitions, and social media to mobilize constituents to contact policymakers.
- Engage the media to cover preservation issues with press releases, interviews and op-eds.
- Preservation related technical assistance to community groups and government agencies.
- Create policy papers or briefs.
- Launch public awareness campaigns.
- Hold policy dialogues and forums among key stakeholders.
- Document problems for policymakers and propose preservation-minded solutions (e.g., commission a report).
- Hold face-to-face meetings with policymakers.
- Only when absolutely necessary, pursue litigation, particularly in cases where legal action is required to prevent the unlawful demolition of historic resources, enforce preservation ordinances, or uphold the public interest in protecting significant sites. Litigation is considered a last resort when other advocacy channels have been exhausted or when legal intervention is essential to protect irreplaceable heritage or prevent the loss of critical preservation tools.

External Requests for Support

Requests from outside organizations or individuals for Cincinnati Preservation's support or advocacy involvement must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director, Advocacy Committee Chair, or Board President. These requests will be evaluated based on alignment with our mission, staff capacity, geographic relevance, urgency, and potential for impact.

VII. Partnerships and Coalitions

One of our guiding principles is to collaborate in advancing advocacy issues. Generally, we will engage in issues where there is a coalition of support. We actively seek partnerships with:

- Local preservation commissions and neighborhood groups or community councils.
- State Historic Preservation Offices (Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana).
- State nonprofit preservation organizations (Heritage Ohio, Preservation Ohio, Preservation Kentucky, Indiana Landmarks).
- National preservation organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Alliance for Preservation Commissions, Preservation Action, National Preservation Partners Network, among others.

- Affordable housing, arts, sustainability, building industry, and community development groups.

VIII. When Cincinnati Preservation Takes the Lead

Cincinnati Preservation will take the lead on an advocacy issue when the matter aligns strongly with our mission, expertise, and regional scope. Leadership may include initiating campaigns, organizing coalitions, issuing public statements, or guiding policy proposals. We will consider leading an advocacy effort after evaluating the following criteria:

- **Direct Mission Alignment:** The issue is clearly connected to our mission to empower and educate people to value, preserve, and save Greater Cincinnati's historic buildings, communities, landscapes, and stories.
- **Geographic Relevance:** The issue falls within our priority area—especially within the I-275 corridor—and affects historic assets in our nine-county service region.
- **Capacity:** Staff and volunteer resources are available to meaningfully and effectively lead the effort without compromising other organizational commitments.
- **Urgency and Threat Level:** The historic resource is at imminent risk (e.g., demolition, neglect, or harmful policy changes) and requires immediate, coordinated action.
- **Lack of Other Leadership:** No other organization is positioned, willing, or able to take the lead, and Cincinnati Preservation has the capacity and credibility to do so.
- **Community Support:** There is a clear need or request from community members, neighborhood groups, or local governments for leadership from Cincinnati Preservation.
- **Potential for Impact:** The advocacy effort has the potential to create lasting preservation outcomes, influence policy, or establish a precedent for future preservation efforts.

In leading advocacy efforts, Cincinnati Preservation remains committed to transparency, collaboration, and alignment with our nonpartisan, educational mission.

VIII. Political and Legal Compliance

Cincinnati Preservation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and does not endorse political candidates or engage in partisan activity. We may engage in:

- Issue Advocacy: Permissible without limitation.
- Lobbying: Limited by IRS regulations. The organization tracks lobbying efforts to ensure compliance.

IX. Implementation

Cincinnati Preservation will establish internal processes and decision-making guidance in accordance with this policy that is created and recommended by the Advocacy committee and approved by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Director is the official spokesperson for Cincinnati Preservation. While the Executive Director or Board President may be asked to advocate on a topic representing Cincinnati Preservation, they can only do so in accordance with this policy. Staff Members or the Advocacy Committee Chair may speak on behalf of the organization only if authorized to do so in the absence of the Executive Director or Board President.

Board members may speak on a topic in their personal or professional capacity but may not represent Cincinnati Preservation.