

CITY OF COOS BAY CITY COUNCIL
Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE March 3, 2015	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
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TO: Mayor Shoji and City Councilors

FROM: Eric Day

THROUGH: Rodger Craddock

ISSUE: Certified Local Governments

BACKGROUND:

At this year's goal session, the Council asked staff to give a report on a program called Certified Local Governments (CLG). The CLG program is designed to promote historic preservation at the local level. It is a federal program (National Park Service) that is administered by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Should the City become a CLG, it would meet the City's historic preservation goal found in the City's Comprehensive Plan - Goal 7.3 (HP.2) states:

"Coos Bay shall assist community organizations in seeking state and federal grant funds to assist in the preservation on historically significant sites, recognizing the recreational, educational, and cultural benefits accrued by the restoration and preservation of these sites and structures."

CLG Benefits:

- **Grants:** CLGs may apply for annual grants from SHPO. The grants, which require a 50/50 match, have typically been in the \$5,000--\$20,000 range in recent years. Grants can be used for a broad range of preservation activities, though some of the most common grant-funded projects include the following:
 - Surveys of historic properties and accompanying context studies
 - National Register nominations of either individual buildings or historic districts
 - Public education activities: walking tour booklets, websites, etc.
 - Preservation planning: updating ordinances, preparing design guidelines, administering local preservation programs, etc.
 - Architectural and engineering studies and plans for rehabilitating historic properties
 - "Brick-and-mortar" rehabilitation work on National Register buildings
 - Training: workshops and conferences for staff and commission members
- **SHPO and National Park Service Assistance:** CLG's enjoy a partnership relationship with the state and federal agencies that have the primary responsibility for promoting historic preservation in the U.S. As such, CLG's are able to tap into the expertise and resources of these agencies in order to help address their local preservation issues.
- **Networking:** Through CLG workshops, conferences, list-servs, and websites, CLG's are

able to participate in the discussion of preservation issues with other local governments throughout the state and country.

Local governments must meet certain qualifications to become "certified" and thereby qualify to receive matching grants from SHPO.

CLG Certification Requirements:

- Establish a historic preservation commission and appoint interested and qualified residents to serve. To the extent they are available, at least some of the commission members should meet "professional" qualifications in the disciplines of history, architecture, architectural history, archaeology, or related fields. The City could use the Design Assistance Team (DAT) for this purpose by amending their governing ordinance.
- Pass a preservation ordinance that outlines how the local government will address historic preservation issues.
- Agree to participate in updating and expanding the state's historic building inventory program. SHPO takes the lead in this effort by maintaining the master database and the files for the statewide inventory, and by providing grants to survey additional properties.
- Agree to review and comment on any National Register of Historic Places nominations of properties within the local government boundaries. Nominations are usually submitted by the property owners themselves or other members of the public. SHPO administers the National Register program in Oregon.
- Affirm that it will fulfill its obligation to enforce existing state preservation laws.

ADVANTAGES:

By joining this program the City receives matching funds for preservation activities and help and advice from other jurisdictions in furthering the City's historic preservation goals.

DISADVANTAGES:

Some staff and public time and effort will be expended in meeting the requirements for membership. Also, as the grants are small, in terms of development costs, the associated projects are typically limited in scope.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Should the City decide to become a CLG, staff costs and possibly city funds to match grant allocations may be expended as a part of the program.

RELATED CITY GOAL:

To create a vibrant community for City citizens and entrepreneurs. To promote and assist in the revitalization of the Downtown and Empire URA Districts in an effort to provide development opportunities for businesses and industry.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff is seeking Council consensus as to whether the City should pursue becoming a Certified Local Government.