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Local Versus National Historic District Designation: The Effect of Preservation Policy on Two Historic Districts in Covington, Kentucky

This work and its defense approved by:

Chair: Mahyar Arefi
Roger Barry
Kate Carothers
LOCAL VERSUS NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION:
THE EFFECT OF PRESERVATION POLICY ON
TWO HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN COVINGTON, KENTUCKY

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Michele A. Brozek
B.A. Psychology, State University of New York at Buffalo, 2002

Committee: Mahyar Arefi, PhD - Chair
            Roger Barry, PhD - Member
            Kate Carothers, M.A. - Reader
Abstract

The purpose of this thesis project is to explore the meaning and consequences of two historic preservation policies in Covington, Kentucky. Covington, similar to thousands of other cities and towns in America, contains both national and local historic districts. While both types of districts grant certain advantages, the main distinction lies in the power of local government to exhibit design control by use of zoning ordinances in local districts. While several studies have shown that local design control produces higher property values, resident dissatisfaction, and even contempt, is common. Past studies have not weighed this type of feedback into evaluating preservation programs, nor have they looked at other diverse methods of measurement. This thesis project works to analyze the economic, social, and physical aspects of both policies, and comes to the conclusion that perhaps national historic districts alone are adequate in creating positive change in a community.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Historic districts have been in existence in America since the 1920s. In their earliest days, they were quite rare, and the handful of districts in place were locally designated and controlled areas, usually of national historical significance. Later in history, the passage of the Historic Preservation Act (1966) allowed for the creation of nationally listed historic districts. For the first time in American history, the preservation of a place, area, or grouping of buildings, not just single structures, became a widespread and common activity. Suddenly, historic districts were sprouting up all over the country as a way to honor and distinguish particular areas of historic importance. Before long, listing a district on the National Register of Historic Places came to mean more than simply an honor or distinction. National districts were quickly becoming a community development tool used for revitalizing both residential and commercial areas.

Under the Tax Reform Act of 1976, owners of property residing in Nationally Registered historic districts became eligible for a tax credit for rehabilitating their buildings that were income-producing. This incentive created a wave of rehabilitation of structures within national historic districts, and communities were experiencing never-before-seen levels of interest and investment in older buildings. The Tax Reform Act also paved the way for the designation of many more districts throughout the United States. One such community that jumped on the historic district bandwagon was Covington, Kentucky, which designated several districts beginning in the early 1970s.

As much positive impact as the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Tax Reform Act of 1976 were having on communities, they had many limitations, causing local
governments to question what more they could do to further preserve, protect, and revitalize their historic districts. As a result, many locally enforced historic districts were established that imposed design control over the structures within these districts. These local districts were a more forceful and hands-on community development tool for local governments, and were intended to even further enhance the positive impact of National District designation. Before long, however, individuals from both inside and outside of these communities began to sense that their property rights were being infringed upon. The perceived stringent control over the design of structures within districts was even perceived to scare new residents away and lower property values as a result.

While many past studies have examined the impact of local and national historic district designation on various aspects of communities, few have looked at the impact of these districts on the overall health and development of neighborhoods. The overall question of this research study is: as historic district regulation has moved from concentrating on the national program to locally controlled programs, what has been the real impact of each program on overall community development, and which preservation tool works best for communities, both in quantitative and qualitative measurements. This thesis will attempt to uncover this question by studying the features of local and national districts, as well as community input in Covington, Kentucky.

Study Area: The City of Covington, Kentucky

The City of Covington is located in the northeast corner of the state of Kentucky directly across the Ohio River from the City of Cincinnati. It is a part for the Cincinnati Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and is bordered by the Ohio River to the North, the
Licking River to the East, and several smaller cities to the west and south. The City was first incorporated in 1815, and originally encompassed about 150 acres. By the 1820s, only about 400 people claimed to reside in Covington, with a boom in population soon to follow. By the end of the 1800s, Covington had significantly grown in size. The population continued to grow until the 1960s, as urban populations began to decline nationwide as a result of suburbanization and other factors. Current day Covington has a population of over 45,000 and is about 7,680 acres in size, making it the fourth largest city in the State of Kentucky.

Covington has long established itself as mainly a preservation-friendly city. Beginning in the early 1970s, the city adopted policies and legislation that was welcoming to historic preservation, and the preservation of historic structures appears to have been an important aspect of the city politics and planning from this time to the present. In about a 30-year period, from the early 1970s to the early 2000s, 16 historic districts were nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Of these districts, about 4,930 structures were included within the established boundaries. The National Register defines a district as:

a geographically definable area- urban or rural, large or small- possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures and/or objects unified by past events or aesthetically by a plan or physical development” (Murtagh 1997, 20).

When compared to cities of similar land size and population, Covington has an extremely large number of historic districts, which can be partly explained by the physical retention of several of the original neighborhoods of the city. The districts are generally grouped according to the neighborhoods where they are located, and are often considered to be whole neighborhoods unto themselves. Similar architectural styles, common dates of original construction, and parallel building-lot configurations (such as setbacks) are common features shared by structures in a Historic District.
In Covington, as was the case elsewhere, the designation of national districts allowed for limited protection of individual historic properties. National designation called for a review of properties that were to be demolished using Federal dollars, and it also opened the door for property-owners to utilize the Historic Preservation Tax Credit program. National districts did not exhibit any protection for demolition using private money, and had no design review of buildings being rehabilitated or newly built.

In addition to national historic district designations, Covington adopted five locally designated districts in the 1980s. These districts were established through an ordinance that outlined Historic Preservation Overlay (HPO) Zones for each of the districts. HPO zoning is a technique that places design control over structures located within the locally designated districts and is guided by design review. Under the ordinance, any significant work done to the façade of the building that is deemed a “contributing member” of the HPO, must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Urban Design Review Board prior to beginning such modifications. Certificates must also be obtained for the demolition of structures within the local district that are deemed “contributing members” of the district. A “contributing member” is defined as a structure which adds or contributes to the historic nature of the district, and often contains many of the original elements of the building. Structures that have been heavily modified from their original form are usually not considered to be contributing members to a district.

The creation of local districts was a declarative step in the direction of creating an even friendlier environment for historic preservation in Covington. The adoption of ordinances allowing local design review in five local districts created a much more proactive approach to preservation in the City and allowed elected officials, city administrators and
policy-makers to have direct control over historic preservation and building rehabilitation projects in the five districts, or zones, of the city.

Opposition to Covington’s Historic Districts

While the political figures and policy-makers of the City have generally taken a favorable position on historic preservation in Covington through the designation of sixteen historic districts and five historic preservation overlay zones (although there have been a handful of leaders who have objected to them), not all of the city’s residents have shared in such enthusiasm for Covington’s preservation policy. Those who oppose the policies of historic preservation, and in particular, design control in the local historic districts or HPOs, cite such issues as NIMBYisms (Not In My Backyard) and property rights violations when expressing their concerns.

NIMBYism, in its earliest and most popular usage, described citizens who did not want a policy or governmental action interfering with their individual rights as a property owner, and that were also a) emotional, uninformed and unscientific about their opposition; b) motivated by narrow and self-motivated interests and; c) obstructing policies that would provide for the collective good (McAvoy 1999). Of course, this definition of NIMBYism suggests that those opposed to the governmental action are always uneducated, ignorant, and selfish respondents. This is not always the case, and some definitions of NIMBYism have come to represent the democratic process in which citizens take an active voice in the disagreement of certain public policies that affect them on a personal level. Nonetheless, NIMBYism is a threat to the creation and survival of public policy programs such as historic
district designation, because there are people who disagree with such policies and do not want them affecting their own properties.

A variety of residents and non-residents of Covington who express disdain for the city’s local historic districts, or HPO zones, include property owners, developers, housing rehabilitation specialists, bankers, and others. In the cases of property owners, many of these negative attitudes surface as a result of the denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness application. One such example is the case of George Arlinghaus, a property owner who was not allowed to install vinyl windows and reduce the size of window openings on his property that was located within a HPO zone in Covington. According to an article in the Kentucky Post, 28 November 1997, Arlinghaus fought the City in court, and mustered up much support for a property right’s campaign in Covington and Northern Kentucky.

Numerous other examples of the disdain for local historic districts have been expressed in Covington, Northern Kentucky, and throughout the Greater Cincinnati region. While it may seem obvious the combination of local and national historic districts would have far more positive effects for preservation and community development than only having a national district, the public opinion of some stakeholders disagrees with this notion. This thesis will work to examine local and national historic districts, reveal the positives and negatives about each policy choice, and uncover which type of district works best for each study-district.

Project Goals

This thesis will examine the effects of combined local and national historic district designation on two neighborhoods in the City of Covington. While it may seem obvious
that two policies or programs combined-- local and national districts-- would produce
greater and more positive outcomes for the neighborhoods, such an understanding is not
commonly shared by the residents in Covington through personal observations, nor solidly
reflected in the literature. Many people in Covington, for example, feel the control of a local
historic district is too stringent and do not see their importance and impact. Some also
believe that these strict rules for design inhibit developers and investors in the city and turn
progress and development away.

The project will be exploratory in nature and its conclusion will produce a set of
lessons for policy makers and elected officials about devising preservation policies that are
more effective, appropriate, and justified for communities. The thesis will also share insight
for cities that have only national districts or only local districts, and encourage the adoption
of other policy tools in an attempt to utilize historic preservation as a community
development instrument.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Before exploring the effects that preservation policy has on community development in two of Covington’s historic districts, it is first necessary to provide an overview of what has been previously researched on the subject. First, a look at the meaning of community development will be introduced. Secondly, a review of the background and history of local districts will be discussed. A background of the country’s national districts and the national preservation program will then be reviewed. A look at the resurgence of local districts in America following the Preservation Act of 1966 will then follow. After these sections, a final section will explore both the positives and negatives of each type of district. This last section will be an important link to the methodology of the study, in which the positive and negative factors that are reviewed in the literature will be compared with the input from Covington’s community.

Community Development

Community development is a concept that is defined in a variety of ways by both researchers and practitioners. It is an interdisciplinary concept that has roots in fields such as sociology, economics, planning, social work, and even architecture (Green & Haines 2002). Although there are varied interpretations about what community development is, the concept can be sorted into categories. Ferguson and Dickens (1999), for example, show that community
development is manifested in five basic forms: physical capital, intellectual or human capital, social capital, financial capital, and political capital. Physical capital can take the form of buildings or streets. Intellectual or human capital can be expressed through skills, knowledge, and confidence between members of a community. Social capital focuses on shared norms, values, and other factors that make relationships between people in a community more viable. Political capital is the ability of a community to exert political power, or to have a political voice. Similarly, Green and Haines (2002) reduce community development to five categories in which progress can be made: human capital, social capital, physical capital, financial capital, and environmental capital.

Still other researchers, such as Rubin and Rubin (1992), define community development as a set of objectives by which a group of people can work to accomplish, such as solving local problems (such as unemployment), addressing inequalities of wealth, improving the potential of individual residents, and building a sense of community. Such authors purposefully avoid narrowing the definition of community development into a list of criteria. Ross Gittell and Avis Vidal (1998) are more examples of such researchers who define community development as a broad set of objectives that may vary from community to community depending on each group of people's goals and objectives. Some of these goals and objectives may be more easily measured than others, but this factor should not effect the labeling of these goals or objectives as community development strategies.

The meaning of community development will be an important part of the methodology of this project, and three categories of community development will be derived from the literature. These factors will be measured or recorded to indicate whether positive community development has been achieved in the local and national districts. These three categories are: social, physical, and economic development. Positive social development can
be measured through feelings of community strength and success. Positive physical development can be measured through improved physical conditions of buildings and infrastructure. Finally, positive economic development can be measure through such indicators as increased property values.

Local Historic Districts

Since approximately the early 1920s, American cities and towns have been concerned with preserving more than just individual properties of historic importance (Hamer 1998). A new interest in historic districts was emerging by the 1930s, and the country's first local historic district in Charleston, South Carolina was established in 1931 (Hamer 1998; Murtagh 1997). Other such locally established and controlled districts were emerging around the country around the same time, such as a district in Williamsburg, Virginia. These local districts preserved their unique historic environments through zoning ordinances that restricted particular types of design for the modifications of existing buildings, as well as the buildings of new structures.

The historic districting of Charleston in 1931 set the precedent for other early historic districts in the country. Susan Pringle Frost, a preservation activist and resident of Charleston, prompted the establishment of the historic district by first requesting the city council of Charleston to introduce legislation that would protect historic iron and woodwork from being removed from local homes to be put on display in house museums (Murtagh 1997). Around the same time, a local fight against the placement of Standard Oil filling stations in areas deemed to be of historic importance was in progress, and caused a never-before-seen heightened interest in historic preservation in the city. Soon after, in 1929, the
city charted an ordinance that regulated the placement of such new stations, industry, commerce, and schools, outside from historic areas. These events ultimately led to the ratification by the Charleston city council of regulations which set up a board of architectural review whose function was to issue certificates of appropriateness for changes to (or demolitions of) structures in the designated “old and historic” district (Murtagh, 105).

Another early historic district, Williamsburg, Virginia, was instituted in a much different manner than Charleston’s historic district. Although work began in the restoration of Williamsburg in 1926, prior to much of the work done in Charleston, and is considered to be the “first large scale attempt in this country to recover the physical form and atmosphere of an entire community”, Williamsburg was created in a much different manner than Charleston and resulted in a much different environment (Wornsnop 1994). Funded by the private donations of John D. Rockefeller, the community became a living historic museum and inspired other cities and towns, such as St. Augustine, Florida, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to establish such economic and tourist magnets.

Similar to Charleston’s first historic district, Williamsburg’s district attracted the attention of other communities to the powers of preservation on the revitalization of a city. In contrast, Williamsburg was built on private initiatives instead of public pressures, and did not employ the use of zoning as a method of control in the district. In these ways, Charleston was more of a model for current day local historic districts with its early use of local historic preservation zoning and architectural review boards to achieve its goals for historic preservation, while Williamsburg introduced the appeal of using a historic district to create a tourist attraction. Through these tactics, local districts have come to develop a variety of basic goals: to preserve the meaning of place and community identity, to protect and enhance the physical design of a place, to improve neighborhood conditions and
appearance, to enhance tourist trade, and to support community economic development (Hodder 1999).

National Historic Districts

It was not until the 1960s that the designation of historic districts became a nationally sponsored activity, as opposed to solely local designation. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established nationally recognized historic districts and sites and had three major objectives. First, the Act created the National Register of Historic Places and Districts, which is a list of properties of national, state or local significance expanded and maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. In order for a site or district to be nominated and listed on the National Register, four criteria for consideration were established (National Parks Service, 2003). These include sites and buildings that: a) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of American history; b) are associated with the lives of persons significant in America’s past; c) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant or distinguishable entity who components may lack individual distinction; or d) have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. The third criteria is considered to be the most important consideration for the nomination and listing of historic districts, since the individual qualities of each structure may not be as important as the whole entity of the district of buildings.

Second, the 1966 Preservation Act directed federal funding to be utilized for historic preservation programs. Lastly, it exerted protection for qualifying structures located within
Nationally Registered historic districts from the "damaging impacts of Federal activity, such as public works construction" (Hamer, 1998, Brandywine Conservancy, 1984). For the first time in American history, the Federal government added its support to historic preservation, and allocated money in the form of tax credits for rehabilitation of historic structures.

These three objectives led to a variety of direct impacts on Federal legislation concerning the preservation of historic districts (King, 2002). The introduction of the Section 106 process, which mandates a review of historic properties located within Nationally Registered districts, worked to limit the number of qualifying historic properties damaged or destroyed by Federal works projects through a review process. Another direct effect of the National Preservation Act of 1966 was passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and later, the Tax Reform Act of 1986. This act established a tax credit for those who rehabilitate properties within Nationally Registered historic districts, according to the standards of the Secretary of the Interior. The initial 1976 Act established a 25% tax credit for income-producing structures located in nationally designated historic districts, and the Act of 1986 lowered the tax credit to 20%.

While the National Register was originally established as a type of honorary list of distinguished sites and districts, their goals have evolved into encompassing many of the same goals as local districts. They aim to protect the historic resources of the area from destruction and interference, and are often used as catalysts for tourism. The legislative spin-offs of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, such as Section 106 Review and the Tax Credit program, have matured the National Register of Districts from simply an honorary list into a full-fledged community development tool. Communities began to designate national historic districts at a fast rate following 1976 in order to reap the benefits of Federal tax credits. Many communities relied on the National Register program as the
centerpiece of their local preservation programs and did not institute locally controlled districts with historic preservation zoning regulations.

Resurgence of Local Districts and Evaluation of Local and National Districts

Not long after the establishment of the national historic preservation program, many communities who relied solely on the program to manage and regulate their historic districts began to express concern about limitations of the program. One major concern was the fact that buildings within national districts could be demolished with the use of private funds (Cassity, 2001). Secondly, rehabilitation work done to buildings in national districts did not have to abide to any standards of historic quality, unless the building was applying for a tax credit. Furthermore, tax credits were only available for income-producing structures, excluding residential buildings. As a result, a resurgence of local historic districts occurred, beginning in the 1970s and continuing into the 1980s. Most commonly, these local districts overlaid on top of national districts, such that the new district would reap the benefits of both national and local preservation policies.

By the early 1990s, over 1,700 communities had established local historic districts similar in structure to early local districts, complete with local design review, architectural review boards (ARB’s), and design guidelines (Beamont 1991). This number was a sharp increase from the several hundred local districts that were in place in the early 1970s.

Proponents of local historic districts argued that local districts were superior to national districts because they better protected the investments of owners of historic properties, including owners of residential buildings. According to supporters, local districts encouraged better quality design, created a healthier environment for fostering tourism,
enhanced business recruitment potential, and provided social and psychological benefits (Cassity, 2001). While an interest in local districts was escalating through the late 1970s and 80s, opposition to such districts and an opinion that national districts were actually a sufficient policy began to be expressed just as strongly.

The fact that local districts incorporated regulation through zoning ordinances to control all exterior work done to properties within the districts was a key point in the argument against local districts. According to those opposed to local districts, local historic regulation is costly to both property owners and other citizens, because the local government must employ a staff to monitor and enforce policies and design standards, and because property owners are required to purchase materials that are often more expensive to adhere to the design standards (Schuster, 1997). Local regulation may also discourage property owners within districts to do more than the design standards require, and to exert the least effort required to comply with historic zoning code (Schuster, 1997).

In addition to public comment on general attitudes towards local and national districts, another set of literature has been published concerning the impact of property values on local and national historic district designation. Studies have shown that residential properties within historic districts, regardless of local or national designation, sell for a premium compared to other similar residential properties outside of districts (Coulson & Leichenko, 2001; Clark & Herrin, 1997; Asabere & Huffman 1994; Leichenko, Coulson, & Listokin, 2001). Similar studies have shown that the effect of historic designation has different effects on property value depending on whether the district is locally or nationally designated (Schaeffer & Millerick, 1991; Leichenko, et. al. 2001; Ford, 1989; Asabere & Huffman, 1994; Asabere & Huffman, 1991; Shipley, 1991; Smith, 1998). Disagreement,
however, about which type of district influences higher property values exists in the literature.

Several studies demonstrate that the designation of local districts have a detrimental impact on property and land values (Asabere et. al., 1991; 1994; Schaeffer et. al., 1991). Such studies attribute the loss of value in local districts to the loss of property rights in districts due to design guidelines and the prohibitory actions of architectural review boards. Other studies link the establishment of local districts to higher property and land values (Ford, 1989; Shipley, 2000) since design review promotes better care for properties within local districts. Still other studies show mixed results for the impact of local district designation on property values (Leichenko et. al., 2001), since each district is unique and produces different property value outcomes.

While much research has addressed public opinion about the effectiveness of local versus national district designation and the effect that designations have on aspects of the community, with research on property values at the forefront of this approach, little work has incorporated these two sets of study. This thesis will work to incorporate these two arenas of research into one comprehensive study that will explore both local opinion of each type of historic district, and the measured impacts of each type of designation on community development.

From the literature on community development, three general areas of community development will be measured: social, physical (environmental), and economic. These community indicators have been used by countless governmental organizations, such as the U.S. Interagency Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators, to study a geographic area over several decades or longer (Phillips 2003). Community indicators are measurements that provide information about past and current trends and assist community
leaders in making decisions about future outcomes (Phillips 2003). One assumption when working with broad categories of community indicators is that a total understanding of each category is not examined. Instead, representative data from each category is explored in an attempt to define and measure overall community well-being (Phillips 2003).

While previous studies have only addressed the importance of measuring quantitative elements in understanding the effectiveness of local and national districts and have limited their exploration to only the economic benefits of each, this thesis will take a more comprehensive approach to measuring positive change in terms of overall community development.
Chapter 3

Methodology

The project will be primarily a non-hypothesis study, and one that is exploratory in nature, tracing the evolution of two historic districts before and after their respective designations, and taking into account the thoughts and opinions of the community as transcribed through local preservation and housing professionals. It will include both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Glaser and Strauss in their 1967 book *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, theory involving qualitative data is “best when it emerges, like concepts. The theory should never be put together, nor should a formal-theory model be applied to it until one is sure to fit, and will not force the data” (Emphasis added, Glaser & Strauss 1967:41).

Prior to the undertaking of the study, two historic districts within the City of Covington have been chosen to analyze. One local and one national district were chosen, each of which was determined to have similar characteristics in terms of their dates of designation, the number of structures within each district, the primary dates of construction of buildings, the primary architectural styles, the prominent land uses, and the building size and setback of structures within each district. In order to assess these features, the following procedures were followed (See Appendix for related attachments):

- A table was compiled containing the following information about each of the districts: the date of national designation, the date of local designation, if applicable, the number of structures, the primary date of construction, the primary architectural styles, and the primary land uses.
Maps of all of the historic districts in Covington were accessed from the Economic Development Department of the City of Covington, and were made using Public Valuation Administration (PVA) data obtained from the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission. These maps were used to locate each district in context of the overall city, and understand the scale of each district. (See Appendix, pages 53, 54).

Building mass and setbacks were analyzed for the districts using data from Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Maps showing the building footprints of all of the structures, as well as aerial photographs of each of the chosen districts are also included. (See Appendix, pages 55-58).

From the compiled information, two similar districts were chosen: The Main Strasse/Westside National Register historic district and Local Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, and the Austinburg National Register historic district. According to the 2001 publication entitled, National Register of Historic Districts: City of Covington (Konicki), the following narratives describe each district:

**Austinburg**
(National District)
The Austinburg National Register historic district is located on Covington’s eastside between 17th and 21st Streets. It is an intact grouping of architecturally significant residential and commercial buildings constructed between 1850 and 1935. The 1,260 buildings in the district display a variety of styles of architecture popular during those years, including examples of Queen Anne, Italianate, and Colonial Revival. The neighborhood began to develop in the 1840s and 50s when several landowners divided their country estates into lots. The area is named after Seneca Austin, one of the original landowners.

**Main Strasse/Westside**
(Local District (National District with Local Overlay Zone))
The Main Strasse/Westside National Register historic district is described in its nomination as an “extraordinarily extensive, intact and homogenous late-nineteenth century urban residential neighborhood”. The 800 buildings in the district, located
on Covington’s Westside from 5th Street south to Pike Street, were built primarily between 1840 and 1877. They are primarily two and three story residences and represent vernacular interpretations of Italianate, Richardsonian Romanesque and Queen Anne styles of architecture.

Tasks for the completion of studying each of the districts were completed:

1) Collected data on the perception of the public’s attitude about local and national historic districts in their city, as gathered from secondary sources. This involved:

   a. Collected comments and input derived from newspaper articles.

      Newspaper articles were collected from a search performed through the Kenton County Public Library’s Newspaper Index system, using key words such as “historic district” and “design review”.

   b. Reviewed the minutes of the Urban Design Review Board between a two year period: from November 2000 to November 2002.

      • Reviewed these documents to explore any positive or negative comment or implied feeling from residents of the City who have experienced the design review process first hand. All of the residents documented in these reports have applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness and have sought approval from the Urban Design Review Board.

   c. Performed interview with the urban housing specialist with the City of Covington, who works with housing developers and rehabilitators on a daily basis and monitors City-funded rehabilitation projects, both within and outside of historic districts in the City.

   d. Performed interview with the Historic Preservation Specialist of the City of Covington (who has been at this position for just over three years). This specialist consults with residents as well as housing developers and rehabilitators who wish to
make exterior modifications to their property, or build infill structures within Covington’s historic districts. The specialist also is responsible for issuing Certificates of Appropriateness to qualified applicants, either independently or through the sanction of the Urban Design Review Board.
e. Performed interview with the past Historic Preservation Specialist for the City (who was at this position for about 10 years).
f. Reviewed two plans from the Austinburg district. Identified issues relevant to historic preservation policy.

2) Collected Public Valuation Administration (PVA) data and City rehabilitation loan data for each historic. This involved:

- Identified parcels in each district on GIS and created a spreadsheet of inclusive addresses within each district.

- From this data, the average sale price of properties, average taxable value, and average land cost of buildings and parcels in each district was calculated before and after the year of district designation for both Austinburg and Main Strasse: 1987. PVA data for Austinburg and Main Strasse were collected around the same time period, and are in the middle of a 4-year cycle of assessments.

- Accessed city data that recorded city housing rehabilitation loans that were granted as early as 1982 to the present.

- Combined the GIS and the City Loan spreadsheets into one spreadsheet for each district.

- Identified which addresses were both located in either the Austinburg or Main Strasse districts and were granted City rehabilitation loans. For
In Austinburg, there were 65 city-sponsored rehabilitation projects. For Main Strasse, there were 53 projects.

- Calculated the total dollar amount invested in each historic district through city rehabilitation loans.

3) Collected data pertaining to the physical conditions of properties in each historic district before and after their respective designations. This involved:

   a. Accessing the original architectural survey forms from each district’s original designation nomination. Since there are hundreds of structures in each of the districts, a sample of structures was taken. PVA data listing inclusive addresses was sorted according to the PVA’s assessment of property condition. Condition was rated in one of three categories: good, fair, and poor. Microsoft Excel randomly sorted listings within each category. Five properties from each of the categories were then chosen for each district, for a total of 30 properties. Original architectural surveys were then searched for each of these properties. Properties with a photographic record were chosen for the study. Properties lacking a photographic record from the original date of designation were not used for the study, and record from the next property on the random list was searched for. If a record was found, then this property was chosen for the study. If not, the same methodology was repeated. For the Main Strasse district, a full fifteen properties were studied. For the Austinburg district, a lack of photographic record data resulted in the study of only eight properties.

   b. Performed a current architectural survey by visiting each site and remarking on its overall condition and appearance. A photograph of each property was taken.

4) Synthesized and analyzed the data.
Methodological Limitations

There are several limitations that should be introduced before presenting the data sources for the study. Included in these limitations is the fact that secondary sources are used in the pursuit of gaining an understanding of public attitudes and community input. Better ways to gauge public attitude could have been utilized, such as interviews or surveys of neighborhood residents. Primary sources were not used in this study, because of time and feasibility restraints. A second limitation involves the methodology for collecting economic data. In this study, inflation has not been accounted for when calculating taxable values, land values, and sale prices. A third limitation involves the physical/environmental analysis. Due to an unexpected lack of available data, a small sample size of structures was studied. A larger sample size may have produced more reliable results. Another limitation to the study is the fact that in an attempt to measure overall community development, only a handful of methodologies have been utilized. There are countless other ways of measuring community success, but only a few were used here. Perhaps other future studies could look at even more diverse methods of measurement.
Chapter 4

Data Sources

Data and sources of data included:

1) District Selection Data
   a) GIS maps to identify districts to study (including maps that show land uses, and size of districts)

2) To show the community’s perception of local historic districts:
   a) Newspaper articles
   b) Interview with Historic Preservation Specialist at the City of Covington. See Appendix, page 7
   c) Interview with past Historic Preservation Specialist
   d) Interview with Urban Housing Specialist with the City of Covington
   e) Minutes from the Urban Design Review Board
   f) The Austinburg Neighborhood Development Plan (1988), and the Austinburg 1998 Development Plan

3) PVA Data and City Rehabilitation Loan Records
   a) Average property values
   b) Average land values
   c) Average sale prices
   d) Number of city rehabilitation projects since 1987
   e) Dollar value of city rehabilitation loans that were granted in each district

4) Physical Condition
   a) Photographs- from 1987 and the present.
b) Recorded observations of conditions and overall appearance of structures.
Chapter 5

Findings

Findings indicated interesting results, pointing towards national districts as having more positive outcomes that were revealed in both the qualitative and quantitative data. While there was more opportunity for negativity to surface for local districts in the qualitative data (since more of the community opinion data-gathering solely focused on local districts), the quantitative data was generally in favor of national districts, with some notable exceptions. Data pertaining to property values mirrored several previous studies and indicated a clear rise in the average property value for the national district, while the average property value in the local district declined slightly. The architectural survey produced contrasting results, however. More properties in the local district were noted to have improved physical conditions than in the national district. The following chapter outlines the findings according to the information they yielded by sections: qualitative (community input), quantitative (property value information), and architectural (physical condition survey).

Community Input

Mostly negative comments from the community were obtained from newspaper articles. The following findings were noted:

- Many newspaper articles reflected the apprehension of property owners about adopting local districts because of the design review process. They do not want their properties interfered with, and fear that “historically accurate” building improvements would be too costly. Some felt that local historic districts would
make it “difficult to tear down old buildings and replace them”, as mentioned in the

- Many signage disputes were reflected in the articles. As the Urban Design Review
  Board would limit the size and detail a sign can have in a local district, many business
owners felt that these restrictions were negatively impacting business at their
establishments. City officials, including members of the Urban Design Review
Board, generally stated that placing limits on signage helped the city’s image. One
business owner who owned an Italian restaurant was denied his request for a sign
which the Urban Design Review Board said “attracted too much attention”. The
owner grew frustrated and stated in a *Kentucky Enquirer* Article, 16 April 1996, “that is
why I need a sign”.

- Specific efforts leading opposition to local districts emerged from the articles. One
such article in the *Kentucky Enquirer*, 4 September 1995, involved an owner of a multi-
family apartment building. The owner installed vinyl windows and reduced the
window sizes on the front façade of his building, before seeking the approval of the
Review Board. When he was turned in by neighbors as violating the ordinance, he
came before the UDRB and was ordered to remove the vinyl windows on the front
façade and install wood windows, as per the Covington Design Guidelines. The
applicant refused to do so, and appealed the decision. The property owner’s
opposition stemmed from the argument that vinyl windows are less costly than the
wood windows that the Review Board requires. The applicant appeared to have not
understood the long-term value or worth of installing more expensive wood
windows. Also, the applicant did not seem to understand that the Design
Regulations are a part of City Ordinance, and may not have even known that he was
in a historic district. The applicant stated that if he would have known this, he may have sought the permission of the UDRB first and installed wood windows to begin with. The matter was settled out of court after 8 years, and the property owner eventually agreed to replace the vinyl windows with wood windows on the front of the building.

- One particular article appeared in the *Kentucky Post*, 24 March 1987, and pointed out that design review in historic districts has “gone too far”, by citing a UDRB case in which an elderly man was not allowed to “paint his house green”.

- Other articles pointed to the opinion of City officials on historic districts. Past mayors as well as other city staff, such as planners, seem to be in support of local and national districts. One past Commissioner, however, was cited in the *Kentucky Post*, 5 May 1985, as saying that she thought Covington’s historic districts were “going too far”, and that the restrictions imposed by them might inhibit future development. This viewpoint did not seem to directly influence any future decision-making regarding preservation policy in Covington.

Interviews with City of Covington housing and preservation specialists revealed much more diverse data. Their feedback produced a mixed community feeling for combined local and national districts, and a generally good community perception for national districts. A common theme that surfaced in the interviews was that the community’s perception of combined and national districts depended largely on the individual district in question. High costs of rehabilitation in local historic districts were also a large factor in the public perception of local and national districts. Interestingly, the district that was cited as most agreeable to local districts by all of the interviewees was the
Licking Riverside District of Covington, which is in a significantly higher income bracket than all other neighborhoods located in the urban core.

The following key findings were compiled from the interviews:

1) Covington’s Historic Preservation Specialist:

- The public’s attitude towards local historic districts varies by the area. The Licking Riverside and the Seminary Square districts of Covington generally have more positive attitudes.

- Some local contractors enjoy working with the historic districts and pride themselves on their specialty work.

- Many housing professionals that work for the city (in the Housing Department at City Hall) are very supportive of the design guidelines. In fact, even if there is a project in a national district, they would still abide by the guidelines for local districts.

- If residents or professionals have a negative attitude towards local districts it is usually because of cost issues.

- Many people living in local districts take pride in living where they do. Some of them may uphold the design guidelines even if they were not in a local district.

- Many residents in local districts do know that they are in such a district, and that the district may increase property values.

- Many residents in national districts do not know about the historic tax credit program, unless they have a specific interest in old houses.

- Some residents of both local and national districts do know there is required design review in local districts, and seek consultation and advice.
• Some people specifically want to live in a historic district, and others, such as those looking to own rental properties, are dissuaded by it.

2) Covington’s Urban Housing Specialist:

• Many districts that have, or are developing, a neighborhood plan knows that they are in a district.

• Many housing redevelopers see historic districts as a means of protecting property values.

• Some community members feel that historic districts are working to preserve not just old buildings but an old way of life (a living, interacting community).

• Some developers do not care about quality- they just want to locate in a valuable neighborhood (this may be why houses of poor quality exist in successful historic districts).

• Most people do not like design review, and will do what they like with their properties. Those that do abide by the guidelines often receive pressure from the neighborhood, not the government.

3) Past Historic Preservation Specialist:

• Residents feel differently about local districts and design review based on what neighborhood they live in (many residents of Licking Riverside appreciate it).

• Some national districts have a strong self-policing system; similar to local districts. An example is Wallace Woods.

• Main Strasse is a “mixed district”. Some residents appreciate design review and some resist it and feel their property rights are being infringed upon.
• People of lesser socio-economic status seem to resist local design review more than higher income groups.

• On main streets in Main Strasse, such as Main Street, residents and business owners are more aware of the local district.

• Housing professionals and rehabbers in Covington are generally positive about design review because they know that the local districts often produce higher rents.

• Many times property owners are supportive of design review until they are told they specifically can not do something.

• Some residents fear increased taxable values on their homes because they do not want their property tax bill to increase.

• Many property owners seem afraid of change, and thus oppose historic districting.

• Many community members believe that preservation is only intended for the upper classes.

• Some political figures see preservation as an impediment.

The review of current and past City of Covington plans revealed some interesting points about the status of each neighborhood before and after historic district designation, and pointed to the community’s willingness to adopt a local historic district in Austinburg in 1988. It is unclear why this recommendation was never implemented. Key findings from a review of Austinburg’s 1988 and 1998 plans are listed below:

• 1988 Plan: “Design of renovated structures is not always consistent with the architectural characteristics of the original structure.”
• 1988 Plan: “Recommend that the city initiate a zone change application to apply the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone to portions of the study area (areas on the National Register). These areas will then be under the review of the UDRB, as such any construction, reconstruction, or alteration that affects the external appearance of the structures must go through a review process to ensure that work will be compatible with the adjacent properties and the historic character of the area”.

• 1998 Plan: One goal is to increase investments in the neighborhood.

• 1998 Plan: Another goal is to reduce abandoned housing through rehab and resale.

Similar to the data found in newspaper articles, many negative comments pertaining to combined districts were found in the minutes of Urban Design Review meetings during the one-year period selected. In other words, through the triangulation of data sources, similar, and thus consistent findings were uncovered. Although mostly negative, some examples of positive feedback, although less common, were noted. The high cost of repairing and restoring historic structures is often expressed as an unfair burden. Some key examples from the findings include:

• The owner of a non-profit children’s organization, Children, Inc., complained that she could not make her sign look distinguishable enough under the guidelines of the UDRB. She felt that limiting the words and images on her sign may detract from attracting clients. She also stated that she was trying to make the site “look beautiful” implying that the UDRB is infringing on this process. There is a sense that the applicant feels that the board is a nuisance.
• Cost is often an issue. Some applicant wished to comply with the UDRB, as long as “expense did not get in the way”. In other words, they were willing to abide by historic guidelines, up to a certain cost, whereas they were no longer willing to pay.

• Cost and the replacement of windows is also often a concern. One applicant stated that he has a building with 60 windows, and he can not afford to replace them all with wood windows. The UDRB approved the cheaper vinyl for the rear and sides, but still required wood for the front.

• One applicant stated that wood windows will cost about “20% more” than vinyl windows, and objected to this cost burden. The UDRB recommended leaving the original wood windows intact and placing storm windows over them. In another similar instance, the UDRB stated that new wood windows last much longer than vinyl. Another cited solution was to install wood windows on only the front elevation and vinyl or aluminum on rear and sides, thus cutting down the cost.

• Another applicant stated that installing wood windows would be a cost burden, because the building is currently inhabitable and so much money will be spent on other sections of the house, including the interior.

• Several applicants simply wished to comply with design guidelines and sought the advice of the Board. One such applicant stated that he wanted to “work with staff on design” issues of his work. Another applicant was willing to paint his new garage “whatever color the UDRB wanted”.

• One applicant applauded the work of the UDRB and design review. He stated, “I believe I have benefited greatly from the historic guidelines to protect the value of my property.”
• Several applicants that lived in their properties expressed their concern with their rights being taken away by design review. One such applicant applied to install a concrete driveway. A member of the UDRB suggested brick may be a better material to use. The applicant replied that she didn’t want the driveway to “cost more than the value of the house”. She also stated that she feels that it is her right to have a driveway. She was a middle aged woman who lived alone, and considered it to be a safety issue.

• Some applicants desire maintenance-free features on their properties, rather than some of the recommended materials that require more regular maintenance. One such applicant stated this as the reason he opposed installing wood windows instead of the preferred vinyl material.

• One applicant stated that he wanted to start “making money on his property as soon as possible” since he has owned the property for several years. He also stated that he felt it did not make sense to bring back the building to its “original form”, since the building has been altered so many times since its initial construction.

• The minutes also revealed that staff feels that enforcement of the UDRB’s actions is an issue. Staff stated that applicants often do not do what they are given permission to do, and there is no system of checking up on past applicants. This makes it an unfair situation for other property owners who are doing the right thing.

• One applicant did a “survey” of other properties in his neighborhood and found that other property owners had violated the UDRB by installing vinyl windows instead of wood and said it “is not fair”. He also stated that wood windows “are junk”, showing some anger toward the Board. The UDRB responded by stating that wood windows last longer.
Property Value Information

Property value produced mixed results, but overall favored Austinburg as having a higher increase of taxable value than Main Strasse (see Figures 1 and 2). While land value in Austinburg decreased from 1986 to 2004, the average taxable value rose from $31,176 to $45,146, and, and the average sale price rose from $16,251 to $39,995. The sale price rose by over $24,000 and the taxable value by nearly $14,000.

In Main Strasse, the average taxable value of property declined slightly by $1,262 (from $54,518 to $53,256). Land value also declined while the sale price increased by over $30,000. Average sale price significantly increased, from $19,464 in 1986 to $49,556 in 2004.

Interestingly, the high sale price may indicate a perceived increase of value over time, since building buyers are more likely to pay more for property in Main Strasse, but not a real increased value, as reflected by the taxable value information.

![Figure 1. Main Strasse Sale Price and Taxable Value. Source: Kenton County PVA.](image1)

![Figure 2. Austinburg Sale Price and Taxable Value. Source: Kenton County PVA.](image2)
Also interestingly, there have been more city-sponsored building rehabilitation projects in Austinburg than in Main Strasse between 1986 and 2002. Sixty-seven projects were completed in Austinburg, while fifty-two were completed in Main Strasse. More money was spent in total and per project in Main Strasse, though, with an average of over $16,000 spent on each project there, and an average of nearly $10,000 spent on each project in Austinburg.

From the property value and building rehabilitation data, Austinburg had a higher increase in average taxable value, and Main Strasse maintained its already-high property values (see Figure 3). Average sale price for properties escalated very high in both districts, and land value decreased slightly in both districts.

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Austinburg</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Structures Surveyed</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worsened</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Improved nor Worsened</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Results of Physical Survey.
Source: City of Covington historic survey files and new survey performed by author.

Also interestingly, there have been more city-sponsored building rehabilitation projects in Austinburg than in Main Strasse between 1986 and 2002. Sixty-seven projects were completed in Austinburg, while fifty-two were completed in Main Strasse. More money was spent in total and per project in Main Strasse, though, with an average of over $16,000 spent on each project there, and an average of nearly $10,000 spent on each project in Austinburg.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main Strasse</th>
<th>Austinburg</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Total Loan Amount</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount per Project</td>
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<td>$9,997.53</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 4. Rehabilitation Loan Data.
Source: City of Covington Housing Development Department.
Physical Status

Architectural survey findings revealed that Main Strasse had a larger number of structures that have improved in condition and less that have worsened in condition compared to Austinburg. Of the eight properties surveyed in Austinburg, one noticeably improved in condition, two worsened in condition, and the remaining six neither improved nor worsened over the time span. In Main Strasse, of the fourteen properties surveyed, six properties improved in condition, one worsened in condition, and the remaining seven neither improved nor worsened.

In Austinburg, one of the most striking examples of a property that worsened in condition is the property that is pictured in Figures 5 and 6, in 1979 and in 2004. As seen from the picture, intricate window detailing on the front of the building has either been removed or covered by boards. The structure is vacant and is presumably an eyesore for the community.

An example of a property that has been significantly improved from Main Strasse is also pictured on the following page (see Figures 7 and 8). In this example, all of the windows on the structure have been restored or replaced where needed. The entire building is being completely rehabilitated- including both the interior and exterior- in accordance with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The project is being completed by these standards so its owners are eligible for Federal historic tax credits.
Figure 5. Example of building that has fallen in disrepair. Austinburg. Photograph taken 1979.
Source: City of Covington historic survey files.

Figure 6. Example of building that has fallen in disrepair. Austinburg. Photograph taken 2004.
Picture taken by author.

Figure 7. Main Strasse. Example of Improvement. Photograph taken 1979.
Source: City of Covington historic survey files.

Figure 8. Main Strasse. Example of Improvement. Photograph taken 2004.
Picture taken by author.
Conclusion

This thesis has confirmed some of the previous literature concerning the success and value of local and national historic districts in communities and has also opened up a new field of research on the subject. The results presented through this research can be used as a tool for the City of Covington and other similar communities who are considering the use of varying alternatives of preservation policy. Studying such communities as Covington, Kentucky, a city that has had a long history of enacting historic preservation policy and implementing it, can offer numerous lessons on differing types of preservation policy. While each program studied here has certain benefits, they each offer limitations as well.
In the qualitative section of the findings, it was discovered that many of Covington’s residents find the design review process associated with local districts to have an overall negative impact on issues revolving around *cost and affordability*, *practicality*, *equity*, and *knowledge*.

*Cost and affordability* is a real and unavoidable issue for many community members who are in need of extensive housing maintenance or rehabilitation. While some residents seem to favor preservation in general, they are unwilling to pay the extra money needed to rehabilitate their own structure in accordance with local design review. Some investors and building rehabilitators feel that they are entitled to make a quick return on their investment, and performing necessary historic rehabilitation would impede them in this success.

Negativity was expressed in the data associated with public opinion more times than positive feedback. Each time these positive feelings are expressed, they are often associated with the Licking Riverside National Register and local district of Covington. As stated previously, this district has the highest average and median income of the central urban core of Covington. A correlation may exist between high income districts and the willingness of the district’s residents to abide by design review mandated by local districts. With more income to pay for historic housing rehabilitation, the residents of areas such as the Licking Riverside district may hold less negativity towards the design guidelines that local districts abide by.

*Practicality* was also a recurrent issue that surfaced throughout the qualitative data. Some community members, including political figures, doubted the worthiness, necessity, and practicality of local districts and design review. One such example was found in a newspaper article, which cited the Urban Design Review Board as forcing an elderly resident to paint his house a particular color. The article had a mocking tone toward the design review
process, casting doubt about the worthiness and practicality of local districts and design review.

*Equity* and enforcement was also a common theme. Some residents took note of other properties in their neighborhood that had not abided by historic guidelines, and wondered why they were forced to do so when neighbors were not. Other residents have noticed that local historic districts are not policed and unapproved work often takes place without the City or other residents noticing or raising opposition.

Other residents seem to feel that their rights as property owners are being infringed upon by living in local historic districts. Many expressed the feeling that it was their right to modify their property as they wished. Sometimes these wishes reflected more than just the pure desire for choice of what can be done with the property, but reflected the resident’s need for other important considerations, such as safety as well as cost. One such example was a woman who wished to install a driveway next to her home and stated that the driveway was necessary for her safety when traveling from her car to her residence.

*Knowledge*, or the often lack of knowledge, was another issue recurrent in the qualitative data. Many community residents who lived in historic districts did not know their property was located in a district, and some did not understand the purpose or regulations of local or national districts.

While there are countless lessons to be learned from the qualitative section of the findings, some important lessons can be taken from this section. These issues can be summarized around the four main issues:

- *Cost and Affordability*. Residents are often not willing to pay for the higher cost of historic preservation rehabilitation.
• Practicality. The design review process is not always deemed practical or worthwhile.

• Equity. Some residents abide by design review standards and some clearly do not, making residents feel the process is unfair. In addition, some feel that their property rights are being taken away through historic design control.

• Knowledge. Many residents do not know what local districts are, what regulations exist within them, or that historic tax credits are an option.

The review of quantitative findings uncovered more results which supported national districts over local districts. The most telling and compelling result of this section was the significant rise in property value in the national district, Austinburg, while the local district, Main Strasse, experienced an unexpected drop in average value. This data, which supports several past studies (Asabere et. al., 1991; 1994; Schaeffer et. al., 1991), may indicate that some of the negativity that was expressed in the qualitative data of this study may be having a detrimental impact on real property values.

An interesting inconsistency in the results of this section gives some credit to local districts, however. Main Strasse experienced a significant rise in average property sale price, even though its taxable value declined. Austinburg also experienced a rise in average sale price, yet this trend was to be expected with its increase in property values. It appears that while the property value in Main Strasse did not rise, the district’s average sale price “caught up” with its value. The phenomena of increased sale price in Main Strasse could be attributed to a greater perception of value as a result of better physical conditions of the property within the district- perhaps as a result of local design review. The architectural survey data from this study assert this hypothesis. Unfortunately, the link between perception of value, assessed value, and real value that would be needed to fully explain
these phenomena can not be fully addressed in this study, but may be an avenue for future research.

One explanation for the stalled property value increase in Main Strasse could be that average housing prices have reached a peak because of such factors as the size and durability of the building stock. For example, Main Strasse contains many small “shot-gun” style homes that are sometimes less than 500 square feet. Obviously, the price that this property will command may peak at a lower value than a house with increased square footage.

In reviewing city loan data for each of the districts, it is not surprising that more money was spent Main Strasse- both overall and per rehabilitation project- since the cost of rehabilitation on historic properties is generally more expensive than non-historic structures. What is interesting, however, is the larger number of projects that have been completed in Austinburg compared to Main Strasse. It seems that the national district is capable of producing more interest in building improvements than the local district.

The architectural survey revealed that the local district had a higher number of structures that have significantly improved since being nominated a district. At the same time, the national district had more structures that worsened in condition. While there are limitations to this data, such as the fact that some subjectivity of the researcher goes into judging the properties and the fact that such a small sample of structures were surveyed, it is believed that the data represent the overall physical condition of each district.
Chapter 6

Discussion and Recommendations

This study suggests that national districts appear to be a sufficient preservation and community development tool for the City of Covington and perhaps other communities considering which type of historic preservation policy may be most beneficial. The national historic district, Austinburg, experienced a greater increase in average taxable property value than the local historic district, Main Strasse. National districts, such as Austinburg, also appear to enjoy the status and honor of historic district status while not suffering the detriments that local districts and the design review that is associated with local districts entail. Austinburg also appeared to have attracted as much interest in building rehabilitation as Main Strasse.

The conclusions of the study do not completely support the success of national districts, however. While communities, and particularly low-income neighborhoods, may have general disapproval for local districts and design review requirements, other benefits for the adoption of local districts may exist, such as a heightened physical upkeep of a neighborhood. While this study showed property values to slightly decrease in the local district, they may have decreased because of capped values as a result of the housing stock, market conditions, or other reasons.

When interpreting the data of this study, and particularly the quantitative data, it is important to consider that many other factors come into play when examining a district before and after its designation. A variety of other social and economic factors could have caused fluctuations in property values, sale prices, and numbers of rehabilitation projects. It
is also important to consider that inflation between the time periods has not been taken into consideration, since relationships between the data were valued over precise dollar values.

Nonetheless, this study provides perspective on the preservation policy of the historic City of Covington, Kentucky. While no clear answers exist on where the future of preservation policy should lead in Covington, it has become clear that national and local districts both succeed and fail in different ways for different reasons. The successes and failures of these districts are driven by community feelings and attitudes, and comprehending these attitudes is paramount before embarking on historic preservation policy. One avenue for future research could investigate the link between community attitude toward local and national districting and the success or failure of each type of district.

Overall, the results of this study are surprising. It may often be the case that policy-makers assume that incorporating two historic preservation policies into a community- both local and national districts- would produce greater and more beneficial results for neighborhoods. This study counters this premonition, however, and suggests that a more careful look at the effectiveness of local historic preservation programs is critical in evaluating which type of preservation policy to adopt in a community.
Bibliography


Konicki, Leah. *National Register of Historic Districts: City of Covington, Kentucky.*


Appendix
City of Covington, KY
National Register
Historic Districts
1. Austinburg
2. 5. Downtown Commercial
6. Emery-Price
7. Helentown
8. Holy Cross
9. Lee-Holman
10. Lewisburg
11. Licking Riverside
12. Linden Grove Cemetery
13. Main Strasse
14. Mutter Gottes
15.-16. Ohio Riverside
17.-18. Rite's Corner
19. Seminary Square
20. Wallace Woods
21. West Fifteenth Street

0 375 750 1,500 2,250 3,000 Feet
Interview Questions

1) What do you feel is the public’s attitude toward local historic districts in Covington, and why?

2) Please elaborate on any positive reactions the public has had toward local districts and the design review process.

3) Please elaborate on any negative reactions the public has had toward local districts and the design review process.

4) What do you feel is the housing rehabilitation professionals’ attitude toward local historic districts and why?

5) Please elaborate on any positive reactions that housing rehabilitation professionals have had toward local districts and the design review process.

6) Please elaborate on any negative reactions that housing rehabilitation professionals have had toward local districts and the design review process.

7) Do you think that residents and/or housing professionals feel that historic districts are doing what they were intended to do for the community?

8) Do you feel that residents and/or housing professionals even know what the districts are intended to do?