NCHRP 25-58 [RFP]

Commercial Properties from 1945 to 1980: Guidance for State DOTs and Their Partners for Historic Context Development, Identification, and Evaluation

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BACKGROUND

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), when a transportation project involves federal funding, licensing, or permitting, transportation agencies must identify and evaluate properties affected by the project for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Rapid development in the United States from 1945 to 1980 created a vast number of properties in urban, suburban, and rural areas, whose contributions to social and architectural history need to be evaluated under the NHPA. Because of the large number of properties dating from this postwar era, state departments of transportation (DOTs) and other agencies must dedicate considerable staff and other resources to meet these evaluation requirements.

*NCHRP Report 723: Model for Identifying and Evaluating the Historic Significance of Post-World War II Housing* provided a national historic context and National Register eligibility guidelines for postwar houses and residential subdivisions. However, postwar development also included commercial development: gas stations, shopping centers, drug stores, office buildings, restaurants, and other non-residential properties. The diverse forms of these property types reflect the various trends of the period. For example, from 1945 to 1960, rapid, automobile-oriented urbanization prompted the construction of drive-up and drive-thru restaurants. The energy crisis of the 1970s influenced commercial design forms and materials choices.

Many commercial properties built from 1945 to 1980 were completed by major architectural firms or by companies that produced innovative new materials and construction methods, thus reflecting the nation's architectural, social, and cultural heritage. Even more properties were constructed using locally derived designs and materials (e.g., small, single story, cinder block grocery stores). These vernacular properties can also be significant when they represent a common architectural form or contribute to historic districts. Apart from potential historic eligibility, postwar commercial properties are valued resources in many communities.

Despite the widespread construction of commercial properties after 1945, there is very little guidance on how to consistently evaluate the potential significance of these properties. As a result, evaluations require significant time and staff resources. Inconsistent approaches also provide regulatory partners with inconsistent information, which means more time may be needed to complete consultation, resulting in project delays. Further, the volume of postwar property evaluations can be overwhelming for state DOTs, FHWA division offices, state historic preservation officers (SHPOs), and tribal historic preservation officers (THPOs).

Research is needed to provide state DOTs with a structured, replicable methodology to determine eligibility of postwar commercial properties for listing in the National Register. Practitioner-ready guidance will help streamline project delivery by reducing
duplicative effort and providing regulatory partners with consistent and complete information, thus strengthening the collaborative relationship between state DOTs and their regulatory partners (SHPOs and THPOs) and other stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are to develop guidance that state DOTs, SHPOs, THPOs, and other partners can use to prepare historic contexts for common commercial property types built between 1945 and 1980; and to identify and evaluate the eligibility and ineligibility of these property types for the National Register for compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. The guidance will describe major national and regional trends that shaped commercial property development from 1945 to 1980; sources and data needed to develop a historic context for these property types; and how to apply National Register criteria and evaluate integrity for individual properties and historic districts. The research will include a pilot study to demonstrate the utility of the guidance.

Accomplishment of the project objectives will require at least the following tasks.

TASKS

Task descriptions are intended to provide a framework for conducting the research. The NCHRP is seeking the insights of proposers on how best to achieve the research objectives. Proposers are expected to describe research plans that can realistically be accomplished within the constraints of available funds and contract time. The research plan should build in appropriate checkpoints with the NCHRP project panel, including, at a minimum, a web-enabled kick-off meeting to be held within 1 month of the contract start date and one face-to-face interim report review meeting with additional web-enabled meetings tied to panel review and/or NCHRP approval of interim deliverables as appropriate. Proposals must present the proposers’ current thinking in sufficient detail to demonstrate their understanding of the issues and the soundness of their approach to meeting the research objectives.

Task 1. Data Collection Strategy. Develop a detailed strategy to collect relevant information on historic contexts for and evaluation of commercial property types constructed from 1945 to 1980. The strategy should be designed to collect the following information:

- Trends and periods that establish historic context for commercial properties of the postwar era. Relevant trends will include those that defined the national context for postwar housing provided by NCHRP Report 738 (e.g., the broad pattern of automobile-oriented suburbanization, community planning), as well as additional trends relevant for commercial properties (e.g., franchising and the use of corporate designs).
- The commercial property types of the postwar era that are most commonly encountered by state DOTs, as well as types that are emerging or anticipated to be common in the coming decade. Anticipated types include but are not limited to gas stations, shopping centers, drug stores, restaurants, motels, movie theaters, office buildings, and office parks. Non-commercial property types (e.g., schools, religious buildings, libraries, government buildings) are outside the scope of this project.
- Bibliography of relevant resources including key primary and secondary data sources, existing historic contexts, surveys of postwar commercial properties, standard plans.

Anticipated data and sources to include:

- Published research in peer-reviewed journals and other scholarly works;
- Practitioner and agency reports and other “grey” literature;
- Applications for historic preservation tax credits;
- National Register listings of commercial properties;
- HABS/HAER documentation of commercial properties; and
- Practitioner outreach (e.g., surveys, interviews).

The strategy will describe how the literature search will be conducted as well as draft versions of data collection instruments (e.g., survey questions, survey platform, respondent contact lists, etc.). The plan will be based on sound methods and include strategies to overcome typical challenges such as low survey response rates. A technical memorandum describing the detailed data collection strategy will be provided for NCHRP review and approval.

Note: The Task 1 technical memorandum will be provided no later than 3 months after the contract start date.
Task 2. Execute the Data Collection Strategy and Summarize Results. Provide a technical memorandum summarizing the information collected:

- Summary and synthesis of the reviewed literature;
- Annotated bibliography of relevant resources;
- Results of practitioner outreach; and
- Prioritized list of property types and subtypes for further development and inclusion in the guidance. Provide a rationale supporting the prioritization.

Task 3. Draft methodology and proposed pilot study. The methodology will provide a structured, replicable approach for developing historic contexts and evaluating postwar-era commercial properties. The methodology will equip state DOTs and their partners to answer questions such as:

- What national, state, or regional trends are relevant for the specific property type?
- What primary and secondary sources are useful for evaluating this property type?
- What design elements reflect the trends?
- What typical modifications can affect integrity?
- What aspects of integrity are most relevant for this property type?
- Should both individual eligibility and historic districts be considered?
- How can stakeholders be identified and engaged in the evaluation?

Develop a proposed pilot study to apply the methodology. The pilot study will apply the draft methodology to develop a historic context and model evaluation. The pilot study may be "place-based" or "type-based". A place-based case would consider multiple property types in the same state, region, or Area of Potential Effects (APE). A type-based case would focus on a single property type (e.g., roadside restaurant) found in multiple locations.

Produce an interim report to include:

- Proposed pilot study;
- Draft methodology; and
- Refined list of property types for the final guidance. For each type, provide a well-developed definition and a concise list of character-defining features in a format similar to that used in NCHRP Report 723.

Note: Although Task 3 will draw from the results of Task 2, the proposal should present the proposer's current thinking for the selection of a pilot study location and/or property type and of the number of property types for inclusion in the final guidance. The research plan shall provide a 1-month period for review and approval of the interim report. An interim meeting of the NCHRP project panel to discuss the report with the research agency will be required within 18 months from the start date. Costs for the in-person meeting venue and travel costs for NCHRP panel members to attend the interim meeting will be paid by NCHRP. The research agency shall not begin work on the remaining tasks without NCHRP approval.

Task 4. Execute the Pilot Study. Provide a technical memorandum with:

- Documentation of the pilot study;
- Any proposed adjustments to the draft methodology identified during the pilot study; and
- A conceptual design and detailed outline of content for the final deliverables.

Task 5. Develop Draft and Final Deliverables. Anticipated deliverables include:

- Final report and guidance document including:
  - Relevant trends for commercial properties built from 1945 to 1980;
  - Methodology for developing historic contexts and identifying and evaluating these properties;
  - The pilot study;
  - Summary of the project activities;
  - Annotated bibliography of literature and data resources; and
  - Priorities for additional applications of the methodology to advance implementation (e.g., a historic context for a specific property type or location);
- A PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes that summarizes the project;
- At least two items or activities to disseminate the research results to target audiences. Example items include:
A draft article suitable for publication in TR News (information regarding TR News publication may be found on the TRB webpage http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/trnews/info4contributors.pdf; no commitment to publish a TR News article is implied); or

A presentation to a relevant audience such as the AASHTO Committee on Environment and Sustainability or the Transportation Research Board’s Standing Committee on Historic and Archeological Preservation in Transportation (ADC 50).

- A stand-alone technical memorandum that identifies implementation pathways, key implementers of the results, and well-defined scopes of work for additional pilot implementations of the guidance for priority property types (see Special Note B).

Note: Following receipt of the draft final deliverables, the remaining 3 months shall be for NCHRP review and comment and for research agency preparation of the final deliverables.

SPECIAL NOTES

A. Proposals should include a task-by-task breakdown of labor hours for each staff member as shown in Figure 4 in the brochure, "Information and Instructions for Preparing Proposals" (http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/crp/docs/ProposalPrep.pdf). Proposals also should include a breakdown of all costs (e.g., wages, indirect costs, travel, materials, and total) for each task using Figures 5 and 6 in the brochure. Please note that TRB Cooperative Research Program subawards (selected proposers are considered subawards to the National Academy of Sciences, the parent organization of TRB) must comply with 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. These requirements include a provision that proposers without a “federally” Negotiated Indirect Costs Rate Agreement (NICRA) shall be subject to a maximum allowable indirect rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs. Modified Total Direct Costs include all salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each lower-tier subaward and subcontract. Modified Total Direct Costs exclude equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each lower-tier subaward and subcontract in excess of $25,000.

B. The NCHRP is a practical, applied research program that produces implementable products addressing problems faced by transportation practitioners and managers. The benefits of NCHRP research are realized only when the results are implemented in state DOTs and other agencies. Implementation of the research product must be considered throughout the process, from problem statement development to research contract and beyond completion of the research. Item 4(c), “Anticipated Research Results,” must include the following: (a) the "product" expected from the research, (b) the audience or "market" for this product, (c) a realistic assessment of impediments to successful implementation, and (d) the institutions and individuals who might take leadership in deploying the research product. The project panel will develop and maintain an implementation plan throughout the life of the project. The research team will be expected to provide input to an implementation team consisting of panel members, AASHTO committee members, the NCHRP Implementation Coordinator, and others in order to meet the goals of NCHRP Active Implementation: Moving Research into Practice, available at http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/docs/NCHRP_ActiveImplementation.pdf.

C. Item 5 in the proposal, "Qualifications of the Research Team," must include a section labeled "Disclosure." Information relevant to the NCHRP’s need to ensure objectivity and to be aware of possible sources of significant financial or organizational conflict of interest in conducting the research must be presented in this section of the proposal. For example, under certain conditions, ownership of the proposing agency, other organizational relationships, or proprietary rights and interests could be perceived as jeopardizing an objective approach to the research effort, and proposers are asked to disclose any such circumstances and to explain how they will be accounted for in this study. If there are no issues related to objectivity, this should be stated.

D. Item 4, “Research Plan,” shall be limited to no more than 30 8.5” x 11” pages. Material on the research plan included in an appendix will not be considered. Item 5, “Qualification of the Research Team” is limited to one 8.5” x 11” pages for each member of the proposed project team. Item 5 to provide information on the qualifications of each member of the proposed research team who will make substantive contributions to the project. Material on qualifications of the research team included in an appendix will not be considered.

E. Proposals are evaluated by the NCHRP staff and project panels consisting of individuals collectively very knowledgeable in the problem area. Selection of an agency is made by the project panel considering the following factors: (1) the proposer's demonstrated understanding of the problem; (2) the merit of the proposed research and pilot study approach; (3) the experience, qualifications, and objectivity of the research team in the same or closely related problem area; (4) the plan for ensuring application
of results; (5) the proposer’s plan for participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises—small firms owned and controlled by minorities or women; and (6) the adequacy of the facilities.

Note: The proposer’s plan for participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises should be incorporated in Item 12 of the proposal.

F. Copyrights - All data, written materials, computer software, graphic and photographic images, and other information prepared under the contract and the copyrights therein shall be owned by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The contractor and subcontractors will be able to publish this material for non-commercial purposes, for internal use, or to further academic research or studies with permission from TRB Cooperative Research Programs. The contractor and subcontractors will not be allowed to sell the project material without prior approval by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. By signing a contract with the National Academy of Sciences, contractors accept legal responsibility for any copyright infringement that may exist in work done for TRB. Contractors are therefore responsible for obtaining all necessary permissions for use of copyrighted material in TRB’s Cooperative Research Programs publications. For guidance on TRB’s policies on using copyrighted material please consult Section 5.4, “Use of Copyrighted Material,” in the Procedural Manual for Contractors.

G. If the research approach includes human subjects testing, proposers should be aware that the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has its own Institutional Review Board (IRB) that must review and approve the results of the proposing agency’s IRB process. It should be assumed that this step will require several weeks.

__Proposals (14 single-bound copies) are due not later than 4:30 p.m. on 3/6/2019.__

This is a firm deadline, and extensions are not granted. In order to be considered for award, all copies of the agency’s proposal accompanied by the executed, unmodified Liability Statement must be in our offices not later than the deadline shown, or the proposal will be rejected. Proposers may choose any carrier or delivery service for their proposals. However, proposers assume the risk of proposal rejection if the carrier or delivery service does not deliver all the required documents by the deadline.

Delivery Address:

PROPOSAL-NCHRP
ATTN: Christopher J. Hedges
Director, Cooperative Research Programs
Transportation Research Board
500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

__Liability Statement__

The signature of an authorized representative of the proposing agency is required on the unaltered liability statement in order for the NCHRP to accept the agency’s proposal for consideration. Proposals submitted without this executed and unaltered statement by the proposal deadline will be summarily rejected. An executed, unaltered statement indicates the agency’s intent and ability to execute a contract that includes the provisions in the statement.


__General Notes__

1. According to the provisions of Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 21, which relates to nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs, all parties are hereby notified that the contract entered into pursuant to this announcement will be awarded without discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability.

2. The essential features required in a proposal for research are detailed in the current brochure entitled “Information and Instructions for Preparing Proposals” (updated March 2018). Proposals must be prepared according to this document, and attention is directed specifically to Section V for mandatory requirements. Proposals that do not conform with these requirements will be rejected. This brochure is available here.

3. The total funds available are made known in the project statement, and line items of the budget are examined to determine the reasonableness of the allocation of funds to the various tasks. If the proposed total cost exceeds the funds available, the proposal is rejected.

4. All proposals become the property of the Transportation Research Board. Final disposition will be made according to the policies thereof, including the right to reject all proposals.
IMPORTANT NOTICE

Potential proposers should understand clearly that the research project described herein is tentative. The final content of the program depends on the level of funding made available through States' agreements for financial support of the NCHRP. Nevertheless, to be prepared to execute research contracts as soon as possible after sponsors' approvals, the NCHRP is assuming that the tentative program will become official in its entirety and is proceeding with requests for proposals and selections of research agencies.