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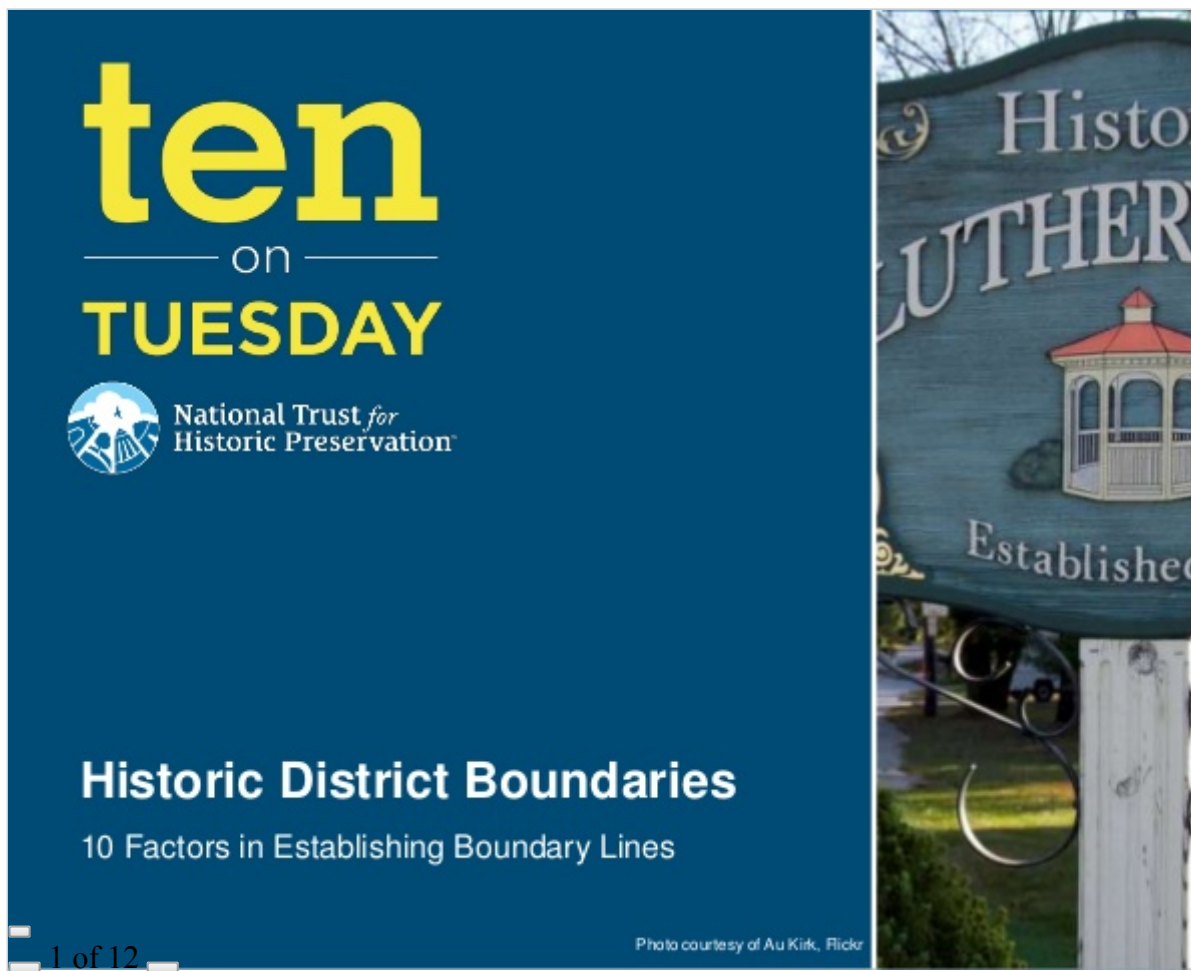
10 Factors in Establishing Local Historic District Boundary Lines

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[10 on Tuesday] [10 Factors in Establishing Local Historic District Boundary Lines](http://www.slideshare.net/PreservationNation/toolkit-establishing-historic-district-) [Link: //www.slideshare.net/PreservationNation/toolkit-establishing-historic-district-]

boundary-lines-010813jr] from **Saving Places** [Link: [//www.slideshare.net/PreservationNation](https://www.slideshare.net/PreservationNation)]

At the start of this series, we gave you a [basic road map](#) [Link: [/10-steps-to-establish-a-local-historic-district](#)] to help you navigate securing local historic district designation for your community. Today's toolkit will focus on one of those steps: determining the edges of your district.

The visual and environmental character of any area comes from the relationships between natural and man-made features. Think individualized building and landscape design, community settlement patterns, neighborhoods with tree-lined streets, etc.

These elements are vital to understanding why one area is different than another and how each links us to our past. The boundaries you define transform the unique features of your community into a meaningful historic district.

So how do you go about it? Hundreds of questions can -- and will -- arise as you begin setting your historic district lines. For example, you might ask: Which buildings should be included? Should vacant lots be excluded? Should a buffer zone surround the district?



[Link: https://nntp-savingplaces.s3.amazonaws.com/2015/07/31/15/37/27/428/blog_photo_Au-Kirk.jpg]
Lutherville Historic District in Baltimore County, Maryland.

The good news is there is a logical process for establishing the edges of historic districts. Here are 10 steps to get you started:

1. Take into account the historic boundaries of an original settlement or planned community -- for example, where there is a concentration of early buildings and sites.

Tip: Look at a map of the area. Compare original borders of a subdivision, farmstead, or other parts of the region to changes that have occurred over time; this will help you draw more accurate lines.

2. Review the results of an architectural survey. Think about the visual character of the area. (For example: a large concentration of Victorian-era homes next to a

neighborhood of 20th-century brick ranch houses.) Consider the surrounding topography and special gateways or entrances to the area.

3. Look for physical features that can be used as a boundary line, like railroads, expressways, and major highways; major urban spaces; rivers, marshlands, and other natural features; major changes in land use; walls, embankments, fence lines; and other limits of the settled area.

4. Incorporate officially surveyed lines. Don't forget about the *legally* established boundary lines of your neighborhood. Streets and other local rights-of-way, property lines, uniform setback lines (lines set by city government beyond which no building can extend so that streets will look uniform), and other previously drawn lines can be used to set boundaries.

5. Consider the politics. It is important to consider the opinions of government officials, institutions, private citizens, and property owners. And, they may be able to offer ideas and suggestions from a different point of view for establishing district boundaries.



[Link: <https://nntp->

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To Old Sacramento Archway in Sacramento, California.

6. Also consider how residents will be affected. Just as you must respect residents' opinions, you must also consider their ability to pay for improvements, their desire to conform to district regulations, and the affordability of remaining in the area after historic designation.

7. Hold public meetings and pre-designation workshops to discuss boundary proposals with residents, property owners, and local preservationists. Utilize planning staff, consultants, or commission members to conduct workshops.

8. Conduct an historic survey. (*Hint: This was another step in our [previous post](#) [Link: [/10-steps-to-establish-a-local-historic-district](#)].*) The comprehensive inventory of sites and structures produced from the survey will help better inform your decisions on where to set the boundaries of your district.

9. Include small areas of non-historic resources when they are completely surrounded by a concentration of historic resources. This avoids drawing "donut-holes" in the historic district. Make sure to clearly identify these areas as non-historic.

10. Make sure you can adequately justify each boundary in your proposed district. Have handy a concise explanation of why each boundary was chosen; address any irregularities; and outline the area's notable geography and integrity/significance.

And as always, your state and local historic preservation offices are great resources for more information.

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