



## **The Harrisburg African-American Churches Neighborhood Revitalization Preservation Planning Project**

### **Program Goal and Benefit**

The *Harrisburg African-American Churches Neighborhood Revitalization Preservation Planning Project* will empower a group of African-American congregations in the City of Harrisburg to be agents of neighborhood preservation and revitalization. This project will have significant public benefit in the preservation of historic physical resources and supporting human resources in the underserved capital region.

### **Program Participation Criteria**

The project is building on an inventory of historic African-American church resources in Harrisburg conducted by Emily T. Cooperman, Ph.D., through a Technical Assistance Grant awarded to the Interdenominational Ministers Conference of Greater Harrisburg (IMC) by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in the summer of 2012. Based on this report, and working in consultation with the IMC and the staff of the Bureau for Historic Preservation of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, a group of African-American congregations that own historic churches was selected to participate in this project. Eight congregations, who pledged their commitment and congregational resources to complete the project, were selected to participate.

### **Participating Congregations**

Second Baptist Church – 424 Forster Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Tabernacle Baptist Church – 1106 Capital Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Rose of Sharon Baptist Church – 1919 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

Camp Curtin Mitchell Memorial UMC – 2221 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110

Fountain Gate Church and Ministries – 1419 Derry Street, Harrisburg, PA 17104

Wesley Union AME Zion Church – 5<sup>th</sup> and Camp Streets, Harrisburg, PA 17110

Harris AME Zion – 915 N. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Harrisburg, PA 17103

McLamb Memorial Church of the Living God – 521 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

### **Participant Comments**

Arthur Brown, Pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, is enthusiastic about the experience. He stated, "The Tabernacle Baptist Church has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1975. The Harrisburg African-American Churches Neighborhood Revitalization Preservation Planning Project is the first opportunity that we have participated in to maximize and take advantage of our unique history and our historical sacred site. We hope that our congregation will gain a new appreciation for our history, the value of our service to our community and that we can foster new partnerships to preserve, maintain and develop our historic building."



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According to Bishop Roberta Thomas, Pastor, Fountain Gate Church and Ministries, who is also participating in the program, "My experience with New Partners/New Dollars has been eye opening, to say the least. Learning new concepts, and how to rebrand Fountain Gate Church and Ministries to present our value to those within and outside our immediate community is priceless. The presenters are very knowledgeable. "

### **Overall Program Description**

The core of the project will be an augmented version of the "New Dollars/New Partners" training program, developed and presented by Partners for Sacred Places, the nation's only program that provides practical help to congregations with older and historic buildings on how to broaden and diversify the circles of donors and partners who can support the care and good use of their property. The New Dollars/New Partners training program has been expanded to incorporate training developed previously by the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia and Emily T. Cooperman, working with Partners for Sacred Places for Philadelphia African-American congregations, as well as training on neighborhood preservation adapted from the Preservation Alliance's Vital Neighborhoods Initiative. The augmented training will assist congregations in researching and deploying their history to tell their story and the story of their community, and educate congregations to assess and understand the historic built environment of their neighborhoods as well as their own facilities. The project includes an architectural assessment of the condition of the historic church properties and recommendations for measures for preservation. Finally, Dr. Cooperman will work with the participating congregations to develop the history of the church's facilities and surrounding neighborhood, and she will provide the Interdenominational Ministers' Conference of Greater Harrisburg and the participating congregations with recommendations for further preservation action.

In summary, the proposed project will be conducted in three interconnected tasks. The first of these is the augmented New Dollars/New Partners Training. The second of these is the architectural assessment. The third of these is historical narrative development and training and the recommendations report.

### **Training Modules**

#### **A. NEW DOLLARS/NEW PARTNERS TRAINING**

The New Dollars/New Partners training, led by the experienced Partners for Sacred Places trainer, Tuomi Forest, provide four full-day training modules with the following content:

##### **1. Making the Case for Your Sacred Place**

Congregations learn how to develop and present to the larger public a compelling case for who they are (their heritage within a community context), what they have (the state and resources of their physical plant), and what they do (how they use their buildings in service to the community). *Preparing a targeted case statement(s) is the foundation for a congregation's capital campaign and new community partnerships.* This core module lays the groundwork for the other three specialized approaches to capital fund development.

##### **2. New Community Partnerships**



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Congregations learn the essentials of how to carry out a simple community assessment, which identifies key assets and strengths, and how to forge new partnerships with other organizations to encourage volunteers, in-kind donations, and direct financial support for both programs and buildings. This module is presented with a trainer from the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute with experience in approaches to the ABCD message and methodology that include urban applications.

### 3. A Capital Campaign Primer

Congregations learn how a capital campaign can raise funds for their capital needs, how to plan a campaign, and whether to retain a fundraising professional. Partners' staff conducts this module in conjunction with a professional capital campaign consultant.

### 4. Tapping Community Funding Resources

Using the case developed in the "Making the Case" module, congregations learn how to develop a grant strategy that focuses on the cultural significance of a congregation's property, as well as its programs and community outreach. This module also teaches a congregation how to research and cultivate appropriate foundations, and how to write strong, persuasive grant applications.

## Resources

The following resources are provided by Partners during the course of the "New Dollars" project:

- Five days of off-site time to help sponsor's staff to structure the training program; respond to questions from participating congregations and help monitor their work; and otherwise support staff and participating congregations through the process.
- Five days of on-site work that are used to orient potential participants, help local sponsors and congregations assess their readiness to participate in the training, link congregations to technical support such as preservation resources, establish a mentor program for this project and train mentors to coach congregations, and help sponsor's staff and/or assigned mentors encourage and support congregations in their work.
- Eight staff days of on-site training by one or two Partners' senior staff members assisted by a trainer from the Asset-Based Community Development Institute and a capital campaign professional (there will be a total of two trainers per module).
- Training materials, including a copy of the following for each participating congregation:
  - Your Sacred Place Is A Community Asset Tool Kit*, which assists congregations in making their case for new capital support;
  - The Complete Guide to Capital Campaigns*, which provides practical help on how to raise capital funds from both congregation members and the larger community;
  - and *The Guide to Serving Families in Sacred Places*, which helps congregations take full advantage of their property in serving children and families.
- An Internet communication link (listserv) is available to participants, sponsors, and trainers to facilitate contacts during and after the training period.



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## B. VITAL NEIGHBORHOODS/ HISTORICAL RESEARCH, ARCHITECTURAL UNDERSTANDING, AND DESIGNATION TRAINING

The New Dollars/New Partners training program includes an additional day of training on the following themes:

- 1) How to Look at Your Neighborhood;
- 2) How to Research and Tell Your History for Community Leverage;
- 3) Understanding Historical Designation; and,
- 4) Understanding Your Historic Building.

This training is led by Melissa Jest, Emily Cooperman, and Dominique Hawkins, with participation by Partners for Sacred Places trainer, Tuomi Forest.

The "How to Research and Tell Your History for Community Leverage," and "Understanding Historical Designation" modules address such topics as the differences between "evidence" and "traces," crafting historical narratives for different audiences and platforms, and practical training in finding sources of information. As in all of the Partners' training, interactive exercises and active participation is part of the program. The day includes an overview presentation on some of the major issues of historic churches and their preservation given by Dominique Hawkins.

The "How to Look at Your Neighborhood" training module is intended to assist residents and neighborhood organizations analyze the physical character and strengths of the neighborhood in which they live or which they represent. The program has two primary objectives: first, to assist communities in identifying the distinctive physical characteristics of their neighborhood worthy of preservation, including historic landmarks and potential historic districts, and second, to assist communities to identify the distinctive physical characteristics and strengths of their neighborhood and define projects and activities that support and improve the public environment and marketing of that neighborhood. The first objective may result in findings that lead, for example, to the nomination of buildings or districts to the National Register of Historic Places, or the preparation of an application for an historic marker or to undertake other activities that explore and celebrate the history of the neighborhood. The second objective is intended to assist residents and community organizations who complete the analysis to pursue preservation grants. The analysis of neighborhood character, strengths and historic assets will enable neighborhood organizations to be better prepared to work with city and state planners and any proposed new development.

Participants take part in interactive instruction in the following topics:

1. Defining Neighborhood Boundaries and Context;
2. Describing Neighborhood History and Current Conditions;
3. Defining General Land Use Patterns;
4. Describing Residential Sub-areas and their character;
5. Identifying historic landmarks and districts; and,
6. Identifying a Target Area of Strength and Ideas for Improvement.

The participants make a presentation to the group on their finding. Emily Cooperman serves as a resource in helping participants to complete these tasks and follows up with participants to monitor progress and needs for assistance. Resources include handouts on research resources relevant to the history of the congregations and



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their surrounding communities, a sample neighborhood analysis containing examples of each of the maps and photographs, and a Field Guide to Architectural Styles prepared by the Preservation Alliance.

### C. ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT

As part of the Architectural Assessment portion of the project, Preservation Design Partners, led by Dominique Hawkins, perform a day-long site visit to each of the congregations included in the project. The Architectural Assessment includes a review of accessible areas of the exterior and interior of each church building, with particular emphasis on issues related to the long-term preservation of the building envelope. The Architectural Assessment emphasizes the condition of materials, such as roofing; potential areas of concern, such as moisture infiltration; in addition to functional as usability issues, such as handicap accessibility. As part of the site visit, overall photographs of existing conditions and detailed photographic documentation of areas of concern are completed to illustrate the Architectural Assessment Report for each property. Each Report includes an overall physical description; a description of existing conditions; and prioritized recommendations for future work. Emily Cooperman provides summaries of the history of the physical plants based on the results of the inventory conducted with the Technical Assistance Grant, and on the results of research conducted in module 3. Each church provides access to all areas during normal business hours, and provides ladders as appropriate.

The following items are not included in this project:

- Building measurement and the preparation of drawings or sketches;
- Structural Engineering or MEP Engineering assessments, however, if a concern is observed the appropriate Engineering Assessment will be recommended;
- Cost estimates;
- Hazardous materials identification or assessment; and,
- Probes and materials testing.

### D. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

In this module, Emily Cooperman follows up with participants to produce a historical narrative product related to their congregation and/or neighborhood, and provides technical assistance and guidance. She supplements this endeavor by producing a summary history of each congregation and its physical facilities and neighborhood as appropriate, depending on the level of effort that the participants are able to produce. Finally, Dr. Cooperman completes a set of recommendations for further preservation action resulting from information gathered in the project, which may include recommendations for historical designation or other preservation planning projects.

### **Program Funders**

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission  
County of Dauphin  
City of Harrisburg

**Program Sponsor:** The Interdenominational Ministers' Conference (IMC) of Greater Harrisburg



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The Interdenominational Ministers' Conference (IMC) of Greater Harrisburg was founded more than 50 years ago by a group of Ministers to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, promote brotherhood, and implement the ideals of justice and dignity throughout our community. Today, more than sixty (60) ministers from a wide and divergent group of denominations and professions of faith are members of the IMC.