

## National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2008 Presidential Candidates Questionnaire

*The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, nine regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories. For more information, visit our website: [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org).*

### SUSTAINABILITY

Preservation, by its very nature, is sustainability, and it has an essential role to play in fostering development that is environmentally, as well as economically, sustainable. We call this “sustainable stewardship.” To illustrate how important this is, earlier this year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation unveiled its Sustainability Initiative to call attention to the critical role historic preservation plays in energy conservation and combating climate change.

We must think of our buildings and neighborhoods as renewable – rather than disposable – resources. It makes no sense for us to recycle newsprint, bottles and aluminum cans while we're throwing away entire buildings, or even entire neighborhoods.

Any solution to climate change must address the need to reduce emissions by being smarter about how we use our buildings and wiser about land use. Preservation does not represent the way out of this environmental crisis. But historic preservation can be – and must be – a key component of any effort to promote sustainable development.

As President Richard Moe stated in a speech on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007, “We can't build our way out of environmental problems. We have to conserve our way out. That means we have to make better, wiser use of what we've already built.” For example, building a new 50,000 square foot building releases as much carbon into the atmosphere as driving a car 14 million miles. Demolishing a 50,000 square foot commercial building creates more than 4,000 tons of waste—enough to fill 26 railroad boxcars—a train one quarter mile long. And 48% of all greenhouse emissions in the United States are attributed to building construction and operations.

As part of this initiative, the National Trust for Historic Preservation is working with federal, state and local groups to encourage new policy proposals that include expanded use of federal and state historic tax credit incentives, local building codes that allow flexibility and innovation so existing building may be more energy efficient, and improve green-building rating systems to encourage building reuse.

Any new building represents a new impact on the environment, no matter how much green technology is employed in its design and construction. The bottom line is that the greenest building – and the greenest neighborhood – is one that already exists

***Question:***

***As President, how would you integrate historic preservation into legislation focused on combating climate change?***

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Tax Credits***

Historic Preservation is an important component to reviving communities—both urban and rural. The National Trust for Historic Preservation supports creation and maintenance of Federal and State rehabilitation tax credits for restoring older and historic structures, particularly as they relate to preserving community character, affordable housing, central business districts and Main Street economic development activity. The National Trust also supports expansion of these credits as they relate to alleviating property abandonment and economically distressed neighborhoods.

Currently, the National Trust for Historic Preservation is encouraging Congress to pass the “Community Restoration and Revitalization Act” (H.R. 1043 in the House, S. 584 in the Senate) that would make beneficial changes to the existing rehabilitation tax credit. Maintaining and expanding the Federal tax credit would be another tool for sustainable development, encourage greater affordable housing and be a catalyst for community revitalization.

### ***Downtown Revitalization***

Urban and Rural communities have witnessed unprecedented growth in some areas, while others have been witness to abandonment. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has decades of experience assisting communities to encourage reinvestment in older communities. Our Main Street Program has been implemented in more than 1,800 urban and rural communities across the country—creating more than 67,000 new businesses and 300,000 new jobs nation-wide.

In addition, the National Trust’s Community Revitalization office works with communities to use historic preservation as a means to revitalize neighborhoods and commercial districts while protecting their unique sense of place.

**Question:**

***Many communities have rich industrial and agricultural traditions that helped shape our national identity. Yet, many of these large cities and small towns are threatened by significant population loss and disinvestment, while others face the threat of sprawl. What federal policies would you propose to encourage reinvestment in these communities?***

**PUBLIC LANDS**

***Role of the National Trust with BLM, US Forest Service and National Park Service***

For over 20 years, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has advocated for the preservation of historic and cultural resources on public lands. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Forest Service (USFS) and the National Park Service (NPS) control millions of acres of land rich in resources including Native American cliff dwellings, ranger cabins and early twentieth-century dude ranches. A variety of factors, including inadequate survey information about cultural resources, insufficient funding, pressure from competing uses such as energy development and recreation, combine to expose resources on these lands to threats such as vandalism, inappropriate use, and neglect.

The National Trust supports additional funding to protect cultural resources on public lands. For example, the National Trust advocates \$16 million for the BLM 1050 account for Cultural Resources Management, higher than the \$13.5 million the FY 2009 Administration Budget proposes.

***National Landscape Conservation System***

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is encouraging Congress to pass H.R. 2016, the National Landscape Conservation System Act, which recently passed the House of Representatives. The measure enjoys support from the Bush Administration and a bipartisan caucus of Congressional leaders. The National Landscape Conservation System is a collection of more than 800 properties that was created administratively in 2000 to protect what have been called the “crown jewels” of the Bureau of Land Management’s holdings. The Act provides statutory recognition of the existing National Landscape Conservation System, but does not provide additional funding or management for the System or its units. Its passage would prevent any future attempts to dissolve the System.

**Question:**

***Public lands stewardship is a responsibility of our citizens and the federal agencies that manage these lands. As President, what steps would you take to ensure the appropriate agencies take public land stewardship seriously and have the tools to properly protect such lands?***

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### ***Section 4(f)***

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act adopted by Congress in 1966 states that transportation projects must avoid historic sites unless there is "no feasible and prudent alternative" and requires "all possible planning to minimize harm" to historic places. This directive has been a critical tool to protecting our nation's heritage from being bulldozed and blacktopped. As the 2009 Transportation Authorization bill discussions begin, the National Trust for Historic Preservation believes it is imperative to protect this important federal program.

### ***Transportation Enhancements***

Implemented in 1991, the Transportation Enhancements program is the largest source of federal funding for historic preservation in the federal budget. The program authorizes states to set aside approximately two percent of their federal-aid highway allocations for new and non-traditional activities that enhance community transportation investments. Six of the twelve approved activities involve historic preservation, including the rehabilitation of historic bridges and roads, the reuse of older facilities like train depots, and the revitalization of historic downtown streetscapes. The National Trust for Historic Preservation works to ensure states protect the Transportation Enhancements program from funding cuts.

### ***Historic Bridges***

Restoring and preserving historic bridges not only ensures safer roads for the traveling public, but provides an opportunity for Americans to see and appreciate our nation's heritage. It is imperative that funds are available to state governments for the updated tools they need to safely and efficiently maintain historic bridges. In particular, the National Trust for Historic Preservation plans to work with the Federal Highway Administration, Members of Congress and our partners during the upcoming Transportation Reauthorization bill to ensure funding restrictions are removed for state and local governments who choose to preserve historic bridges.

### ***Public Transportation Supporting Existing Development***

The National Trust for Historic Preservation encourages transportation programs and policies that foster sustainable and adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure. Supporting such programs shines the light on the large amount of historic buildings typically found in downtowns once served by rail. It helps to revitalize communities and restores both urban and suburban cores and encourages sustainable growth.

### ***Question:***

***Transportation policies will face dramatic changes in 2009. As President, what policies would you propose that support historic preservation-based approaches to restoring, preserving and maintaining our nation's transportation resources in a way that minimizes sprawl and supports reinvestment in existing communities?***

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUNDING

The federal government plays an important role in providing critical funding for historic preservation activities. Under the Department of Interior, the Historic Preservation Fund houses funds for a number of important historic preservation activities that, unfortunately, are often underfunded. *Save America's Treasures* is a national public-private partnership to protect the country's threatened cultural treasures that document and illuminate the history and culture of the United States. *State Historic Preservation Officers* are chosen by their Governor and play an important role in, among other things, administering the national historic preservation program at the state level. *Tribal Historic Preservation Officers* play the same function as a State Historic Preservation Officer for their tribe. The National Trust for Historic Preservation supports increased funding for these programs to carry out quality state and federal historic preservation-related programs. We also support funding for other federal historic preservation programs such as *Preserve America* (which is, as stated on their website, "an Administration initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage.").

***Question:***

***The Historic Preservation Fund is the home to our nation's important historic preservation programs. As President, what funding policies would you propose to ensure these programs are properly strengthened and maintained?***