

PA SHPO

Instructions for Determination of Eligibility (DOE) Historic District Attachments

Thank you for your interest in having a historic district evaluated for National Register eligibility. The first step in the National Register process is to request a Determination of Eligibility (DOE). Tax credit projects and certain grant programs, such as [Keystone Construction Grants](#), also require DOEs.

SHPO policy requires DOEs for:

- Unevaluated districts.
- Previously evaluated districts with DOEs that are over five years old.
- Previously evaluated districts that have experienced significant changes since the last DOE.

Requirements for a DOE submission depend on the situation and level of previous documentation.

➔ For districts that have not yet had a DOE:

- Submit all of the information described below.

➔ For districts needing an updated DOE:

- If the previous documentation for the district in PA-SHARE is comprehensive, submit a description of changes to the district, an updated map, and current photos.
- If previous documentation for the district is incomplete, submit all of the information described below.



Use [PA-SHARE SearchLite](#) to find if the district or a property within the district boundary has been previously evaluated.

Consult with SHPO National Register staff if you are uncertain about the level of documentation required.

How to Submit a DOE Request

Instructions on submitting your DOE request through our [PA-SHARE](#) online system is available in this [tutorial](#). Using PA-SHARE, you'll select the "Submit" and "DOE request." Then you'll be guided to enter data about the property. If a field isn't marked as "required," you may leave it blank. If you are uncertain about how to respond to a required field, enter your best guess.

We're here to help!

If you need assistance with PA-SHARE, please reach out to our help desk at pashare@pa.gov.

The DOE Attachment

This is the most important part of your submission for eligibility evaluation purposes.

As part of the PA-SHARE submission, you will need to upload a pdf document that provides a written physical description and history of the district, with supporting photos and proposed boundary map. Your document can incorporate all photos and maps, so you do not need to upload multiple items. Please save your final document as a pdf to upload into the PA-SHARE submission as an "Attachment."

Below in the following pages is guidance for preparing the attachment to upload as part of your PA-SHARE submission. Feel free to tweak the order this information is presented, but your document should include the type of detail and items outlined below. Please prepare this document prior to beginning your PA-SHARE submission—it will make it easier to move through the submission process.

Attachment Contents Checklist

☐ **Identifying information**

- Date Prepared
- Name of District
- Borough and/or Township Name(s)
- County Name(s)
- Your Name and Email Address

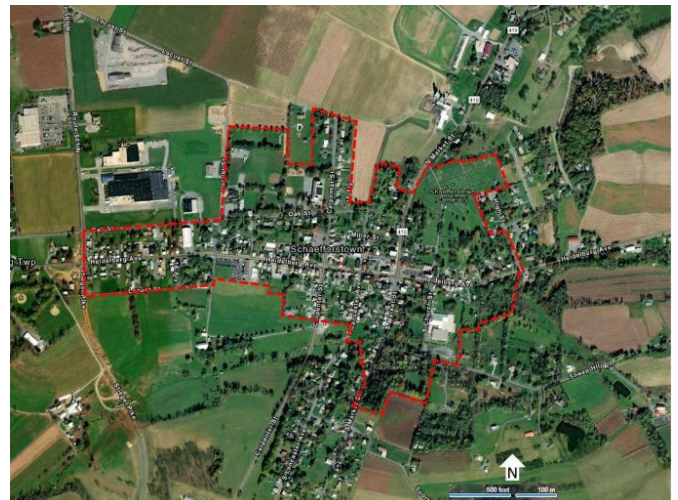
☐ **Physical Description**

- Briefly describe the overall *current* setting, noting where resources have been removed leaving vacant lots, infill construction, and changes to the setting up to present day. Explain the relationship of the district to its surroundings.
- Estimate the number of resources in the district.
- Describe the spatial arrangement of resources and the types of buildings, structures, sites, and major landscape features within the district (such as tree-lined streets, setbacks, yards, detached garages, alleys, fencing, railroad tracks, etc.).
- Note primary dates or phases of construction.
- Explain what types of resources, architectural styles, and materials are typically found within the district. Acknowledge less common types, styles, and materials of resources. Note key resources that relate to the district's importance and if there are any individually listed resources.
- Summarize *substantial* changes to the district and explain briefly the types of changes that would result in some resources being classified as "non-contributing" because of alterations that are too extensive for the resource to convey the district's significance or relevant time period.

What is a district?

A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of **resources** (sites, buildings, structures, objects, and landscape features) united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

Examples of district types: college campuses, central business or commercial corridors, industrial complexes, rural villages, residential areas, church complexes, agricultural areas, medical complexes, company towns



This aerial of the Schaefferstown Historic District, PA-SHARE #1979RE00356, indicates the district boundary in red.

The proposed boundary may change following staff review, but we want to understand the setting, relationships between resources, and how the district has physically evolved up to present day.

Tip: An inventory, or a complete list of resources within the district, is not required for an eligibility evaluation. If you will be proceeding with a National Register listing, we prefer that you wait to prepare an inventory until after we've completed our review, as we will provide guidance for the inventory to be submitted with the first draft of the nomination.

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☐ **Current Color Photos** of the overall district and the interior of primary buildings.

- Generally, 30 photos are enough to reflect the setting, streetscapes, and representative buildings.
- The photos should convey the range of resource types and architectural styles, the spatial arrangement of resources, and any important landscape features.
- When important to the district's historic significance, include interior photos of primary buildings. This is typically needed for districts like industrial complexes and educational campuses.
- At least one photo should convey the types of alterations that would result in a resource being considered "non-contributing."
- Photos should be large enough to see architectural details. Include a caption under each photo that has a photo number, describes the image, and notes important details.



Streetscape of the Bath Crossroad Historic District. PA-SHARE Resource #1998RE01959. Try to take photos that include numerous buildings in order to capture the overall appearance, character, and design of the district.

Tip: Don't upload all of your photos individually into PA-SHARE. Instead, include your photos in the document with the rest of the required information and upload everything as one attachment. When completing your PA-SHARE submission, you will be prompted to upload one image as an individual file as the "header" image for the resource. This is the only image that needs to be submitted individually.

☐ **Current District Map** that shows the footprints of all resources, major landscape features, and the proposed district boundary.

- The map can be based on an aerial view, tax parcel plan, or sketched.
- Include a north arrow and approximate scale bar.
- Label large resources (like parks, cemeteries, or school campuses), streets/alleys, and substantial landscape features (like creeks or ponds).
- Key the photos to the district map by placing the photo number in the location the photographer was positioned and adding a small arrow pointing the direction the camera was facing.
- Providing a "chronology" map that indicates historic construction phases can be helpful for certain types of districts. Discuss with staff if it seems appropriate.



Map of the Bath Crossroads Historic District, PA-SHARE #1998RE01959, as submitted in the original DOE. Map includes proposed district boundaries and indicates key buildings and features within the district.

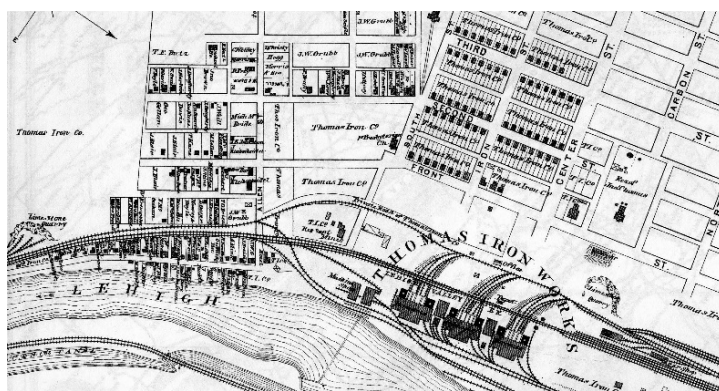
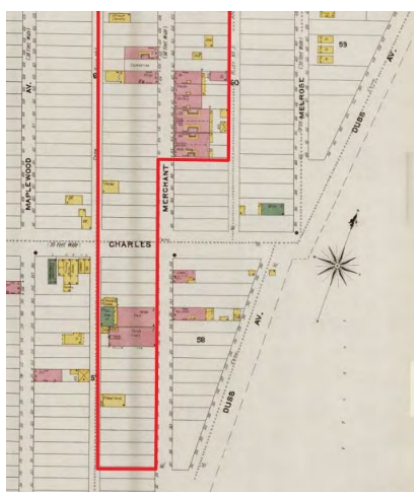
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☐ History of the District

- Summarize the district's history to present day, focusing on the time period/s when the district would be considered important. This summary should include: how the community developed, growth spurts or declines, whether there were certain years of substantial new construction, important local industries, immigration patterns, and other important trends or events.
- Explain how the district is an important example of a trend/theme, or why it is significant.
- Compare the district to similar places in the area (for example, towns of the same size with similar resources or residential neighborhoods of the same era).
- Historic photos, aerial views, maps, etc. can be effective in conveying how a district developed and can be incorporated into this document with captions that identify the date and source.

Tip: When possible, add the boundary proposed for district to historic maps or aerial views.



Left: 1905 Sanborn map showing a portion of the Ambridge Commercial Historic District, PA-SHARE #2017RE02675, National Register boundary outlined in red; Right: 1876 map of Hokendauqua's Thomas Iron Company Town Historic District, PA-SHARE #2021RE00197.

☐ Bibliography

- Include the important resources used for your research and to prepare this document.
- The works cited does not need to be entered in the fill-in-the-blank space in the PA-SHARE submission screen – instead, it can be added as a page at the end of your document.

Please note that a district can have multiple reasons for being considered significant, multiple style influences, multiple periods of significance, etc. Don't worry too much about getting all the details requested in PA-SHARE exactly correct in your submission. Areas, periods, and levels of significance will be refined in the actual National Register nomination drafts, if listing is pursued.

Questions? Ask our staff.

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