

# **A Preservation Charter for the Historic Towns and Areas of the United States of America (1992)**

## **ICOMOS U.S.**

This Charter represents the ICOMOS United States' adaptation of the 1987 ICOMOS Historic Towns Charter. It defines four objectives for the preservation of historic towns in the U.S., emphasizing preservation as integral to community planning. It sees property owners and residents as playing a key role in the protection of historic towns, participating in the planning process. In 18 principles, the document outlines the components of a successful preservation program for historic towns, including studies of the history, culture, architecture and other appropriate fields in order to understand the historic context as well as considerations about the future of the area. Other principles include:

- a harmonious relationship between the historic area and its surrounding region,
- thorough study and documentation prior to any changes,
- involvement of residents in planning,
- retaining sound, affordable housing and avoiding displacement of residents, and
- respecting the scale and character of the surrounding built environment in new construction.

The document addresses such specific issues as the introduction and development of parking, roads and transit systems. It encourages protection of the historic area and its residents from natural disasters as far as possible. It also encourages educational efforts and specialized training to improve preservation efforts in historic areas. Finally, the Charter suggests the creation of preservation organizations and financial incentives that encourage preservation.