As a Certified Local Government, and as outlined in the City Ordinances, the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission has certain responsibilities. The Commission conducts bi-monthly meetings where it considers design review, recommendations to City Council on preservation related topics, recommendations on National Register nominations, and review and approval of Colorado State Income Tax Credits for qualified restorations. These duties and other public projects form the foundation for responsible preservation planning.

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Historic Places Bike Tour

Commenting on the bold experiment to create a community within the mountainous landscape once considered the last true wilderness, pioneer journalist Charles Leckenby wrote: “It was the pioneers who laid the foundations broad and deep for the blessings we now enjoy.” One hundred years after city incorporation and after the first hand-hewn log buildings were erected, Steamboat Springs’ City Council created the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission. The Commission is charged with the mission to preserve and enhance Steamboat Springs’ unique historic, architectural, and cultural heritage. Partially funded by the Federal Historic Preservation Fund, the Commission’s activities have resulted in the identification of sites, buildings, structures, and districts eligible for designation to the National, State and Routt County Registers of Historic Places. Eligibility is based on historic, architectural, and geographic significance. Registered properties within the city limits of Steamboat Springs qualify for a variety of economic incentives for restoration or rehabilitation, including a local sales tax rebate and income tax credits. This tour includes 11 properties listed on the Routt County Register of Historic Places and represents a broad spectrum of Steamboat Springs’ rich past.

Routt County Courthouse, 1923

Bike Tour Destinations:

1. Initiated in 1914, Howelsen Hill is the oldest ski area in continuing use west of the Mississippi. The Hill is home to the Winter Carnival and has been the site for numerous national and world record breaking ski jumps.

2. In 1900, the Carver family built the Carver Power Plant next door to their house to provide electricity to the local population. The stream, a by-product of the system, was used to heat nearby schools and residences.

3. Bishop Spalding started St. Paul’s Episcopal Church prior to the turn of the century. The church building was constructed and consecrated in 1913. The native sandstone used in the construction came from the Steamboat Town and Quarry Company on Emerald Mountain.

4. The Queen Anne style building that houses the Tread of Pioneers Museum was built in 1908 by Ernest Campbell. The Museum features a ski gallery, a Ute Indian exhibit, and one of the original stage coaches which brought passengers to Steamboat Springs in the late 1800s.

5. The Routt County National Bank building was erected in 1919 and although the architect is unknown, the builder was Carl Howelsen, a Norwegian immigrant renowned for his influence with skiing as well as for his craftsmanship with stone. The upper floor was designed to be a meeting place for the Masonic Lodge.

6. The Christian Science Church was built in 1934, after the Christian Science Society had been meeting in Steamboat Springs for nearly 3 decades. Mrs. James Crawford, pioneer mother of the community, was one of the charter members of the church which was organized locally in 1908.

7. A striking visual element in residential Steamboat Springs, the Seventh Street District, from Pine Street to Laurel Street, is eligible for designation. Characterized by Craftsman and Bungalow type houses, the area displays a cohesiveness in setting and materials.

8. Constructed in 1910, the Craig House exemplifies the heritage and development of Routt County and is associated with James Lafayette Norvell, considered the county’s first entrepreneur as a developer and cattle buyer. Norvell’s name frequently appears in the developments in all parts of the county; there are Norvell Additions to the towns of Steamboat Springs and Yampa and he is credited with developing parts of Hayden and Craig. The house is an excellent local example of the Bungalow style of architecture.

9. Constructed by significant local author and historian John Rolfe Burroughs after his release as a prisoner of war in World War II, the three Burroughs Houses represent the growth of Steamboat Springs in the postwar period. Reflective of the Rustic style of architecture, this style evolved from the early Pioneer log style seen in the log buildings of the pioneer and homesteading periods.

10. The Routt County Courthouse represents the development of Routt County, its government, and the establishment of Steamboat Springs as the permanent county seat. A simplified Classical Revival building with Beaux Arts influences constructed in 1922-1923, the Courthouse was designed by master architect Robert Kenneth Fuller.

11. The 130-acre Legacy Ranch District serves as a gateway to the city and reminds citizens and visitors of the significant role that high country farming and ranching played in the development of Colorado. The Legacy Ranch, also referred to as the Hay Meadow, signifies a complete in-tact, operable ranch and continues to serve in this capacity.

12. The Mesa School was built in 1916 by Art Gumprecht. The School served grades one through eight until rural school district consolidation was completed in 1959. The schoolhouse was restored by Historic Routt County in 2000 and gifted to the City of Steamboat Springs for use as a community meeting center.