

Metropolitan Historical Commission  
Sunnyside in Sevier Park  
1113 Kirkwood Avenue  
Nashville, Tennessee 37204

## **Historical Marker Program Guidelines**

In 1967, the newly-formed Metropolitan Historical Commission of Nashville and Davidson County initiated a historical marker program to commemorate significant people, places, and events in the city's past. Marker Number One, "Heaton's Station," was erected at Lock One Road in 1968. The marker program is now one of the Historical Commission's longest-running and most successful programs. By the end of 2022, 250 historical markers have been erected across the county.

The following guidelines are designed to assist individuals and organizations who wish to sponsor a historical marker through the Metropolitan Historical Commission's historical marker program.

### **Significance**

Every statement on a Metropolitan Historical Commission marker must satisfy two conditions:  
Is it significant? Is it accurate?

The subject of any marker erected by the Metropolitan Historical Commission should be a person, place, structure, or event that has local importance and, wherever possible, significance in the broad pattern of Tennessee or national history. The event, person, structure, or place should have achieved historical significance fifty years or more ago. Exceptions may be made by the Metro Historical Commission if the sponsoring party can show that it is of exceptional importance.

### Examples of markers that would not meet our criteria for significance:

- markers to specific land grants
- markers solely of genealogical or family interest
- markers to living persons

Markers to unprotected archaeological sites will also not be considered, not because of a lack of historical significance, but so as not to endanger the archaeological artifacts by drawing attention to them before they can be properly assessed and secured. Protected archaeological sites—such as Aaitafama' Archaeological Park—are excellent candidates for a historical marker.

### **Historical Fact**

Historical significance may be subjective, but factual accuracy may be proved, and documentation of every fact is required. A permanent file on each marker is kept at the Commission office so that answers may always be provided to anyone who asks for verification of a particular marker or for additional information on the subject. For your convenience, see page 4 of these guidelines for a sample documentation sheet, and a blank copy of the documentation sheet on page 5 that you may use to show the documentation of each statement in the marker text. Your text and documentation should acknowledge historically marginalized groups—such as Native American, enslaved persons, immigrant groups, etc.— as applicable.

**Location**

A suitable and safe location should be designated in the marker application. The same marker text cannot be approved to be placed at more than one (1) location. Generally, markers are placed within the public right-of-way. Exceptions may be made that allow a marker to be placed on private property. In all cases, the site must be adjacent to a public road or property to facilitate installation and maintenance. In the event that the proposed marker is to be located on private property, written consent of the owner must be filed with the Commission. If a historical marker needs to be moved to a new location, the Commission must give consent before the marker can be moved.

All Metropolitan Historical Commission markers are installed and maintained by Nashville Department of Transportation & Multimodal Infrastructure (NDOT).

**Cost**

Standard markers cost approximately \$3500-\$4000 and are generally funded by the applicant. Ask the Commission staff for specific marker costs.

**Text specifications**

Marker texts should be approximately 480 characters and spaces, cast in 1-inch letters. The same text will appear on both sides of the marker. If the text is shorter than this, staff may help revise to reach the maximum character count.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for a longer text to "wrap" the marker, with text continuing on the reverse side of the marker, or to have text on one side and a metal photograph on the other. These markers are more expensive than standard markers. Please indicate if you wish to pursue one of these options when you submit your application.

**Marker Approval**

The Commission staff and the sponsoring party will work together to write a suitable marker text before it will be submitted to the Commission for approval. If the Commission staff feels that the submitted draft text is not compatible with the standards of the Metropolitan Historical Commission, the sponsoring party will be notified immediately. The staff will help with any corrections or improvements that can be made to revise the proposed text.

Once the staff and sponsoring party agree to a suitable marker text, it will be submitted to the Commission for approval. The Commission generally will consider and vote on the proposed marker at the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting. The Commission meets monthly on the third Monday of the month. After Commission approval, allow approximately twenty-four (24) weeks manufacturing time for the casting, shipping, and erection of the marker.

Marker proposals must be submitted for consideration to the Metropolitan Historical Commission staff four (4) to six (6) weeks before a regular meeting of the Commission, to allow time for staff review and revisions.

## **Metropolitan Historical Commission Historical Marker Application Process**

Proposals should be submitted in the form of a letter to the Commission, and should include the following:

1. The name of the person, place, structure, or event for which the marker is to be erected and a statement of significance of the same;
2. A copy of the proposed marker text with documentation sheet for the information put forth in each sentence in the text (see documentation sheet sample below);
3. A proposed location for the marker, documented by photographs and/or maps, and a letter of permission of the property owner;
4. The source of funding for the marker, and written statement guaranteeing payment.

Markers are generally placed in the right-of-way rather than on private property, but a letter of permission from the property owner, indicating that they consent to a marker being placed in front of their property, is still required. The staff is available to work with individuals and organizations proposing historical markers to advise on the text, references, and placement of markers.

The staff **MUST** have a letter from an organization guaranteeing payment for the marker before a marker can be ordered. This letter should be on the organization's letterhead with a billing address clearly stated. A copy of this letter and the billing address of the individual or organization sponsoring the marker will be sent to the manufacturer. The manufacturer will bill the sponsoring organization directly. **DO NOT** make checks to the Metro Historical Commission.

For further information, call the Metro Historical Commission at 615-862-7970 or email [jessica.reeves@nashville.gov](mailto:jessica.reeves@nashville.gov).

## SAMPLE Documentation Sheet

<u>Facts</u>	<u>Sources</u>
<i>List each important fact that is relevant to this marker subject. All places, dates, sites, names of people involved, etc. must be documented.</i>	<i>Each fact must be verified with notation of the source material. <u>You must include a copy of the page from each document that was used.</u></i>
Here, near the center of a 64-acre woodland park owned by the Nashville Railway & Light Co., the Glendale streetcar line turned back toward town.	USGS Map, Nashville Quadrangle, Edition of 1932.
The park opened in 1888 to attract passengers for the railway—originally steam, electric after 1893.	Arthur W. Crouch, <i>Glendale Park, Nashville, Tennessee</i> . 1969. Typescript deposited in Nashville Public Library.
A zoo was added in 1912.	“24 Years of Golden Eggs,” <i>Nashville Tennessean Magazine</i> , April 6, 1947.
The park closed in 1932, a casualty of automobiles and the Depression.	“Glendale Park, A Never Never Land That Once Was—Hop the Trolley, Go Again,” <i>Nashville Banner</i> , February 15, 1956, p. 7.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Facts</u></b></p> <p><i>List each important fact that is relevant to this marker subject. All places, dates, sites, names of people involved, etc. must be documented.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Sources</u></b></p> <p><i>Each fact must be verified with notation of the source material. <u>You must include a copy of the page from each document that was used.</u></i></p>