

Legislative Services Commission Feasibility Study for OHS Sites
Frequently Asked Questions



1. What is the LSC feasibility study and why was it undertaken?

The Fiscal Year 2008-09 state budget (sometimes referred to as House Bill 119) charged the Legislative Service Commission (LSC) to “study the feasibility and potential results of the state's offering incentives for local entities, including municipal corporations, counties, townships, local historical societies, and regional authorities, to assume control of state historical sites. The incentives to be studied shall include the establishment of tax credits, the contribution of capital dollars, and the creation of an endowment-matching program. The study shall focus on the cost and funding aspects of the incentives that are studied. In addition, the study shall attempt to determine the potential results of providing each incentive at varying levels.” OHS is responsible for 59 historic sites and museums (by far, the most of any state-administered site system), but does not have adequate resources to invest in those sites. This study was a good opportunity to highlight the need for more investment in the state’s historic sites.

2. Does the study mean that the Ohio Historical Society is trying to reduce the size of its site system?

This study came as part of the legislature’s response to OHS efforts to seek sufficient funding for all of the history related services it provides to the state, including management of the site system. The scope of the study was only to look at incentives. OHS cooperated with LSC to provide the information it needed to perform the feasibility study. LSC asked the Society to assess which sites would be appropriate to be directly owned and managed by local and other organizations so that it could determine what kinds of incentives would be useful.

3. What does this mean for the future of the OHS site in my community?

We do not know at this time. We hope that this is one step in balancing the needs of the site system with resources available. Our goal is to make sure that every site remains an important asset in its community and that it is properly preserved. We have made it clear that each historic site is distinctive in its own way with a local network of people who support the site, either financially or through volunteer or similar efforts. Good stewardship and the long-term operation of the site are our top concerns.

4. Should I expect any of the OHS historic sites to be closed or transferred as a result of this study?

The legislature did not ask LSC to compile a list of sites to close or transfer, only to determine what incentives might induce others to assume ownership of sites in the system. We do not know at this time how the legislature will use the information that the LSC report provided. We believe that transfer of any site must be done with local consultation and there must be local support for any decision.

5. What happens now?

The Ohio General Assembly will consider the information contained in the report and take any action it deems appropriate, especially as it relates to creating incentives. Local organizations interested in discussing the report or any of the Ohio Historical Society sites mentioned in the LSC study are encouraged to contact George Kane at 614.297.2441.