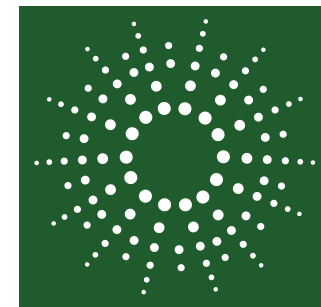




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PRESERVATION  
COMMISSIONS

education + training + advocacy

# PUTTING THE NAPC MESSAGING GUIDE TO WORK



NAPC  
VIRTUAL  
SUMMER  
SHORT  
COURSE

# POLL

---

**How do you currently work  
in historic preservation?**



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

---

- Understand the purpose and features of the new NAPC Messaging Guide for Local Preservation Programs.
- Apply the guide in real time.
- Brainstorm with other participants on potential uses of the guide.
- Identify some practical ways you can use the guide right away to advance your work and make it easier.



## POLL RESULTS

---

**How do you currently work  
in historic preservation?**



## **PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER**

---

**What do all the previous sessions have in common?**

**(Besides historic preservation)**







MESSAGING GUIDE FOR  
LOCAL PRESERVATION  
PROGRAMS

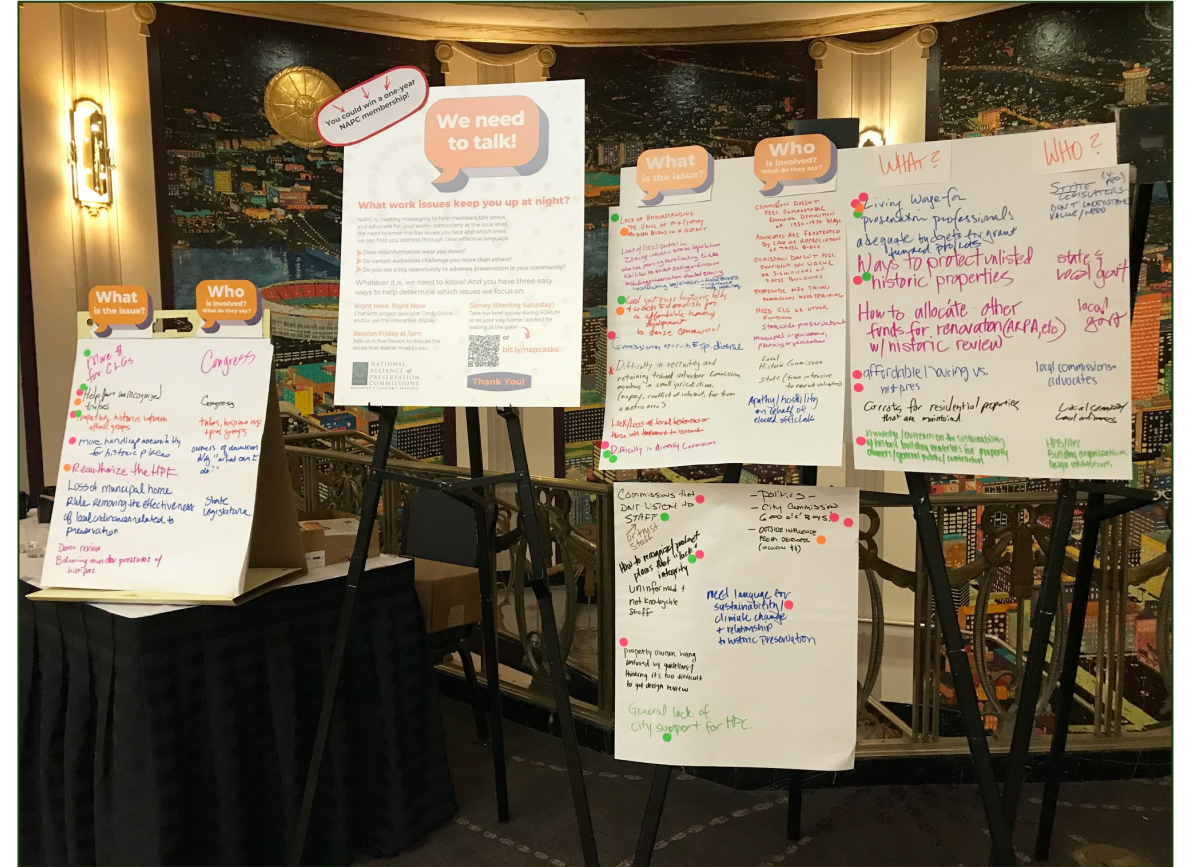
[napcommissions.org/messaging-guide](https://napcommissions.org/messaging-guide)



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# FORUM 2022 — SESSION, TABLE

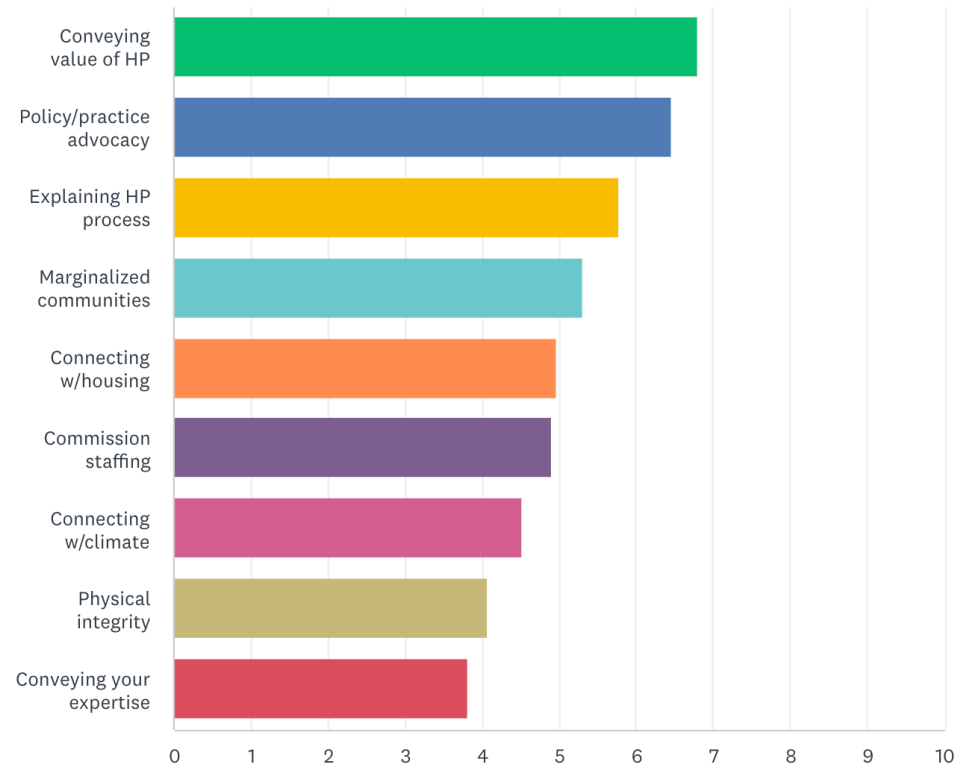




# SURVEY (~900 COMMENTS); 41 PEER REVIEWERS (+ PROJECT TEAM)

Below we list the most common issues cited by FORUM attendees. Please rank these issues in order of importance to your work, with 1 being most important. Choose "N/A" for any issues that don't apply, and use the next question to add any crucial issues that aren't listed here.

Answered: 261 Skipped: 0



## THE GUIDE SEEKS TO HELP YOU:

The image shows the cover of a guide titled "MESSAGING GUIDE FOR LOCAL PRESERVATION PROGRAMS". The cover features a dark green horizontal band with the title in white, uppercase letters. Above and below this band are white areas with scattered black dots of varying sizes. At the bottom left of the cover is the logo for the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC), which includes a circular graphic of dots and the text "NATIONAL ALLIANCE of PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS" and "education + training + advocacy".

MESSAGING GUIDE FOR  
LOCAL PRESERVATION  
PROGRAMS



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- **Have more productive conversations**
- **Demystify the local preservation process**
- **Position your work as the positive, collaborative effort that it is**



# HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

## How to Use This Guide

As someone who works in or with a local government's historic preservation program, you spend your time helping people as much as you can, using the tools you have.

These tools largely include technical standards and specialized terms. You also work in a field that is largely misunderstood. It's no wonder you might have trouble conveying why and how people need to do their part to preserve historic places, or how your work plays an essential role in the life and strength of your community.

To help you communicate more effectively about your work, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) created this guide with significant input from NAPC members and colleagues. You'll find:

- General communications tips
- Tips on word choice, from clarity and jargon to equity concerns and common terms currently under discussion
- Tips on connecting with different audiences and responding to common concerns about historic preservation
- Sample messages to help build support for more effective preservation policy and practice
- Messages addressing general themes and specific connections between preservation and pressing issues, with supporting points and examples
- Sample language and graphics to clarify the local preservation process, particularly design review, and to respond to relevant concerns

Spoiler alert: **The overriding theme of the content in this guide is connection**—connecting your work to other pressing needs in your community, other local departments and initiatives, and other responsibilities of daily life, as well as the power of historic places in connecting people with the past and each other.

- Note the key audience (local preservation programs).
- Copy and paste.
- Make it your own.
- Use as part of the big picture.
- Keep the conversation going.
- [Navigation tips]



# GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS TIPS

## General Communications Tips

This guide seeks to help you foster accurate perceptions of your work by conveying it in a positive yet realistic way. [How you frame your messages](#)—the choices you make about what you say and how you say it—can help people see issues from a different perspective, fostering more productive conversations that build support over time.



*Accentuating the positive and minimizing the negative isn't 'selling' or 'spinning,' it's simply telling our own story the way we want it to be told. No one else will tell it for us.*  
— Dan Becker, Owner and Consulting Principal,  
Heritage Arts of NC LLC (and NAPC CAMP Trainer)

Below, we offer a few basic communications tips you might find helpful.

## Look to the Future

We often say that historic preservation is about the future, not just the past. You can use this same forward-thinking approach to frame effective messages by:

- [Highlighting solutions](#)—how older and historic places have benefited your community, how design guidelines offer flexibility to meet project goals, even how preservation policy can change over time
- [Speaking to shared values and aspirations](#)—fundamental human beliefs about ourselves, the world, the kind of people we want to be, and the future we want to see, such as:
  - Belonging: We all want to belong.
  - Connection: We have a deep human need for connection.
  - Fairness (Equity): We all share some basic needs, like health, safety, and the opportunity to succeed.

- Look to the future.
- Use specific local examples.
- Use images and graphics.
- Myths: Replace, don't repeat.
- Use data carefully.
- Make information easy to use.
- Keep at it.



# TIPS ON WORD CHOICE

- Clarity
- Jargon
- Equity
- Common Terms, Revisited (inc. “historic preservation”)

## Common Terms, Revisited

Language evolves constantly. As of June 2023, preservation professionals and social justice advocates question the use of some terms common to local preservation programs, including those listed below. While we don’t have the answers to these complex issues, we want you to be aware of them, and we offer a few suggestions.

Term	Concern(s)	Consideration(s)
“Appropriate”	<p>Many consider it vague, subjective, and/or authoritative.</p> <p>Some suggest renaming “Certificate of Appropriateness” (COA) as “Certificate of Approval” or simply “Historic Approval.”</p>	<p>Ubiquitous in design review because of its use in the <a href="#">Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties</a>.</p> <p>You might be able to change the name of the COA form without changing your preservation ordinance.</p>
“Character”	<p>Many consider it vague and not easily (or often) defined, which can hinder evaluation and foster claims of subjectivity.</p> <p>Some consider it a <a href="#">signal of exclusion and structural racism</a>.</p>	<p>Widely used as a key benefit of preservation: maintaining the distinct character of a building, neighborhood, community, etc.</p> <p>Might be cited in relevant legislation; avoiding it could possibly have legal implications.</p>



# CONNECTING WITH DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

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- Elected Officials
- Colleagues in Local Government
- Property Owners
- Developers
- Historically Excluded Communities
- The “General Public”



# RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT PRESERVATION

If you hear or sense ...	Try ...
<p>General disinterest: The sense that preservation doesn't matter or isn't a priority</p>	<p>Connect preservation to other pressing issues through specific examples.</p> <p>Make preservation personal by asking them about places they like and why, having coffee in a rehabbed building, bringing them to places in question, etc.</p> <p>Highlight not just historic places but longtime businesses and organizations they care about.</p> <p>Emphasize historic preservation as a public service and part of broader planning efforts.</p>
<p>Competing priorities: The sense that preservation actively undermines other policy goals (e.g., affordable housing)</p>	<p>Share specific local examples of how reusing historic places advanced a different issue (e.g., affordable housing).</p> <p>Ask for details, find common ground, and address specifics using this guide and/or your experience.</p> <p>Consider the source: Try to find someone else they'll listen to who shares your perspective.</p> <p>Emphasize historic preservation as a public service and part of broader planning efforts.</p>



# ADVANCING POLICY AND PRACTICE

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In addition to conveying what you do, why it matters, and how the local preservation process works, messaging can help foster more effective policy and practice. Even if you can't officially advocate for policy changes, you can build support for goals including:

- Inclusion in relevant decisions and plans (e.g., comprehensive plan)
- Coordination with other departments and processes (e.g., [as in New York City](#))
- Consistent code enforcement
- Updating policies, practices, and incentives to meet community needs (including addressing biases and supporting historically excluded communities)
- Regular training for staff and commissioners
- More funding for projects, incentives, and staffing



*[... We need to look] at communities in a holistic way that includes preservation as one of the essential elements of healthy communities and not a standalone program.*

— **Lauren Hoogkamer**, MSHP/MSUP, Principal Planner,  
City of Tacoma, WA (and NAPC CAMP Trainer)

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## Values-Based Messaging

You can connect your work to the core values of your local government (typically stated in the strategic or comprehensive plan and on the website). These values vary but often include:

- Access and transparency
- Accountability, including responsible stewardship and fiscal management
- Collaboration/teamwork

---

## Sample Messages

### Inclusion in Relevant Decisions

We get more done when we work together. Far from a standalone program, historic preservation has inherent connections to a surprising number of local issues, from economic development to equity and anti-racism, housing and sustainability, infrastructure, resilience, even emergency management. When relevant decisions on these and other issues don't fully consider the places people care about, we lose important opportunities and efficiencies that preservation offers. By looking at our community more holistically—for instance, integrating preservation into the comprehensive plan—we can steward local resources more effectively while better serving our residents.

### Cross-Departmental Collaboration

People trust us more when they know what's going on. When historic places aren't fully considered in relevant decisions on planning, economic development, and other related issues, we miss the opportunity to inform residents about potential impacts on the places they care about, and how they can make their voices heard. If we work together on decisions that affect these places, we can be more transparent with residents, building trust in both the preservation process and local government.

### Supporting Historically Excluded Communities

As we work to build a more just and equitable community, historic preservation has a unique role to play. We can use preservation to acknowledge past harm, build mutual understanding, and help people in different ways. We can address systemic injustice far more effectively if we all understand how our [city/town/region] developed (including patterns of discrimination and erasure); who created (and was





# MESSAGING

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## Universal concern: devaluing preservation

- Not a priority: nice to have, hardly essential
- Obstacle: actively undermines other needs and priorities in the community

The most effective way to convey your relevance is to **connect your work to pressing community needs.**





# MESSAGING: WHAT IS PRESERVATION?

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- Broad term for different ways of treating older places people care about, like ...
- People care about older places for many reasons, like ...
- The types of places we preserve include ...
- Preservation works differently at the local, state, and national level ...



# MESSAGING: WHY PRESERVATION MATTERS

## General Themes

- Connection to Pressing Local Issues
- Change and Balance
- Shared Stake in the Future

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Change and Balance</b>
<b>Key Messages</b>	<p>Preservation guides/manages change to places people care about.</p> <p>Preservation balances change with continuity/familiarity/stability.</p>
<b>Supporting Messages</b>	<p>Historic places change all the time. We use preservation policies as a tool to navigate that change, so places can evolve while keeping what makes them meaningful.</p> <p>Every place changes in one way or another. Many historic places—from farms and ranches to downtowns—have to change in order to survive. How they change over time is part of their story.</p>

<b>Sample Tailoring</b>	<p><b>For elected officials and colleagues in local government</b>          Preservation policy balances property rights with the public interest. It stems from a long-held recognition that certain parts of our environment—including open space and places of cultural value—benefit society at large and deserve protection, even if they're privately owned. The more we can help residents care for their historic places, the better we serve the community.</p> <p><b>For property owners, developers, community members</b>          Preservation balances property rights with the public interest. It's part of owning property in [city/state/region]; it just adds a step because your place has special value to the community. We know this is an extra responsibility, and we're here to make the process as smooth as possible for you.</p>
-------------------------	---

The trick is in how you find the balance between the pros and cons of working with historic places.



# MESSAGING: WHY PRESERVATION MATTERS

---

## Specific Issues

- Affordable Housing
- Density
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism
- Health and Well-Being
- Local Economy
- Sustainability and Climate Change

## General Position:

Preservation is not the solution  
but an essential part of the solution.



# MESSAGING: WHY PRESERVATION MATTERS

Issue	<b>Affordable Housing</b> (some overlap with Density)
Key Message	Solving the affordable housing crisis will take a mix of approaches, including the use of older and historic places. By keeping the affordable housing we already have, adapting existing buildings for residential use, and adding compatible new housing to older neighborhoods, we can help make sure everyone in our community has a safe, affordable home.
Supporting Points	<p>Most of the country's <a href="#">existing affordable rental housing</a> is unsubsidized, privately owned, and at risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's typically in older, smaller buildings—including historic homes and districts—and might be subject to <a href="#">rent stabilization</a> policy.</li> <li>• Much of this housing is for low-income residents and in historically excluded communities, making the buildings more vulnerable to demolition and replacement with new housing that is not affordable to current residents.</li> <li>• <a href="#">New construction can't keep up with demand</a>, and the vast majority of new construction isn't affordable to low- and middle-income residents.</li> <li>• We can <a href="#">keep this housing safe and affordable at a fraction of the cost of new construction</a>, updating it to meet new needs while keeping these residents in their homes.</li> </ul>

Issue	<b>Affordable Housing (contd.)</b>
Examples	<p>Preserving existing affordable housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Preservation Compact's</a> work in Chicago (they refer to "preservation" strictly as retention of existing housing)</li> </ul> <p>Adding "missing middle" housing to older neighborhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonprofit developer Restoration Housing is <a href="#">transforming vacant historic homes into affordable multifamily housing</a> in Roanoke, VA.</li> <li>• Based on the "kit homes" popular a century ago, <a href="#">This Used to Be Normal: Pattern Book Homes for 21st Century</a> offers free construction plans for compatible multifamily homes in Michigan, as well as tips for updating zoning codes to allow for more multifamily construction.</li> </ul>



# HOW LOCAL PRESERVATION WORKS

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## Sample Text

- Your Local Preservation Program
- Design Review Overview
- How Design Review Works

## Sample Graphics (Canva)

- Do You Need Design Review?
- Design Review at a Glance

## Do You Need Design Review?

**It depends! Here's a very broad overview.**

For details, see [Design Guidelines/Approval Matrix etc.]

Questions? Contact us at [info]



## TIPS: DISCUSSING DESIGN REVIEW

---

- Help people prepare.
- Explain why, from the start.
- Say yes when you can.
- Show how it works.
- Stick to the guidelines.
- Start with the good news.
- Admit reality.





# RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROCESS

Concern	Potential Response
The extra time it takes	<p data-bbox="428 354 1141 454">Design review does add a step to the other clearances you need for your project. We're here to help make this part of the process as smooth as possible for you.</p> <p data-bbox="428 496 1103 601">We coordinate different steps when we can, and we can also coordinate with your team (contractor, architect, permit expeditor, etc.).</p> <p data-bbox="428 644 1141 819">We approve projects fairly quickly, often within a few days or at a single meeting. If the commission needs to review the project, following the design guidelines could get your application on the consent agenda, for quick approval at the start of the meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="428 862 1141 1005">We coordinate multiple reviews when possible so they can take place at the same time. Once we've approved the project, we coordinate directly with our permitting office to get you on your way.</p> <p data-bbox="428 1048 1141 1152">We have this process down. The earlier we're involved, the better. If you contact us before you start planning, your application has a better chance of being approved faster.</p>



# RESOURCES

## NAPC Programs

[NAPC-L listserv](#)

[Resources](#) including Design Guidelines, Preservation Plans, Technical Assistance, Professional Network Directory, and Cultural Resource Survey Tool

[Webinar Series](#) — key sources for this guide; two recordings available for free:

- [“Community Outreach Strategies for Historic Preservation Commissions and Boards”](#)
- [“Preservation Justice: Making Your Preservation Program More Equitable”](#)

[FORUM Conference](#)

[Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program \(CAMP®\)](#)

[CAMP Resilience and Disaster Planning](#)

## Communications

[ComNetworkDEI.org](#)

[“Communicating Climate Change,”](#) The Communications Network (Webinar 1 of 2)

[Communicating Climate Heritage Toolkit](#), Climate Heritage Network

[Conscious Style Guide](#)

[Diversity Style Guide](#) (see [About](#) for their many sources)

[FrameWorks Institute](#) and [Hattaway Communications](#) (social science-based)

[Inclusive Language Guidelines](#), American Psychological Association

[M+R’s Guide to a More Inclusive Media Relations Approach](#)

[Radical Copyeditor](#) (equity-based)

[rootid](#) (equity-based)

[TheCaseMade](#) (social science- and community-based)

[Where We Thrive Toolkit](#) for communicating resident-centered neighborhood revitalization



# SOURCES

## Affordable Housing

- ["Opinion: Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing is Hiding in Plain Sight,"](#) Paul Brophy and Carey Shea, *Shelterforce*, July 22, 2019
- [Rent Control Laws by State,](#) National Multifamily Housing Council, April 30, 2023
- ["More Housing Is Coming—But the National Shortage Will Persist,"](#) Tim Henderson, *Stateline*, September 8, 2022
- ["Preserving the largest and most at-risk supply of affordable housing,"](#) Steve King, Shannon Peloquin, Charles Riesenberg, and Jonathan Woetzel, McKinsey & Company, February 23, 2021
- ["A Century-Old Neighborhood Provides a Model for the Present Day,"](#) Daniel Herriges, *Strong Towns*, February 22, 2023
- ["Why integration matters,"](#) Joe Cortright, *City Commentary*, June 14, 2018
- ["Housing Diversity Makes Communities More Resilient against Economic Downturns,"](#) Arnab Chakraborty and Andrew McMillan, *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (2018), posted April 29, 2020
- ["How Adaptive Reuse Can Help the Housing Crisis,"](#) Tatiana Walk-Morris, *Planning Magazine*, American Planning Association, May 1, 2021
- [Using the \[Federal\] Historic Tax Credit for Affordable Housing,](#) HUD Exchange, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- [Low-Income Housing Tax Credit,](#) Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- [UpstairsDowntown™](#)
- [At Home on Main Street,](#) Main Street America



# POLL

---

**Which part of the messaging guide interests you the most right now?**



# PUTTING THE GUIDE TO WORK: LET'S GO

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**Welcome our special guest,  
Alison Brake!**



# PUTTING THE GUIDE TO WORK: LET'S GO

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## Your turn!



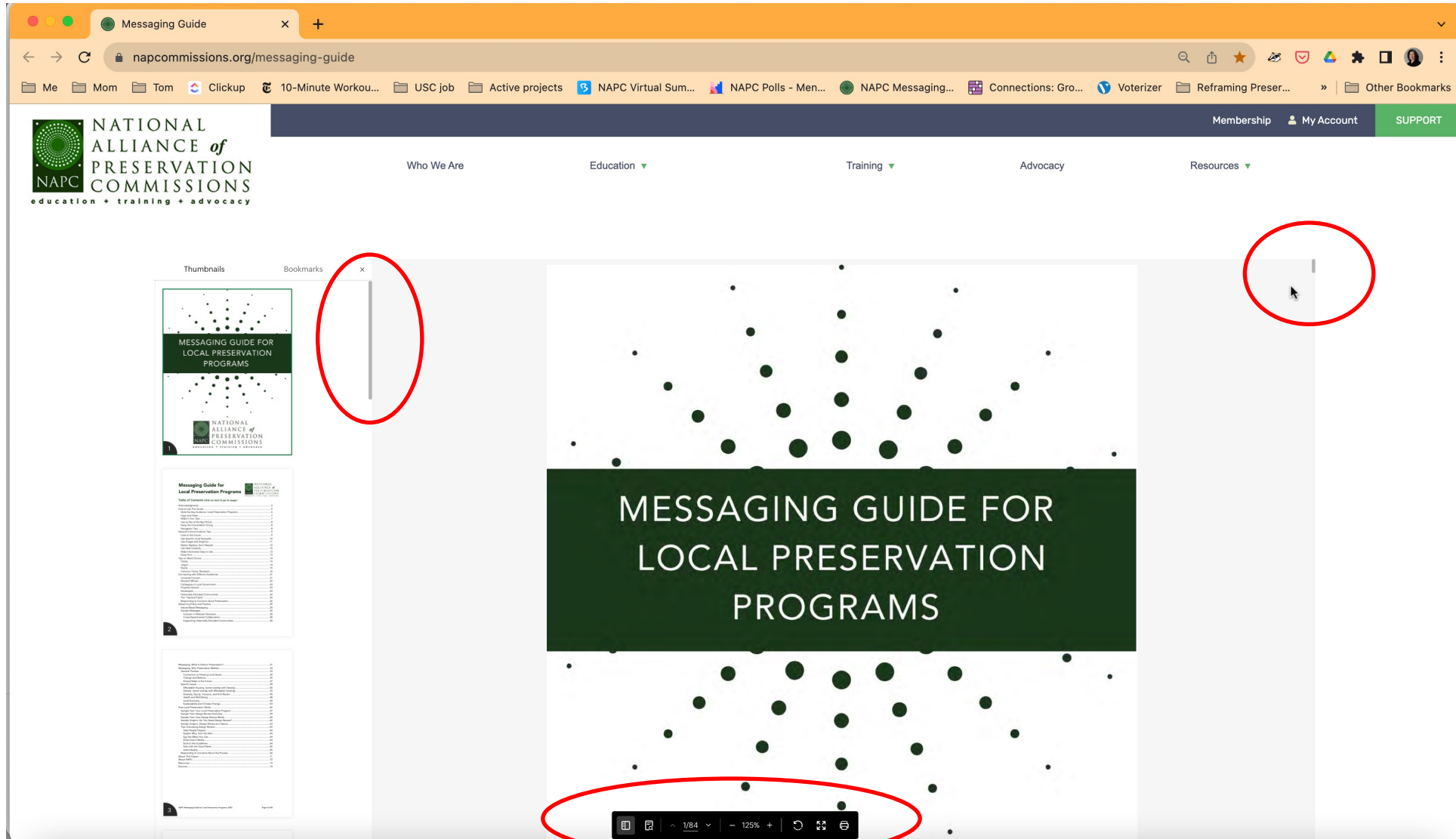
# POLL

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**How can you use the NAPC  
Messaging Guide in the next week?**



# NAPCOMMISSIONS.ORG/MESSAGING-GUIDE

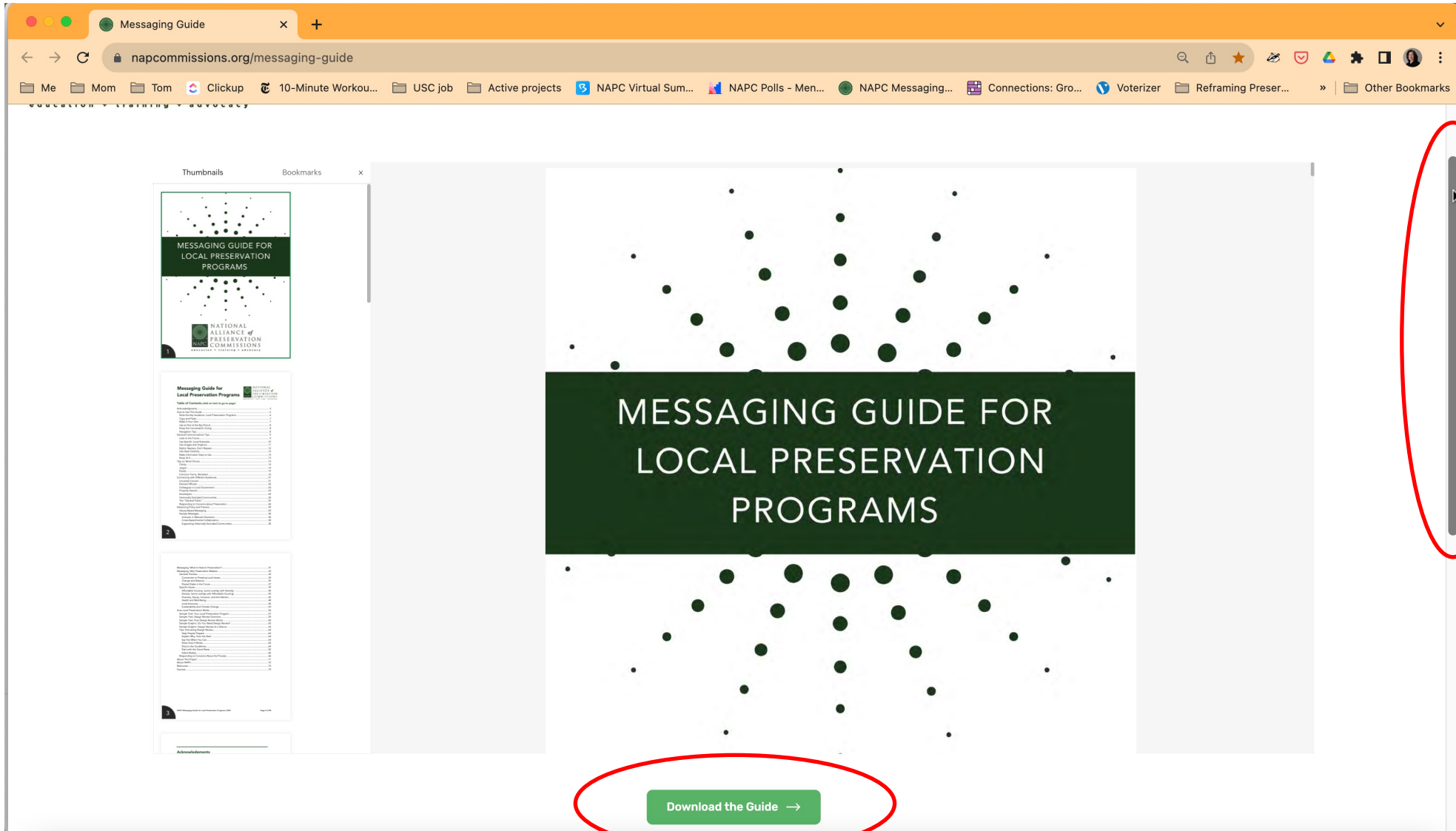


Navigate the guide online





# NAPCOMMISSIONS.ORG/MESSAGING-GUIDE



Download  
the guide



# NAVIGATION TIPS (IN ACROBAT)

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Bookmarks

- Acknowledgments
  - NAPC Project Advisory Committee
  - Author
  - Peer Reviewers/Contributors
  - Peer Reviewers/Contributors (contd.)
- How to Use This Guide
  - Note the Key Audience: Local Preservation Programs
  - Copy and Paste
  - Make It Your Own
  - Use as Part of the Big Picture
  - Keep the Conversation Going
  - Navigation Tips**
  - General Communications Tips
  - Look to the Future
  - Use Specific Local Examples
  - Use Images and Graphics
  - Myths: Replace, Don't Repeat

## Messaging Guide for Local Preservation Programs



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### Table of Contents (click on text to go to page)

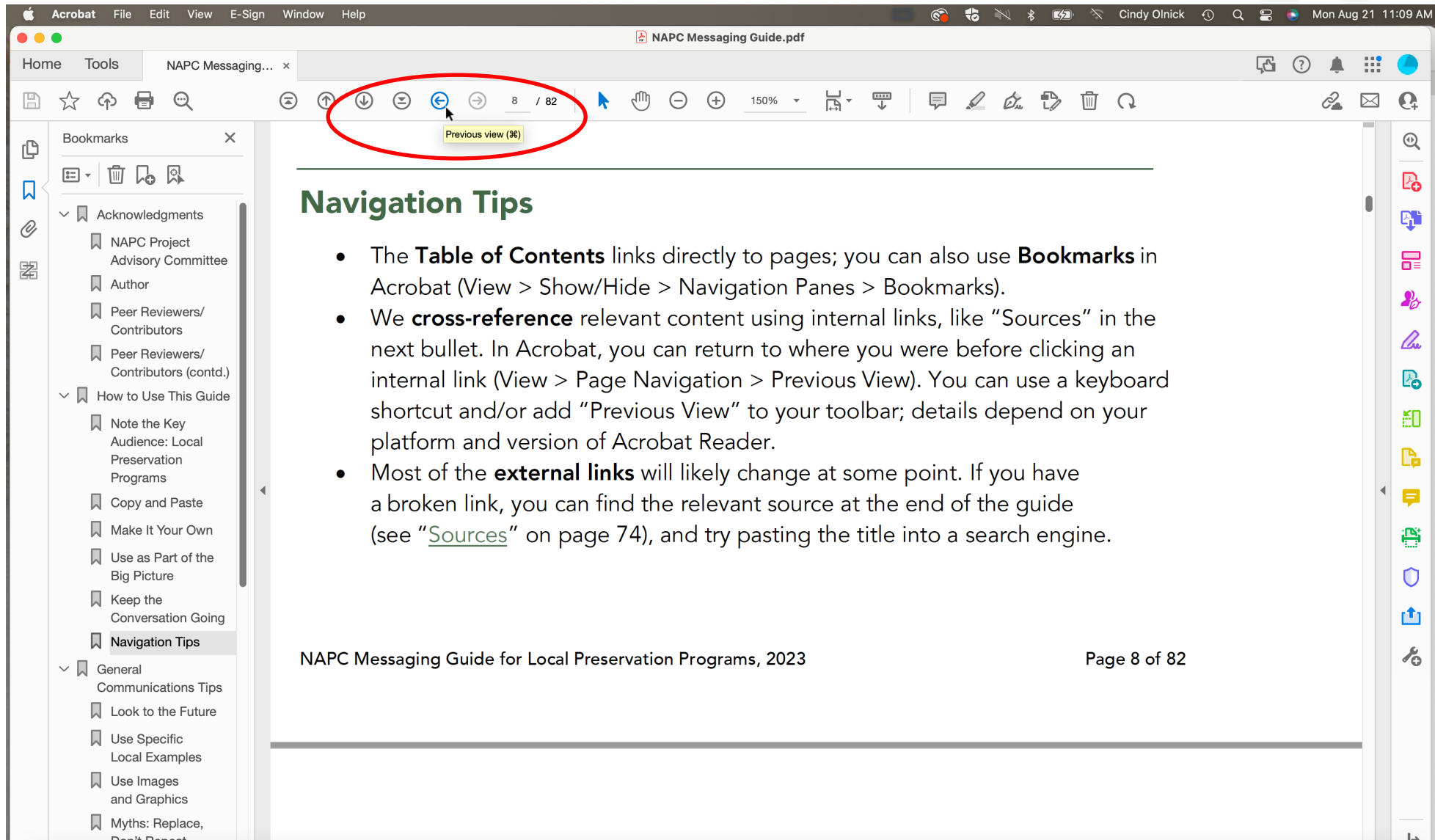
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# NAVIGATION TIPS (IN ACROBAT)



The screenshot shows the Adobe Acrobat Reader interface. The title bar indicates the document is 'NAPC Messaging Guide.pdf'. The toolbar at the top contains various navigation and editing tools. A red circle highlights the 'Previous View' button, which is represented by a blue left-pointing arrow. A tooltip above the button reads 'Previous view (#8)'. The left sidebar shows a 'Bookmarks' pane with a list of sections, including 'Acknowledgments', 'How to Use This Guide', and 'Navigation Tips'. The main content area displays the 'Navigation Tips' section, which includes a bulleted list of advice. The footer of the document reads 'NAPC Messaging Guide for Local Preservation Programs, 2023' and 'Page 8 of 82'.

## Navigation Tips

- The **Table of Contents** links directly to pages; you can also use **Bookmarks** in Acrobat (View > Show/Hide > Navigation Panes > Bookmarks).
- We **cross-reference** relevant content using internal links, like “Sources” in the next bullet. In Acrobat, you can return to where you were before clicking an internal link (View > Page Navigation > Previous View). You can use a keyboard shortcut and/or add “Previous View” to your toolbar; details depend on your platform and version of Acrobat Reader.
- Most of the **external links** will likely change at some point. If you have a broken link, you can find the relevant source at the end of the guide (see “[Sources](#)” on page 74), and try pasting the title into a search engine.

NAPC Messaging Guide for Local Preservation Programs, 2023 Page 8 of 82

“Previous View”  
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# NAVIGATION TIPS (IN ADOBE ADOBE ADOBE)

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## Navigation Tips

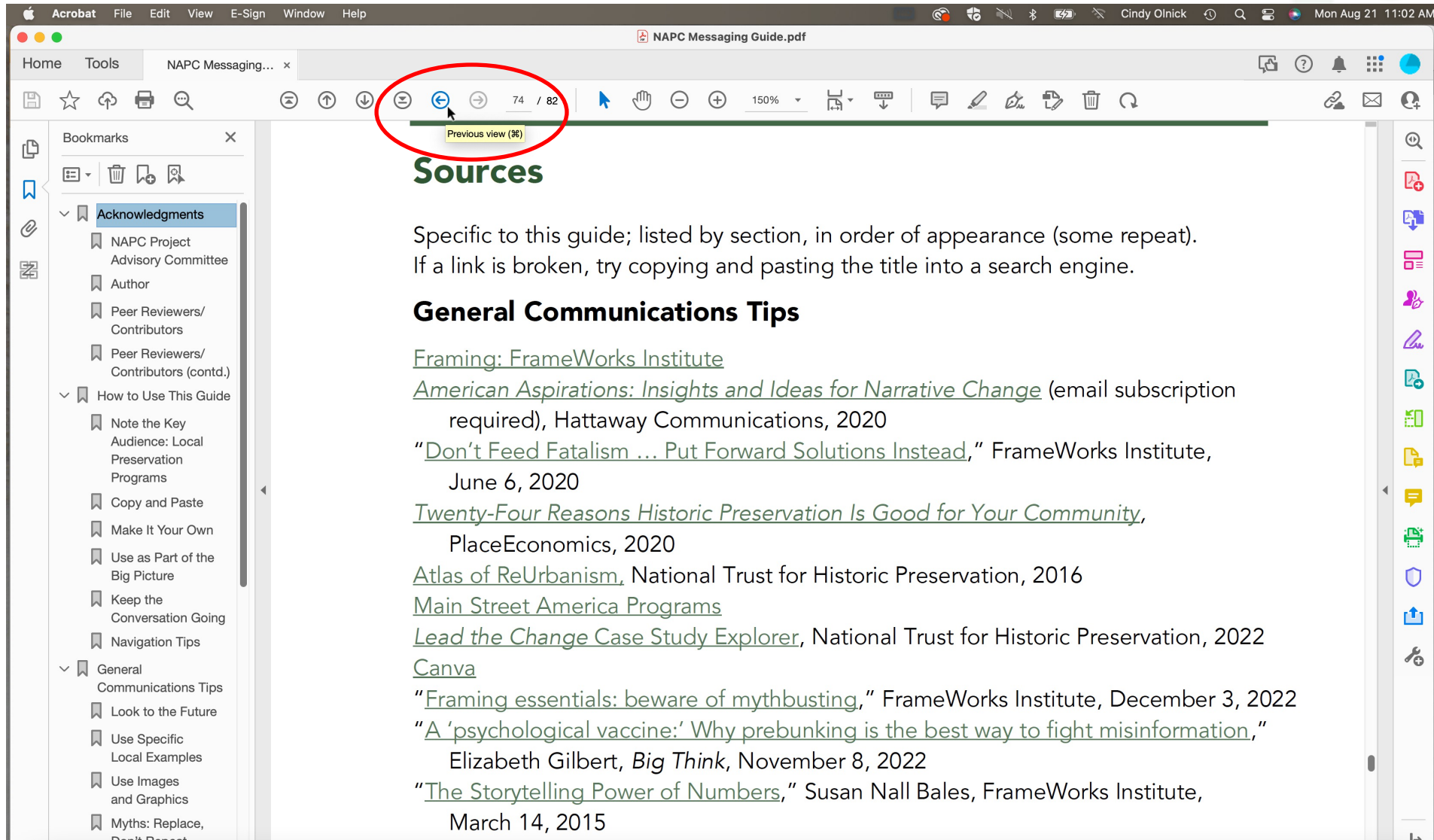
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NAPC Messaging Guide for Local Preservation Programs, 2023 Page 8 of 82

Cross  
references  
(internal links)



# NAVIGATION TIPS (IN ACROBAT)



The screenshot shows the Adobe Acrobat interface with a PDF document titled "NAPC Messaging Guide.pdf" open. The navigation toolbar at the top contains several icons, with the "Previous view" icon (a left-pointing arrow) circled in red. Below the toolbar, the document content is visible, starting with the heading "Sources" and followed by a list of references. The left sidebar shows a table of contents with "Navigation Tips" selected.

**Sources**

Specific to this guide; listed by section, in order of appearance (some repeat).  
If a link is broken, try copying and pasting the title into a search engine.

**General Communications Tips**

Framing: FrameWorks Institute  
American Aspirations: Insights and Ideas for Narrative Change (email subscription required), Hattaway Communications, 2020  
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Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation Is Good for Your Community, PlaceEconomics, 2020  
Atlas of ReUrbanism, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2016  
Main Street America Programs  
Lead the Change Case Study Explorer, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2022  
Canva  
"Framing essentials: beware of mythbusting," FrameWorks Institute, December 3, 2022  
"A 'psychological vaccine:' Why prebunking is the best way to fight misinformation," Elizabeth Gilbert, *Big Think*, November 8, 2022  
"The Storytelling Power of Numbers," Susan Nall Bales, FrameWorks Institute, March 14, 2015

"Previous View"  
takes you back



# TAKEAWAYS

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- **Messaging affects virtually every aspect of your work. It's a long game, so start where you are and keep at it. You can do this!**
- **Convey your relevance by connecting your work to pressing issues in your community (and other local departments/processes).**
- **The Messaging Guide isn't a quick fix but can help you have more productive conversations, demystify the process, and position your work as the positive, collaborative effort that it is.**
- **Let us know how it works, and use NAPC-L for peer support ([napcommissions.org/napcl](http://napcommissions.org/napcl)).**



# PUTTING THE GUIDE TO WORK: LET'S GO

Go for it!

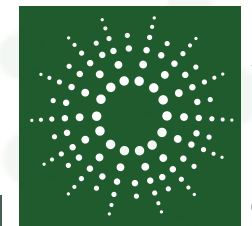
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