



The Translating Community History project aims to use creative archival practices to highlight the significance of East Austin neighborhoods. Open Chair and The Projecto, with support from the City of Austin Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service, collaborated to create portraits and collect stories that celebrate the cultural and built heritage of these storied Black and Brown communities. Find more information at [www.austintexas.gov/page/current-projects](http://www.austintexas.gov/page/current-projects) and submit your story at [theopenchair.co](http://theopenchair.co).

This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.



OPEN CHAIR

## EQUITY-BASED HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

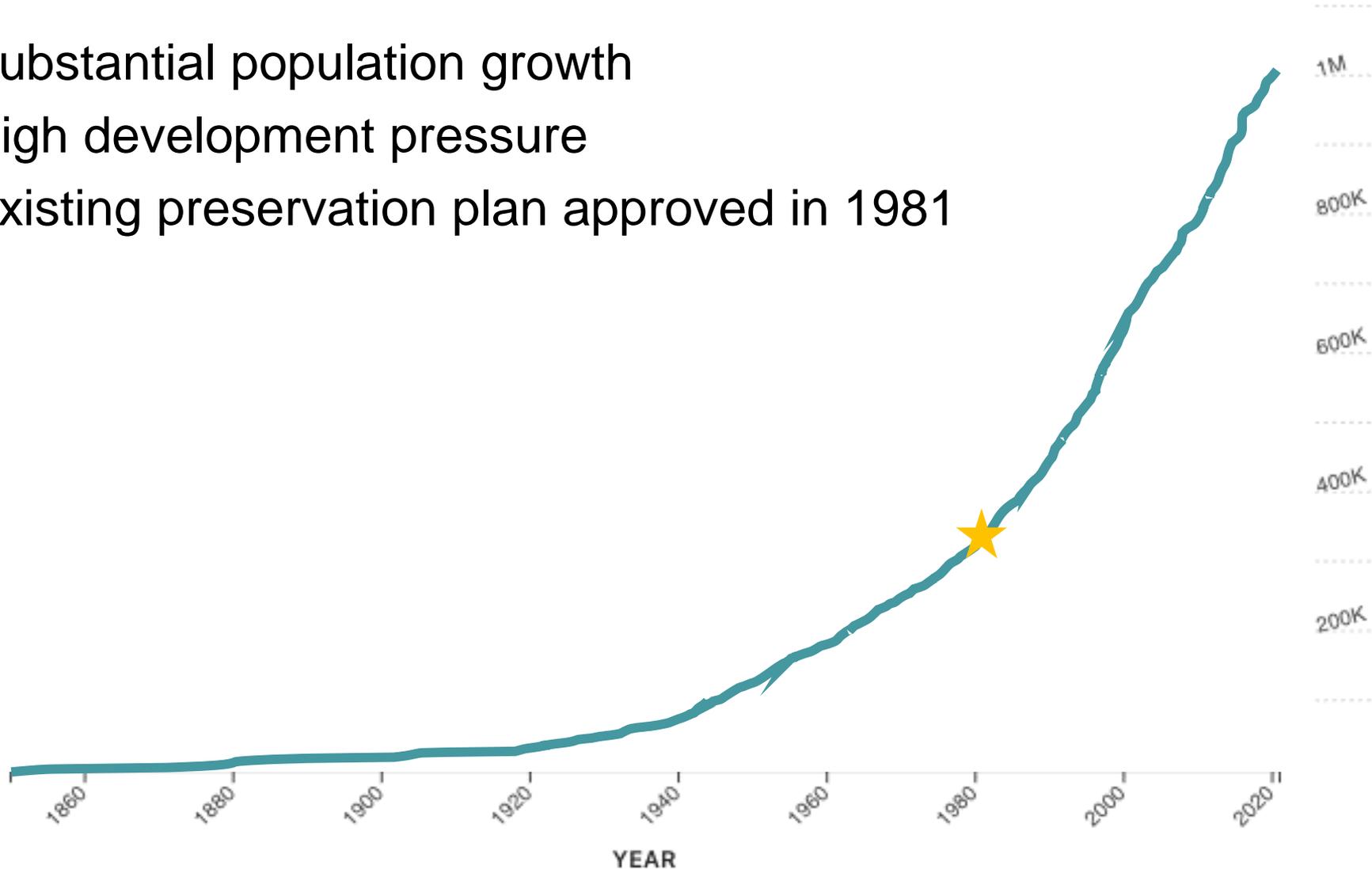
### Briefing to Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission—March 15, 2022

# GOAL

Replace Austin's 1981 preservation plan with an inclusive, equity-focused, and community-oriented process and outcome

# WHY NOW?

- Substantial population growth
- High development pressure
- Existing preservation plan approved in 1981



# WHY NOW?



# EQUITY + COMMUNITY

- How can we better recognize, preserve, and share important places and stories?
- How can preservation policies and tools address essential issues like sustainability, affordability, and displacement?
- How can citizens co-create preservation policies?



# EQUITY + COMMUNITY

The Latino Collection and Resource Center, in partnership with the Westside Preservation Alliance and the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, presents:

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS A SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 @ 6:30PM

This panel discussion will consider the role of historic preservation in the broader context of civil rights and social justice, how we can increase equity in historic preservation, how we can engage our communities in historic preservation to save our neighborhoods, and current challenges to inclusion in preservation policy, education, and recruitment at local and national levels.

Central Library  
Latino Collection & Resource Center  
600 Soledad St. 78205



Sarah Zenaida Gould, Ph.D.  
Director, Museo del Westside



Graciela I. Sanchez  
Executive Director, Esperanza Peace & Justice Center



Fred L. McGhee, Ph.D.  
President, Montopolis CDC

## ISSUES IN PRESERVATION POLICY

— Preservation and Social Inclusion —  
Preservation's Reckoning —  
Examining Questions of Exclusion —  
Shifting Policy Toward Inclusion —  
Challenging and Redefining Narratives —  
Connecting to Community Development —  
— Edited by Erica Avrami

## CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT FOR LGBTQ HISTORY IN SAN FRANCISCO

Donna J. Graves & Shayne E. Watson



# AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ACTION FUND

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Presented by OHP's Vacant Building Program

## HEIRS PROPERTY:

How Owners of Inherited Homesteads Can Find Help in San Antonio

Tuesday, August 3, 2021  
6:00 - 7:00 pm CDT



Planning for the future can support the growth of generational wealth for families



Images (clockwise from top): Westside Preservation Alliance/Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, Columbia University, City and County of San Francisco, Calle 24 Latino Cultural District, National Trust for Historic Preservation, San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation

# HISTORY MATTERS

## Root causes and current-day inequities

### GENOCIDE AND COLONIZATION OF NATIVE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Multiple genocides were committed on the native people of Central Texas. Natives were hunted, detained, converted, and colonized in successive waves of white, Mexican, and other occupations. Amongst the violence, Natives were racialized in a way that slated them for extermination and denied them the most basic notion of human agency. Ethnic cleansing as a strategy, sometimes explicit—sometimes implicit—was thoroughly employed.

### ISOLATION OF MEXICAN AMERICANS, SEIZURE OF PROPERTY, AND LYNCHING

Following the Mexican-American War, those of Mexican descent were isolated within the Republic of Texas and later the State of Texas. Only white men were allowed to vote and have representation in government. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexican citizens in Texas were allowed to retain Mexican citizenship or become U.S. citizens. Those who held property and personal wealth after the Mexican-American War often lost it due to questionable land sales and lawsuits. White Texans were almost as likely to lynch Mexican American men as they were to lynch African Americans.

Austin's long history of systemic racism led to disparities in housing, transportation, health, education, and economic outcomes. Many of the racial inequities that exist today are a direct result of past and current laws, ordinances, and city planning.

### DISPLACEMENT OF FREEDOM COLONIES

Communities such as Clarksville, Wheatville, Kincheonville, Masontown, and Gregorytown were established by formerly enslaved people after the Civil War and interspersed throughout the city and its outskirts. To enforce racial segregation and the relocation of Black families to East Austin, the City denied them the public services enjoyed by surrounding neighborhoods such as paved streets, sidewalks, street lighting, sewers, and flood control measures. Clarksville's streets were not paved until the 1970s. Meanwhile, racist local policies and discriminatory banking practices made it difficult for residents to maintain or improve their homes.



1848

1854

1870s

### ENSLAVEMENT AND COLONIZATION OF AFRICAN PEOPLE

Exploitation of the labor of enslaved African people was part of Texas's original colonization under Spanish rule. Despite being outlawed under Mexican rule following independence from Spain, Stephen F. Austin and many white settlers actively worked to guarantee their right to hold slaves. Slavery was legal in the Republic of Texas and free Black people were banished. The enslavement of Black people continued when Texas joined the United States and, later, the Confederate States of America. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation legally ended slavery, white plantation owners refused to release their enslaved workers until Federal troops were sent to Texas two years later. Discrimination and violence by white people against Black people continued for many decades in the Jim Crow South.

*"No Peon [Mexican American] remains in the city, who is not vouched for by respectable citizens. It should be the duty of every citizen to aid in preserving the present state of things."*

- State Gazette

### VIGILANTE TARGETING AND REMOVAL OF MEXICAN AMERICANS

Many white Austinites saw Mexican Americans as a transient class that instilled "false notions of freedom" in enslaved people, even though Mexican Americans as a group were long-established in the area. A vigilante committee led by the mayor and other prominent citizens worked to forcibly remove all Mexican Americans from Travis County unless vouched for by whites. They drove out about twenty families. The few Mexican Americans who remained in Travis County—only 20 people in 1860—were given a curfew. The local Mexican American population remained low throughout the Civil War, although records indicate that Mexican Americans fought on both sides of the war. Most Mexican Americans did not return to Travis County until the mid-1870s.

### EARLY CHINESE IMMIGRANTS WERE PROHIBITED FROM OWNING PROPERTY

Discriminatory laws denied Chinese immigrants (who were prohibited from citizenship under federal law) the right to own property in Austin. The spouses of these immigrants could be stripped of their U.S. citizenship and its benefits.



# HISTORY MATTERS

Percent Poverty by Census Tract, Austin MSA, 2010-2014, ACS 5-Year Data

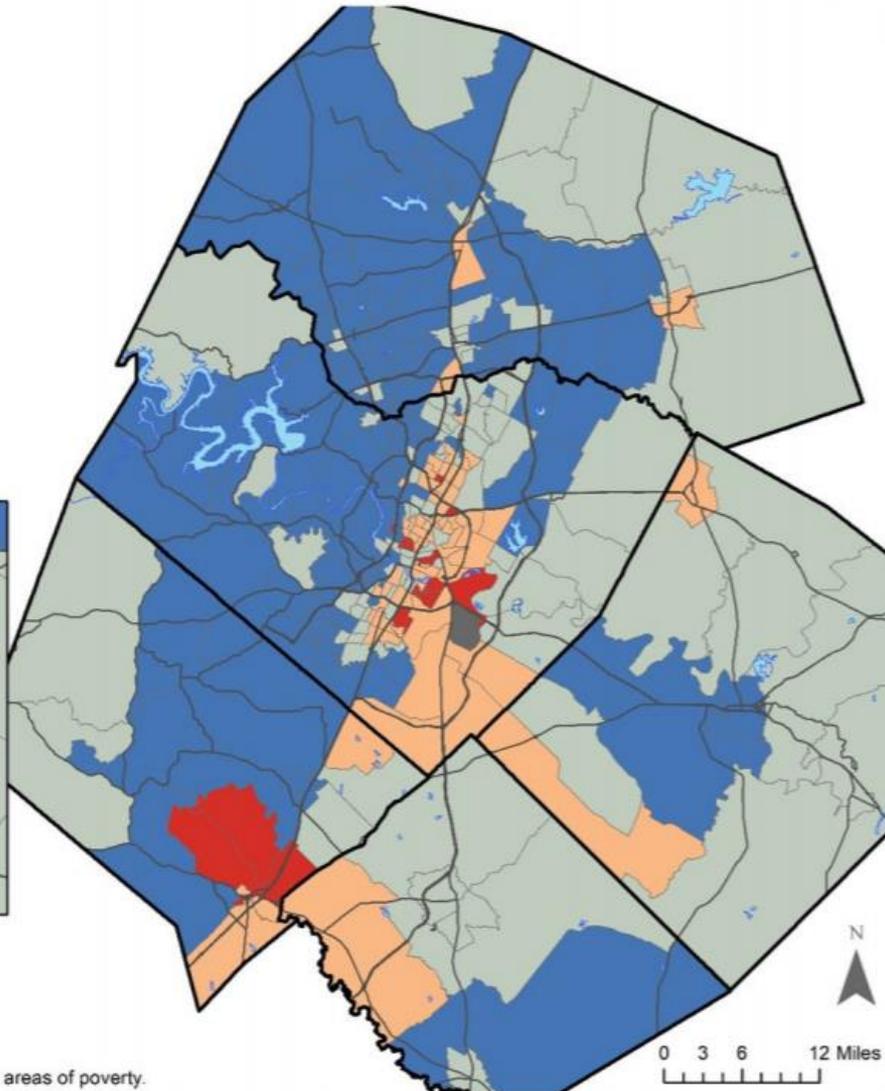
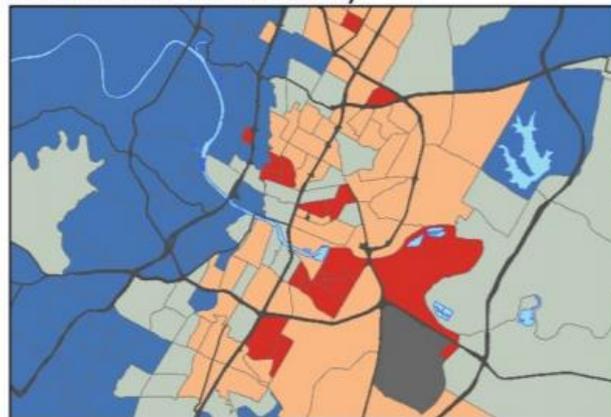
**Legend**

- County
- Highways
- Water
- Airport

**Percent Poverty  
by Census Tract**

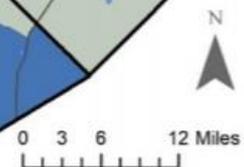
- Less than 10%
- 10% to 20%
- 20% to 40%
- Over 40%

**Inset: Central Travis County**

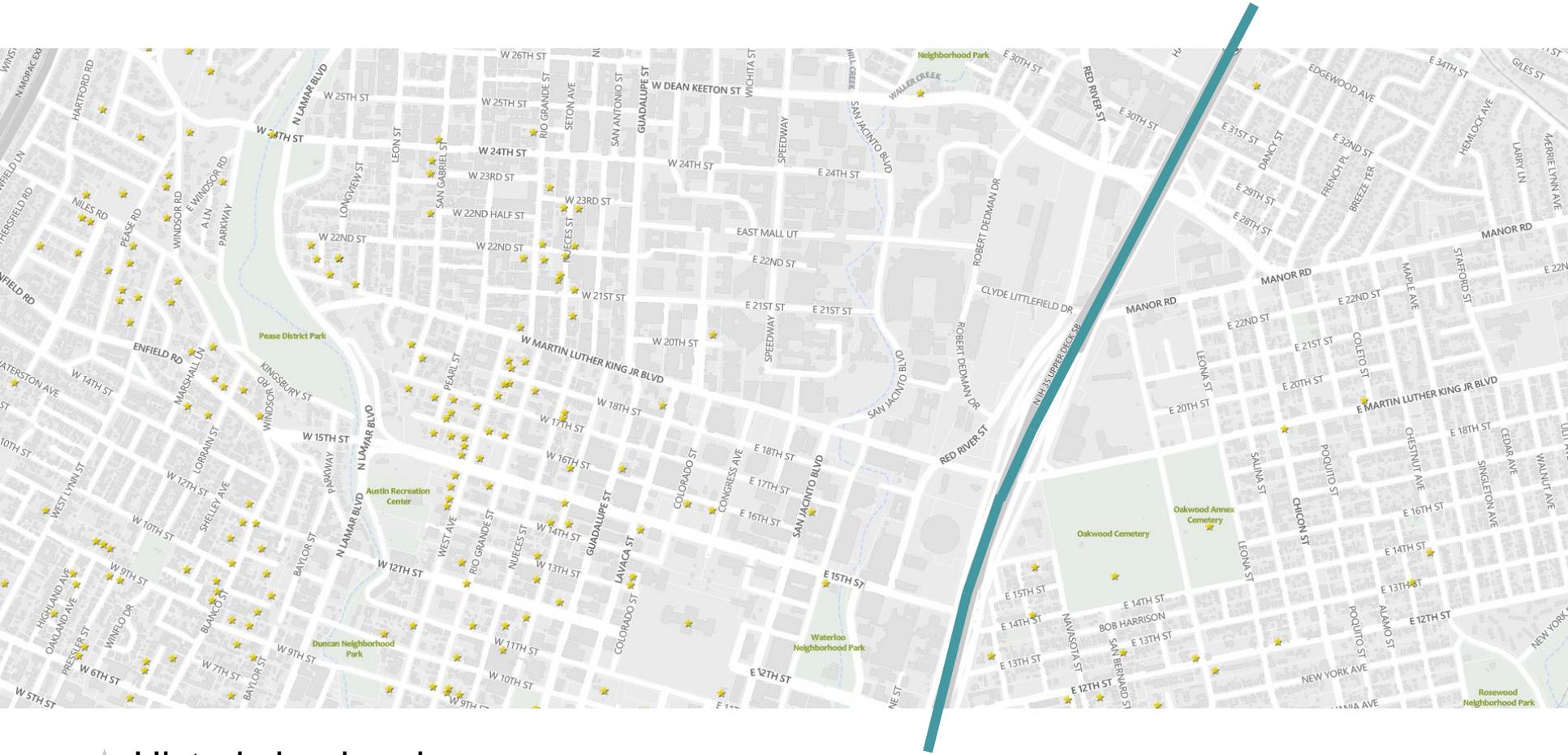


 Community Advancement Network

Map produced by CAN from U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year, 2010-2014, American Community Survey data. (Table C17002: Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in Past 12 Months)  
Census tracts with high student populations tend to correlate with high areas of poverty.

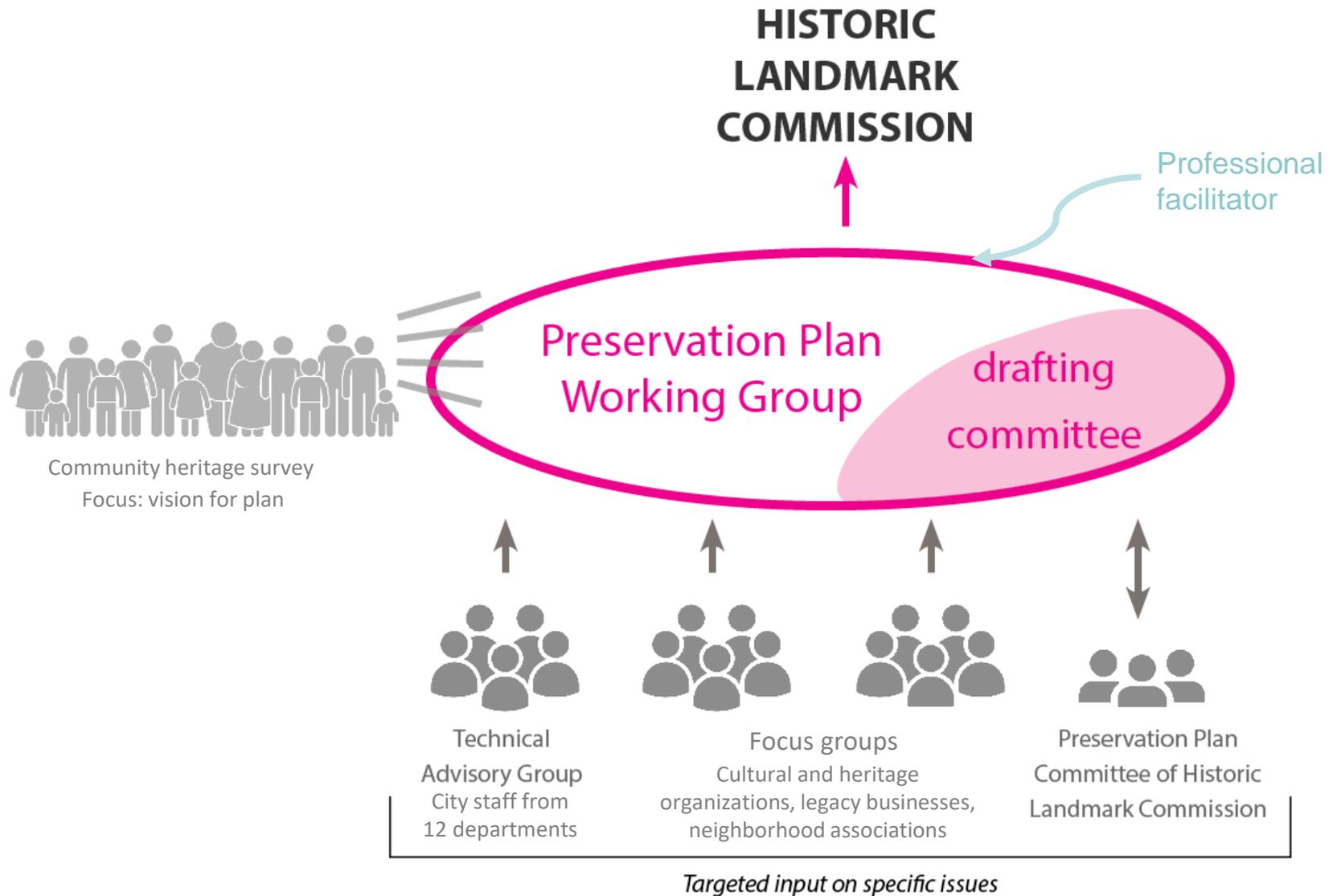


# HISTORY MATTERS



★ Historic landmark

# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS



# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

Preservation Plan Working Group

Recruitment through community partners

\$25/hour compensation available

Laptop and wifi hotspot loans available

# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

Preservation Plan Working Group

150 applicants

Multipronged selection process

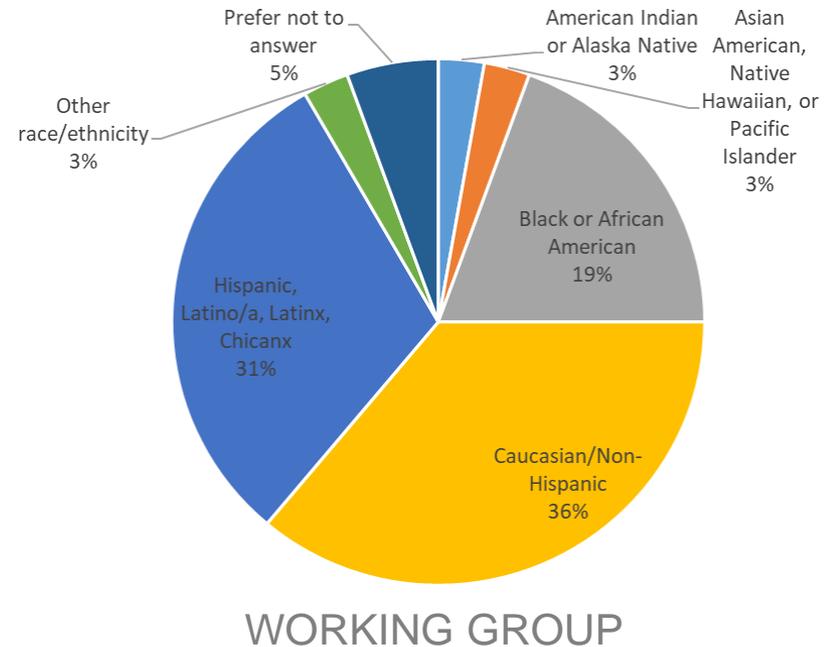
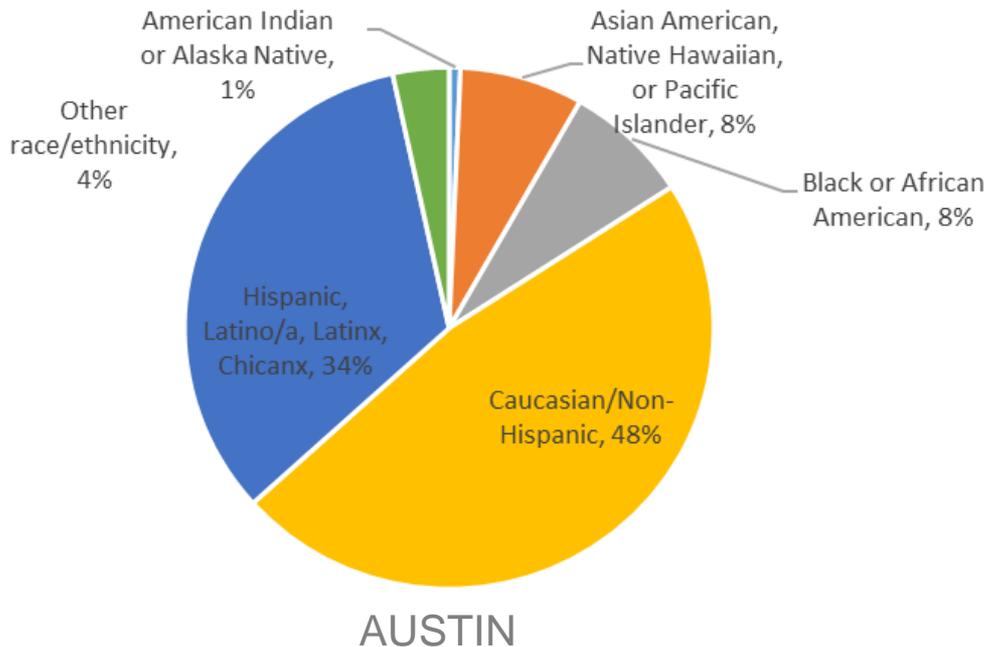
- Short answers
- Stakeholder representation
- Lived experience + geographic diversity

# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

29 community members

22 ZIP codes

17 members opting into compensation



# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

- ✓ Affordable housing advocate
- ✓ Archaeologist
- ✓ Architect
- ✓ Attorney
- ✓ Business owner
- ✓ City board or commission
- ✓ Community member
- ✓ Contractor
- ✓ Developer
- ✓ Economic development organization
- ✓ Educational institution
- ✓ Engineer
- ✓ Heritage organization
- ✓ Heritage tourism professional
- ✓ Historic property owner
- ✓ Historical commission (City, County, State)
- ✓ Landscape architect
- ✓ Neighborhood association
- ✓ Preservation organization
- ✓ Preservation consultant
- ✓ Religious institution
- ✓ Social justice organization
- ✓ Urban planner/planning organization

# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

## What does preservation do?

BRIEF #1 FOR PRESERVATION PLAN WORKING GROUP | JULY 2021

### Identify historic resources

Important historic properties are identified proactively through surveys or citizen curiosity...



...Or reactively through a demolition application, where staff uncover important information about the resource during routine permit review.



### Preserve historic resources

Preservation of important resources happens through historic designation. Historic designation at the local level can be initiated by the property owner, community members (for historic districts), or the Historic Landmark Commission. Historic resources can also be designated at the state and federal levels, with different levels of protection.

		
<b>Local</b> 644 historic landmarks 8 historic districts	<b>State</b> 201 resources	<b>National Register</b> 173 individual 18 districts
 Binding City review	 Advisory City review of major projects	

Visit the [Historic Property Viewer](#) to see historic landmarks, historic districts, and National Register districts.

Historic preservation recognizes and safeguards significant places—and can play an important role in shaping the future. Preservation in Austin includes many activities; this overview focuses on the City's Historic Preservation Office and Historic Landmark Commission.

### Steward historic resources

City staff work with property owners to ensure that changes to historic resources meet occupant needs while retaining the property's important historic features. Read the [Historic Design Standards](#) used to evaluate most projects.

Small changes can be approved administratively by staff. The Historic Landmark Commission reviews larger and/or more visible changes. Repair, maintenance, and interior changes do not require historic review.



**Local** Property tax incentives  
**State and National Register** Historic tax credits



**Local** Code citations, legal action (exceedingly rare)  
**State and National Register** legal action (for State resources, exceedingly rare)

### Outreach and engagement

Most community members find out about nearby historic projects and potential historic resources via mailed notifications of Historic Landmark Commission hearings. These mailings are required by City Code. [Historic resource surveys](#) are a way to learn more about the history of certain areas. Typically conducted by consultants, the survey process includes large public meetings and other opportunities for input.

Historic district applications require extensive outreach and engagement by community applicant teams. City staff supports these efforts.

*Other recent engagement*

- [Translating Community History project](#)
- [Imagine Austin speaker event](#)
- Hands-on wood window repair workshop
- Citizen working groups for the Heritage Grant and the Historic Design Standards

Icons from the Noun Project: Person with tablet by Irene Hoffman, buildings by Laurent Genereux, wrecking ball by Pham Duy Phuong Hung, armadillo by Amanda Sebastiani, Texas by Alexander Skowlosky, United States by Ted Grajeda, hammer by David Khai, carrot by CHARIE Tristram, lightsaber by Vectors Market



# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

## Who does historic preservation?

COMMUNITY



**Community members**  
*Residents, memory-keepers, advocates for local heritage*



**Property owners**  
**Business owners**  
*Stewards of buildings and culture*

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

Preservation Austin  
Neighborhood organizations  
Preservation Texas  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Preservation Action



OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Cultural organizations  
Heritage organizations  
Museums  
Friends of groups  
Heritage trails



GOVERNMENT

**National Park Service**  
*Maintains National Register of Historic Places*  
*Provide guidance on Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*

**Travis County Historical Commission**  
*Identifies, researches, and recognizes historic sites and buildings*  
*Also a Certified Local Government*

gives authority to



**Texas Historical Commission**  
*Runs Certified Local Government program*  
*Facilitates National Register listing*

empowers



**City of Austin**  
**DEPARTMENTS**  
*Historic Preservation Office: manages historic designation process, reviews minor changes to historic properties, runs incentive programs, administers historic resource surveys, staffs Historic Landmark Commission*  
*Parks and Recreation Department: maintains City-owned historic properties*  
*Economic Development Department: administers heritage tourism grants*



**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
*Recommends historic zoning to City Council*  
*Reviews major changes to historic properties*  
*Reviews heritage grant applications and tax exemption applications*  
*Makes policy recommendations to City Council*

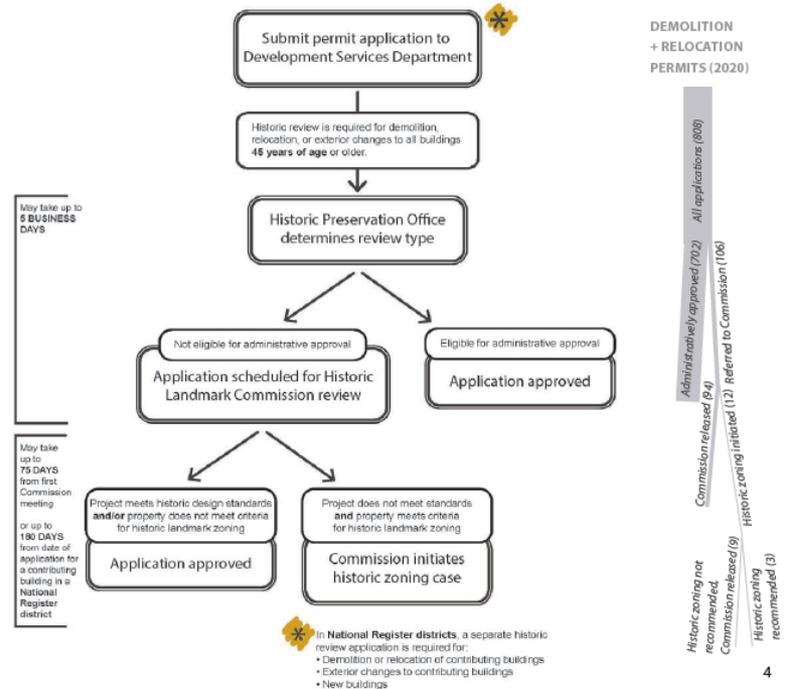
# Historic review

## Historic-age properties

Historic Preservation Office staff review demolitions, relocations, and exterior changes to historic-age properties (45+ years old). Staff approve 87% of these applications administratively, and most people are not aware their project has gone through historic review.

Following the Land Development Code, staff refer some properties to the Historic Landmark Commission for review and potential designation:

- Properties that have not been changed substantially (retain integrity) and may meet two criteria for historic designation
- Properties that a historic resource survey has identified as eligible for landmark designation or contribute to a potential historic district
- All civic buildings, such as churches, educational facilities, and other institutions



# MEETING SCHEDULE – PHASE 1

## Essential Background and Process

July '21 Introduction and goals

Aug. Equity workshop

Sept. Decision-making

## Topics

Oct. Vision for the plan /  
Heritage in Austin

Nov. Tangible heritage

Dec. Intangible heritage

Feb. '22 Incentives

Mar. Processes and fees

Apr.

May

Enforcement and protection

Outreach, education,  
engagement

## Review and next steps

June

Review recommendations

June (2)

Final review, next steps

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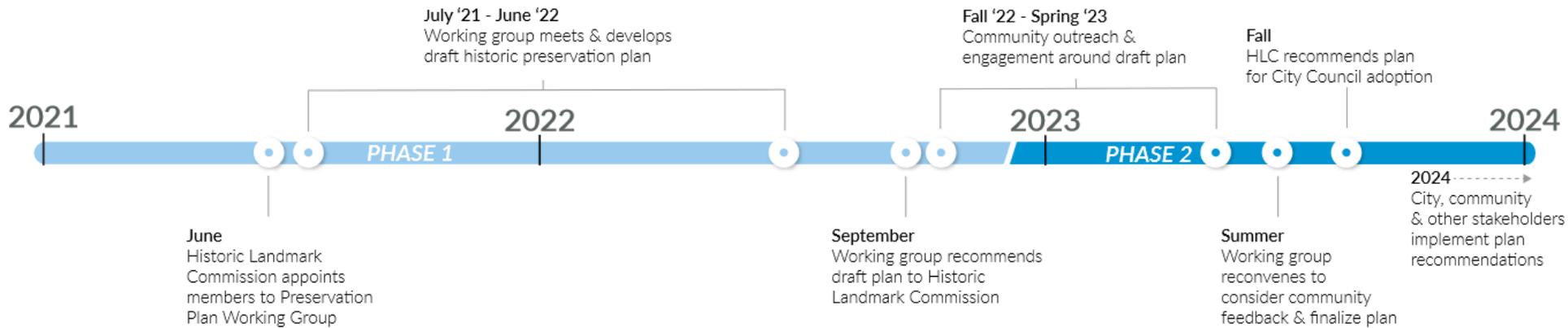
Community  
heritage  
survey



Focus group conversations:

- 1) Collect input for working group discussion
  - 2) Get feedback on draft recommendations
  - 3) Engage key stakeholder groups
- 

# PROCESS



# VISION

Historic preservation in Austin actively engages communities in protecting and sharing important places and stories. Preservation uses the past to create a shared sense of belonging and to shape an equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and economically vital future for all.

# EQUITY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

## Does the proposed recommendation...

Yes / No

1. Reinforce the plan's vision?

## If Yes, does the proposed recommendation...

-  
No /  
harms

0  
Neutral

+  
Yes /  
benefits

2. Respect community-based knowledge? Is it based on community-identified needs and input?

3. Increase equitable access to information about historic preservation and equip people to take action?  
Is it clear to people without previous preservation experience?

4. Recognize and honor the cultures, historic assets, traditions, and stories of historically underrepresented communities in meaningful ways?

5. Ground its reasoning and expected outcomes in good practices around equity, including racially disaggregated data?

6. Balance big-picture thinking with specific, actionable, measurable items that recognize and redress historical inequities, both isolated and systemic?

7. Improve access to preservation policies, programs, tools, and incentives for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income communities?

8. Avoid creating financial or other burdens for BIPOC communities and low-income people? If yes, are there opportunities to mitigate these impacts? Does it place responsibility on institutions to address historical disparities in historic preservation policies, programs, and tools?

9. Advance affordability, economic opportunities, and environmental sustainability for everyone, and especially for BIPOC communities? If not, are there opportunities to do so?

10. Engage and empower BIPOC communities to actively participate in implementation?

# bit.ly/ATXpresplan

## Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan



*La versión en español sigue a continuación.*

### Background

The equity-based historic preservation plan (phase 1, 2021–22) will replace Austin's 1981 preservation plan with an inclusive, equity-focused, and community-oriented process and outcome. A working group composed of historic preservation professionals, stakeholders from allied fields, and community representatives is tackling pressing questions: Whose heritage is represented in designated historic properties, and what stories are missing? Who benefits from preservation policies, programs, and incentives? How can historic preservation tools be expanded to address essential issues such as sustainability, affordability, and displacement?

Phase 1 will result in a draft historic preservation plan, including recommendations [Continue reading](#)

Provide input/Provea sus comentarios

News feed

Background/Antecedentes

CLOSED: This survey has concluded.

### SMALL GROUP APPLICATION

[Solicitud en español](#)

Thank you for your interest in participating in small group conversations to inform the equity-based historic preservation plan! Three small groups will provide targeted input on recommendations for the plan. Each group will meet 2-3 times between November 2021 and June 2022, with participation expected to take about 10 hours total. Meetings will be held remotely until guidance from Austin Public Health allows for in-person meetings

### Documents/Documentos

Meeting 1- July 29, 2021

Meeting 2 - August 30, 2021

Meeting 3 - September 23, 2021

Meeting 4 – October 14, 2021

Meeting 5 - November 18, 2021

Meeting 6 – December 9, 2021

Meeting 7 – February 10, 2022

Agenda (148 KB) (pdf)

Brief (11.8 MB) (pdf)

Presentation (683 KB) (pdf)

Meeting Summary (159 KB) (pdf)



THANK YOU

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