



# EQUITY-BASED PRESERVATION PLAN

Historic Landmark Commission briefing—September 7, 2022

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# PRESERVATION PLAN WORKING GROUP

**12** months

**22** working group and drafting committee meetings

**1,100** hours

# GOAL

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



Images: Open Chair / City of Austin (left and center), Preservation and Social Inclusion (right)

# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

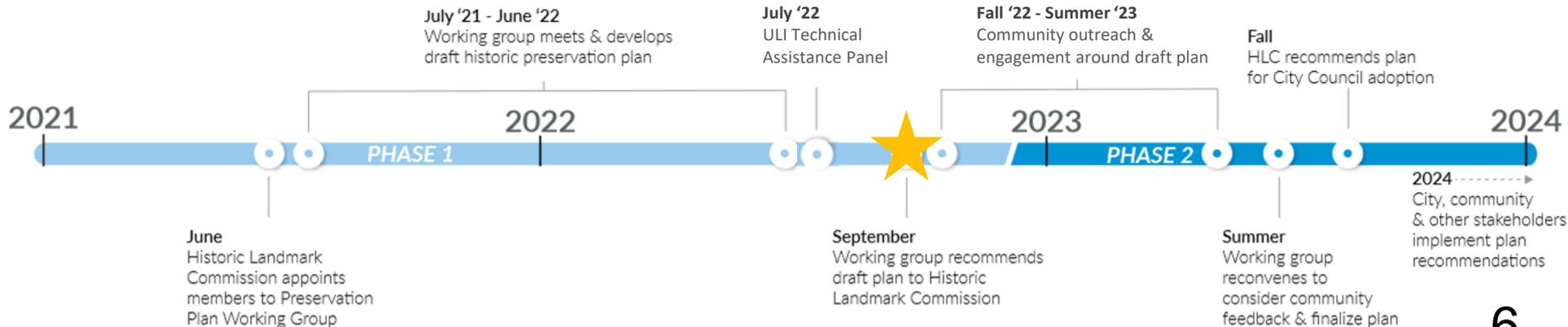
## Equity-based preservation plan

WHAT	<u>Draft plan</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vision</li><li>• Draft recommendations</li></ul>	<u>Engage community</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refine/expand framework</li><li>• Timeline and metrics</li><li>• Partners</li></ul>
ENGAGEMENT	Preservation Plan Working Group, with targeted input	Grounded in broad, inclusive community engagement
WHEN	2021-22	2022-23
GOAL	Draft framework	Plan adoption

# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

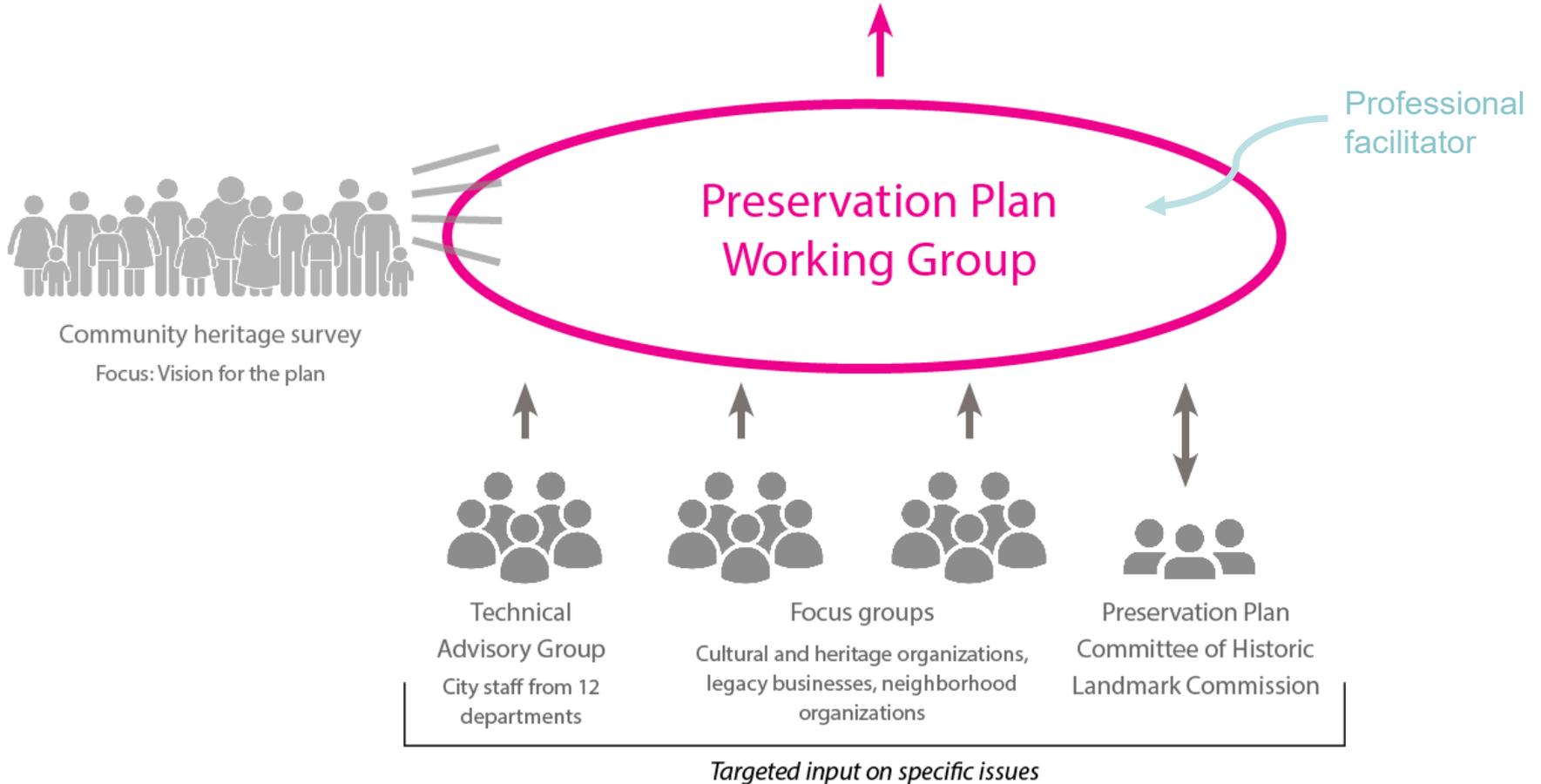
## Equity-based preservation plan

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# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

**HISTORIC  
LANDMARK  
COMMISSION**



# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS



# COMMUNITY-BASED PROCESS

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

# What does preservation do?

**Identify historic resources**  
 Identify historic resources on the ground through historic research and fieldwork.

**Preserve historic resources**  
 Preserve historic resources through historic preservation laws, regulations, and programs.

**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**  
 Steward historic resources through historic preservation laws, regulations, and programs.



# Root causes and current-day inequities

**DEVELOPING HISTORIC RESOURCES AND AN ADVANTAGE**  
 The City of Austin established the Historic Landmark Commission in 1974. Limited resources, the Commission's preservation of architecturally grand buildings and the homes of wealthy citizens, typically white men.



**1966 NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT**  
 The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was signed into law in 1966. It established the National Historic Landmarks Program and the National Historic Register.

**1971 CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSING**  
 The construction of housing in Austin during the 1970s was heavily influenced by the NHPA and the Historic Landmark Commission.

**1974 AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHES THE HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
 The Austin City Council established the Historic Landmark Commission in 1974. The Commission's mandate was to identify and preserve historic resources in Austin.

# Heritage in Austin

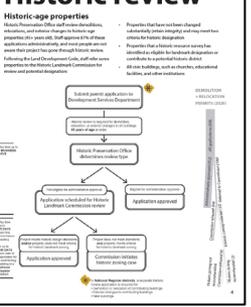
**What's historic?**  
 Historic resources in Austin include historic buildings, streets, and landscapes. The City's Historic Preservation Office and Historic Landmark Commission work to identify and preserve these resources.



# Who does historic preservation?



# Historic review

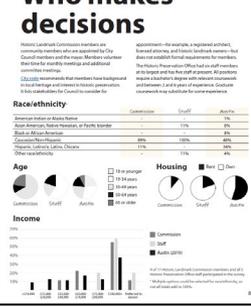


# Legal framework

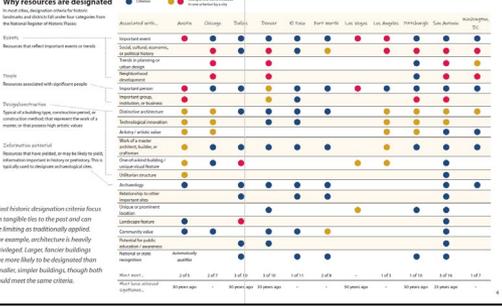
**Increased power for non-supportive property owners**  
 The City of Austin has increased its power to regulate historic resources through various laws and regulations. This includes the Historic Landmark Commission and the Historic Landmark Ordinance.

**Other legal changes**  
 Other legal changes include the Historic Landmark Ordinance and the Historic Landmark Commission's authority to regulate historic resources.

# Who makes decisions



# Why resources are designed



# Integrity

**What is integrity, and why does it matter?**  
 Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. It is essential for historic preservation because it ensures that historic resources are preserved in their original form and context.

**Challenges around integrity**  
 Challenges around integrity include the loss of historic resources, the impact of modern development, and the need for better preservation practices.



# Cultural heritage

**What's included?**  
 Cultural heritage includes the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities, groups, and individuals recognize as a part of their cultural heritage. It is sometimes called living heritage.

**How preservation relates**  
 Preservation relates to cultural heritage by ensuring that historic resources are preserved in their original form and context. This includes the preservation of historic buildings, streets, and landscapes.



# Incentives



**Tax Incentives**  
 Tax incentives include the Federal Historic Tax Credit and the State Historic Tax Credit. These incentives encourage the preservation of historic resources by providing tax breaks for property owners.

**Grants**  
 Grants include the National Historic Preservation Act grants and the State Historic Preservation Act grants. These grants provide financial support for historic preservation projects.

**Loans**  
 Loans include the National Historic Preservation Act loans and the State Historic Preservation Act loans. These loans provide financial support for historic preservation projects.

# Processes and Fees



**Historic review aims to help property owners steward their buildings.**  
 A new checklist, including Austin's review changes to non-designated older buildings, to assess designation eligibility.

**How historic review works**  
 The following charts illustrate Austin's process, with processes from comparable cities noted in blue.

**48%** of all historic applications are approved by the Commission.

**51%** of all historic applications are approved by the Commission.

**1%** of all historic applications are approved by the Commission.

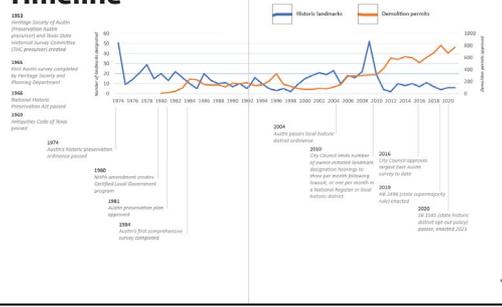
# Outreach, engagement + education



**Effective outreach, education, and engagement involves diverse partnerships that create space to share about local heritage, discuss why preservation matters, and empower people to act as stewards of place and people.**

**Types of outreach + engagement**  
 Types of outreach + engagement include public meetings, workshops, and educational programs. These activities help to raise awareness of historic resources and encourage community involvement in preservation efforts.

# Timeline



# What does preservation do?

**Identify historic resources**  
 Identify historic resources through research and fieldwork. This includes reviewing maps, photographs, and other historical documents to determine the location and significance of historic resources.

**Preserve historic resources**  
 Preserve historic resources through various means, including repair, restoration, and adaptive reuse. This ensures that historic resources are maintained and their significance is preserved for future generations.

**Steward historic resources**  
 Steward historic resources by ensuring their long-term protection and care. This involves monitoring the condition of historic resources and implementing measures to prevent deterioration or loss.

**Outreach and engagement**  
 Outreach and engagement are essential for building community support and awareness of historic preservation. This includes public meetings, tours, and educational programs.

# Root causes and current-day inequities

**Historical inequities**  
 Historical inequities, such as redlining and discriminatory housing practices, have led to the current-day inequities seen in historic preservation. These practices have resulted in the loss of historic resources in minority neighborhoods.

**Current-day inequities**  
 Current-day inequities in historic preservation include the over-reliance on private property owners and the lack of affordable housing options. This has resulted in the loss of historic resources in low-income neighborhoods.



# Heritage in Austin

**What's historic?**  
 Historic resources in Austin include historic buildings, streetscapes, and neighborhoods. These resources are valued for their architectural significance and their role in the city's history.

City Council District	Number of Historic Resources	Number of Historic Landmarks	Number of Historic Districts
1st	12	2	1
2nd	15	3	1
3rd	18	4	1
4th	20	5	1
5th	22	6	1
6th	25	7	1
7th	28	8	1
8th	30	9	1
9th	32	10	1
10th	35	11	1
11th	38	12	1
12th	40	13	1
13th	42	14	1
14th	45	15	1
15th	48	16	1
16th	50	17	1
17th	52	18	1
18th	55	19	1
19th	58	20	1
20th	60	21	1

- 170 responses to community heritage survey
- 19 community members in 3 focus groups
- City staff from 12 departments

# Who does historic preservation?



# Integrity

**What is integrity, and why does it matter?**  
 Integrity is the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. In historic preservation, integrity means that historic resources are preserved in their original form and location, without alterations that compromise their historical significance.

**Challenges around integrity**  
 Challenges around integrity include the loss of historic resources due to demolition and the over-reliance on private property owners. This can result in the loss of historic resources and the degradation of historic resources.

# What's included?



**Historic preservation relates to...**  
 Historic preservation relates to community development, economic development, and social justice. It is a key component of a sustainable and equitable city.

# Incentives

**Historic preservation in Austin actively engages communities in protecting and sharing important places and stories.**  
 Incentives are provided to encourage private property owners to preserve historic resources. These incentives include tax breaks, grants, and technical assistance.



# Processes and Fees

**Historic review aims to help property owners steward their buildings.**  
 The historic review process involves the review of historic resources and the issuance of historic preservation orders. This process ensures that historic resources are preserved and their significance is protected.



# Outreach, engagement + education



# COMMUNITY-BASED 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.

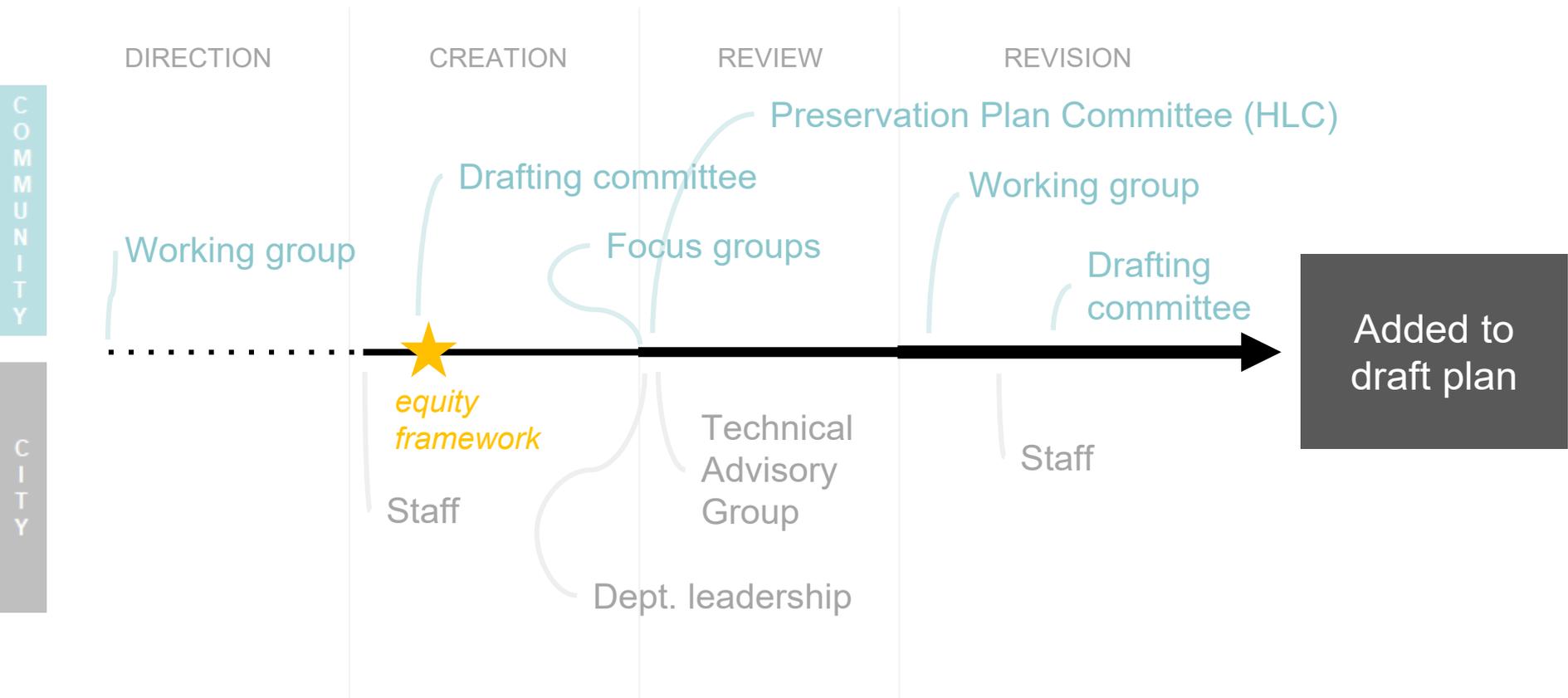
# CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

1. **Vision:** Does the plan offer a clear vision for historic preservation that can be used by stakeholders to communicate and collaborate? Do all recommendations support that vision?
2. **Process:** Has the process of developing the preservation plan been welcoming and accessible to community members with a range of viewpoints, regardless of previous preservation experience?
3. **Education:** Does the plan educate readers about the benefits of historic preservation and how preservation relates to key topics such as property rights, displacement, economic opportunities, and affordability? Does it equip community members, policymakers, and City staff to take action?
4. **Expansion:** Does the plan recognize historically underrepresented people, places, and stories? Does it expand what is considered historically significant?
5. **Effectiveness:** Are the plan's recommendations for policies, programs, and incentives grounded in good practices from around the U.S. and the world? Are they likely to result in the recognition, preservation, and/or interpretation of more historic resources?
6. **Practicality:** Does the plan balance big-picture thinking with specific, actionable, measurable recommendations that recognize legal constraints? Does the plan include a realistic strategy for regular updates?
7. **Accessibility:** Does the plan recommend ways to make historic preservation processes more accessible to community members, especially those who aren't familiar with the processes? Is the plan itself easy to understand?
8. **Equity:** Are the expected benefits of the plan's recommendations equitably distributed? Are negative impacts minimized, particularly for communities that have historically been disadvantaged by public policies?
9. **Connection:** Does the plan support affordability (as with tax incentives), economic opportunities, and environmental sustainability, particularly for historically underrepresented communities?
10. **Support:** Is the plan supported by working group members, policymakers, City departments, allied organizations, and community members?

# EQUITY 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 marginalized 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 communities of color and low-income communities?			
8. Avoid creating financial or other burdens for communities of color 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 communities of color? If not, are there opportunities to do so?			
10. Engage and empower historically marginalized communities to actively participate in implementation?			

# CREATING DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS





# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Goals

1. Tell Austin's full history
2. Recognize cultural heritage
3. Preserve archaeological resources
4. Stabilize communities
5. Support environmental sustainability

*What we preserve*

---

6. Engage and empower communities
7. Support people doing the work
8. Engage new partners

*Who preserves*

---

9. Proactively identify important places
10. Follow good designation practices
11. Support stewardship of community assets
12. Be strategic with review
13. Protect historic resources
14. Implement the plan collaboratively

*How we preserve*

---



# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

## What we preserve

1. Tell Austin's full history
2. Recognize cultural heritage
3. Preserve archaeological resources
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Goals



# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

## What we preserve

1

Tell Austin's full history



**Queer History Series**  
open call for storytellers

### 2 Recognize cultural heritage

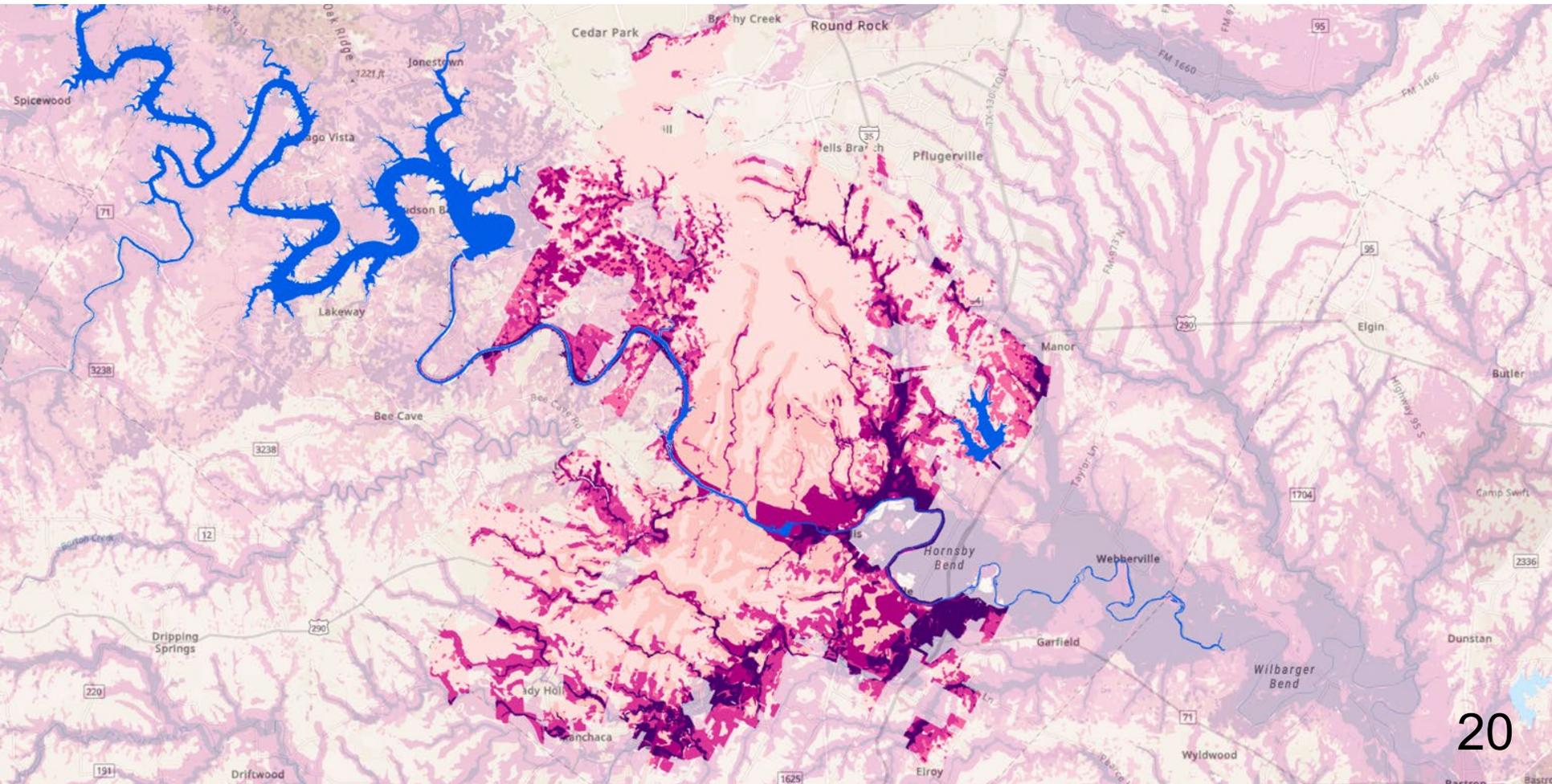
**Strongly support iconic longstanding legacy businesses that contribute to Austin's unique character and heritage.**

*Economic Development Department activities like the Legacy Business Relief Grant offer a strong baseline. Ensure that legacy businesses benefit from existing and new programs by providing coordinated marketing/promotion, technical assistance, and streamlined regulation for a wide variety of legacy businesses; offering dedicated need-based funding and tax relief; and creating a "legacy business" points category for funding opportunities. Conduct focused outreach to businesses owned by people of color about opportunities and work with them and other stakeholders to identify gaps.*

# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

# What we preserve

## 3 Preserve archaeological resources



# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

## What we preserve

### 4 Stabilize communities

- Retain more older buildings and encourage ADUs through flexible zoning and a streamlined development review process
- Support low- and moderate-income property owners, especially seniors and families who want to stay in an inherited property



Images: UT News (center), Public City (right)

# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

What we preserve

## 5 Support environmental sustainability





# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Who preserves

6. Engage and empower communities
7. Support people doing the work
8. Engage new partners



# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

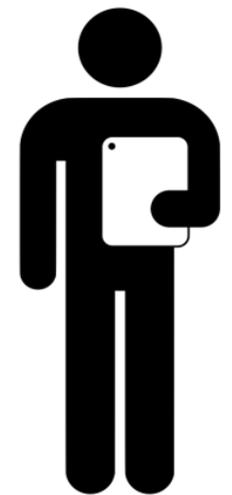
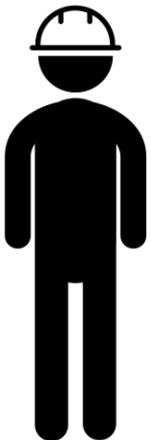
Who preserves

## 6 Engage and empower communities



### 7 Support people doing the work

- Highlight local craftspeople and career pathways
- Ensure that commissioners, community ambassadors, and City staff have access to regular trainings and resources
- Reduce participation barriers to City boards and commissions





# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Who preserves

8

Engage new partners

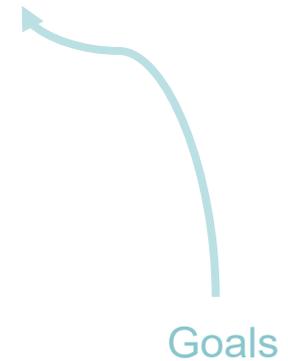




# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

How we preserve

9. Proactively identify important places
10. Follow good designation practices
11. Support stewardship of community assets
12. Be strategic with review
13. Protect historic resources
14. Implement the plan collaboratively



## 9

### Proactively identify important places



**Laura Esparza**, Interviewed by Gloria Espitia on October 18, 2012. Esparza was born in 1958 to one of the founding families of San Antonio. She studied community arts development and theater while in college in the Pacific Northwest and eventually moved to Austin to become the Division Manager that oversaw the MACC and several cultural facilities. While she was not intimately involved in the design

of the MACC facility, she evolved the dance rehearsal studio into the Black Box Theater, and developed the Latino Arts Residency Program.

Photo: Laura Esparza, *Todo Austin*, July 13, 2013

[Read Laura Esparza's oral history transcript.](#)

Listen to the full interview:



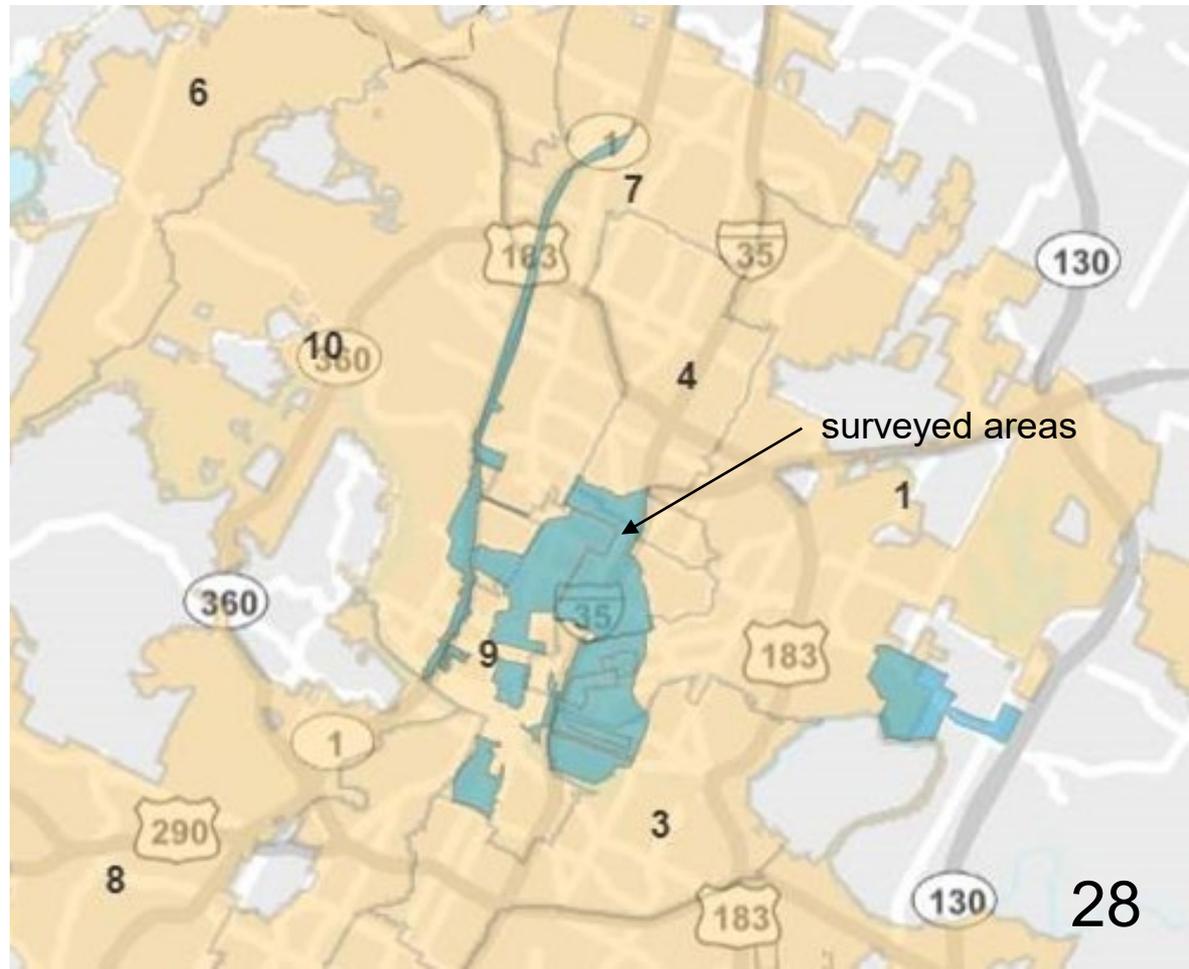
**Austin History Center**  
AHC\_3256\_Laura Esparza

1:24:51

▶ 72

Cookie policy

Image: Austin History Center (left)



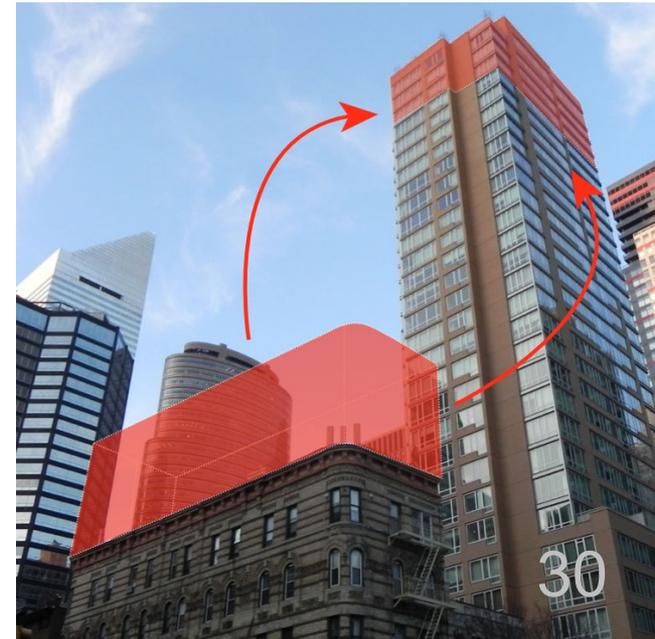
### 10 Follow good designation practices

- Keep the bar high for historic landmark designation--while creating better pathways to recognize properties that tell important stories but are not architecturally significant
- Reinforce historic preservation and displacement prevention goals with a time-limited incentive for newly designated historic landmarks and districts
- Allow scattered resources joined by a significant theme to be designated together



### 11 Support stewardship of community assets

- Provide people with clear information about preservation and rehabilitation when they need it
- Ensure preservation incentives support preservation and rehabilitation in an effective and equitable way
- Explore how a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program could support preservation of smaller-scale historic buildings

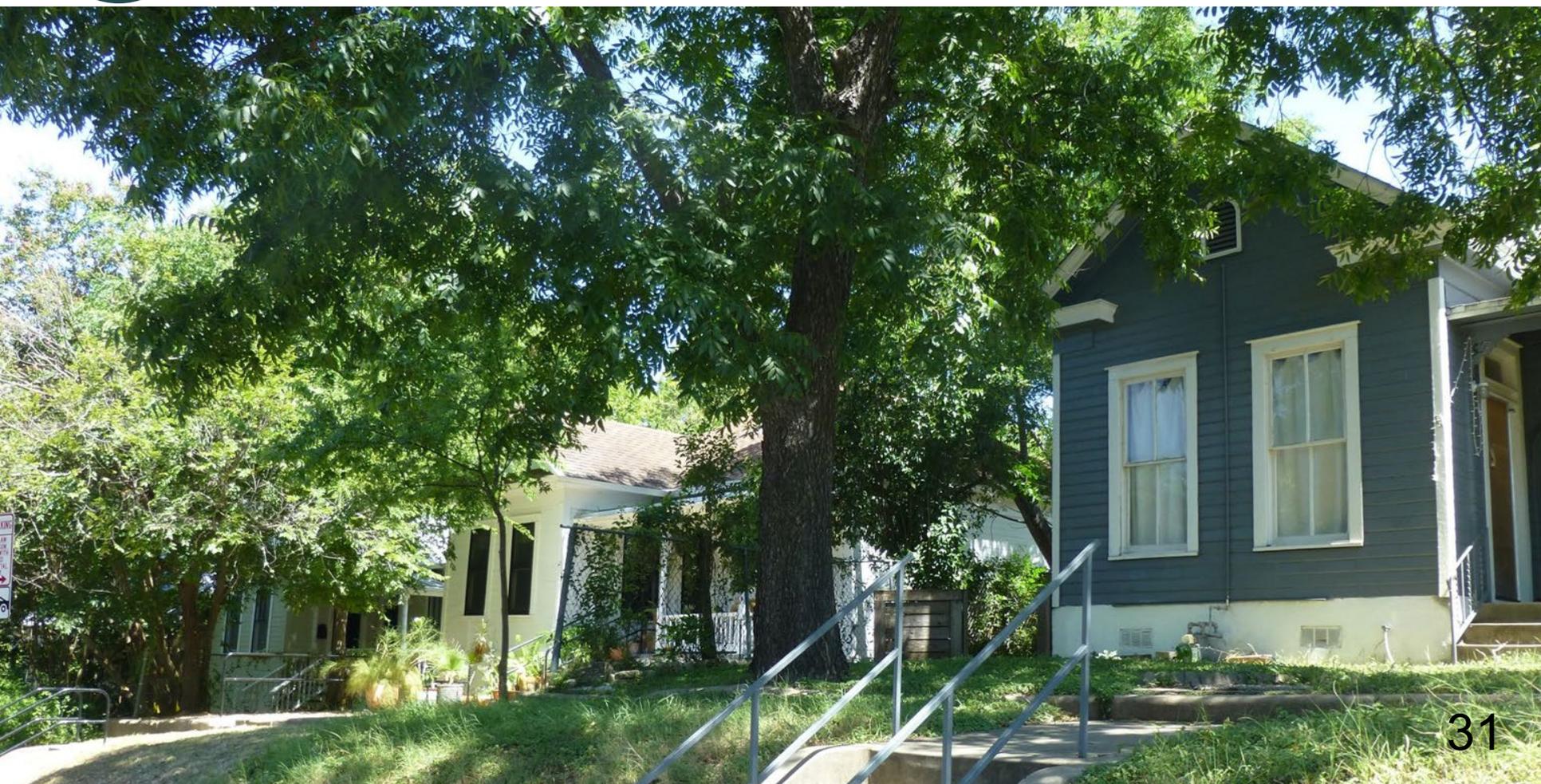




# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

How we preserve

## 12 Be strategic with review



# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

How we preserve

## 13 Protect historic resources

- Clearly communicate requirements
- Be proactive
- Follow through

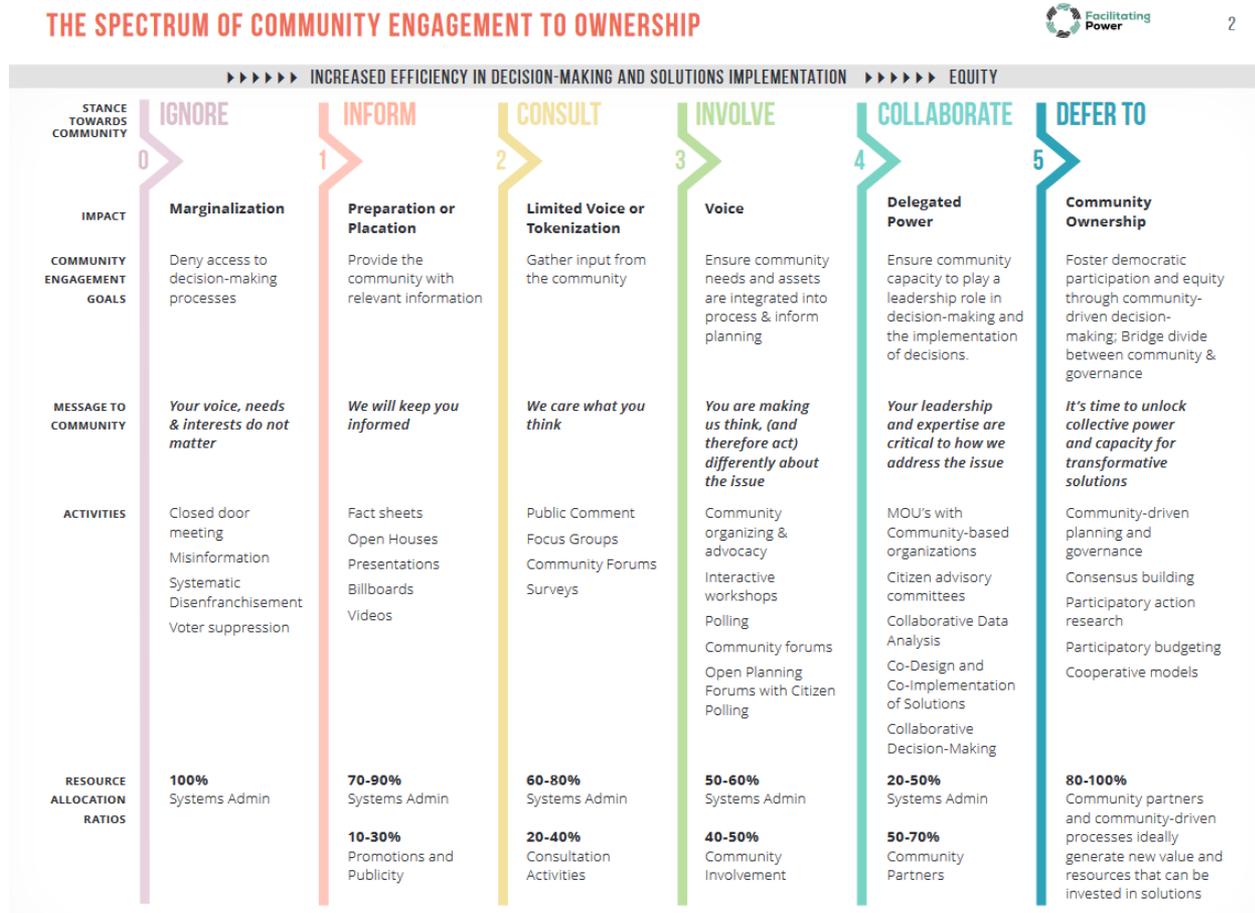


# DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

How we preserve

14

## Implement the plan collaboratively



# WHAT COMES NEXT?

- Prioritize outreach and listening to historically marginalized communities
- Hire community ambassadors
- Continue consulting with working group

## Raise awareness of historic preservation

“Grow the tent” for more in-depth engagement

## Engage community to refine draft plan

Identify gaps, refine and prioritize recommendations

Develop timeline, identify partners and metrics

Estimate costs for priority recommendations

## Plan adoption

Presentations to boards and commissions

Presentation to Council

Adoption by Council

# WHAT COMES NEXT?

- Prioritize outreach and listening to historically marginalized communities
- Hire community ambassadors
- Continue consulting with working group

## Soft launch (fall 2022)

Raise awareness of historic preservation

Provide the draft plan for community feedback

Board and commission briefings

Invite community members to help inform effective engagement

Recruit community ambassadors

## Outreach and engagement campaign (spring 2023)

Broad, inclusive outreach

Public meetings and presentations to community organizations

Events, tours, focus groups

& more



# WHAT COMES NEXT?

Sign up for the project email list

Tell us what's important to you in the community survey (**coming soon**)!

Watch for the formal release of the draft this fall

[www.bit.ly/ATXpresplan](http://www.bit.ly/ATXpresplan)

# WHAT COMES NEXT?



Home / Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan

## Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan



[Sign up for updates about the preservation plan!](#)

*La versión en español sigue a continuación.*

### Background

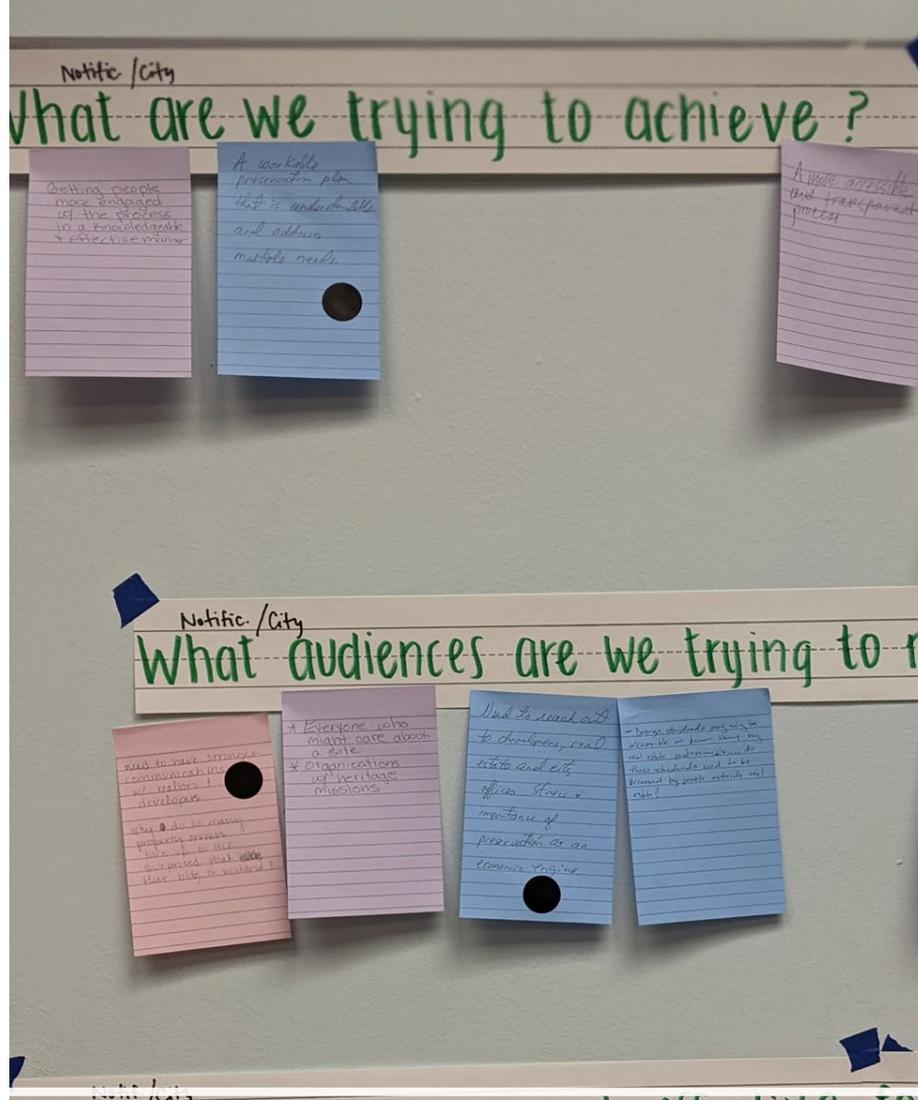
The equity-based historic preservation plan (phase 1, 2021–22) will replace Austin's 1981 preservation plan with an inclusive, equity-focused, and community-oriented process and outcome. A working group composed of historic preservation professionals, stakeholders from allied fields, and community representatives 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 [Continue reading](#)

### Documents/Documentos

- July 29, 2021 – Introduction and goals
- August 30, 2021 – Equity workshop
- September 23, 2021 – Decision-making
- October 14, 2021 – Vision for the plan/heritage in Austin
- November 18, 2021 – Tangible heritage
- December 9, 2021 – Intangible heritage
- February 10, 2021 – Incentives

[www.bit.ly/ATXpresplan](http://www.bit.ly/ATXpresplan)



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