

# PALM DISTRICT PLANNING

## Palm District Planning Initiative

Historic Landmark  
Commission Briefing

November 2, 2022



**HOUSING &  
PLANNING**

# Content

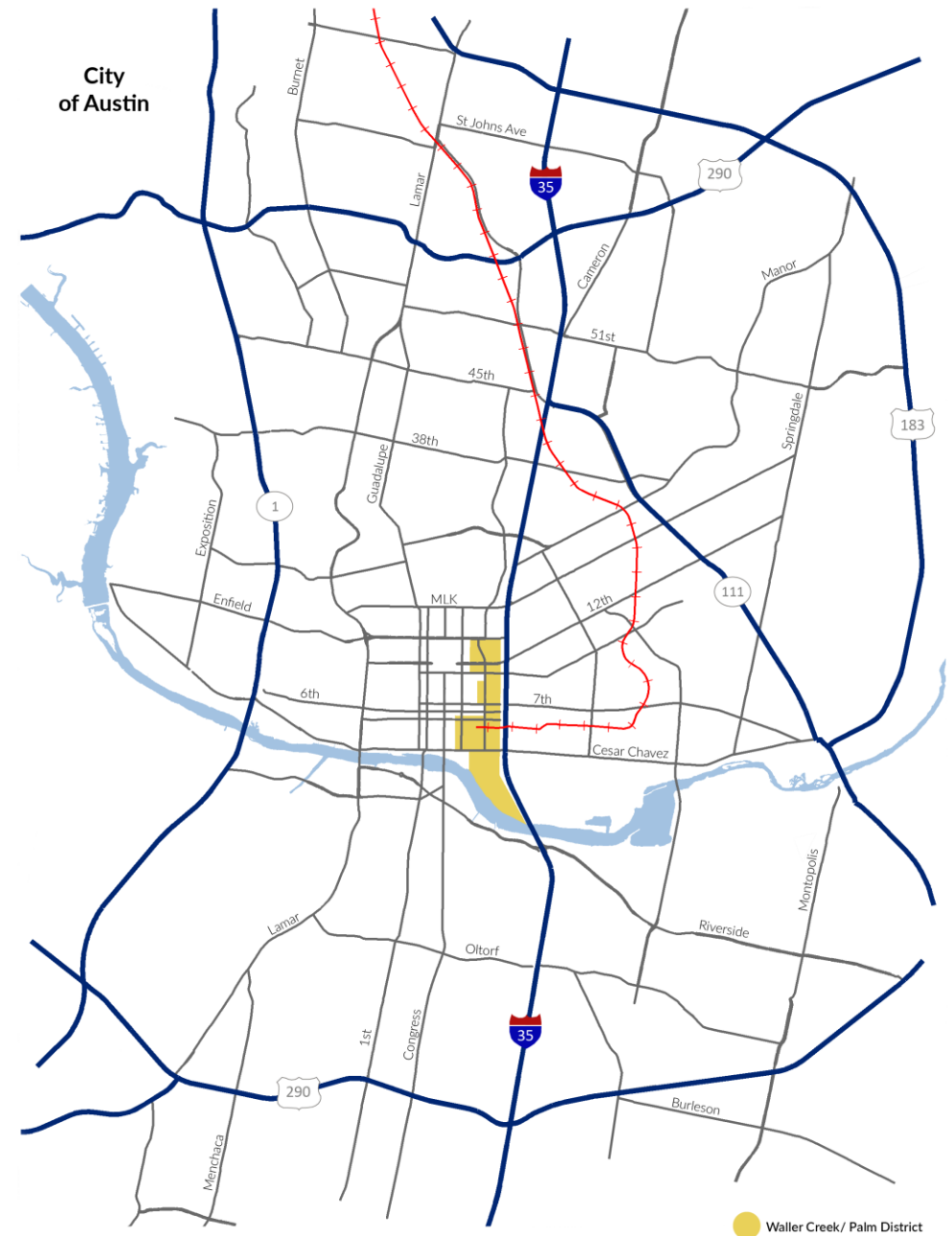
- Background and Study Area
- What We Heard
- Vision and Scenarios
- Implementation/Next Steps



# Background and Study Area



Develop a shared vision for  
a complex, culturally rich,  
and rapidly transforming  
part of downtown Austin.







Gold Line / Metro Rapid (Proposed)

Brush Square Improvement Plan

Proposed Heritage Tourism/Proposed Mexican  
American Heritage Corridor/Cultural District

Convention Center Expansion

Waterloo Greenway

ESB-Mexican American  
Cultural Center Expansion

Blue Line (Proposed)

### Palm District Study Area

#### Initiatives

##### Project Connect

Blue Line (Proposed)

Green Line (Proposed)

Red Line (Proposed)

Gold Line (Proposed)

Mexican American Heritage Corridor  
(Proposed)

Waterloo Greenway

I-35 Capital Express Central Project

Points of Interest

#### Subdistricts

Rainey Street District

Red River Cultural District

Innovation District

State Capitol

Waterloo Park

Innovation District

Red River Cultural District

APD Headquarters

Red Line + Green Line

Palm Park

Palm School

Rainey Mobility Improvements

Rainey Street District

I-35 Capital Express Central Project



# PALM DISTRICT PLANNING



# Resolution 20190523-029

- Palm School Negotiations
- Rainey Street District Fund
- Fifth Street Mexican American Heritage Corridor
- Convention Center Expansion
- District Planning Process
- Improved Connectivity





WE ARE HERE



## Palm District Planning Initiative Timeline







# Equity-Based Goals

- Create a safe, welcoming place
- Preserve and interpret history
- Enhance educational and cultural assets
- Provide economic benefits
- Increase access to housing
- Improve mobility and access
- Improve access to nature, enhance natural systems, and support an equitable, sustainable, resilient future





# What We Heard

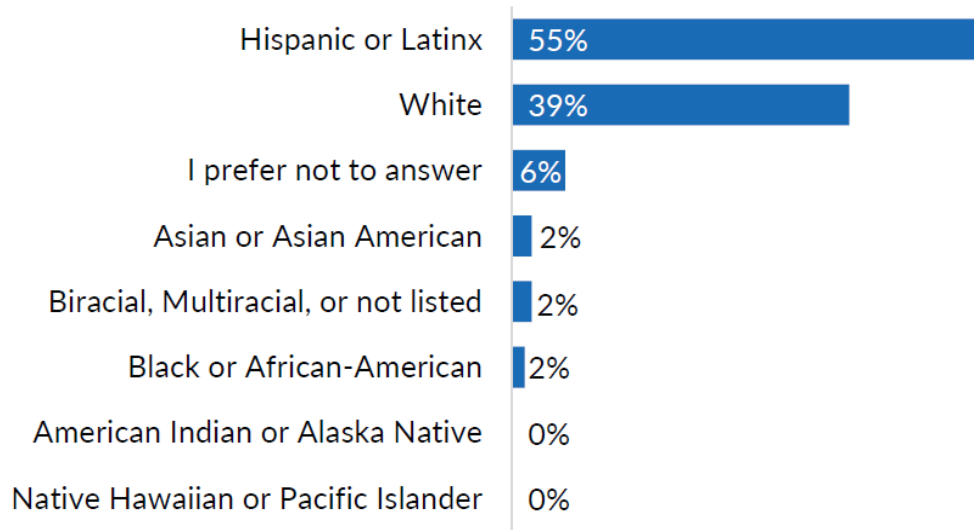


# Participants

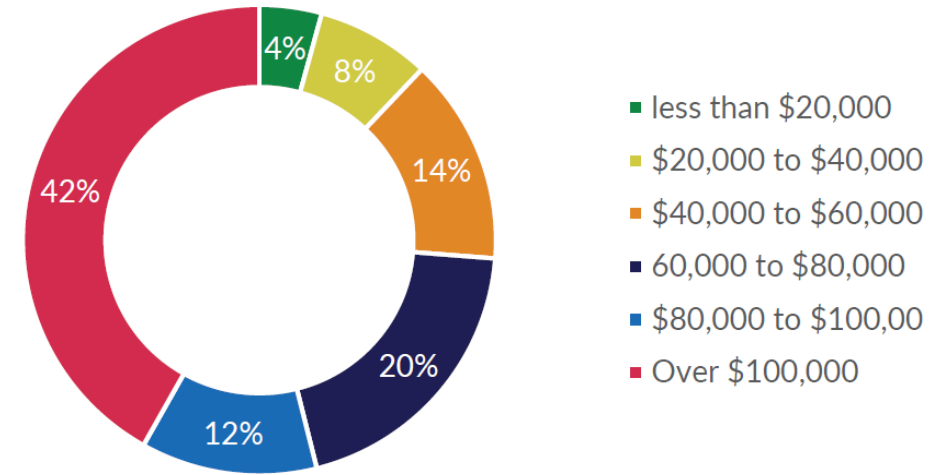
- **Visits to SpeakUp Austin! Webpage: 3,600**
- **Survey Responses: 700+ (3 Surveys)**
- **Visioning Forum Attendees: 150+**
- **Targeted East Austin Outreach: 75 + (Individuals and Organizations)**
- **AIA Event Participants: 60+**
- **Interactive Map Responses: 25+**

# Survey Demographics

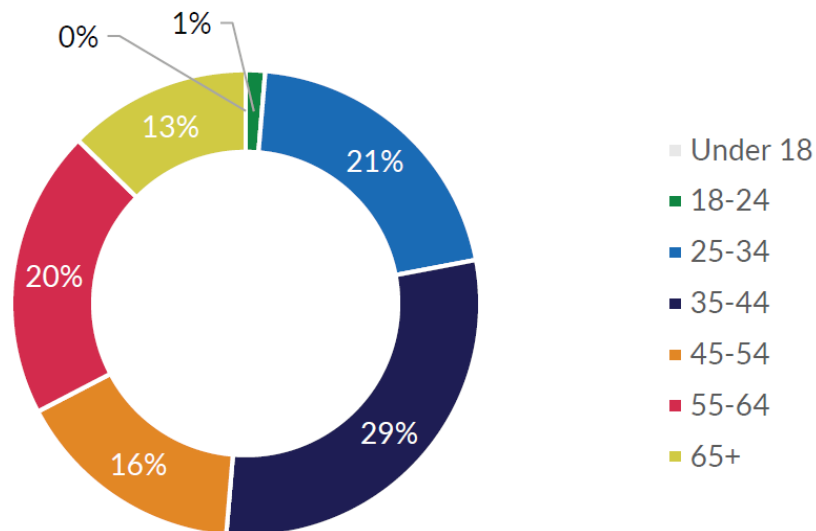
## Race and Ethnicity



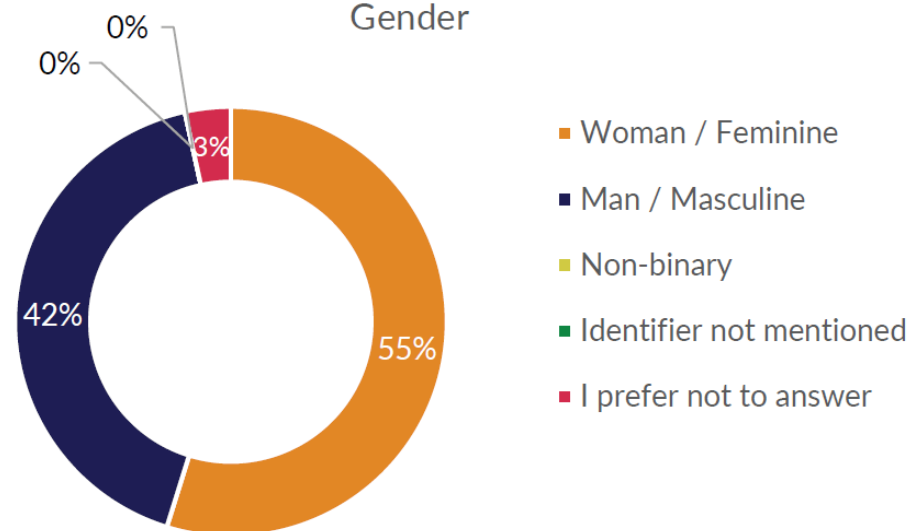
## Household Income



## Age Range



## Gender





# Visioning Forums







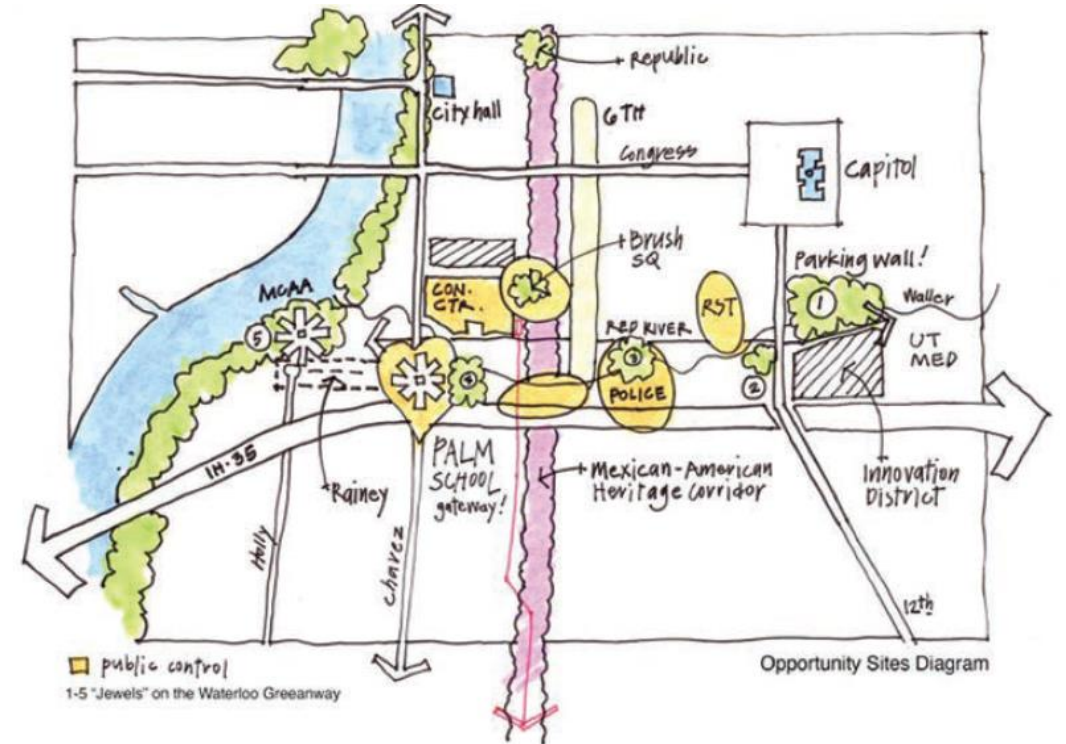
# Targeted East Austin Engagement:

- La Raza Roundtable
- Current and Former Elected Officials
- Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Tejano Democrats
- Palm School Alumni
- The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC)
- La Pena Arts, Inc.
- Mexic-Arte
- Nuestro Grupo/Academia Cuauhtli
- AHMIGA (Latina civic and social networking organization)
- Café Con Letras
- L.A.C.E.
- PODER
- Long-time East Austin residents

# American Institute of Architects Recommendations:



The AIA report included a rendering of a potential gateway to Downtown through the Palm District highlighting the Mexican American heritage of the area.





# Vision and Scenarios

# VISION

The Palm District is a vibrant historic hub of downtown where the past is honored, culture is celebrated, and the future is shaped.



*Dense transit-oriented development is balanced with history and natural spaces creating physical connections that invite people to move easily to and through the district.*



*The district is a dynamic place, growing and evolving, while actively retaining families and individuals who have traditionally called this place home.*



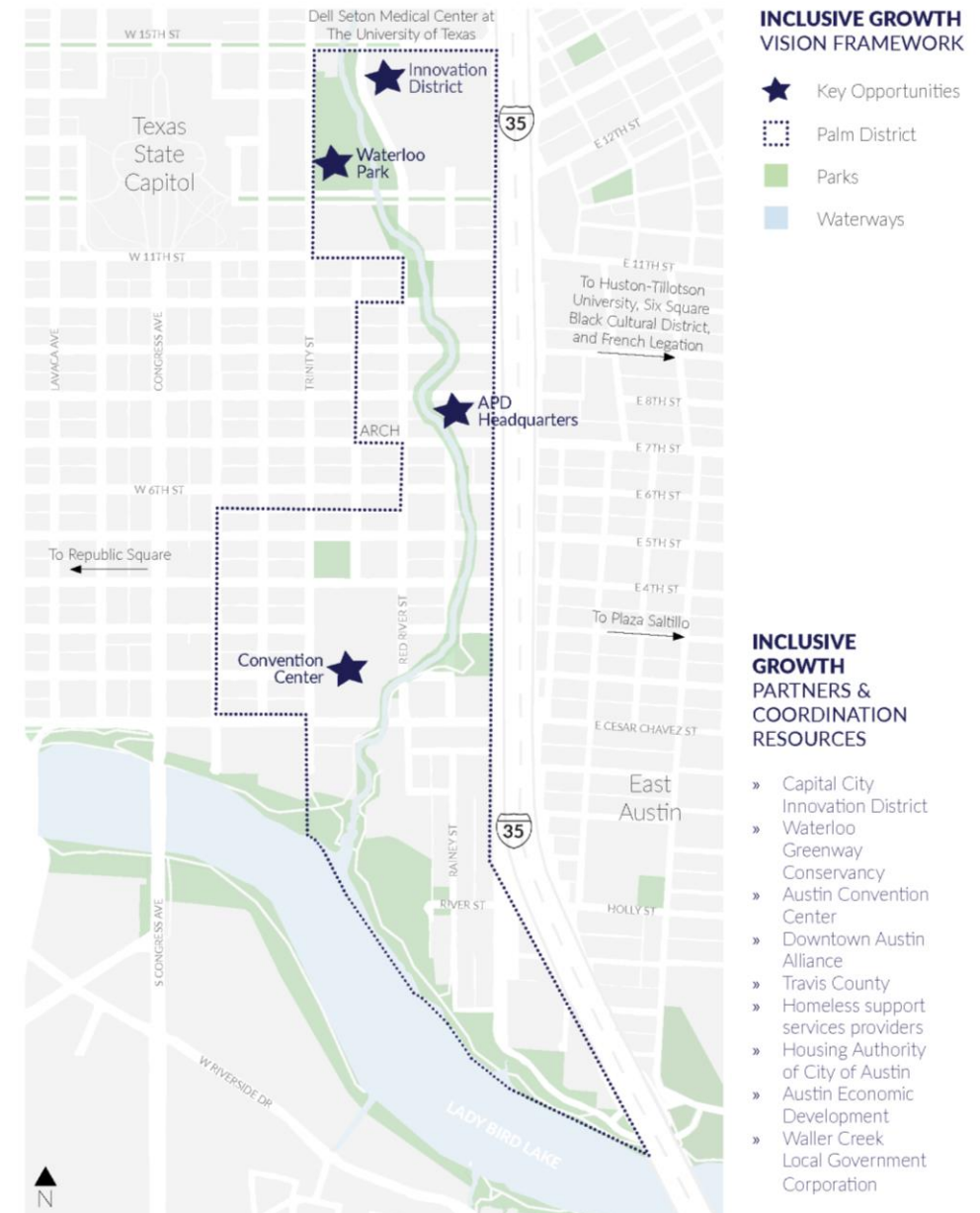
*Creativity and innovation are cultivated, and people from Austin and beyond are welcome to live, relax, work, play, learn, and connect with others.*





# INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Growth in the district will provide a prosperous future for longtime and recent residents and for established and new businesses.





# CULTURE

The district will become a destination that celebrates its multi-cultural heritage.



## CULTURE VISION FRAMEWORK

- ★ Key Opportunities
- ◀▶ Key Corridors
- ▭ Palm District
- Parks
- Waterways

## CULTURE PARTNERS & COORDINATION RESOURCES

- » Austin Convention Center
- » Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center
- » George Washington Carver Museum
- » Huston-Tillotson University
- » Six Square Cultural District
- » Red River Cultural District
- » Mexic-Arte
- » La Peña
- » Tejano Trails
- » Waterloo Greenway Conservancy
- » Travis County
- » Downtown Austin Alliance
- » Preservation Austin
- » Austin Parks & Recreation
- » Austin History Center
- » Austin Economic Development
- » Visit Austin
- » Waller Creek Local Government Corporation





# CONNECTION

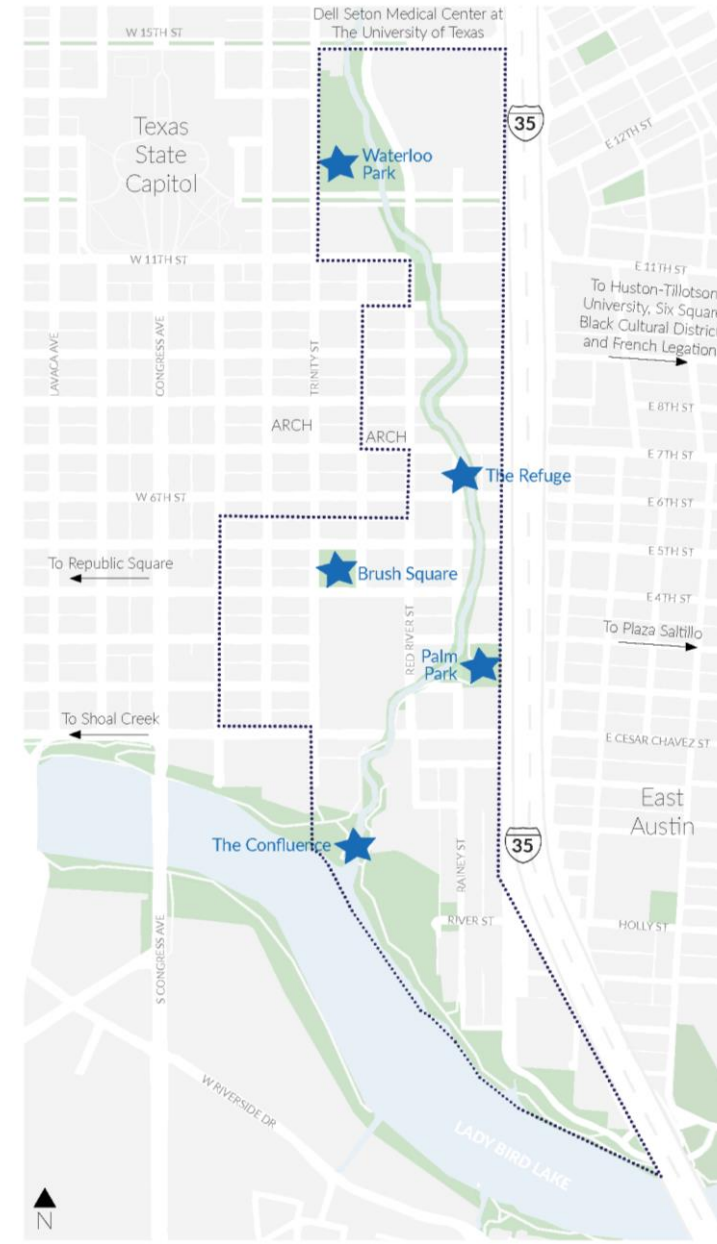
Physical, cultural and social connections will be strengthened within downtown and between East Austin and downtown.





# NATURE

The natural environment will be preserved and enhanced by restoring existing natural and open spaces and pursuing high standards of sustainable design and development with a focus on green infrastructure.



## NATURE VISION FRAMEWORK

- ★ Key Opportunities
- ▭ Palm District
- Parks
- Waterways

## NATURE PARTNERS & COORDINATION RESOURCES

- » Waterloo Greenway Conservancy
- » Waller Creek Local Government Corporation
- » Austin Parks & Recreation
- » Austin Watershed Protection
- » Austin Public Works
- » Austin Office of Sustainability
- » Trails Foundation



# Desired Outcomes....

## Inclusive Growth

Create opportunities to use publicly-owned properties for dense, mixed-income housing, places for cultural celebration, and to preserve those sites that are of historical, social, and cultural significance.

## Culture

Preserve performance venues in the Red River Cultural District through incentives, public private partnerships, and regulatory tools such as transfer of development rights, historic and landmark designations, and the Iconic Venue Fund.

## Connection

Leverage the lowering and replacement of I-35 to create better and more attractive connections between East Austin and the District.

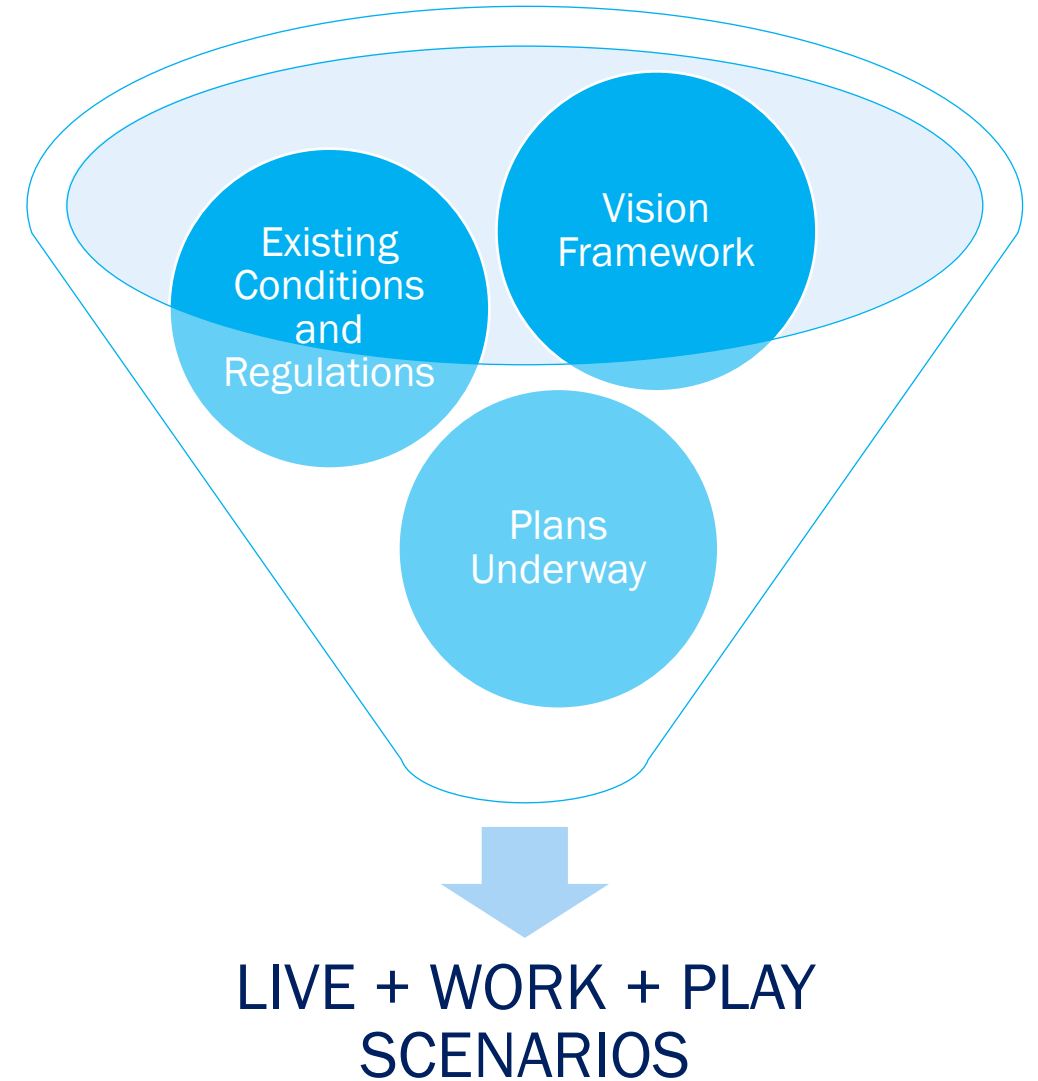
## Nature

Improve the Waterloo Greenway, south of Palm Park to the Confluence, through lighting, interpretive signage, and other amenities to invite visitors and residents to explore and experience Waller Creek.



# Scenario Development

- Partnership with Downtown Austin Alliance and Asakura Robinson
- Scenario Planning Workshops August 2022
- 3 Thematic Scenarios: Live, Work, Play





# Scenario Ranking and Feedback

- Scenarios Survey
- Feedback:
  - Preference for Live Scenario
  - Add Housing
  - Decrease Office
  - Support Cultural Uses

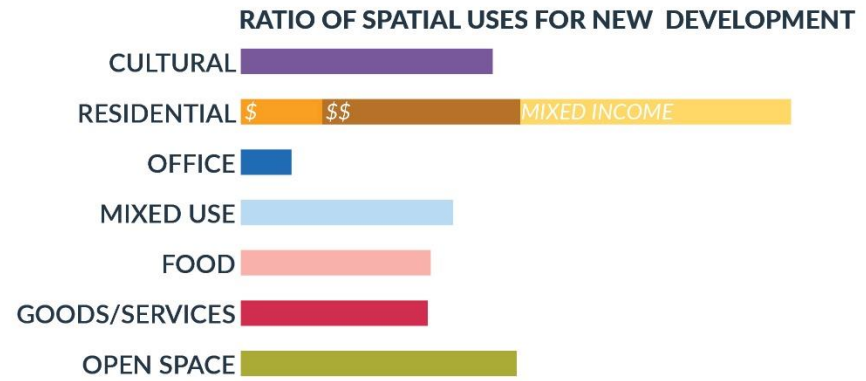
# PALM DISTRICT

## Preferred Scenario

NOTES: The scenario represents an aspirational view of how the district could develop over time and does not bind individual property owners or the City of Austin and partner agencies. Implementation would require a range of actions by the City of Austin and its partners.

The Palm School site is owned by Travis County, and Travis County has been undertaking a process to explore options for this site. See <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/planning-budget/economic-development-strategic-investments/palm-school>.

The Texas Department of Transportation is currently evaluating options the reconstruction of I-35 through the federally-required environmental review process, and the City is working in tandem with that process to explore possible approaches for capping I-35 and/or designing enhanced bridges (stitches). See <https://austintexas.gov/ourfuture35> for additional information.



## LEGEND

### Goods / Services

- Food/ Restaurants
- Bar/Pub
- Food Truck/ Street Vendor
- Retail
- Health Services

### Residential

- Low Income
- Market Rate
- Mixed Income
- Hotel

### Office

- Artist Studio/ Creative Office
- Mixed Use w/ Office

### Cultural

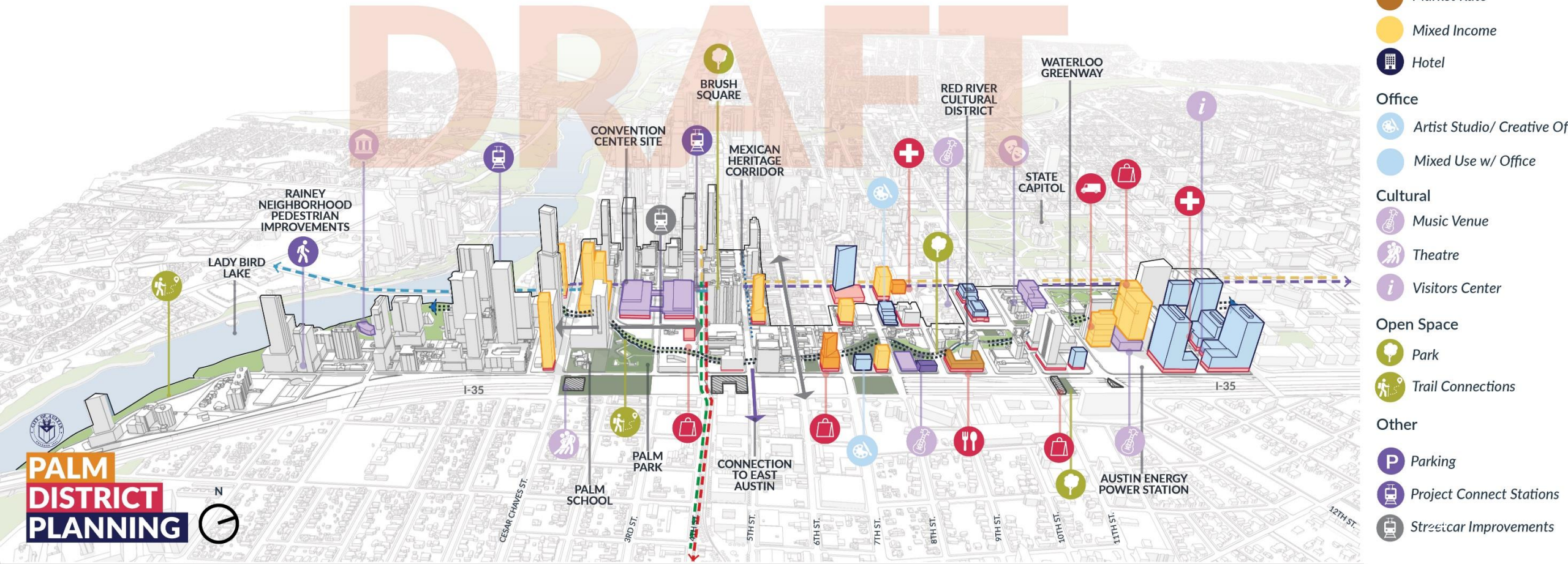
- Music Venue
- Theatre
- Visitors Center

### Open Space

- Park
- Trail Connections

### Other

- Parking
- Project Connect Stations
- Streetcar Improvements







# Implementation



# Recommendations

Timing → 1-3 YEARS

Sponsor

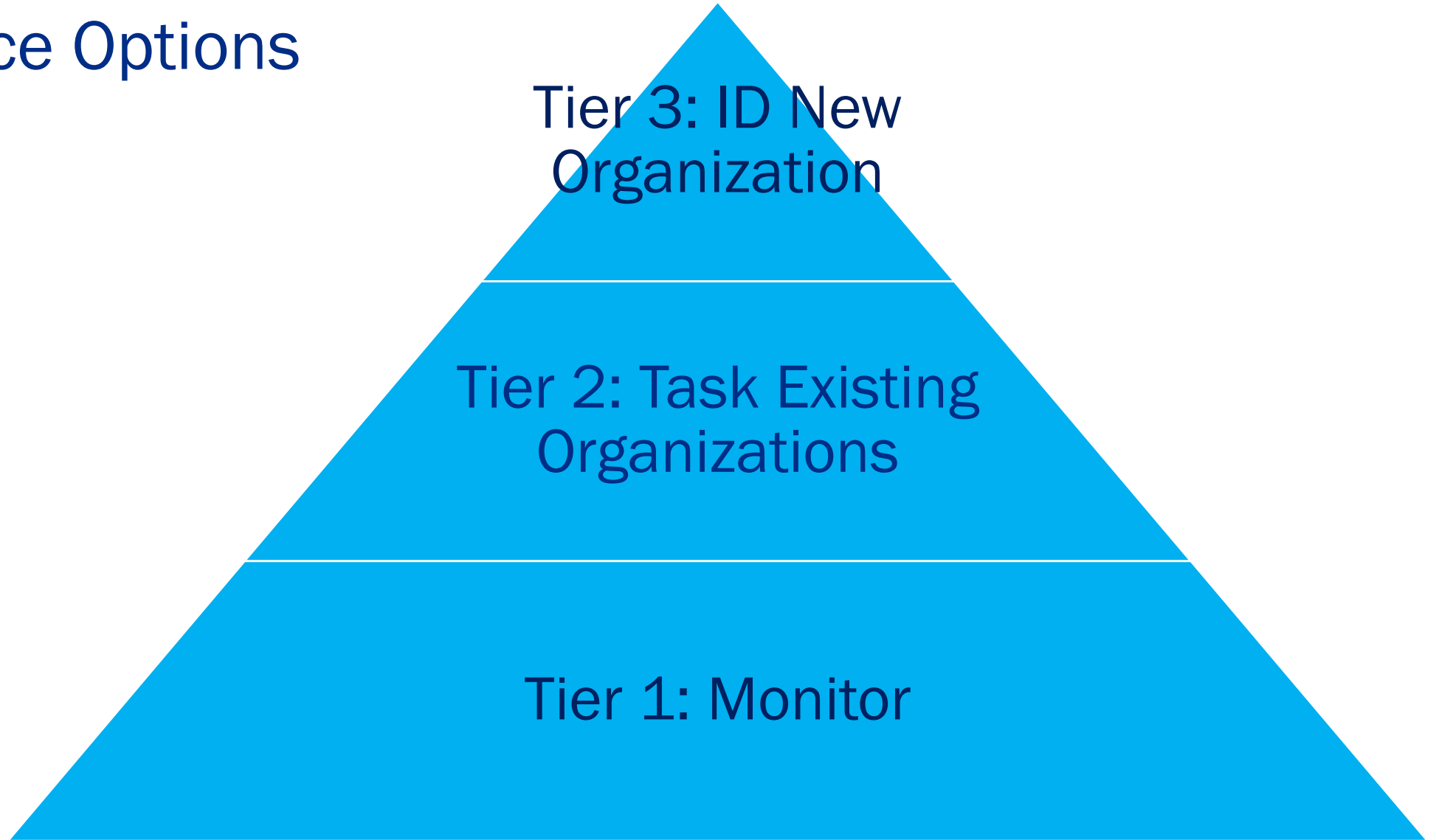
Theme

Recommendation

#	Recommendation	Sponsor (s)	Theme/Outcomes
CLTR_3	Create opportunities for cultural spaces to locate at the expanded Convention Center , Innovation District, and the Palm School site and through the redesign of Palm Park.	Convention Center, Capital City Innovation, Travis County, FSD-Real Estate, PARD,	Culture
CLTR_5	Incorporate cultural uses and programming into the Palm School site in addition to site restoration.	Travis County	Culture
CLTR_7	Ensure I-35 Cap & Stitch alternatives incorporate cultural uses that provide space for diverse communities	CPO, PARD	Culture
CLTR_8	Implement the Heritage Wayfinding for African American Cultural Heritage District and include points of interest such as Freedman Communities found within and near the Palm District.	EDD	Culture
CLTR_11	Create opportunities for the implementaion of the 5th Street Mexican-American Heritage Corridor and larger Mexican-American Cultural District.	EDD	Culture
IG_1	Incentivize new development to include ground floor retail spaces to provide opportunities for: local-serving goods, services, entertainment, and cultural spaces to foster complete communities in the Palm District.	HPD	Inclusive Growth



# Governance Options





# Next Steps





## Next Steps

Milestone/Next Step	Date
Planning Commission	11/8/2022
City Council Hearing/Consideration	12/1/2022
Implementation Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LDC Amendment</li><li>• DAP Amendment</li><li>• Finalize Governance</li></ul>	2023



# How to Get Involved!



## ■ Visit [www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict](http://www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict)

- Review draft Plan
- Provide Input to:
  - Planning Commission
  - City Council
- Review other materials
- Ask questions

### Palm District Planning Initiative

Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Email

The Palm District is an area on the eastern edge of downtown Austin that includes many attractions and points of interest such as Waller Creek, Red River Cultural District, Palm School, Rainey Street, the Emma S. Barrientos - Mexican American Cultural Center, and the Convention Center. The area is a dynamic gateway for visitors and a cultural touchstone for Austin's Mexican American community.

The Palm District Planning Initiative will guide future development in the district, linking land use, urban design, transportation, economic development, housing, public spaces, historic preservation, cultural arts, and social equity.

Through this process, the City will partner [Continue reading](#)

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<http://speakupaustin.org/hvN51j>

#### Key Dates/Fechas Importantes

Presentation of American Institute of Architects Team Findings and Recommendations (6:30PM-8PM)  
July 26 2021

Public Community Meeting (6PM-8PM)  
June 16 2021

Public Community Meeting (8AM-10AM)  
June 15 2021

#### Videos



- Provide input via
  - **e-mail:** [palmdistrictplanning@austintexas.gov](mailto:palmdistrictplanning@austintexas.gov)
  - **Phone:** 311
  - **Mail:** Palm District Planning, Housing and Planning Department, PO Box 1088, Austin, Texas 78767





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# Thank You

[Speakupaustin.org/PalmDistrict](https://speakupaustin.org/PalmDistrict)

[PalmDistrictPlanning@austintexas.gov](mailto:PalmDistrictPlanning@austintexas.gov)