

# PALM DISTRICT PLANNING

## Palm District Planning Initiative

Council Work Session  
November 29, 2022



**HOUSING &  
PLANNING**

# Content

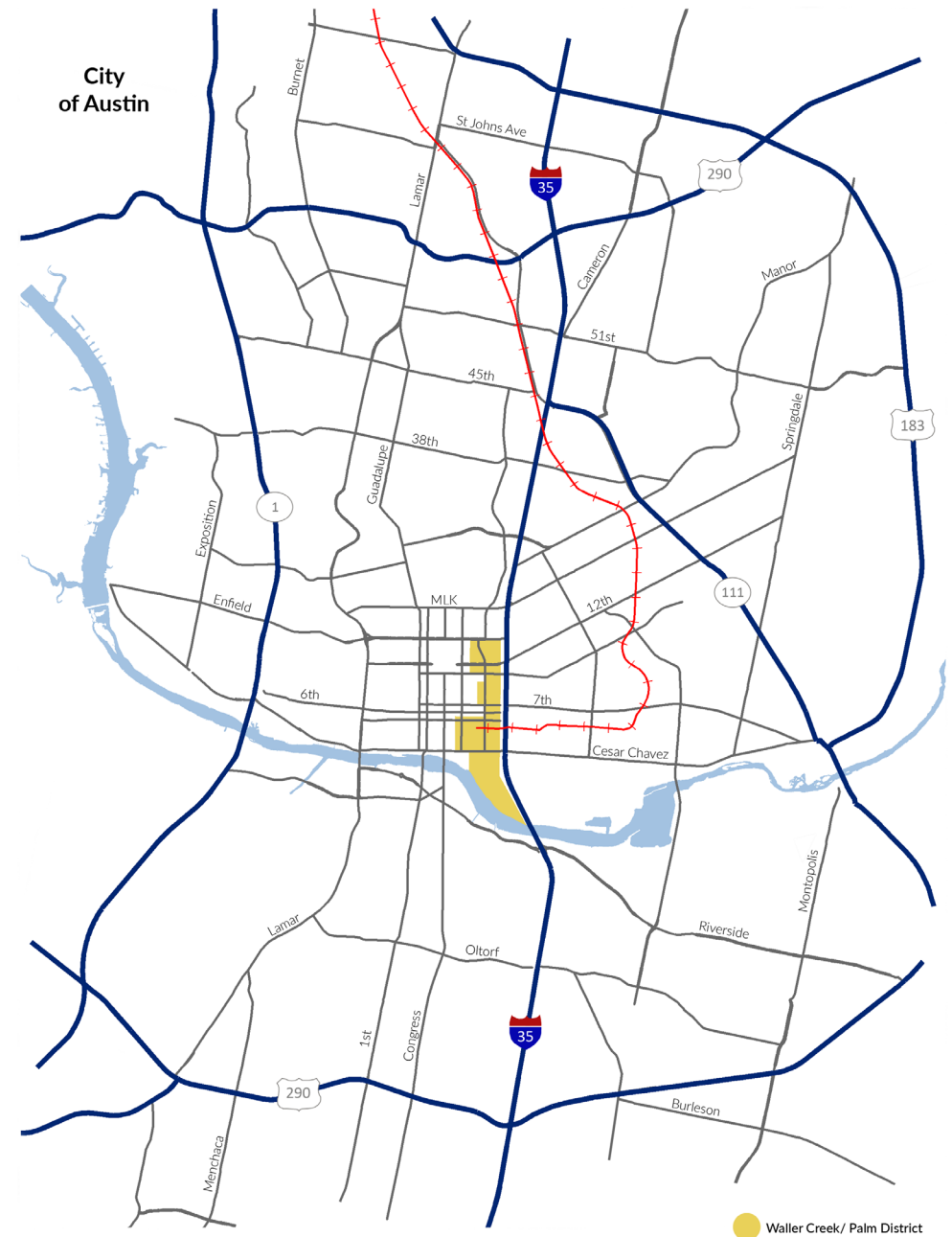
- Background and Study Area
- What We Heard
- Vision and Scenarios
- Implementation/Next Steps



# Background and Study Area



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









# Resolution 20190523-029

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



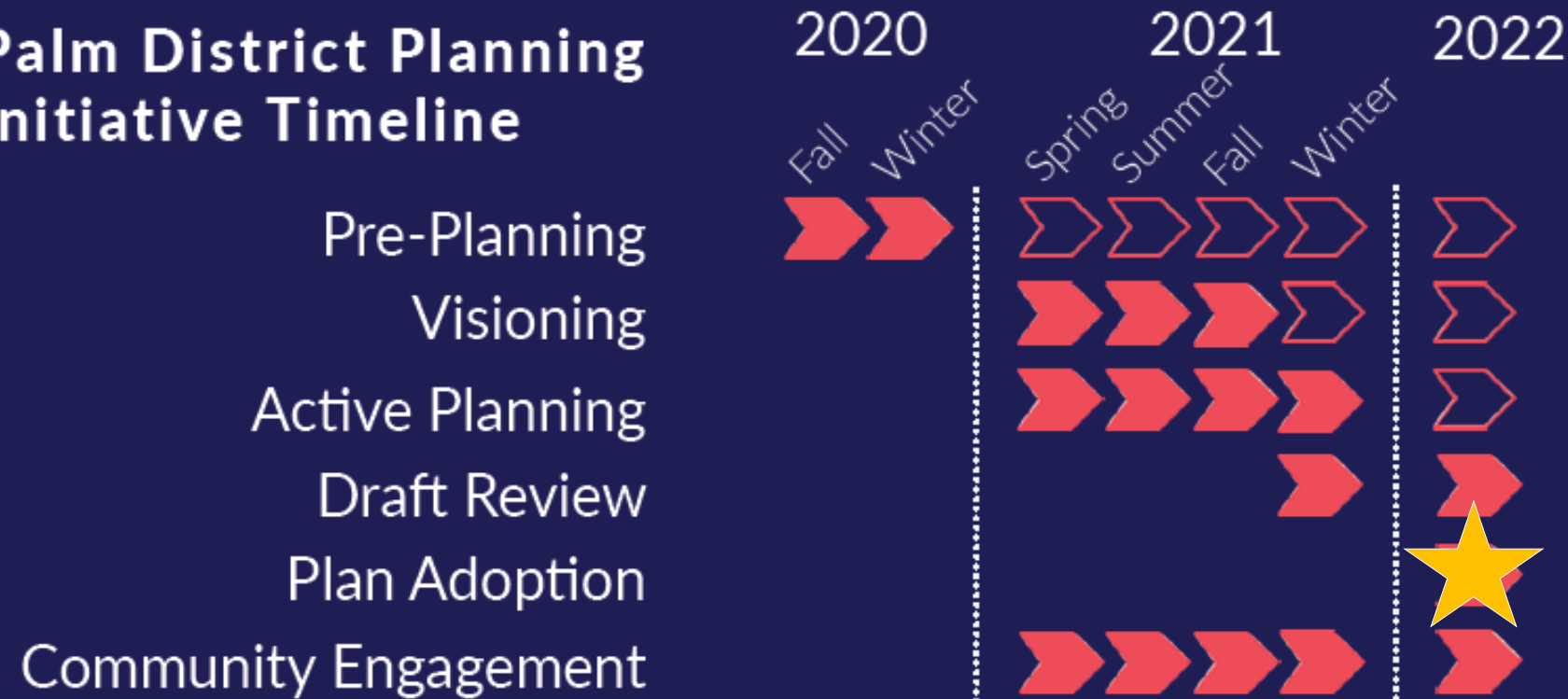




WE ARE HERE



## 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



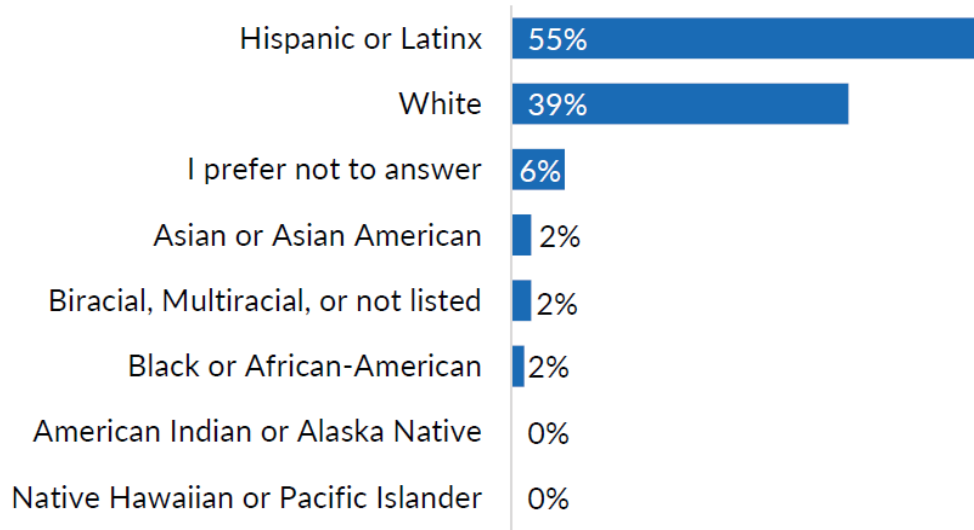
# Participants

- **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+**

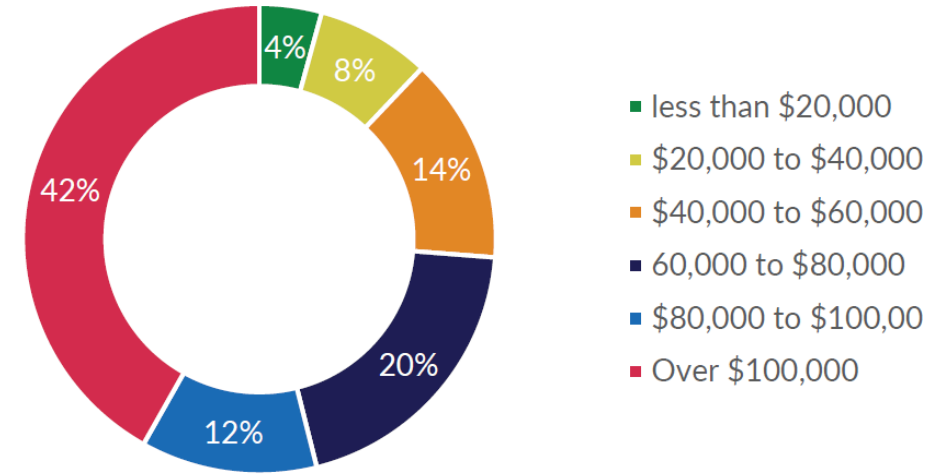
**Palm District Webpage: [www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict](http://www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict)**

# Survey Demographics

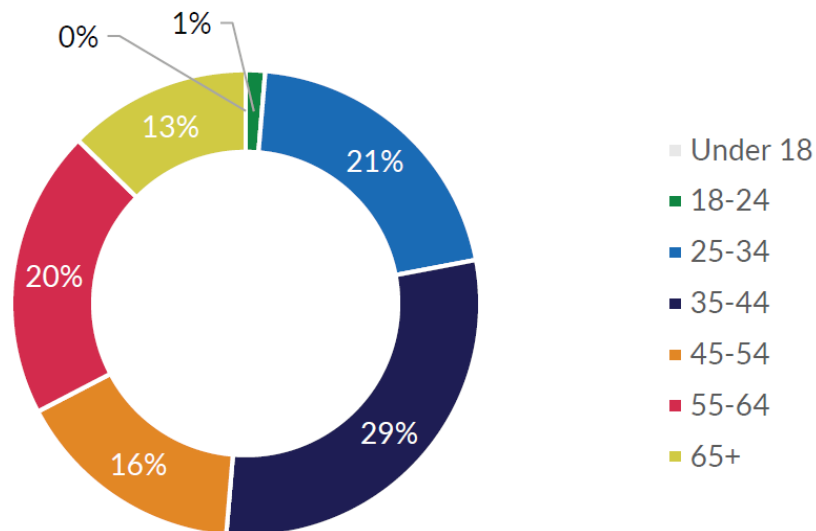
## Race and Ethnicity



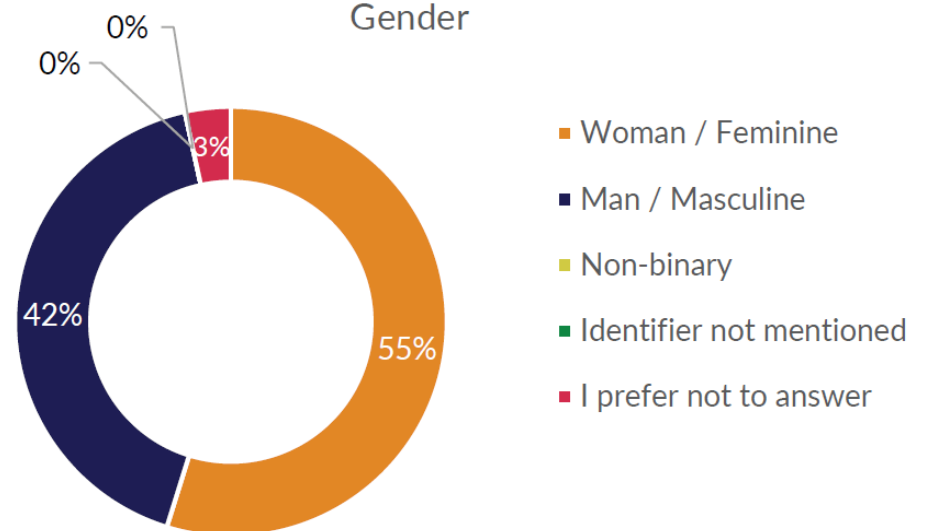
## Household Income



## Age Range



## Gender





# Visioning Forums







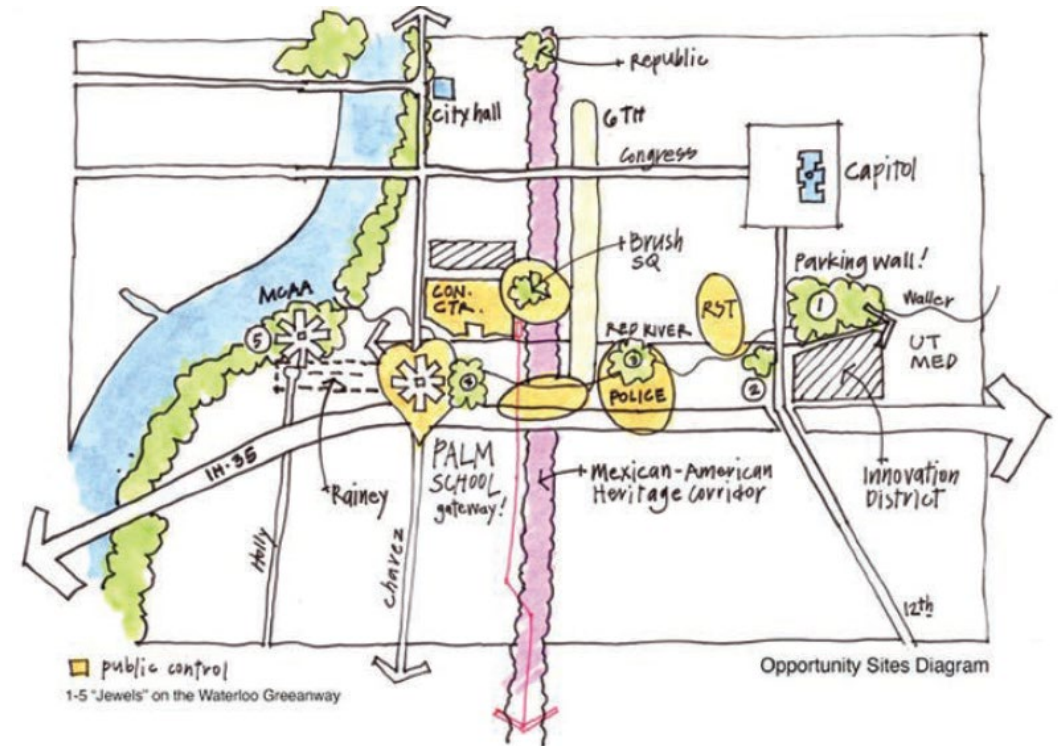
# Targeted East Austin Engagement:

- 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.*



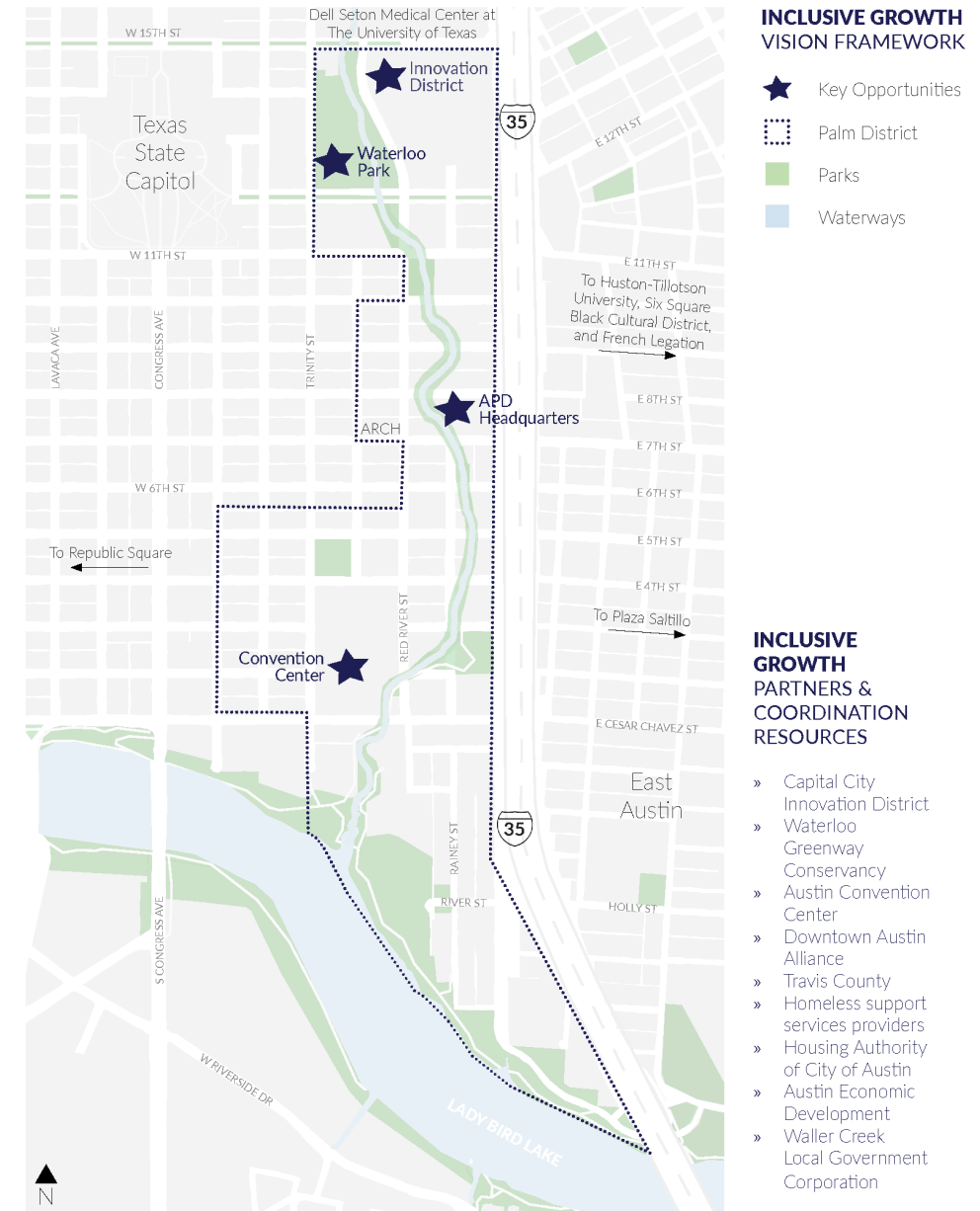
*Creativity and innovation are cultivated, and people from Austin and beyond are welcome to live, relax, work, play, learn, and connect with others.*





# 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

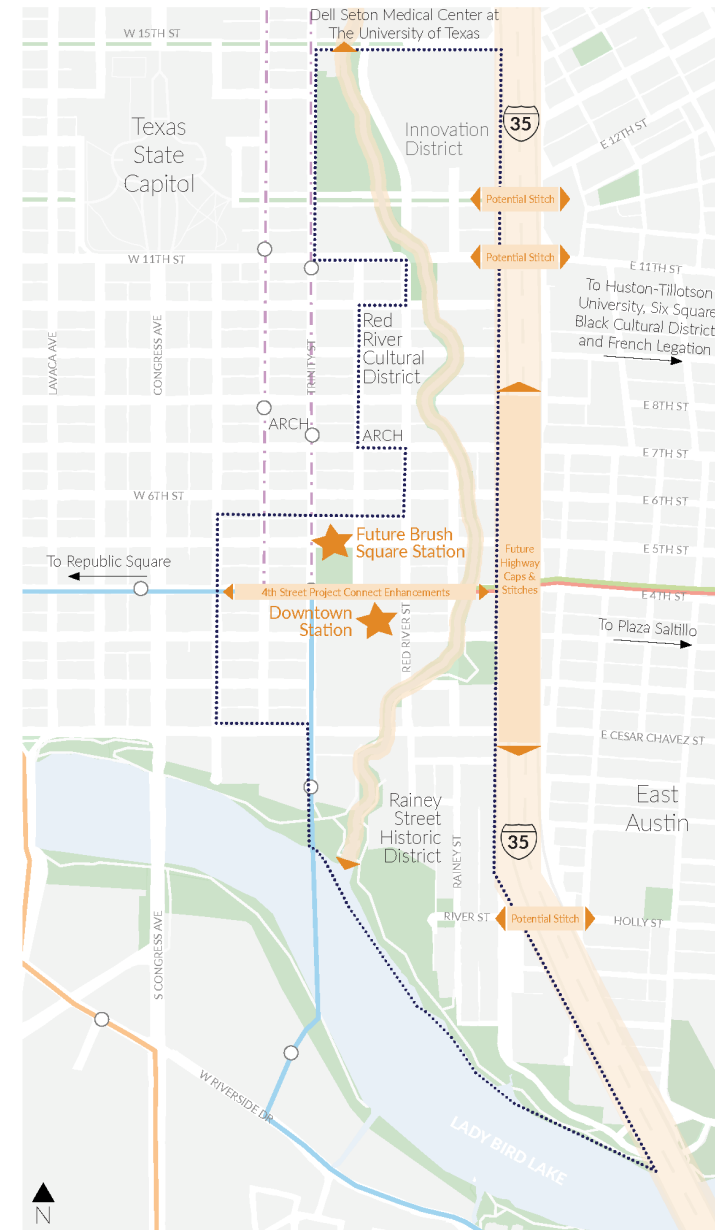
## CULTURE PARTNERS & COORDINATION RESOURCES

- » 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 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.



## CONNECTION VISION FRAMEWORK

- ★ Key Opportunities
- Key Corridors
- Palm District
- Parks
- Waterways
- ↔ I-35 Redesign
- Project Connect Light Rail
- Project Connect MetroRail
- Project Connect Transit Stations
- - - Project Connect MetroRapid (BRT)

## CONNECTION PARTNERS & COORDINATION RESOURCES

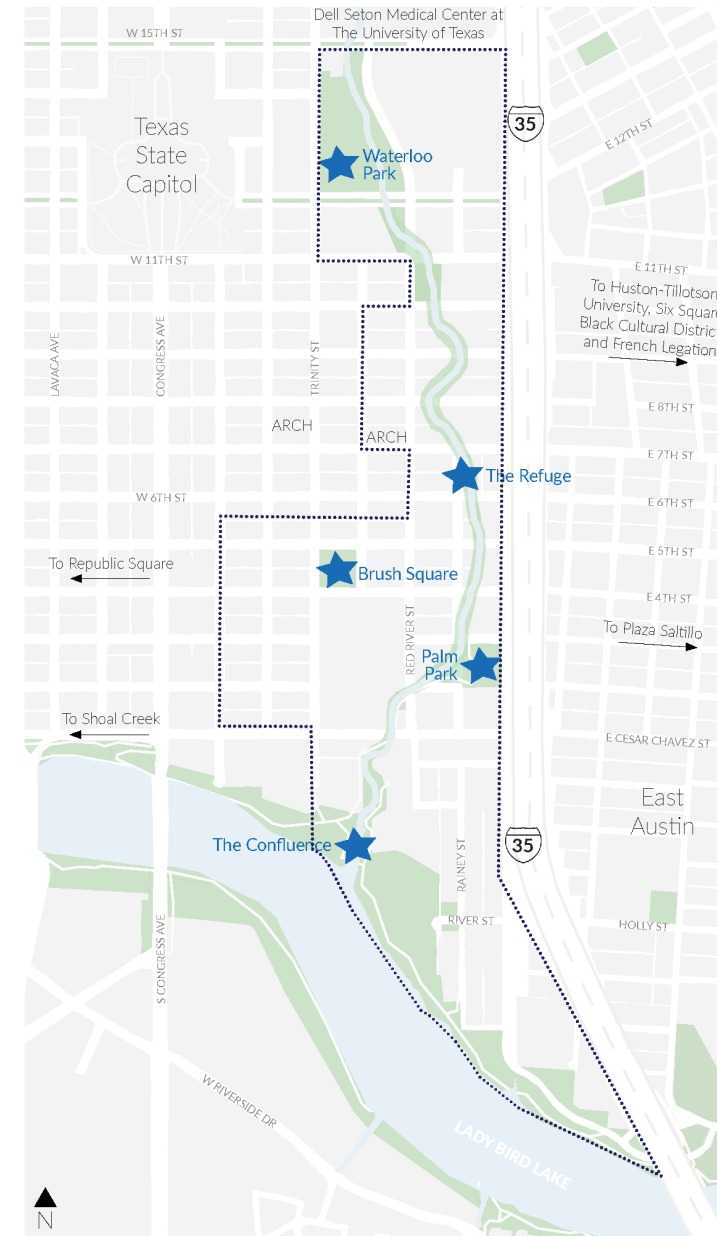
- » CapMetro
- » Austin Transit Partnership
- » Waterloo Greenway Conservancy
- » Austin Transportation
- » Downtown Austin Alliance
- » Austin Energy
- » Austin Watershed Protection
- » Austin Water
- » Austin Parks & Recreation
- » Waller Creek Local Government Corporation





# 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.

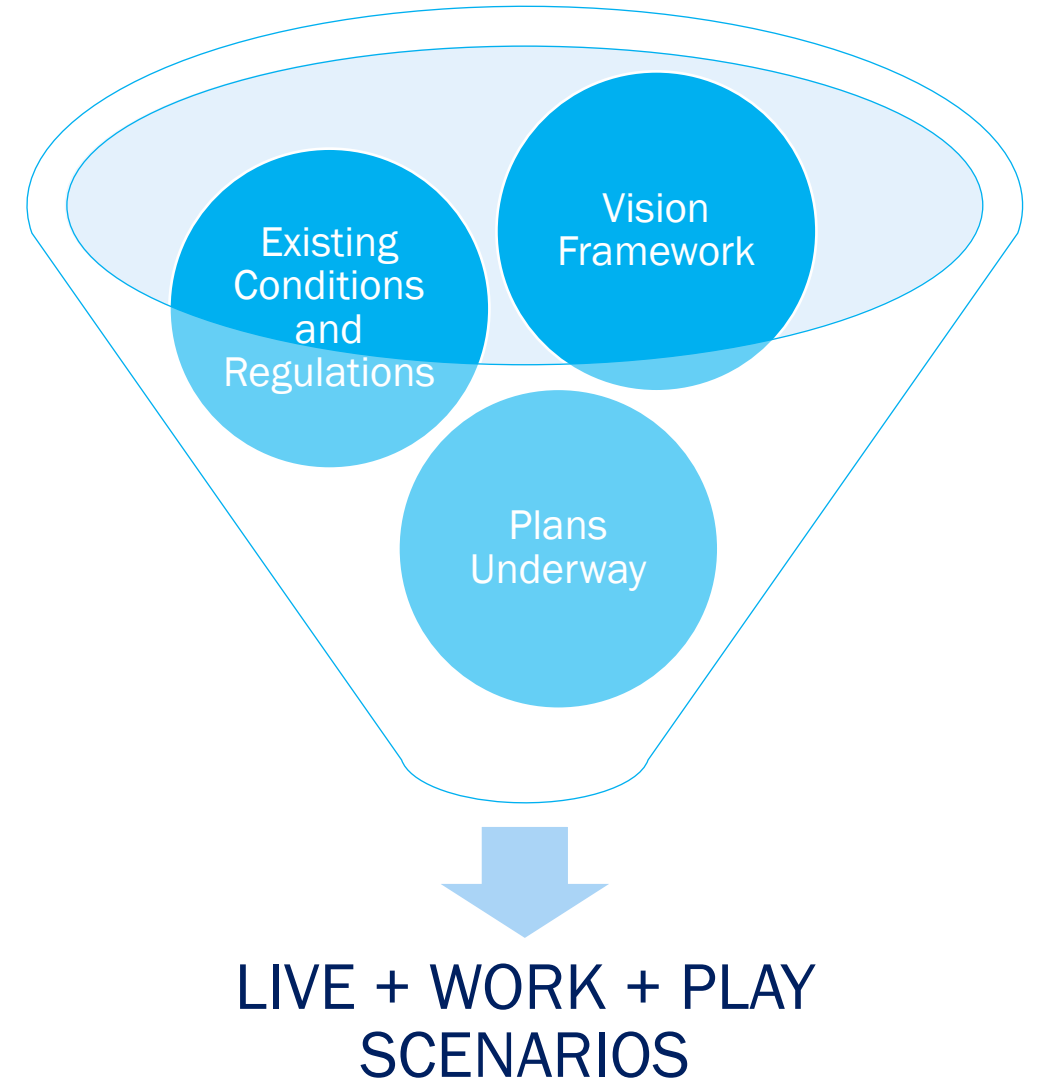
## Nature

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



# PREFERRED SCENARIO

Putting it All Together



**PALM  
DISTRICT  
PLANNING**

## LEGEND

### Goods / Services

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

### Residential

- Low Income
- Market Rate
- Mixed Income
- Hotel

### Office

- Artist Studio/ Creative Office
- Mixed Use: Office, Hotel, Residential

### Cultural

- Music Venue
- Theatre
- Visitors Center

### Open Space

- Park
- Trail Connections

### Connectivity

- Streetcar
- Waterloo Greenway Trail
- Project Connect Blue Line
- Project Connect Red Line
- Project Connect Green Line
- Project Connect Purple Line
- Project Connect Gold Line

### Other

- Parking
- Project Connect Stations
- Streetcar Improvements
- Sidewalk/Streetscape Improvements



# Implementation





# Recommendations

Timing → 1-3 YEARS

Sponsor

Theme

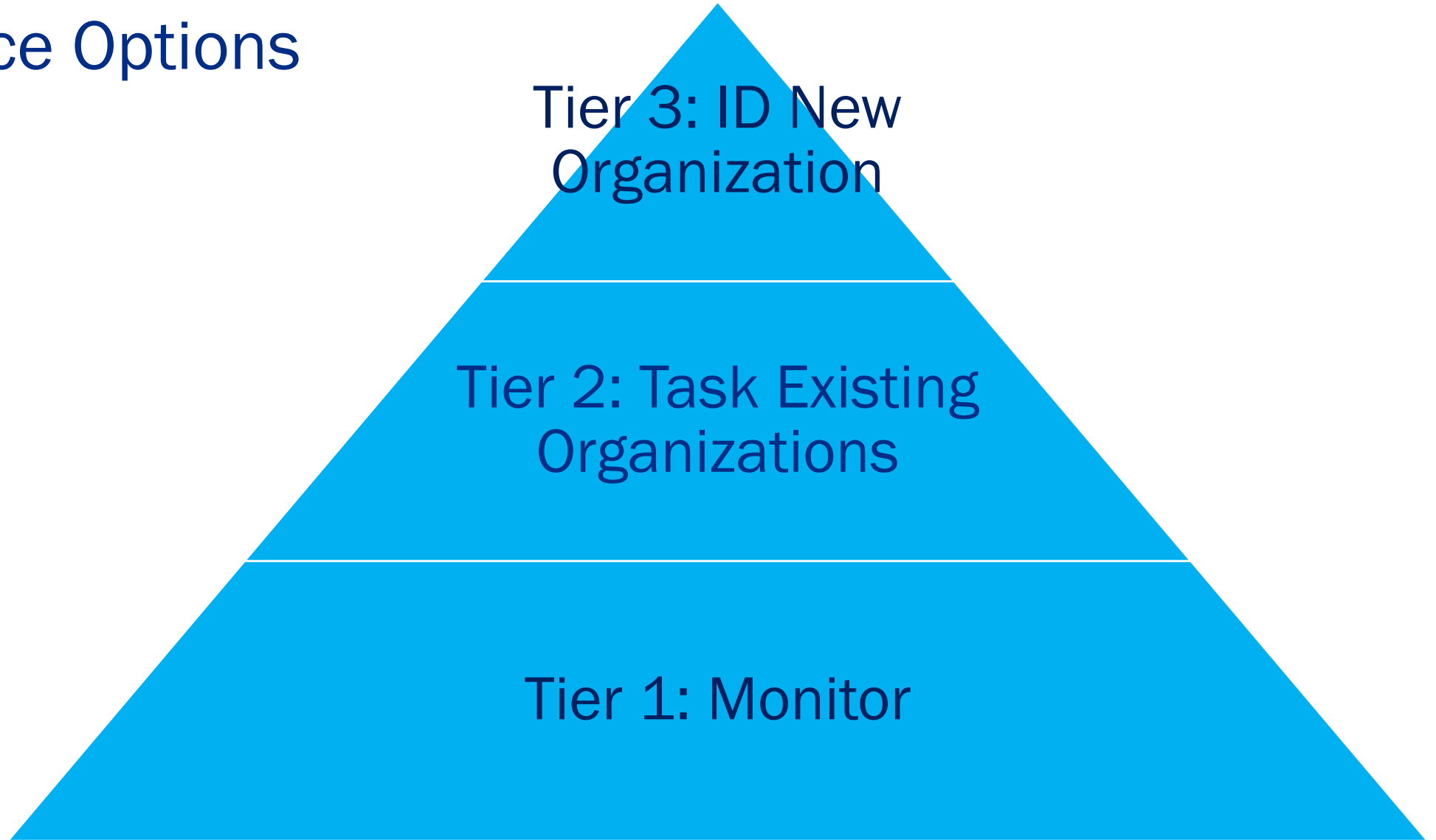
Recommendation

#	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

- Build on investments and programs already underway
- Guide and coordinate future actions



# Governance Options





## Looking Forward: “Bold Moves”

- Execute Council Approved Vision for Waterloo Greenway
- Bolster the Red River Cultural District and the “Live Music Mile”
- Stay Focused on Cap and Stitch and IH 35 Frontage Roads
- Leverage E-TOD, Downtown Station connectivity, and future Convention Center cultural programming
- Accommodate Housing at a range of incomes



# Next Steps/ Recommended Action





## Next Steps

Milestone/Next Step	Date
Planning Commission Hearing	11/15/2022 (Postponed Action to 12/20/2022)
Planning Commission Possible Action	12/20/2022* (Anticipate postponement to January)
City Council Hearing/Consideration	12/1/2022 (Recommend postponement to 2/23/2023)
Implementation Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LDC Amendment</li><li>• DAP Amendment</li><li>• Finalize Governance</li></ul>	2023



# Recommended City Council Actions:

- Postpone Public Hearing to **February 23, 2023\***
- At February Meeting:
  - Adopt Palm District Plan as an attachment to Imagine Austin
  - Under a related agenda item, approve a resolution directing staff to:
    - Initiate focused amendment to Downtown Austin Plan
    - Initiate focused amendments to Land Development Code related to setbacks and development standards along Waller Creek/Waterloo Greenway

*\*amendments to Imagine Austin require Planning Commission action*



**HOUSING &  
PLANNING**

# Thank You

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

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