



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners
From: Stevie Greathouse, Housing and Planning Department
Date: November 1, 2022
Subject: Palm District Plan Adoption

This memo provides a brief synopsis of the Palm District Initiative planning process.

In 2019, City Council Resolution No. 20190523-029 directed staff to develop a small area plan for the eastern edge of Downtown: the Palm District. The planning process formally kicked off in May 2021, and staff has engaged community through a number of methods, including:

- SpeakUpAustin! website (<https://www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict>)
- On-line and paper surveys in English and Spanish
- A Palm District on-line interactive map
- Social Media and E-mail newsletter
- Courtesy notification postcard to residents and businesses
- June 2021 Virtual Community Visioning Forums
- July 2021 American Institute of Architects Virtual Design Workshops
- Recordings of all the virtual events to the SpeakUpAustin! website
- Ongoing, targeted outreach to Austin's Mexican American community leaders and longtime residents through interviews and focus groups.

To summarize the collective results of all of these engagement efforts, Housing and Planning staff created the *Listening Report: What We Heard During the Visioning Phase*. Staff next reviewed and analyzed the community input to develop the draft plan's major themes. Their findings were released in February 2022 in the *Draft Vision Framework*.

In August 2022, a series of four in-person workshops, hosted by the Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA), were held at the Neal Kocurek Memorial Austin Convention Center. A design team from Asakura Robinson led community stakeholders through several scenario planning exercises. Based on those results, through conversations with stakeholders, and a review of previous plan materials, the consultant team developed scenarios based on three different themes: Live, Work, and Play. Staff solicited input on those scenarios through a public survey. The Palm District Plan includes a preferred scenario that aligns with the Vision Framework and is guided by public input.

Housing and Planning Department staff are briefing the following boards and commissions about the draft Palm District Plan prior to Council consideration:

- Small Area Planning Joint Committee
- Environmental Commission
- Downtown Commission
- Parks Board
- Design Commission
- Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission
- African American Resource Advisory Commission
- Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Board
- Historic Landmark Commission.