

Palm District Planning Initiative

Planning Commission
6/27/2023



**PALM
DISTRICT
PLANNING**



Content

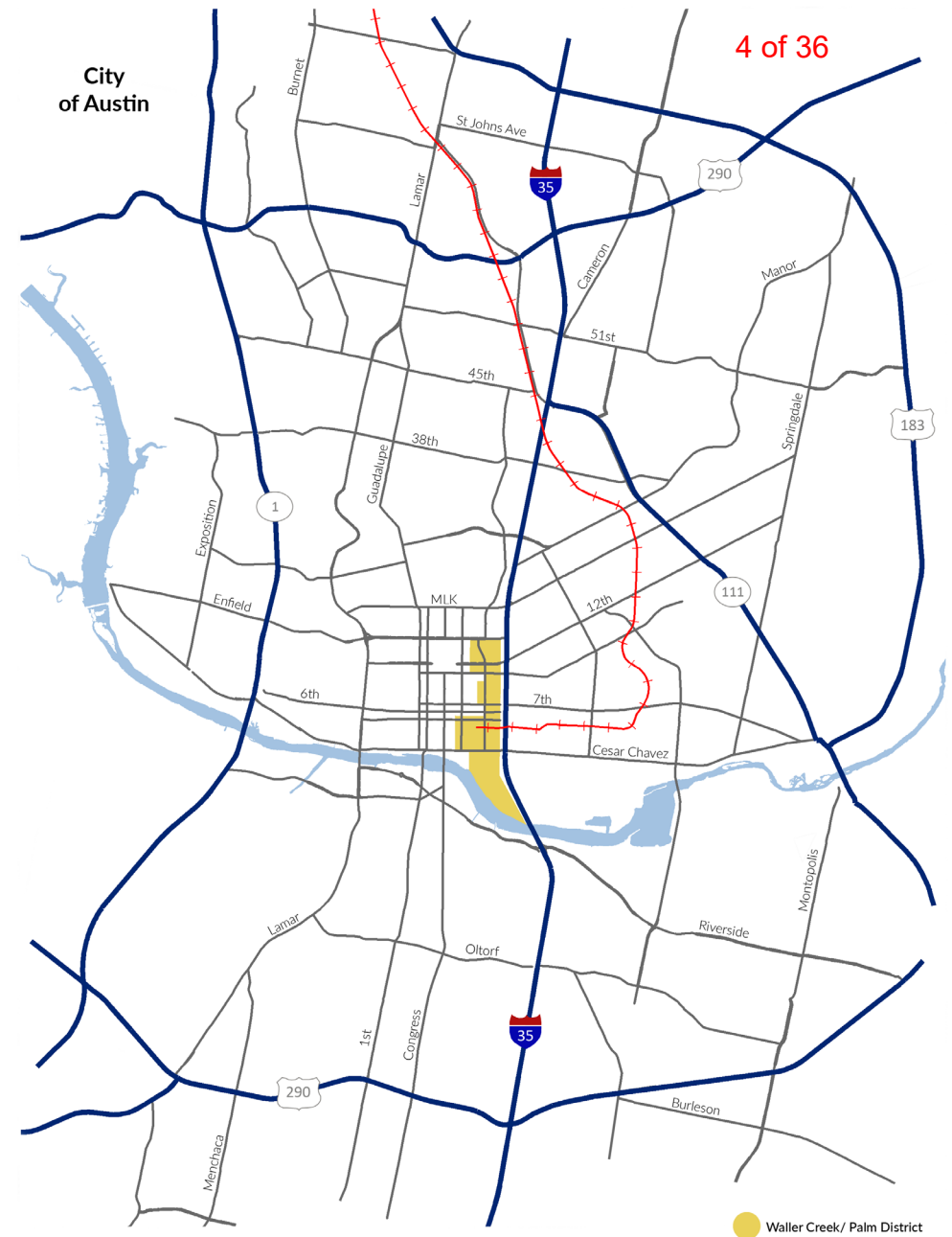
- Background
- Engagement
- Plan Overview
- Adoption and Next Steps



Background



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





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



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





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



Project Team

Project Leadership:

- Planning Department, Long Range Planning

Project Support:

- Urban Design Division
- Historic Preservation Office, Austin History Center
- Communications Team, Communications and Public Information Office
- Martha Cotera (Information Systems DBA)
- Downtown Austin Alliance + Asakura Robinson + AIA Austin

Coordinating Departments:

- Convention Center
- Economic Development
- Real Estate
- Austin Transportation
- Parks and Recreation
- Watershed Protection
- Office of Sustainability
- Equity Office



Partners/Key Stakeholders

- *Downtown Austin Alliance*
- *Waterloo Greenway*
- *Travis County*
- *Capital Metro*
- *American Institute of Architects*
- *UT School of Architecture*
- *Texas Department of Transportation*
- *Preservation Austin*
- *Visit Austin*
- *Our Austin Story*
- *The Trail Foundation*
- *Travis County Historical Commission*
- *The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce*
- *Housing Authority of the City of Austin*
- *Capital City Innovation*
- *Movability*
- *East Sixth Street Public Improvement District*
- *Project Connect Advisory Net*
- *Hispanic Austin Leadership*
- *Hispanic Advocates Business Leadership of Austin*
- *The Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association*
- *ESB-MACC*
- *Mexic-Arte*
- *La Peña*
- *The Red River Cultural District*
- *La Raza Roundtable*
- *The Rainey Neighbors Association*
- *The East Cesar Chavez NPCT*
- *The Rainey Business Coalition*
- *The Town Lake Neighborhood Association*
- *The Austin History Center Association*
- *The Greater Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*
- *City of Austin Boards and Commissions*
- *....and more*

	2019	2020				2021				2022				2023		
	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Initiation																
Phase 1: Pre-Planning																
Planning Team Meetings																
Key Stakeholder Meetings																
Board and Commission Briefings																
AIA Visit																
Existing Conditions Report																
Phase 2: Visioning																
Kick Off (website, press release, mailed postcard, lawnsigns, etc)																
Visioning Forums																
AIA National Virtual Meetings and Recommendation																
Targeted East Austin Engagement																
Listening Report																
Draft Vision																
Phase 3: Scenario Planning																
Scenario Planning Workshops																
Scenarios Survey																
Phase 4: Review																
Public Review Draft																
Recommended Draft																
Council Work Session																
Planning Commission Review																
Adoption																

Original Goal: 12/1/2022-----> 7/20/2023



Engagement



Participants

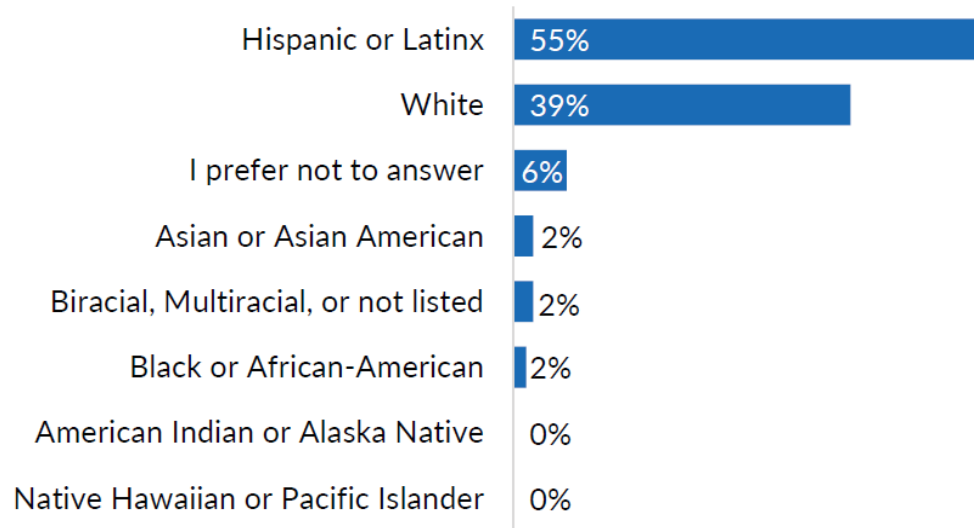
- **Visits to SpeakUp Austin! Webpage: 3,600**
- **Survey Responses: 700+ (3 Surveys)**
- **Visioning Forum Attendees: 150+**
- **Targeted East Austin Outreach: 75+ (Individuals and Organizations)**
- **AIA Event Participants: 60+**
- **Interactive Map Responses: 25+**

Palm District Webpage: www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict

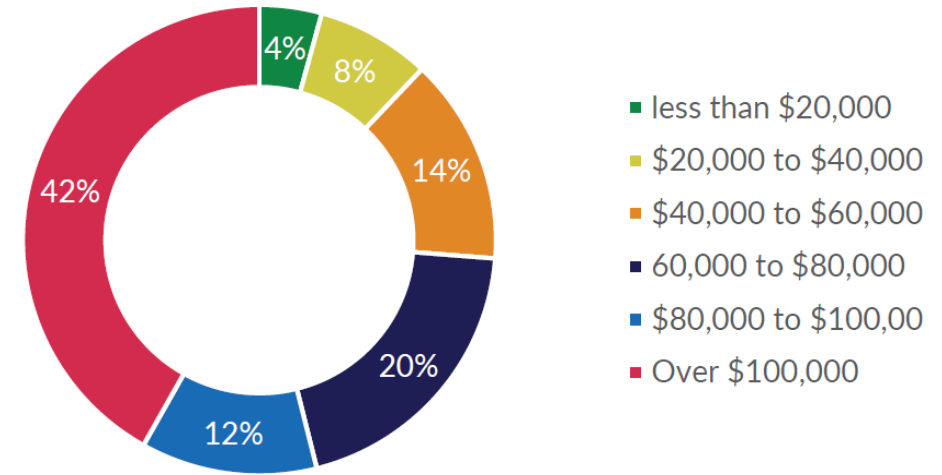
Survey Demographics

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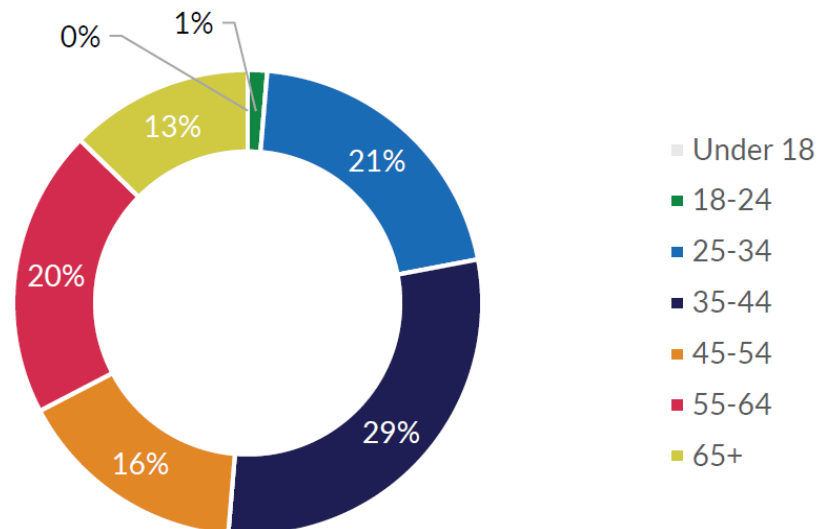
Race and Ethnicity



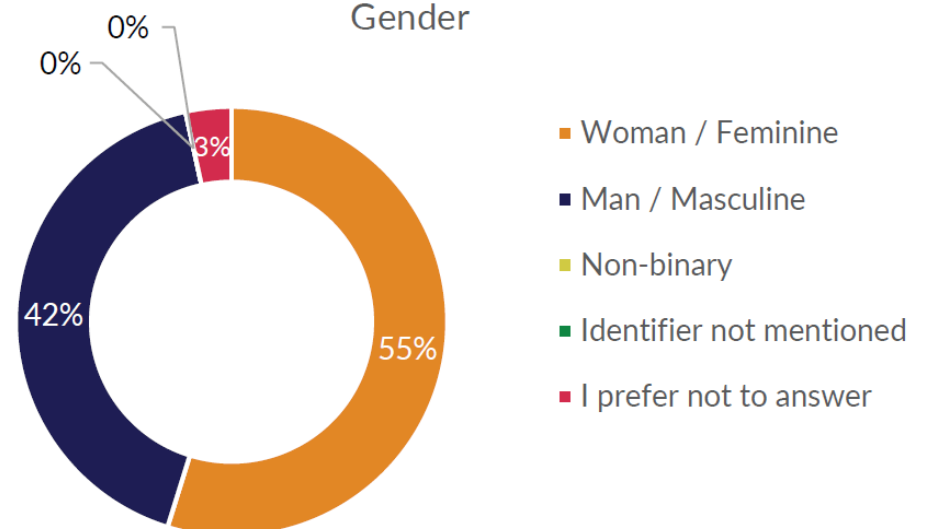
Household Income



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 (AIA) Team

AIA Communities by Design



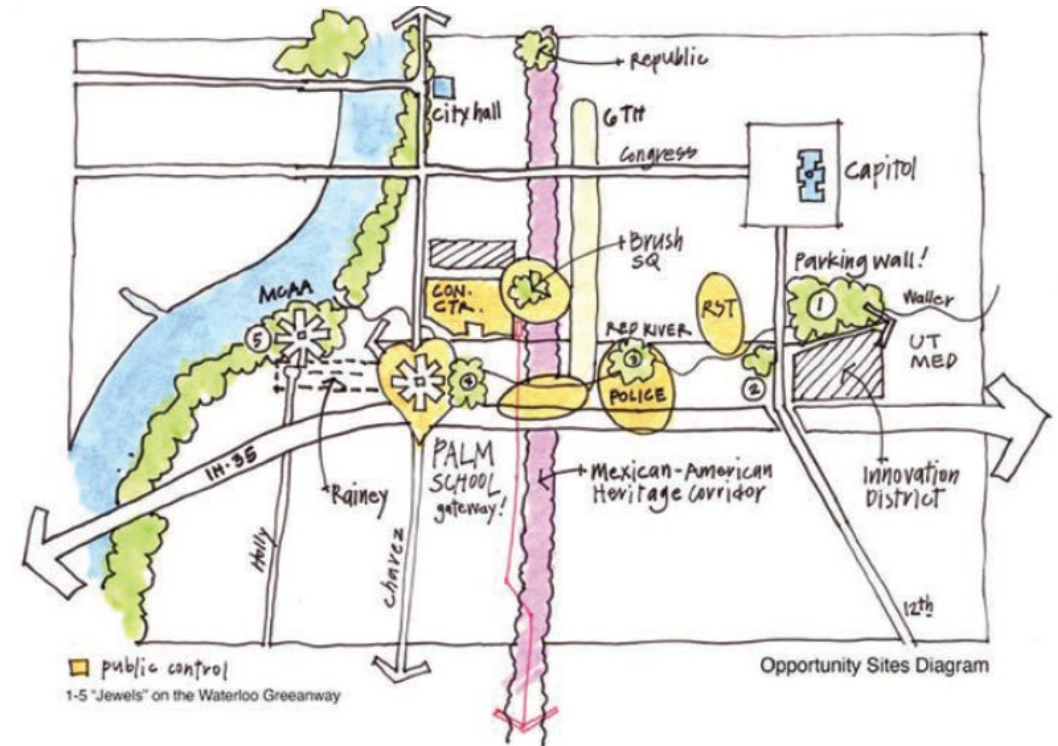
1735 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

- Cheryl Morgan, FAIA, Birmingham, Alabama (Team Leader)
- Rick Reinhard, Washington DC
- Sherry Okun-Rudnak, MA, LEED-AP, California
- Desiree Aranda, Phoenix, AZ
- Paola Capo, AIA Communities by Design Staff
- Erin Simmons, AIA Communities by Design Staff
- Joel Mills, Senior Director AIA Communities by Design

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.





Draft Plan

VISION

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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.

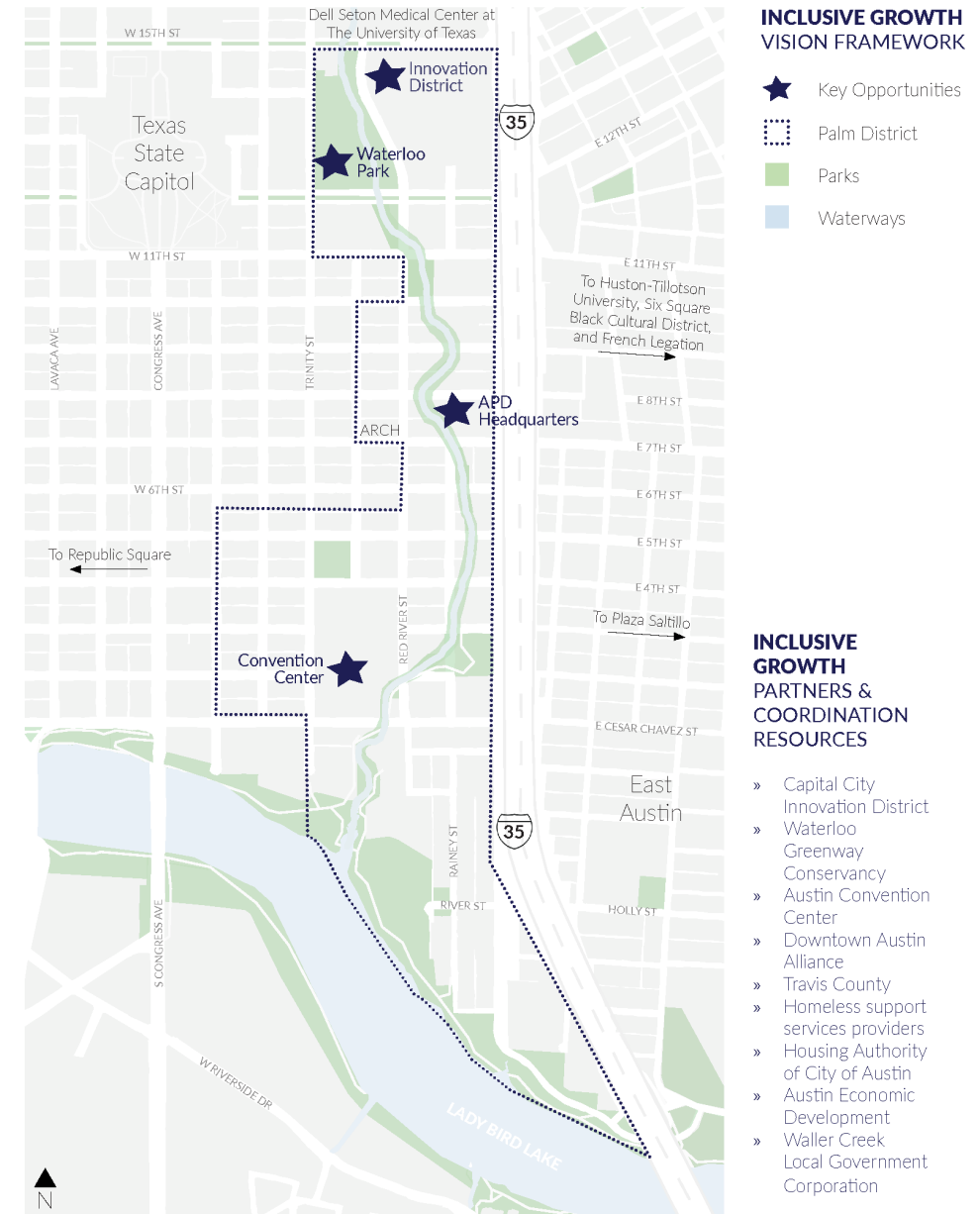


Creativity and innovation are cultivated, and people from Austin and beyond are welcome to live, relax, work, play, learn, and connect with others.



INCLUSIVE GROWTH 20 of 36

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

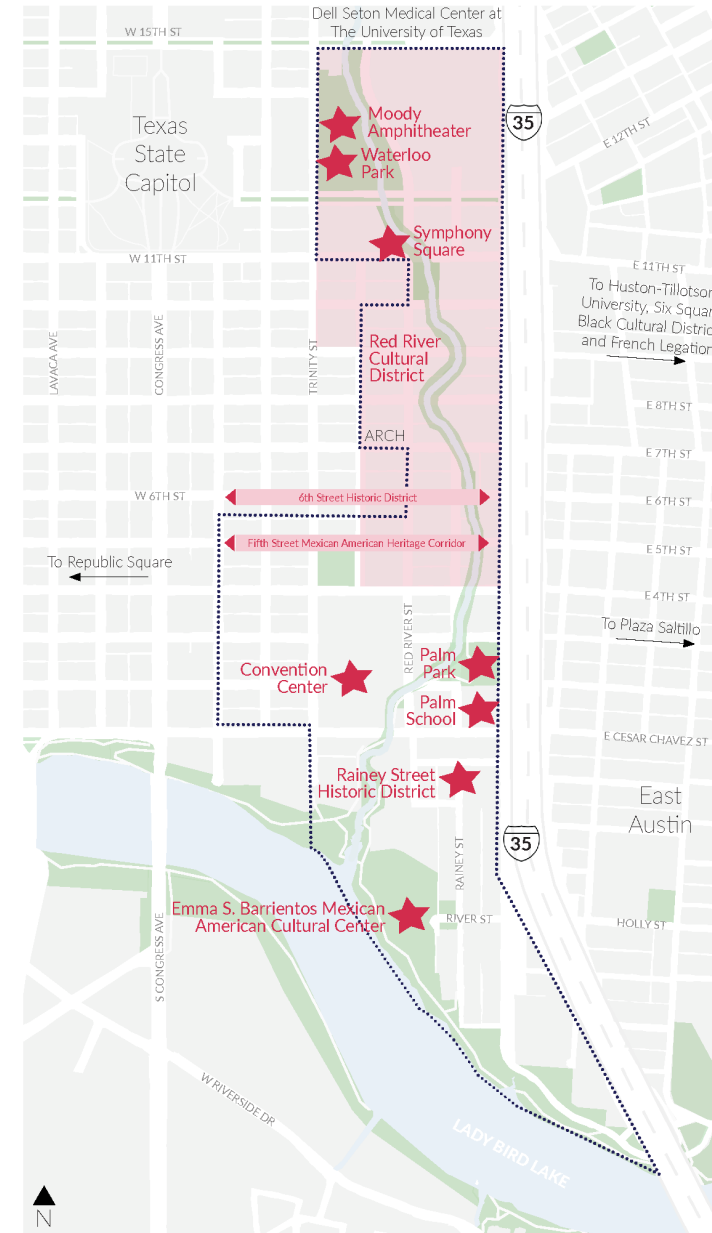




CULTURE

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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

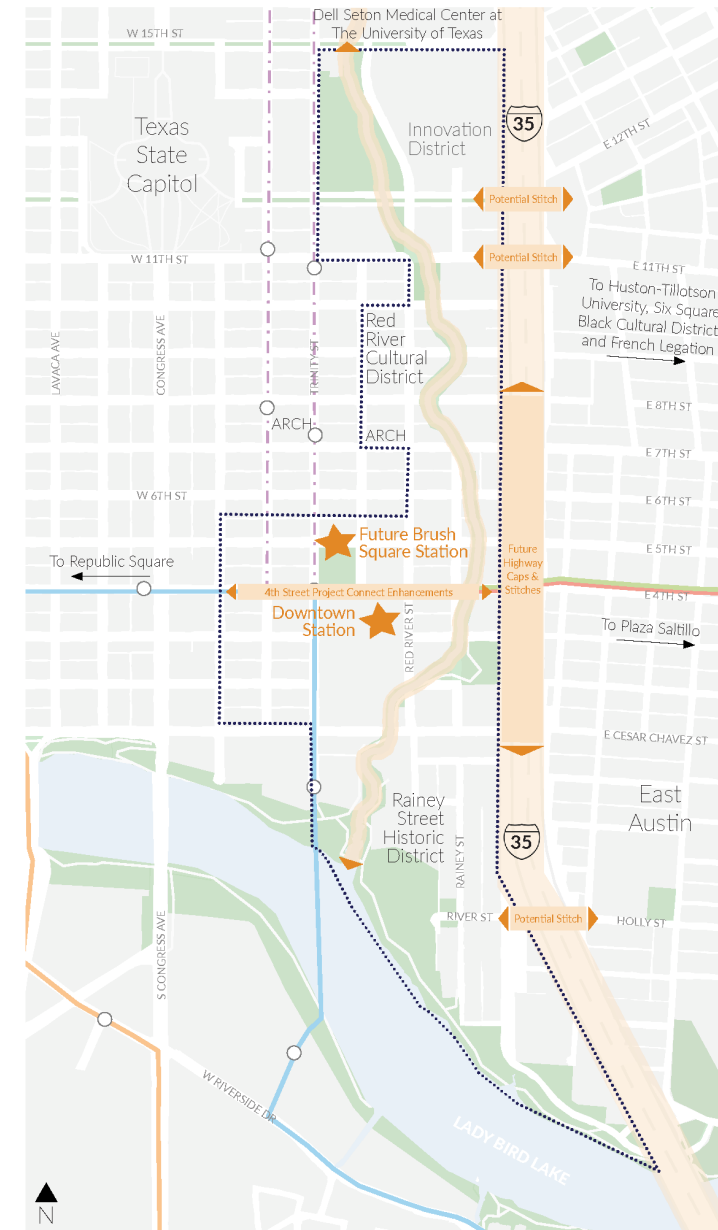
- » Austin Convention Center
- » Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center
- » George Washington Carver Museum
- » Huston-Tillotson University
- » Six Square Cultural District
- » Red River Cultural District
- » Mexic-Arte
- » La Peña
- » Tejano Trails
- » Waterloo Greenway Conservancy
- »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



CONNECTION

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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

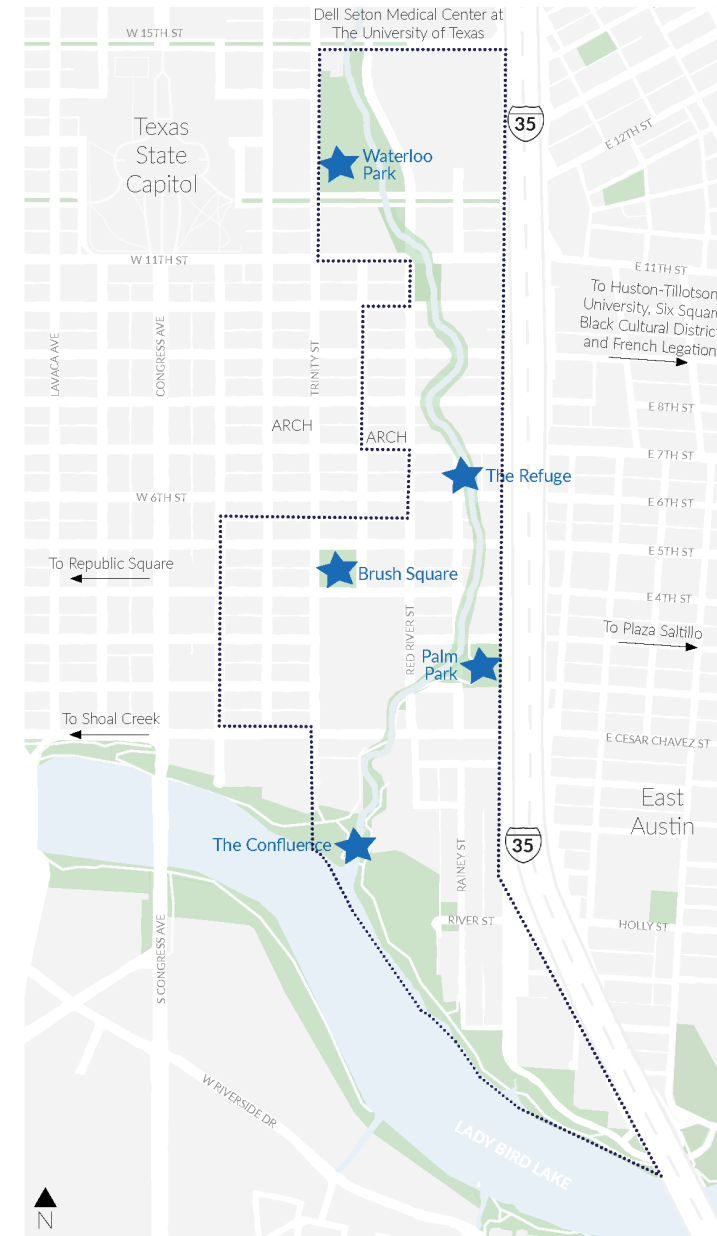
- » CapMetro
- » Austin Transit Partnership
- » Waterloo Greenway Conservancy
- » Austin Transportation
- » Downtown Austin Alliance
- » Austin Energy
- » Austin Watershed Protection
- » Austin Water
- » Austin Parks & Recreation
- » Waller Creek Local Government Corporation



NATURE

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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....

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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

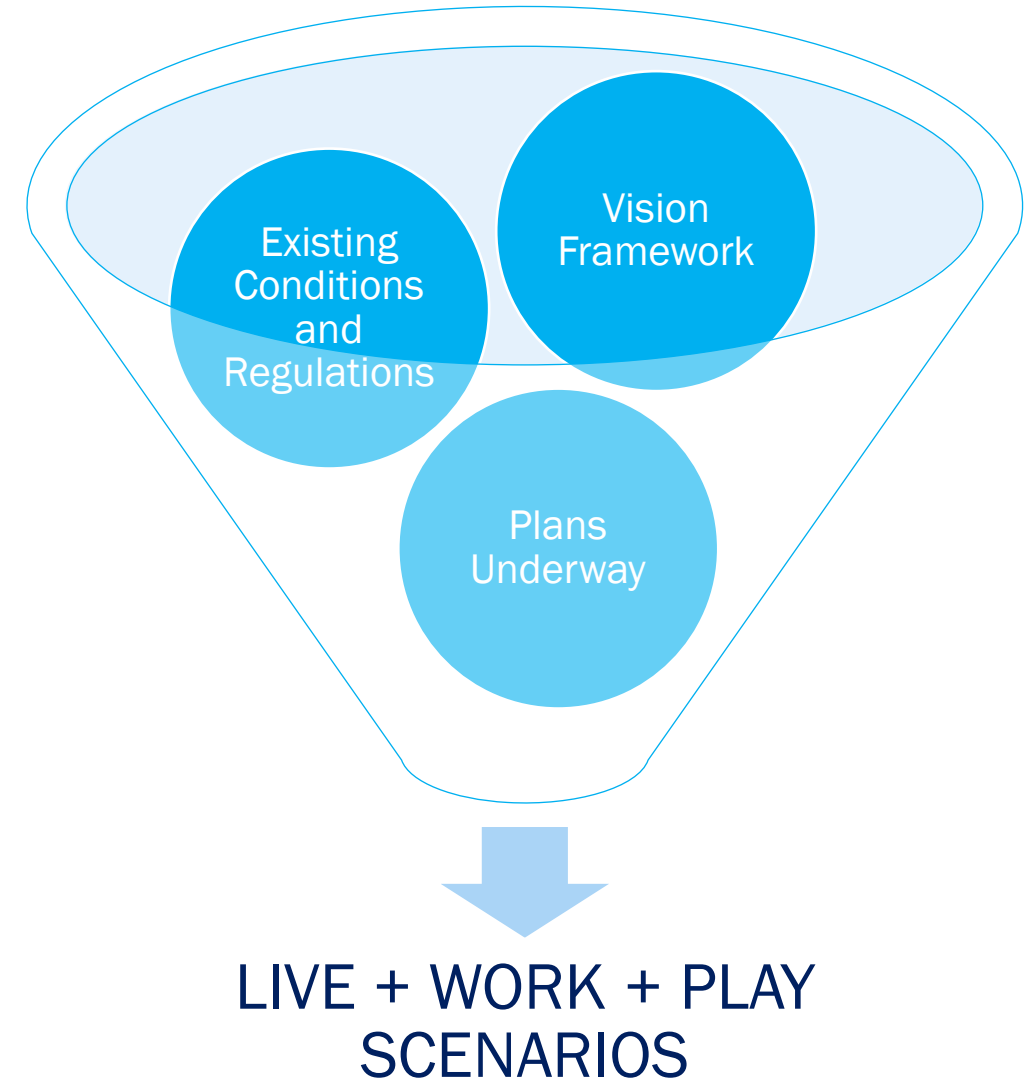
Leverage the lowering and replacement of I-35 to create better and more attractive connections between East Austin and the District.

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





LEGEND

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Goods / Services | Residential | Cultural | Connectivity | Other |
| Food/ Restaurants | Low Income | Music Venue | Streetcar | Parking |
| Bar/Pub | Market Rate | Theatre | Waterloo Greenway Trail | Project Connect Stations |
| Food Truck/ Street Vendors | Mixed Income | Visitors Center | Project Connect Blue Line | Streetcar Improvements |
| Retail | Hotel | Open Space | Project Connect Red Line | Sidewalk/Streetscape Improvements |
| Health Services | Office | Park | Project Connect Green Line | |
| | Artist Studio/ Creative Office | Trail Connections | Project Connect Purple Line | |
| | Mixed Use: Office, Hotel, Residential | | Project Connect Gold Line | |



Recommendations

Timing → 1-3 YEARS

Sponsor Theme

#	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

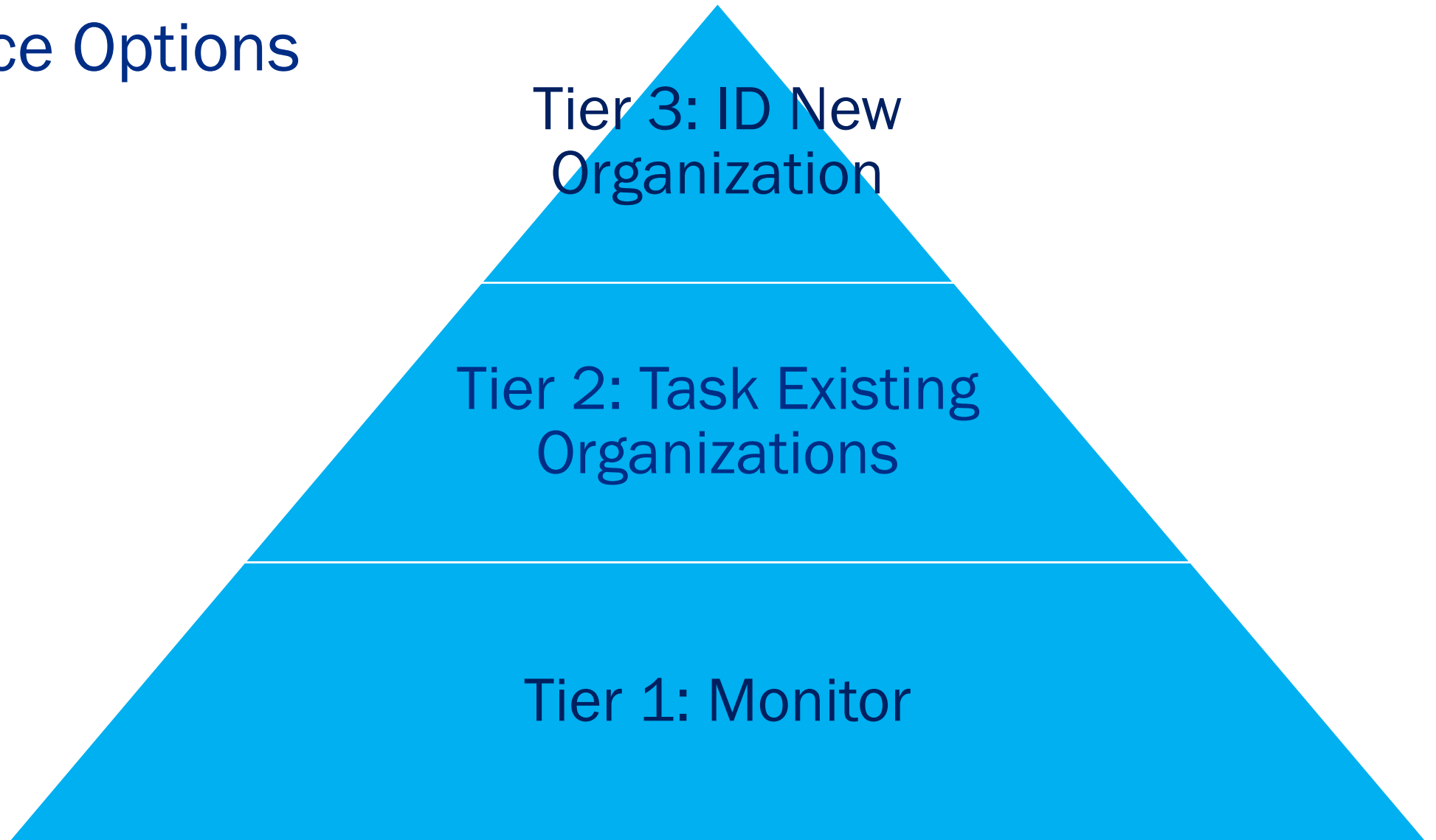


Looking Forward: “Bold Moves”

- 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



Governance Options





Recommendation/Next Steps



Recommended City Council Action:

- At July 20, 2023 Council Meeting:
 - Adopt Palm District Plan as an attachment to Imagine Austin (amendments to Imagine Austin require Planning Commission action)
 - Under a related agenda item, approve a companion resolution :
 - 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
 - Provide implementation governance direction
 - Initiate other activities required to implement the plan



Adoption Process to Date

Milestone	Date
Planning Commission Hearings	11/15/2022 (held hearing and postponed discussion to 12/20/2022) 12/20/2022 (postponed discussion to 1/10/2022) 1/10/2023 (appointed working group and postponed discussion to 2/14/2023) 2/14/2023 postponed discussion to 4/25/2023 to allow additional engagement 4/25/2023 postponed discussion to 5/30/2023 to allow more time for working group engagement 5/30/2023 postponed discussion to 6/27/2023 to complete engagement, develop working group recommendation
Council Work Session	11/29/2022
Council Hearing	12/1/2022 (Postponed to 2/23/23) 2/23/2023 (Postponed to to 5/18/23) 5/18/2023 (Postponed to 7/20/23)



Next Steps

Milestone	Date
Planning Commission Hearing	6/27/2023 (and/or 7/11/2023)
City Council Hearing	7/20/2023 Public hearing and possible action
Implementation Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LDC Amendment• DAP Amendment• Finalize Governance• Additional actions based on companion resolution	2023-2024



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What's Next?

- IH 35 Reconstruction and Cap and Stitch (Lead: Corridor Program Office)
- Project Connect (Lead: Austin Transit Partnership)
- Convention Center Reconstruction (Lead: Convention Center)
- Waterloo Greenway Phase II and III, including Palm Park (Lead: Waller Creek LGC)
- Palm School Site Visioning (Lead: Travis County)
- Red River Cultural District and Mexican American Heritage Corridor (Lead: Economic Development Department)
- ESB-MACC Phase II (Lead: Parks and Recreation Department)
- Austin Core Transportation Plan (Lead: Transportation and Public Works)
- Regulatory Changes (Lead: Planning Department)
- APD Headquarters Site (Lead: Financial Services/Real Estate)



Thank You

<https://www.speakupaustin.org/palmdistrict>

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