



HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20240501-26

Date: May 1, 2024

Subject: FY 2024-25 Budget Recommendation

Motioned by: Featherston

Seconded by: Heimsath

Recommendation

Allocation of funds to the Historic Preservation Office. See attached document.

Description of Recommendation to Council

Recommendation by the Historic Landmark Commission to Council regarding the FY 2024-25 budget.

Rationale

See attached document.

Vote

For: Alvarez, Featherston, Koch, Evans, McWhorter, Grogan, Rubio, Larosche

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Castillo, Dudley, Heimsath

Vote: 8-0

Attest:

Sam Fahnestock
Staff liaison, Historic Landmark Commission



FY 2024-25 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION

Historic Landmark Commission Recommendation 20240501-26

WHEREAS the City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission was established in 1974 to promote historic preservation activities in Austin and advise the Austin City Council on matters related to historic preservation; and

WHEREAS the purpose of the Historic Landmark Commission is to prepare and periodically revise an inventory of the structures and areas that may be eligible for designation as historic landmarks, most recently completed in 1984; prepare, review, and propose amendments to a citywide Historic Preservation Plan, last adopted in 1981; and review requests to establish or remove a historic designation and make recommendations on the requests to the Land Use Commission; and

WHEREAS the Historic Landmark Commission and Historic Preservation Office seek to respond to 21st-century challenges with improved and new policies, programs, and tools, including transparent and accessible historic review processes, inclusive community outreach, and incentives that meet both historic preservation and equity goals; and

WHEREAS the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) provides technical support and manages an information network to help local commissions accomplish their preservation objectives, and membership is \$150 per commission member; and

WHEREAS historic surveys are a vital resource

WHEREAS the Historic Landmark Commission created a 26-member community working group, the Preservation Plan Working Group, on June 28, 2021, to develop a draft of an equity-based historic preservation plan between July 2021 and June 2022 (phase 1 of the planning process); and

WHEREAS the Preservation Plan Working Group worked diligently to complete the draft plan during monthly meetings, drawing on research from national best practices, employing an equity evaluation framework, and incorporating feedback from a community heritage survey, focus groups, a Technical Advisory Group of City staff, and the Preservation Plan Committee of the Historic Landmark Commission; and

WHEREAS phase 2 of the planning process includes extensive community engagement around the draft preservation plan, with community members, organizational and institutional stakeholders, board and commission members, and others invited to learn about the topics, prioritize recommendations, identify gaps, identify potential partners for implementation, and estimate costs for priority recommendations before the plan is presented to City Council for adoption; and

WHEREAS Council allocated \$160,000 to phase 2 of the Equity-Based Preservation Plan in the FY2022-23 budget, including stipends for approximately 12 community ambassadors, and continued that support in FY2023-24; and

WHEREAS the community ambassadors play important roles in facilitating effective, creative outreach to prioritize communities and groups that have been historically marginalized in public decision-making and historic preservation activities, such as communities of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people, low-income households, and renters; and

WHEREAS the community ambassador program for the preservation plan is modeled on the successful Community Climate and Rain to River community ambassador programs in the Office of Sustainability and the Watershed Protection Department; and

WHEREAS the Office of Sustainability and the Watershed Protection Department have required a full-time staff member to coordinate their community ambassador programs, and strongly recommend this type of robust support for ambassadors when advising other programs; and

WHEREAS continuing broad, inclusive community engagement after the plan is adopted will be essential to ensure that the Equity-Based Preservation Plan is able to meet its vision to “actively engage communities in protecting and sharing important places and stories... [to] use the past to create a shared sense of belonging and to shape an equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and economically vital future for all”; and

WHEREAS primary goals of the draft plan require meaningful, ongoing community engagement, including telling Austin’s full history, recognizing cultural heritage, engaging communities equitably, and engaging new partners; and

WHEREAS the Historic Preservation Office does not have the staff capacity to provide the recommended full-time support for the community ambassador program or continuing community engagement priorities in the plan; and

WHEREAS neighborhood surveys are an invaluable tool used by the commission to identify areas and properties worthy of historic zoning, and additional funding to facilitate surveys in previously unsurveyed areas of Austin that may contain historic resources would greatly benefit both the Historic Landmark Commission and the City of Austin as a whole.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Landmark Commission recommends that the Council allocate funds to the Planning Department to continue to support the development and implementation of the Equity-Based Preservation Plan via a staff position to coordinate the community ambassador program and support other community engagement, and allocate \$1,650 dollars for NAPC Memberships for each of the members of the Historic Landmark Commission, and increase funding for surveys of potentially historic neighborhoods and properties.