



# Economic and Cultural District Framework Policy

## Economic Development Department

June 17, 2024

# History



# City of Austin and Economic and Cultural Districts

- The City of Austin lacks a holistic approach to the recognition and development of Economic and Cultural Districts
- Specific “District” Planning/Policy’s Recognized include:
  - Small Area Planning
  - Historic District Designation
  - Public Improvement Districts



# Prior District Council Actions

- Resolution No. 20071213-058 establishes the African American Cultural Arts District, the City of Austin's first Cultural District
- Resolution No. 20110825-067 establishes the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Mexican American Heritage Corridor
- Resolution No. 20131017-036 establishes the Red River Cultural District
- Resolution No. 20230702-128 establishes the South Shore Cultural District



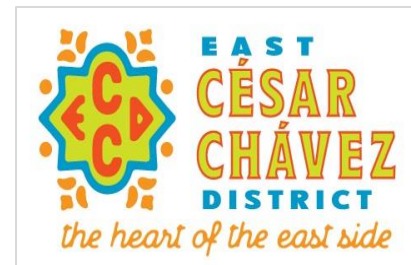
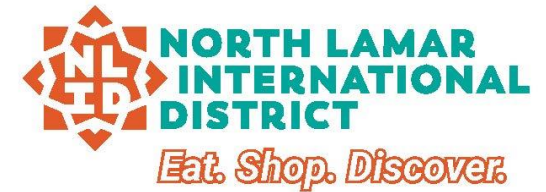
# Souly Austin

## Program Purpose:

Souly Austin is a place-based economic development program focused on creating and retaining strong, vibrant, culturally rich and diverse neighborhood business districts throughout Austin through the development of Merchants Associations.

## Program Details

- 2014 Program began with a focus of forming Neighborhood Business District Merchant Associations
- \$362,500 annual allocation (2015)
- 6 Neighborhood Business District Merchant Associations formed to date
- Intent to onboard 2 new districts during 2019



# Purpose



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- Framework aims to leverage economic benefits of concentrated activity in defined districts.
- Districts serve as tourist attractions, offering diverse experiences.
- Framework provides guidance for organizing and resourcing economic and cultural districts in Austin.
- Well-defined districts support thriving commerce and cultural preservation.
- Unified management, branding, programming, and improvements amplify economic impact and foster synergy among stakeholders.

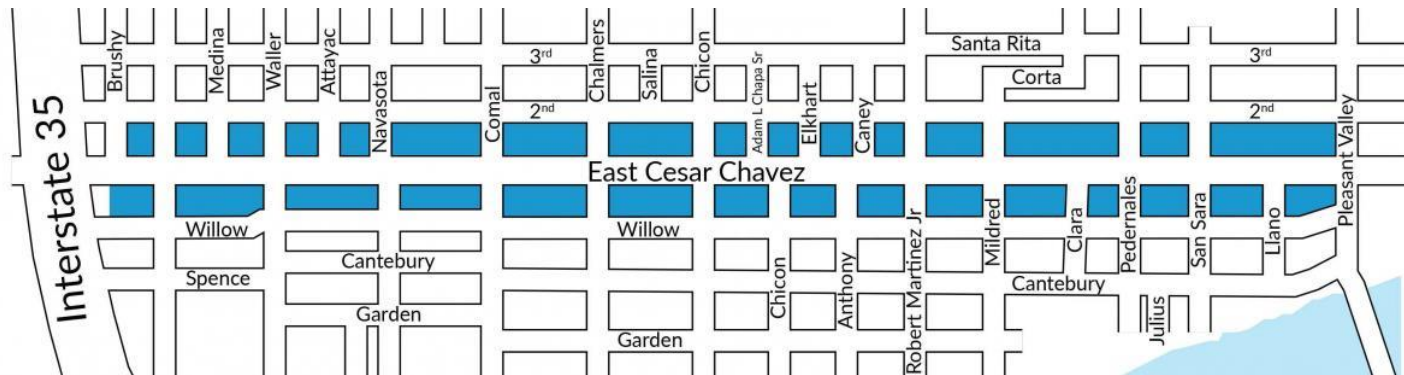


# Defining Districts



# Economic and Cultural District Definition

- Economic and Cultural districts (ECDs) are compact areas ( $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile) rich in creative, cultural, and commercial assets.
- ECDs contain concentrations of creative, cultural, entertainment, heritage, or commercial assets that contribute to neighborhood supportive commerce
- ECDs make use of a variety of economic, value capture, and focused regulatory tools
- ECDs are typically stewarded by district management entities independent of the City of Austin.



# Types of Districts

- **Economic** - Contain a high proportion of commercial, entertainment, or cultural uses that help anchor economic activity to neighborhoods and cities
- **Entertainment/Music** - Characterized by a high number or proportion of live music venues
- **Culture and Arts** - Characterized by a high number or proportion of arts and culture uses, or by the presence of major arts and culture anchors.
- **Heritage** - Characterized by significant presence of historic and heritage sites, with local, state, or national recognition.
- **Small Business** - Have more diversity of businesses and often include a high proportion of restaurants, personal services, niche retail, and other “main street” style, pedestrian-oriented businesses.



# Value & Guiding Principles



# Value and Guiding Principles

- Community Empowerment and Stewardship - Foster grassroots engagement and organization
- Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Identity - Ensure that cultural assets, traditions, and stories are honored
- Equitable Access to Resources and Opportunities - Implement policies and initiatives that address systemic barriers to access
- Sustainable Development and Environmental Stewardship - Integrate sustainable practices into district planning and operations
- Economic Clustering - Promote collaboration, networking, and shared resources, fostering growth and resilience within the local economy



# Policy Alignments



# Policy Alignments

- Imagine Austin
- Music and Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Recommendation
- Healthy Food Initiative
- Chapter 380 Policy
- Strategic Housing Blueprint
- Complete Streets
- Cultural Tourism Plan
- Thriving In Place/Cultural Asset Mapping Project
- Neighborhood Actions Plans



# District Development Services



# District Development Services



# Recognition Process



# Recognition Process

- **Economic Districts**
  - Letter of Intent
  - Letters of Support
  - Demonstration of Organizational Capacity
  - District Strategy/Implementation Plan
  - Recognition
- **Cultural Districts**
  - Letter of Intent
  - Letters of Support
  - Demonstration of Organizational Capacity
  - Cultural Asset Map
  - District Strategy/Implementation Plan
  - Recognition/Establishing Ordinance



# Current Initiatives



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- **African American Cultural Heritage District**
  - Resolution No. 20071213-058
- **5<sup>th</sup> Street Mexican American Heritage Corridor**
  - Resolution No. 20110825-067
- **Red River Cultural District**
  - Resolution No. 20131017-036
- **South Shore Cultural District**
  - Resolution No. 20230720-128
- **Souly Austin District Development (FY19 Commitments)**
  - South First Street , Aldrich Street at Mueller
- **Existing Economic and Cultural Districts**
  - East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, East Cesar Chavez Street, North Lamar International District, South Congress



# Ongoing Challenges



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- Unfunded IFCs
- Limited Financial Capacity
- Limited Staffing Capacity
- Limited Community Capacity
- Lack of Business/District Preservation/Resiliency Tools





Questions?

Economic Development Department

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