

- 30 (5) building rehabilitation projects and heritage tourism are powerful economic
31 generators resulting in job creation and increased tax revenue; and
- 32 (6) the City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission (the Commission) was
33 established in 1974 to develop, oversee, and advise on historic preservation
34 policies, guidelines, and regulations; and
- 35 (7) the Commission's purpose is to develop, review, and propose amendments to a
36 citywide Historic Preservation Plan, which was last adopted more than 40 years
37 ago in 1981 when Austin's population was less than 350,000 people; and
- 38 (8) the Commission is tasked with reviewing requests to enact or remove a historic
39 designation, making recommendations on historic designation-related requests to
40 the Land Use Commission; and developing and periodically revising a city-wide
41 historic resource inventory of structures and areas that may be eligible for historic
42 designation; and
- 43 (9) the Commission has successfully recommended designation of 676 historic
44 landmarks and eight historic districts, guided changes to designated properties,
45 supported historic landmark and historic district owners in the maintenance of
46 individual properties and historic districts, and recommended heritage tourism
47 grants for projects benefitting tourists and convention delegates; and
- 48 (10) the Historic Preservation Office in the City of Austin Planning Department
49 encourages the preservation of Austin's historic buildings, structures, sites, and
50 districts by supporting the Historic Landmark Commission, facilitating historic
51 zoning cases, reviewing alterations and additions to historic properties, assessing
52 the eligibility of older properties for potential historic designation, providing
53 feedback on heritage tourism grant proposals, and engaging community members
54 in local heritage initiatives; and
- 55 (11) the Commission and Historic Preservation Office have long recognized the need
56 to redefine and expand the role of historic preservation to better meet the
57 community's needs and to shift to a proactive approach as opposed to a reactive
58 approach; and
- 59 (12) City preservation efforts, in spite of many successes, have historically not
60 reflected the full history of the city and its many diverse communities, and
61 Austin's rapid growth has led to high development pressures, a rising number of
62 demolition applications, and increasing displacement of longtime communities;
63 and

- 64 (13) national preservation efforts and best practices in peer cities emphasize the value
65 of historic and cultural resources that reflect more diverse histories and
66 communities, tools to recognize and support cultural heritage such as legacy
67 businesses, preservation's role in environmental sustainability and affordability,
68 and more inclusive community engagement; and
- 69 (14) the Commission and the Historic Preservation Office seek to respond to 21st-
70 century challenges with improved and new policies, programs, and tools,
71 including transparent and accessible historic review processes, inclusive
72 community outreach, and incentives that meet both historic preservation and
73 equity goals; and
- 74 (15) on June 28, 2021, the Commission established a 26-member Preservation Plan
75 Working Group (the Working Group), representative of Austin's racial and ethnic
76 diversity, hailing from 19 ZIP codes, and including one third renters, to develop the
77 draft Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan (the Plan); and
- 78 (16) the Working Group diligently completed the draft Plan during monthly meetings,
79 drawing on research from national best practices, employing an equity evaluation
80 framework, and incorporating feedback from 275 community members and
81 stakeholders through a community heritage survey, focus groups, a Technical
82 Advisory Group of City staff, and the Commission's Preservation Plan Committee;
83 and
- 84 (17) Council allocated \$160,000 in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget to support robust
85 community engagement around the draft Plan; and
- 86 (18) broad, inclusive outreach and engagement around the draft Plan reached more
87 than 2,400 people throughout Austin to review and comment on the Plan's goals
88 and recommendations, through 127 targeted events and leveraging outreach by
89 community ambassadors and organizational partners; and
- 90 (19) communities of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ communities, and
91 renters were strongly represented in Plan engagement participants, amplifying the
92 voices of those who have not historically been part of discussions about historic
93 preservation; and
- 94 (20) the Working Group and Commission revised and finalized the Plan based on
95 public feedback in summer 2024; and

- 96 (21) the Plan is a set of 14 goals and 107 recommendations for the next 10 years
97 developed by a diverse, representative group of community members with input
98 and feedback from the broader Austin community, organizational and institutional
99 stakeholders, and City staff; and
- 100 (22) the Plan’s goals and recommendations align with and support recent council
101 resolutions: equitable incentives for historic property owners (Resolution No.
102 20230323-059), streamlined relocation and deconstruction processes for older
103 buildings (Resolution No. 20231102-024), retention of unique cultural resources
104 in ETOD districts (Resolution No. 20240516-005), community-focused planning
105 centered on local heritage in 78702 (Resolution No. 20240418-076), an effective
106 Preservation Bonus (Ordinance No. 20231207-001 and Resolution No. 20240718-
107 090), updated tools for downtown development and cultural preservation
108 (Resolution No. 20240718-185), strategic use of Historic Preservation Acquisition
109 Funds (Resolution No. 20240926-069), and support for legacy businesses
110 (Ordinance No. 20240926-012); and
- 111 (23) the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan outlines historic preservation policies for
112 the City to identify, preserve, and interpret historic resources in Austin for
113 residents and visitors; and
- 114 (24) the Plan aligns with and supports Imagine Austin’s historic preservation goals and
115 recommendations and incorporating the Plan into the City’s comprehensive plan
116 will further a coordinated, strategic approach to planning for the City; and
- 117 (25) the Plan includes a number of recommendations that may be implemented in the
118 short term in response to Austin’s rapidly changing landscape and community
119 displacement pressures.

120 **PART 4.** In accordance with Article X of the Charter of the City of Austin, council
121 amends the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan by adopting the Equity-Based
122 Preservation Plan, attached as **Exhibit “A,”** to this ordinance.

123 **PART 5.** The City Council recognizes that the City is one partner of many in achieving
124 the Plan’s vision and goals, and, therefore, directs the City Manager to:

- 125 (1) Use the goals and recommendations outlined in the Plan to create a roadmap with
126 actionable steps for the City to prioritize and lead;
- 127 (2) Identify ongoing funding and partnership opportunities to implement Plan
128 recommendations; and

- 129 (3) Continue to engage and support community organizations, educational
130 institutions, local businesses, faith communities, professional stakeholder
131 organizations, historic property owners, and other community members to
132 collaboratively implement the Plan.

133 **PART 6.** The City Council directs the City Manager to identify and clearly define
134 leadership roles and responsibilities for implementation of the various recommendations
135 within the Plan, including defining metrics and measurements of success, to return to
136 Council with an update by March of 2025, and to thereafter provide annual updates on
137 the implementation of the Plan.

138 **PART 7.** The City Council directs the City Manager to begin work on strategies in the
139 Plan using available funding and staffing, including but not limited to:

- 140 (1) Designation of more landmarks and districts that represent communities that have
141 historically been marginalized to tell Austin's full history;
- 142 (2) Support of iconic longstanding legacy businesses that contribute to Austin's
143 unique character and heritage;
- 144 (3) Creation and improvement of tools for retaining existing buildings when
145 developing multiple units on a property, including the Preservation Bonus;
- 146 (4) Provision of resources for heirs' property owners and other vulnerable
147 populations;
- 148 (5) Identification of potential heritage tourism sites and support of existing heritage
149 tourism sites;
- 150 (6) City Code changes to clarify and streamline historic review and designation
151 processes; and
- 152 (7) Active exploration of how a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program
153 could successfully support preservation of smaller-scale downtown buildings,
154 commercial corridors, and historic districts in areas targeted for higher density.

155 **PART 8.** The City Manager is directed to identify funding to implement the Plan,
156 including but not limited to these near-term items:

- 157 (1) Evaluation of historic preservation incentives and any changes needed to make
158 them more effective, building on the exploration of TDR;

