



PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

Downtown Austin Historic Resources Survey

Presentation to City Council Housing & Planning Committee

Thursday, June 12, 2025



Historic Preservation Office
Planning Department
Project Sponsor



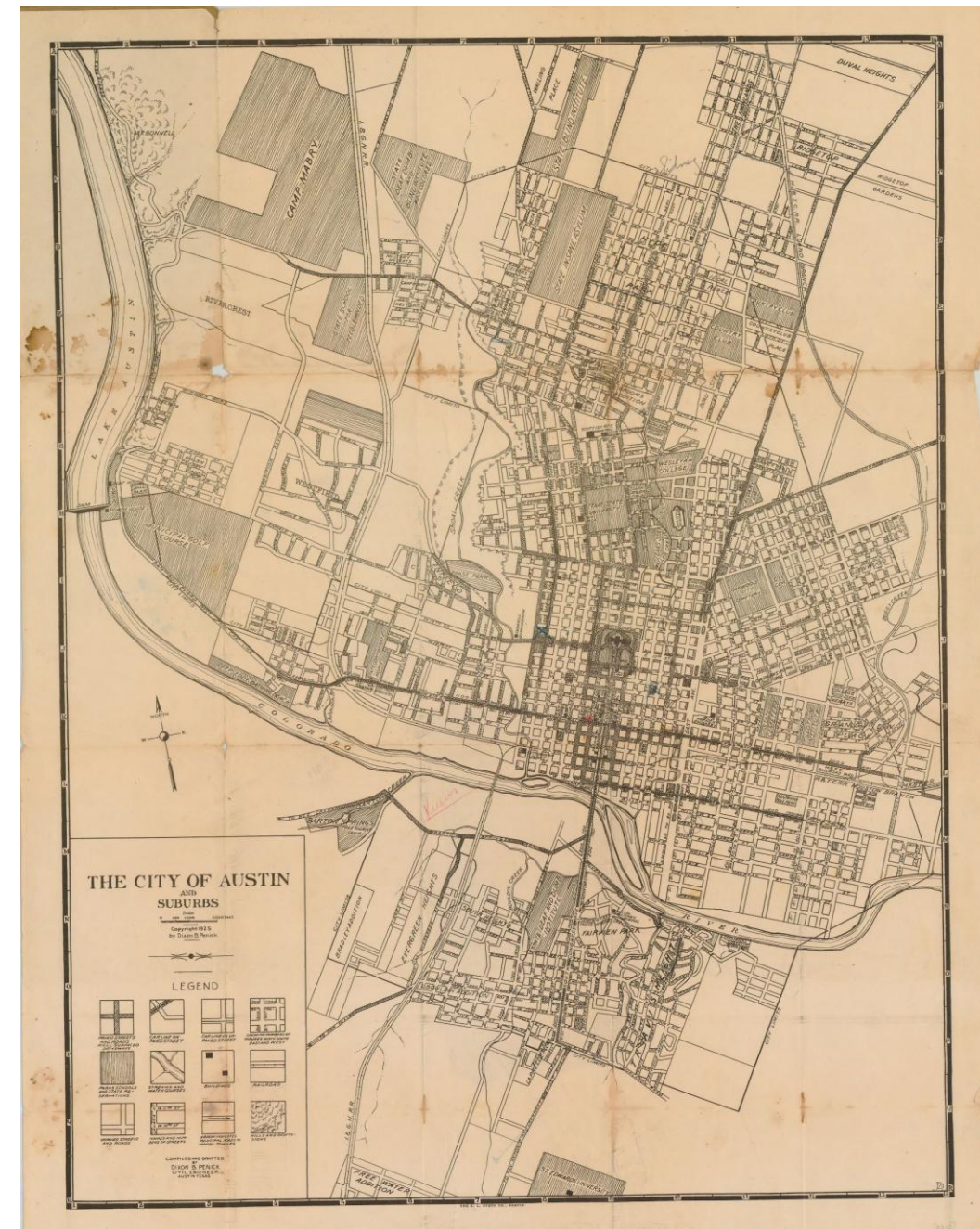
HHM & Associates
Preservation Consulting Firm

Agenda

- What are Historic Resource Surveys?
- Survey Background & Methodology
- Survey Recommendations
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Timeline & Next Steps
- Future Survey Projects

Historic Resource Surveys

- Document buildings, structures, and objects that are at least 50 years old
- Evaluate architectural character and historic associations
- Recommend **eligibility** for historic designations, including:
 - Local landmark zoning (H)
 - Local historic district zoning (HD)
 - Individual National Register listing
 - National Register historic district listing
- Are a foundational tool for historic preservation and should be updated every ten years





Historic Resource Surveys

- Support City HPO staff evaluating permit and designation applications
- Support property owners seeking historic designation
- Survey data integrated into GIS planning tools
- Identify heritage tourist sites/districts and areas of importance to underrepresented communities

Heritage Tourism Recommendations

Potential heritage tourism sites were gauged by their relationship to the tourism theme tags identified by Visit Austin (see Table 2-23 below).²

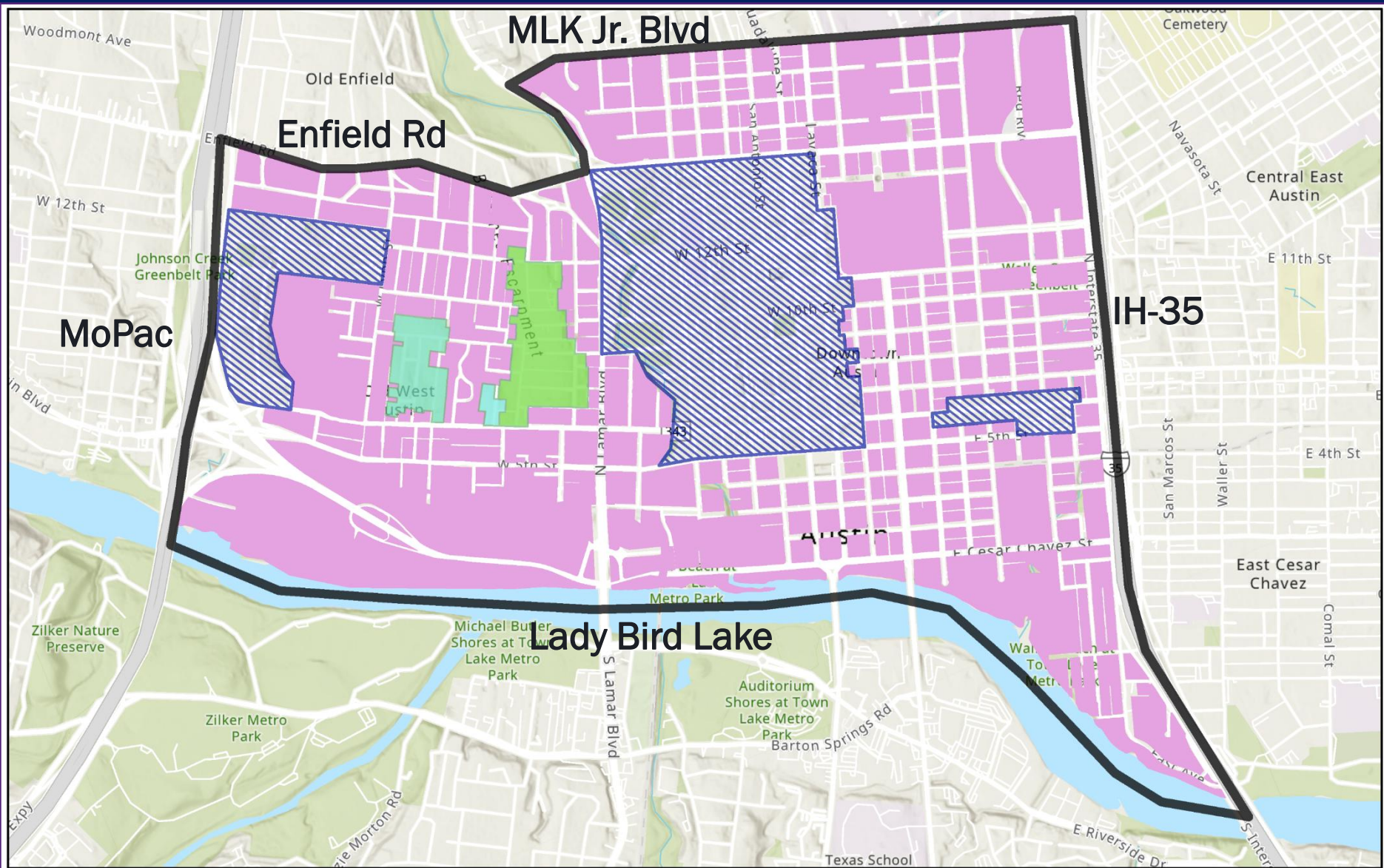
Table 2-23. Tags for the potential heritage tourism sites, grouped by theme. Note that some resources have more than one heritage tourism tag.

Tourism Tag	No. Potential Sites
Architecture	2
Arts heritage: Literature	1
Arts heritage: Music	6
Arts heritage: Visual arts	7
Cultural heritage: African American	3
Cultural heritage: German and Swedish	2
Cultural heritage: Hispanic	3
Engineering and infrastructure history: Bridges	14
Engineering and infrastructure history: Rail	1
Engineering and infrastructure history: Utilities	1
Government history	3
Legacy business: Bars and lounges	5
Legacy business: Food	10
Legacy business: Other	9
Lodging	6
Natural environment	3
Social history: Other	2
Social history: Education	1
Social history: LGBTQIA+	3
Social history: Preservation	1
Social history: Women	2
TOTAL	85

Survey Background & Methodology

- Downtown Austin was last surveyed in 1984
- 1,964 resources on 1,553 parcels surveyed
- Boundaries:
 - Enfield Rd/ MLK Jr. Blvd (north)
 - IH-35 (east)
 - Lady Bird Lake (south)
 - MoPac (west)





3/14/2025

Prior LHD boundaries - excluded from survey

Castle Hill LHD

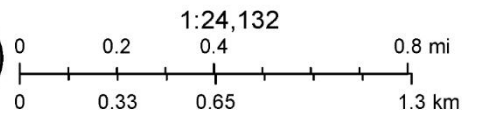
Harthan Street LHD

Smoot-Terrace Park LHD

Downtown Austin Survey - Boundary

Recently surveyed areas - excluded from survey

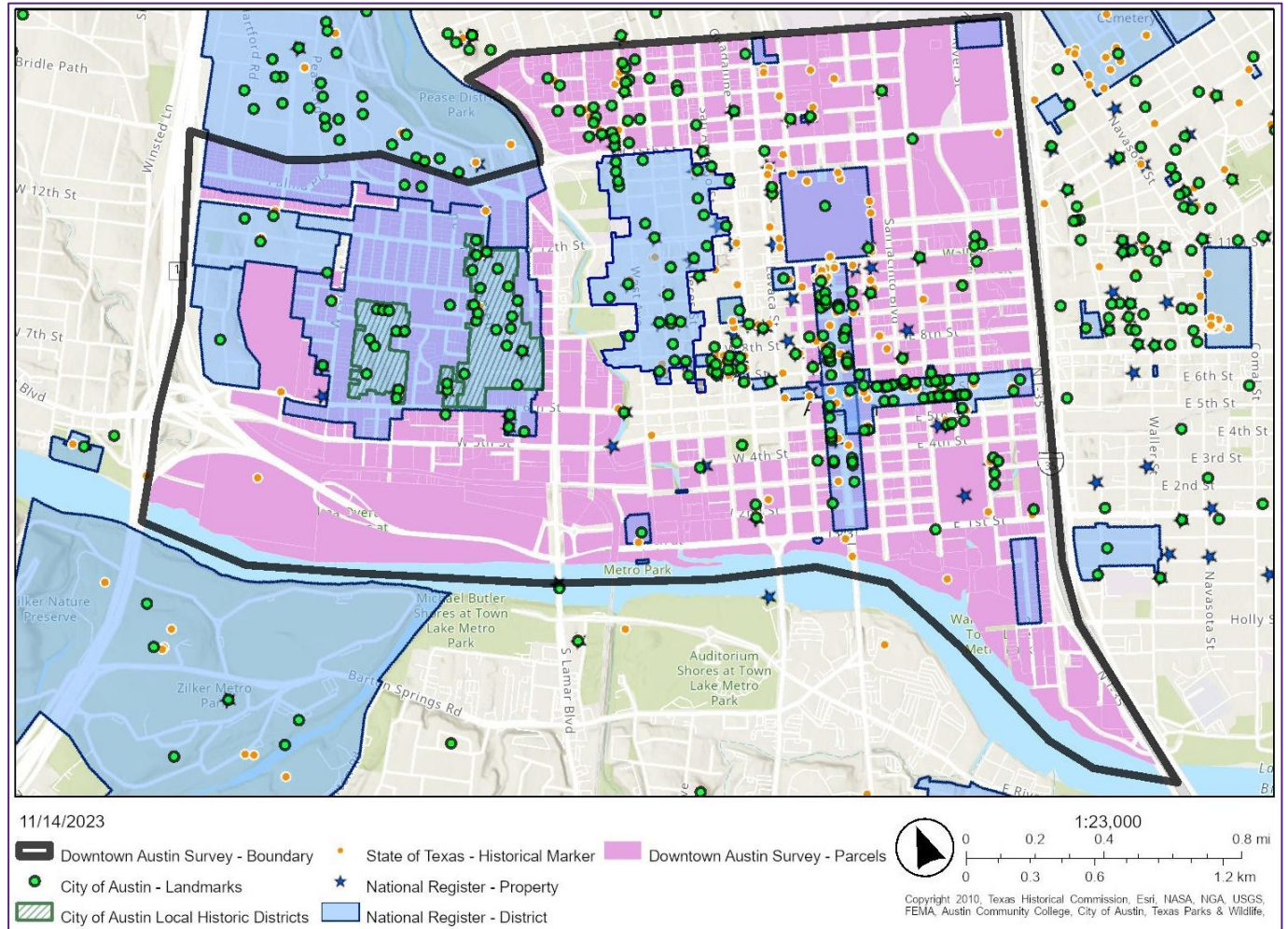
Downtown Austin Survey - Parcels



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

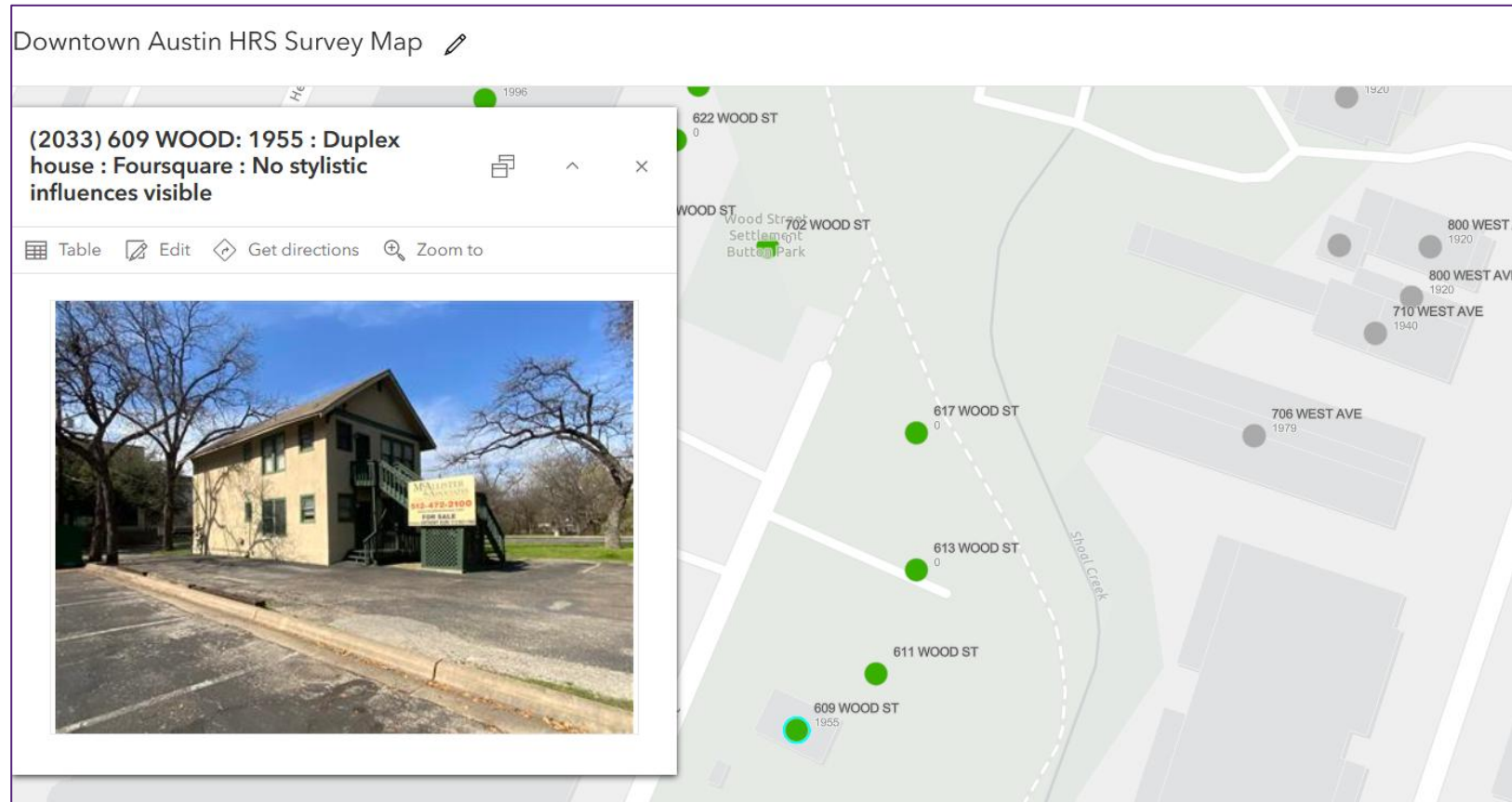
Step 1: Fieldwork Preparation

- Data integrated into geospatial database as basemap:
 - Travis County Appraisal District
 - City of Austin historic zoning
 - National Register of Historic Places
 - Historic maps



Step 2: Field Survey

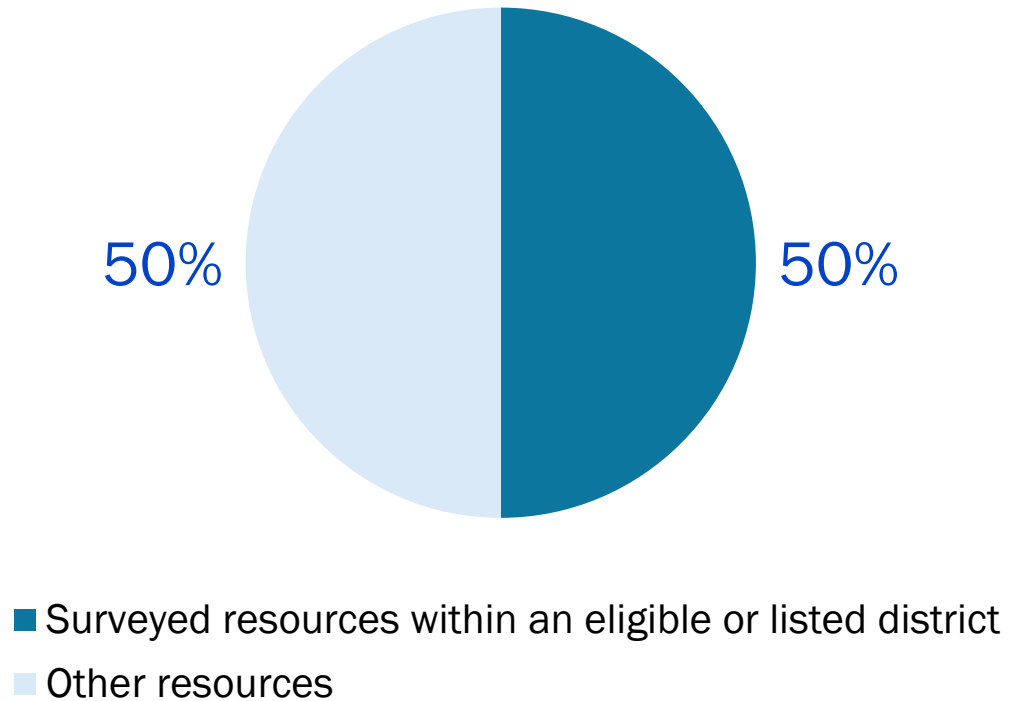
- Documented all resources **constructed by 1975**
- Both primary and auxiliary resources documented
- Two photographs taken of each resource
- Architectural character and physical integrity recorded



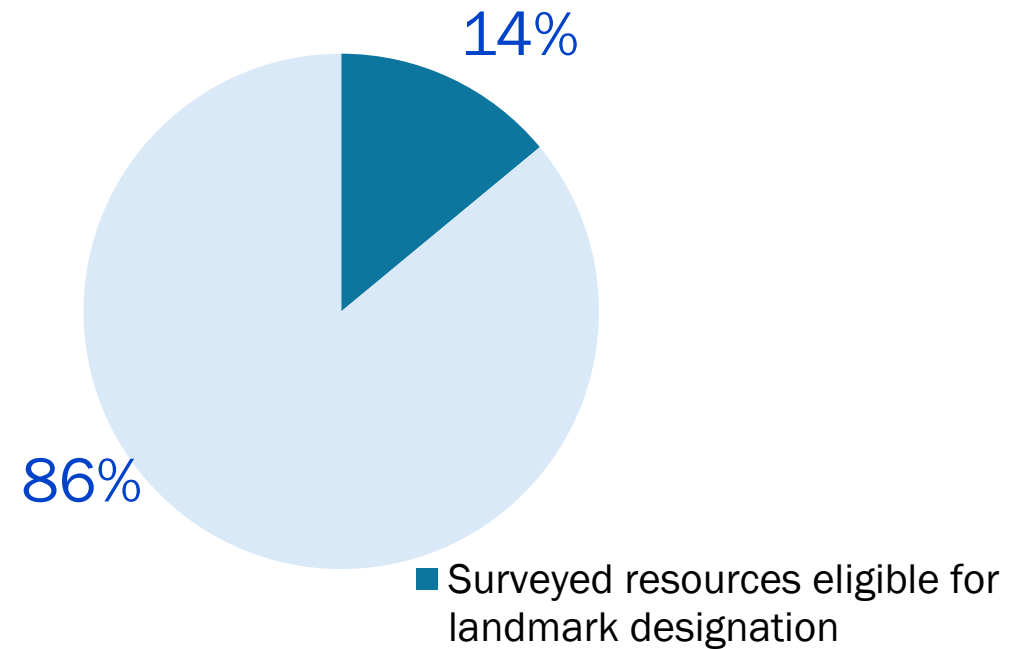


Survey Recommendations

Historic Districts



Historic Landmarks





Sample of Resources Eligible for Historic Designation



1513

Address
604 E 3 ST A



1514

Address
606 E 3 ST



372

Address
103 E 5 ST



238

Address
115 E 5 ST



1500

Address
305 E 5 ST



608

Address
411 E 5 ST



2708

Address
1600 W 5 ST



2713

Address
1611 W 5 ST A



370

Address
200 E 6 ST



1448

Address
701 E 6 ST



1494

Address
708 E 6 ST



3383

Address
1116 W 6 ST A



1176

Address
1116 W 6 ST B



2330

Address
1315 W 6 ST



2356

Address
1401 W 6 ST



2433

Address
1405 W 6 ST



2533

Address
1409 W 6 ST



2531

Address
1414 W 6 ST



2723

Address
1505 W 6 ST



2807

Address
1507 W 6 ST



2864

Address
1511 W 6 ST



2866

Address
1513 W 6 ST



281

Address
1601 W 6 ST A

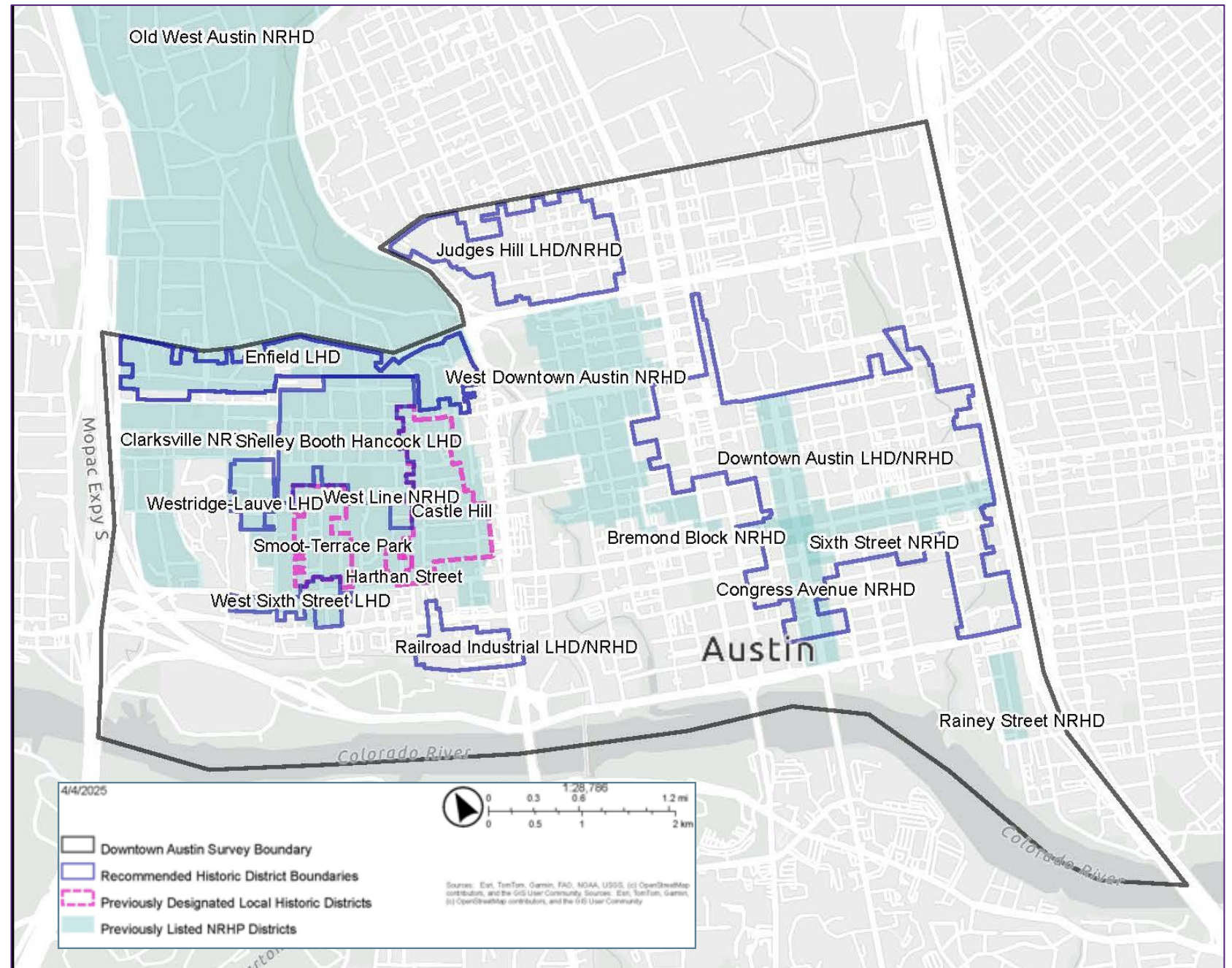


2809

Address
1603 W 6 ST



Recommended Historic District Boundaries





Frequently Asked Questions

Will this survey result in automatic zoning or tax changes?

Answer: No. The survey makes only advisory recommendations for historic resource eligibility.

Can a building be designated against an owner's wishes?

Answer: Yes, but a super majority of Council support is required, making it extremely rare. Since 2014, only two buildings have been designated against an owner's wishes.

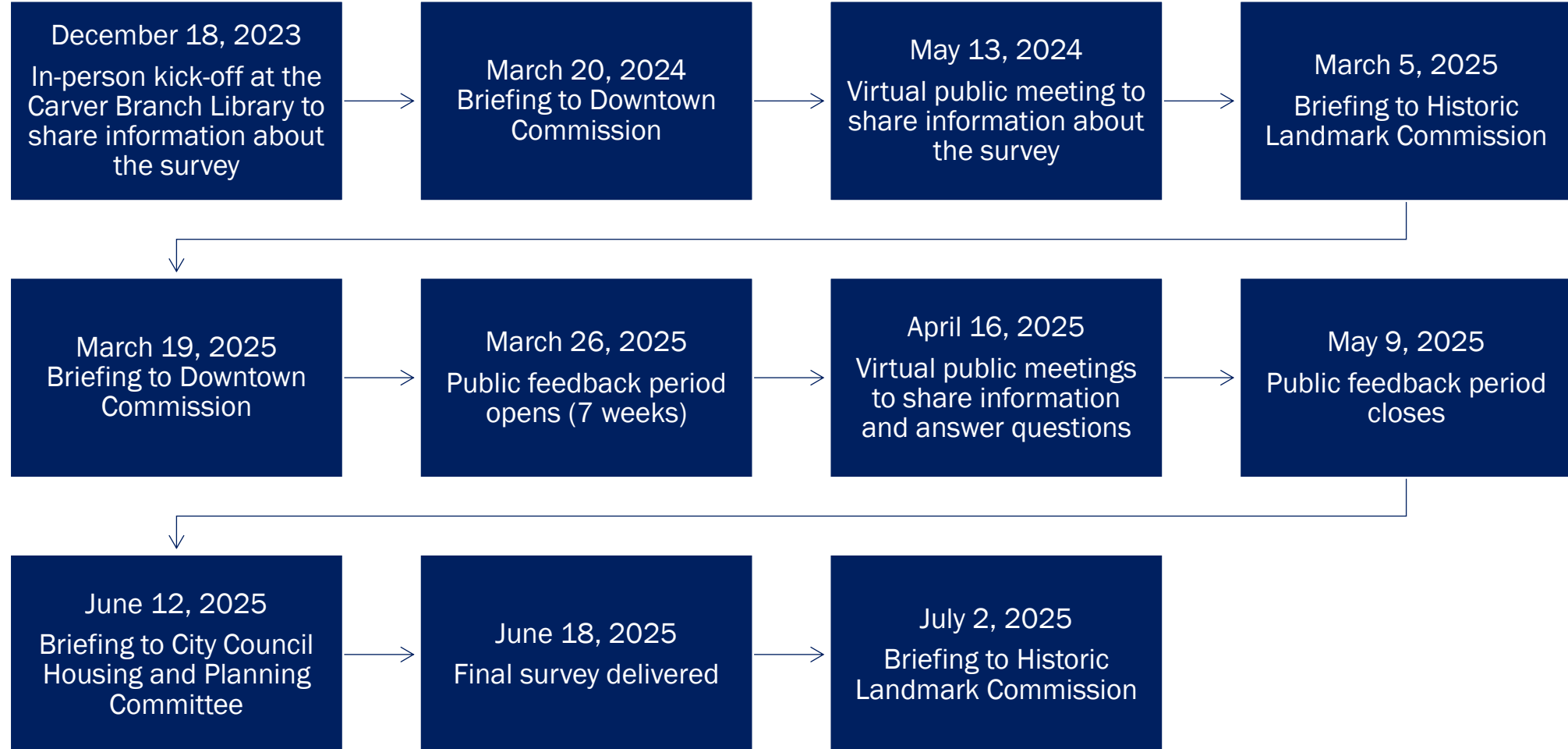
Will voluntary owner-initiated historic designation result in zoning or tax changes?

Answer: It depends.

- Designation at the local level adds H or HD to the base zoning and can unlock property tax reduction incentives. Alterations must follow City design standards.
- Designation at the federal level does not involve a zoning change and makes some properties eligible for rehabilitation tax credits. City provides advisory reviews of alterations.

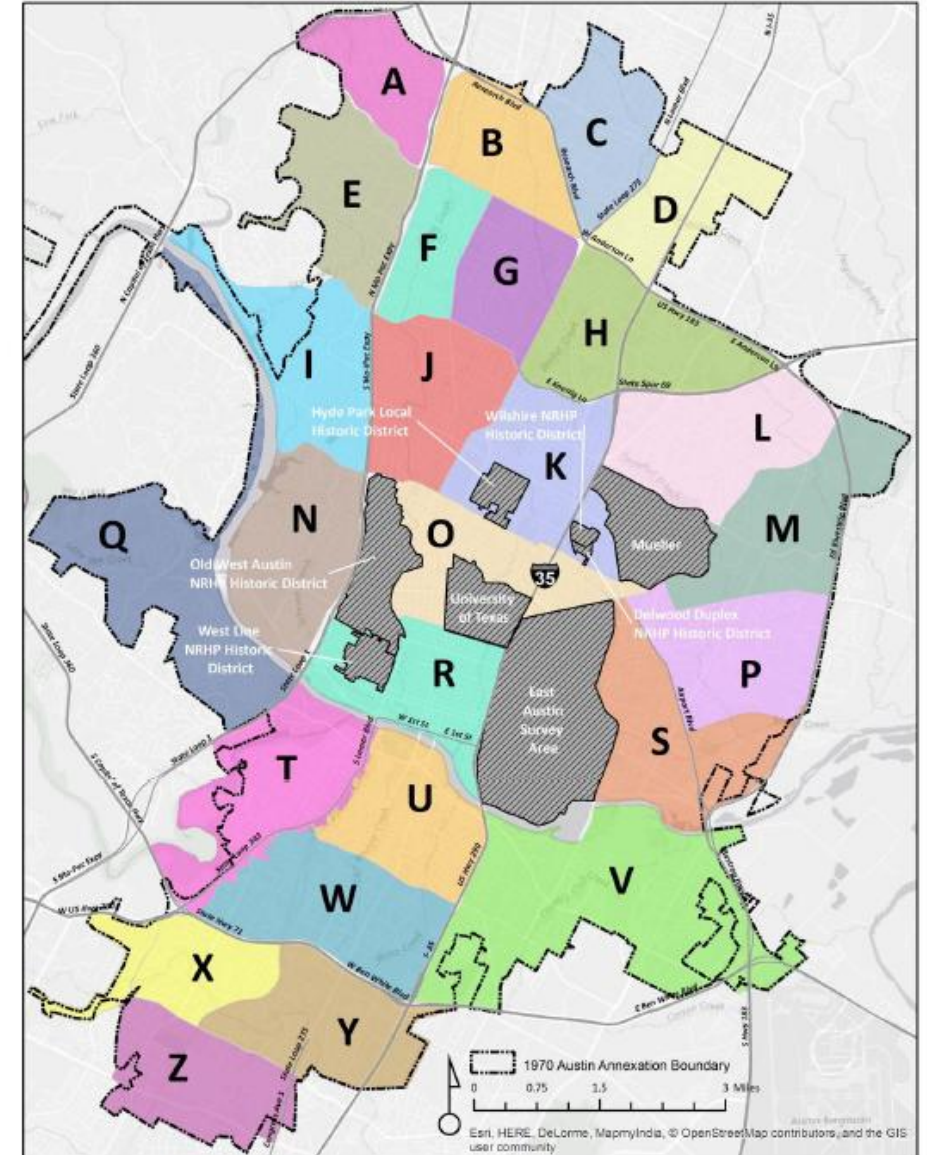


Timeline & Next Steps



Future Survey Projects

- Continual and consistent historic resource surveys lay essential groundwork for historic preservation and are an invaluable part of all major cities' preservation programs.
- Update and expansion of 2016 East Austin Historic Resource Survey (pending FY2026 funding)
- Prioritization of areas with high development pressure
- Determination of funding



Future Austin Survey Area Overview Map showing boundaries of areas evaluated for potential future survey. Source: Map by HHM using Esri base map, 2016.



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Thank You