

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE October 19, 2023

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Historic and Cultural Preservation Strategic Plan – Progress**

Over the past several years, you have passed the [Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan](#) (CECAP), the [Connect Dallas Strategic Mobility Plan](#) (Connect Dallas), the [Racial Equity Plan](#) (REP), the [Economic Development Policy](#) (EDP), the [Economic Development Incentives Policy](#) (Incentives Policy), and the [Housing Policy 2033](#) (DHP33), aligning the City under a shared mission & vision to support equity in environmental justice, mobility, employment, economic opportunities, and housing for all Dallas residents. With the passing of the Racial Equity Plan and Equitable Economic Development Policy, we began to turn our attention to the City's role in equitably preserving Dallas' history and culture.

After briefing the City Council on initial findings on the state of equity in historic preservation in November of 2022, the Housing and Homelessness Solutions Committee requested an extensive community and stakeholder engagement process to inform a strategic plan for the City's historic preservation program. The goal of this strategic plan is to outline a clear roadmap to building a well-resourced, effective preservation function within the City that has the tools and programs needed to preserve history and culture in Dallas' communities: with particular focus on historically marginalized communities, low-income communities, and communities of color.

Engagement and Strategic Planning Progress

Over the past seven months, City staff have worked closely with HR&A Advisors to engage a wide breadth of stakeholders to understand Dallas communities' challenges and needs related to historic and cultural preservation. Assistant City Manager Al-Ghafry convened an interdepartmental Core Team of leaders in departments whose work touches preservation and historic neighborhoods, including Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, Parks and Recreation, the Office of Arts and Culture, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Development Services, Public Works, Code Compliance, and the Office of Economic Development. I also convened a Historic and Cultural Preservation Stakeholder Steering Committee, including diverse leaders in preservation, architecture, community organizing, and racial equity, to inform the planning process and review recommendations for the Strategic Plan. The committee is chaired by Amber Sims and Brent Brown and includes two Landmark Commissioners. A full list of Steering Committee members is included in the appendix to this memorandum. Additionally, the full Landmark Commission has received monthly briefings on the strategic planning process and commissioners have widely attended community meetings.

In June, I attended a meeting convening these key groups--historic preservation staff, Landmark Commissioners, related Department leaders, and the stakeholder steering

committee-- to identify key goals for the strategic planning process. Common goals identified included:

- Increasing accessibility – making the City’s preservation program more accessible and navigable for residents
- Increasing efficiency in the process of design review, allowing staff to dedicate time to other impactful programming
- Increasing inclusion – developing programs, landmark designations, and Landmark Commissioner appointments that serve and represent communities of color
- Increasing community engagement, outreach, and education around preservation
- Developing tools to serve endangered neighborhoods that are not designated or do not want to be designated as historic districts

The team has combined findings from stakeholder interviews and preservation best-practice research to develop recommended actions for the City to take to achieve the above goals. The recommendations are organized around three themes:

- Theme 1: Adjustments to Existing Preservation Program for Efficiency and Accessibility
 - Needed changes to existing tools (preservation ordinance, website, administrative processes, etc.) to improve efficiency and customer service.
 - These recommendations are currently being refined by Chief Preservation Planner Kate Singleton and an Ad-Hoc Committee of the Landmark Commission.
- Theme 2: Cross-Departmental Collaboration for Historic and Cultural Preservation
 - Recommendations for improved partnerships and structures between departments including Planning and Urban Design, Parks and Recreation, Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, the Office of Arts and Culture, Code Compliance, and the Office of Equity and Inclusion to achieve interdisciplinary cultural preservation goals.
- Theme 3: Potential New Initiatives for Equitable Historic and Cultural Preservation
 - New designations, programs, and tools designed to better protect and celebrate the history and culture of communities and neighborhoods not focused on the architectural significance of their structures, and the resources (including staffing) to implement these new tools and programs.

Through nine workshops, recommendations on all themes were vetted with the stakeholder steering committee, historic preservation staff, and Planning and Urban Design leadership. I want to especially thank Andrea Gilles, Interim Director of Planning

and Urban Design, for stepping into a leadership role here as we search for a new lead for the historic and preservation function within PUD.

In September, our team hosted three public workshops to gather feedback on Theme 3: recommendations for potential new initiatives for equitable preservation. Sixty (60) residents participated in these in-person workshops, representing both currently designated historic districts and communities exploring options to preserve the culture of their neighborhoods. I would like to express gratitude to all the members of the public, stakeholder steering committee, Landmark Commission, and City staff who have contributed their knowledge to these important conversations about how to improve our preservation program, and who remain committed to protecting the cultural and historical assets that make our city special.

The Work to Come

Historic preservation leadership are working to refine recommendations and prepare an initial draft of the Historic and Cultural Preservation Strategic Plan. In November, we will re-engage all stakeholders and Department leaders who participated in this process to provide a final round of feedback on the draft strategic plan. We will also brief Councilmembers on the draft and seek your feedback in advance of City Council consideration and adoption of the Plan as policy for the City.

The successful implementation of this strategic plan will result in:

- An easier and more navigable Certificate of Appropriateness process for residents of historic districts.
- Accessible resources to assist residents who struggle with the financial burden of living in a historic district.
- A new designation option that places less financial burden and restriction on individual property owners while still preserving the character and culture of the neighborhood.
- Increased collaboration between the City and non-profit and philanthropic partners in preservation, arts and culture, and racial equity.
- More accessible information about Dallas diverse history and culture available throughout our City.
- An interdisciplinary approach to pursuing initiatives and resources that help us achieve our sustainability, racial equity, economic development, and historic and cultural preservation goals.

The successful implementation of this strategic plan will require strong leadership and unwavering commitment to pursuing equitable service provision for all our communities. It will require creative collaboration between City departments and strengthening connections with our external partners and funders in the preservation of arts and culture. As we begin the hiring and search process to find a new Assistant Director for

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Planning and Urban Design to oversee the preservation program, we will be looking for a candidate that displays determination to pursue racial equity in the ways we preserve and tell the stories of places, and exhibits a willingness to think creatively to bring the best possible services and resources to Dallas residents.

What is my commitment to this work?

I am personally invested in the success of the City of Dallas' historic preservation program. I understand how integral history and culture are to the connective tissue of our City. City staff have worked tirelessly over the past few years to integrate racial equity into all City functions. That work must include expanding a historic preservation program grounded in values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, that is equipped with the tools and resources necessary to protect Dallas' diverse communities' heritage. I am dedicated to identifying the resources, partnerships, and staffing that will be necessary to build a robust program that meets the community needs our team has identified throughout our engagement process this year.

Thank you in advance for your confidence in our Team and your leadership on this important issue.



T.C. Broadnax
City Manager

c: Tammy Palomino, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billieae Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Deputy City Manager
Jon Fortune, Deputy City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Robert Perez, Assistant City Manager
Carl Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Directors and Assistant Directors

Appendix: Steering Committee Membership

Role	Name	Affiliated Organization
Co-Chair	Brent Brown	buildingcommunityWorkshop
Co-Chair	Amber Sims	Young Leaders, Strong City
Member	Stephanie Drenka	Dallas Asian American Historical Society
Member	Denise Johnson	Dallas Asian American Historical Society
Member	Priscilla Escobedo	Dallas Mexican American Historical League
Member	Teresa Coleman Wash	Bishop Arts Theatre Center
Member	Victoria Ferrell Ortiz	RAYO Planning
Member	Leslie Nepveux, AIA NCARB	Veux Deux Design
Member	Marcel Quimby	Quimby Preservation
Member	Shalondria Galimore	South Central Civic League, Melissa Pierce Project
Member	Larry Johnson	Tenth Street Resident Association
Member	Evelyn Montgomery	Old Red Museum of Dallas County History and Culture, Landmark Commission
Member	Stephanie Champion	Builders of Hope CDC
Member	Victoria Clow	Chair of Preservation Dallas Board
Member	David Preziosi	Texas Historical Foundation, Landmark Commission