

# African American Cultural Heritage District Strategic Plan

## Working Recommendations

### Organizational / Capacity

1. Fund and staff the **Cultural District's Management entity**.
  - a. Staffing and roles should include:
    - i. "Quarterbacking" the community coalition
    - ii. Program managers to run programming in cultural arts, historic preservation, and other areas as decided upon by the organization and the coalition
    - iii. Fundraising and Grant Management
    - iv. Communications staff
2. Establish a **"coalition"** for collaboration between community-based organizations and clarify the role of a "quarterback" organization to coordinate implementation of the plan.
3. Establish a municipal **Management District or Public Improvement District**, to be managed by the "quarterback" organization or the "coalition"
4. Develop a **coordinated capital campaign** to establish dedicated philanthropic funding for the plan's goals.
5. **Enhance communication, information sharing and Education** through local, grassroots publication about the District.
6. Develop internal summer internships for high school students and/or create a **youth council** as part of the organization.
7. Work with the City to prioritize the District as a trusted communication

### Housing

1. Establish a right of return
  - a. Develop **homeownership assistance** for AACHD homebuyers and generational heirs to District properties.
  - b. Explore the **development of a fund to provide down payment assistance** to displaced Eastside residents who wish to return.
2. Expand programs to **fund deferred maintenance** for homeowners and small owner rental properties.
  - a. Create a program for reduced utilities for new homeowners
3. Develop **programs to protect aging residents** from displacement
  - a. **Reduced utilities**
  - b. **Reduced property taxes**
  - c. Assistance in **establishing clear title** and legally **passing down property**

- d. Support **home repair and energy efficiency** assistance
- e. Create additional **Homestead Preservation Districts** to stabilize homeownership in targeted areas
- 4. Make it easier for **long-time residents to subdivide or add ADUs** to their properties so they can stay in the neighborhood
- 5. Create a program to **attract young Black professionals and families**
- 6. **Stabilize existing affordable rental** properties.
  - a. Establish **purchase opportunities** for long-time renters.
  - b. Ensure **properties are maintained** to City standards
  - c. Expand methods of **stabilizing rents**
- 7. Establish tools or organizations to **support new affordable homeownership and rental** projects.
  - a. Establish a **Community Land Trust**
  - b. Expand **CDFIs** (Community Development Financial Institutions)
  - c. Expand **CHDOs** (Community Housing Development Organization)

## Business and Development

- 1. Expand access to capital for existing and new businesses with establishment of **Business Loan Fund**
- 2. Expand access to **affordable, high-quality real estate** for existing and new businesses through both the preservation of existing building stock and new development
- 3. Support **short term business incubation** and pilots
  - a. **Programmatic supports for entrepreneurs**, including business plan development
  - b. Development of **shared systems** for POS, HR for example
- 4. Collaborate with partners to **expand childcare, support and job training programs**
- 5. Strengthen partnerships among area schools to **expand adult education and job placement programs.**
- 6. Expanded **financial literacy education.**
- 7. Invest in **neighborhood scale marketing** and business programming, especially prioritizing Black-owned businesses.
- 8. Establish methods for **community participation in development**
  - a. Co-ops
  - b. Community Investment Trust
- 9. Establish **community benefits agreements** for major infrastructure projects, including the proposed highway cap, and with major developers.

## Culture & History

1. Create programs to **support African-American culture-bearers**
  - a. **Affordable housing and studio space**
  - b. **Expand programming** that highlights African-American music, art and culture
    - i. Annual showcase of African-American art
    - ii. Participation in SxSW and other festivals with a focus on African-American music
  - c. Invest in **expanding existing cultural institutions** in the neighborhood
2. Preserve and protect the **community's built heritage**
  - a. Provide **local tax incentives to legacy businesses and homeowners** in the Cultural District
  - b. Create a **property owner assistance revolving fund** that owners of historic and culturally significant properties can use to fund rehabilitation
  - c. Partner with **housing non-profits/land trusts to acquire properties at risk and preserve affordability** for legacy residents and businesses
  - d. Reduce the cost of historic zoning within the cultural district.
3. Build Preservation Capacity
  - a. Designate **National Register Historic Districts** based on East Austin survey
  - b. Teach students at Huston-Tillotson how to **complete local landmark designations** and National Register nominations
  - c. Train staff at an existing or new community organization in the completion of **Texas historic tax credit applications** so they can offer low-cost assistance to building owners.
4. Invest in **Storytelling and Visibility**
  - a. Facilitate the creation of a **centralized repository or database** for archival resources in the cultural heritage district.
  - b. **Transcribe oral histories & digitize** as many archival resources as possible. Link to the established repository/database.
  - c. Establish a regular **community intake program** where community members can provide oral histories and bring historic photographs for scanning, digitization, and inclusion in the collection.
  - d. Establish a **heritage wayfinding program** with inclusion criteria and branding tailored to AACHD. Utilize local artists and artisans for the design of interpretive materials.

## Infrastructure

1. Develop an agreement with the City and the Downtown Austin Alliance for the AACHD to lead **planning and design of the proposed cap**
  - a. Include **heritage and story telling** elements
  - b. Ensure the community has at least a voice and at best a financial stake in the success of adjacent development
  - c. Ensure that **park amenities serve the community**
  - d. Ensure that design, construction and operations benefit Black-owned businesses and employees
2. Establish **District design standards** and work with COA on public realm maintenance, and funding for maintenance: lighting, banners, murals, public art, bus stops, benches
3. Identify priority streets for **public realm improvements**
  - a. Heritage commercial corridors
  - b. Historic Districts
  - c. Safe Routes to Schools, Parks and Healthcare
4. Prioritize **east-west bike infrastructure** in the District
5. Collaborate with the Department of Parks and Recreation to **update plans for city-owned parks:**
  - a. Complete a **community audit** of City Parks and Open Space in the district.
    - i. Prioritize improvements to Dragon Button Park.
    - ii. Prioritize improvements to Boggy Creek Greenbelt.
    - iii. Improvements to community garden programs, including supporting more community programming and outreach.
6. Invest in expanding the **urban tree canopy**.
7. Invest in mitigating any **gaps in technological service** in the community
8. Develop a **beautification project program** with a care plan for stewardship/maintenance/capacity building.