

## 2010 Preservation Texas Summit Statewide Preservation Plan Round Table February 5, 2010

Every 10 years the Texas Historical Commission, in collaboration with our partners, develops a Statewide Preservation Plan for Texas. This new statewide preservation plan is an opportunity to lay a pathway, or perhaps blaze a trail, for Texans to preserve, protect and leverage our historic and cultural fabric for the betterment of our communities. It will be a web-based interactive tool with specific goals, resources and best practices. It will be practical and achievable. We kicked off the planning process in December 2009 with a statewide public survey to hear from stakeholders about the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities pertaining to local preservation efforts. The final plan is scheduled to be released in December 2010. To learn more about Texas' Statewide Preservation Plan and how to get involved, please visit us [here](#).

The Preservation Texas Summit roundtable was a unique opportunity to inform preservationists about the statewide plan, discuss the survey results and work through draft themes of the plan. After a brief presentation about the Statewide Plan, we discussed the draft survey results and solicited roundtable participants' feedback. We also developed seven working themes based on the survey results and asked participants how these themes are reflected in their communities or preservation experiences. We concluded the meeting with participants voting on the themes that are their highest priorities for the plan to address.

### General Questions

#### 1. Questions/Comments about the Statewide Plan

- It sounds like a ground-up approach
- The survey was a well thought-out tool and I learned about preservation issues just by taking it
- How did you use social media? You can enhance your visibility and target a younger demographic through social media
- How will the THC adjust its programs and staffing to address priorities in the plan?
  - Answer: Some activities of the agency are mandated and cannot be changed. However, this plan will help guide internal decisions, as well as legislative requests.

#### 2. How do you see yourself using the Statewide Plan?

- At San Jacinto it would be good to know what is required by the state, laws that impact our work, and who we can go to for answers
- We need resources for small preservation projects: craftsmen directory, standards, legal consultation, sustainability guidance
- Connections to economic development tools and local applications
- As a preservation professional—help to indicate ways he/she can provide services

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### 3. What survey results surprised you?

- Results overlap local conditions
  - Threatened downtown resources coupled with property rights issues
  - Downtown Austin listed as a 2010 Preservation Texas Endangered Resource
- The demographic breakdown of who took the survey wasn't a surprise, but how to reach more diverse constituents?
  - Reaching out to communities of color
    - African American radio, newspapers, Dallas South Blog
    - Hispanic TV Programming—need Spanish speaker
    - Tap into existing resources and multi-lingual preservation representatives
  - Tapping into trades organizations
  - Reaching development councils, real estate folks
- The perception and reality of preserving white history and how to change this
- Reaching people who want to preserve but don't know how or what to do
- Plan should address possible discrepancy between people's perceptions of problems with the actual problems

### Working Themes of Statewide Plan

The following themes were developed in response to the survey results and conversations with the Statewide Plan Advisory Council and THC staff. These are working themes and are intended to serve as a tool to delve deeper into the priority issues that impact preservation activities in Texas. After a brief presentation about each theme, participants were asked to comment on how these issues are reflected in their community or experiences. At the end of their meeting, folks voted on which themes were the highest priority for the plan to address.

#### 1. The Information Landscape (preservation tools, resources, survey and inventory, communication)

VOTES: 35

- Some information needs to be geared to the “average Joe”
- Priority need for statewide survey and inventory
  - Very few people know where the resources are, as well as upcoming priorities of resources and districts
- Statewide plan that explains preservation resources that are available statewide (and from the “state”)
- The power of GIS—knowing where the resources are
- Cultural Resource Management (and Section 106) integrated into information infrastructure
  - Lots of inventory and eligibility information generated that is not being used
- What's going to happen with the Atlas? Will it be improved?

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### 2. Awareness and Understanding of the Tools and Value of Preservation

VOTES: 31

- Federal tools and resources to help local preservation efforts
- Tools for rural communities with no city infrastructure info
  - Tools and resources for county government specifically
- Easy information for people to see the “option” of preservation
  - E.g. instead of taking out old windows and replacing them with widows from a home improvement store
- Local landmark commission doesn’t know how to deal with modernist resources
- Statewide plan as an educational plan that consolidates, highlights, compiles resources and information
- Messages need to address contesting values and seek to understand motivation of each
  - Property rights
  - Developers

### 3. Economic Development Incentives and/or Programs that Incorporate HP

VOTES: 27

- Job creation for younger folks—“Preservation Corps” similar to AmeriCorps
- Challenge of rehabbed properties that exceed local market value
- Projects must be geared toward local use and need and not just serve a tourist purpose
  - “Practical preservation”
  - Example of Castroville and tourist development, where locals are priced out of market and any “non- historic” development is discouraged
- Connect historic highways and trails with places, buildings and rural resources so tours are easily accessible

### 4. Preservation as part of the Sustainability Equation

VOTES: 27

- Cost of vacant lots and impact on center cities and small towns

### 5. Preservation Education (theme added by participants)

VOTES: 23

- Preservation professionals coming out of school with little resources to get a job in the field
- Professional Development and continuing education
- Mentor Program

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### 6. Representing and Engaging Texas' Diverse Residents

VOTES: 19

- Reaching out and engaging communities of color (see notes above on suggestions for how to do this)
- Importance of music/black musicians/places to hear music in black community
- Hotels and establishments where African Americans were integral in their operation prior to desegregation

### 7. State and Local Preservation Laws

VOTES: 18

- Also Federal Laws and Programs
- County government issues
- Goals and resources at state government level

### 8. Support for Historic Housing and Homeowners

VOTES: 10

- What does “historic” mean?
  - Broad definition of historic
- Isolated projects—not districts
  - How can they get support and help
- Encourage remodeling and rehabilitation
  - Add value to towns
- Not enough encouragement of local survey and inventory
- Info on “parts” of houses
- Modernist buildings
- Cost of living in restored housing
  - Property taxes
  - More accessible information

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