

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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**AGENDA**  
**COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Hotel  
Bluebonnet Room  
303 W 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, TX 78701  
October 28, 2021  
10:15 a.m.

(or upon the adjournment of the 9:45 a.m. Architecture Committee, whichever occurs later)

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*This meeting of the THC Community Heritage Development Committee has been properly posted with the Secretary of State's Office according to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code. The members may discuss and/or take action on any of the items listed in the agenda.*

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1. Call to Order — *Committee Chairman Peterson*
  - A. Committee member introductions
  - B. Establish quorum
  - C. Recognize and/or excuse absences
2. Consider approval of the July 26, 2021 committee meeting minutes —*Committee Chairman Peterson*
3. Consider approval of designations of 2022 Texas Main Street Cities (item 12.2) —*Committee Chairman Peterson*
4. Consider approval of the Texas Main Street Program, Associate Network for continued development and implementation (item 12.3) —*Committee Chairman Peterson*
5. Consider authorization for Friends of the Texas Historical Commission to license DowntownTX.org and associated intellectual property to organizations with similar missions (item 12.4) —*Committee Chairman Peterson*
6. Community Heritage Development Division update and committee discussion —*Patterson*
  - A. Update on Real Places Conferences, including staffing
  - B. Update on the Texas Main Street Program activities including staffing, and DowntownTX.org
  - C. Update on heritage tourism activities including Texas Heritage Trails Program
  - D. Update on the Certified Local Government activities including grants, training, and prospective CLGs
7. Adjournment

NOTICE OF ASSISTANCE AT PUBLIC MEETINGS: Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print or Braille, are requested to contact Estber Brinkley at (512) 463-5768 at least four (4) business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## MINUTES COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

CAPITOL EXTENSION

Room E1.030

1400 N. Congress Ave.

Austin, TX 78701

July 26, 2021

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*This meeting of the THC Community Heritage Development Committee has been properly posted with the Secretary of State's Office according to the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551. The Committee may discuss and/or take action on any of the items listed in the agenda.*

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### 1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) Community Heritage Development Committee was called to order by Committee Chairman Peterson at 1:32pm.

#### A. Committee member introductions

Chairman Peterson welcomed everyone. Members in attendance in addition to the Chair, included Commissioners Monica Zárate Burdette, Lilia Garcia, Garrett Donnelly, Daisy White, Renee Dutia.

#### B. Establish Quorum

Chairman Peterson noted a quorum was present.

#### C. Recognize and excuse absences

Chairman Peterson noted that Commissioner Bahorich was absent. Commissioner White moved to excuse the absence, seconded by Commissioner Zárate Burdette. Motion passed unanimously.

### 2. Consider approval of the April 26, 2021 committee meeting minutes-*Committee Chairman Peterson*

Commissioner White moved, Commissioner Garcia seconded, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the April 26, 2021 Community Heritage Development Committee meeting minutes.

### 3. Consider approval of the allocation plan for remaining FY2021 Certified Local Government grant funds-*Committee Chairman Peterson*

The committee discussed the proposed utilization of remaining federal CLG grant funds as travel stipends for participants to attend the NAPC FORUM22 in Cincinnati. The funds need to be allocated in federal fiscal year 2021 but can be awarded in 2022. Specific grant recommendations to CLGs using these funds will come to the Commission for approval at a future meeting. Committee Chairman Peterson moved that the

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committee recommend approval. Commissioner Zárata Burdette seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Consider approval of the biennial funding plan for the Texas Heritage Trails Program-*Committee Chairman Peterson***

Staff recommended a biennial funding plan like that maintained level funding for the regions but slightly decreased the base payments and increased the portion requiring regional cash or in-kind matching. The anticipated total for each region remained the same. Staff was questioned as to whether there was consideration for increasing the funding to the regions however the legislative appropriation had not increased. The committee directed staff to reexamine the funding levels for FY'23 and Committee Chairman Peterson moved that the committee recommend approval for one year, 2022. Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. Consider recommendations of short form new program analysis for a Texas Main Street Associate Network-*Committee Chairman Peterson***

Staff brought forth a proposal to extend the reach and influence of the Texas Main Street Program through an affiliate initiative that will provide limited resources and services to communities in need of assistance. The analysis and discussion described how the proposed associate network could support communities that are not strong candidates for the traditional program; those that seek to become rectified for the full Main Street Program; and those seeking to grow into the traditional program. Staff requested input on the potential participation fees. A suggestion was made to consider that any fee as an incentivized credit or towards TMSP application. Chairman Nau asked if the division can deliver such a service without the addition of more staff to which the director assured the committee that quality would be high and the work manageable. With committee approval, the staff will proceed to develop the full, long form proposal for future Commission approval. Moved by Chairman Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Dutia. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **6. Staff report and consider recommendations on the DowntownTX.org pilot licensing effort-*Division Director Patterson***

A status update was provided on the continued success of the site, launched in 2017. Statistics show a steady increase in users and listings. More features will be rolling out at the end of August. The agency owns domain names and software for this inventory system, and the web address. At this point, the agency is in the process of exploring the licensing the product to another state program through a pilot-expansion supported by the committee at a previous meeting. Mr. Patterson elaborated on the anticipated costs and structure of the licensing effort as it unfolds, including a possible, initial 5–10-year plan for the investment of the first licensee. The committee expressed support, but no action was necessary or taken.

#### **7. Community Heritage Development Division update and committee discussion-*Division Director Patterson***

##### **A. Update on Real Places Conference, including staffing:**

February 2-4, 2022 are the dates for the Real Places conference to be held in-person. Allison Zogg was introduced as the agency's new event planner. The opening evening is planned for the French Legation State Historic Site.

##### **B. Update on the Texas Main Street Program activities including staffing, and DowntownTX.org:**

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In August there will be a program kick-off in Stephenville and a Texas Main Street Retreat will be held in September, in Seguin. State coordinator Debra Drescher will be retiring on August 31, 2021. A certificate of appreciation was awarded for her 15 years of service to the program and agency.

- C. Update on the heritage tourism activities including Texas Heritage Trails Program:  
The Texas Heritage Trails Program will hold its statewide meeting in Austin, on August 12 -13 and will also be represented with a booth at the Texas State Fair tis fall. The team has an RFP out for updated market information on heritage travelers via cell phone geolocation data. An updated *Texas Heritage Travel Guide* is at the printers and planned for delivery around September 1.
- D. Update on the Certified Local Government activities including grants, training, and prospective CLGs:  
CLG will present C.A.M.P. and disaster workshops soon and begin collaborative workshops with TxDOT over the coming year.

### 8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25pm.

## Quarterly Report

Community Heritage Development (CHD) Division  
July–September 2021

### WORK IN COMMUNITIES

The communities participating in CHD’s programs rely heavily on our staff expertise and guidance, which often must be delivered onsite.

In August and September, staff provided measurable assistance to all 10 trail regions and 22 communities. Assistance, or in some cases multiple incidences of assistance, was provided to **Brownsville, Caldwell, Conroe, Corsicana, Del Rio, Denison, Ennis, Goliad, Henderson, Houston, Huntsville, Livingston, Mansfield, Marshall, Mesquite, Round Rock, San Marcos, Seguin, Stephenville, Taylor, Waco, and Wichita Falls.**

In addition, the Texas Main Street Program organized a retreat for statewide participants in September. Hosted by Seguin, 45 Main Street communities attended and were provided training at the retreat.

### ANNUAL MAIN STREET REINVESTMENTS REPORTED

The Texas Main Street Program (TMSP) revitalizes Texas’ historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts through economic development and historic preservation. The program provides personalized outreach and assistance with planning, economic and small business development, and architectural, urban, and graphic design services, as well as organizational expertise.

Main Street follows a state-supported, self-help model in which the success or failure rests on the efforts of the local community. The educational, technical, and organizational support the THC provides makes the local reinvestments possible, but key factors in success are the skill, expertise, and tenacity by which the local manager and community apply the program principles.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the program, with the initial cities entering in 1981. Since its

inception, the TMSP has helped generate more than \$4.9 billion in reinvestment in Texas downtowns and urban neighborhood commercial districts, created more than 44,000 jobs, and established more than 11,000 new businesses across 182 communities.

Currently, there are 88 official Texas Main Street communities, including urban and rural programs, serving more than 3.1 million Texans. The focus of the Texas program is smaller, rural communities, with 81 percent of the participating communities having populations below 50,000 and a median population of 15,640.

In total, more than \$115 million of private funds were reinvested in TMSP communities during the period roughly equivalent to the fiscal year. Other totals reported by the local programs and tracked by the agency for the 2021 period include: 816 rehabilitation projects worth over \$43 million; more than \$38 million in new downtown construction; the sale and purchase of \$32 million of downtown real estate; net gains of 408 business starts and over 1,700 new jobs in Main Street districts; and a gain of approximately 352 downtown residents and 299 housing units. Local Main Street communities also reported more than 39,000 volunteer hours committed to historic Texas downtowns during the biennium, a value of \$1 million.

The pandemic resulted in modestly lower figures across most measures when compared to the prior year. This was especially noticeable in the 65 percent drop in the volunteer hours, which were impacted by lack of special events and continued social distancing and isolation. However, an increase in new construction, business starts, and net job gains countered the downward trend.

## HERITAGE TOURISM

Representatives from the 10 Texas Heritage Trail Regions and THC staff convened in Austin this August for the semi-annual statewide meeting. In addition to sharing best practices and updates, the staff and representatives heard from the THC's Amy Hammons and Nano Calderon about the most effective methods of collaborating with County Historical Commissions. The group also heard presentations on partnering with Texas State Parks and social media marketing.

The regions operated a tourism promotion area within the Food and Fiber Pavilion at the 2021 State Fair of Texas. The THC funds the booth while the regions and partners provide the staffing for the 24-day run. This year, the regions featured two destinations each day in the booth, giving partners the chance to have their day at the fair with a special display and staff highlighting the community as a destination. This year also featured a promotion with one lucky winner receiving a package filled with fun Texas swag and gift cards for dining, lodging, and retail. Prizes were provided by the regions, the THC, and other participating partners. Email addresses were collected via a QR code and shared with participating partners for further promotion of Texas as a heritage travel destination.

The Heritage Tourism team completed a planning retreat to identify new opportunities for programs and services focused on assisting communities and organizations to build capacity and enhance visitor experience.

Working with Communications, the Heritage Tourism team struck a deal with *El Diario*, a Spanish language newspaper in El Paso, to distribute 29,000 *Texan Hispano* travel guides to subscribers. The guides were distributed in the October 9 issue of the paper to coordinate with Hispanic Heritage Month.

## DOWNTOWNTX.ORG WORK CONTINUES

The Texas Main Street Program has continued expanding and improving the DowntownTX.org website. A total of 102 communities are either live or in the process of data integration. To date, 19,900 properties have been inventoried, including 555 locally designated landmarks, 2,960 properties that contribute to local districts, and 347 National Register-listed properties. The DowntownTX.org site

had 20,280 unique users from July 1 through September 20; a new unique user record was set in July with 8,110 users visiting the site that month alone.

The DowntownTX.org phase 3 software improvements were successfully launched in August. The updates included new dashboard data interfaces, improved boundary map management, printable reports and property pages, and enhanced historic resources survey capabilities.

## CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is excited to have funded the third phase of development for DowntownTX.org. This phase was specifically geared toward Certified Local Governments to provide an online inventory and survey tool for cities to track changes to their historic resources. It offers photo and document uploads, historic survey tracking, and fields for architectural descriptions and notes, and can be used to coordinate a volunteer- or city staff-led historic resources survey that aims to offset some costs of a consultant-led survey. The pilot cities, Corpus Christi and Corsicana, tested the new features over the course of the project, with success, and the program is working on steps to invite other CLGs to begin the process of incorporating their cities into the website.

The CLG program hosted more than 40 participants in multi-day, virtual Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) training in August with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. The program will also host a virtual Disaster and Resilience Planning CAMP on September 30 for cities and counties affected by Hurricane Harvey.

## NEW STAFF MEMBER JOINS THE DIVISION

The agency welcomed Jamie Teich as the new CHD Programs Specialist in July. Prior to joining the THC, Jamie spent seven years with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, establishing inter-departmental projects in exhibition curation, programming, collection development, and educational outreach.

Teich has a bachelor's degree in Theater Design from the City University of New York and a graduate degree in Art History from Tufts University in Massachusetts.

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**Item 12.2**  
Texas Historical Commission  
Quarterly Meeting  
October 28-29, 2021

## Consider approval of designations of 2022 Texas Main Street Cities

### **Background:**

Currently 88 designated cities receive services from the Texas Main Street Program, which was begun under the Texas Historical Commission in 1981. In accordance with Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 19, §19.4 (a): “Applications to the program are due annually on the last working day of July or other dates established by the Commission”. By July 31, 2021, applications were received from two communities for official Main Street designation: Conroe (Montgomery County) and Freeport (Brazoria County). Conroe was in the Main Street Program from 2006-2010 while Freeport was in the program from 2000-2012 so both are applying to be recertified cities and under city government management. The 2010 population for Conroe was 56,207 and the initial 2020 Census data shows a population of nearly 89,000. In either case, Conroe would enter as an urban program. Freeport has a 2010 census population of 12,049 and preliminary 2020 data shows a decline to 10,696 and the applicant is classified as a small city within the program.

The Texas Historical Commission may designate up to five new or recertified official *Texas Main Street Cities* (§19.4(f)). Upon acceptance, new and recertified programs receive access to all Main Street services. Provisional programs may be accepted that attend Main Street training and receive limited assistance, but do not receive design services. They agree to apply again the following year.

Agency staff did visit each of the applicant cities between receipt of letters of intent and the first meeting of the Interagency Council. Staff also had communications and discussions with both communities prior to the application and several staff on the team have previously visited both communities as agency representatives.

The Main Street Interagency Council (IAC) convened and reviewed applications for designation as official Texas Main Street Cities (§19.4(e)). Voting members of the seven-person council is comprised of two staff members of the Texas Main Street program; the Community Heritage Development Director; one staff member from the Budget, Planning and Policy Division of the Office of the Governor; one from the Texas Economic Development and Tourism division of the Office of the Governor; and one staff member from the Texas Department of Agriculture Rural Affairs program. There is also one non-voting member of the Legislative Budget Board who was not able to participate this year.

The criteria currently in use is as follows and is published in the application:

### **Evaluation Criteria:** (110 Total Possible Points)

1. **Historic commercial fabric and historic identity:** The historic significance of the proposed Main Street area and the interest in and commitment to historic preservation. (35 Points)
2. **Organizational capacity:** Demonstrates community and private sector support for the program as well as the capability of the applicant to successfully implement the Main Street Program. (25 Points)

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3. **Support and financial capacity:** Demonstrates the financial capability to employ a full-time manager, fund a local Main Street Program and support downtown-related projects. (24 Points)
4. **Physical capacity:** The cohesiveness, distinctiveness and variety of business activity conducted in the proposed Main Street Program area. (10 Points)
5. **Demonstrated need:** The need for the Main Street Program in the city and its expected impact on the city. (10 Points)
6. **Geographic distribution & discretionary:** (6 Points)

The council ranks applicants as to their merit based on the evaluation criteria. Following individual scoring by council members, a collective average score is developed for each applicant. Staff of Main Street and the Community Heritage Development division director meet to discuss available resources as permitted by §19.4(f). The average scores of all 6 voting Council members were as follows:

Conroe 83.7  
Freeport 76.8

In January 2017, the Commission adopted a policy to not accept future Main Street Cities that score 70 or below in the evaluation. The Commission still has discretion to not approve those with scores above 70. The Main Street Interagency Council approved scores that make both applicants eligible to be designated Main Street Cities. Acceptance of both communities will not pose an undue burden on staff resources. The applicants chosen by the Commission are designated as official Texas Main Street Cities and will formally enter the program January 1, 2022.

**Recommended motion (Committee):**

Move that the committee send forward to the Commission and recommend acceptance of Conroe and Freeport as official 2022 Texas Main Street Cities.

**Recommended motion (Commission):**

Move to accept Conroe and Freeport as official 2022 Texas Main Street Cities.

2022 Main Street Applicant Comparison		
	CONROE	FREEPORT
<b>Ethnic Fabric</b>		
Anglo	56.00%	22.00%
Hispanic	32.90%	64.50%
Asian	2.59%	0.25%
African American	7.47%	11.50%
Native American	0.13%	0.25%
Other	0.91%	1.50%
<b>Current city population estimate</b>	91,079	12,005
<b>Percentage growth/decline since 2000</b>	62.04%	-0.36
<b>Size (blocks) for proposed Main Street district</b>	15	12 full, 4 partial
<b># of buildings in district</b>	127	81
<b>percentageof retail storefronts</b>	10%	1%
<b># of bldgs vacant ground floor</b>	11	8
<b># of bldgs vacant upper floor or only used for storage</b>	7	2
<b># of vacant buildings upper &amp; down</b>	13	5
<b># of businesses in district</b>	78	22
<b># of total jobs/employees in district</b>	3,192	115
<b>Historic Building Stock</b>		
Pre 1860	0.00%	0.00%
1860-1919	10.00%	7.00%
1920-1963	40.00%	59.00%
Post 1963	60.00%	34.00%
<b>Tax - Cities Revenue</b>		
Sales tax current FY (partial, so far in current FY, see Q 5 in application for full previous year)	\$23,072,152.00	\$1,684,021.00
Hotel/motel tax current FY (partial, so far in current FY, see Q 6 in application for full previous year)	\$469,941.00	\$11,874.00
Levy economic dev sales tax?	Yes	Yes
<b>4a</b>	No	No
<b>4b</b>	Yes	Yes
Annual ec dev. \$ yield	\$11 - 13 million	\$1,000,000
<b>Proposed MS Budget</b>		
1st year	\$433,175.00	\$123,630.00
1st - 3rd/5th year	\$489,300.00	\$145,183.00
1st yr Manager salary as part of budget	yes	yes
Are benefits additionally inc in budget?	yes	yes
Façade/incentive grant in budget?	yes	yes
<b>Historic tools</b>		
Preservation ordinance	no	in progress
Downtown master plan	yes	no
RTHL-Recorded Tx. Hist. Landmarks	no	yes
National Register district	no	no
National Register prop. (ind)	no	no
Local Historic designation program	yes	no
Historical commission	no	no
Design review	yes	no
Certified Local Government status	no	no
<b>Provisional Main Street city</b>		
Recertification application	no*	yes**
Urban application	yes	no
Small city application	no*	yes

# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## Item 12.3

Texas Historical Commission  
Quarterly Meeting  
October 28-29, 2021

### **Consider approval of the Texas Main Street Program, Associate Network for continued development and implementation**

#### **Background:**

In 2020, staff identified a need to address a gap between inquiries and applications to the Main Street Program, and subsequently an opportunity to offer support to more communities across the state. The creation of an Associate Network will draw on the expertise and infrastructure of the Texas Main Street Program (TMSP) to provide limited services and resources to communities with stakeholders who would otherwise be unable to receive such assistance due to Main Street's participation requirements. The Associate Network would be designed to supplement and extend the impact of the TMSP without placing unreasonable additional demands on staff; this will be accomplished by curating and offering existing Main Street resources that emphasize historic preservation education and bolstering local organizational capacity to achieve preservation initiatives.

At the July 2021 meeting, the Community Heritage Development Division Director presented the Short Form Program analysis to the CHD Committee for their consideration. The Committee accepted the Short Form and urged staff to continue developing the program's concept through the Long Form, to be presented at the October 2021 meeting.

With Commission approval, staff plan to develop resources to support the implementation of the Associate Network with an estimated 2023 program integration date. Throughout 2022, Main Street staff would curate existing resources such as general design or community economic revitalization guidance and community organization building tools to build grassroots volunteer bases. Staff would also work with other branches and programs of the agency, such as Division of Architecture, Certified Local Government, and History Programs, to build a repository of historic preservation education resources that would benefit all communities, but particularly those who are just starting a preservation-based revitalization strategy.

The Associate Network will allow participants to receive specific preservation training and downtown revitalization resources that will result in a widespread benefit for communities. The network also offers an opportunity to gather and share information regarding historic preservation in geographic regions that are currently underserved.

#### **Recommended motion (Committee):**

Move that the committee send forward to the Commission and recommend approval of the Texas Associate Network and direct staff to begin building resources and services for statewide implementation.

#### **Recommended motion (Commission):**

Move to approve the Texas Associate Network and direct staff to begin building resources and services for statewide implementation.

**Describe in detail the program you are proposing. How will this program interact with other programs/divisions within the agency?**

The development of an affiliate program, i.e. the Texas Associate Network or hereinafter the Associate Network, extends the reach and influence of the Texas Main Street Program (TMSP) by providing services to communities that either need initial support and education to grow into a traditional, designated Texas Main Street Program, or communities in need of downtown revitalization assistance but that are unable to join as a traditional Main Street due to the program's participation criteria. The Associate Network would also act as an intermediate step for a previously designated Main Street city to re-enter the program as a Recertified City, allowing them to reestablish the essential community organizational capacity and educational foundation before accessing the full suite of Main Street Program resources. The Associate Network would draw on the expertise and infrastructure of TMSP to provide access to limited services and resources to cities who would otherwise be unable to receive such assistance. The Associate Network is designed to supplement and extend the influence of the TMSP without placing unreasonable additional demands on existing TMSP staff. Further, the proposed initiative is not anticipated to place any specific or significant burden on other agency programs. It is expected that the Associate Network may introduce communities to the opportunities found throughout the agency programs and thus potentially increase participation elsewhere in the agency.

**Demonstrated Need for the Initiative**

The traditional Main Street Program, as implemented in Texas and nationwide for 40 years, is appropriate for communities with certain characteristics: participating cities must have a historic downtown core in need of revitalization and the human and financial resources to support a multi-year commitment to the program and its principles. Participation in the program requires a full-time locally funded manager, an active volunteer board, political support, grassroots business support, and financial resources to implement a modest program for physical improvements in both the private and public sectors. In return, these communities receive substantial services and guidance from the agency staff as well as from fellow participants. The Texas Main Street Program has historically had a very strong presence from Dallas eastward as well as radiating outward from Austin.

For a multitude of reasons, many communities across the state do not take full advantage of the agency's programs and assistance, including Main Street. Factors at play could range from general lacking awareness of what assistance is available from the state to localized issues such as declining populations—particularly in rural areas—resulting in increased needs but fewer resources to address them, as well as losses of historic buildings over time. Texas cities have diverse economic benchmarks such as per capita incomes and widely different populations. Population figures for Main Street communities vary dramatically, and many successful participants are cities with less than 5,000 residents. There is not a strong correlation between population size and success or failure, but smaller communities face some unique economic challenges. This is also true within a transitioning community itself, where a critical mass of revitalization efforts is usually necessary to gain positive momentum and neighboring owners or businesses benefit from each other's investments.

The traditional Main Street model, with its full-time and multi-year commitment, may not be a feasible model for many Texas communities of smaller size or more limited historic preservation and financial resources. As powerful as the Main Street network is, the program simply remains out of reach for many communities. While lack of population is not the determining factor, communities with less than 2,000 residents are also likely to have a very limited number of historic buildings—a very small core of only a few blocks; and additional challenges may also include limited overnight tourism and financial resources to support a full-time revitalization program. Further, the human resources may simply not be deep enough to provide the necessary volunteers for the program or for historic preservation in general.

This gap in service is illustrated by the number of general inquiries received between application years 2011-2020. Over this 10-year period, the TMSP state coordinator received inquiries from a total of 184 cities. Of these, 59 cities had multiple inquiries over several years, however, only 11 of the 59 followed through to apply for the program. While we cannot know for certain what exactly inhibited these serious inquiries from applying, we know that the overall cost of creating a local program and more stringent historic resources requirements can limit those who can participate. We therefore seek to bridge this service gap and make our programs more accessible to communities of all sizes.

### **Proposed Solution**

The Texas Associate Network will develop implementation strategies based on data, research, and nationwide best practices to educate and support communities either not ready or unable to participate in the traditional Main Street model as well as those rejoining as a Recertified City. The Associate Network will focus primarily on building organizational capacity and educating communities about downtown revitalization through historic preservation.

The objectives of the initiative are:

- Support initial community revitalization efforts through historic preservation education
- Provide curated, existing services to a broader audience, leveraging the brand and knowledge of Texas Main Street to support more communities across the state.

The staff of the Texas Main Street Program already provides downtown, preservation-based revitalization services and training to 88 communities across Texas. The Associate Network is designed to build off the success of the Main Street Program, encouraging a commitment to historic preservation for broader audiences than the traditional Main Street participation requirements may permit. Rather than create the initiative with separate and disconnected staff, the initiative is conceived as an extension of, or supplement to, the Texas Main Street Program but simultaneously with its own identity.

It is anticipated that the program will serve and appeal to communities interested in exploring the Main Street approach to downtown revitalization but that are unable to make a multi-year commitment that would involve the creation of a local program with required full-time staff. The program will also act as an intermediary step for cities seeking recertification, allowing them the time to rebuild their organizational capacity and refresh themselves on the fundamentals of Main Street and historic preservation before admittance as a full designated city. This is of particular interest for TMSP staff, as recertified cities may have previously dropped the program for several reasons within or outside of their control. Reevaluating the intake process and directing recertified cities to the Associate Network will give the city immediate access to key resources and educational trainings that will support their efforts to rejoin the program while gauging their long-term success as a designated Main Street and identifying the key opportunities for growth that may have impeded their prior success within the program.

Initially, we expect to internally identify cities to invite to apply based on previous interest in Main Street or a rejected application in the last 10 years, but the application will eventually be open to all. The application process will be simple and largely administrative; cities will submit their applications to the Main Street staff for their review and recommendation for the THC's executive director's ultimate approval.

One staff person will serve as the Associate Network coordinator under the umbrella of the Texas Main Street Program. At this time, we believe these responsibilities may be delegated as additional responsibility for an existing staff person. The Associate Network coordinator would provide historic preservation and organizational training with the key goal of bolstering local historic preservation initiatives throughout the state. By introducing preservation concepts, the Associate Network coordinator will educate, council, and support participating communities as they explore the creation of preservation ordinances, grants, National Register listings, and other initiatives with far-reaching benefits. Additionally, the coordinator will introduce cities to the fundamentals of Main Street's Four Points and how they can be applied as a targeted downtown revitalization strategy. As the network grows and expands, the Associate Network coordinator will continue to train and support new communities' liaisons as they are added to the program and guide them to agency programs that will further support their individual goals.

Other TMSP staff would be called upon on a very limited basis, primarily consultative in nature or as part of larger training initiatives for the entire Main Street network such as the virtual introductory series or topical trainings. This will minimize any negative impacts on the existing program resources and preserve the brand identity of our designated Main Street Programs. Occasionally the assistance of other agency staff or outside partners, such as the division's Heritage Tourism and Certified Local Government staff, Texas Heritage Trail Regions, History Programs, Division of Architecture staff, or similar outside organizations, may be necessary should communities express an interest in pursuing initiatives that fall under these programs or outside the purview of the agency.

As a measurable outcome of the Associate Network, participating communities will be expected to satisfy basic, narrative reporting requirements that document their preservation and organization activities, volunteerism, local stakeholder registers, and key benchmarks of success such as passing preservation ordinances, holding preservation initiative-based town halls, or properties/districts successfully achieving historic designations. Additionally, city leaders or network liaisons may be required to earn an agreed upon number of training hours per contract period. Staff will regularly check in with each participating community to guide progress and ensure that benchmarks are being met, and when appropriate reports will track the communities' progress in key areas: historic preservation education and initiatives, local volunteerism and stakeholder involvement, and strategic economic vitality and organizational capacity building.

From the state's perspective, the Associate Network has the potential to increase the efficacy, efficiency, and retention of designated Main Street programs long-term. Although increasing the number of designated Main Streets is not a primary goal of the initiative, Associate Network participants would have a greater understanding of Main Street's community benefits before applying as well as be more prepared for the state and local requirements. Additionally, staff expect programs that graduate from Associate Network status to designated Main Streets would have a streamlined onboarding process once joining the Main Street Program. TMSP staff would cultivate a relationship with the program and city officials during their tenure as an Associate city that will facilitate their joining the designated programs; staff would receive information and reports from the Associate Network coordinator about the Associate cities pursuing designated Main Street status and thus staff would have a better understanding of the incoming cities than what would be available through the Main Street application alone.

**Where will this program be located within the agency structure? (i.e., what division, program, etc.).**

Services will be provided by Main Street staff in the Community Heritage Development Division. The Associate Network will introduce a differentiated system to the existing Texas Main Street Program and broaden our service audience. The initiative's coordinator will be led by the TMSP state coordinator and the work will be conducted under the TMSP umbrella. The initiative's coordinator will instigate and lead the collaboration when necessary with other staff or programs.

**Please list and describe the key measures or benchmarks the agency will use to determine the program's success. Will this program contribute to any of the agency's existing performance measures in the current strategic plan?**

Following the example set by 40 years of Main Street implementation, the Associate Network frames preservation within the lens of downtown revitalization in a way that is approachable to a broader audience; this in turn supports the state's preservation initiatives by fostering greater understanding and appreciation for the unique cultural and economic assets that can be found only in our Texas downtowns. Associates will be challenged to proactively stimulate and support the growth of their downtown centers while lessening the negative impacts of far-reaching economic development issues.

The Associate Network also helps participants establish preservation-oriented volunteer bases and leadership, such as a preservation board, which are essential for the success of any long-term goals or local initiatives. Associate Network participants will also be encouraged to bolster relationships within their local marketplace to demonstrate historic preservation as an effective business and financial strategy: investors, realtors, brokers, developers, and bankers, who must become involved to influence and endorse the future of preservation.

The immediate benefits of the Associate Network relate to the dissemination of information through educational workshops and resources. City officials, property and business owners, and other local stakeholders will have access to Main Street-curated information that can help them understand the various resources at their disposal to encourage thoughtful preservation of their historic assets, rather than short-sighted demolition or insensitive treatments. Associate Network stakeholders will be directed to state and federal programs that meet their specific needs and be provided general consultative guidance from the Main Street team of that nature. The broader and enduring community impact stems from the very nature of incremental development and preservation—locals and developers alike will recognize historic buildings as an asset, seen for their full economic potential and therefore will take steps to preserve them appropriately: historic designations and districts, participation in designated Main Street or Certified Local Government programs, or the creation of preservation ordinances.

As an implementation strategy, the Associate Network will track short and long-term tangible and measurable outcomes. General benchmarks include workshop and webinar attendance, community volunteer participation, and identification of long-term initiatives to support local preservation and economic vitality goals. Long-term measures will assess local institutional changes that have occurred to promote sustainable growth, future revitalization, and further integration with federal and state preservation programs. Implementation of initiatives such as tax abatements, historic tax credits, low-interest loans and grants, and expedited permitting will be tracked to identify programmatic changes and future success in

joining and sustaining local programs or initiatives such as Main Street, Certified Local Government, or the federal and state tax credits.

## **Existing Agency Performance Measures and Strategic Plan Goals**

Associate Network training and activities will have a direct impact on the helping the agency meet its goals outlined in Agency Strategic Plan (FY 2021-2025) and associated performance measures. Additionally, the work of the network will further the agency's contributions to the goals of the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan (2010).

The creation of an Associate Network is in line with the agency's overall mission and philosophy by supporting local historic preservation of historic assets for the cultural and economic benefit of participants while fostering a sense of place. Strategic Plan Objective A.2: Encourage Economic Development, Tourism, and Education through historic places in partnership with local public, private, and nonprofit entities. The creation of an "Affiliate category of participation" is specifically identified as an Action item under this section.

The Associate Network will positively impact the agency's performance measures, specifically:

- Output: Number of technical assists provided
- Output: Number of properties and sites assisted
- Outcome: Number of individuals provided training/assistance in historic/archeological preservation

Success with the Associate Network may also lead to increases in additional measures outside the direct reporting of Community Heritage Development Division.

The Associate Network has the potential to help fulfill many objectives outlined in the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan (2010). The initiative most closely aligns with Goal 4: Leverage Economic Development Tools for Preservation, outlining that communities should leverage preservation-based and traditional economic development tools to revitalize historic areas, and Goal 8: the existing preservation community develops its organizational capacity to strengthen and expand preservation skills. Through the successful implementation of the Associate Network and subsequent educational and organizational foundation, Statewide Plan Goal 1: Survey and Online Inventory and Goal 3: Implement Policies and Incentives become more easily attainable. As part of the Associate Network, participating cities may be able use the DowntownTX.org software to compile holistic building and business inventories, which in turn can help programs identify and implement effective preservation policies or incentives to protect their historic and cultural assets.

These goals would be supported by providing guidance, training, and targeted services to communities that are otherwise unlikely to receive similar assistance.

**What is the budget for this program (annual budget for permanent programs/total budget for short term projects)? Please include a detailed budget that includes staff time, additional FTEs, materials, etc.**

The operational costs of the initiative consist primarily of staff salary and benefits for an existing 1 FTE with some travel and overhead expenditures. These total annual costs are estimated to be \$90,000 and funds already exist within the development assistance strategy and the Community Heritage Development Division's budget. The occasional use of outside consultants may be necessary when specific analysis or data collection falls outside the expertise of the agency staff. Additional allocations, if available in the future, could be utilized to produce or improve specific tools, direct participants to services and resources that would not be available at the Associate Network, or hire additional staff should the Associate Network prove successful.

**How will the agency fund this program? If available, please include a fundraising plan if outside money is needed for the program.**

Funds already exist within the Community Heritage Development Division's operational budget for the current biennium.

**Based on funding, the resources of the agency and staff availability, will other programs need to be suspended or stopped in order to accomplish this new program?**

No programs will be suspended or stopped in order to provide this additional service. The Associate Network is designed to supplement rather than replace Main Street or other programs.

**How will this program be successfully implemented? Please include a detailed implementation plan and timeline.**

Background:

In 2020, staff identified the need to address service gaps within TMSP audience and reach, seeking reevaluate program's requirements and opportunities for broader support. Staff assessed the feasibility of an affiliate/Associate Network, which would inherently offer fewer services but be more accessible to a wide variety of communities based on their needs. Sample documents and service descriptions of similar Main Street affiliate programs across the nation were examined, and in-depth conversations were hosted with Georgia and Washington Main Street coordinators to gauge their program structure. After internal deliberation regarding the types of services that would be useful to cities starting their preservation journeys while limiting the impact on staff, the Short Form program analysis was created and presented to the Community Heritage Development Committee in July 2021. At that time, the Committee urged staff to continue exploring the viability of the Associate Network premise and return with the Long Form at the October 2021 meeting.

Below is a summary of the estimated further development and implementation timeline. Some schedule adjustments are anticipated as program implementation progresses:

**November 2021—February 2022: Naming and branding of the Associate Network to protect TMSP brand-identity; creation of important materials**

- TMSP staff will coordinate with the Communications division to finalize Associate Network branding and name to distinguish it from the designated Main Street Program, securing both programs' brand identities
- TMSP staff will work with Communications to devise a promotions strategy and the creation of the Associate Network application

**March 2022 – July 2022: Associate Network applications developed; promotion of services; fee schedule development and adoption by Commission; continued concept refinement and resource building.**

- Publish the Associate Network application, services menu, and other related documents to the agency website.
- Coordinate with Communications to appropriately publicize and promote the new program, its relationship to Main Street, and the application process.
- At this time, staff may make site visits to communities serious about the Associate Network to make board presentations, discuss the application process, or provide initial guidance.
- Staff continue to develop and curate resources that are appropriate for the Associate Network cities

**August 2022 – October 2022: Review of Network Applications, acceptance of pilot programs,**

- Follow the agency-specified process for application review to select the pilot cities; submit staff recommendations to the THC executive director for approval
- Notify all applicants in writing of their incoming status and next steps

**October 2022 – December 2022: Preparation for incoming cities, including official notification of acceptance, DowntownTX.org imports and initial data collection and profile building.**

- Pilot cities' contracts signed/fees collected for incoming year
- Some initial data collection and site visits may be required to prepare certain services, such as DowntownTX.org profile generation

**January 2023: First Associate cities join the Texas Associate Network**

## TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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### Item 12.4

Texas Historical Commission  
Quarterly Meeting  
October 28-29, 2021

### **Consider authorization for Friends of the Texas Historical Commission to license DowntownTX.org and associated intellectual property to organizations with similar missions**

#### **Background:**

Since 2015, THC staff with the help of the Friends has been developing the [DowntownTX.org](http://DowntownTX.org) web-based tools and software utilizing a combination of private, state, and federal funding that totals more than \$270,000 of investment, not including staff time. The site launched in 2017 and currently there is inventory data for 101 Texas communities with about 20,000 total properties. The system is already live to the public for 64 historic downtowns. The site has attracted the attention of several Main Street programs outside of Texas including, West Virginia, Oakland County Michigan, and now the state of Georgia. Since inception, staff has envisioned the possibility of sharing the tools with like-minded preservation organizations whose constituents and historic resources could benefit without having to duplicate the Texas investment. Future licensing fees could reduce some of the annual and future development costs that THC bears maintaining and improving the system.

At the May 2019 meeting, the Community Heritage Development division director outlined a pilot licensing project and approach for the CHD Committee's consideration. Formal action wasn't requested, but the Committee responded positively and directed staff to continue with the described approach. At the time, West Virginia was the anticipated pilot partner, however Georgia has come forward and is prepared with financing to license the software. The anticipated costs that Georgia, or another initial licensee will need to cover are approximately \$72,000 which also adapts the underlying code to facilitate future licensing to other entities at a lower upfront cost.

The following approach laid out in 2019 remains accurate apart from the substitution of Georgia for West Virginia:

1. Commission support for a pilot expansion with WV
2. Formally partner with Friends of the THC for expansion
3. FTHC to contract with WV for multi-tenant features with fees to cover legal and administration costs
4. Work on legal and business issues while software is being modified for WV
5. Evaluate the success of the pilot and business plan
6. Seek Commission and Trustee approval for future expansion, or terminate the expansion leaving THC and WV as the only users of the product, at no risk to THC

The website, software tools, code, data, and other intellectual property belongs to the Commission. Therefore, formal authorization is being requested to permit the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission to act on the Commission's behalf regarding the licensing of the property, specifically to organizations with similar missions. This may include nonprofits and governmental entities but does not authorize the licensing for commercial interests. In all cases, the Commission would retain ownership of the property. Friends will apply their typical administrative fees, but otherwise the licensing profits, if any, will be retained to support the future software development and maintenance.

## TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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**Recommended motion (Committee):**

Move that the committee send forward to the Commission and recommend authorization for Friends of the Texas Historical Commission to license DowntownTX.org and associated intellectual property to organizations with similar missions

**Recommended motion (Commission):**

Move to authorize Friends of the Texas Historical Commission to license DowntownTX.org and associated intellectual property to organizations with similar missions