



COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

The Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Community Heritage Development Division works in partnership with communities and regions to revitalize historic areas, stimulate tourism, and encourage economic development through the use of preservation strategies.

WHAT WE DO

TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Since 1981, the Texas Main Street Program has worked closely with more than 180 communities across the state to revive and strengthen their historic downtowns or neighborhood commercial districts. Affiliated with Main Street America of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Texas program is among the most successful downtown revitalization programs in the nation.

Each year, up to five Texas cities or urban neighborhoods commit local support and are selected as official Texas Main Street cities. Once selected, these communities are provided training utilizing the national model's four-point approach of organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality. As participants in the statewide network, civic leaders, small businesses, and organizations receive individualized assistance in planning, development, architectural preservation, and other disciplines from the division staff.

The THC typically does not provide funding or grants specifically to local Main Street cities. However, since its inception, the Texas Main Street Program has generated over \$5.4 billion of investment in the participating commercial districts.

The Texas Main Street Program maintains DowntownTX.org, a real estate and building inventory tool that lists commercial buildings in historic downtowns. It links investors and developers to properties that are potentially eligible for historic preservation tax incentives.



Locals gather on the courthouse lawn for a movie night in Denton, a Main Street city since 1990.

HERITAGE TOURISM AND THE TEXAS HERITAGE TRAILS PROGRAM

The division supports heritage tourism by assisting local governments, organizations, and individuals in the preservation, enhancement, and promotion of heritage and cultural attractions in the state. Program goals include raising the standards of heritage and cultural attractions across Texas; fostering heritage preservation and education; encouraging regional cooperation and promotion of heritage and cultural attractions; and encouraging local tourism leadership and organizational skills.

The THC plans and implements heritage tourism activities across the state primarily through the Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP), a regional initiative designed to promote tourism visitation to cultural and heritage sites and events. The THTP has leveraged the state's 10 scenic driving trails created in 1968 to support regional nonprofit trail organizations that create collaborative efforts among communities, heritage regions, and the state to partner and promote Texas' historic and cultural resources.



The agency's Texas Heritage Trails Program (THTP) is the premier source for heritage travel information with print and digital materials for promoting curated and high-quality heritage destinations to Texans and visitors. The program's printed travel guides, TexasTimeTravel.com, heritage trail region websites, and mobile tours market heritage regions as tourism destinations, increase visitation to cultural and historic sites, and bring dollars to Texas.

In addition to the THTP, the THC's Heritage Tourism Program works to develop and promote the state as a tourist destination in conjunction with the agency's historic sites, the Office of the Governor–Economic Development and Tourism, Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Commission on the Arts, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is a local, state, and federal government partnership for historic preservation. The THC administers the program at the state level, and the National Park Service is the responsible federal agency. The program is designed to help cities and counties develop high standards of preservation to protect a wide range of important historic properties—from ornate courthouses to working-class neighborhoods. CLG communities are recognized as having special expertise in historic preservation and become part of a national network that provides valuable local perspectives on statewide preservation activities. The THC utilizes a portion of its federal funding to support local preservation projects in CLG communities. Applications for CLG matching grants are usually available in early fall.

TEXAS TREASURE BUSINESS AWARD


Since the Texas Treasure Business Award program was created in 2005, over 500 businesses throughout Texas have been honored for their historic significance, from well-known establishments like H.E.B. and Bill Miller BBQ to small-town bakeries, florists, general stores, and more. By acknowledging local businesses while they are still in operation, we honor them as places of living history and are able to record their stories and ensure their legacy for generations to come.



Official State of Texas Longhorn Herd at Fort Griffin State Historic Site, near Albany (above top). Waco Suspension Bridge (above).

HOW TO REACH US

Staff members are available to answer questions and provide preservation assistance. Please contact us at:
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**TEXAS
 HISTORICAL
 COMMISSION** 
 REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

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