Community Heritage Development Committee

April 27, 2023
AGENDA
COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Embassy Suites Austin Central
Agave A-B
5901 N. Interstate Hwy 35
Austin, TX 78723
April 27, 2023
1:00 p.m.

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.

1. Call to Order — Committee Chair Peterson
   A. Committee member introductions
   B. Establish quorum
   C. Recognize and/or excuse absences

2. Consider approval of the January 31, 2023, committee meeting minutes — Committee Chair Peterson

3. Consider adoption of rule review for Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 30, related to the Texas Heritage Trails Program, as published in the February 17, 2023 Texas Register (48 TexReg 969) (Item 7.5) — Committee Chair Peterson

4. Consider changes to the schedule, criteria, and process for the designation of Texas Main Street Cities and other program participants (item 11.2) — Committee Chair Peterson

5. Community Heritage Development Division update and committee discussion — Patterson
   A. Update on the Texas Main Street Program activities including staffing and DowntownTX.org
   B. Update on heritage tourism activities including Texas Heritage Trails Program
   C. Update on the Certified Local Government activities including grants, training, and prospective CLGs
   D. Update on the Texas Treasures Business Award
   E. Update on Real Places Conferences

6. 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 Paige Neumann at (512) 463-5768 at least four (4) business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) Community Heritage Development Committee was called to order by Committee Chair Pete Peterson at 12:41 p.m.

A. Committee member introductions

Chair Peterson welcomed everyone. Members in attendance, in addition to the Chair, included Commissioners Garrett Donnelly, Lilia Garcia, and Daisy Sloan White.

B. Establish Quorum

Chair Peterson noted a quorum was present.

C. Recognize and excuse absences

Commissioners Donna Bahorich, Monica Zárate Burdette, and Renee Dutia were excused.

2. Consider approval of the October 17, 2022 committee meeting minutes—Committee Chair Peterson

Commissioner White moved, Commissioner Garcia seconded, and the committee voted unanimously to approve the October 17, 2022 Community Heritage Development Committee meeting minutes.

3. Consider approval of the application ranking and funding recommendations for the FY 2023 Certified Local Government Grants (item 11.2)—Committee Chair Peterson

Commissioner Garcia motioned, that the committee send forward to the Commission and recommend acceptance of the ranking as presented and funding recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2023 Certified Local Government grants based on the availability of federal funds. Funds will be committed in the order of commission staff rankings as federal funds become available. Individual recommended funding amounts may be adjusted as necessary to ensure efficient use of the available funds.
Commissioner White seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously to recommend acceptance of ranking and funding recommendations.

4. Consider filing authorization of intent to review and consider for re-adoption, revision or repeal, Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 30 Texas Heritage Trails Program for publication in the Texas Register (item 11.3)

Commissioner Donnelly motioned, Commissioner White seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously to recommend filing authorization of intent to review the Texas Administrative Code for the Texas Heritage Trails Program for publication in the Texas Register.

5. Community Heritage Development Division update and committee discussion—Division Director Patterson

Mr. Patterson discussed the upcoming Real Places Conference with its planned 95 speakers, 32 sessions, and 800 registrants including virtual and in-person participants. Direct financial support from the agency is $85,000 while conference sponsorships totaled $126,000 this year. Many are valuable long-time sponsors and the committee was shown an image with all the sponsor logos.

Chairman Nau questioned the limitations of offering registration refunds due to inclement weather. Patterson explained that the substantial reason is due to food and beverage commitments and subsidized hotel rooms that are already contracted for and non-refundable given the weather onset and forecasts changed just prior to the start of the conference.

Planning for the 2024 conference is already underway. The number of registrants and interested presenters continues to grow. The team is weighing the option of moving the conference to another city or another time of year. Despite weather concerns, other constraints, and factors such as the legislative session, other conferences and summer audience and staff vacations complicate other seasons. A commitment was made to consider scheduling alternatives to avoid winter weather.

An update on the Texas Main Street Program was provided, noting the desire to improve the application process, outreach, and the development of a leadership council. Mentioned were the three open and restructured positions on the team which has slowed some of the other progress. Mr. Patterson discussed recent implementations of the increased standards required for national accreditation. While these changes are beneficial to the program, the process is and will be time consuming.

The Community Heritage Development team will be forging a partnership with the Smithsonian Institute’s Museum on Main Street, a program started in 1994 that has only intermittently been in Texas. Through 2024 and 2025, the Smithsonian model will help expand heritage tourism in six locations across the state with their traveling exhibition, Crossroads: Change in Rural America. The target communities to host the exhibit will be rural, with populations under 10,000. The heritage tourism staff will be leading the program while coordinating museum services. The goal of this initiative is to deliver lasting heritage tourism services to diverse areas.

The staff vacancy within the Certified Local Government program was mentioned and a few of the most recent Texas Treasure Business Award recipients were acknowledged.

6. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m.
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 January and February, staff provided measurable assistance to all 10 trail regions and 23 communities. Assistance, or in some cases multiple incidences of assistance, was provided to Austin, Bartlett, Bastrop, Beaumont, Brownsville, Caldwell, Conroe, Denison, Elgin, Galveston, Goliad, Granger, Grapevine, Killeen, Laredo, Palestine, Paris, Rio Grande City, San Marcos, Seguin, Taylor, Waco, and Weatherford.

RESULTS IN FROM REAL PLACES 2023 CONFERENCE
The conference was proud to present seven renowned keynote speakers from across the country—Sara Bronin in her first appearance as chair of the U.S. Advisory Council on Historic Preservation presented “Protecting Preservation: National Support for Statewide and Local Efforts;” Joe Veneto of Veneto Collaboratory discussed partnering with organizations to design, develop, and deliver unforgettable visitor experiences; Caroline Klibanoff covered how history institutions are uniquely positioned to spark curiosity and empower informed civic participation among young adults; Dan Goodgame, John Phillip Santos, and Melissa Reese participated in a special Texas Monthly 50th anniversary panel discussion on journalist and preservationist roles in establishing and preserving the historical record; and decorative finish conservator Jeff Greene shared his process on investigating and uncovering hidden and lost interiors through finishes investigation.

The event opened with an evening reception and unique multimedia performance by the critically acclaimed Montopolis, performing “Lone Star: Tall Tales from Deep in the Heart of Texas.” Winter weather shut down most of the state on the first day of the conference, preventing or delaying travel by many attendees and speakers. The event was already scheduled to be hybrid, so impacted speakers were able to present remotely. Only one session—a pre-conference workshop—had to be cancelled. Prior to the weather, 796 participants registered, 686 in person and 110 virtual. Only 414 were able to be on site, but the hybrid nature allowed most registrants to participate despite travel issues.

The post-conference survey of public participants had 95 percent of respondents rating the conference quality positively, with 70 percent rating it “excellent.” The percentage rating the conference as excellent increased notably from the previous year, despite similar weather issues.

DOWNTOWNTX.ORG IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES TOURS
The Texas Main Street Program staff rolled out a new approach to the Imagine the Possibilities Tours. The local tours, now supported in May and October, are designed to raise awareness of DowntownTX.org and to connect real estate agents, potential investors, and business owners to available properties in historic downtowns. The site tracks more than 20,000 parcels in 104 historic downtowns.


HERITAGE TOURISM: HISTORIC OVERNIGHTS
Historic Overnights, a new campaign to identify, research, and promote historically significant overnight accommodations to heritage travelers in Texas launches soon. Initially created as a partnership with a specific short-term rental platform to engage owners, the project has since evolved to include
short-term rentals on multiple booking platforms, as well as bed and breakfasts and historic hotels.

For the project’s launch, staff partnered with Visit Galveston, the Galveston Historical Foundation, and the Rosenberg Library to reach historic property owners in the community. Through workshops and individual consultation, these participants learned to use archival resources to research the history of their property and piece together biographical details, documents, new clippings, and photographs to tell a more engaging personal story that enriches the visitor experience and brings the past to life. The stories will be featured on TexasTimeTravel.com and promoted with our partners.

HERITAGE TOURISM: MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET
Community applications opened in March for the heritage tourism initiative, Museum on Main Street. This partnership with the Smithsonian Institution will reach underserved rural communities and assist them in reflecting on their history, culture, and people.

Six communities will be selected in June to host the Smithsonian’s traveling exhibit called Crossroads: Change in Rural America during 2024. Tour planning typically begins 1–2 years before the exhibit arrives. This allows plenty of time to work with each host community to build project-planning skills, form organizational partnerships, develop local assets, and create visitor experiences that will not only ensure a successful Museum on Main Street exhibit, but will also create sustainable change in each location’s heritage landscape.

With a national exhibit as a high-profile rallying point and two years of training and preparation, this program offers a unique and turnkey model for providing heritage tourism consultation to rural communities in every corner of the state.

HERITAGE TOURISM: TEXAS TIME TRAVEL and DIGITAL DATA
TexasTimeTravel.com analytics from the second quarter of FY 2023 include:

- Users: 86,501
- User engagement rate: 59 percent

- thec.texas.gov was the top referring site to TexasTimeTravel.com behind Google searches and the THC’s GovDelivery emails
- 59 percent accessed the site using a mobile device
- Visitors to the site were split roughly equally between male (52 percent) and female (48 percent)
- The most common age group for site visitors was ages 35–44 followed by 45–54
- The Spanish translation button was clicked 122 times and the Texas Heritage Travel Guide was downloaded 340 times

The heritage tourism team evaluates data from the consumer research dashboard to plan new content for TexasTimeTravel.com and the Texas Heritage Traveler e-newsletter. Highlights of the data for the second quarter of FY 2023 include:

- 3,458,378 total unique visitors to heritage sites and attractions
- 7,339,889 total visitor days
- Heritage traveler demographics
  - Caucasian (73 percent)
  - Hispanic (19 percent)
  - African American (5 percent)
  - 33 percent are ages 45–, and 30 percent are 65+
  - 36 percent have a bachelor’s degree
  - More than 50 percent have 1–2 people in the household
- Most interesting visitor statistics of the period:
  - Daytrippers accounted for two-thirds of visits to state historic sites this quarter.
  - The Independence Trail Region saw the highest number of unique visitors during this time at 755,129 visitors.
  - Visitors spent double the amount of time in the Texas Mountain Trail Region (2.6 days) compared with all other regions.
  - The largest percentage of Hispanic visitors was in the Pecos Trail Region (41 percent).
COMMISSION REPORT

TEXAS TREASURE BUSINESS AWARD PROGRAM

APRIL 2023
MALLORY LAUREL
SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

Photo: The front desk of iconic hotel, The Driskill. Date unknown.
## RECENT Awardees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACME Auto Glass (1973)</td>
<td>College Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrera's Supply Company (1918)</td>
<td>Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowie Industries Inc. (1951)</td>
<td>Bowie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Club (1955)</td>
<td>Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herring Printing Company (1964)</td>
<td>Kerrville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake &amp; Dorothy's Café (1948)</td>
<td>Stephenville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson's Saw Shop (1970)</td>
<td>San Augustine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King, Guerra, Davis &amp; Garcia PC (1922)</td>
<td>Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koepp Chevrolet Inc. (1923)</td>
<td>La Vernia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ledwell &amp; Sons Enterprises Inc. (1946)</td>
<td>Texarkana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Duncan Insurance Agency (1911)</td>
<td>Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readfield Meats (1960)</td>
<td>Bryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Gas Supply Company (1946)</td>
<td>Azle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Supply Co. (1937)</td>
<td>Beaumont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamford American (1900)</td>
<td>Stamford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Driskill (1886)</td>
<td>Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom's Pawn (1972)</td>
<td>Clute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner's Hardware and Gifts (1890)</td>
<td>Cuero</td>
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</table>
# HISTORIC BBQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southside Market (1882)</td>
<td>Elgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kreuz Market (1900)</td>
<td>Lockhart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patillo's Barbeque (1912)</td>
<td>Beaumont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin's Place (1925)</td>
<td>Bryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prine's BBQ (1925)</td>
<td>Wichita Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riscky's BAR-B-Q (1927)</td>
<td>Fort Worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Original Black's Barbecue (1932)</td>
<td>Lockhart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizzitola's Bar B Cue (1935)</td>
<td>Houston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncle Henny's Tamales (1937)</td>
<td>Beaumont</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dickey's Barbecue Pit (1941)</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
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<td>House Park Bar-B-Que (1943)</td>
<td>Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernie's Pit BBQ (1948)</td>
<td>Greenville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louie Mueller Barbecue (1949)</td>
<td>Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stringer's Lufkin Bar-B-Que (1950)</td>
<td>Lufkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom &amp; Bingo's Bar-B-Que (1952)</td>
<td>Lubbock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack Jordan's Bar-B-Que (1952)</td>
<td>Odessa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanley's Famous Pit Barbecue (1953)</td>
<td>Tyler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vera's Backyard Bar-B-Que (1955)</td>
<td>Brownsville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sonny Bryan's Smokehouse (1958)</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Market (1958)</td>
<td>Luling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesquite BBQ (1959)</td>
<td>Mesquite</td>
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<td>Davila's BBQ (1959)</td>
<td>Seguin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que (1962)</td>
<td>Llano</td>
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<td>Inman's Ranch House Bar-B-Q (1964)</td>
<td>Marble Falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sam's Original Restaurant (1966)</td>
<td>Fairfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Salt Lick BBQ (1967)</td>
<td>Driftwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodacious Bar-B-Q (1968)</td>
<td>Longview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartley's BBQ (1968)</td>
<td>Grapevine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bert's Bar-B-Q (1970)</td>
<td>Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smokehouse BBQ (1972)</td>
<td>Lindsay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**BUSINESS SPOTLIGHTS**

**Bowie Industries, est. 1951**

"On this very spot 65 years ago, before the highway was widened to four lanes, there was a pay phone booth across Wise Street in front of Bowie Industries. When Sig Andreasen and Owen Meyer first started, they didn’t have enough money to have a phone. They gave out this [pay phone] number to every customer and when a customer called, one of them would run across the highway and answer the phone. After a couple of years, they were successful enough to afford an actual phone."

**Jake & Dorothy’s Café, est. 1948**

"70 years of feeding hungry athletes, coaches, and referees is bound to produce a story or two. Known as the ‘Battle of 377’, the sometimes-heated rivalry between the Brownwood Lions and the Stepheville Yellow Jackets dates back to 1937, before there was a Jake & Dorothy’s Café. A fan of Jake & Dorothy’s, former Brownwood Head Coach, Gordon Wood, loved to treat his team to chicken-fried steaks at the Café after the game. Kerry recalls several Friday nights when the referees had to keep the peace long enough for everyone to finish dinner."

**Koepp Chevrolet Inc., est. 1923**

"The painted-over brick of the nearly 65-year old building holds a chill from the night before. The clank of metal-on-metal echoes in from the repair shop and drowns out the hum of the highway. Old friends unexpectedly reunite and discuss times passed as they wait for their oil change. Though GM has sanctioned alterations of the building, there are myriad markers of days past. It’s not modern and fussy, like city dealerships; it’s familiar and inviting. The Blue Marlin that Dwight caught in 1972 is mounted above where Jr. used to sit, imbuing the family’s personal touch. The 1956 Chevrolet repair manual on the Parts shelf, the framed photos of Ewald O. standing proudly in front of his new business, and the scrap pile nestled in antique truck bed are reminders of how much these chilly bricks have seen."

*All quotations above were sourced from the awardee’s own narrative, which was submitted with their nomination form.*
Consider adoption of rule review for Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 30, related to the Texas Heritage Trails Program, as published in the February 17, 2023 *Texas Register* (48 TexReg 969)

**Background:**

The Texas Government Code, §2001.039, establishes a four-year rule review cycle for all state agency rules, including THC rules. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) filed notice of proposed review of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 30 related to the Texas Heritage Trails Program with the *Texas Register* following the February 1, 2023 quarterly meeting. The official comment period began with publication of the notice of proposed review in the *Texas Register* on February 17, 2023. The filing of the notice of proposed review soliciting comments as to whether the reason for adoption continues to exist does not preclude any amendments that may be proposed through a separate rulemaking process.

If authorized by the Commission, the THC will file the notice of adopted review for Chapter 30 (Texas Heritage Trails Program) in the *Texas Register* following the April 28, 2023 meeting. The notice of adopted review will state that the THC finds the reasons for adopting the above-mentioned rule of the TAC continue to exist and readopts the rules.

The THC received no comments related to the rule review.

**Recommended motion (Committee):**

Move that the committee send forward to the Commission and recommend adoption of the review of Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 30 Texas Heritage Trails Program as published in the February 17, 2023 *Texas Register* (48 TexReg 969)

**Recommended motion (Commission):**

Move adoption of the review of Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 30 Texas Heritage Trails Program as published in the February 17, 2023 *Texas Register* (48 TexReg 969)
The Texas Historical Commission (hereafter referred to as the commission) adopts the review of Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, for Chapter 30, Texas Heritage Trails Program.

This review was completed pursuant to Texas Government Code, § 2001.039. The commission has assessed whether the reason(s) for adopting or re-adopting this chapter continues to exist. The notice of a proposed review was published in the February 17, 2023 issue of the Texas Register (48 TexReg 969).

The commission received no comments related to the review of the above-noted chapter.

As a result of the internal review, the commission has determined that certain revisions are appropriate and necessary. The commission finds that the reasons for initially adopting these rules continue to exist and re-adopts Chapter 30 in accordance with the requirements of Texas Government Code, §2001.039.

This concludes the review of 13 TAC Chapter 30.

TRD – 202202863

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
Proposed review filed February 17, 2023
Consider changes to the schedule, criteria, and process for the designation of Texas Main Street Cities and other program participants

**Proposal:**
Agency staff recommend that the traditional application, designation, and entry procedures for new or recertified communities be replaced with an incremental process based on benchmarks related to the recently revised Main Street America accreditation standards as well as preservation and revitalization best practices. Staff recommend that the proposed process will be more flexible for communities and benefit both the local and state programs; better ensuring that officially designated Texas Main Street Cities will be successful in their downtown revitalization efforts and program participation. Secondarily, the proposed process will also permit better allocation and management of agency resources. Staff recommend beginning these changes now, replacing the upcoming July 2023 application deadline.

In short, under the proposed process, new participants would first enter the Texas Associate Network approved by the Commission in October 2021. Those communities seeking to become an officially designated Texas Main Street City, will demonstrate achievement and readiness through a series of benchmarks over time, designed to establish the foundation for a successful local revitalization program under the national model. The communities can meet these benchmarks on a schedule that fits their situation and formal designation may happen more frequently than just annually. Not all Texas Associate Network participants will choose to work towards official designation, nor will there be a requirement to do so. Once an appropriate level of benchmark achievements has been reached, staff will authorize the community to complete a formal application to the program for Commission consideration and approval. The focus of the future application is anticipated to document the accomplished benchmarks and demonstrate the ability to meet national accreditation standards at the affiliate level. When designated by the Commission, the local program will essentially be a fully functioning, albeit not necessarily staffed yet, revitalization program under the Main Street Approach model. The state staff will already be familiar in detail with the local board and community with its challenges and resources at the time of designation.

Initially, the Commission establishment of an alternative process without the July deadline is all that is necessary to implement the changes. An application and formal designation by the Commission will remain, but at a later stage of the entry process with different requirements. It is anticipated that some revisions to the Texas Administrative Code will be necessary as implementation moves forward and fees will need to be revisited. Reconciliation of differing state and national terminology use will be required as well. A rethinking of the Interagency Council’s role that can better engage and assist the program will be considered as the new process is implemented. During the interim, to comply with the current code, the IAC will continue to be consulted prior to a designation request reaching the Commission. Continuing the traditional First Lady’s Tour of new Main Streets remains possible and warrants its own future evaluation. This proposal will not directly impact existing designated Main Street Cities unless they cease participation and seek recertification.
Background:
Texas Government Code Chapter 442 authorizes the state program as follows with (b) and (c) being most relevant to the proposal:

Sec. 442.014. MAIN STREET PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall administer a main street program to assist communities with the development, restoration, and preservation of their historic neighborhood commercial districts and central business districts. (b) The commission shall designate certain communities to participate in the program as official main street cities. (c) The commission by rule shall prescribe the frequency of community designations and qualification standards for participation in the program. (d) The commission by rule shall prescribe a fee schedule for participation in the program under Subsection (c). The commission shall collect fees from the participating communities to offset costs of participation in the program.

Currently 90 designated cities receive services from the Texas Main Street Program, which was begun under the Texas Historical Commission in 1981. Once designated by the Commission, communities continue to participate in the program by executing annual contracts, paying nominal fees, adhering to contractual and program obligations which includes a local fulltime manager, submitting required periodic reports, and being evaluated against state and national accreditation standards. Communities with individual local program challenges may temporarily participate with probational requirements or invoke a one-time leave of absence. Communities that cease participation or do not adhere to program requirements are no longer considered designated cities and must reapply should they seek to return to the program as a Texas Main Street Recertified City.

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”. The existing traditional application and entry process for new or recertified communities can be summarized as follows:

- Communities submit optional letters of intent to apply in advance of the application
- Communities submit a formal application to the program by the last business day of July. The current application addresses six major criteria via 63 multi-part questions and significant additional supplemental materials and measures of local support.
- Interdisciplinary staff of the agency evaluate the historic integrity and significance of the proposed districts based primarily on photographic materials supplied by the applicants.
- The Interagency Council evaluates and scores the applications based primarily on the materials supplied by applicants. (Scoring 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.)
- Program staff visit each applicant community between the letter of intent (if applicable) and the Commission consideration
- Staff recommendations for designated cities are presented to the Commission in October of each year for program entry the following January 1, with up to five new or recertified designated each year.
- Designated cities begin the solicitation and hiring process for a local manager(s) with the goal of having staff in place around January 1. Cities also must establish a local board for the program in similar timeframe. A minimum three-to-five-year commitment to the local program is
expected of new participants, however there is no reasonable mechanism for enforcing this commitment.

- In year one of participation, new communities and their staff receive orientations, manager and board trainings, to help them begin their program work. These cities are also eligible to receive any of the services available to existing cities.

Through many years of observation, staff has determined that the current application process is not adequately or accurately evaluating the readiness, commitment, and capacity of local communities to successfully implement the Texas Main Street model. The application asks for important, appropriate, and logical information and materials however applicants too often fail to have a deep enough understanding of the issues to provide the relevant and accurate materials. Staff believe that the evaluation criteria remain on target but they need to be demonstrated and evaluated with new methods. The current application process is not difficult, but it does require substantial amounts of preparation and is resource intensive for both applicants and evaluators. The application successfully weeds out the under-committed or less serious applicants, but it fails to accurately identify the community’s likelihood of success and full local commitment to the program, in large part because applicants do not fully see and comprehend the significant, long-term work ahead.

Further, many applicant communities, once accepted, demonstrate too limited of a program understanding and the steps they will need to implement. For example, even after acceptance too many local stakeholders mistakenly believe that Main Street is a state grant program. Budgets and staffing projected on the application may fail to materialize in a timely manner. Local elections can change the city leadership’s support between the time of application and entry into the program in certain years. Instances of communities struggling more than necessary or even dropping the program early in their tenure are above acceptable levels for such a mature state program. Boards and managers of new programs too often are unclear about their respective roles, responsibilities, and best practices despite training being provided. The proposed new entry process addresses these concerns but creating a working period where communities build their foundation and understanding gradually under the guidance of the agency, before making the application request.

Agency staff are supportive of new national accreditation standards currently being implemented. The new standards will identify local programs operating at a sophisticated and successful level that are closely following the expected models, thereby annually earning national accreditation. The programs not achieving the national accreditation requirements will operate as affiliates as defined by Main Street America. In Texas, programs at both these levels will continue to be considered an officially designated Texas Main Street City. A new city entering the program under current and proposed requirements should not be expected to be accredited in their first year or two.

**Recommended motion (Committee):**
Move that the committee send forward to the Commission and recommend adoption of the new Texas Main Street entry process with applications brought to the Commission for consideration once staff has determined a city participating in the Texas Associate Network has met the required benchmarks.

**Recommended motion (Commission):**
Move adoption of the new Main Street entry process with applications brought to the Commission for consideration once staff has determined a city participating in the Texas Associate Network has met the required benchmarks.