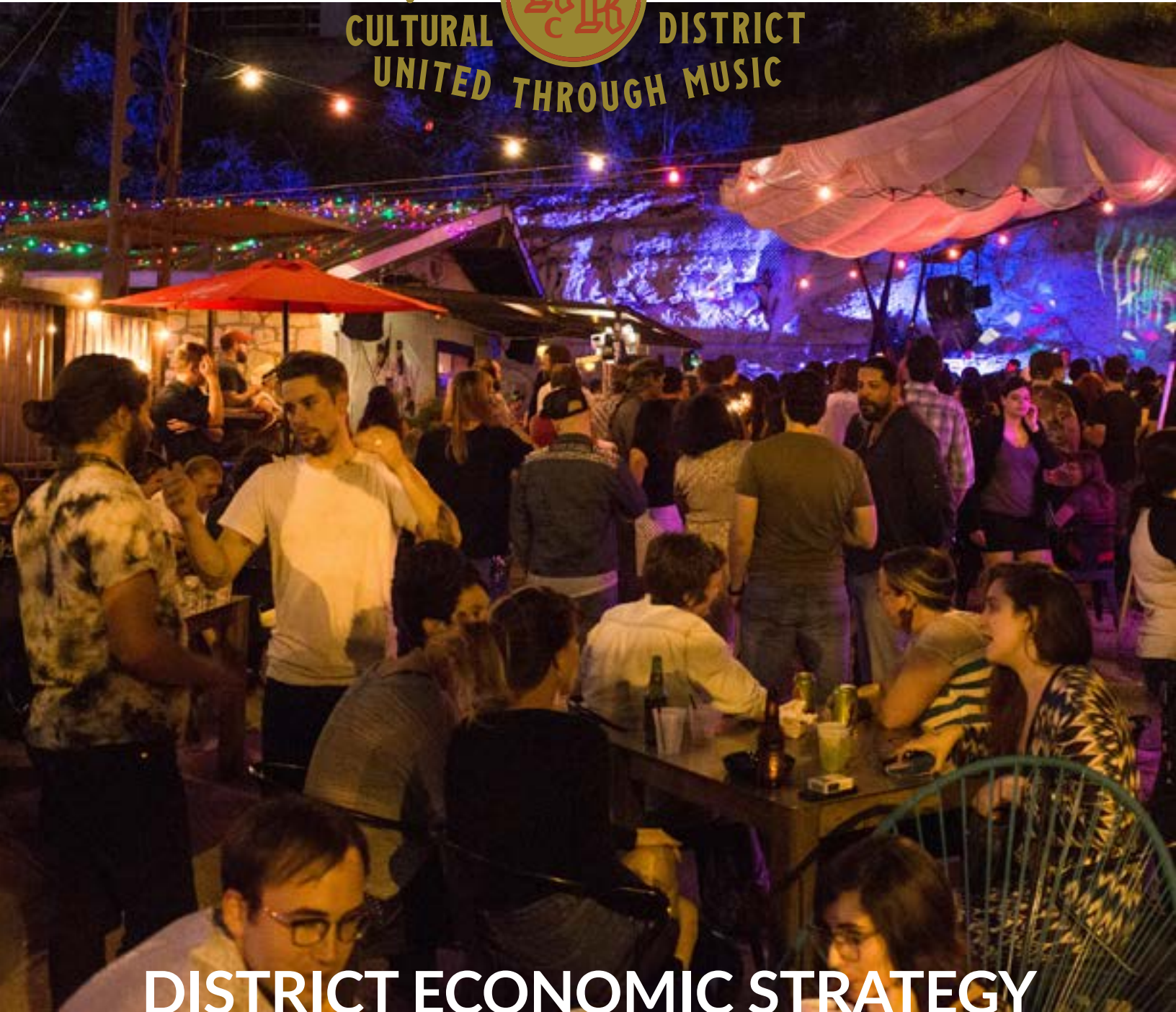




CULTURAL DISTRICT  
UNITED THROUGH MUSIC



# DISTRICT ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Updated  
June 2017



Economic  
Developpr  
CITY OF AUSTIN

# Acknowledgements

The City of Austin acknowledges the leadership of the stakeholders of the Red River Cultural District and their contributions towards the Development of the Business District Strategy. Without their input, passion, direction and on-going participation, a Red River Cultural District vision and Strategy would not have become a reality. This Strategy is a product of their dedication to the preservation and enhancement of the Red River Cultural District.

The Strategy content was developed by the City of Austin's Economic Development Department in collaboration with the Souly Austin 2015-2016 Team including the Austin Community Design and Development Center, Morningside Research and Consulting, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aide, and The University of Texas Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic.

## **Special thanks to the following partners in this process:**

- Austin City Council Members
- Austin Office of the City Manager
- Austin Code Department
- Austin Development Services Department
- Austin Energy
- Austin Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- Austin Music People ( AMP)
- Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department
- Austin Office of Sustainability
- Austin Planning and Zoning Department
- Austin Police Department
- Austin Public Works Department
- Austin Transportation Department
- Downtown Austin Alliance
- Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Red River Cultural District Merchants Association
- Waller Creek Conservancy

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# Executive Summary

## *Authentically Austin:*

*Providing authentic Austin experiences through diverse local music, art and food for all.*

This Business District Strategy is intended to galvanize leadership around a shared vision for the future of the Red River Cultural District (RRCD). This vision is centered on the rich live music and cultural hub of Red River, between E. 6th St. and 12th St. The goals of the Souly Austin process and the resulting Strategy are to empower business and property owners by encouraging them to share their vision, assess their district, organize to identify goals, develop a Business District Strategy, and anchor leadership in the district to advocate for the future they envision.

The recommendations outlined in this Strategy were identified in collaboration with business and property owners in the district, representatives from relevant organizations, community and industry leaders, professional consultants and City of Austin department representatives. Austin is a fast growing city, and this District Strategy recognizes that conditions affecting RRCD businesses may change rapidly. The Strategy is a living document, and should be revisited and revised in five (5) years. Its focus is on short-, medium-, and long-term projects, programs, and policies that can be implemented for the greatest positive impact on RRCD business.

Overall, the most immediate priority identified by district stakeholders is changing the perception and reality of **public safety** in the district. This is one of the largest barriers to attracting more patrons to the district, retaining talent and staff at businesses,

and expanding the cultural amenities key to the district's identity. District stakeholders also see a need to foster a cohesive **identity** for the district and distinguish the district boundaries through landmarks and **creative placemaking**. This will enable the district to promote itself as a unified hub of activity and music.

Additionally, creating an environment for **economic growth** where businesses can thrive is key to the district's success. This includes attracting a more diverse customer and business base by generating more **daytime activity**, working together to host **iconic events** in the district and implementing innovative policies and programs to **support creative industries** in the district. Another main priority identified is **beautification** and improving the physical experience of being in the district. Increasing foot traffic is dependent on visitors having an enjoyable experience exploring the district.

The RRCD also seeks to address the increasing **traffic and parking** issues in the district. These issues not only cause problems for patrons who wish to visit businesses in the district, but also impede commerce by preventing easy access to businesses by employees and performers. The following Strategy describes all of these objectives in depth and provides the background context necessary to understand their potential for positive transformation in the RRCD.





## Red River Cultural District Merchants Association

*The Red River Cultural District is a creative community that provides deeply-rooted and authentic local music, food, and cultural experiences for every artist, fan and guest.*

The Red River Merchants Association was officially chartered in February 2016 through the Souly Austin program. The Association represents the businesses and cultural organizations in the Red River Cultural District. It is supported by non-profit organizations in the District and related businesses outside its boundaries.

Businesses in the Red River Cultural District have been strong leaders throughout the Souly Austin process, regularly meeting to develop strategic priorities and cooperate on building a shared vision for the District. Their hard work and innovative thinking have been essential in developing this Merchant Association. The founding Board of Directors of the Red River Cultural District Merchant Association are as follows:

- Stephen Sternschein, Empire Control Room & Garage
- Cody Cowan, The Mohawk
- Ryan Garrett, Stubb's Bar-B-Q
- Jason McNeely, Barracuda
- Maggie Lea and Tamara Hoover, Cheer Up Charlies
- John Wickham Sidewinder/Elysium/Valhalla



The following businesses and organizations have been engaged throughout the Souly Austin process and have contributed substantially to the Development of the Merchant Association and this Business District Strategy:

- Arlo's
- Austin Creative Alliance
- Austin Music People
- Austin Symphony
- Barracuda
- Beerland
- The Beverly Austin
- Brick Oven Pizza
- Cheer Up Charlies
- Elysium
- Empire Control Room & Garage
- First Baptist Church of Austin
- German-Texan Historical society
- Hoboken Pies
- Hotel Indigo
- Hyatt Hotel
- The Mohawk
- Pelon's TexMex/ 508 Tequila Bar
- Plush
- Side Bar
- The Sidewinder
- Stubb's
- Swan Dive
- True Blue Tattoo
- Valhalla
- Waller Creek Conservancy

# Context of the Red River Cultural District

*“Austin’s music community is an economic development engine that generates a complex ecosystem with ... music industry innovators at its center. That music industry engine also benefits Austin with thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars of music tourism revenue.” - The Austin Music Census, 2015*

The Red River Cultural District (RRCD) is home to nearly 30 businesses that cater to a variety of patrons including live music fans, families, and tourists. Over 50,000 people seek out live music in the district every month, making it one of the most iconic live music hubs in a city that cherishes its reputation as the Live Music Capital of the World. Sudden shuttering of multiple music venues in the area and threats of closure of other cultural establishments across the city prompted the City and industry leaders to take action to preserve and strengthen Austin’s music and arts assets with a focus on the Red River Cultural District.



## Map 2.1: District Boundaries



The Austin City Council designated the Red River Cultural District as a cultural district in October of 2013. Formalizing the area as a cultural district provides geographic boundaries for specific City-level policy actions and targeted improvements that support the preservation and growth of the arts and music-based industries. The boundaries for the City designated district are the 600-900 blocks of Red River Street.

Stakeholders from businesses and organizations on Red River St. between 6th Street and 12th Street participated in the process of developing this Business District Strategy. This differs from the original boundaries set for the Cultural District, adding a wider range of organizations and businesses.





## Anchoring the Music Industry and Downtown Tourism

The RRCD is a key anchor for the arts and tourism sectors for Downtown Austin and the city as a whole. It is anchored by 12 live music venues with a combined patron capacity of 7,500, including high capacity venues such as Stubb's (3,000 capacity) and the Mohawk (900 capacity). The RRCD serves as an incubator for the local music industry, "where many of our songwriters and musicians make their debuts ( *AMP White Paper* )."

The RRCD is also key part of the festival economy in Austin. This is seen most clearly in connections to SXSW, FunFunFunFest, and Austin City Limits (ACL). RRCD venues host events and shows throughout the festival. This is reflected in annual mixed beverage sales for the district, which peak during with SXSW and ACL.

The RRCD is located less than one-half mile from the Austin Convention Center. Within that one-half mile range, 22 hotels are currently operating or under construction. These will account for a staggering 6,741 rooms in total. The music venues in the RRCD provide major entertainment amenities for the hotels in the area, while the hotel expansions will bring new patrons and customers to the venues and other businesses throughout the year.

Finally, the RRCD includes significant historical assets. These include the German-Texan Heritage Society's German Free School and Symphony Square. These historic anchors balance out the district's live music venues, broadening the cultural focus of the RRCD.

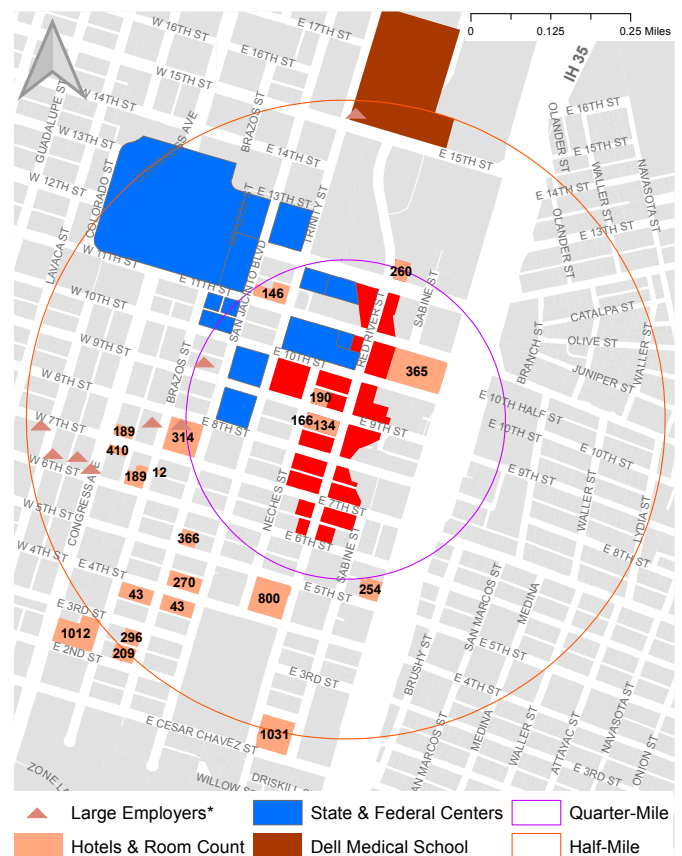
## Medical District

The Dell Medical School will begin operations as the medical school for The University of Texas at Austin in fall 2016. It is located at Red River and W. 15th St., one quarter-mile north of the RRCD. The School will be augmented by a new teaching hospital with trauma ward, Seton Medical Center at The University of Texas, projected to open in 2017. The existing Central Health Breckenridge campus will be vacated and redeveloped. Plans call for the construction of academic buildings on the current site of the Frank Erwin Center.

Along with the medical complex itself, many key Downtown stakeholders have advocated for the Development of an "innovation district" tied to the medical school. This would entail mixed-use residential



**Map 2.2: Red River Cultural District Area Demand Drivers**





and office space tailored to startup companies, particularly in fields related to medical entrepreneurship. The foundation Capital City Innovation formed in March 2016 to pursue innovation district Development. As these projects develop they substantially increase the number of regular patrons to the District, as well as encourage a greater mix of entertainment, dining, and retail options.

## Overlapping Initiatives

The major challenges and opportunities identified by the business owners in the RRCD have also been expressed in several other planning and advocacy efforts specific to

the Austin music industry and Downtown area.

Past efforts examined include the following and are described in the “Overlapping Initiatives” chart:

- Imagine Austin
- City of Austin Sustainability Action Agenda
- Downtown Austin Plan
- Waller Creek Master Plan
- Downtown Public Improvement District Plan
- The Austin Music Census
- AMP Biennial White Paper

## Overlapping Initiatives

	Economic Growth	Connectivity & Transportation	Land Use & Regulations	Livability & Sustainability	Music, Culture & Arts	Green Infrastructure
<b>Imagine Austin (2012)</b> This comprehensive plan helps address Austin’s most pressing issues and guides how our city transforms in the future.	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>City of Austin Sustainability Action Agenda</b> This framework highlights and tracks City of Austin projects that are helping to advance our community’s sustainable future.	●	●		●	●	●
<b>Downtown Austin Plan (2011)</b> The Plan’s vision for Downtown Austin is that it will become the heart of one of the most sustainable cities in the nation.	●	●	●	●	●	
<b>Waller Creek District Master Plan (2010)</b> The Plan specifies actions for the natural environment, fosters the creative arts and nourishes authentic and uplifting experiences of Waller Creek.	●	●	●	●		●
<b>Downtown PID Plan (2012)</b> The Downtown Public Improvement District is guided by the mission to preserve and enhance the value and vitality of downtown Austin, with a vision of the downtown as “the community’s cultural hub, where art and music dance and play.”	●	●		●	●	●
<b>The Austin Music Census (2015)</b> The Census is the most detailed assessment of Austin’s commercial music economy undertaken to date.	●	●	●		●	
<b>Austin Music People White Paper (2015)</b> This report recommends specific actionable strategies to protect, preserve and amplify the economic and creative impacts of Austin’s live music industry in the years ahead.	●	●	●		●	

Topics such as economic growth, livability and sustainability and connectivity and transportation appear consistently across planning and economic Development efforts and interests of district stakeholders. However, gaps appear in priorities related to preservation and retention of Austin's music, arts, and cultural assets (though this is a major theme in the Downtown Plan). The RRCD Strategy builds on and expands these existing efforts, laying out a detailed framework to implement many of the overlapping recommendations in past initiatives.

## Downtown Demand

The RRCD is located in Downtown Austin, a large and growing market for goods and services, including music and entertainment, food and alcohol. Two major populations drive downtown demand: workers and residents.

**Workers:** Currently there are approximately 12,375 office workers employed within half a mile of the RRCD, including State employment centered at the Capitol Complex. Based on a national retail study from 2012, office workers spend on average \$26.29 per worker per visit at full and limited service restaurants and \$3.45 per worker per visit on entertainment.

**Residents:** Currently, 7,170 residents live within one fourth of a mile of the RRCD. Downtown households

spend an average of \$5,430 on eating out annually.

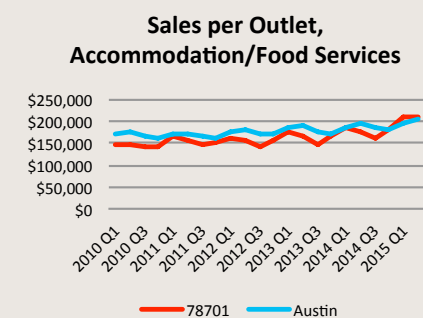
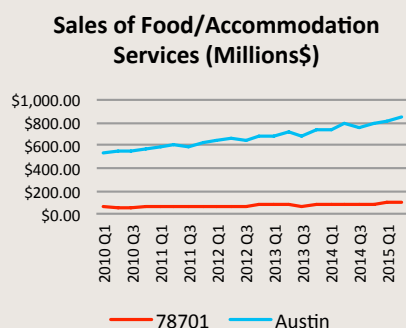
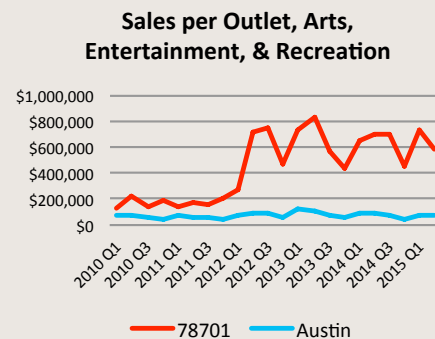
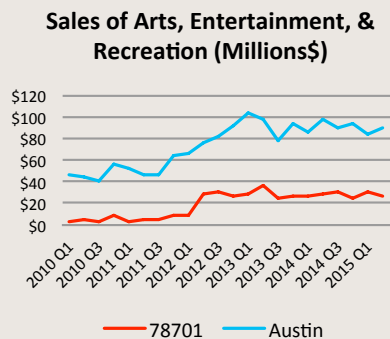
They spend \$1,031 annually on alcohol. They spend an additional \$990 on tickets to arts and culture events and concerts per year.

Based on these estimates, residents and workers living and working near the RRCD spend approximately \$68.6 million annually on food, tickets and alcohol. The district is currently only capturing a small portion of this revenue, suggesting clear opportunities for business growth.

## Downtown Sales

The Downtown area as a whole shows heavy spending on music, arts, culture, entertainment, and recreation industries. This can be seen by looking at the trends in total sales and sales per store since 2010. While total sales in the 78701 zip code have remained a high portion of total arts spending in Austin, the sales per store in Downtown far exceed that of the city as a whole. In contrast, sales per store for accommodation and food services closely track averages for the whole city. This reinforces the distinct importance of arts, entertainment and recreation industries for Downtown. The RRCD's singular focus on arts and music is related to Development constraints that prevent the Development of competing uses.

## Downtown Austin Sales since 2010



Sources: Texas Comptroller, City of Austin; Nov. 2015

## Development Pressure

The District's unique zoning context has facilitated the Development of Red River as a live music, arts and cultural district thus far. Most of the district falls under Capitol View Corridors, limiting building heights significantly. Much of the property in and around the District is owned by the City of Austin or non-profits, making it less likely to redevelop in the future. Most lots in the District are too small for structured parking, making typical residential and mixed-use Developments infeasible. The Development that is occurring in the District tends to be complementary to the tourism and festival industry in which many RRCD businesses participate.

Despite these limitations on new Development potential, rental rates and property taxes in the District are keeping pace with the rest of Austin, often increasing faster than businesses can increase their revenue.

Two prominent music venues have been forced to close their doors in the past year as a result of rising property costs. Business owners in the District report that even though rental rates and property taxes are rising, venues do not believe they can increase beverage or admission prices without alienating customers. Additionally the aging structures in the District often require costly

maintenance by their tenants, which can be an added financial burden for businesses already struggling with rising rents.

The 2015 Austin Music Census, discussed in detail below, cited several additional challenges for live music venues. These include increasing unwillingness of music patrons to pay cover charges and difficulty communicating with City officials about problematic ordinances. Overcoming these barriers is essential to supporting the thriving music and entertainment industry in the RRCD.

## Austin Music Census and AMP White Paper, 2015

Two recent reports have focused attention towards the District and Austin music industry overall.

The **Austin Music Census** was published in June 2015 and called attention to the challenges faced by musicians, the music industry, music venues, and nightlife establishments in Austin today. Among these challenges are operating pressures creating vulnerabilities for music venues. Participants in the Census identified expensive leases, high operating costs, short-term lease contracts, productivity losses from perceived regulatory inefficiencies and declining "cover" revenue as contributing factors to declining operating margins.

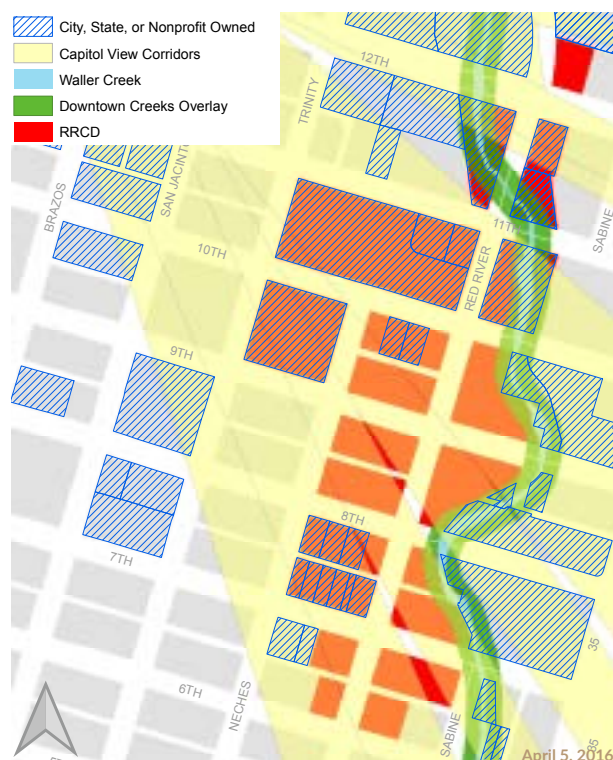
Key policy recommendations that came out of the Census were:

- The need for a City-level, long-term music industry Development strategy;
- The stimulation of economic growth through cluster Development;
- The need for functional, formal entertainment districts;
- The creation of a commercial music industry hub with affordable co-working space; and,
- Easier permitting and streamlined regulation for live music venues and nightlife establishments.

The Census cautions that if music venue vulnerabilities are left unchecked it could lead to the erosion and disintegration of the critical parts of the Austin music community.

Also in mid-2015, the **Austin Music People (AMP)** released their **Biennial White Paper** building on these recommendations to propose specific strategies to protect, preserve and amplify the economic and creative impacts of Austin's live music industry. AMP's primary

**Map 2.3: RRCD Development Context**





focus is the continued economic Development of Austin's music industry and the organization has been a critical collaborator with the RRCD. AMP specifically works to propose solutions that create conditions to preserve venues, enhance economic Development and spark impactful discussions.

The AMP Biennial White Paper: 2015 provides recommendations under three categories:

- Repair and Enhance - short-term and immediate changes
- Sustain and Grow - larger ideas for 1-1.5 years out
- Foundation for the Future - bigger ideas to establish and sustain Austin's music ecosystem

Recommendations specific to the RRCD include:

- Award density bonuses and other benefits to developers for the preservation of existing creative venue and business; and,
- Create an overlay for the RRCD to give a stronger voice to the RRCD Merchants Association in new Development plans in the district.

AMP followed this paper with the release of the **Music Industry Economic Impact Study** in 2016. This study shows that while total economic impacts of the music industry have increased, the city lost 1,205 primary music jobs between 2010-2014. This trend reinforces the need for focused policy supporting musicians, venues, and industry Development as a whole.

## Challenges & Opportunities

The Red River business owners and stakeholders participated in a SWOT analysis to identify the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Participants noted that while it was difficult

to readily identify opportunities, the potential threats to the district's future are becoming more and more obvious as the area continues to develop and change. One business owner explained that the new Developments in the district "kind of hit us like a bombshell" that they are unprepared to address.

Overall, participants identified a lack of small business support, burdensome regulations, poor daytime walkability and increasing rents and taxes as weaknesses and threats they are most concerned about. Some regulations, including proposed ordinances to change the way amplified sound is measured, could hamper the ability of Red River music venues to operate. Additionally, safety concerns, lack of daytime services and poor infrastructure are seen as deterrents to daytime activation in the district.

Major strengths that emerged were the close "neighborhood" atmosphere of the District, unique history of the area and the vibrant live music community. Participants identified multiple opportunities to leverage these strengths to develop a more unified identity and collaboratively operate as a live music district downtown. Suggestions included promoting the District's nightlife vitality and establishing a common brand and messaging for the district as a whole.

Comments surrounding Development and infrastructure were simultaneously recognized as threats and opportunities. While many participants have experienced financial pressure due to recent Development they also recognize an opportunity to alter current trends and find ways for new Development to help preserve the District's cultural assets. Opportunities were also identified for attracting a more beneficial mix of food and art-oriented businesses to the District to complement its live music culture. Development trends may also encourage District improvements in parking, walkability, and transit accessibility. RRCD businesses also see opportunities to

*"The presence of a healthy venue ecosystem of various sizes and styles of music clubs is a critical anchor for industry development and revenue earning opportunities for local musicians."*

- Austin Music People Biennial White Paper  
2015

## VENUE EMPLOYMENT

93% of venues employ full-time staff

67% have 6+ full-time staff

30% have 20+ full-time staff

improve the streetscape experience and multi-modal transit access as Development continues and enhancements are considered.

These strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were synthesized into major themes and compared against other efforts in the industry and Downtown area. This helped the team to recognize consistent and unique themes between the RRCD and the rest of the city and business districts.

## Preservation and Retention

One key motivator for gathering stakeholders in the RRCD is the preservation and retention of the valued assets in the area including music venues, cultural resources, and destinations that have come to represent much of Austin's national and local identity. With the closure of multiple venues in recent years many industry and community leaders have focused their attention toward providing resources to maintain and support the growth of the district and reverse recent decline in the music industry.

## Safety

The issue of safety impacts all aspects of doing business in the RRCD. Perceptions of feeling unsafe while navigating the District and attending events may prevent new patrons from visiting the District and existing patrons from returning. This stifles growth of District businesses due to reduction in customers. Safety concerns also negatively impact employee retention and musician and talent attraction to venues in the District. Improving the walkability of the District by providing more connected and consistent sidewalks and reclaiming dangerous dead public space are strategies for addressing the perception of safety in the District. Creating a safe environment for those who visit and work in the District is essential for fostering its long-term economic growth and retaining its existing cultural assets.

The presence of homeless service providers surrounding the district including the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) has a major impact on the environment and economic vitality of the RRCD. Merchants have observed criminals targeting homeless individuals, district

# SWOT

Major themes from a participatory district analysis.

## STRENGTHS

- Cluster of historic music culture
- Nightlife cultural vitality
- Downtown location
- Strong live music community of venues, musicians, and patrons

## WEAKNESSES

- Difficult regulatory environment
- Small music business support
- Transient and homeless population
- No daytime activity
- Lack of transparency in Development plans

## OPPORTUNITIES

- New Development will bring new patrons
- Collaboration on new regulations to support and retain venues
- Leverage and preserve the district's cultural identity

## THREATS

- Development pressure
- Rising rents and property costs
- Small businesses unable to compete



patrons, and their own staff. On-going panhandling, loitering, littering, and individuals occupying business doorways contributes to the negative perception by visitors to the District. These factors contribute to an unsafe climate that deters daytime business activation as well as normal RRCD operations. There is a pressing need for addressing the concentration of homelessness and safety concerns around the ARCH in a just manner consistent with City policy.

The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) estimates on a given day 2,197 individuals in Austin need a shelter bed while current assets can only accommodate 1,382. These leaves a gap of shelter service for 815 individuals. The ARCH has 100 beds for men, with space for sleeping mats for another 130. The Salvation Army's Downtown Shelter and Social Service Center provides 259 beds for women, men, and families with children. This suggests that one-third of Austin's shelter beds are concentrated on these two blocks. Overall, over 3,700 individuals in Austin are homeless and in need of at least 2,800 affordable, low-barrier housing units not currently available, including

- 2,300 studios or one-bedroom units;
- 350 two-bedroom units;
- 150 3-4 bedroom units; and,
- 744 units of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).

The City of Austin has a goal of achieving 400 new units of PSH by 2018, with 200 units as "Housing First." So

far only 141 units have been funded, of which only 65 are "Housing First," giving residents' access to housing without having to meet other conditions first.

## Summary

The Red River Cultural District is a keystone of Austin's music industry and culture. Live music venues and other businesses in the District face many challenges including unprecedented Development pressure. As part of the Souly Austin process, these business leaders have come together to identify the challenges and develop strategic plans to address them.

The purpose of the **Red River Cultural District Business District Strategy** is to serve as the framework for partnership Development, implementation, enhancements, and economic Development. The Business District Strategy makes recommendations on strategies that lead to job creation, business retention, attracting and retaining small businesses, increasing patronage to the District that promotes greater revenue to businesses and the City. The Strategy's components position the District, the City of Austin, and other stakeholders to work collaboratively toward enhancing and stabilizing the area. Through these collaborations, clear strategies, and policy interventions, the Red River Cultural District will continue and deepen its role as a sustainer and incubator of music and culture in Austin.







# Process

*The Souly Austin Business District Incubator aims to support the creation and retention of stable, organized commercial districts through the formation of merchants associations.*

Austin's comprehensive plan **Imagine Austin** calls for growth and investment in Austin's creative culture as a cornerstone to the city's identity and its economy. Austin is home to several informal commercial districts rich with a mix of local icons and emerging entrepreneurs. Many of these districts are seeing rapid change to their customer base, neighboring businesses and property values as Austin continues to grow. As directed by City Council, the City of Austin Economic Development Department provides resources that enable emerging leaders in these districts to work collaboratively to ensure a prosperous future for the existing and nascent businesses serving their district.

The **Souly Austin Business District Incubator** is an initiative of the City of Austin Economic Development Department's Commercial Stabilization Program that focuses on the support of "complete communities" called for in Imagine Austin. Under the initiative, business owners receive a flexible set of tools to assist in the formation of merchants associations and organized commercial districts. A vibrant commercial district offers a range of retail, restaurants, and services that reflect a unique culture and soul and provide goods, services, and amenities to the community. These elements are essential to a socially and economically healthy Austin.

The program is designed to promote and support businesses of all sizes and types within the city's commercial areas and corridors. Merchants associations can help steer these processes and create ideal conditions for successful commercial districts.

A **merchants association** is a group of neighboring business owners organized around beautification efforts, marketing and promotions, business retention, and economic Development activities to anchor and

## Souly Austin

(2015-2016)

The Souly Austin team was formed by the City of Austin Economic Development Department to facilitate the outreach, planning and visioning and technical training for emerging business associations.

### The team includes:

- City of Austin Economic Development Department
- Morningside Research and Consulting
- Austin Community Design and Development Center
- Texas Community Building with Attorney Resources

### Initial outreach and research was conducted in collaboration with the:

- Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Austin Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
- The Entrepreneurship And Community Development Clinic, University Of Texas School of Law

## Why organize a Merchants Association?

Merchants associations provide the opportunity for brick-and-mortar businesses of all types to speak with a unified voice to their city and stakeholders and cooperate with one another on marketing, events, and commercial improvements.

### Benefits of a Merchants Association include:

- Greater capacity for small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Increased job opportunities
- Business stability
- Readily-accessible community goods and services
- Preservation of unique cultures and environments
- Business retention and support services for existing and legacy businesses
- Increased sales revenue and taxes
- Increased pedestrian and bike friendly



stabilize a commercial district. Collectively, merchants associations act as a unified voice and assist in leading and influencing positive changes.

Members of merchants associations are typically business owners, property owners and supporters of the district. Ultimately membership is determined by the leaders of the association and documented in the bylaws of the organization.

**The Economic Development Department is cultivating merchants associations** in order to support the creation and retention of stable, organized commercial districts throughout the city.

### Souly Austin is designed to:

- Empower, engage and educate the business community;
- Provide a flexible set of tools to assist businesses in the formation of merchants associations;
- Promote and support businesses of all sizes and types within the city's commercial areas and corridors;
- Create ideal conditions for organized commercial districts;
- Support vibrant, functional and stable commercial districts that further promote a socially and economically healthy Austin;
- Develop strong internal and external partnerships; and,
- Build and sustain places people love.

### The initiative provides an array of support services that include:

- Education on merchants associations;
- Engagement of interested businesses;
- Coaching for the formation of merchants associations;
- Capacity and consensus-building;
- District strategy Development
- Business Development and training;
- Market analysis;
- Business Loans and Music Venue Loans;
- Marketing and promotion tools;
- Monetary district activation awards;
- Unified voice to the City of Austin; and,
- Placemaking grants and project coordination.



Souly Austin exists to **empower** business owners, encourage them to **share** and assess their district, **organize** to identify goals and develop a Business District Strategy and then **anchor** leadership in the district to advocate for the future they envision. For the Red River Cultural District (RRCD) this process included outreach, visioning and planning, policy considerations and technical training in order to fully equip the new RRCD Merchants Association with the tools for success.

The initial **outreach** was critical to educating business and property owners about Souly Austin. Business and property owners were invited to participate in District meetings in which the group shared information on the characteristics, challenges and vision of businesses in the District. The Souly Austin team worked collectively to build relationships with District stakeholders in order to inform the process and identify district leaders. Importantly, business leaders emerge and become committed to creating a vision for the District.

#### District visioning and strategy Development

meetings were also part of the process allowing the Souly Austin team the opportunity to work with District business owners, City department representatives, community leaders and industry stakeholders to:

- Create a collective District vision;
- Inventory key challenges, opportunities and priorities linked to achieving the District vision;
- Imagine what it would take to achieve the vision;
- Set forth short, medium and long-term goals and policy recommendations;
- Identify and spatialize key objectives toward a Business District Strategy; and,
- Begin implementation of those objectives.

The information gathered through these engagements informed the content of this District Strategy. The

Strategy is intended to guide the implementation of the District's collective vision in conjunction with other policies, programs and projects across the city.

During the visioning and planning process the district businesses received **technical training** about the legal process of forming a merchants association. Trainings focused on association formation and management, taxes and record keeping and intellectual property and contracts.

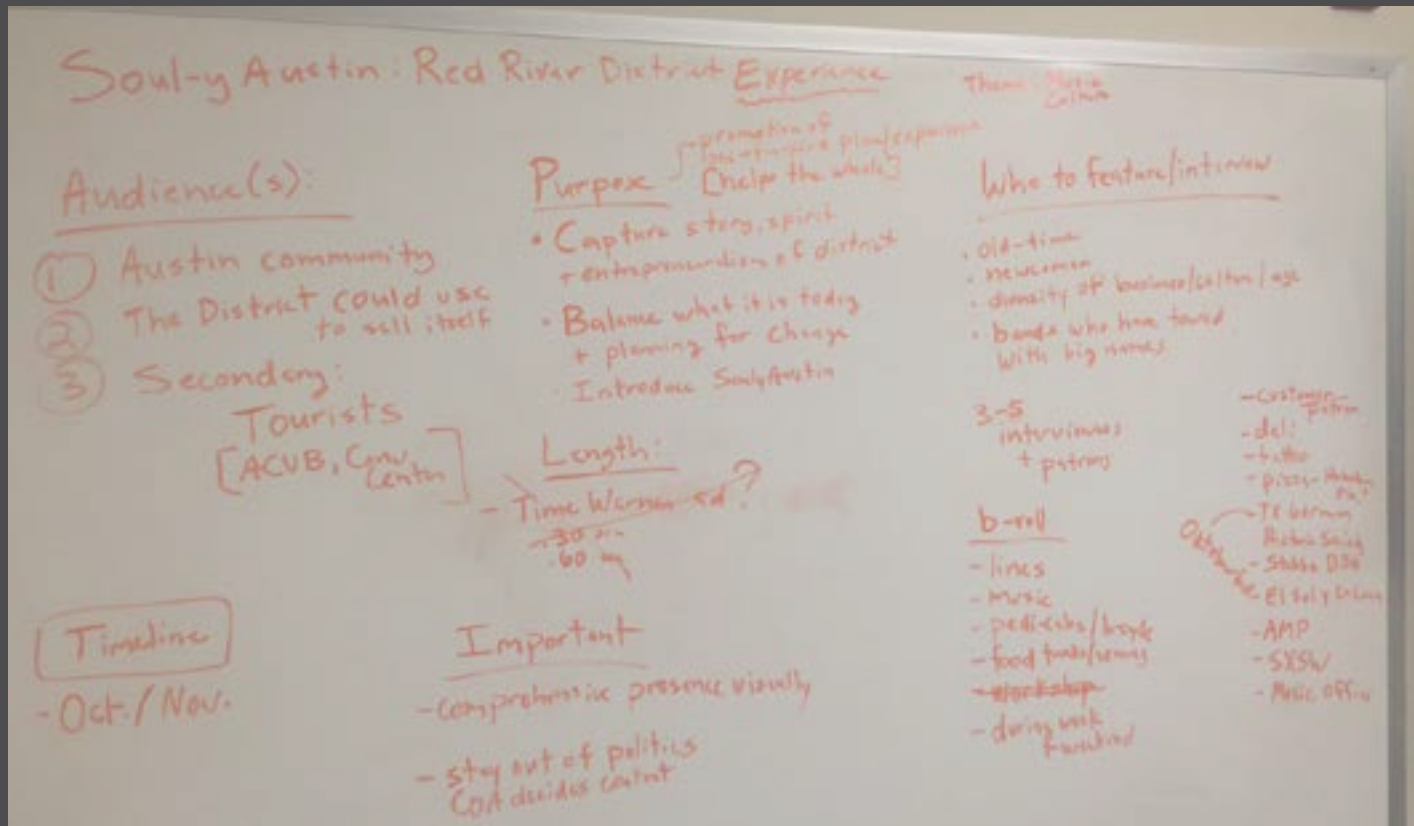
#### What is a Business District Strategy?

The end goal of this process is to equip the newly formed merchants association with a framework for the District's future. A **Business District Strategy** is a business plan shared among the businesses in a district, the City and other stakeholders. The Strategy focuses on information, needs and actions that will benefit all district businesses as a whole. It includes goals that businesses will take on as an association, as well as goals they will take on in partnership with the City of Austin Economic Development Department and other stakeholders in the community.

The Strategy presented in this document explores the **key objectives** identified by stakeholders through the outreach and engagement process. The Strategy also outlines implementation recommendations that may guide the way toward achieving the vision stakeholders share for the District. This Strategy serves as a guidebook for the new merchants association and as a communication tool for the group to express their priorities to the City and other entities working in the District.

The RRCD and the live music industry are undergoing profound changes as business models and respond to new conditions in entertainment, retail, and technology. The Strategy should be revisited regularly to insure that it remains an effective framework for adaptation. Its focus is on **short- and medium-term projects** that can be implemented for the greatest positive impact on RRCD business.





## Vision to Strategy Workshop

The cornerstone of the strategic planning process was a workshop where facilitated discussions were held on key elements identified in previous meetings. Business owners, property owners, industry representatives, City employees, and community stakeholders worked together to outline their primary goals for the District and how to achieve them. This information was the core content from which the Business District Strategy was developed.

**73%** of businesses contacted have been involved in the process.



## PROCESS MILESTONES

- 1 Outreach & Education**  
*Connect with merchants to build awareness of the program*
- 2 Goals & Priorities Meetings**  
*Develop relationships, identify opportunities & needs, share stories*
- 3 Workshop & Strategy Design**  
*Design a process for the District Strategy and identify its key elements*
- 4 Association Formation Training**  
*Learn about the process of forming an association*
- 5 District Workshop**  
*Organize the vision and goals into an action plan*
- 6 Association Meetings**  
*Hold regular meetings of merchants to move formation forward*
- 7 Business District Strategy**  
*Synthesize information into a feasible district strategy for implementation*
- 8 Ongoing Implementation**  
*Build partnerships to support the achievement of the district vision and association goals*

## Outreach

The Morningside team interviewed several business owners to gain a deeper understanding of their general characteristics, challenges and vision for the district's future. Morningside ultimately contacted 27 business and property owners in the district and conducted 15 interviews, 8 of which were music venues.

### General Business Characteristics

- **15 years** on average of operation
- **9 years** on average at their current location
- **25 employees** on average at each business
- **10 a.m.-2 a.m.** hours of operation
- **11 a.m.-3 p.m.** peak food hours
- **10 p.m.-2 a.m.** peak entertainment hours

Businesses in the area cater to both young and older crowds and a variety of different customer bases such as live music fans, families, tourists, food enthusiasts, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and businesses travelers.

### Challenges

The business owners interviewed identified rising property costs, public safety, lack of parking and city regulations as top challenges to their successful operation.

### Vision

Business owners expressed a desire to build collaborative relationships, improve safety and walk-ability and alleviate parking issues through the Souly Austin process.



Souly Austin contributes to the implementation of **Imagine Austin**, the City of Austin's comprehensive plan. Imagine Austin instructs City staff to develop a range of policies to support the growth and prosperity of Austin's small business community and creative economy. Imagine Austin also envisions the integration of small businesses into compact, walkable communities and districts. The following policies and Priority Programs in particular anchor the Development and implementation of the Souly Austin initiative.

### Economy Policies

EP2: Implement policies that create, nurture, and retain small and local businesses and minority- and women-owned business. (See also C P1, C P2)

EP5: Enhance Austin's draw as a premier national and international tourist destination by strengthening and diversifying the arts and entertainment offerings, enhancing natural resources, and expanding the availability of family-friendly events and venues. (See also LUT P37, C P1, C P7)

EP6: Support up-to-date infrastructure, flexible policies and programs, and adaptive reuse of buildings, so local, small, and creative businesses thrive and innovate. (See also LUT P8, HN P7, HN P12, C P8, C P15)

### Creativity Policies

CP9: Encourage artists and other creative individuals by promoting the creation of live/work spaces and creative industry hubs, districts, and clusters as retail, community, or neighborhood anchors and activity generators to attract and support other economic and community enterprises. (See also LUT P3, HN P4, E P3)

### Priority Programs

Compact and Connected, 8: Partner with local Chambers of commerce, the business community, and region, state, and federal entities to recruit and retain businesses to activity centers and corridors.

Economic, 8: Encourage entrepreneurship and local businesses by creating programs and policies that enable local businesses to thrive.



# Red River Cultural District Vision

*Authentically Austin:*

*Providing authentic Austin experiences through diverse local music, art and food for all.*



Considering the significance of the Red River Cultural District (RRCDD) as an incubator for the local Austin music and arts scene and its close proximity to other Downtown attractions, stakeholders agreed that a strong district vision was needed to ground their collective actions. This vision was created through a collaborative process in partnership with a variety of district stakeholders. The vision statement assists in guiding a collective outcome for the District that all stakeholders can support and speak to.

District businesses and participants were asked to envision their ideal headlines in the media and news over the next five years as the District meets its highest goals. A few of these headlines included:

*"Red River Cultural District finds the balance between the old and new; nurtures live music, venue growth and multiplication while addressing Development, long-term sustainability and use of the area's resources."*

*"Plan an evening and create a memory."*

*"The Texas Red River Cultural District creates sustainable model for growth of live music community alongside Development in Austin, TX."*

*"Austin Red River Cultural District Venues Still Thriving!"*

The headlines that seemed to resonate most with the group were those that referred to balancing the rich cultural history of the District with new sustainable Development practices and preservation.

The concepts of safety, authenticity, identity of place, entertainment and food emerged as key elements of the vision statement. The core ideas behind these headline statements were merged into a number of draft vision statements that were further refined during the district's workshop.

The final wording of the vision statement was crafted by the leaders of the RRCDD Merchants Association. The vision will serve as a guidepost for their future activities.



This word cloud was created from stakeholder responses to the following question at the vision to Strategy workshop.\*  
When you think of the future you want to see for the Red River Cultural District, what is the one word that comes to mind?

\* The frequency of terms is represented by the size of the text in the word cloud. Terms such as ordinances and music were heard most frequently in stakeholder responses.

# A District Strategy for the Future

This District Strategy is intended to galvanize leadership around a shared vision for the future of the Red River Cultural District (RRCD). The goals of the Souly Austin process and the resulting Strategy are to empower business owners by encouraging them to share their vision; assess their district; organize to identify goals; develop a Business District Strategy; then serve as a foundation for district leadership to advocate for the future they envision. This section will explore the various objectives, strategies and implementation recommendations provided by businesses and stakeholders of the RRCD.

Strategy elements and recommendations that follow were identified in collaboration with business owners in the District, representatives from relevant organizations, community and industry leaders, professional consultants and City of Austin department representatives.

**District elements** are major themes that emerged throughout the Souly Austin process and through an analysis of existing planning efforts surrounding the District. These elements served as organizing principles for stakeholder discussions and the recommendations in this Strategy. The elements used include the following: **Economic Growth, Music, Culture, and Arts; Livability and Sustainability; Green Infrastructure; Land Use and Regulations; and Connectivity and Transportation.** The Business District Strategy is further organized into Objectives and Strategies:

**Objectives** are goals that the district aims to achieve.

**Strategies** are the tactics stakeholders may use to accomplish or contribute to the objective.

Specific **activation projects** were also identified for various strategies. These activations are highlighted in this Strategy as projects to be considered for future implementation.

## The Strategy

This Strategy focuses on information, needs, and actions that can be taken by the newly formed Merchants Association, as well as goals to be achieved in partnership with the City of Austin Economic Development Department, other City departments, and stakeholder groups in the community. Many objectives and strategies are repeated or resonant across Strategy elements. They are interconnected, as stakeholders observed during discussion, and build upon the successful implementation of multiple strategies.

The strategies require different levels of commitment and participation from different stakeholders. Many of these strategies require cooperation with one or several City of Austin departments for successful implementation.

However, many can be realized through actions by businesses and stakeholders in the RRCD alone. This highlights the importance of tying the Business District Strategy to the RRCD Merchant Association so that the Association can use it as an empowering tool. The Merchant Association can use this Strategy as a “living document” to map out, coordinate, and lead programs and enhancements to the District over time.

## DISTRICT ELEMENTS



### Economic Growth

Promote business diversity and resilience, job growth and partnerships to support commercial districts that anchor and reflect their neighborhoods.



### Livability & Sustainability

Encourage safety, affordability, sustainable infrastructure and strong connections between commercial districts and their neighborhoods.



### Connectivity & Transportation

Enhance walkability of the district, improve access to parking for employees and patrons and create more connections to diverse transit options.



### Music, Culture & Arts

Preserve and grow businesses and institutions that express the rich cultural heritage of the city through live music, creative space and public art.



### Land Use & Regulations

Promote regulations and developments that help small business, creative spaces and venues and commercial districts thrive.



### Green Infrastructure

Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate green infrastructure practices and nature into the city.



Map 5.1: Existing District Merchants





# Economic Growth

*Promote business diversity and resilience, job growth and partnerships to support commercial districts that anchor and reflect their neighborhoods.*

The Red River Cultural District (RRCD) is a key anchor for the arts, music and tourism sectors specific to Downtown Austin and to the city as a whole. According to the 2014 *Texas Tourism Region and MSA Visitor Profile* visitors generally spend \$11 on entertainment and \$33 on food, per person per day. Austin's nightlife on average contributes to over 2.5 million stays per year and an estimated 2.2 million stays include seeing a concert or attending a theater event. These statistics reinforce the importance of stabilizing the music and cultural anchors that support Austin tourism. Stakeholders within the RRCD believe that without a plan for consistent economic growth in the District the cultural and music incubator anchors that RRCD provides may be in jeopardy.

Businesses in the RRCD seek to attract a more diverse customer base at different times of the day, week and year in order

to fill in the natural lulls that come with operating a music venue and business. This can be achieved with collaborative business events, which will aid in attracting new

and diverse groups of patrons to the District. Individual businesses may consider new tools to draw new patrons such as including food and breakfast options, incorporating daytime entertainment opportunities, and collective marketing to further this goal. Creating more physical connections to surrounding amenities such as the 2nd Street District, E. 6th Street, and other Downtown hot spots along with demonstrating a connection to the Downtown rail station at 4th St. may also help draw a new customer

base to the area. Enhancing the diversity of businesses and cultural organizations will expand the RRCD's customer base, expanding sales across days and seasons.





### Objective 1 Revise policies and programs managing sound levels in the RRCD

The current ordinance requires outdoor events to end at the standard cut off times of 10:30 p.m. Sunday-Wednesday, 11 p.m. on Thursday and Midnight on weekends. According to the stakeholders in the RRCD, this reduces their sales and attractiveness as a venue. Venues expressed that the current sound ordinance detracts from the “Live Music Capital of the World” image that the city promotes by limiting the types of concerts and events that a venue can host. Operators noted that larger acts at times have passed up Austin due to limitations on performance sound and time they can play.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Pilot extended hours allowance in the summer for live entertainment to perform later in the evening when the weather is more tolerable.	●		
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Expand the venue assistance loan program to include more eligible venue business needs, including advanced sound mitigation costs, more general live music venue uses, and potential sound mitigation subsidy.	●		
<b>Strategy 1.3:</b> Implement an “Agent of Change” principle to encourage compatibility between residential & entertainment venues, rewarding participating and high-performing hotels, multi-family projects, & music venues with positive ratings (styled after LEED or Green Building standards).	●		
<b>Strategy 1.4:</b> Explore opportunities for an Entertainment License to include rebates from the City’s mixed beverage tax.		●	

Resource:

### *“Agent of Change” principle, Music & Creative Ecosystem Omnibus*

Austin’s City Council passed a Resolution 20160303-019 on March 3, 2016, directing the City Manager to develop a plan of action in response to the Music & Creative Ecosystem Omnibus. Included therein is the objective of establishing an “Agent of Change” principle. This ordinance would work to encourage compatibility between residential buildings and entertainment venues in the following ways:

Foster productive dialogue between venues and developers at the beginning of the residential Development process;

- Require lessors and sellers of residential property near Places of Entertainment to disclose to new lessees and purchasers the potential for noise and other inconveniences potentially associated with nearby venues; and,
- Establish that no place of entertainment located near a new residential Development shall be a public or private nuisance on the basis of noise if the venue operated in compliance with its permits and appropriate laws.

This is based on San Francisco Ordinance No. 70-15, passed in May of 2015, which may serve as a best practice guide for the City of Austin. This ordinance includes a number of provisions outlining expectations and processes for managing complaints between venues and residences. Developers of residential properties near registered Places of Entertainment are required to provide the following information to tenants or purchasers:

#### “DISCLOSURE OF NEIGHBORING PLACE OF ENTERTAINMENT.

You are purchasing or leasing property that is adjacent or nearby to [name and address of the Place(s) of Entertainment]. This venue is an existing Place of Entertainment, as defined in Police Code Section 1060, which includes establishments such as live music venues, nightclubs and theaters. This establishment may subject you to inconveniences or discomfort arising from or associated with its operations, which may include, but are not limited to, nighttime noise, odors, and litter. One or more of the inconveniences or discomforts may occur even if the Place of Entertainment is operating in conformance with existing laws and regulations and locally accepted customs and standards (or operations of such use). If you live near a Place of Entertainment, you should be prepared to accept such inconveniences or discomforts as a normal and necessary aspect of living in a neighborhood with mixed commercial and residential uses.”

(San Francisco, <http://www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances15/o0070-15.pdf>)



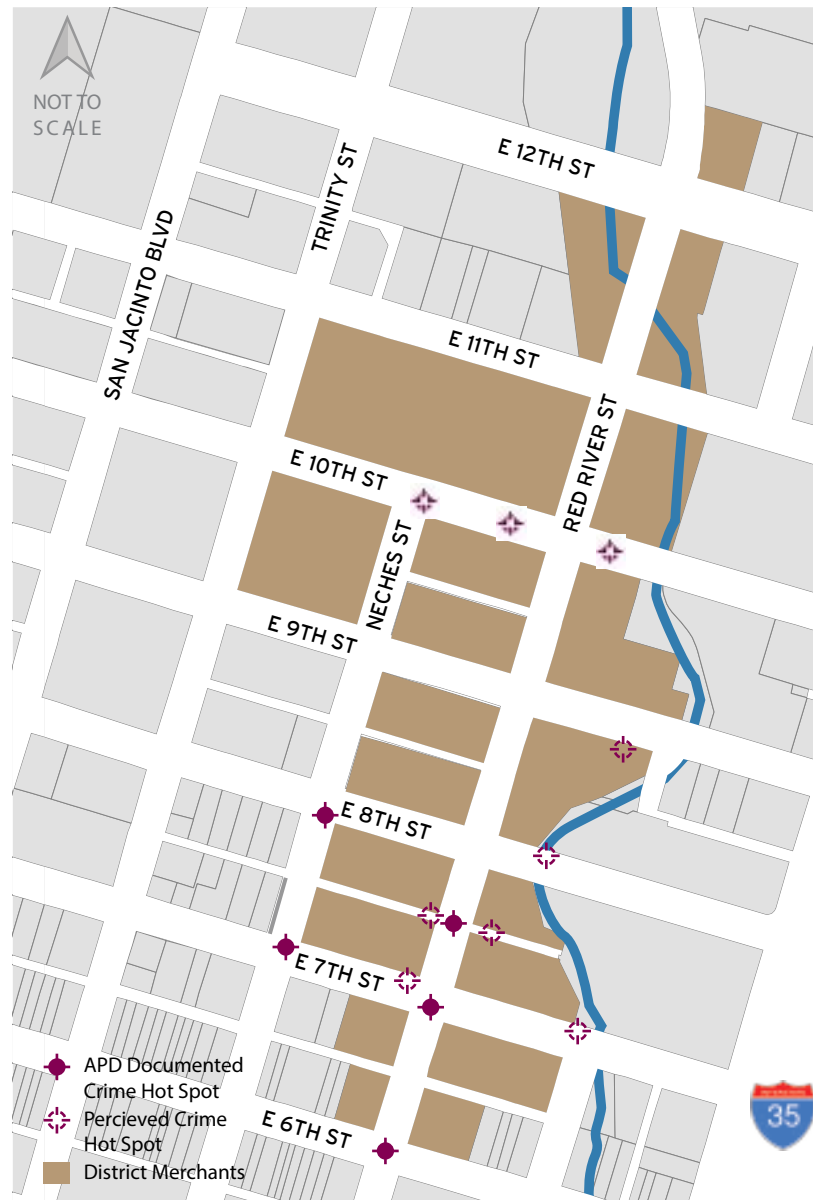




## Objective 2 Create and maintain a safe business district environment

Providing and maintaining a safe business district environment was identified as one of the top priorities by the area stakeholders. A safe business district environment assists in retaining employees, attracting customers, and increasing pedestrian traffic. Stakeholders feel strongly that the District must be safe in order to maximize their business potential. Stakeholders believe that the area's safety greatly impacts the success of the District. If the area looks dangerous or is perceived to be dangerous patrons may choose to go elsewhere. Stakeholders stressed that safety must be addressed before other District issues and improvements can be considered.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Educate and provide awareness to policy makers showcasing the environment and activities impacting the businesses.	●		
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Create a safety committee including the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Austin Police Department and other stakeholders to address safety and crime related issues, and partner with the APD to increase police patrols in the Red River area.	●		
<b>Strategy 2.3:</b> Work with Austin Energy and other partners to provide more lighting in high crime areas or areas of concern such as alleyways and parking areas.		●	
<b>Strategy 2.4:</b> Explore design solutions for recessed doorways on businesses to resolve the concern of the homeless and transient population occupying the space.		●	
<b>Strategy 2.5:</b> Create and implement design solutions for high incident areas such as alleys not in use, and the 8th St. Bridge.		●	
<b>Strategy 2.6:</b> Send a Merchants Association representative to attend monthly police commander forums to share information on current needs and problems within the district.	●		

**Map 5.2: District Crime Hot Spots**

Stakeholders identified several locations where they have had unsafe experiences within the District. These zones tend to be in areas that have less pedestrian activity such as underutilized alleys and side streets, but do not always coincide with criminal activity documented in Austin Police Department citations.



### Objective 3 Increase daytime activity within the district to attract customers

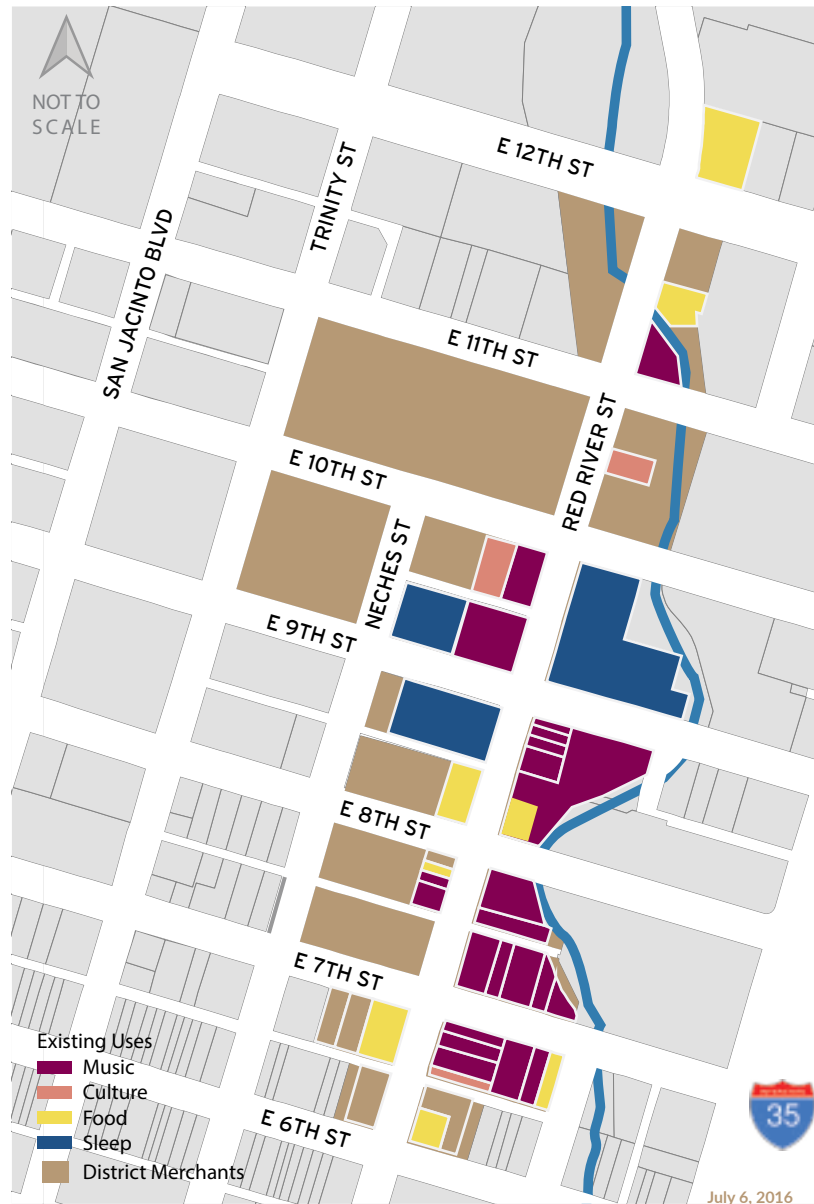
Daytime activity in the District is a critical component to increasing business revenues. Promoting daytime activity also provides an opportunity to strengthen connections to other mixed-use activity centers and increase foot traffic for the RRCD. Daytime activity will increase with the anticipated Waller Creek improvements if safe, attractive connections between the Creek and the District are implemented. This strategy may help the District diversify its business mix, offering more food and entertainment choices for patrons.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Introduce breakfast and entertainment options during day time hours to attract more customers on strategic days of the week.	●		
<b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Identify District locations for food, retail and art trucks to create different experiences for existing and new visitors and to promote daytime activation.	●		
<b>Strategy 3.3:</b> Create an appealing public environment that is attractive to visitors by increasing the presence street trees and greenery throughout the District and reducing the amount of concrete.		●	
<b>Strategy 3.4:</b> Attract diverse complementary businesses and creatives to the District such as artists, performers, vintage shops, record shops and restaurants through collective or pop up events to assist in day time activation.			●
<b>Strategy 3.5:</b> Explore temporary placemaking techniques (cafés, planters, banners, trees, etc.) to activate the District during day time hours.	●		

#### Activation Case Study:

#### Los Angeles Arts District Farmers Market

The Los Angeles Arts District Farmers Market features fresh fruit, veggies, gourmet treats, delicious prepared foods, baked goods, live music, beer and art. The market is sponsored by the Los Angeles River Artists and Business Association and Angel City Brewery with support from their Council District and serves as a small business incubator for many farms, nurseries, bakeries, meat and seafood providers, cheese makers and specialty food producers. The market operates regularly on Thursdays from 5 p.m.-9 p.m. and is open to new vendors through an application process. (<http://artsdistrictfarmersmarket.com/>)

**Map 5.3: District Business Diversity**

The RRCD has historically been occupied by mostly music venues, but the business mix has recently diversified with more food options and tourist accommodations. The District is becoming home to more residents, bringing more week day and daytime visitors to the District. New hotels in the District (with 490 rooms total) are a major driver of patrons to venues. Continuing to attract a more diverse mix of businesses is a major priority for the economic growth of the RRCD. Additionally, stakeholders identified opportunities to host night and farmers markets in currently underutilized public space to catalyze more diverse attractions within the District.





German Free School Oktoberfest source: austinmonthly.com

#### Objective 4 Create signature district events to increase activity and attract patrons

Celebrate RRCD's unique character by hosting iconic events that bring new audiences to the District. These events - described as 'intentional gatherings' by District stakeholders - provide an opportunity to build on traditions and attractions already present in the District. By diversifying the types of events, stakeholders hope to attract a diverse crowd including new patrons who may have never visited the RRCD. The events will assist in solidifying a cohesive identity and brand for the District.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Formalize 'Free Week' as an annual district event supporting the Merchants Association.	●		
<b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Host an annual District-wide event that may build on area traditions, such as Oktoberfest and Christmas Market (Texas German Heritage Society).	●		
<b>Strategy 4.3:</b> Establish a reoccurring District night market or farmers market that features food vendors, artisans, local arts, and music to assist in attracting new audiences.		●	
<b>Strategy 4.4:</b> Establish a collective District-wide happy hour or pub crawl event.		●	
<b>Strategy 4.5:</b> Explore outdoor events such as a music lunch event to attract patrons to the District.	●		
<b>Strategy 4.6:</b> Partner with like-minded organizations such as the Waller Creek Conservancy to draw audiences into the District with co-marketing and strategic placement of installations during events such as the Creek Show.	●		



### Objective 5 Improve building facades and streetscapes

Businesses recognize an opportunity to increase their economic vitality through improvements to storefronts, including signage and design modifications. Upgrades to facades may lead to increased foot traffic and increased patronage of existing businesses.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 5.1:</b> Develop district design standards for streetscapes and facades (including trees, planters, lighting, etc.) to increase the District's visual appeal.	●		
<b>Strategy 5.2:</b> Create a system for shared ownership and maintenance of public space amenities such as sidewalk planters and public art.		●	
<b>Strategy 5.3:</b> Use grants from the developing Facade Fresh program to make improvements to building exteriors (repairs, landscaping, sidewalk cafes, etc.).		●	
<b>Strategy 5.4:</b> Implement construction site standards, signage, and debris mitigation programs to mitigate the visual disruption from area construction sites.	●		



## Objective 6 Promote and brand the district, its events, activities and nightlife vitality

Promote awareness of District businesses and events through physical installations, technology, advertisements, and cross-promotion. Many businesses in the District routinely offer events or services that attract visitors. The District could leverage these individual attractions to promote its collective identity and support for thriving cultural experiences.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 6.1:</b> Develop a comprehensive District marketing strategy that anchors the RRCD to Austin's brand as the "Live Music Capital of the World."	●		
<b>Strategy 6.2:</b> Use digital media and develop a mobile-friendly website to promote businesses and events in the District.		●	
<b>Strategy 6.4:</b> Develop a district-wide promotion and discount card for repeat customers, hotel guests, and residents.	●		
<b>Strategy 6.5:</b> Develop a program in which companies purchase billboard space in the District, with proceeds going to the Merchants Association.		●	
<b>Strategy 6.6:</b> Generate and secure sponsorships throughout the year, not just during festivals and events, to assist in activation during the slower months.		●	

### Activation Case Study: Frenchman Art Market

The Frenchman Art Market in New Orleans, LA is a weekly nighttime art market featuring local New Orleans and regional artists selling handmade art, jewelry and craft goods. The Market provides a family friendly cultural experience within the lively music and nightlife of Frenchmen Street. Visitors may browse art, find gifts and meet local artisans. The space offers a reprieve for visitors with outdoor living rooms among the fun of Frenchmen Street. ([frenchmenartmarket.com](http://frenchmenartmarket.com))





### Objective 7 Small business support

Many of the weaknesses and threats to the future of the District identified by stakeholders focused on a perceived lack of support for small business operators. The tight margins many Red River businesses operate within means that there is little left at the end of the day to invest in improvements, manage rising property costs and work towards property ownership. These circumstances put long-term small businesses at risk of being displaced. Businesses also seek more transparency on and assistance in navigating through City regulations. Finally, businesses need more timely information about new Development that may negatively impact their operations.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 7.1:</b> Implement a code training program for venue operators to better navigate the City's regulations.	●		
<b>Strategy 7.2:</b> Partner with the City's Small Business Program to develop and deliver more tailored trainings.		●	
<b>Strategy 7.3:</b> Develop a relationship and communication system with the City for more transparency on new Development or projects that may impact the District including transportation projects, road closures, and utility interruptions.		●	

#### Resource:

#### Small Business Resources

The City offers many services for small businesses in the Austin community from technical assistance to loan services to enhance the success of growing small businesses and encourage the creation of jobs for low- to moderate-income households. The Small Business Program, for example, provides counseling and Development assistance to Austin's business owners.

Follow this link to find out more about the resources available to small business owners in Austin: Small Business Program ([www.smallbizatx.org](http://www.smallbizatx.org))





### **Objective 8** Work with the developing Innovation Center tied to the Dell Medical School

The Dell Medical School is beginning program operations in fall of 2016. This facility will be the anchor for medical industry growth in the Downtown and will provide a major new base of workers and students close to the RRCD. Along with the Dell Medical School itself a new innovation District focused on medical technologies is projected to develop in the vicinity. These new office workers may be a customer base for the RRCD as well, especially for daytime sales. Their companies may also be a driver for new office or live/work Development in the area.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 8.1:</b> Market the RRCD's food, culture, and music offerings to staff, faculty, and students associated with the Dell Medical School.	●		
<b>Strategy 8.2:</b> Identify partnership opportunities as the medical innovation district develops.		●	



# Music, Culture & Arts

*Preserve and grow businesses and institutions that express the rich cultural heritage of the city through live music, creative spaces and public art.*

District stakeholders overwhelmingly identified preserving and enhancing local history and the live music heritage of the District as a top priority. The emergence of food culture is also recognized as a valuable piece of the District's identity. Stakeholders also believe there should be more opportunities for public art throughout the District including graphic and performance arts.

The long-standing culture of music venues and bars in the District is widely recognized as a strength of the District with a history to be celebrated. District stakeholders recognize this as an opportunity to reinforce the cultural identity of

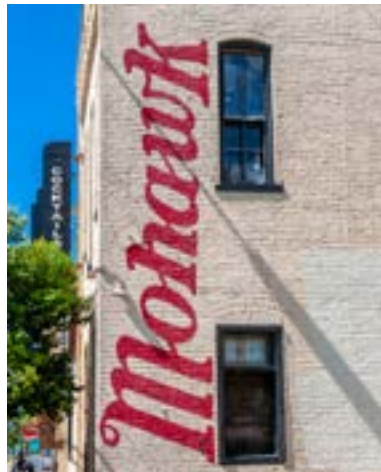
Red River as the music incubator for local Austin talent. Strengthening the District's

reputation as a key anchor for the music industry and tourism in Austin is a major

priority for the Red River Cultural District (RRCD) leaders. The District is home to 12 live music venues, including high capacity venues such as Stubb's (3,000 capacity) and the Mohawk (900 capacity).

The District is also a key anchor for major festivals such as SXSW, FunFunFunFest, and Austin City Limits. The impacts of tourism from these festivals is astounding for both the City and businesses in the RRCD. The historic cultural identity and national tourism attractions in the district are the

foundations from which the RRCD can build a sustainable future.



SXSW Tourism Impacts	2014	2015
SXSW Participants	134,000	139,525
Single Tickets	60,000	57,925
Badgeholders	44,500	42,900
Hotel Reservations	13,990	13,300
Room Nights	60,450	60,254
Guest Passes	150,000	171,000

source: Analysis of the Economic Benefit to the City of Austin from SXSW 2014/2015

**Map 5.4: RRCD Music Venues & Capacity**



The numbers on this map refer to the capacities of the venues shown in number of persons.



### Objective 1 Support and preserve the Red River Cultural District Designation

The RRCD was established per City Council Resolution No. 20131017-036 in 2013. The RRCD Merchants Association serves as the organizing body to further preserve and enhance the District and its designation. While the resolution supports this designation at a local level, District stakeholders have expressed a desire to explore the potential to further that designation at the state level through the Texas Commission on the Arts (<http://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/cultural-districts/>). The State designation would recognize this District as a special zone that harnesses cultural resources and amenities.

#### Strategies & Implementation

**Strategy 1:** Explore the opportunity to submit an application to the Texas Commission on the Arts for a State cultural district designation.

**Short**  
(1 year)

**Medium**  
(2 years)

**Long**  
(5+ yrs)



#### Resource:

##### *Texas Commission on the Arts Cultural District Designation*



The Texas Commission on the Arts offers a State-level cultural district designation. This designation allows for access to State grants and incentive programs. These programs are limited but may be augmented in the future. While the RRCD Strategy is not equivalent to a State designation submission, the information in the Strategy can be used toward designation in the future.

#### RRCD Strategy Overlap with State Cultural District Requirements

- Benefits of cultural district
- Evidence of public input into the planning process for the cultural district
- Description of cultural district
- Overall goals and objectives
- Program and activity plan
- Cultural plan with sections on cultural tourism, marketing, and economic development
- Maps
- Photographs





## Objective 2 Provide exposure within the RRCD for local artists

Holding true to the history of Red River as being an incubator for local artists to express their talents, connect with one another and build new audiences is of major importance to many District stakeholders. District businesses and industry leaders should work together to provide more opportunities for local artists to be featured in events, media, advertising and festivals associated with the District.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Provide information on district message boards and through weekly newsletters and social media for local artists to access opportunities. Information may also be available at individual businesses or at District kiosks.		●	
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Work with existing festivals and create new District-focused events and festivals to feature local artists.			●
<b>Strategy 2.3:</b> Support public art and installations by local artists that further distinguish the identity of the District.	●		



### Objective 3 Provide low-cost/free events to increase accessibility to the public

The *Austin Music Census* highlighted the issue of declining “cover” revenue for music venues. The Census found that patrons in Austin are less willing to pay a cover charge at the door for local artists, which directly conflicts with the goals of the RRCD to promote local artists. The Census suggests that venue operators across the city are making up these losses through VIP experience packages and private event bookings. District stakeholders are seeking other ways to attract visitors to the District by making events affordable without having a negative impact on the venues’ bottom line.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Explore partnerships with larger venues to accommodate more attendees for free shows.		●	
<b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Develop opportunities to accommodate free or low-cost parking for patrons of events. Exploration of opening more lots to public parking in partnership with the City and other stakeholders.	●		
<b>Strategy 3.3:</b> Develop partnerships with local organizations to identify a local beneficiary for events. For example, patrons could receive a discounted or free entry to an event with a donation at the door.	●		
<b>Strategy 3.4:</b> Identify potential sponsorships for free events in the RRCD.		●	

Resource:

#### *Jane Dunn Sibley Symphony Square*

Symphony Square is an attractive complex including four historic buildings and a 350-seat Amphitheater. It houses the offices of the Austin Symphony and hosts a variety of public events annually, including Children’s Day Art Park and Christmas in the Community. The Symphony is interested in increasing programming of its space and cooperating with the Merchants Association for events and shared District goals. (<http://www.austinsymphony.org/about/symphony-square/>)



### Objective 4 Provide for street activation through the adoption of a busking ordinance

“Busking” refers to performing music or other art in public places for gratuities. Buskers are common on the streets in many cities and are coming to be recognized as valued contributors to a city’s character. In Austin busking is not currently distinguished from panhandling, which puts buskers at risk of being ticketed for performing on the street. Panhandling is prohibited between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. in the Central Business District. The Austin Music Commission has drafted an ordinance to include specific language conceding sound volume restrictions, extending the street performance curfew and most importantly, defining the busker right to perform in City code, but no formal language has been adopted that recognizes buskers as permitted performers on the streets of Austin.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Adopt a City ordinance for busking. A similar ordinance in Spokane, WA, may serve as a best practice guide.		●	
<b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Explore and develop a potential partnership with surrounding districts to support buskers.		●	
<b>Strategy 4.3:</b> Promote buskers and performers during Free Week.		●	

#### Activation Case Study: Lawrence Busker Festival

The Lawrence Busker Festival was started with the simple idea that Lawrence, Kansas, could be a popular spot for street performers. There were already many musicians and vendors using the sidewalks of downtown as their stages, so it seemed only natural to enhance the trend. The festival is a creative collaboration between artists, Downtown Lawrence, the Lawrence Arts Center and the business community.

Visit [lawrencebuskerfest.com](http://lawrencebuskerfest.com) to find out more about the festival.





# Livability & Sustainability

*Encourage safety, affordability, sustainable infrastructure and strong connections between commercial districts and their neighborhoods.*

Stakeholders in the Red River Cultural District (RRCD) have consistently expressed a desire to enhance the unique close-knit character of the District. The desire to foster a “neighborhood” atmosphere and create a unified identity is a common goal for the District and one that overlaps with the objectives and strategies identified for Economic Growth.

Developing a common brand for the District and making improvements to the public experience within the district that reinforce that brand may work to improve safety, secure access to

more resources for District businesses and attract new visitors to the District.

Downtown residents may become partners in the long-term Development of the RRCD’s businesses and culture. Their spending dynamics suggest a commitment to values

that align with the RRCD vision developed by its Merchants Association. Customer preference data for the Downtown revealed that residents in the area tend to base their spending on quality over price, are interested in how to help the environment, usually value green products over convenience and are likely to buy a brand that supports a charity.

The values of those living in or near the District support the Development of a strong local, sustainable neighborhood brand that serves the cultural heritage of the District.

Safety again plays a large role in meeting stakeholders’ goals

for the District. A number of high crime areas exist in or near the District, which must be overcome before residents and visitors feel a connection to the District’s brand.

**64.3%**  
households are  
renter occupied

**42.1%**  
have a graduate  
or professional  
degree

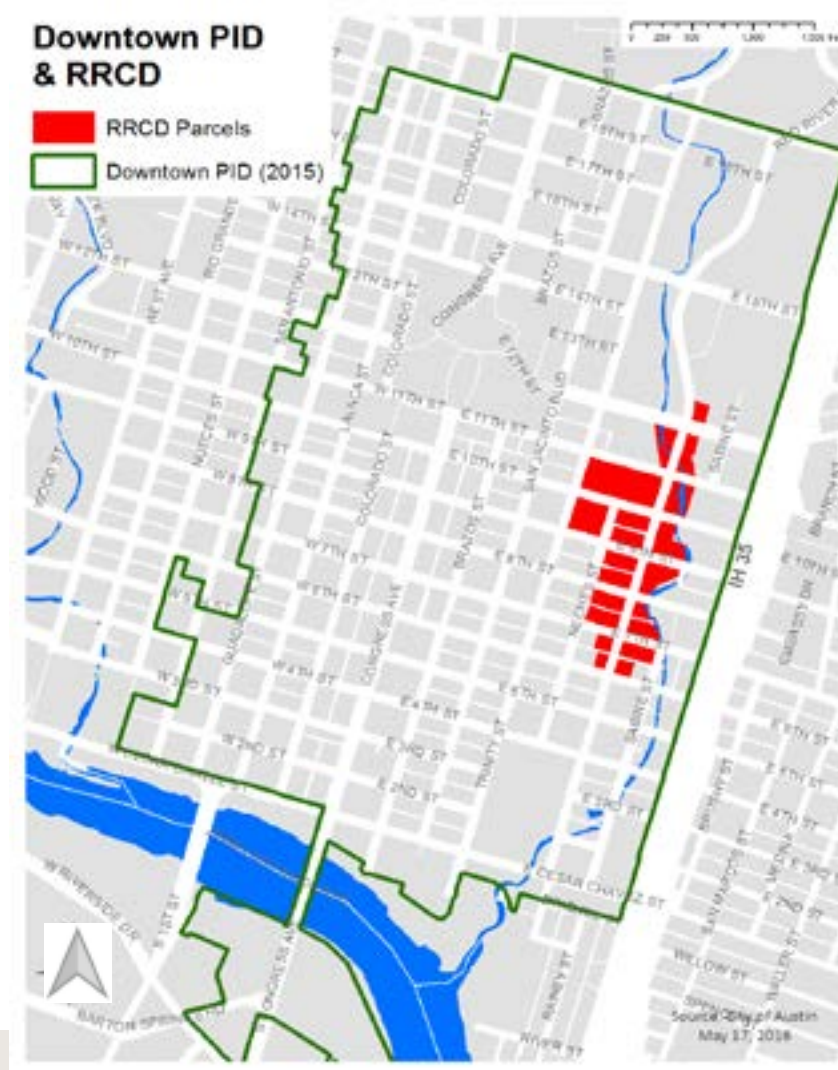
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010  
Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2015 and 2020

**64.4%**  
are 1 person  
households

**78.6%**  
are in White Collar  
occupations

The City of Austin Sustainability Action Agenda defines livability as “Encouraging the Development of neighborhoods that provide access to alternative and public transportation, are safe and affordable, promote physical activity and are designed according to green design and construction principles.”



**Map 5.5: Downtown PID & RRCD**

*Resource:*

### ***Downtown Public Improvement District***

The Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) manages the Downtown Public Improvement District (PID). Through the PID tool, property owners in the Downtown vote to authorize additional assessment of \$0.10 for every \$100 in taxable real property value. This self-assessment is used to pay for additional services in the Downtown area. In particular, the DAA provides cleaning, beautification, hospitality, social, and safety services through its new partnership with the downtown management company Block by Block. This partnership began in January 2016. Prior to this, these services were provided in-house. Cleaning activity in 2015 included the following highlights:

- 18,928 hours spent removing litter
- 5,408 hours spent cleaning sidewalks
- 2,700 hours spent removing graffiti

Properties in the RRCD lie within the Downtown PID, and their self-assessments contribute to the DAA's service funds. While the DAA and RRCD businesses have already developed fruitful collaborations, there are many more opportunities to partner on common goals of increased safety and area beautification.



### Objective 1 Enhance a fun and exciting District environment and identity

The RRCD seeks to foster an entertaining and welcoming atmosphere to draw in visitors. Unique street furniture, public art and directional cues such as gateways and signage will assist in providing more public attention to the District and draw in new audiences. These elements add interest to the pedestrian experience and make it more enticing to new visitors to explore the District.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Use sidewalk cafes to highlight food offerings and activate disused right-of-way.		●	
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Install overhead string lights to enhance the district's nightlife experience and delineate District boundaries.	●		
<b>Strategy 1.3:</b> Highlight the gateways to the District through signage to indicate when visitors are entering or leaving the District and reinforce its identity and brand.		●	
<b>Strategy 1.4:</b> Implement animated neon signage in partnership with the City of Austin and District businesses to further distinguish the unique identity of the District.		●	
<b>Strategy 1.5:</b> Design, implement, and maintain District- identity banners in partnership with the City and other supporters.	●		
<b>Strategy 1.6:</b> Install and maintain unique and consistent street furniture including lighting, bike racks, and trash bins throughout the District.		●	
<b>Strategy 1.7:</b> Implement sidewalk art and other strategies to assist in wayfinding and identifying District boundaries and aid in improving the pedestrian experience.		●	



## Objective 2 Launch a District-wide recycling program

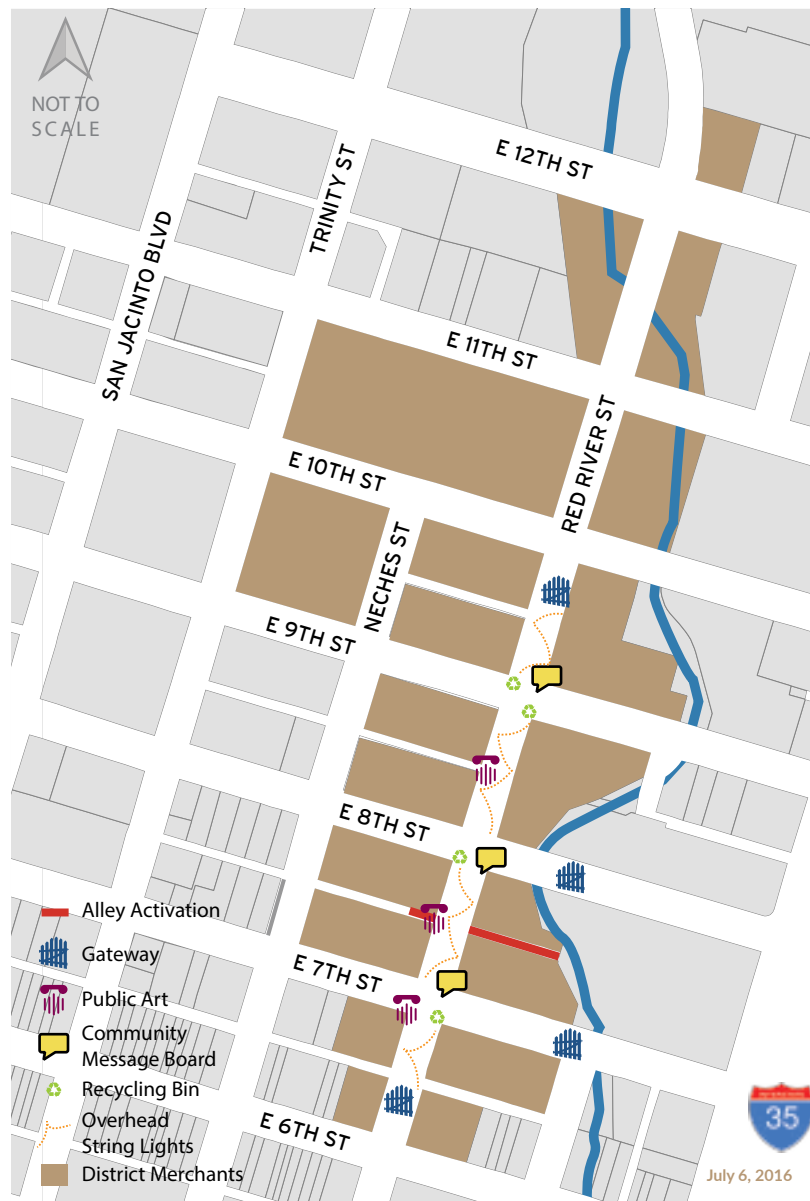
Residents in the downtown area were found in the market analysis to prefer products and businesses that help the environment (see Appendix). Stakeholders in the District see this as an opportunity to add a sustainability dimension to the identity of the District. By establishing a District-wide recycling program and adopting green business practices the District could appeal to new audiences and manage waste more effectively.

Strategies & Implementation	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Explore partnerships to implement recycling stations throughout the district and to identify other creative strategies to mitigate waste.	●		
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Promote the use of aluminum cans rather than the use of plastic and glass at venues and businesses.	●		
<b>Strategy 2.3:</b> Identify a location for a District-wide dumpster for recycling.	●		
<b>Strategy 2.4:</b> Collaborate with the City of Austin's Zero Waste Program to receive rebates to businesses and District-wide recycling coordination.		●	
<b>Strategy 2.5:</b> Install trash/recycling bins throughout the District.	●		

### Activation Case Study: Gateways

The Gaslamp Quarter's Gateway Arch is recognized as the entrance to San Diego's Downtown district. With a unique selection of eclectic restaurants, nightclubs, bars, boutiques, art galleries, offices and condos, the Gaslamp Quarter contributes to the character, charm and vitality of San Diego's entertainment and residential scene. Visit <http://www.welcometosandiego.com> for more information.



**Map 5.6: District Identity Priorities**

RRCD stakeholders identified several opportunities to bolster the District brand and identity through installation of gateways, public art, community message boards, recycling bins and overhead string lights. The locations of these items on the above map were specifically identified by stakeholders in the workshop, with the exception of the recycling bin locations which correlate to current trash receptacle locations. Activation of underutilized alleys was also identified as a way to beautify the District's public space.





# Green Infrastructure

*Use green infrastructure to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city.*

The Red River Cultural District (RRCD) is not only a staple in the music and arts world of Austin, but it is also a neighbor to Waller Creek, one of Austin's most substantial urban creek corridors. Waller Creek connects parts of Downtown from Lady Bird Lake to the University of Texas campus. The storied past of the Creek has led to its occasional channelization and neglect, but a new Waller Creek District Master Plan sets out to restore the ecological functions of the creek corridor and reinforce its role as a living element with unique amenity value to Austin.

Improvements made to Waller Creek could have a substantial impact on the RRCD. This includes the renovation of Waterloo Park, adding a year-round 7,000 person event space with band shell to the District. Waller Creek improvements will reinforce the ecological identity and function of the Creek. Integrating these functions with urban life means that the

Creek will perform as flood control and wildlife habitat while providing quality open space for music, art, and the RRCD community.

Green infrastructure is also being considered in larger City planning projects including

the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and the land Development code rewrite, Code NEXT. Both envision an interconnected system of parks, waterways, open space, trails, green streets, tree canopy, agriculture and storm water management features that mimic natural hydrology throughout the city. These systems could have the potential environmental benefits of storm water management, watershed protection, energy usage reduction, improved air quality, reduced carbon

dioxide, and urban heat island mitigation, as well as social benefits of improved aesthetics, recreational opportunities and Development catalyzation.



*Source: Waller Creek District Master Plan, 2010*

**Map 5.7: Green Infrastructure Improvements**

District stakeholders expressed a desire to make green infrastructure improvements such as increasing the amount of street trees and planters in order to improve the public experience of walking through the District and to strengthen their connection to Waller Creek. The specific locations on the above map were identified by RRCD stakeholders as areas in need of improvements. These improvements will also provide the benefits of increased storm water management, wildlife habitat and shade during the hot summer months.



## Objective 1 Beautify the District with green infrastructure

Green infrastructure could be a tool for beautification of the district, which works to increase foot traffic and improve safety. Implementing elements such as green walls, planters and trees will dramatically improve the pedestrian experience of the District and contribute to achieving its Economic Growth and Livability and Sustainability goals as well.

### Strategies & Implementation

	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Explore the concept of a green wall and potential locations for installation.		●	
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Explore opportunities for beautification through vegetation and the potential installation of street trees and planters connecting to Waller Creek.	●		
<b>Strategy 1.3:</b> Explore the costs and process for implementing pervious paving within the District.		●	



## Objective 2 Explore options to manage storm water within the district

The Waller Creek Master Plan sees green infrastructure elements such as rain gardens as “ecological machines” that treat storm water from the roadway and adjacent Development before sending it into the wetland habitat within. These “machines” may also occur along Red River to assist in managing and treating storm water before it is returned to the ecological habitat of Waller Creek.

### Strategies & Implementation

	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 2:</b> Explore the costs associated with vegetation and the use of rain gardens in the District to manage storm water and identify applicable locations for implementation.		●	



# Land Use & Regulations

*Promote regulations and Developments that help small businesses, creative spaces and venues and commercial districts to thrive.*

The Red River Cultural District (RRCD) stakeholders are especially concerned about land use decisions and regulations specifically impacting music venue operations, but also day-to-day business operations. Stakeholders identified the need to ensure that Development in the District supports the viability of music venues, cultural arts uses and small local businesses.

A major constraint on Development in the District is the height restrictions under the Capitol View Corridors (CVCs) regulations. Capitol View Corridors restrict building heights in and around

Downtown Austin to allow unbroken views of the State Capitol. Most of the RRCD falls under CVCs, restricting most buildings in the District to 5-6 stories. The full limitations under CVCs are discussed in the ReDevelopment Analysis section of this Strategy.



As seen on the Land Use map on the following page, the RRCD is home to mostly commercially zoned properties and surrounded by many

publicly owned properties. Lot sizes in much of the District are too small for structured parking, which coupled with the fact that much of the land is owned by the City of Austin and nonprofits has by default led to the preservation and Development of Red River as a live music, arts and culture district.

Significant Development occurring in and near the RRCD include hotels and other uses complimentary to the tourism and

entertainment industry. As new Development moves into the area, RRCD leaders wish to maintain the cultural history and iconic landmarks of the District. Devising inventive ways to balance preservation of existing businesses and uses with new complimentary Development is a priority for the RRCD.



**Map 5.8: RRCD Existing Land Uses**



### Objective 1 Utilize public space and right of way to enhance business spaces

Many pockets of unused public space are found in the RRCD. These include underutilized alleyways and driveways. The RRCD stakeholders see an opportunity to reimagine these spaces and repurpose them in productive ways. Reimagining these spaces, which are now often associated with illicit activity, will contribute to making the District safer and more accessible.

#### Strategies & Implementation

	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Explore designating no longer used driveways for vendor use, bike, and motorcycle parking and valet or car-sharing drop off and pick up.		●	
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Explore alley activation in three specific locations:			
1) <b>East</b> side of Red River, between 7th and 8th (connecting to Waller Creek);		●	
2) <b>West</b> side of Red River, between 7th and 8th; and,			
3) <b>West</b> side of Red River, between 9th and 10th.			



#### Activation Case Study: Los Angeles' EaCa Alleyway

The revitalization and activation of Los Angeles' EaCa alleyway was the result of efforts between multiple cooperating stakeholders and government agencies. Once known as a deteriorating pathway, the EaCa alleyway now serves as a pedestrian walkway where patrons are spotted walking along the alley and sitting in outdoor patios. The unique landscape character of the more aesthetically pleasing alleyway environment found near Hollywood's Entertainment District. Visit [http://lasustainability.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EaCa-Alley-Project\\_Final.pdf](http://lasustainability.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EaCa-Alley-Project_Final.pdf) for more information.



## Objective 2 Reinvest parking meter and parking ticket revenue into the District

District stakeholders see an opportunity to leverage parking meter and ticket revenue to make improvements to the District as is permitted in other locations around Austin. Parking meter revenue Downtown is devoted to the Great Streets Program. This may provide a good opportunity to invest in Great Street-style streetscape improvements in the RRCD, which includes several high priority streets (including Red River and E. 7th St.). A parking ticket surcharge could also be explored.

### Strategies & Implementation

**Strategy 2.1:** Explore targeting Great Streets revenue from meters in the RRCD to streetscape improvements (trees, planters, lighting, etc.) in and around the RRCD.

**Strategy 2.2:** Explore the possibility of developing a surcharge on parking tickets in the RRCD targeted to improvements in the District.

Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
	●	
	●	



## Objective 3 Develop and implement a strategy for loading zones

Performers and suppliers for businesses in the District often encounter difficulty loading and unloading materials necessary for their operation. This often impacts business by forcing performers to circle the District for extended periods of time searching for an appropriate place to safely unload equipment for shows. This puts them at risk and impacts venue operations when performers are reluctant to play due to the hassle of getting equipment in and out efficiently. Businesses also experience difficulty with receiving deliveries due to the lack of loading and unloading areas.

### Strategies & Implementation

**Strategy 3:** Identify additional active loading and unloading zones in partnership with the City of Austin.

Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
	●	







### Objective 4 Collaborate with the Waller Creek Conservancy

The RRCD businesses and leaders see a great value in collaboration among themselves and other groups working in the vicinity. The Waller Creek Conservancy could be a key collaborator in designing and implementing improvement projects in the District. The Conservancy has already developed design guidelines and Frameworks that would be valuable tools for the RRCD in achieving its vision.

### Strategies & Implementation

**Strategy 4:** Collaborate with the Waller Creek Conservancy to share design elements that may be applicable to the RRCD.

Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
●		



Map 5.9: Waller District Design Framework



Resource:

### Waller District Design Guidelines

The Waller District Design Guidelines associated with the Waller Creek District Master Plan include pedestrian-oriented street front use recommendations that support goals of the RRCD Merchants Association. These guidelines include restricting ground-floor residential and requiring pedestrian-oriented uses, including cultural uses. Possibilities for collaboration are explored further in the Policies section.





# Connectivity & Transportation

*Enhance walkability, bikeability, transit connectivity and innovative parking solutions in districts.*

For the Red River Cultural District (RRCD) to thrive, it must be linked to other key attractions in the city and accessible to visitors without the use of cars. Enhancing the walkability of the District by transforming public rights-of-way into great public spaces is a key priority for the RRCD. The need to create safe, attractive places for people of all ages and abilities aligns with other recommendations within this Strategy that focus on increasing pedestrian traffic and diversifying the mix of patrons of the District.

Improving access to parking for employees, performers and visitors is also a priority towards making the District more business and pedestrian friendly. Creating more connections to transit options such as B-Cycle, pedicabs, ride-sharing, taxis, and regular bus routes

may also assist in resolving parking issues in the District. The lack of parking impacts several aspects of doing business in the District. Daily business operations are routinely interrupted because

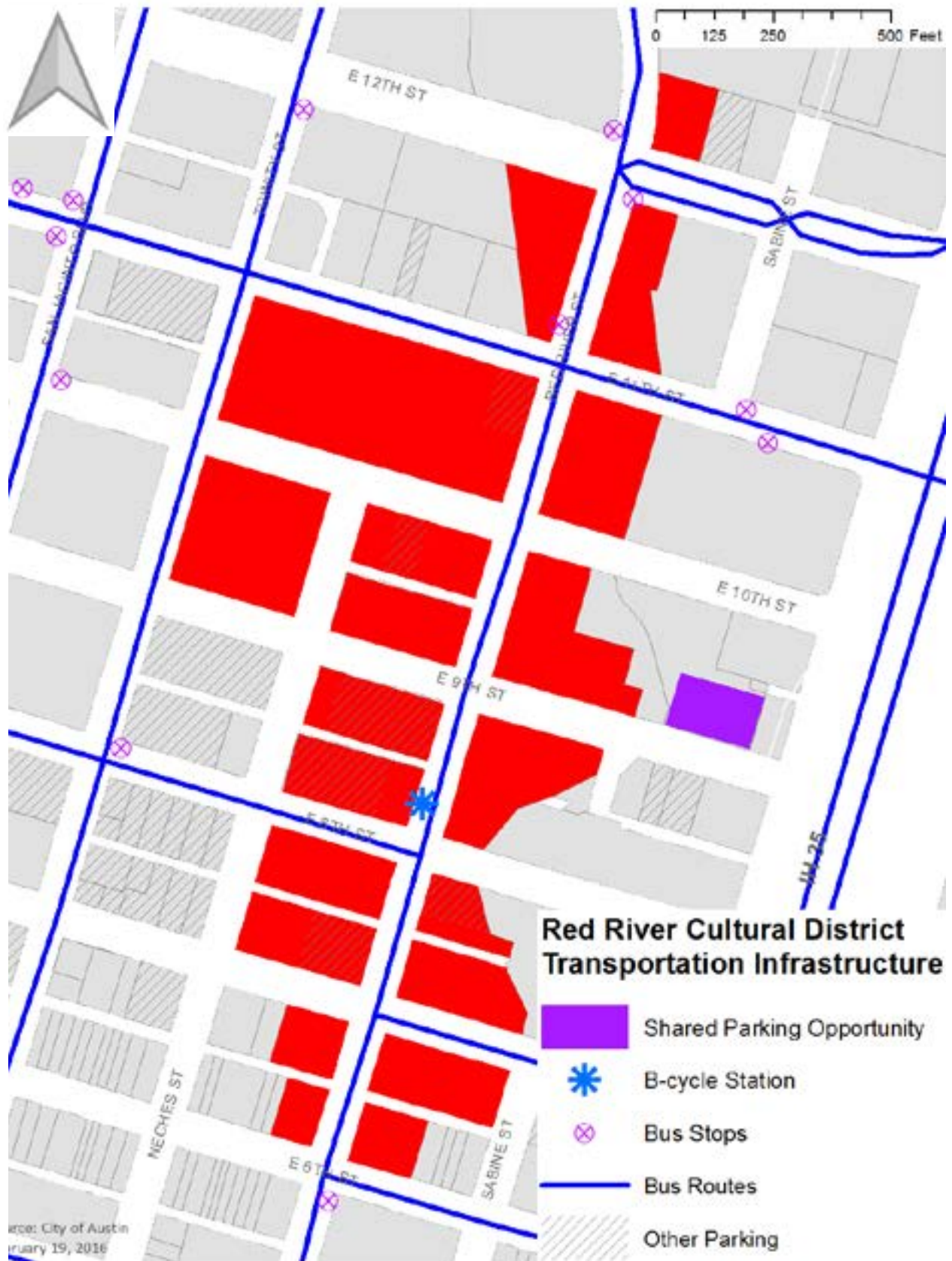
employees must step away to pay parking meters, performers are reluctant to play at Red River venues due to the excessive amount of time it takes them to find parking to unload equipment and visitors are deterred from patronizing District businesses because of the inability to find nearby parking.

Several complementary objectives identified by District stakeholders focused on enhancing

the District's connections to the Metro Rail stop, bus stops, bike lanes and other walkable parts of Downtown. These will bring in more visitors to the District without increasing parking demand.



Map 5.10: RRCD Existing Transportation Infrastructure



Resource:

## Austin Downtown Circulator

The 'Dillo was a popular Downtown shuttle circulator operating in Austin until 2009. It transported visitors, residents and workers throughout Downtown Austin. For most of history the 'Dillo was a free shuttle. The 'Dillo was discontinued in 2009 because of declining ridership, a bus operator strike and an unsuccessful fare increase.

Red River business owners and managers have expressed interest in the reinstatement of a Downtown circulator system. This would help ease some of the conflicts in the District over parking for patrons and workers. A renewed circulator would also serve the growing festival and convention sectors Downtown, as well as the growing population of residents making Downtown their homes. Finally, it would help connect the "last mile" of major bus, rapid bus and light rail lines with stops interspersed throughout the Downtown area. These include the MetroRail Red Line, a proposed Lone Star Rail stop, the 801 and 803 RapidBus routes and a number of other bus routes.

MobilityATX, an online platform developed to generate citizen feedback on Austin transportation priorities, released a report in 2015 on the 10 most popular transportation proposals generated through the website. The 8th ranked proposal is as follows: "It's time to reboot the Dillo!" The company RideScout, taking initiative on behalf of Mobility ATX users, ran a circulator trial run from June 23rd - July 31st, 2015. This pilot as well as popularity in the Mobility ATX investigation suggest that a new Downtown circulator may be feasible.

## Map 5.11: Downtown Circulator Routes



Source: MetroBlog, Capmetro, August 19, 2008





### Objective 1 Draw people to the RRCD via safe pedestrian access

Improving sidewalk connections and the overall pedestrian-level experience will greatly contribute to the vitality of the District. Business owners are interested in exploring opportunities that improve the overall experience for their patrons and enhancing public space through improvements to sidewalks, wayfinding and connectivity to transportation.

#### Strategies & Implementation

**Strategy 1.1:** Identify locations within the District that are in need of sidewalk repair and work in partnership with the City of Austin to implement them.

**Strategy 1.2:** Consider the feasibility of sidewalk improvements using decomposed granite (example in front of Stubb's), especially between 7th and 8th Streets.

Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
	●	
	●	



Map 5.12: Sidewalk Prioritization



#### Resource:

#### Waller District Design Guidelines

The Waller District Design Guidelines associated with the Waller Creek District Master Plan include pedestrian-oriented street front use recommendations that support goals of the RRCD Merchants Association. These guidelines include restricting ground-floor residential and requiring pedestrian-oriented uses, including cultural uses. Possibilities for collaboration are explored further in the Policies section.





## Objective 2 Explore options to provide improved access to IH-35 and slow down traffic

District stakeholders expressed interest in exploring alternative ways for visitors to travel to and around the District. This effort is specific to patrons visiting the District by car. This may include changing one-way roads to two-way roads and tactical urbanism strategies to slow down traffic for pedestrian safety.

### Strategies & Implementation

	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Explore the feasibility of two-way traffic on 7th, 8th, and 10th streets as indicated on the District Infrastructure Needs map (pg. 64).		●	
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Explore “Better Block” concepts to assist in activating the streetscape and slowing down traffic.	●		

#### Activation Case Study: Better Block

The Better Block project started in April, 2010, when a group of community organizers, neighbors and property owners gathered together to revitalize a single commercial block in an under-used neighborhood corridor in Dallas. The group brought together all of the resources from the community and converted the block into a walk-able, bikeable neighborhood destination for people of all ages complete with bike lanes, cafe seating, trees, plants, pop-up businesses and lighting. The project was developed to show the city how the block could be revived and improve area safety, health and economics if ordinances that restricted small business and multi-modal infrastructure were removed. Since that time, Better Block projects have been developed throughout the world with many of the temporary infrastructure improvements and businesses made permanent.

The Better Block is an open-sourced project that is free to re-use and build upon. ([www.betterblock.org](http://www.betterblock.org))



### Objective 3 Provide safe travel options other than personal cars

Parking demand in the District could be lessened by decreasing the amount of cars coming to the District and providing alternatives to accessing the District. The District is interested in exploring partnerships with other transportation providers such as Cap Metro, on-demand transportation services and pedicab enterprises to make it easier for visitors to access their services and not drive to the District.

#### Strategies & Implementation

	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Partner with on-demand transportation services and cab companies to provide customers with access to transportation.	●		
<b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Provide dedicated parking, drop off and pick-up areas for pedicabs as indicated on the District Infrastructure Needs map (pg. 64).	●		
<b>Strategy 3.3:</b> Connect with Metro Rail station on 4th Street and other public transit stops.		●	

#### Resource:

#### Great Streets

The City of Austin's Great Streets Development Program (<http://www.austintexas.gov/page/great-streets>) provides a mechanism to improve the quality of streets and sidewalks within the Downtown area. Its objective is to transform public right-of-way into great public spaces that provide pedestrians with street furnishings, bike racks, trash receptacles, and shade trees. Street trees improve the pedestrian experience by providing shade, as well as a psychological and physical boundary between the pedestrian and vehicular zones of great streets. Street trees contribute to the beautification of streets and serve as key green infrastructure for Downtown.



Red River St. is considered a "commuter street"; from City of Austin's Great Streets Master Plan



### Objective 4 Provide additional safe car parking options at peak hours for RRCD patrons

Business owners see opportunities to collaborate with surrounding property owners and City agencies to solve their parking barriers. For example, a shared parking agreement with nearby garages could provide parking for employees and visitors during peak evening and weekend hours when private corporate garages may have open spaces. Stakeholders could also work to develop signage to help visitors navigate the area when construction is under way.

#### Strategies & Implementation

	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)
<b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Implement shared parking agreements with nearby garages and the Austin Transportation Department for employee and/or visitor parking.		●	
<b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Provide directional signage to help visitors navigate to parking facilities, especially around construction.	●		

#### Resource:

#### Shared Parking Agreements

Shared parking agreements allow the same parking spaces to be used by multiple entities at different times of the day. According to Austin regulations, shared parking must be within 500 feet of the entrance to the uses served. Shared parking will not normally be considered in areas zoned Central Business District or Downtown Mixed Use, which are already allowed a reduction in the normal parking requirement.

#### Benefits:

- Efficient use of land and existing parking infrastructure
- Supports transit-oriented Development
- Promotes walkability
- Boosts business by tapping into the market potential of parked customers





**Map 5.13: District Infrastructure Needs**

RRCD stakeholders identified opportunities to improve sidewalks and to reclaim underutilized alleys and driveways for public use. Stakeholders also identified potential solutions to increasing accessibility in the District including consideration of two-way traffic on certain streets and ride sharing and pedicab valet zones. Potential shared parking locations noted by stakeholders are also identified in the map above.



# Policy Recommendations

The Business District Strategy focuses on developing a shared vision between the Red River Cultural District (RRCD) businesses, their Merchants Association, and the City of Austin. Strategies developed in the Strategy are achievable through collaboration among Merchants Association businesses themselves, or by partnership between the Association and existing City departments and programs.

However, several larger issues were raised by stakeholders during meetings and outreach interviews that can only be addressed by policy innovations:

- Regulations on amplified sound adversely impacting music venues;
- Potential reDevelopment displacing music venues or arts uses; and
- Short-term leases and escalating rent/taxes cutting into thin business margins.

Because these were clear concerns regularly expressed by businesses in the District, discussion of potential policy resolutions has been included. This includes consideration of policies proposed by other plans that impact the area, including the *Austin Music Census*, the *AMP Biennial White Paper*, and the *Waller Creek District Master Plan*. The RRCD Merchants Association and the City of Austin can use this policy discussion to frame larger conversations about stabilizing and enhancing the RRCD.

# Sound Ordinance

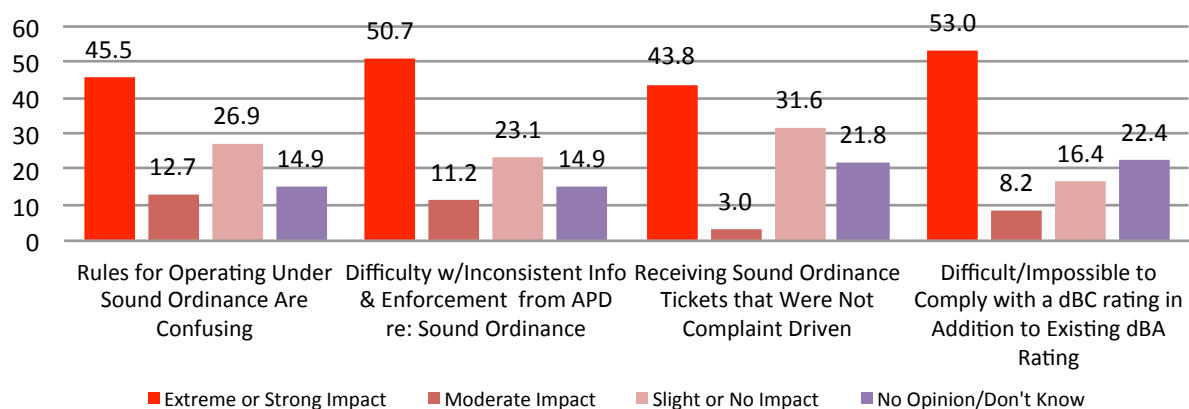
Regulations regarding sound and conflicts with neighbors have become serious threats to the Austin music industry. This was revealed in the *Austin Music Census*, as can be seen in the data presented below. Approximately half of respondents felt that sound ordinance challenges had an extreme or moderate impact on their music venues, with issues ranging from inconsistent enforcement to threats of additional sound ratings systems being introduced.

The RRCD has a range of cultural spaces and businesses in operation, but live music venues are crucial anchors to the district's creative ecosystem. Businesses in the RRCD Merchants Association expressed similar frustrations and concerns over sound regulations. The current limits of 85 decibels (dB) make it difficult to operate music venues capable of drawing international-level performers. Additional sound regulations, such as the addition of a dBC rating to the current dBA rating, would be seen as major threats to the viability of RRCD music venues.

Businesses are also concerned with conflicts over sound with new residential and hotel Developments in the Downtown. The policies that follow could help mitigate these concerns, both from the “senders” and “receivers” of amplified sound. These are important policies to consider for maintaining the role the RRCD plays in incubating local music.

Several residential and hotel Developments in the RRCD have already adopted a more tolerant attitude. The Beverly Apartments and Hotel Indigo have included appropriate levels of sound mitigation, work with the surrounding venues and even promote them as valuable amenities. These “good neighbors” represent the type of behavior that should be encouraged for the RRCD area.

**Sound Ordinance Venue Challenges, *Austin Music Census***



## Policy Strategy 1

### **Pilot an adjustment of the sound ordinance for the RRCD to better accommodate its role as a cultural district and live music anchor/incubator.**

Businesses in the RRCD have expressed concerns that current regulations around amplified sound make it difficult to manage live music venues, despite being located in the core of the Downtown. While the current dB cap is already prohibitive, increasing this regulation would threaten the basic feasibility of venues in the district. Additionally, the time limits imposed by the regulation are problematic, especially in Austin's hot summer months when outdoor shows would be better held later in the evening. Stakeholders would like to see the following policy changes related to amplified sound:

- Allow outdoor amplified sound in the RRCD until 2 a.m., currently already allowed for the Warehouse District and East Sixth Street District.
- Do not use an additional dBC rating in regulating amplified sound that would cripple the live music sector.

## Policy Strategy 2

### **Require and/or incentivize residential uses in proximity of the RRCD to work with the District Merchants Association on mitigating noise conflicts.**

Several hotels and residential properties, including members and participants in the RRCD Merchants Association, have adopted proactive "good neighbor" behaviors regarding the live music and cultural uses in the District. They utilize high levels of sound mitigation in their buildings and discourage residents from making noise complaints. Instead these businesses market their proximity to the RRCD as an asset. These behaviors should be promoted for all new neighbors of the RRCD. Desired policy actions include:

- Require and/or incentivize higher levels of sound mitigation in residential and hotel Developments within 600 ft. of the RRCD.
- Explore the feasibility of adopting an "agent of change" principle that puts responsibility on newer Development for noise impact mitigation (see pg. 28).
- Increase funding for the Music Venue Assistance Loan Program and target RRCD to help music venues incorporate their own sound mitigation with minimal financial burden.

# Creative Use Zoning

Red River businesses have repeatedly expressed concern over reDevelopment that may eliminate live music venues and other arts uses from their District. These are valid concerns given the high premiums for Austin’s Downtown real estate market. While the *ReDevelopment Analysis* section suggests limited reDevelopment likelihood in the immediate area, several sites may still shift to multi-story buildings. ReDevelopment potential could increase substantially in coming years if IH-35 is depressed, affecting local zoning restrictions. District stakeholders should be proactive in promoting policies to stabilize the live music, arts and culture-focused vision of the RRCD.

Many cities have adopted zoning policies to encourage or preserve creative uses in designated culture districts. These often involve the Development of overlays that either offer additional privileges to uses for arts and music (“creative uses”) or restrict “non-creative” uses within a given area. This type of overlay has been proposed by Austin Music People in their *2015 White Paper*. It has been echoed and endorsed by the Austin Creative Alliance (ACA). It is beyond the scope of this Strategy to evaluate the feasibility of each element suggested. However, several elements may serve as a starting point for future zoning-based policy solutions. These solutions can be discussed in light of the major zoning changes being developed for





Austin through the CodeNEXT process, which will rewrite the City's Land Development Code to reflect the goals of Imagine Austin.

The Downtown Density Bonus (DDB) is another area of opportunity for supporting the live music and culture-focused vision of the RRCD. The DDB allows developers to build additional square footage above that allowed by base zoning in return for providing community benefits. These benefits include affordable housing, green architectural features, child or senior care facilities, etc. Community benefits also include Cultural Uses and Live Music Venues. Rarely used in its current form, minor revisions to the DDB could improve its effectiveness for preserving and enhancing live music venues and cultural spaces in the RRCD.

The policy strategies recommended on the following pages do not suspend or prevent new Development; nor do they counter existing plans. Instead they encourage any new Development in the District to align with the RRCD vision and deepen the area's character as a defined cultural district.

The 2015 Austin Music People

Biennial White Paper identified the following policy recommendations:

Explore an overlay of the Red

River Cultural District that allows

for:

- **Preservation of existing creative uses**
- **Integration of new or reDevelopments into the Waller Creek Master Plan**
- **Proposed new or reDevelopment to be approved by the Red River Merchants Association**
- **Specific community benefits required in new or redeveloped properties**
- **A percentage of retail space in new Developments offering rents at 70% of retail market rates for local creative businesses**
- **Integration into any Code NEXT base zoning**
- **Offering tax credits for property owners in the Red River Cultural District who voluntarily restrict their deeds in perpetuity and sell the restricted rights**

## Policy Strategy 1

### Partner with Waller Creek Conservancy (WCC) and other stakeholders to expand, adapt, and implement “Pedestrian Activity Streets” design guidelines through more of the RRCD.

This map shows the design guidelines currently in place for the Waller District. Two broad types of use guidelines are included, “pedestrian activity streets” and “mixed use streets.” These guidelines are based on a percentage of ground floor parcel frontage that must be occupied by specific uses. The “pedestrian activity street” use guidelines correspond with the goals for a RRCD overlay expressed by Austin Music

People (AMP). The guidelines could be amended to reinforce support for live music venue uses in particular.

The Waller District Guidelines also divide the District into sections, with the areas overlapping the RRCD called “the Narrows” and “the Refuge.” Neither section allow for ground-floor residential uses. The application of this rule would prevent the ground floor of mixed use Developments from being used for condominiums or apartments.

**Map 6.1: Waller District & RRCD**



## Policy Strategy 2

### Adjust Downtown Density Bonus Live Music and Cultural Uses Community Benefits to make them more impactful for Venue and Creative Space preservation and enhancement.

The Downtown Density Bonus (DDB) allows developers to exceed the height limits permitted in base zoning in the Downtown area if they agree to provide community benefits. Currently, most of the RRCD falls under the following zoning categories:

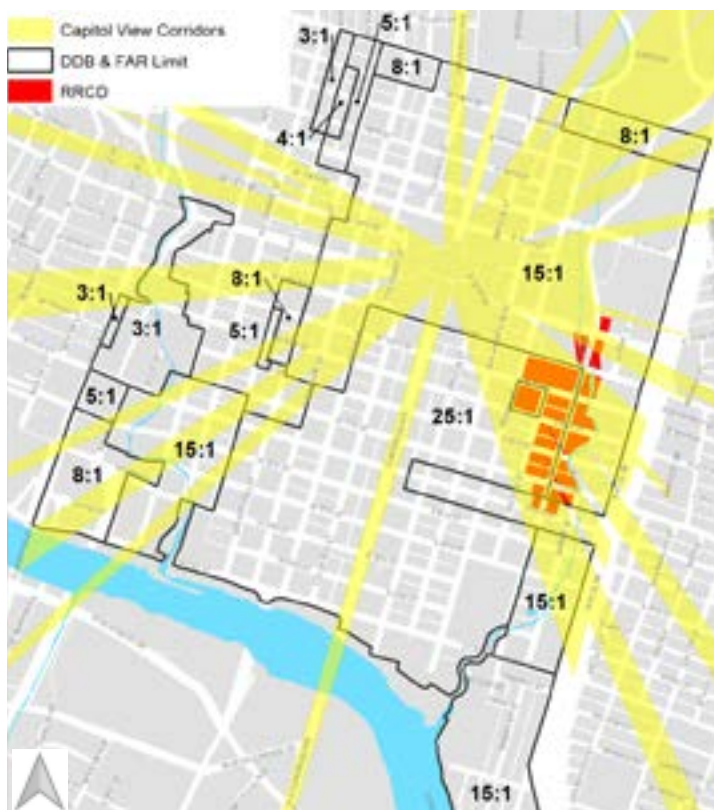
- Central Business District (CBD): Total floor area of building may be eight (8) times the area of the building's lot.
- Downtown Mixed Use (DMU): Total floor area of building may be five (5) times the area of the building's lot, with height capped at 120 feet.

The DDB program allows these floor-to-area (FAR) ratios to be increased in the Downtown based on a system shown in the adjacent map. The map shows the allowed ratio of stories to the base floor area (For example, 5:1 means five stories on a 100% developed lot, etc.). Participating lots in the RRCD can increase their ratios substantially.

There is little opportunity to use the DDB in the RRCD because of height restrictions from Capitol View Corridors. The Live Music Community Benefit could be amended to allow Development bonus fees for off-site venue retention and expansion, modeled on similar options for other Community Benefits. These fees could be administered by the City for venue preservation in cultural districts.

Allowing for-profit cultural uses would make this bonus available to more creative uses. Expanding "community benefit" to include preservation of existing creative venues and businesses would conform to the basic intent of the benefit while rewarding the retention of existing venues and cultural spaces in any future mixed-use reDevelopment.

**Map 6.2: Downtown Density Bonus & RRCD**



July 6, 2016

# Tax & Rent Stabilization

The majority of live music venues and other businesses in the RRCD rent their space. Only one major venue, Stubb's, owns its own property. Other businesses

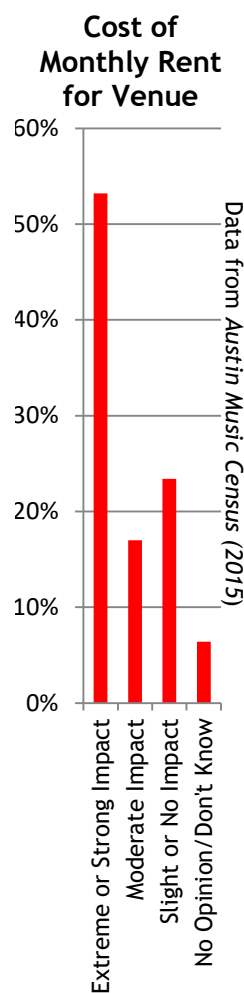
report growing challenges related to their leases and landlord relationships. Many are only offered short-term leases, despite a willingness to make longer lease commitments. This disincentivizes investment in business expansion or physical space enhancement. One venue manager interviewed during the *Austin Music Census* "pointed out that it would be futile to invest \$500,000 in a business only to make that investment back in five years but be priced out of their lease in year six."

Despite the constrained potential for reDevelopment in the District, Downtown property market increases are driving up taxes and lease rates for businesses in the RRCD, eating into already thin margins. Outreach in the RRCD revealed that this is a major challenge in the District, with two venues forced to close in 2015 over rising property costs. According to the *Austin Music*

*Census*, many live music venue operators in the Central Business District cited the additional financial pressure of rental rate "acceleration" clauses that "tie monthly rent

payments to Austin's economic performance data." Increasing and unstable lease rates combined with high maintenance costs on older buildings make operating live music venues increasingly burdensome in the District.

The designation of the RRCD as a City Cultural District and its importance as a major "incubator" for talent in the Austin music industry calls for policy interventions that stabilize operations costs for live music, arts, and culture businesses. This could be achieved through cost-reduction incentives targeting businesses and/or their property owners. It could also be done through enhanced programming to facilitate property ownership by businesses or an allied organization. These types of policies have been proposed by a number of stakeholders active in the RRCD, as well as through the City's *Austin Music Census*.





## Policy Strategy 1

### Explore a variety of tools to incentivize long-term (10+ years) leases at affordable rates, including removal of rental rate “acceleration” clauses.

While the City cannot mandate rent terms to property owners, it can explore incentives favorable to the retention and Development of the RRCD and its cultural assets. The *Austin Music Census* recommends property tax abatements to property owners who sign stable long-term leases. It also recommends eligible venues abide by all City regulations and focus on live music. These proposals have been echoed by Austin Music People and the Austin Creative Alliance. This type of program would function as a decentralized “incubator” for local music Development making a suite of targeted economic Development incentives

appropriate, within the constraints of State statute.

Incentives may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Tax abatements or credits for long-term leases, creative use deed restrictions, etc.;
- Grants/loans for businesses, allowed for economic Development;
- Utility rebates;
- Bulk discounts for utilities services; and/or,
- Discounted City fees.

## Policy Strategy 2

### Encourage property ownership by venues or innovative structures that infuse a social mission through non-market lease-fee terms.

Long-term lease stability for the RRCD could only be guaranteed for property owned by the business occupant, the City, or a nonprofit developer or land trust. Basic policy changes could support the following ownership models:

- A “socially-oriented developer” such as a creative trust, real estate investment co-op, crowdfunded equity program; etc.
- “Tenant Option to Purchase” through limited tax abatements or purchasing options agreements
- An Economic Development Corporation.

Development of an EDC including a particular focus on Downtown project Development is one of the top seven (7) “transformative steps” called for the *Downtown Austin Plan*. It advocates for “projects that benefit the community, such as affordable housing, parks, cultural facilities and public infrastructure.” The State of Texas eliminated ad valorem taxes on buildings, tangible personal property, incomplete improvements, and land owned by EDCs as of January 2016, making this a more attractive option.

# ReDevelopment Analysis

*Long-term growth in the Downtown will generate additional demand that the Red River Cultural District could capture as it continues to develop as a cultural district.*



ReDevelopment in the Red River Cultural District (RRCD) is heavily constrained by existing regulations and ownership patterns. This limits the likelihood of existing properties being replaced with high-rise Development. However, several major Development projects are occurring in and near the District and may provide an expanded neighborhood customer base. Long-term growth in the Downtown area will generate additional demand that the RRCD could capture as it continues to develop as a cultural district.

### Capitol View Corridors

Capitol View Corridors (CVCs) restrict building heights in and around Downtown Austin to allow unbroken views of the state Capitol. Most of the RRCD falls under ten (10) distinct Capital View Corridors. Most buildings in the area may only rise to five-six stories. The highest value Downtown real estate building types, such as point towers, cannot be built here. This limits the profitability of new construction substantially in comparison to the rest of Downtown. The map on the following page shows the overlap of CVCs with the RRCD and the approximate numbers of stories allowable at lots around the District. Heights are shown based on their CVC intersections. Many sites are crossed by multiple CVCs, creating divided build-out envelopes on the same lot.

### Density Bonus Program

A Downtown Density Bonus program currently allows buildings in the Downtown area to exceed the height limits of their base zoning in return for providing community benefits. Developers offering to provide one of the following are entitled to an additional two square feet of floor area for each square foot provided:

- Lease to an approved Cultural Uses nonprofit for ten years; or,
- Live Music Venue of at least 2,500 square feet leased to an approved operator for ten years.

While this would be appropriate for the RRCD, currently it is unlikely that any reDevelopment would utilize the Downtown Density Bonus program.

The RRCD is zoned Central Business District (CBD) which allows a base of eight (8) stories or Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) which allows a base of five (5) stories. Because maximum heights allowable under Capital View Corridors are less than six (6) stories in most cases there is little

### Map 7.1: RRCD Capitol View Corridors & Allowed Height in Stories



Numbers shown on the map represent approximate heights in stories proscribed by Capital View Corridor regulations at several sites. Estimates are not official City of Austin CVC determinations.



Hotel Indigo/Holiday Inn Express (opened 2016) and Hyatt House Hotel (opening summer 2017) added 489 hotel rooms to the RRCD. Waterloo Park Tower (expected 2018) will include 260 hotel rooms, as well as a 3,700 square foot restaurant. These three developments will add 749 rooms to the District.

incentive for developers to participate in bonus programs.

### Public and Institutional Land

Much of the land in and surrounding the RRCD is owned by the public or nonprofit sectors. The high concentration of institutional and civic uses influences the ability to assemble land into larger, more developable lots. Much of this property is owned by the State of Texas. The State is planning to consolidate operations onto the Capitol Complex, which could free up land near the RRCD. Other property is held by churches, historic sites and nonprofits. These civic lots are untaxed. Two major centers, the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) and the Salvation Army, provide shelter space for the homeless population, serving almost 500 men, women and children nightly. The Salvation Army is currently undergoing a fundraising campaign to improve and expand its facility.

Structured parking, above ground or underground, is not viable at most of the RRCD lots because they are too small to accommodate parking garages. Buildings in the RRCD are in the Central Business District, which does not require on-site parking. However, almost all Developments in the Downtown do so, often at the highest number of allowable parking spaces. Multi-story residential and office Development Downtown requires some structured parking to be competitive in most cases.

In summary, reDevelopment in the RRCD is limited by the following factors:

- CVC height restrictions;
- Concentrations of institutional and civic uses;
- Small parcel sizes; and,
- Scattered lot ownership

There is limited likelihood of new high-density construction in most of the RRCD under current regulations and ownership patterns.



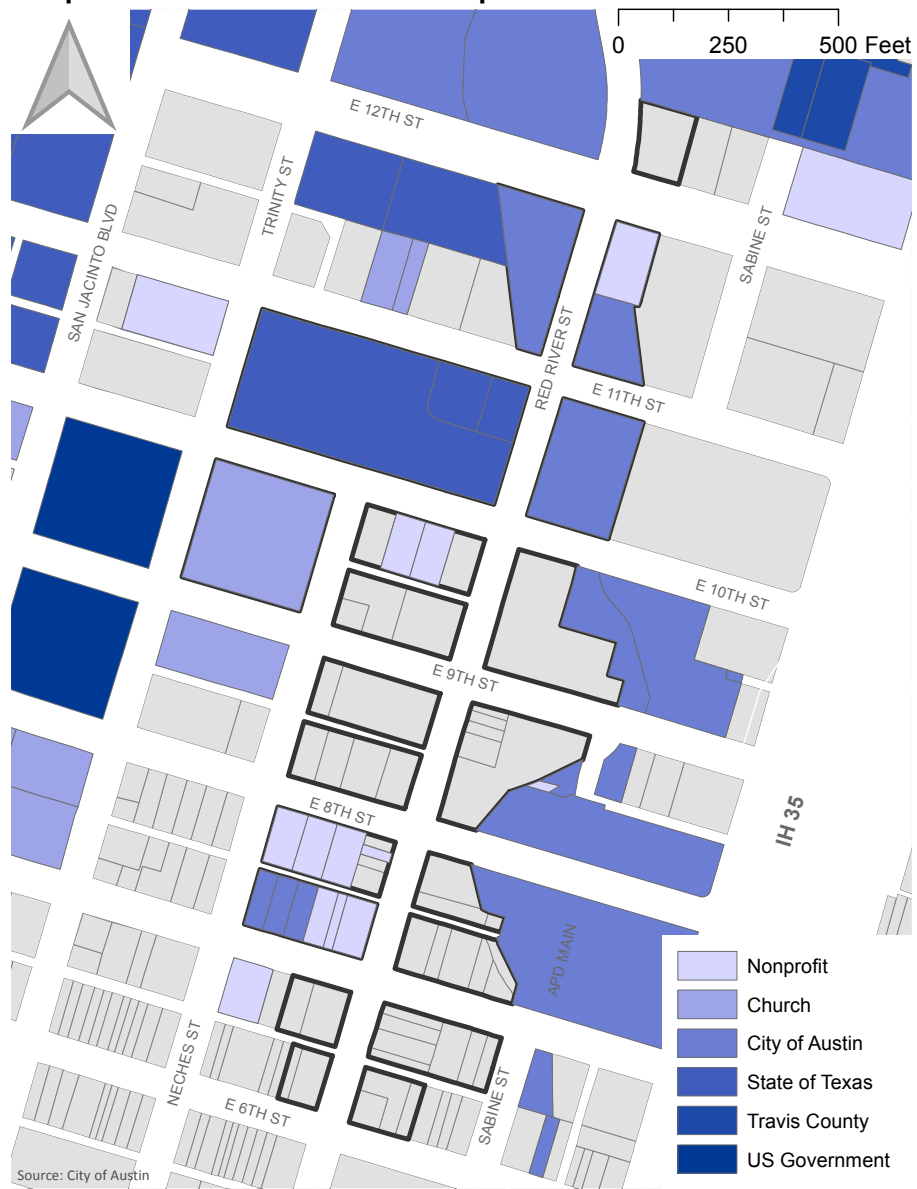
*German Free School, German-Texan Heritage Society*



*Salvation Army*



**Map 7.2: RRCD Civic Ownership**



**Map 7.3: RRCD ReDevelopment Likelihood****Under Construction**

A - Hotel Indigo/Holiday Inn Express

B - Hyatt House Hotel

**Emerging Projects**

C - Waterloo Park Tower

D - Block 87 (Episcopal Church)

**High Likelihood of Re-development**

E - 500 E. 8th (Parking Lot)

**Moderate Redevelopment Pressure**

F - 519 E. 7th (Twin Liquors)

G - 600 E. 6th

H - 900 Red River St.

**Total Demand Projections in RRCD**

Source		2020	2040
Demand from Household and Worker Growth	Households	\$22.8M	\$40.4M
	Workers	\$10.6M	\$14.7M
	Total	\$33.4M	\$55.1M
	New Demand	\$5.1M	\$26.7M
Commercial SF Supported by Demand Growth	Households	45,675	80,841
	Workers	21,206	29,341
	Total	66,882	110,182

## Commercial Space Projection

Downtown growth could generate \$5.1M in new demand in the RRCD by 2020 and \$26.7M by 2040.

Downtown Austin is projected to grow substantially over the next 25 years. Estimates by a team led by the City Demographer suggest the Downtown population will grow to over 14,000 residents by 2020 and over 25,000 residents by 2040. Employment is projected to grow from 42,000 to 51,000 by 2020 and 71,000 by 2040. These new residents and workers will contribute substantial new demand for goods and services in the Downtown area.

These growth projections were used to estimate the growth of sales for services in line with the RRCD vision, within the primary trade areas (PTAs) of the District. For analysis purposes, the PTAs were defined as follows:

- Households: 1/2 mile from the RRCD
- Workers: 1/4 mile from the RRCD

Current numbers of households and office workers in the RRCD PTAs were used to establish baselines for new demand projections. These baselines were “aged” by the population and employment growth rates for the entire Downtown. These PTA projections were then multiplied by per household and per office worker expenditures on food, alcoholic beverages and fees and admissions to events. These expenditures were then multiplied by a capture rate of 50%.

### RRCD PTA Estimate of Demand by Population

	2015	Rate	2020	Rate	2040
Downtown	11,801	3.95%	14,325	2.90%	25,354
Pop. in 1/2 Mile	7,171	3.95%	8,705	2.90%	15,407
Household Demand	\$7,451		\$7,451		\$7,451
Household Size	1.42		1.42		1.42
Households	5,050		6,130		10,850
Total Demand	\$18.8M		\$22.8M		\$40.4M
Commercial SF	37,628		45,675		80,841

### RRCD PTA Estimate of Demand by Workers

	2015	Annual Growth Rate	2020	Annual Growth Rate	2040
Downtown	41,942	2.07%	51,499	1.64%	71,253
PTA	12,375	2.07%	13,713	1.64%	18,972
Per Worker Demand	\$1,546		\$1,546		\$1,546
Total Demand	\$9.6M		\$10.6M		\$14.7M
Commercial SF	19,138		21,206		29,341

Sources: City of Austin, ESRI Community Analyst, Office-Worker Retail Spending in a Digital Age (2012)

## Envision Tomorrow and Scenario Modeling

Envision Tomorrow is a land use modeling tool that allows the user to develop urban build-out scenarios from the scale of a region down to an individual building site. These scenarios are associated with data that drive a range of indicators about site performance related to ecological, economic and social impacts.

Envision Tomorrow is a useful tool for commercial area planning. It is used to show the neighborhood context for a merchants association or commercial district. It is used to make fine-grained evaluation of reDevelopment pressure on distinct parcels, a crucial activity for business retention risk assessment. It is used to model and compare the impacts of commercial district designs made by merchants associations, providing useful data on customer behavior, affordability and positive impacts for the neighborhood and city.

This tool is combined with analysis of existing conditions and zoning to map areas of likely reDevelopment in the RRCD, as well as how that reDevelopment could relate to the values of the RRCD Strategy.

### Neighborhood Context

<b>What is it?</b>	Examining current and future conditions of neighborhoods related to the built environment and demographics.
<b>Why is it important?</b>	Knowing Characteristics that may influence retail sales, commercial real estate demand, local amenities and appropriate building typologies.
<b>How is it analyzed?</b>	Return-On-Investment App., Cost of New Infrastructure, Monthly Housing Costs (H+T+E), Housing Affordability and Demand, (Tax) Revenue-To-Cost Ratio, Jobs-Housing Balance, Walktrips per Household, VMT per Capita, Fiscal Impact Tool (ReFIT)

### Business Retention Assessment

<b>What is it?</b>	Evaluating area zoning constraints and market demands to see which commercial lots are at greatest likelihood of redevelopment.
<b>Why is it important?</b>	Knowing which businesses may need focused action to mitigate displacement pressure.
<b>How is it analyzed?</b>	ET Return-On-Investment App. (Combined with Neighborhood Plans, Existing Zoning and Land Use Restrictions)

### Commercial District Design

<b>What is it?</b>	Developing long-term build out scenarios that accommodate the development of healthy and thriving commercial districts.
<b>Why is it important?</b>	have on neighborhoods and the City.
<b>How is it analyzed?</b>	Return-On-Investment App., Net New Jobs, (Tax) Revenue-To-Cost Ratio, Cost of New Infrastructure, Land Use Mix, Housing Affordability and Demand, Jobs-Housing Balance, Walktrips, VMT Per Capita, Fiscal Impact Tool (ReFIT), CO2 Output per Capita, etc.



## Comparing Real Estate Products: Envision Tomorrow Analysis

Although real estate Development in the RRCD is limited as described previously, several sites in the RRCD may experience reDevelopment pressure. Envision Tomorrow was used to analyze the types of buildings that might develop based on area constraints and sales/lease rates (see the previous page for more information about the Envision Tomorrow scenario modeling tool). This analysis was undertaken to anticipate what types of real estate products the RRCD market might encourage and whether or not those products are in line with the vision of the RRCD Merchant Association and District Strategy. Also considered was the feasibility of building types that would further the vision of the RRCD Association and Strategy while remaining profitable to developers.

The most likely new buildings for the Downtown area are multi-story apartments, condominiums, offices, hotels and mixed-use buildings. Even with restricted building heights, these products would all be profitable to developers in the RRCD at current area lease and sales rates. This is not surprising given the high value of Downtown properties.

However, in most cases it would be as profitable or more profitable to construct mixed-use buildings with a ground floor dedicated to a Live Music Venue or Cultural Use.

This appears to be true even if the lease rate is far below current market rates for Live Music Venues in the area.

When this type of building was included in area scenario models, it generated significant positive impacts for the City as well as profitability for developers. Fiscal impacts improved for the City, since adding retail to a residential or office property generates sales tax. Retail will be most successful in the District if it contributes to District strengths in live music, restaurants, clubs and cultural venues.

According to the analysis, even though it would be profitable to redevelop several lots in the RRCD, it could be beneficial to developers, the City and the RRCD itself if any reDevelopment is tailored to include live music, arts and cultural uses.



The Hamilton: A mixed-use building with music venue incorporated. Washington, D.C. (Source: CAPCOG)

## Building Statistics for a Sample Parcel

Parking Lot Development Options	Stories	GSF	Venue SF	IRR
Apartments	5	88,870	0	13.9%
Offices	5	78,912	0	18.1%
Office+Venue Mixed Use	5	63,130	15,782	15.7%
Hotel+Venue Mixed Use	5	84,173	21,043	28.2%

Source: City of Austin

# Conclusion and Implementation

*The Red River Cultural District seeks to collectively preserve and enhance Austin's rich music, arts and food cultural assets.*



Leaders from the Red River Cultural District (RRCD) have shown their dedication to building a thriving future for the District throughout their participation in the Souly Austin process. The goals of the Souly Austin process and the resulting Business District Strategy create a framework for implementation of a collective vision for the future. Though Souly Austin provides the technical assistance efforts to encourage merchant association formation, the force for positive change comes from the merchants themselves. Through the Development of partnerships with area stakeholders, organizations and the City of Austin, the RRCD Merchants Association can assist in providing a welcoming home for Austin's local music, arts and food industries and patrons. The partnerships developed through this process are the foundation upon which district initiatives will grow, improvements will be made and the Strategy will provide measures of success and action.

## Action & Implementation

As the RRCD continues to serve as an anchor for cultural amenities and a music incubator for the city, the preservation and enhancement of this unique district remains critical to Austin's economy and brand as the "Live Music Capital of the World."

The most immediate priority identified by District stakeholders is changing the perception and reality of public safety in the District. As outlined throughout the Strategy, safety is one of the largest barriers to attracting more patrons to the District and retaining performers and employees. Creating a safe environment for those who visit and work in the District is essential for fostering its long-term economic growth. The District Strategy presented here provides a common ground for that collaboration to flourish.

The objectives and strategies outlined in this Strategy have been identified with the goal of supporting the achievement of the District vision through supporting economic growth; enhancement of music, culture and arts; improvements in livability and sustainability; integration of green infrastructure; innovative land uses and regulations; and improvements to connectivity and transportation systems. In summary, the actions recommended in this Business District Strategy aim to achieve the following:

- Promote business diversity and resilience, job growth, and partnerships that will support and anchor the district;
- Preserve and grow businesses and institutions that express the rich cultural heritage of the district through live music, creative spaces and public art;
- Encourage safety, affordability, sustainable infrastructure and strong connections between the RRCD and the surrounding downtown neighborhood;
- Create a sense of place;
- Protect environmental sensitive areas and integrate nature into the District;
- Promote regulations and Developments that help small business, creative spaces and venues thrive; and,
- Enhance walkability, bikeability, transit connectivity and innovative parking solutions in the District.

Several larger policy issues were also discussed by businesses during meetings and outreach interviews such as the adverse impact of amplified sound regulations on music venues, the potential displacement of creative uses as reDevelopment occurs and the negative financial impact of short-term leases and escalating rent and taxes on business viability. The **Policy Recommendations** section of this Strategy outlines the innovations necessary for businesses to overcome these challenges. The policy recommendations include putting in place:

- Regulations that help mitigate conflicts over sound with new land uses from both the "senders" and "receivers" of amplified sound;
- Zoning that incentivizes and privileges creative uses within the District; and,
- Mechanisms that stabilize operating costs for live music, arts and culture businesses through cost-reduction incentives and facilitation of property ownership.

Though new highrise construction in the RRCD is heavily constrained by existing regulations and ownership patterns, the continued growth of Austin will undoubtedly generate additional demand for the services offered in the RRCD. The future abilities of the District to meet this demand and fulfill Austin's reputation as "the Live Music Capital of the World" rests with the leadership and collaborations seeded through the Souly Austin process and this Business District Strategy.

# Cost Estimates

\*The costs are estimates effective April 2018 and are subject change based on design, engineering, maintenance, project management, and inflation. They require further assessment for inclusion in future capital improvement projects plans. Estimates are based on comparable costs for projects or stated program costs for specific improvements. The “Contingencies” line item is developed using the Public Works tool for project estimation. All recommendations identified were generated from business owners in the Red River Cultural District.



## RRCD Cost Estimates Phase 1, June 5, 2019 DRAFT\*

Description	Unit Type	Unit count	Cost per Unit	Subtotal	Contingency	Total
Phase I						
Improve the steep, narrow sidewalk; curb cuts create ADA relevant hazards with steps on E. 10th St	Linear feet	59	250	14,750	2,213	\$16,963
Improve the sidewalks (absent or in poor repair) and broken by curb cuts; createing ADA accessibility hazards	Linear feet	108	250	27,000	4,050	\$31,050
Repair sidewalks in poor repair; identified as high priority in Sidewalk Master Plan and from Stakeholder Input; Improve and widen with crushed granite	Linear feet	220	31	6,800	1,020	\$7,820
Fill gap in sidewalk after installing deck for Hoboken Pies. With concrete sidewalk 4" thick	Linear feet	56	9	526	79	\$605
Remove second sidewalk to create single span without grades. Push back to retaining wall at parking lot; concrete sidewalk 4" thick	Project	1	10,000	10,000	1,500	\$11,500
Installing trash/recycling bins cans to address litter problems in district (18 total)	Individual waste cans	18	1,700	30,600	4,590	\$35,190
Reduce and close curb cuts at 617 E. 7th, 519 E. 7th, and Red River 700 block (west side)	Square feet	113	260	29,380	4,407	\$33,787
Repair Utility cuts and ADA hazard sidewalk damage; temporary cuts need permanent replacement	Linear feet	10	250	2,500	375	\$2,875
Restriping crosswalks	Intersection	4	2,500	10,000	1,500	\$11,500
Installation of planter boxes with boxes, soil, and planting materials to beautify District	Individual planter boxes, including box, soil, and plantings	47	2,872	134,979	40,494	\$175,473
Planting of Street Trees, including purchase, planting	Tree (Placeholder value)	4	2,180	8,718	1,308	\$10,026
Installation of planter boxes with boxes, soil, and planting materials	Planter box maintenance contract	1	50,000	50,000	0	\$50,000
Sidewalk patio at Hoboken	Project	1	4,836	4,836	1,451	\$6,287
Alley grading	Square feet	2,500	2	5,000	750	\$5,750
Alley Paving	Square feet	2,500	23	57,500	8,625	\$66,125
Subtotal Cost Estimates						\$465,600
Architecture & Engineering, and Miscellaneous Contingencies						\$322,400
<b>Phase 1 Total with Contingency</b>						<b>\$788,000</b>
Phase II						
Installing pedestrian-scaled street lighting for safety enhancements	Individual light poles	10	15,000	150,000	22,500	\$172,500
Completing absent sidewalk network at 9th and Red River	Linear feet	147	250	36,750	5,513	\$42,263
Installing multispace parking meter at 9th and Red River	Meter	1	10,000	10,000	1,500	\$11,500
Bulbouts at intersection corners	Corner	16	10,000	160,000	24,000	\$184,000
Alley Activation	Additional activation of closed alley	108	0	0	0	\$-
Subtotal Cost Estimates						\$410,263
Architecture & Engineering, and Miscellaneous Contingencies						\$284,737
<b>Phase 2 Total with Contingency</b>						<b>\$695,000</b>
<b>TOTAL Phase 1 &amp; Phase 2 Cost Estimates</b>						<b>\$1,483,000</b>

# Appendix

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# Objectives & Strategies

## Economic Growth

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 1:</b> Revise policies and programs managing sound levels in the RRCD				
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Pilot extended hours allowance in the summer for live entertainment to perform later in the evening when the weather is more tolerable.	●			Music Program (EDD); Souly Austin
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Expand the venue assistance loan program to include more eligible venue business needs, including advanced sound mitigation costs, more general live music venue uses, and potential sound mitigation subsidy.	●			Music Program (EDD)
<b>Strategy 1.3:</b> Implement an “Agent of Change” principle to encourage compatibility between residential and entertainment venues, rewarding participating and high-performing hotels, multi-family projects, and music venues with positive ratings (styled after LEED or Green Building standards).	●			Music Program (EDD)
<b>Strategy 1.4:</b> Explore opportunities for an Entertainment License to include rebates from the City’s mixed beverage tax.		●		Music Program (EDD)
<b>Objective 2:</b> Create and maintain a safe business district environment				
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Educate and provide awareness to policy makers showcasing the environment and activities impacting the businesses.	●			RRMA, Souly Austin, DAA
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Create a safety committee including the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Austin Police Department and other stakeholders to address safety and crime related issues, and partner with the APD to increase police patrols in the Red River area.	●			RRMA, Austin Police Department, DAA, Waller Creek Conservancy

CoA=City of Austin; EDD= Economic Development Department; DAA= Downtown Austin Alliance;  
 RRMA= Red River Merchant Association; SBP= Small Business Program; CAD= Cultural Arts Division;  
 ATD= Austin Transportation Department

## Economic Growth

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Strategy 2.3:</b> Work with Austin Energy and other partners to provide more lighting in high crime areas or areas of concern such as alleyways and parking areas.	●			RRMA, Austin Energy, DAA/Downtown PID
<b>Strategy 2.4:</b> Explore design solutions for recessed doorways on businesses to resolve the concern of the homeless and transient population occupying the space.		●		RRMA, Facade Fresh, Urban Design Division, Development Services
<b>Strategy 2.5:</b> Create and implement design solutions for high incident areas such as alleys, disused alleys, and the 8th St. Bridge.		●		RRMA, Urban Design Division, WCC
<b>Strategy 2.6:</b> Send a Merchants Association representative to attend monthly police commander forums to share information on current needs and problems within the District.	●			RRMA, APD
<b>Objective 3:</b> Increase daytime activity within the district to attract customers				
<b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Introduce breakfast and entertainment options during day time hours to attract more customers on strategic days of the week.	●			Individual Businesses, RRMA
<b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Identify District locations for food, retail and art trucks to create different experiences for existing and new visitors and to promote daytime activation.	●			RRMA, Office of Sustainability (CoA), Sustainable Food Center, SBP (EDD), CAD (EDD)
<b>Strategy 3.3:</b> Create an appealing public environment that is attractive to visitors by increasing the presence street trees and greenery throughout the District and reducing the amount of concrete.			●	RRMA, Waller Creek Conservancy, Public Works (CoA), Great Streets (CoA)
<b>Strategy 3.4:</b> Attract diverse complementary businesses and creatives to the District such as artists, performers, vintage shops, record shops, and restaurants through collective or pop up events to assist in day time activation.			●	RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD), CAD (EDD), SBP (EDD)
<b>Strategy 3.5:</b> Explore temporary placemaking techniques (cafés, planters, banners, trees, etc.) to activate the District during day time hours.	●			RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD)



## Economic Growth

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 4:</b> Create signature district events to increase activity and attract patrons				
<b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Formalize 'Free Week' as an annual District event supporting the Merchants Association.	●			RRMA
<b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Host an annual District-wide event that may build on area traditions, such as Oktoberfest and Christmas Market (Texas German Heritage Society).	●			RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD), ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 4.3:</b> Establish a reoccurring District night market or farmers market that features food vendors, artisans, local arts, and music to assist in attracting new audiences.		●		RRMA, ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 4.4:</b> Establish a collective District-wide happy hour or pub crawl event.		●		RRMA
<b>Strategy 4.5:</b> Explore outdoor events such as a music lunch event to attract patrons to the District.	●			RRMA
<b>Strategy 4.6:</b> Partner with like-minded organizations such as the Waller Creek Conservancy to draw audiences into the District with co-marketing and strategic placement of installations during events such as the Creek Show.	●			RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD), Waller Creek Conservancy
<b>Objective 5:</b> Improve exterior building facades				
<b>Strategy 5.1:</b> Develop district design standards for streetscapes and facades (including trees, planters, lighting, etc.) to increase the District's visual appeal.	●			RRMA, Austin Energy, Great Streets (CoA), ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 5.2:</b> Create a system for shared ownership and maintenance of public space amenities such as sidewalk planters, and public art.		●		RRMA, Public Works (CoA), Great Streets (CoA)
<b>Strategy 5.3:</b> Use grants from the developing Facade Fresh program to make improvements to building exteriors, including repairs, landscaping, and sidewalk cafes.		●		RRMA, Facade Fresh, ATD (CoA), Great Streets (CoA)
<b>Strategy 5.4:</b> Implement construction site standards, signage, and debris mitigation programs to mitigate the visual disruption from area construction sites.	●			RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD)

## Economic Growth

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 6:</b> Promote and brand the district, its events, activities, and nightlife vitality				
<b>Strategy 6.1:</b> Develop a comprehensive District marketing strategy that anchors the RRCD to Austin's brand as the "Live Music Capital of the World".	●			RRMA, Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau, DAA, Music Program (EDD)
<b>Strategy 6.2:</b> Use digital media and develop a mobile-friendly website to promote businesses and events in the District.		●		RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD), SBP (EDD)
<b>Strategy 6.3:</b> Establish community message boards at key intersections in the District.	●			RRMA, ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 6.4:</b> Develop a District-wide promotion and discount card for repeat customers, hotel guests, and residents.	●			RRMA
<b>Strategy 6.5:</b> Develop a program in which companies purchase billboard space in the District, with proceeds going to the Merchants Association.		●		RRMA
<b>Strategy 6.6:</b> Generate and secure sponsorships throughout the year, not just during festivals and events, to assist in activation during the slower months.		●		RRMA
<b>Objective 7:</b> Small business support				
<b>Strategy 7.1:</b> Implement a code training program for venue operators to better navigate the City's regulations.	●			Music Program (EDD), Code Department (CoA)
<b>Strategy 7.2:</b> Partner with the city's Small Business Program to develop and deliver more tailored trainings.		●		SBP (EDD)
<b>Strategy 7.3:</b> Develop a relationship and communication system with the City for more transparency on new Development or projects that may impact the District including transportation projects, road closures and utility interruptions.		●		Souly Austin, ATD (CoA), Public Works (CoA)
<b>Objective 8:</b> Work with the developing medical cluster centered on the Dell Medical School				
<b>Strategy 8.1:</b> Market the RRCD's food, culture, and music to staff, faculty, and students associated with the Dell Medical School.	●			RRMA, Dell Medical School
<b>Strategy 8.2:</b> Identify partnership opportunities as the medical Innovation District develops.		●		RRMA, Dell Medical School, Capital City Innovation

## Music, Culture, & Arts

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 1:</b> Support and preserve the Red River Cultural District Designation				
<b>Strategy 1:</b> Explore the opportunity to submit an application to the Texas Commission on the Arts for a state cultural district designation.		●		RRMA, Music Program (EDD), Souly Austin (EDD)
<b>Objective 2:</b> Provide exposure within the RRCD for local artists				
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Provide information on District message boards and through weekly newsletters and social media for local artists to access opportunities. Information may also be available at individual businesses or at district kiosks.		●		RRMA, Public Works (CoA)
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Work with existing festivals and create new District-focused festivals to feature local artists.			●	RRMA
<b>Strategy 2.3:</b> Support public art and installations by local artists that further distinguish the identity of the District.	●			RRMA, CAD (EDD)
<b>Objective 3:</b> Provide low cost/free events to increase accessibility to the public				
<b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Explore partnerships with larger venues to accommodate more attendees for free shows.			●	RRMA
<b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Develop opportunities to accommodate free or low cost parking for patrons of events. Exploration of opening more lots to public parking in partnership with the City and other stakeholders.	●			RRMA, ATD (CoA), State of Texas
<b>Strategy 3.3:</b> Develop partnerships with local organizations to identify a local beneficiary for events. For example, patrons could receive a discounted or free entry to an event with a donation at the door.	●			RRMA, Appropriate nonprofits (Capital Area Food Bank, Foundation Communities, HAAM, etc.)
<b>Strategy 3.4:</b> Identify potential sponsorships for free events in the RRCD.		●		RRMA
<b>Objective 4:</b> Provide for street activation through the adoption of a busking ordinance				
<b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Adopt a city ordinance for busking. a similar ordinance in Spokane, WA, may serve as a best practice guide.		●		RRMA, Code Department (CoA)
<b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Explore and develop a potential partnership with surrounding districts to support buskers.		●		RRMA, DAA
<b>Strategy 4.3:</b> Promote buskers and performers during free week.		●		Music Program (CoA)

## Livability & Sustainability

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 1:</b> Enhance a fun and exciting district environment and identity				
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Use sidewalk cafes to highlight food offerings and activate disused right-of-way.		●		RRMA, CAD (EDD)
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Install overhead string lights to enhance the District's nightlife experience and delineate district boundaries.	●			RRMA, ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 1.3:</b> Highlight the gateways to the district through signage to indicate when visitors are entering or leaving the District and reinforce its identity and brand.		●		RRMA, Public Works (CoA)
<b>Strategy 1.4:</b> Implement animated neon signage in partnership with the City of Austin and District businesses to further distinguish the unique identity of the District.		●		RRMA, Development Services (CoA)
<b>Strategy 1.5:</b> Design, implement, and maintain District identity banners in partnership with the City and other supporters.	●			RRMA, ATD (CoA), Souly Austin (EDD)
<b>Strategy 1.6:</b> Install and maintain unique and consistent street furniture including lighting, bike racks, and trash bins throughout the District.		●		RRMA, Great Streets (CoA), Public Works (CoA), Austin Resource Recovery
<b>Strategy 1.7:</b> Implement sidewalk art and other strategies to assist in wayfinding and identifying District boundaries and aid in improving the pedestrian experience.		●		RRMA, Urban Design (CoA), Souly Austin (EDD)
<b>Objective 2:</b> Launch a District-wide recycling program				
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Explore partnerships to implement recycling stations throughout the District and to identify other creative strategies to mitigate waste.	●			RRMA, Austin Resource Recovery (CoA), Great Streets (CoA)
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Promote the use of aluminum cans rather than the use of plastic and glass at venues and businesses.	●			RRMA
<b>Strategy 2.3:</b> Identify a location for a District-wide dumpster for recycling.	●			RRMA, Austin Resource Recovery
<b>Strategy 2.4:</b> Collaborate with the City of Austin's Zero Waste Program to receive rebates to businesses and District-wide recycling coordination.		●		RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD), Austin Resource Recovery (CoA)
<b>Strategy 2.5:</b> Install trash/recycling bins throughout the District.	●			RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD), Austin Resource Recovery (CoA), Public Works (CoA)



## Green Infrastructure

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 1:</b> Beautify the District through Green Infrastructure				
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Explore the concept of a green wall and potential locations for installation.		●		RRMA, Facade Fresh, ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Explore opportunities for beautification through vegetation and the potential installation of street trees and planters connecting to Waller Creek.	●			RRMA, Waller Creek Conservancy, Great Streets (CoA)
<b>Strategy 1.3:</b> Explore the costs and process for implementing pervious paving within the District.		●		RRMA, Public Works (CoA), Watershed Protection (CoA)
<b>Objective 2:</b> Explore options to manage storm water within the district				
<b>Strategy 2:</b> Explore the costs associated with vegetation and the use of rain gardens in the District to manage storm water and identify applicable locations for implementation.		●		RRMA, Waller Creek Conservancy, Watershed Protection (CoA)

## Land Use & Regulations

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 1:</b> Utilize public space and right of way to enhance business spaces				
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Explore designating no longer used driveways for vendor use, bike, and motorcycle parking, and valet or car-sharing drop off and pick up.		●		Individual Businesses, ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Explore alley activation in three specific locations: 1) <b>East</b> side of Red River, between 7th and 8th (connecting to Waller Creek); 2) <b>West</b> side of Red River, between 7th and 8th; and, 3) <b>West</b> side of Red River, between 9th and 10th.		●		Individual Businesses, RRMA, Public Works (CoA), WCC
<b>Objective 2:</b> Reinvest parking meter and parking ticket revenue into the District				
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Explore targeting Great Streets revenue from meters in the RRCD to streetscape improvements (trees, planters, lighting, etc.) in and around the RRCD.		●		RRMA, Great Streets (CoA), ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Explore the possibility of developing a surcharge on parking tickets in the RRCD targeted to improvements in the District.		●		RRMA, Austin Police Department, ATD (CoA)
<b>Objective 3:</b> Develop and implement a strategy for loading zones				
<b>Strategy 3:</b> Identify additional active loading and unloading zones in partnership with the City of Austin.		●		Individual Businesses, ATD (CoA)
<b>Objective 4:</b> Collaborate with the Waller Creek Conservancy				
<b>Strategy 4:</b> Collaborate with the Waller Creek Conservancy to share design elements that may be applicable to the RRCD.	●			RRMA, Waller Creek Conservancy, Planning & Zoning (CoA), Souly Austin (EDD), Music Program (EDD)

## Connectivity & Transportation

Strategy	Short (1 year)	Medium (2 years)	Long (5+ yrs)	Resources
<b>Objective 1:</b> Draw people to the RRCD via safe pedestrian access				
<b>Strategy 1.1:</b> Identify locations within the District that are in need of sidewalk repair and work in partnership with the City of Austin to implement them.		●		RRMA, Sidewalk Program (CoA)
<b>Strategy 1.2:</b> Consider the feasibility of sidewalk improvements using decomposed granite (example in front of Stubb's), especially between 7th and 8th Streets.		●		RRMA, Public Works (CoA)
<b>Objective 2:</b> Explore options to provide improved access to IH-35 and slow down traffic				
<b>Strategy 2.1:</b> Explore the feasibility of two-way traffic on 7th, 8th, and 10th streets as indicated on the District Infrastructure Needs map (pg. 64).		●		ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 2.2:</b> Explore "Better Block" concepts to assist in activating the streetscape and slowing down traffic.	●			RRMA, Souly Austin (EDD), ATD (CoA)
<b>Objective 3:</b> Provide safe travel options other than personal cars				
<b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Partner with on-demand transportation services and cab companies to provide customers with access to transportation.	●			RRMA, ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Provide dedicated parking, drop off and pick-up areas for pedicabs as indicated on the District Infrastructure Needs map (pg. 64).	●			RRMA, ATD (CoA)
<b>Strategy 3.3:</b> Connect with Metro Rail station on 4th Street and other public transit stops.		●		RRMA, ATD (CoA), Capmetro
<b>Objective 4:</b> Provide additional safe car parking options at peak hours for RRCD patrons				
<b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Implement shared parking agreements with nearby garages and the Austin Transportation Department for employee and/or visitor parking.		●		RRMA, ATD (CoA), Souly Austin (EDD)
<b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Provide directional signage to help visitors navigate to parking facilities, especially around construction.	●			Public Works (CoA), DAA/Downtown PID

# Primary Trade Area Characteristics

The Primary Trade Area (PTA) of RRCD is analyzed in terms of raw distance (1/2 mile) and drive time (5 minutes). The data shown here describe PTA demographic factors and resident behaviors most relevant to RRCD businesses. Data on concert attendance and dining habits may help proprietors analyze new market potential for their businesses.

## General Characteristics

Geography	0.5 Mile	5 Minute Drive
Area (Sq. Mi.)	1.39	3.22
<b>Demographics</b>		
Population	5,079	18,274
Households	2,407	5,728
Median Age	33.2	25.1
MHI	\$66,157	\$45,614
<b>Business Summary</b>		
Total Businesses	3,833	5,193
Total Employees	63,750	94,023
Office Employment	42,446	62,704
Source: ESRI Community Analyst 2016		

## Consumer Behavior in RRCD Primary Trade Area(s)

	0.5 Mile		5 Minute Drive Time	
Arts & Recreation	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Went to art gallery in last 12 months	657	14.2%	1,695	10.3%
Went to bar/night club in last 12 months	1,339	29.0%	3,916	23.9%
Dined out in last 12 months	2,214	48.0%	7,693	46.9%
Danced/went dancing in last 12 months	642	13.9%	2,237	13.6%
Attended classical music/opera performance/12 months	332	7.2%	992	6.0%
Attended rock music performance in last 12 months	718	15.6%	2,024	12.3%
Went to live theater in last 12 months	880	19.1%	2,395	14.6%
Restaurants				
Went to family restaurant/steak house in last 6 months	3,358	72.8%	12,282	74.9%
Family restaurant/steak house last 6 months: breakfast	535	11.6%	1,824	11.1%
Family restaurant/steak house last 6 months: lunch	863	18.7%	3,091	18.8%
Family restaurant/steak house last 6 months: dinner	2,204	47.8%	8,280	50.5%
Family restaurant/steak house last 6 months: weekend	1,856	40.2%	7,004	42.7%
Went to fine dining restaurant last month	736	16.0%	2,021	12.3%
Went to fine dining restaurant 3+ times last month	252	5.5%	604	3.7%
Spent at fine dining rest in last 6 months: <\$51	70	1.5%	232	1.4%
Spent at fine dining rest in last 6 months: \$51-\$100	244	5.3%	719	4.4%
Spent at fine dining rest in last 6 months: \$101-\$200	238	5.2%	647	3.9%
Spent at fine dining rest in last 6 months: \$201+	263	5.7%	661	4.0%
Source: ESRI Community Analyst 2016				

\*The proportion of households attending rock performances is higher in the PTAs than in the city as a whole. In Austin, 12.1% of households are estimated to have attended a rock performance, or 80,380 in total.



## Tourism Data

Visitors to the Austin MSA generally spend \$11 on entertainment and \$33 on food per person per day. Austin nightlife is part of over 2.5 million stays per year. Almost 2.2 million stays include seeing a concert or attending theater. 1.83 million stays include visiting historic sites. These statistics reinforce the importance of music and culture anchors for Downtown tourism.

### Tourism Data, 2014 (Domestic)

Metric	Total
Person-Days (Millions)	45.55
Person-Stays (Millions)	22.62
Average Party Size	1.69
Average Length (Incl. Days)	1.92
Day-trips	52.2%
1-3 Nights	39.7%
4-7 Nights	6.7%
8+ Nights	1.4%
Avg. Per Person Per Day Spending	
Food	\$33
Lodging	\$54
Entertainment	\$11

Source: 2014 Texas Tourism Region & MSA Visitor Profile

## Domestic Visitor Profile, Austin-Round Rock MSA

Purpose of Stay	Percent	Number
Getaway Weekend-Overnight	9.5%	4.33
General Vacation-Overnight	4.3%	1.96
Day Trip Vacation/Getaway	2.2%	1.00
Special Event (celebration, reunion)	9.5%	4.33
Convention/Show/Conference	1.8%	0.82
Convention (Business)	7.5%	3.42
Activities		
Nightlife (bar, nightclub, etc.)	11.1%	2.51
Concerts/Theatre/Dance etc.	9.7%	2.19
Touring/Sightseeing	8.2%	1.85
Historic Sites	8.1%	1.83
Culinary/Dining Experience	25.8%	5.84
Source: 2014 Texas Tourism Region & MSA Visitor Profile		

## Capital Improvements Programs

Infrastructure proposals in the RRCD Strategy were compared to existing plans, programs, and priorities in the District to establish their compatibility. The recommendations in the RRCD Strategy align with the following capital improvement programs:

- Great Streets
- Waller District Design Guidelines
- Sidewalk Master Plan
- Comprehensive Infrastructure Assessment

### Great Streets

The Great Streets program includes design guidelines for streetscapes in the urban core (from E. 11th St. to Ladybird Lake, and from Lamar Blvd. to IH-35). It is funded through parking meter revenues in the District. Great Streets calls for street trees with a canopy height of 14-16 feet to be installed into sidewalks. This is consistent with the RRCD encouragement of street trees along Red River and E. 7th Sts. E. 7th is identified in the first priority set for implementation; Red River is identified in the second priority set. (*Great Streets Master Plan*, 2001)



*From City of Austin's Great Streets Master Plan*

## Waller Creek District (WCD) Master Plan

The WCD Master Plan calls for enhanced green infrastructure connections along roadways connecting to Waller Creek, including particular attention to E. 7th and Red River St. The Master Plan also recommends that Great Streets program parking meter funding target these streets to support the vision of the WCD.

Creek Sections, from Waller Creek District Master Plan



Bike-Pedestrian Circulation Concept, from Waller Creek District Master Plan





## Sidewalk Master Plan

The City's new Sidewalk Master Plan utilizes a set of rubrics to target improvements and investment to areas of highest need. It divides sidewalks into "Absent" and "Existing." "Absent" sidewalks are prioritized according to a weighted matrix for need assessment. "Existing" sidewalks are prioritized based on their current conditions.



Sidewalk Master Plan: Existing Sidewalk Prioritization, Adopted, June 16, 2016

## Long-Range Capital Improvement Program

The Capital Planning Office (CPO) develops a long-range plan for strategic investment in maintaining, improving, and expanding Austin's physical infrastructure. Funding priorities are given to infrastructure based on urgent needs, capital renewal, and service demands. In addition, eleven (11) Strategic Areas are identified in the 2016-2017 Long-Range CIP Strategic Plan, including the Downtown. These areas show a high degree of overlap for implementing City of Austin plans and initiatives. They are identified and prioritized based on the degree of overlap, with areas ranked as "high" or "very high" showing the strongest overlap and potential for cooperation to leverage expenditures for capital projects.

The RRCD is in the Downtown, one of the highest level Strategic Areas. In addition, particular areas in the RRCD show "very high" levels of overlap. This means they are important areas for leveraging City resources for improved streets, sidewalks, water infrastructure, and cultural facilities.





# Music and Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Recommendations

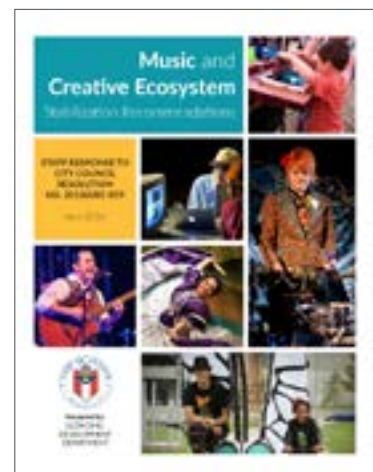
The Austin City Council passed Resolution No. 20160303-019 directing the City Manager to develop a plan of action to address a variety of priorities, goals, and objectives to support the music and creative industries in Austin. The Economic Development Department released a set of recommendations to address them. These recommendations include the following major categories:

- Affordable Space preservation and creation;
- Agent of Change Principle to foster compatibility between venues and residential areas;
- Cultural Tourism to boost incomes of artists and musicians;
- Entertainment License to simplify permitting for music venues;
- Genre Development to promote music diversity;
- Incentives, Tools, and Loans to stabilize music and creative sectors and promote continued growth;
- Land Use Regulations to facilitate creative space preservation and Development;
- Permitting and Licensing improvements
- Professional Development to support professionals in creative industries; and,
- Revenue Development to increase incomes for Austin area musicians.

Many of the strategies proposed in these recommendations stem directly from work with the Red River Cultural District Merchant Association and the Development of this Business District Strategy. They are key stakeholders in the shaping and deployment of policies and programs, and offer major insights on the cultivation of a sustainable music and creative ecosystem in Austin. Key elements for the RRCD include, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Development of tools for preservation of music and creative space, especially in cultural districts;
- Simplification of licenses and permitting processes;
- Adoption of an Agent of Change Principle to insure compatibility between existing music venues and new residential and hotel Development in the Downtown; and,
- Improved communication with City of Austin departments and regulators.

View full recommendations here: <http://tinyurl.com/hob7yc3>



# Summary of Actions to Date

## June 2019

The Red River Merchants Association has been a dynamic leader in supporting the preservation and enhancement of the Red River Cultural District since its formation. They have been regularly engaged on policy changes, infrastructure investment and improvement, and community advocacy. This leadership has been made possible through the intensive collaboration between businesses and music venues driven by the Association. Major achievements and developments are summarized below.

### Successful Placemaking Installations

As part of the Souly Austin program, the Red River Merchants Association worked with local artists including Tim Kerr to install three distinctive murals celebrating the history of the District. One of the pieces, “There’s more to “Texas Music”, profiles eight musicians who have left an everlasting impact on the national music landscape and were all rooted to Austin. The Association also installed distinctive neon gateway signage for the District.

### Creation of Hot Summer Nights Festival

A major goal of businesses discussed in this Strategy was the creation of new, major events to help increase revenues and stabilize District venues during slower summer months. The Association used seed funding from the Souly Austin program to launch Hot Summer Nights, a free music festival held in July that incorporates participation from all the businesses, venues, and cultural organizations in the Red River Cultural District. This festival is a major success, generating 30% revenue boosts during the month of July, thousands of attendees, and millions of social media impressions.

## Successful Extended Hours Pilot

A major objective brought out during the creation of this District Economic Strategy was the extension of permissible outdoor live music to later hours for venues in the Red River Cultural District. This led to the passing of Ordinance No. 20170126-019 in January of 2017, which initiated a pilot program to study extended hours for outdoor live music in the District. This study was extended through April 2018 by Ordinance No. 20171019-007. This pilot program was very successful, with positive reception from both music venues and community advocates. City Council passed Ordinance No. 20180426-008 in April of 2018 to make these extended hours permanent for the District.

## City Council Resolutions in Support of the Red River Cultural District

The Austin City Council passed Resolution 20170608-033 to support the enhancement of physical infrastructure, streetscaping, safety, and tourism for the Red River Cultural District. The Resolution directed the City Manager to address public safety and pedestrian enhancements for the Red River Cultural District (RRCD), the home to thirteen (13) live music venues, hotels and other businesses in a district essential to Austin's music industry ecosystem. Two CIUR memoranda have been issued in response to this Resolution, on March 20, 2018, and on July 12, 2018. These updates outline the need for continuing inter-departmental collaboration and shared funding to achieve the goals established in 20170608-033.

## Alley Closure

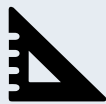
One of the main safety concerns identified in this Strategy is the alley between 7th and 8th Streets, connected Red River St. to Waller Creek. This alley is not accessible for through traffic, and has become a major locus of crime in the District. The Association wants this remedied with initial closure and long-term repurposing and integration into the vibrant street life of the District. The Economic Development Department is leading and funding the effort to manage and close the alley, in collaboration with the Association and the Public Works Department.

## FY2019 Budget

In support of Resolution 20170608-033 and their focus on anchoring and preserving the Red River Cultural District, and as a result of the strong advocacy from the Red River Merchants Association, City Council designated funds from the Great Streets Program to Red River Cultural District Enhancements. While Council directed up to \$2.7 million to targeted to the District, discussions for funding and prioritization are ongoing.

## Hiring of Executive Director

The Red River Cultural District Merchants Association (RRMA) appointed its first Executive Director in fall of 2018. Cody Cowan has a long history in the District, serving as General Manager of the Mohawk, a live music venue since 2008 and working in Red River venues since 1997. He served as President or Vice President of the Red River Merchants Association since its formation in 2016 and has been a leader for both the RRMA and in the Souly Austin program.



**394,599 FT<sup>2</sup>  
COMMERCIAL SQUARE  
FOOTAGE**



**765  
ESTIMATED JOBS IN  
THE DISTRICT**



**30  
TOTAL BUSINESSES  
IN THE DISTRICT**



**\$235,159,018  
PROPERTY TAX  
INFORMATION (2018)**



**6  
CULTURAL &  
HISTORIC ASSETS**

**LEGACY BUSINESSES:**

German-Texan  
Heritage Society

Stubb's BBQ

True Blue Tattoo

**HOUSEHOLDS  
IN RED RIVER  
CULTURAL DISTRICT**

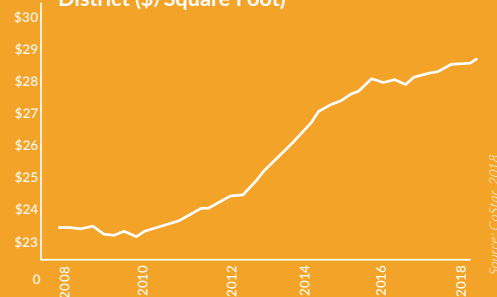


**IN DISTRICT: 117**

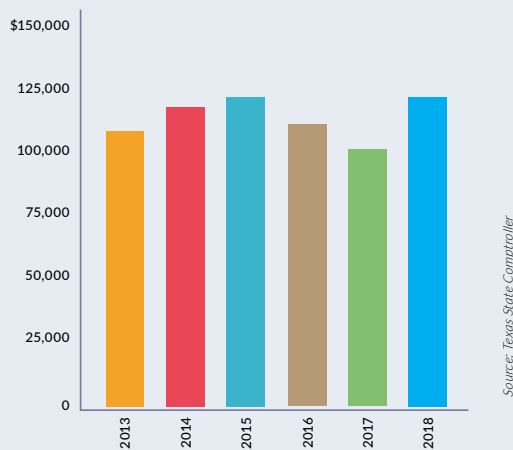
**IN 1/2 MILE:  
1,894**

**IN 15 MINUTE  
WALKSHED:  
2,831**

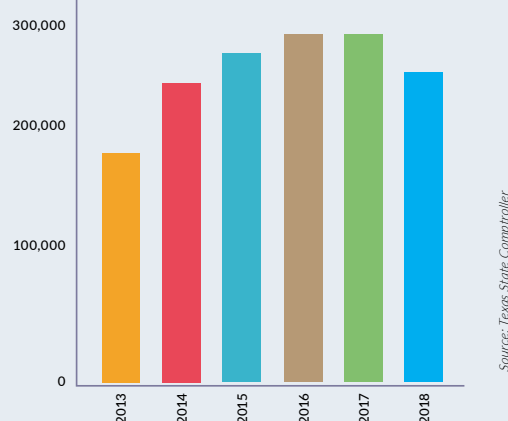
**Commercial Rent in the Red River Cultural  
District (\$/Square Foot)**



**SALES TAXES PAID IN THE RED RIVER  
CULTURAL DISTRICT (COA PORTION):**



**MIXED BEVERAGE TAXES PAID  
IN THE RED RIVER CULTURAL  
DISTRICT (COA PORTION):**



## Strategies Completed or Initiated to Date

Strategy	Timeframe	Status
<b>Economic Development Strategy 1.1.</b> Implement an “Agent of Change” principle to encourage compatibility between residential and entertainment venues, rewarding participating and high-performing hotels, multifamily projects, and music venues with positive ratings (styled after LEED or Green Building standards).	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 1.2.</b> Expand the venue assistance loan program to include more eligible venue business needs, including advanced sound mitigation costs, more general live music venue uses, and potential sound mitigation subsidy.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 1.3.</b> Pilot extended hours allowance in the summer for live entertainment to perform later in the evening when the weather is more tolerable.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 1.4.</b> Explore opportunities for an Entertainment License to include rebates from the City’s mixed beverage tax.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 2.1.</b> Educate and provide awareness to policy makers showcasing the environment and activities impacting the businesses.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 2.2.</b> Create a safety committee including the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Austin Police Department and other stakeholders to address safety and crime related issues, and partner with the APD to increase police patrols in the Red River area.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 2.3.</b> Work with Austin Energy and other partners to provide more lighting in high crime areas or areas of concern such as alleyways and parking areas.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 2.5.</b> Create and implement design solutions for high incident areas such as alleys, disused alleys, and the 8th St. bridge.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 2.6.</b> Send a Merchants Association representative to attend monthly police commander forums to share information on current needs and problems within the district.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 3.1.</b> Introduce breakfast and entertainment options during day time hours to attract more customers on strategic days of the week.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 3.2.</b> Identify district locations for food, retail and art trucks to create different experiences for existing and new visitors and to promote daytime activation.	Short (1 year)	Complete



## Strategies Completed or Initiated to Date

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Status</i>
<b>Economic Development Strategy 3.3.</b> Create an appealing public environment that is attractive to visitors by increasing street trees and greenery within the in the district and reducing the amount of concrete.	Long (5+ years)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 3.4.</b> Attract diverse complementary businesses and creatives to the district such as artists, performers, vintage shops, record shops, and restaurants through collective or pop up events to assist in day time activation.	Long (5+ years)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 3.5.</b> Explore temporary placemaking techniques to activate the district during day time hours.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 4.1.</b> Formalize 'Free Week' as an annual district event supporting the Merchants Association.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 4.2.</b> Host an annual district-wide event that may build on area traditions, such as Oktoberfest & Christmas Market (Texas German Heritage Society).	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 4.6.</b> Partner with like-minded organizations such as the Waller Creek Conservancy to draw audiences into the District with co-marketing and strategic placement of installations during events such as the Creek Show.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 5.1.</b> Improve, repair, and install lighting in parking and public spaces throughout the district.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 5.2.</b> Create a system for shared ownership and maintenance of public space amenities such as sidewalk planters, and public art.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 6.1.</b> Develop a comprehensive district marketing strategy that anchors the RRCD to Austin's brand as the "live music capital of the world".	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 6.2.</b> Use digital media & develop a mobile-friendly website to promote businesses & events in the district.	Medium (2 years)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 6.4.</b> Develop a district-wide promotion & discount card for repeat customers, hotel guests, & district residents.	Short (1 year)	In Process

## Strategies Completed or Initiated to Date

Strategy	Timeframe	Status
<b>Economic Development Strategy 6.6.</b> Generate & secure sponsorships throughout the year not just during festivals & events to assist in activation during the slower months.	Medium (2 years)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 7.1.</b> Implement a code training program for venue operators to better navigate the City's regulations.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 7.2.</b> Partner with the city's Small Business Program to develop & deliver more tailored trainings.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 7.3.</b> Develop a relationship & communication system with the City for more transparency on new development or projects that may impact the district including transportation projects, road closures & utility interruptions.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Economic Development Strategy 8.1.</b> Market the RRCD's food, culture, & music to staff, faculty, & students associated with the Dell Medical School	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 1.</b> Explore the opportunity to submit an application to the Texas Commission on the Arts for a state cultural district designation.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 2.1.</b> Provide information on District message boards and through weekly newsletters and social media for local artists to access opportunities. Information may also be available at individual businesses or at district kiosks.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 2.2.</b> Work with existing festivals and create new District-focused festivals to feature local artists.	Long (5+ years)	Complete
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 2.3.</b> Support public art and installations by local artists that further distinguish the identity of the District.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Economic Development Strategy 8.1.</b> Market the RRCD's food, culture, & music to staff, faculty, & students associated with the Dell Medical School		
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 3.1.</b> Explore partnerships with larger venues to accommodate more attendees for free shows.	Long (5+ years)	Complete

## Strategies Completed or Initiated to Date

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Status</i>
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 3.2.</b> Develop opportunities to accommodate free or low cost parking for patrons of events. Exploration of opening more lots to public parking in partnership with the City and other stakeholders.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 3.4.</b> Identify potential sponsorships for free events in the RRCD.	Long (5+ years)	Complete
<b>Music, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 4.1.</b> Adopt a city ordinance for busking. a similar ordinance in Spokane, WA, may serve as a best practice guide.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Music, CuMusic, Culture, &amp; Arts Strategy 4.2.</b> Explore and develop a potential partnership with surrounding districts to support buskers.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 1.1.</b> Use sidewalk cafes to highlight food offerings and activate disused right-of-way.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 1.3.</b> Highlight the gateways to the district through signage to indicate when visitors are entering or leaving the District and reinforce its identity and brand.	Medium (2 years)	Complete
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 1.4.</b> Implement animated neon signage in partnership with the City of Austin and District businesses to further distinguish the unique identity of the District.	Medium (2 years)	Complete
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 1.5.</b> Design, implement, and maintain District identity banners in partnership with the City and other supporters.	Short (1 year)	Complete
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 1.6.</b> Install and maintain unique and consistent street furniture including lighting, bike racks, and trash bins throughout the District.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 1.7.</b> Implement sidewalk art and other strategies to assist in wayfinding and identifying District boundaries and aid in improving the pedestrian experience.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 2.1.</b> Explore partnerships to implement recycling stations throughout the District and to identify other creative strategies to mitigate waste.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Livability &amp; Sustainability Strategy 2.5.</b> Install trash/recycling bins throughout the District.	Short (1 year)	In Process

## Strategies Completed or Initiated to Date

Strategy	Timeframe	Status
<b>Green Infrastructure Strategy 1.1.</b> Explore the concept of a green wall and potential locations for installation.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Green Infrastructure Strategy 1.2.</b> Explore opportunities for beautification through vegetation and the potential installation of street trees and planters connecting to Waller Creek.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Land Use &amp; Regulations Strategy 1.1.</b> Explore designating no longer used driveways for vendor use, bike, and motorcycle parking, and valet or carsharing drop off and pick up.	Medium (2 years)	Complete
<b>Land Use &amp; Regulations Strategy 1.2.</b> Explore alley activation in three specific locations: 1) East side of Red River, between 7th and 8th (connecting to Waller Creek); 2) West side of Red River, between 7th and 8th; and, 3) West side of Red River, between 9th and 10th	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Land Use &amp; Regulations Strategy 4.</b> Collaborate with the Waller Creek Conservancy to share design elements that may be applicable to the RRCD.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Connectivity &amp; Transportation Strategy 1.1.</b> Identify locations within the District that are in need of sidewalk repair and work in partnership with the City of Austin to implement them.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Connectivity &amp; Transportation Strategy 1.2.</b> Consider the feasibility of sidewalk improvements using decomposed granite (example in front of Stubb's), especially between 7th and 8th Streets.	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Connectivity &amp; Transportation Strategy 2.1.</b> Explore the feasibility of two-way traffic on 7th, 8th, and 10th streets as indicated on the District Infrastructure Needs map (pg. 64).	Medium (2 years)	In Process
<b>Connectivity &amp; Transportation Strategy 2.2.</b> Explore "Better Block" concepts to assist in activating the streetscape and slowing down traffic.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Connectivity &amp; Transportation Strategy 3.1.</b> Partner with on-demand transportation services and cab companies to provide customers with access to transportation.	Short (1 year)	In Process
<b>Connectivity &amp; Transportation Strategy 4.1.</b> Implement shared parking agreements with nearby garages and the Austin Transportation Department for employee and/or visitor parking.	Medium (2 years)	Complete
<b>Connectivity &amp; Transportation Strategy 4.2.</b> Provide directional signage to help visitors navigate to parking facilities, especially around construction.	Short (1 year)	In Process





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