

**City of Austin  
Historic Preservation Office  
Programmatic Initiatives  
Per Resolution 20110804-0029**

On August 4, 2011 City Council passed resolution 20110804-0029 in response to recommendations from citizens, the Heritage Society of Austin (HSA) and the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) staff. The resolution requested HPO staff research possible changes to the Historic Preservation program related to improving review of tax exemption requests and conducting annual inspections of City Landmarks, funding for increased staffing and to develop programs to benefit owners of historic properties, and adoption of policies to provide information and outreach to the public. The following are initial responses from the HPO staff to each element of the resolution.

**I. Enhance the Inspection and Enforcement of Maintenance Requirements for Historic Tax Exemptions & Implement an Inspection Fee to Cover the Costs of Inspections.**

**A. Review of Tax Exemption Applications:**

Staff has already initiated the following procedures for reviewing applications for Historic Tax Exemptions as part of the 2012 exemption process.

On or before January 15th of each year, a City Landmark owner who requests a tax exemption shall file a sworn affidavit with the City that includes a statement of compliance and certification that the property is in need of tax relief to encourage its preservation, and is being preserved and maintained as required by the historic landmark regulations. Properties that are Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks or State Archeological Landmarks are required to provide the sworn affidavit, but are not required to provide a statement of need.

Upon receipt of the affidavit, HPO staff shall perform a visual inspection of the exterior of the property to assess if it is being preserved and maintained as required by historic landmark regulations, and shall review the owner statement to certify that the property is in need of tax relief to encourage its preservation.

Staff will present recommendations for approval or disapproval of tax exemption requests to the Historic Landmark Commission (HLC), who will consider and vote to approve or disapprove the recommendations. Staff will present the HLC's decision to City Council for consideration. Staff will then provide to the Chief Appraiser and the Austin Independent School District (and other taxing entities, if requested) a list of properties the City Council has approved to receive the tax exemption for that year.

**B. Inspection Procedure:**

Staff has already initiated the following procedures for inspecting Landmark properties as part of the 2012 exemption process.

Historic Preservation staff will inspect historic landmark properties in February and March of each year as follows:

1. Complete an inspection form for each property. At a minimum the inspection will include a visual assessment of the following building components:
  - a) Foundations
  - b) Exterior walls, siding and trim

- c) Roof/drainage
  - d) Decorative elements
  - e) Doors and windows
  - f) Grounds and accessory buildings
  - g) Unapproved alterations/additions and signage
2. Take at least one photo of each property from the right-of-way to serve as an annual record of the property's condition and appearance. Detailed photographs will be taken of all deficiencies.
  3. Communicate with property owners regarding deficiencies, and require owners to submit a statement outlining their plan and schedule to remedy deficiencies in a timely manner. Based on the scope of work, owners may be required to submit a Certificate of Appropriateness application for review by the Historic Preservation Office and/or Historic Landmark Commission.
  4. If HPO staff workload allows, re-inspect deficient properties to ensure work has taken place in accordance with approved plans, otherwise re-inspect the following year. Continued noncompliance or failure to address deficiencies may result in staff recommending denial of future tax exemption requests.
  5. Record all actions and communications in the Historic Preservation Office files.
  6. Complete all inspections in time to present recommendations for approval/disapproval to the Historic Landmark Commission and meet the deadlines of other taxing entities and the Travis County Appraisal District.

**C. Implement an annual fee for processing tax exemption requests:**

Staff recommends assessing property owners a fee of \$100, which will be due with annual submission of the required sworn affidavit.

Staff estimates that each request for an exemption, on average, requires one hour of administrative time and two hours of a historic preservation planner's time to review and process the affidavit, conduct the inspection, follow up with an owner regarding deficiencies, and coordinate with the other taxing entities and TCAD.

Assessing these fees could generate \$42,000-45,000 in revenue for the City per year based on approximately 420-450 applications being received annually.

**II. Recommendations for Funding Mechanisms for the Expansion of Existing Functions and the Creation of new Programmatic Functions within the Historic Preservation Program:**

**A. Possible sources of funding:**

**1. Dedicate tax exemption application fees to the Historic Preservation program:**

Potential revenues of \$42,000-\$45,000 from proposed new tax exemption fee could be dedicated to the Historic Preservation Office.

**2. Downtown Density Bonus Program – “In Lieu of” Fees for historic buildings:**

Historic Preservation Office staff is working with the Urban Design program on the creation of a density bonus program for Downtown development as called out in the Downtown Austin Plan. HPO staff proposes that projects involving buildings designated at the City, State or National level, that are contributing buildings in Local and National Register Historic Districts, or are

identified as priority buildings in the Warehouse District or identified in the 1984 Comprehensive Cultural Resource Survey be eligible for density bonuses if the work proposed includes proper restoration or rehabilitation of historic façade elements. Staff further recommends that an “in lieu of” fee be made available for non-historic buildings. In these cases, in exchange for density bonuses, developers could contribute “in lieu of” fees to a dedicated fund for use by the Historic Preservation Program for activities and programs that benefit historic resources in the Downtown area, such as a façade grant or loan program. Staff recommends that the program be designed so that these incentives are not available to projects that result in the demolition of, or inappropriate modifications to, Landmarks, or contributing or high priority historic buildings.

**B. Expansion of Existing Functions:**

**1. Increased staffing to enhance inspections:**

Staff caseloads have increased, and are anticipated to continue to do so. The zoning of additional local historic districts will result in a higher number of Certificates of Appropriateness, and increased construction activity throughout the City will result in a greater number of permit applications for projects in National Register Districts, as well as an increase in the number of demolition/relocation permits for buildings over 50 years old. Additionally, the adoption of new preservation programs and activities including increased requirements for the tax exemption program, potential loan programs, and the management of the Austin Historical Survey Wiki, puts a significant burden on current staff work loads.

To address increased case loads and possible new programs, staff recommends creating a new full-time, permanent Historic Preservation Planner position within the Planning & Development Review Department. This position could be responsible for performing investigative and inspection work to support enforcement of code regulations for the City's local historic districts and historic landmarks as they relate to property tax exemptions, Certificates of Appropriateness, and sign permits. The position could also review work funded through the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) Heritage Tourism Grants for compliance with preservation standards. Additionally the position could provide training to residents and neighborhood associations on proper maintenance and rehabilitation treatments for historic properties, as well as assist with other HPO duties, including moderating and verifying data entered into the Austin Historical Survey Wiki system.

**2. Plaques for Historic Landmarks:**

Until about two years ago, funding for City Landmark plaques was provided by the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB); however funds are no longer being appropriated in the ACVB or City budgets for this purpose.

In the spring of 2012 the Historic Preservation Office purchased 50 Landmark plaques, at approximately \$100 per plaque, and made those plaques available to landmark property owners at cost. Although this system has helped alleviate the backlog of Landmarks that do not have plaques, their purchase is voluntary and does not guarantee that all Landmarks will have an identifying plaque.

Staff recommends adopting a requirement that owners of all new City Landmarks be required to install a plaque, and that an additional \$100 fee be charged once "H" zoning is granted. Staff further recommends these fees be dedicated to the PDRD budget to cover the cost of purchasing the plaques. Instituting a requirement for all owners of new Landmarks to install a plaque and the associated fee would require a code revision, and possibly going through the administrative rule posting process.

Note: It is necessary to order plaques in large lots of 50 or more to secure a volume discount from the foundry. Once the backlog of need is fulfilled, a single order of 50 plaques could last for as much as 2-3 years depending on the number of properties zoned as City Landmarks each year.

**3. Offsetting costs for low-income owners to submit historic zoning applications:**

Currently the fees for owner-initiated "H" zoning requests are \$313 for the zoning application, and \$241 to perform the required public notification (\$554 total). Property owners are not assessed any fees for City-initiated "H" zoning changes.

Staff recommends adopting criteria in the Fee Schedule that would grant a waiver of the "H" zoning and notification fees to property owners that are participating in other low-income assistance programs in the City such as:

- Neighborhood Housing & Community Development programs - lead abatement, accessibility improvements, home repair, Housing Smarts homebuyer training, down payment assistance, wastewater private lateral pipeline replacement/repair, or Holly Good Neighbor Program. Eligibility for most of these programs includes household income that is 80% or less of Austin area's median family income.
- Austin Energy - Customer Assistance Program (CAP), fee waiver and discounts, free home-energy improvements.
- Meals on Wheels and More programs.

**III. Provide a Technical and Loan Assistance Program to Better Enable the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings in Underrepresented Areas, and in the Central Business District, and to Assist Low-Income Owners of Landmarks with Preservation and Rehabilitation. Include Recommendations for Outreach and Research Assistance to Underrepresented Areas:**

**A. Establish Rehabilitation Loans for Under-represented Areas, Low-Income Homeowners and properties in Central Business District:**

There are a number of models for loan programs that can be considered including revolving loans and below-market-rate loans provided by local banks.

A revolving loan fund is a program in which an entity loans capital from a fund to property owners so that they may undertake the rehabilitation of a property. An example of such a fund is the Business Retention and Enhancement (BRE) Program for Congress Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street described in section III.B.1. These funds "revolve" through the repayment of principal and interest over the course of a pre-established loan term. The payments received are deposited back into the fund and can then be loaned out for other projects. These types of programs require capitalization, with funds coming from government appropriations (as was

done for BRE), grant funds such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), or private grants and donations.

Revolving loans are essentially mortgage or construction loans that must be repaid by the borrower. The loans have a term, an interest rate, and an amortization period. Such loans can be secured through the ability of the lender to foreclose on properties in the case of default, although a majority of the organizations operating revolving loan funds occupy a second position behind the primary mortgage lender, if any. Lenders with a specific historic preservation interest may also require a longer term property interest in the form of a covenant or easement.

To qualify loan applicants may be required to meet certain income criteria and the property might have to meet designation criteria such as being locally landmarked or contributing (or potentially contributing) to a local or National Register historic district. Additionally, it is typical to require that all work funded by the loan meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The goals of such programs typically differ from a typical bank loan in that the focus is on the rehabilitation of historically significant properties and making loans to property owners who might otherwise not be eligible for more traditional bank loans, or other historic preservation rehabilitation incentives such as grants. Therefore, interest rates are typically below or slightly above the prime rate, and repayment requirements are flexible. However, because the goal is also to make the funds available to other applicants, or "revolve", the repayment period is typically short-term. Some programs have terms with monthly payments for a period of years (e.g. 3-5 years), with a balloon payment at the end of the term.

This type of program can be administered by a municipality or through a public/private partnership with a community lender (such as Business & Community Lenders of Texas). Options for management by the City of Austin could involve the Historic Preservation Office working with other City departments such as Neighborhood Housing & Community Development or the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office. A public/private partnership could involve working with a local bank or a private non-profit organization such as the Business & Community Lenders of Texas, the Downtown Austin Alliance, or the HSA Responsibilities for managing a revolving loan program include evaluating risk and closing and servicing the loans. According to a 2011 thesis by a University of Pennsylvania graduate student that evaluated 15 historic preservation revolving loan programs, such programs, "benefitted when there are full time staff whose primary responsibility was management of the loan fund."<sup>1</sup>

Another option for loan programs is partnering with the private banking industry, where one bank, or a consortium of banks, makes below market-rate loans based on criteria established by the partnering public or non-profit entity. As with a revolving fund, eligibility criteria may include income level (either minimum or maximum), property and/or equity value, owner-occupancy, residential or commercial use, and designation status or age of the property. Additionally, for a historic preservation-focused program, criteria for the type of work (e.g. exterior vs. interior) and conformance with preservation standards are typically required.

Given the complexity of establishing and managing a loan program, including evaluating risk, managing funds and enforcing repayment, if new loan programs are considered or existing ones expanded, Historic Preservation Office staff recommends establishing an advisory panel to explore the best models for the City of Austin. The panel should be made up of city staff, and interested organizations and citizens whose charge would be to develop specific recommendations for financing, partnership opportunities, management structure, and eligibility requirements for rehabilitation loans for under-represented areas, low-income homeowners and for expanding existing loan opportunities for properties in the central business district. The Historic Preservation Office and City departments that should be represented on this panel should include Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (for CBD loans), Neighborhood Housing & Community Development (for residential loans), and the Legal and Financial Services offices. Expertise from the community should be sought in the fields of banking and law. Other private organizations that should be represented include Business & Community Lenders of Texas, HSA, and Downtown Austin Alliance, as well as organizations representing under-represented areas and low-income homeowners such as the Austin Housing Finance Corporation, Meals on Wheels and More, Habitat for Humanity, or other members of the Austin Housing Repair Coalition.

Issues to be considered by an advisory panel:

- Sources of funding.
- Evaluation of risk.
- Eligibility criteria.
- Insurance requirements.
- Distribution of loan funds.
- Repayment periods.
- Interest rates.
- Technical oversight of work funded by loans.
- Creating and maintaining a fund balance if utilizing a revolving fund model.
- Outreach to local banks if bank loans or a consortium are sought.
- Restrictions on use of funds if Federal (e.g. CDBG) or other grant funds are used.
- Enforcing repayment of debt and addressing defaults.
- Costs for managing program.
- Marketing the loan program to the community.

<sup>1</sup> "An Evaluation of Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Funds, and Recommendations for the Establishment of Future Programs" Olivia Mitchell *University of Pennsylvania*, Thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, 1-1-2011

**1. Existing City of Austin public and private programs for funding façade rehabilitation:** As a part of the process of considering possible new grant or loan programs HPO staff researched programs currently in place at the City of Austin and through non-profit, community organizations, as well as those in other cities.

**a. City of Austin Business Retention and Enhancement (BRE) Program for Congress Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street** - The BRE is a program of the

Economic Growth and Redevelopment Office (EGRSO) that provides support to businesses that help meet the City's goal of establishing Congress Avenue and East 6th Street as retail and urban entertainment district destinations. Currently the BRE Program provides low-interest loans up to \$250,000 to existing businesses located within Congress Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street National Register Districts that are being displaced because of development, and to attract new businesses to the those areas. Eligible business uses include art gallery, food sales, general retail sales, indoor entertainment, restaurant, and theater. Loans may be made to improve building façades, and the terms and rates are negotiable.

Historic Preservation Office (HPO) and EGRSO staff, Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) and Business & Community Lenders of Texas (BCL) have been evaluating options for revising the BRE program to provide greater incentives for the rehabilitation of properties in the Congress Avenue and East 6<sup>th</sup> Street historic districts and create greater demand for the loan funds.

EGRSO staff plan to introduce recommendations for revisions to the program later this year (2012). HPO staff will continue to work with EGRSO regarding the impact and benefits possible for historic properties in the districts.

Staff recommends that if revisions are approved for this program, the results of those revisions be monitored to determine best practices that may be adopted for a broader program benefitting historic properties throughout downtown.

- b. Austin Housing Finance Corporation – Home Rehabilitation Loan Program** – The Austin Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) provides zero percent (0%) loans for income-eligible owners of single family detached homes to fund repairs to bring homes up to code. Work can include foundation repair, roofing, plumbing, HVAC and electrical upgrades, and other major interior and exterior repairs. The home must currently be appraised at \$218,595 or less and must be the applicant's primary residence.
- c. Meals on Wheels and More - Home Repair and Architectural Barrier Removal** - As a member of the Austin Housing Repair Coalition, Meals on Wheels and More serves low income homeowner clients who face serious structural issues with their homes that result in a decline in health and safety. Meals on Wheels and More offers home repairs and/or modifications including accessibility modifications such as ramps, bathroom and kitchen remodels, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical upgrades, window and door replacement and modification, painting, and repairs to foundations and roofs. The average cost per home is \$15,000.

Due to limited funds, this program cannot always address proper repairs of deteriorated historic architectural features, or may require removal of features such as historic doors to meet code requirements. If funds could be provided to increase the budget for homes that are determined contributing to potential local historic districts or as individual City

Landmarks, the necessary life/safety upgrades could be made in a manner that maintains the historic architectural character of these homes. Sources of funds could be City appropriations, public and private grants, or donations.

- d. **Austin Habitat for Humanity – Home Repair** – As a member of the Austin Housing Repair Coalition, Habitat operates a program that provides funding, and volunteers working alongside able-bodied homeowners to make light to moderate exterior repairs. Typical projects include roof repair, siding and trim, gutters, window and trim, doors, fencing, landscaping, painting, grading, soffit, and blown insulation. Owner's family income must be under 60% of median family income (MFI). The home must be a free-standing, single-family, owner-occupied home that is more than 5 years old, and the ownership must be stable.

As with Meals and Wheels and More, this program cannot always address proper repairs of deteriorated historic architectural features. If funds could be provided to increase the budget for homes that are determined contributing to potential local historic districts or as individual City Landmarks, the necessary repairs could be made in a manner that maintains the historic architectural character of these homes. Sources of funds could be City appropriations, public and private grants, or donations.

**2. The following is a small sampling of existing loan programs in other communities:**

- a. **City of San Antonio** – The Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Loan Program is offered in partnership with the City's Housing and Neighborhood Services Department, to help low to moderate-income historic property owners. The program assists property owners with their restoration and rehabilitation projects through a combination of loans and grants. Property must be located within the City limits; the structure must be an owner-occupied, residential building; the property must be located within a local historic district, designated as a local landmark, or eligible for historic designation; and there are income qualifiers. Funding for the program is provided by CDBG funds.
- b. **Cleveland Restoration Society** – The Heritage Homes Program provides a low-interest loan product financed through a sole lender, KeyBank. It has a fixed interest rate that is typically 3% below market, and is available at terms from 5 to 12 years. There are no out-of-pocket costs for the loan and no points charged. Interest from the loan is tax deductible. There are no income qualifiers, however there are qualifiers related to the tax value of the property. Properties do not have to be designated or located in a historic district, they only have to be 50 years or older. Properties must be zoned residential and cannot have more than 3 rental units.
- c. **City of Tampa, Florida** - The Interstate Historic Preservation Trust Fund Loan Program is a revolving loan fund that was established from the proceeds generated from the sale of historic buildings impacted by interstate expansions. Properties must be located in National Register

Historic Districts and constructed more than fifty (50) years prior to the date of the application (both contributing and non-contributing properties are eligible). Loans may not exceed \$200,000 and have repayment periods ranging from 5 to 20 years. The interest rate is based upon the published Ten Year Treasury Note rates.

- d. **Amarillo, TX** – A \$5.6 million revolving loan pool was created by a consortium of seven Amarillo banks. The consortium provides market-interest-rate loans to developers planning new construction or rehabilitating vacant buildings in downtown Amarillo, and priority is given to projects with a residential component. Loans are received and processed by the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission, with the banks having equal input on loan approval.
- e. **Bastrop, TX** - Six Bastrop banks have provided \$5 million for low-interest loans to help preserve and restore Bastrop's Main Street. The program was developed by First National Bank, and is coordinated by Bastrop's Main Street program. Loans are available to business and building owners and applicants can receive a minimum of \$25,000 to a maximum of \$250,000 per loan. Banks participating in the consortium include First National Bank, Wells Fargo Bank in Bastrop, First State Bank, Franklin Bank, Roscoe State Bank and Woodforest National Bank.

**B. Provide Outreach and Research Assistance to Underrepresented Areas:**

Staff is working with HSA through their Local Historic District Workgroup as well as other initiatives PA is pursuing to reach out to East Austin neighborhood groups, cultural and heritage organizations, and individual residents and community leaders regarding Historic Preservation programs.

Staff has been meeting with organizations such as Meals and Wheels and More and Habitat for Humanity to discuss ways to improve communication between the City's Historic Preservation Officer and the groups serving home owners in underrepresented areas, as well as how existing programs can be enhanced to protect historic resources and neighborhood character.

Additionally, the Austin Historical Survey Wiki, with funding from the National Park Service, has specifically targeted East Austin neighborhoods for beta testing of the Wiki tool.

Additional outreach programming could be developed to educate and train residents in underrepresented areas on how to research the history of their neighborhood and homes, cultural resource survey methodology, and maintenance and restoration techniques. However, current workloads limit the amount of time staff can dedicate to such activities.

**IV. Adoption of Standard Advisory Design Guidelines for Contributing Buildings in National Register Districts:**

Historic District Design Guidelines developed specifically for Austin's National Register Historic Districts will provide predictability in the interpretation and implementation of the general design standards currently used by the HPO staff and the Historic Landmark Commission when reviewing cases in the historic districts.

This can provide a greater incentive for property owners to invest in historic properties and help better preserve the character of those historic districts.

The City of Austin currently has 17 National Register Districts (NRD) that include more than 4,700 addresses. Austin has the largest single NRD in Texas, Old West Austin, which encompasses more than 3,500 properties. The types of resources represented in the NRDs include commercial, institutional and residential properties, park land, and even a military base. The construction periods of the buildings range from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the post-World War II era, and represent vernacular to high-style architecture.

In addition to providing citizens and City of Austin officials clearer direction for project review, developing design guidelines in a thorough and comprehensive manner could provide the opportunity to update information on the number of contributing and non-contributing properties within the NRDs, and assess the impact of demolitions and inappropriate development on the historical integrity and architectural character of the NRDs over the past decades.

Staff recommends that however Design Guidelines are developed a committee of Historic Landmark Commission members, other preservation professionals, and representatives from the neighborhood associations representing the existing NRDs should be convened to participate and guide the process.

Options for developing design guidelines include:

**A. Hiring a Professional Consultant Team** - The City of San Antonio is undergoing a similar project at this time and have hired a team of consultants comprised of architectural historians and historic preservation planners to develop city-wide design guidelines for their historic districts at a cost of \$75,000. The process has involved extensive stakeholder input and has resulted in a draft document available for public viewing - [http://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/Docs/Events/SA\\_HP\\_Design\\_Guidelines\\_Outline\\_draft\\_4-2-12.pdf](http://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/Docs/Events/SA_HP_Design_Guidelines_Outline_draft_4-2-12.pdf).

The scope of work carried out by a consultant team could include conducting a reconnaissance-level "re-survey" of the existing NRDs, and developing and executing of a public input process. This type of project would require significant staff time to manage the RFP process and subsequent contract.

**B. Develop Design Guidelines "In-House"** - The Historic Landmark Commission has endorsed a Local Historic District Design Standards Template developed by HSA. This template can be used by neighborhood groups to develop application materials for Local Historic District zoning. The template must be edited on a case-by-case basis for each neighborhood to be responsive to the architectural character of each District.

The Local Historic District Design Standards template could be used as a starting point to develop advisory design guidelines for use in the NRDs. However, the template currently addresses only residential properties, not the full breadth of property types and architecture, such as commercial and institutional sites, represented in the City's NRDs.

This option still requires reassessment of each district and executing a stakeholder input process; however it would require a significantly greater commitment of staff time than Option A.

**V. Explore Training Opportunities for City Council Members, Historic Landmark Commissioners, Land Use Commissioners, and Historic Preservation Office Staff Members:**

**A. National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC):** As a Certified Local Government the City of Austin's Historic Preservation Office should maintain an annual NAPC membership. At a price of \$130/year membership includes a bimonthly newsletter and reduced registration to NAPC biennial conference.

City management could also commit funding to send at least one staff person and two Historic Landmark Commissioners to the biennial NAPC Forum conference. The cost per person would be approximately \$1,500-\$1,700: \$300-500/airfare, \$140/registration, \$89/night lodging, \$61/per diem. Alternatively if there is concern about the City paying travel expenses for Commission members, reimbursement could be provided for conference registration fees only.

The City could also provide funding for HLC members, staff and other City Officials to attend a NAPC Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) program. CAMP is an educational program built around NAPC's four-point curriculum, which includes the legal framework of local preservation, identifying and protecting historic resources, the commission's role and responsibility, and public support and outreach. NAPC works with the community hosting the CAMP session to build a program that explores these essential concepts to provide commission members, staff, elected officials, and others with the tools they need to build strong local preservation programs.

CAMP can be funded with Texas Historical Commission Certified Local Government (CLG) grants, and the city could partner with surrounding communities to host a regional CAMP.

**B. National Trust for Historic Preservation:**

Staff recommends the City continue to maintain annual National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) Forum membership at a cost of \$115. Membership provides subscriptions to the Quarterly Forum Journal and Preservation magazine, access to online Forum resources, and a discounted rate for NTHP conferences and trainings.

The City should commit funding to send at least one staff person and one Historic Landmark Commissioner to the annual NTHP conference. Cost per person would be approximately \$1,500-1,700. Alternatively if there is concern about the City paying travel expenses for Commission members, reimbursement could be provided for conference registration fees only. Cost for registration alone, with Forum membership, is \$250-\$350/person.

Note: Funding for attendance at NAPC and NTHP conferences could be provided on a biannual basis such that staff and Commissioners attend one or the other conference each year.

**C. Develop in-house training for new City Council Members, Historic Landmark Commissioners, Land Use Commissioners:**

Staff recommends developing orientation materials for all new City Council Members, Historic Landmark Commissioners, and ZAP and Planning Commission members regarding the Historic Preservation Program's policies, procedures and regulating ordinances, as well as historic preservation best practices and standards.

**VI. Compile Data on Historic Landmarks in a Web-based Format:**

**A. Austin Historical Survey Wiki Web Tool:**

Staff continues to work with University of Texas (UT) School of Architecture faculty and graduate students on the development and implementation of the wiki web tool to survey historic properties in East Austin and make that information available to the public via a "wiki" web format.

Funding for the current phase of work is being provided by a Preserve America Grant of \$87,278 awarded to the City by the National Park Service that is being matched by \$87,835 of UT and City of Austin staff time.

The Wiki site was made accessible to the general public on June 4, 2012. Beta testing and uploading of existing data will continue in the coming year. To date over 3,800 sites have been uploaded on the Wiki, including all City of Austin Landmarks. Staff continues to work with HSA volunteers to upload historical information and photos for each Landmark.

HPO Staff and the UT team are working with City Public Information Office and CTM staff to coordinate migration of the Wiki system to City servers. The current schedule is to migrate the Wiki system to City servers in January 2013, with City staff continuing to coordinate moderation of Wiki data with UT faculty and staff through June 2013. Once management of the system is fully passed to the City in June 2013, HPO staff will be responsible moderating and approving uploaded information with technical assistance for maintaining the system being provided by CTM.

**B. City of Austin website:**

The "In My Neighborhood" mapping system on the new City website has a layer option for Historic landmarks that shows the location for all City of Austin Historic Landmarks as well as properties that are individually designated on the National Register. Historic Preservation staff will work with GIS staff to determine if the map can indicate the type of designation for each property.

Additionally, GIS staff is working on providing overlay on the GIS web viewer indicating the boundaries of Local Historic Districts in a similar manner as is already provided for National Register Historic District boundaries.

**C. Heritage Society of Austin Tour App:**

Although not a City of Austin HPO project, the HSA has been developing a downloadable tour "app". The Historic Austin Tours App will provide downloadable tours of historic Austin with mapped locations, property descriptions, current and historic photos, and audio commentary. The content will be divided into distinct geographic and thematic tours that can be downloaded individually. The first available tours of Congress Avenue, East Sixth Street, and

the Old West Austin neighborhood will be available in November. Three new tours will be developed each year. The HSA is presenting this app in partnership with the ACVB.

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