

Soul-y Austin

Commercial Stabilization Strategy

CITY OF AUSTIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY 8, 2016



Austin's Prosperity Engine

Citizens

We build programs that create a better future for all Austinites.

Businesses

We help Austin's businesses and entrepreneurs reach their full potential.

Neighborhoods

We revitalize, energize and uplift Austin's diverse local communities and neighborhoods.

Soul-y Austin Overview

Soul-y Austin is a program of the City of Austin Economic Development Department that strives to accomplish the following:

- Provide a **flexible set of tools** to assist businesses in the formation of **merchants associations**;
- **Empower, engage and educate** the business community;
- 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; and,
- Develop strong **internal and external partnerships**.



Goal:

To provide a framework for sustainable business district planning and implementation

Benefits of Organized Commercial Districts

- Greater capacity for small businesses and entrepreneurs to **thrive**, including increased sales revenue
- Increased **job opportunities**
- Readily-accessible community **goods and services**
- **Preservation of unique** cultures and environment;
- **Stronger advocacy for business retention and support services** for existing and long term businesses
- Ability to **jointly promote the district**, thereby increasing pedestrian and bike friendly communities
- Platform to build a resource **framework**



Defining the Need through Partnership

Over-arching Theme:

Businesses recognize the **need for organizing** joint ventures to improve and preserve their business area. However, **very few** organized business districts exist in Austin.

Priorities for Common Action:

- Crime and safety
- Increase the opportunity for more bike and pedestrian friendly business environments
- Parking solutions (shared parking agreements, residential parking issues, etc.
- Affordability (rent and tax increase, short term leases)



Local chambers partnered with the City to reach out to local businesses.

Soul-y Austin Overview

Program Principals

- City-wide
- Inclusive of all business types
- Voluntary program
- Business leadership and commitment determine the success of this initiative
- 8-14 month facilitated process
- Brick and mortar commercial areas

Goal: To provide a framework for sustainable business district planning and implementation

4 STEPS TO SUCCESS



What we have learned

- Wayfinding/Signage
- Displacement Concerns (Rising property taxes & rents)
- Retention of existing businesses and creative spaces
- Maintaining a local variety of businesses
- Infrastructure Enhancements
- Parking Issues
- Code and permit inconsistencies
- Connection to local products
- District Events
- Alley clean up / Activation
- Cleanliness
- Integration of arts and culture



Soul-y Austin Participating Districts

Red River Cultural District
(6th Street to 12th Street, encompassing
parcels on 10th and 7th)

East 12th Street
(I-35 to Airport)

Manor Road
(I-35 to Airport)



Soul-y Austin Successes

Red River Cultural District



Soul-y Austin Successes

Red River Cultural District



Soul-y Austin Successes

12th Street



Soul-y Austin Successes

Manor Road

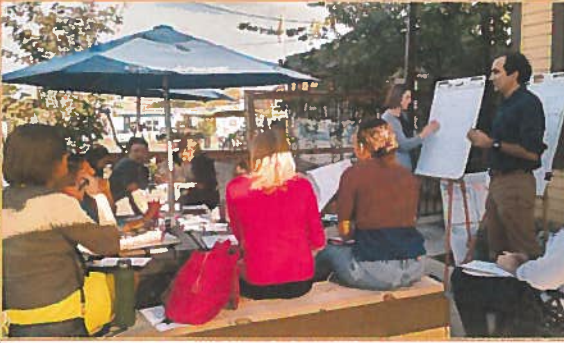
Please join your Manor Road neighbors to learn more about the creation of the Manor Road Merchants Association.

Thu, December 14, 2017
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM
1200 Manor Road, Austin, TX 78702

A merchants association is a group of business owners that exists to endorse and advocate for the business district they inhabit. It is a networking and promotional tool that can help you and your business thrive in a competitive market. Our monthly merchants association will be a chance to learn and share best practices and information, provide feedback to the City of Austin Economic Development Department, through the Soul y Austin Program, and receive support from our neighbors. For more information please visit <http://www.manorroad.org/merchants>.

WHY ORGANIZE?

The benefits of a merchants association include greater visibility for small businesses and entrepreneurs in their area, increased job opportunities, business and industry growth, community spirit and service, preservation of historic architecture and neighborhoods, business education and shared services for selling and buying goods, increased sales revenue and lower cost of doing business, and a lot of community involvement.



Manor Road

Soul-y Austin Next Steps

- Early 2016 Welcome three new districts
- EDD Resource Roadshow
 - Family Business Loan Program, Small Business Trainings, District Videos, Business Retention and Enhancement Program, Music Venue Loan Program, Cultural Arts TEMPO program, etc.
- Collaborations with other City initiatives
- Collaboration with Venture Portland; benchmark City for business districts
- Programming to include façade enhancements and place making grants





Thank you
City of Austin Economic Development Department

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE OUR TRANSPARENCY AT WWW.AUSTINTEXAS.GOV/EDD