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September 2, 2022

Terri Myers, Chair
City of Austin Historic Landmark Commission

Re: Proposed Historic Design Standards

Dear Ms. Myers,

Preservation Austin exists to empower Austinites to shape a more inclusive, resilient, and meaningful community culture through preservation. We write today to reiterate our support of the Historic Preservation Office's proposed Historic Design Standards. Our organization wrote a [letter](#) in support of the design standards in 2020. Since then, the landscape of preservation in Austin has shifted dramatically, making the adoption of the standards an even greater priority.

Having a set of clear, citywide design standards is integral to the success of the forthcoming [Equity-Based Historic Preservation Plan](#), which seeks to outline strategies to protect our diverse built and cultural heritage. In the spirit of the plan, these standards will increase equity and accessibility in Austin's local historic district application process. Our organization has adopted Underrepresented Heritage as an [Advocacy Priority](#) for the past three years and has committed to identifying, protecting, and celebrating sites associated with under-told histories. We see the citywide design standards as an encouragement to many groups who would not have the time or resources to develop unique standards for their proposed district. With recent [changes in state law](#) making the creation of local historic districts even more challenging, lessening the barriers to designation and the protections it provides is critical.

The design standards will also streamline the Historic Landmark Commission process for city staff, developers, and advocates alike by providing clear and consistent standards. We believe this will create a more efficient and effective process for the benefit of all. We also believe the standards support the preservation of our city's diverse heritage, for the people of Austin, in a way that's compatible with increasing density. From commercial districts to neighborhoods, the standards provide guidance for balancing much-needed density with much-needed preservation and lay out a clear roadmap to achieving both of these goals. The standards also eliminate inconsistencies in the process, enabling builders and developers to work within a clear framework while providing the flexibility needed to be site-specific and creative.

Preservation Austin encourages the Historic Landmark Commission to support the proposed Historic Design Standards. We know they will be an asset to our city for years to come.

Thank you for your service to the community,

Linda Y. Jackson, President