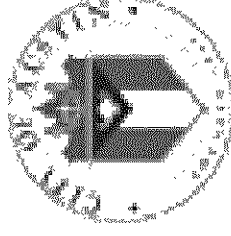


Group Solutions RJW

African American Forums on Quality of Life

April 25 - 29, 2005



African American Forums on Quality of Life

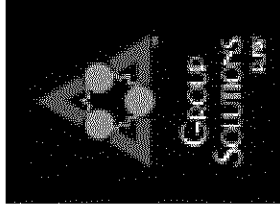
Quality of Life Scorecard

Austin vs. 28 Comparable Cities

- Higher incomes
- More educated

Negatives

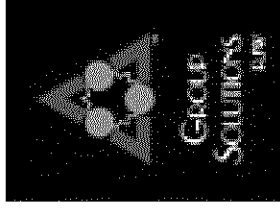
- African Americans trail other Austinites
- Lacks a Cultural and Social Infrastructure



Charge

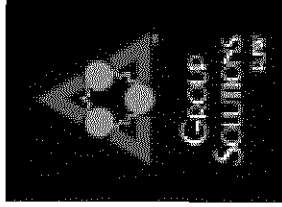
- Facilitate discussions
- Actionable recommendations
- Explicit focus

“What can local government do to retain and attract African Americans so that the City maintains a diverse economy and culture?”



Methodology

- Six forums
- 60 panelists
- 700 participants
- 250 written comments
- 75 e-mail and website comments
- A solutions group of 20
- Standing room crowds



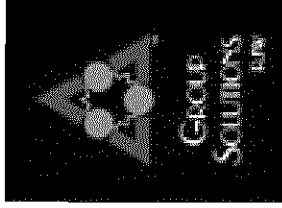
**Do African Americans experience challenges
different from others in Austin?**

Overwhelmingly “YES!”



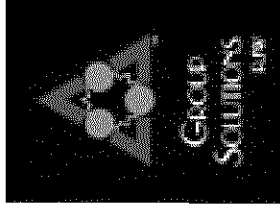
Challenges

- A welcoming environment
- Arts and entertainment
- Jobs
- Police - community interactions
- East Austin investment
- Housing
- Education
- Business and economic development



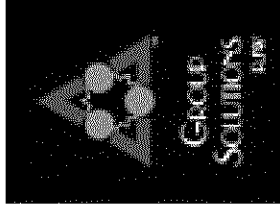
Themes

- Austin is not welcoming
- Culture and social infrastructure lacking
- Historical contributions missing
- Limited social options for students and young adults



Arts and Entertainment

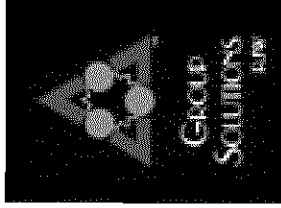
- Artists and musicians lack access
- Resources and assets are not publicized
- Marketing campaign is crucial
- “Live Music Capital of the World” is not true for African Americans
- Need to make SXSW, Austin City Limits festival, and other events more inclusive
- Need for more venues
- Midtown Live is an important asset



Themes

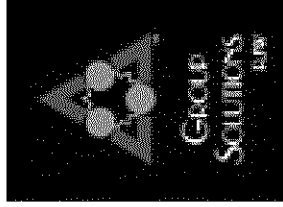
Jobs

- Job access and discrimination are concerns
- Varied options, including low tech and semi-skilled
- Opportunities for advancement
- Access to higher paying jobs
- Training, internships, mentors for students
- The City's practices are very important



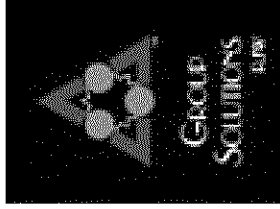
Business and Economic Development

- Access to capital #1 priority
 - High risk, low interest rates, contractors
- Existing M/WBE ordinances
- Insurance and other contractual obligations are burdensome
- Economic development strategies that include the Capital City African American Chamber
- Link corporate incentives to African American job and business opportunities.



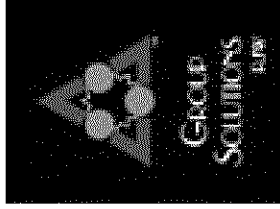
Education

- Quality education is goal
- Current performance of AISD is unacceptable
- Disparity in performance and facilities
- Creative solutions and training options
- Role for City of Austin



Housing and Commercial Development

- Escalating taxes and gentrification
- Keep residents in homes and assist elderly
- More housing options
- Physical environment
- Commercial needs
- The importance of East Austin
- Protection of cultural assets

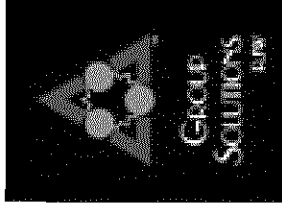


Police Interactions

- Brought up in six of six forums
- Police insensitivity and racial profiling continue
- Strained relations heightened by Midtown Live comments
- Concern about repeat offenders and department's ability to discipline its own

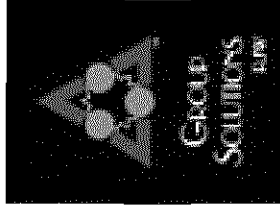
Recommendations

- Guided by written, e-mail and verbal input from the community
- Respond to original question
- Focused and actionable
- Action plan by City to follow



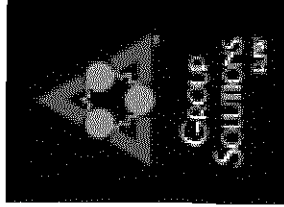
Arts and Entertainment

- Develop a marketing campaign
- Promote culture, history, restaurants and events on ACVB website and in promotional materials
- Create an African American community liaison within ACVB
- Include African American signature events in ACVB marketing
- Ensure that artists, musicians and others have equal access to City venues and City sponsored events
- Create an African American cultural fund for marketing and support of activities



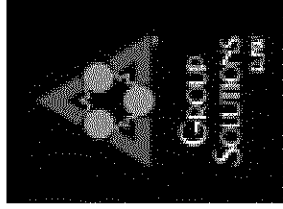
Police Interactions

- Enhance police cultural sensitivity training
- Provide additional policy directives to officers on graduated use of force
- Identify officers with patterns of inappropriate behavior, document actions in personnel records, and discipline officers appropriately



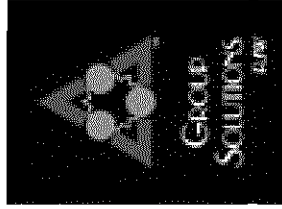
Housing & Commercial Development

- Develop a comprehensive approach to housing options
 - *Tax Foreclosures*
 - *Gentrification*
 - *Problems of the elderly*
 - *New housing options*
- Improve the physical environment of East Austin
- “Buy down” the cost of land in East Austin
- Encourage mixed use development in East Austin



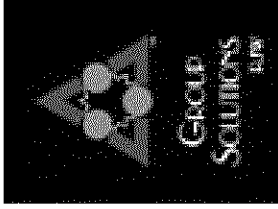
Education

- Increase collaborations with the Austin Independent School District on joint use facilities, after school programs, mentoring in low performing schools, and other efforts that improve education and reduce costs.



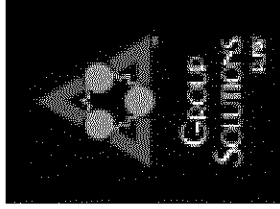
Employment & Economic Development

- Partner with local chambers of commerce to recruit and retain jobs
- Identify African American businesses and use available incentives
- Link corporate recruitment to specific hiring, contracting, and purchasing opportunities
- Review the City's hiring and compensation practices
- Increase access to capital
- Enforce the City's M/WBE ordinances
- Increase access to information about small business assistance programs



Other Recommendations

- Create a monitoring and review process that allows the City and the African American community to evaluate the success of changing the quality of life for African Americans.
- Expand the quality of life dialogue to include additional African American organizations and individuals as well as the broader Austin community (e.g., corporate and civic leaders, interested citizens and others).



Thank You

- Outpouring of community support
- Attendance
- Volunteers
- Sharing of time, talent, ideas
- Recognition of Council

