

# African American Cultural Heritage District Coalition Workshop #2

**Date:** Friday, December 13th, 2024

**Time:** 10:00pm-12:00pm

**Location:** Huston-Tillotson Downs-Jones Library

**Attendees:** See Tables

## City of Austin and Consultant Team

Name	Business/Organization
<b>Juany Torres</b>	City of Austin, Economic & Cultural Districts Program Manager
<b>Matt Schmidt</b>	City of Austin, Acting Cultural Arts Division Manager
<b>Donald Jackson</b>	City of Austin, Business Process Consultant
Ann Eaton	City of Austin, Assistant Director, Workforce Development & Business
Morgan Messick	City of Austin, Assistant Director, Cultural Arts, Music & Entertainment
Anthony Segura	City of Austin, Deputy Director
Sabine Romero	Global Business Expansion Division Manager
<b>Zakcq Lockrem</b>	Mend Collaborative
<b>Michelle Bright</b>	Mend Collaborative
<b>Kennedy Rauh</b>	Mend Collaborative

## AACHD Stakeholders

Name	Business/Organization
<b>Harold McMillan</b>	East Austin Creative Coalition (EACC)
<b>Daphne McDole</b>	Director of Development Huston Tillotson, Six Square
<b>Harrison David Eppright</b>	Visit Austin, Neill Cochran House, Preservation Austin, Six Square
<b>Pam Owens</b>	Edge of Your Seat Consulting, East Austin Conservancy
<b>Carl Settles</b>	E4 Youth, Pastor

<b>Barbara Spears-Corbett</b>	Original L.C. Anderson Alumni Association
<b>Eric Byrd</b>	District 1 - City Council
<b>Miriam Conner</b>	Creative Policy, Preservation Austin
<b>Byron Davis</b>	Urban Renewal Board, Commissioner
<b>Natasha Harper-Madison</b>	Council Member, District 1
<b>John Lawler</b>	Council Policy Strategist, District 1
<b>Theresa Alvarez</b>	Rally Austin
<b>Paige Parker</b>	Austin Film Festival
<b>Greg Smith</b>	Austin Revitalization Authority
<b>Micah Clements</b>	Six Square
<b>Catalina Berry</b>	East Austin Conservancy
<b>Maria K. Bryant</b>	Austin Area Urban League (AAUL)
<b>Christopher Page</b>	Homewood Heights Neighborhood President
<b>Ashton Cumberbatch</b>	Equidad, Black Chamber

## 1 | Desired Outcomes

The purposes of the second meeting of this group were established to achieve the following:

- Establish how we will work together over the next year
- Develop goals and desired outcomes for the process
- Develop a public engagement plan

Following the first two to three meetings, Mend Collaborative will be developing a full work plan and Public Engagement Plan for the process.

## 2 | Discussion Takeaways

### Proposed Meeting Agreements

Mend presented proposed meeting agreements, after which the following edits/additions were suggested:

1. Change “Meetings will start and end on time” to “Meetings will begin 15 minutes late and end on time”
2. Add “Decisions made by consensus will be supported and championed by the group”
3. Add “Don’t make assumptions, ask for clarification”

## **Discussion of 2021 Resolution Directives**

Mend presented the 8 directives included in the 2021 resolution for discussion.

During discussion the following key points were made:

- This process has been too long in coming and there is frustration at the pace that things have been happening. There is a desire to move forward, but it’s very important that progress is shown.
- The resolution suggests funding mechanisms. Substantive funding for these projects, including specific carve outs, staffing plans, need to move forward quickly.
- The process should focus on tangible results, establishing specific projects, programs and policies, and providing clarity about costs.
- The process should explore funding opportunities outside of the City.
- There’s a need for the participants to commit to working together through the process in supportive ways, even when historic conflicts make that difficult. There is a need for participants to meet without the City and Consultants to work through the framework for cooperation.
- There’s been a significant amount of engagement already, and the community has stated numerous times what they need. This process should focus on working with existing organizations and need not be an extensive process.
- There is a need to define key terms and to map the communities assets to avoid misunderstandings.

## **Visioning Activity - Assets and Opportunities**

Mend led a rapid brainstorming activity asking the following questions:

- What’s working well in the area of the District today?
- What are the biggest opportunities in the District’s future?

The responses were then sorted into key themes, which are highlighted below:

1. **Proximity to Downtown:** value of land, scenic views
2. **The Community’s “Vibe”:** people, art, music

3. **Wealth of History:** A variety of historic and cultural community organizations and landmarks including Huston Tillotson, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Carver Museum, Victory Grill, artworks, parks, resilience and strength
4. **The Future of the District:** investing in youth, cultivating new community leaders
5. **Small Businesses and Entrepreneurship:** Black-owned businesses, Black food, Black and Brown artists, nightlife
6. **Investments and Projects:** wayfinding network, redevelopment, aesthetic enhancements

Every response from this activity will be documented and provided to the group for evaluation and examination.

### **Visioning Activity - Challenges**

The rapid visioning session continued to discuss the challenges of the cultural district. The following summarizes challenges for the District:

1. **Need for Dedicated Funding:** lack of resources, fall starts in planning, staff commitment
2. **Interpersonal and Interorganizational Conflicts:** challenges in building consensus, trauma, disillusionment
3. **The City of Austin:** staff and elected official turnover
4. **Racism:** Institutional and structural racism, abuse of power, low trust

Every response from this activity will be documented and provided to the group for evaluation and examination.

The results of the rapid brainstorming will be utilized to create a set of “community priorities” which will be the focus of the planning process. Specific topics that will be covered include:

- The rights of the African-American Community to remain and return to the district.
- Structures for Black-owned small businesses, entrepreneurship, community ownership and wealth building.
- Historic preservation and storytelling
- “Placekeeping” and cultural arts
- Streetscapes and physical planning

The Community Priorities will be presented at the next meeting for consideration and feedback.

## **Visioning Activity - News Headline Activity**

A final activity asked participants to write a “headline” for the community’s future. These headlines will be utilized to build a draft vision statement which will be presented at the next meeting. Every response from this activity will be documented and provided to the group for evaluation and examination.

## **3 | Next Steps**

The next AACHD Coalition Workshop will be held in late January (Tuesday the 28th or Wednesday, January 29th, 2024 are suggested). The exact time and location are to be determined, but it will most likely be from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

The Coalition will meet without the City and Consultants prior to that meeting.

### **Action Items:**

- **Mend and COA** will assist Miriam and Barbara who will be coordinating a coalition meeting without the City or consultant team.
- **Mend Collaborative** will develop a draft vision and priorities for feedback at the next meeting.
- **Miriam and Barbara** will coordinate a coalition meeting without the City of consultant team.
- All participants will:
  - **Contribute to the [Coalition Partners Contact List](#)** - Your contributions to contacting and identifying partner organizations in this coalition and community engagement building effort are critical to the success of our shared goals. Please complete entries into the form no later than Wednesday, November 27th for initial invites to Workshop #2.
  - **Review [Timeline of City Council Actions Impacting the African-American Cultural Heritage District](#)** - Please provide edits, additions
  - **Review [African American Cultural Heritage District Story Map](#)** - Provide additional recommended locations/points of interest