

An Introduction to Historic Preservation Policy

Housing and Homelessness Solutions Committee Briefing
November 15, 2022

Historic Preservation Policy

The Need for a Historic Preservation Policy

Policy Recommendations

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JOPPEE
OLD FREEDMAN TOWN

The Need for a Historic Preservation Policy

WHY HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

Alignment with City Plans and Policies



1. BIG AUDACIOUS GOAL

Economic, Workforce, & Community Development

Become the most economically inclusive city by eliminating the wealth gap through workforce and economic inclusion, fostering full participation in cultural and civic life of Dallas by acknowledging contributions of historically disadvantaged communities, and investing in economic and human development in equity priority areas.

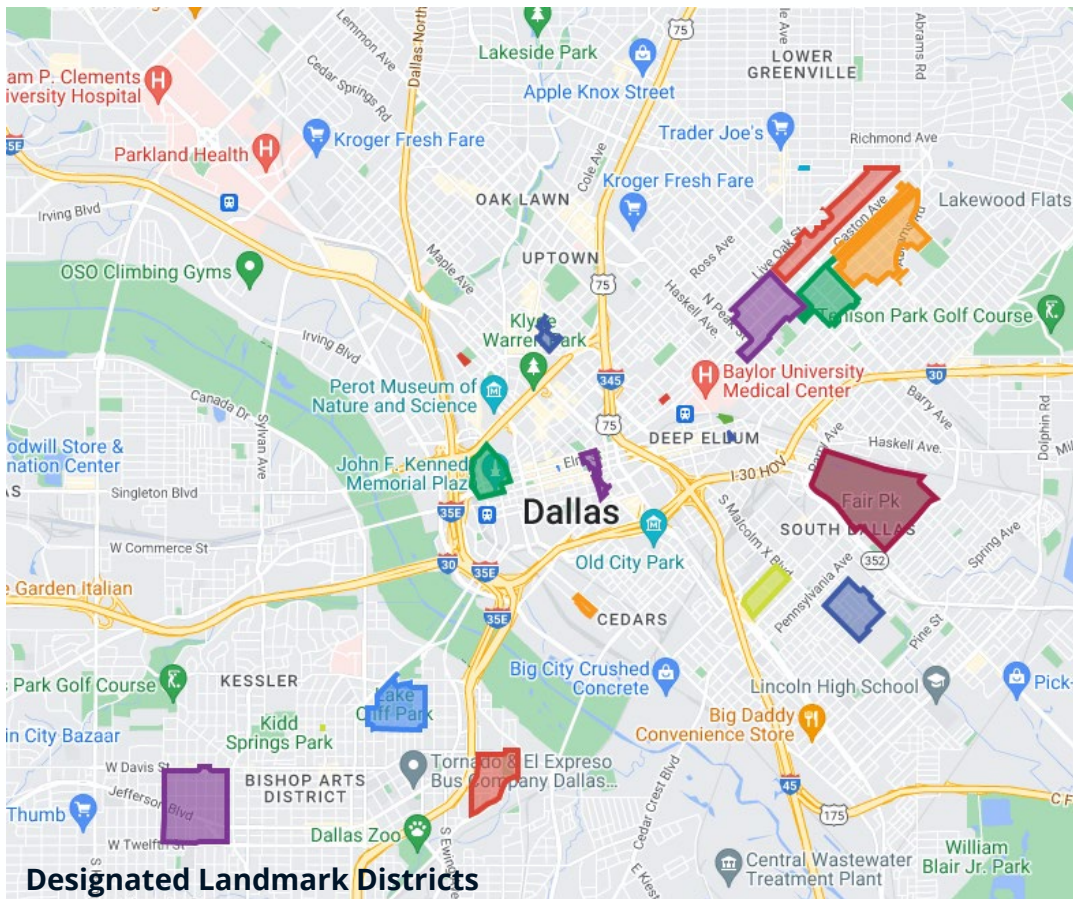
City of Dallas 2022-2023
Racial Equity Plan

*“fostering full participation in **cultural and civic life** of Dallas by acknowledging contributions of historically disadvantaged communities, and investing in economic and human development in equity priority areas”*

Achieving the City’s vision for **equitable economic and community development** requires establishing a Historic Preservation Policy that **serves the cultural and civic life of *all* Dallas residents and neighborhoods**, especially historically marginalized communities that contribute immensely to the city’s culture and identity.

WHAT DOES THE OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION DO?

The Office of Historic Preservation provides services related to identification of historic districts and preservation of historic structures, including Landmark Designation, Certificates of Appropriateness, and administering tax incentive programs for Historic Districts and Structures.



21

Designated Landmark
Districts

~130

Individually Designated
Landmark Structures

Barriers to Equitable Economic Development:

- Exclusive emphasis on *architectural significance* is at odds with the City's emphasis on the importance of serving historically disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- Imposition of financial burden on property owners, disproportionately impacting historically marginalized communities.
- Inefficient processes create barriers to access and limit staff capacity to proactively protect cultural assets and engage communities.

WHY IS ADOPTING A POLICY ESSENTIAL?

Staff cannot complete urgently necessary reforms without clear direction from City Council in the form of a Historic Preservation Policy aligned with City priorities.

A policy is essential to:

- Establish a mission and vision for historic preservation that is **aligned with the Racial Equity Plan and the Economic Development Policy**
- Create **efficient and effective customer service** for Dallas residents living in historic districts
- Create the **staff capacity necessary to carry out a robust strategic planning and community engagement** process in 2023



Historic West Dallas. Image from buildingcommunityWorkshop's Neighborhood Stories program.

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Policy Recommendations

Historic preservation is an endeavor to save important parts of communities' pasts in order to enrich their futures.

Dallas needs an Office of Historic Preservation that:

- Prioritizes **proactive preservation of community and cultural assets**
- **Inclusively defines historical significance**, by preserving the landmarks and neighborhoods that gain their significance from a variety of cultures, ethnicities, races, spiritualities, sexual orientations, or other unique identities
- Efficiently **serves residents that live in historically significant neighborhoods** (including historically marginalized neighborhoods), providing access to resources and reliable approval processes, instead of imposing unnecessary burdens

IMMEDIATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Historic Preservation Policy recommends immediate actions that improve inclusion, equity, and customer service, while addressing barriers to access for historically marginalized communities.

Inclusive representation and definition of “significance”:

- Develop **cultural context statements** for historically disadvantaged communities.
- Adopt criteria that promote **inclusion and diversity in governance**, including the criteria for landmark commissioner appointment.

Honoring the cultural significance of historically marginalized neighborhoods and providing resources instead of imposing additional burden:

- Create a new **historic district designation – Legacy Neighborhoods** – that recognizes the historical and cultural significance of historically marginalized neighborhoods.
- Help residents of Legacy Neighborhoods access **resources that can stabilize and preserve communities and prevent cultural displacement**, without imposing any additional regulatory burden on residents.

IMMEDIATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Historic Preservation Policy recommends immediate actions that improve inclusion, equity, and customer service, while addressing barriers to access for historically marginalized communities.

Efficient customer service:

- **Streamline the Certificates of Appropriateness process** while maintaining important protections for landmarks and landmark districts.
- **Develop tools, including an online application portal**, that make regulatory processes easily navigable for residents.

Building a foundation for sustained community engagement, education, and empowerment:

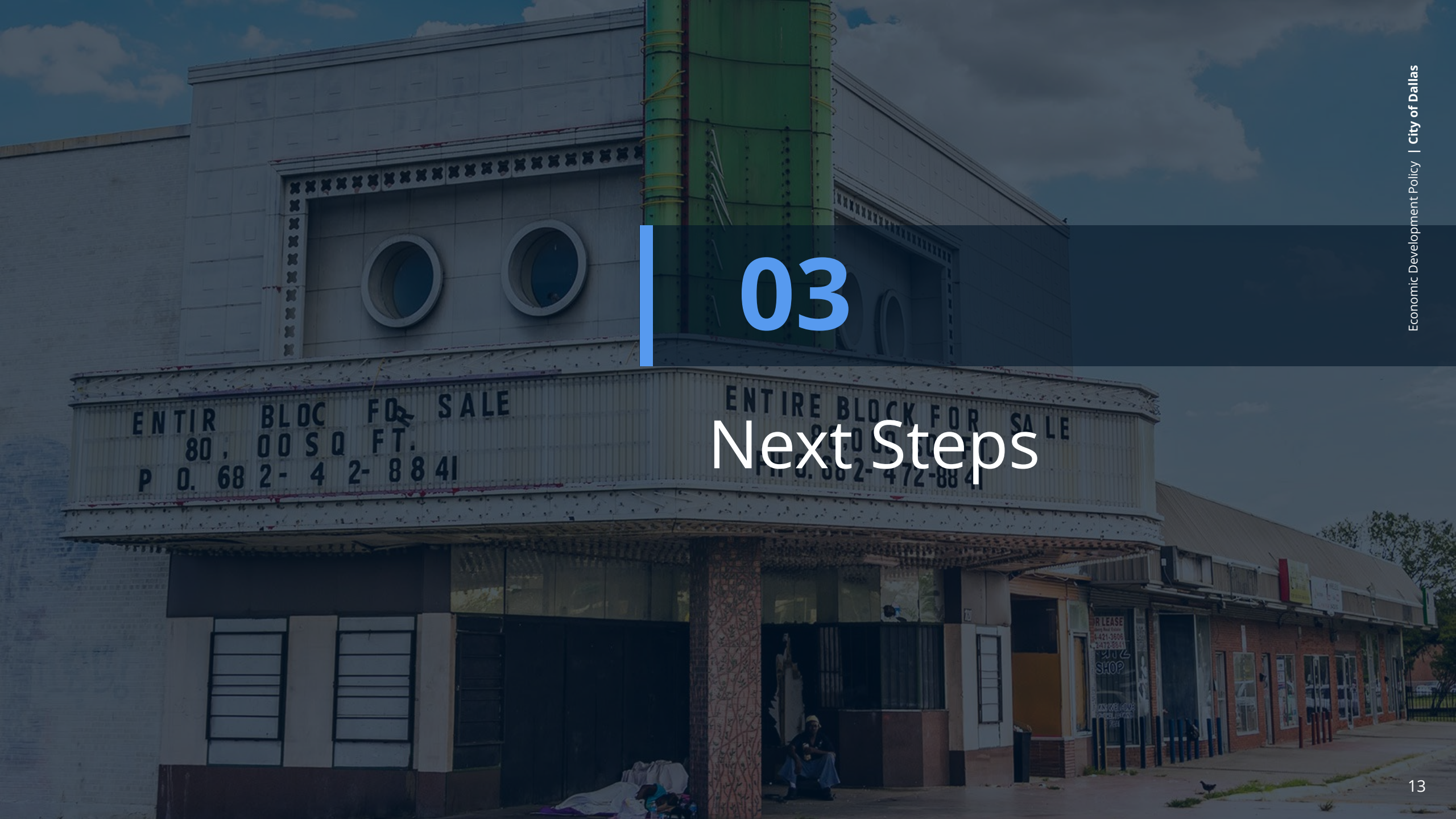
- Directs staff to **focus on proactive programming that engages residents, building community around historical and cultural assets.**
- Gives direction to staff to carry out a **strategic planning process in collaboration with communities to develop programming aligned with community need.**

IMMEDIATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Laying the Groundwork for Achieving REP Progress Measures

Establish the policy necessary to achieve the REP's programmatic recommendations.

Racial Equity Plan Progress Measures for the Office of Historic Preservation:	Addressed by This Policy
Develop a new incentive program aimed at influencing the likelihood that the percentage of resources allocated to historically disadvantaged communities will increase by October 2024.	✓
Assess City support for historical homes/structures that are not tied to property value.	✓
Increase number of historical preservation pieces of collateral, outreach events, education and awareness presentations/ publications, in historically disadvantaged communities	✓
Increase the number of residents from historically disadvantaged communities on the Landmark Commission.	✓



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TIMELINE

Adoption of this Policy would kickstart a process of ordinance change, community engagement, historic resources surveying, and strategic planning.





| Appendix

Certificates of Appropriateness Process

The City of Dallas does not currently have a Historic Preservation Policy. The actions of the Landmark Commission are governed by City ordinance.

Challenges with Current Ordinance System:

- Ordinance language describing approval processes and historical appropriateness are broadly interpreted by the Landmark Commission, resulting in decisions beyond the scope of defined ordinances and long wait times for customers.
- Due to the lengthy COA process, OHP Staff do not have the capacity to advance racial equity priorities.

70-80%

of Certificates of Appropriateness Applications go before the Landmark Commission **3-4 times** before being approved

60

minutes

Average Time for Staff to Process a "Routine Maintenance" Application

1200+

minutes

Average Time for Staff to Process a Certificate of Appropriateness