

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE May 3, 2021

The Honorable Members of the Economic Development Committee:

TO Tennell Atkins (Chair), David Blewett (Vice-Chair), Jennifer Staubach Gates, Adam McGough, Omar Narvaez, Jaime Resendez, Chad West

SUBJECT **The Economics of Historic Preservation**

The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) appreciates an opportunity to share a brief presentation regarding the Economics of Historic Preservation and to highlight linkages between a key OHP operational matter and the Implementation of the Economic Development Policy.

## Background Information

- The 1973 Landmark Program held “reinvigorating decaying neighborhoods and promoting understanding” of historic preservation as key objectives.
- In 2015, the Mayor’s Downtown Historic Preservation Task Force recommended ways to improve the preservation program with timelines for implementation.

Of the nine Task Force recommendations adopted by City Council in 2015, one of those recommendations is currently being undertaken and eight (that were to be implemented over a five-year period by 2020) have not been advanced. Of the eight that have not been advanced, two of the recommendations relate to priority statements outlined in the Vision for Historic Preservation in Dallas:

1. Review staff priorities to foster efficiencies; and
  2. Shift the focus of the preservation program
- In 2020, a Vision for Historic Preservation in Dallas (the “Vision”) identified and developed a strategy for addressing key preservation issues, many of which are related to economic development. Staff received positive feedback from stakeholders, friends and interested parties on the Vision, which included priority statements that the OHP proposed to advance expeditiously:
    - *Ensure that our processes and programs reflect best practices and that our ordinances, regulations and guidelines facilitate efficiency; and*
    - *Free-up staff time currently allocated almost exclusively to regulatory responsibilities (i.e. Certificates of Appropriateness) to support a more balanced Preservation Program that promotes the relationship between historic preservation and economic development*

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### **Streamlining OHP's Regulations and Processes**

The Vision contains many strategies aimed at broadening and balancing the Historic Preservation Program, including elevating its contribution to economic development, developing strategies that contribute to affordable housing options and focusing on historically underserved communities. Advancing important strategies will require that our regulations and processes be streamlined to free-up staff time to do so.

The Vision outlined an expedited timeframe to bring forth the first step towards streamlining our processes and regulations, which included a proposed amendment to the City Code that would facilitate an expedited review process by allowing for greater administrative review authority.

### **Administrative Review**

Feedback obtained from public presentations, consultation and a workshop designed to solicit additional ideas for practical no-cost solutions for streamlining the OHP's regulations and processes was insufficiently supportive of the concept of administrative review. The matter of administrative review has been under consideration by an Ad-Hoc Committee of the Landmark Commission since January 2021.

Streamlining OHP's regulations and processes, realigning its resources, and updating the powers and duties of the landmark Commission are necessary to advance strategies outlined in the Vision that support the recently launched Economic Development Policy.

### **The Vision Presentation Video**

The Vision presentation may be viewed at

<https://cityofdallaspreservation.wordpress.com/2020/10/30/vision-plan-streamlining-regulations-and-processes-full-presentation-and-survey/>. If you have questions about the Vision for Historic Preservation in Dallas, please contact Murray G. Miller, Director, Office of Historic Preservation at (214) 557-2170 (c).



Dr. Eric Anthony Johnson

Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services

c: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council T.C. Broadnax, City Manager Chris Caso, City Attorney Mark Swann, City Auditor Billerae Johnson, City Secretary Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge Kimberly Bizar Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager	Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Chief of Equity and Inclusion Directors and Assistant Directors
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# The Economics of Historic Preservation



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**1973 Landmark Program** - Reinvigorating Decaying Neighborhoods and Promoting Understanding were key aspects of the Landmark Program

**2015 Downtown Dallas Historic Preservation Task Force** - Shifting the focus of the preservation program was a key recommendation

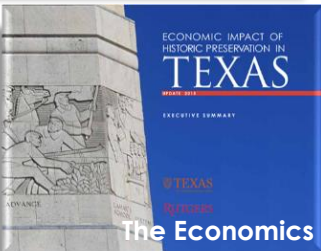
**2019 The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)** - Created to assume an enhanced role within Economic Development & Neighborhood Revitalization

**2020 A Vision for Historic Preservation in Dallas** - Acknowledged a need to broaden the Historic Preservation program, which included streamlining the OHP's regulations and Processes

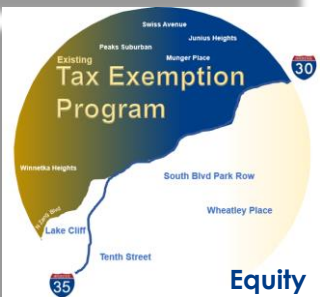


### 22 Reasons Why Preserve

Social, Economic and Cultural Considerations



1. It is essential to the identity and unique character of communities
2. It is essential to cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability
3. Key ingredients to neighborhood livability and quality of life
4. In an increasingly anonymous form of development – individual character is a precious identity
5. Create a sense of stability
6. Incremental development over time an inspiration for future development
7. Quality and richness of design, construction, craftsmanship and materials
8. Adaptable to contemporary needs
9. Promotes respect for those that came before us
10. Encourages citizen activity in local government about the future
11. Vacant housing and empty lots reduce property values
12. It is the ultimate in recycling - 20% of all landfill is construction waste
13. It saves embodied energy
14. Many preservation practices are "green"
15. It decreases urban sprawl
16. Cultural and heritage tourism is a rapidly-growing industry
17. It is more labor intensive resulting in the creation of more jobs
18. Materials are purchased locally
19. Property values remain stable or rise in historic districts
20. Young people love old buildings and authentic places
21. Night life is more active where a mix of buildings including historic areas
22. To maintain a sense of permanence



**2021 Economic Development Policy** – includes increasing diverse housing options, reviewing and updating the City's incentive programs, developing processes to promote a responsive and financially sustainable local government, and prioritizing Southern Dallas and communities of color

**OHP Issues** - Streamlining Regulations/Processes + Realigning Processes and Resources + Program Equity

## Next Steps

- Recommend actions required to achieve alignment of OHP's regulations, processes and resources to support the implementation of the Economic Development Policy
- Advance the City Manager's goals for the OHP
- Review and recommend any adjustments to Section 51A-3.103 (c) Powers and duties of the Landmark Commission that would serve to support the Economic Development Policy