

# DOWN TOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE



DOWNTOWN VISION:  
Community Engagement  
Focus Groups and  
Key Leader Interviews  
Report of Findings



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NOVEMBER 2017







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*"It's very important for every city to keep its unique brand. We have to manage growth but we have to remain Austin. We can't lose sight of what makes Austin, Austin. We don't want to become Houston or Dallas. We need to protect our assets, like the historic structures, natural beauty, music and food trucks. We are known for our quirkiness, our "hippie-feel." We don't want to lose that."*

KEY LEADER INTERVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2017



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“When I think about all the barriers to living downtown – the accessibility, the homeless, lack of parking and affordable shopping – I think about moving. But something keeps me here. It’s still the downtown where I want to stay, play and pray.”*

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT, AUGUST 2017

This quote aptly captures the overall positive tone of multiple conversations held with people from all walks of life through a series of community focus groups and key leader interviews. They were conducted by Group Solutions RJW on behalf of the Downtown Austin Alliance in August, September and October, 2017.

With the future of downtown Austin in its lens, the Downtown Austin Alliance embarked on a months’ long community listening exercise to capture the input of citizens and important stakeholders to help frame and update the Vision and Action Plan for downtown Austin.

Full of affection and hope for downtown but alarmed that it may not survive as the unique, vibrant and quirky city we love if key challenges remain unsolved, 141 people (70 men and 71 women) participated in 16 focus groups moderated by experienced community engagement professionals Robena Jackson and Juan Tornoe. (See Focus Group Demographics on P. 11). The focus groups were held in locations throughout Austin and included these groups:

- African Americans
- Asian Americans
- Creatives (visual and performing artists)
- Downtown developers
- Downtown residents (2 groups)
- Downtown retailers
- Hispanics (2 groups)
- Historic Preservationists
- Members, Downtown Austin Alliance
- Those experiencing homelessness
- Those who patronize downtown at night
- Those who patronize downtown during the day
- Those who work downtown (2 groups)

Participants in several of the focus groups were recruited by partnering organizations like the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association, Big Medium, Preservation Austin, Mexican American Cultural Center, Asian American Resource Center and the Austin Black Chamber of Commerce. Other focus groups were recruited by Austin’s Tammadge Market Research which uses a database designed for qualitative research recruitment, with randomization built into every query. Those recruited for the focus groups were asked to respond to a brief series of questions crafted to elicit their honest opinions about what they value the most about downtown, how they think downtown can become more welcoming to diverse groups of all types and what changes they could suggest to ensure that Austin has the best downtown in the country in 10 to 15 years.

In addition, 25 key community leaders identified by the Downtown Austin Alliance were interviewed in August, September and October, 2017 – from university presidents and officials, to city, county and state elected leaders to business and homeless advocacy CEOs (see Key Leaders List on P. 10). All were interviewed in person with the exception of two, who were interviewed via telephone. They responded to similar questions as the focus groups and provided remarkably similar viewpoints and concerns.

These key themes emerged after analysis of feedback from focus groups and key leader interviews:

1. Keep Austin “Austin” – preserve Austin’s uniqueness (e.g., its charm, live music, the scale of buildings, the historic facades, the bats, etc.).
2. Solve transportation issues to enable people to get in, out and around downtown.
3. Lack of parking is a severe problem that prevents people from visiting, working and enjoying downtown.
4. Find housing solutions (with a sense of connection and community like Community First! Village) for the growing

population of homeless. The ARCH was meant to be a temporary emergency shelter and is not equipped to handle the thousands of homeless who pass through its doors. Most visitors and residents are sympathetic but some are frightened by the mental health issues and aggressiveness exhibited by homeless individuals who frequent downtown. Many of the homeless say they don't feel safe either.

5. Really make downtown "a downtown for all". Celebrate diversity and the historic/current contributions of African Americans, Asian Americans and Hispanics. Make Austin one of the most welcoming cities in the country.
6. Add more museums, historic destinations, music venues, cultural activities, art "collaboratives" and other destinations that attract people to downtown. Market these "districts" using written, visual and online way-finding tools so that local residents and guests can find the theatre district(s), art district(s), historic district(s), etc.
7. Zealously protect downtown's historic buildings and assets. Explore every funding tool, including a bond election, to make sure that Austin doesn't lose any more iconic buildings or destinations.
8. Make downtown affordable – the large majority of individuals, businesses and nonprofits can't afford to locate (or shop, eat, etc.) in downtown. This is a problem.

## THE SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) works as a full-time advocate for downtown through a variety of programs and initiatives that increase downtown's value and vitality. A healthy and energetic downtown benefits the entire region so it was imperative to capture the input of important stakeholders as DAA updates its Vision and Action Plan, developing goals for the future. Group Solutions, a public involvement and communication firm for more than 20 years in Austin, was hired to assist DAA in the issue identification phase of the visioning process. Group Solutions:

- Conducted 16 carefully guided focus group discussions
- Solicited input from 25 key community leaders and constituents
- Analyzed the results and developed a community engagement findings report

### Focus Groups

Not unlike a fireside chat with friendly rules added, 16 diverse groups made up of 141 Austinites were convened in various community locations to provide personal and honest perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about downtown Austin.

Each small group (or, focus group) of eight to 10 people spent 60 minutes together, guided by a discussion leader and responding to half a dozen questions designed to discover:

- How they currently view downtown
- Is downtown welcoming to all?
- What changes would make it the best downtown in the country 15 to 20 years down the road?

Participants were recruited from all age and ethnic groups. Questions were asked in an interactive group setting. Group members were free to talk with each other and were encouraged to move around and "have fun." Refreshments were provided to keep energy levels high and prevent distracted thinking. During the discussion process, a recorder took notes to summarize the vital points made by each group.

*"I miss the 'Dillo!"*

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT, AUGUST 2017

### Key Leader Interviews

Despite busy schedules, those in community leadership positions demonstrated a strong desire to talk about downtown. Everyone has an opinion about downtown's identity as "heart and soul of the city" and wants it to survive as a unique, unforgettable place. Just like focus group participants, key leaders interviewed expressed deep affection for downtown and used the words "vibrant" and "full of life" most often when describing what they like most about downtown.

Twenty-three, one-on-one, one-hour interviews were conducted over the span of three months and two more interviews were accomplished by telephone. An interviewer asked questions similar to ones posed to focus group participants and a recorder made notes of responses and summarized each interview. Honest comments were encouraged and summaries were submitted without names to facilitate anonymity.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND PREVAILING VIEWPOINTS

Participants in focus groups and key stakeholder interviews generally expressed similar viewpoints and concerns, with only a few exceptions. Here are primary areas of agreement:

### Everyone's Downtown

Respondents value an inclusive downtown, and voice a desire to embrace and celebrate Austin's minority cultures. The general agreement, however, is that presently downtown is more for young people (college students, party-goers), tourists and affluent Austinites than for "everyone". Affordability keeps many Austin residents from availing themselves of downtown (e.g., the high cost of transportation, parking, housing and food). But, lack of activities, programming and places that appeal to, and respond to, the needs of families with children and teenagers and people of color is also a reality today.

*"You can have a viable downtown with tourists and the people who live downtown, but it's not the downtown you want."*

KEY LEADER INTERVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2017



## Mobility

The reality today is that getting downtown is a challenge. There is no parking, the train access is limited, it's difficult to get in and out of downtown and cost is a barrier. Many feel that downtown is only for tourists and those living in downtown, and that all others are deliberately dissuaded from coming into downtown. Employers raise the issue of not being able to keep workers because of the lack of parking.

## Experiencing the Public Realm

Respondents enjoy easy access to the Capitol and other green spaces in downtown. They believe downtown is relatively clean but that there is room for improvement, particularly east of Congress Avenue. Currently the public realm has few amenities for children and families, and public restrooms and water fountains are scarce. The homeless population is growing and becoming more aggressive. The homeless feel less safe, too. Respondents believe that if something is not done about the homeless, downtown will deteriorate.

## Districts and Character

Respondents enjoy Rainey Street, E. 6th, 2nd Street, the Warehouse District and other areas because of their walkability, entertainment, food, drink and music. They love Austin's unique character, but believe we are at risk of losing that character. They want more affordable retail, especially on Congress Avenue, and attractions downtown. But, the desire is to maintain the local character and avoid large, chain stores.

*“Solving the racial divide is key to having a world-class community. You have to be very intentional about it.”*

KEY LEADER INTERVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2017

## UNIQUE FINDINGS

Although most questions prompted similar responses across ethnic and age groups, several queries brought out diverse opinions and feedback:

### Cars

Some participants want a downtown primarily for buses, pedestrians and bicyclists with accommodation for as few cars as possible. Although there is agreement that downtown needs to be walkable with better connectivity, others say that the lack of parking and the inability to get in and out of downtown easily, is a major barrier to enjoying downtown. Particularly for families with children and older adults, cars are essential to getting around, especially when bus and train routes and schedules are limited. Many focus group participants and key leaders expressed the opinion that a significant number of citizens will be excluded from coming downtown if mobility options don't include cars and parking availability.

### Homelessness

Much of the angst expressed about downtown's future focused on the homeless and what to do about the growing number and increasingly aggressive behavior. Participants in younger age groups tended to be more sympathetic and struggled to offer solutions. One 30-something said he always wants to give them money or food but



wonders if he is “enabling” a destructive lifestyle. Several women who work downtown spoke up and said they have been cursed at and touched by homeless people wanting money. They are hesitant to go out to lunch alone or walk at night by themselves. Other very well-traveled individuals mentioned places like Seattle, Utah and Rotterdam that seem to be doing a more compassionate job than we are at connecting the homeless to housing and services. Several key leaders simply want the homeless removed from downtown because visitors are afraid of them and businesses have to hire security to protect employees and customers. The homeless themselves say they don't feel safe either – particularly the women – and they say they come downtown because that is where the services are. Those services – like Salvation Army and ARCH-Front Steps – have been downtown long before all the condo towers were built. The homeless say they are trying to get the help they need to get back on their feet and become “normal” again.

### Do you feel welcome downtown?

This question prompted disparity in the way participants view downtown. Overall, younger Anglos and Hispanics expressed a more relaxed and positive attitude about downtown, frequently spending time at clubs and music venues. Other Anglo residents not living in the core of the city said that lack of affordability, mobility and family-focused activities discouraged them from coming downtown. African Americans of all ages reported not feeling welcome downtown because of those same issues but also because of disinterested and biased customer service and lack of culturally and racially diverse programming and business offerings. Young black professionals say they are migrating to the Domain rather than downtown because of more welcoming and diverse offerings. Older Hispanic residents, particularly those who grew up in East Austin, fondly remember the past and say “there is nothing for me” in downtown.

*“We cannot have the best downtown in the country until we can move people around.”*

KEY LEADER INTERVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2017



## RESPONDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus group participants and key leaders provided creative insights and suggestions when asked how they would ensure that Austin becomes the best downtown in the country in the next 10 to 15 years. Here are the top recommendations:

### Uniquely Austin

- Keep downtown Austin authentic and unique for locals as well as tourists by preserving historic buildings, the corridor views of the pink granite Capitol, and live music.
- Maintain small, local businesses. Offer incentives to local small businesses so they can survive downtown like the city and business community plan to do for Amazon if that company chooses Austin for its newest facility.
- Examine all possible funding sources to preserve Austin's historic buildings before they are gone for good.
- Offer more support and access to local artists and musicians.

### Affordable

- Offer more free events, free or reduced cost parking, affordable housing and restaurants, quality affordable daycare, and more moderately priced retail.
- Offer more options for healthy, affordable lunch fare.
- Include establishments such as drugstores, shoe repair shops, and grocery stores so that people can buy everyday items.

### Diverse and Inclusive

- In the story of Austin, include minority stories. Waterloo Park and the Brackenridge Tract used to be neighborhoods for African Americans and Hispanics. They had churches, homes and businesses. We need to honor these histories.
- Offer more festivals, museums and art destinations that appeal to diverse cultures and groups.

### Extremely Walkable

- Establish way-finding systems and programs to help people navigate downtown and to point out diverse cultural amenities like the Mexican American Cultural Center, Carver Museum and the Asian American Resource Center, even if they aren't downtown.

- Provide more signage and market the districts to a greater extent to give downtown more identity and inform people about where they are.
- Fix the sidewalks and provide more connectivity to all areas of downtown.

### Parks and Green Space

- Program public spaces (parks, libraries, etc.) in ways that appeal to families and diverse cultures.
- Offer playground equipment in every park.
- Plant more flowers /greenery on the streets.
- Conduct more frequent cleanings for East Sixth and/or east of Congress.
- Add outdoor eating spots and shady areas for sitting, and places for contemplation and relaxation.
- Add amenities like water fountains/stations and public restrooms.

### Accessible and Easy to Get Around

- Establish a downtown circulator like the old 'Dillo.
- Provide more and less expensive parking (underground parking and using private garages for public parking at night at little or no cost are suggested).
- Offer mobile apps that make it easier to find parking and/or pay meters.
- Provide more bike lanes, and repair or replace sidewalks and other infrastructure.
- Extend hours that buses run to and from downtown and provide more light rail and transit options into and through downtown.
- Use alleys for loading and unloading goods to prevent blocking streets and sidewalks.
- Encourage creative thinking about downtown transportation (e.g., preserving corridors and taking light rail underground, Wire One, the effect of driverless cars).
- Connect the waterfront to downtown (e.g. kayaking down the river and then eating dinner in a reasonably priced restaurant without having to go home to change clothes).

### Address Homelessness

- Step up mental health resources.
- Develop a collaboration between downtown employers (like hotels) and homeless advocates to provide job training and jobs to qualified people experiencing homelessness.
- Provide housing, which is the only permanent way to provide dignity and stabilize the lives of homeless individuals. The ARCH was meant to be only a temporary shelter until people got back on their feet.
- Provide separate shelters or shelter spaces for men and women.





# APPENDIX

Focus Group Questions  
Key Leaders List and Questions  
Focus Group Demographics

*“One thing I really like about Austin is we’re not following a model and I like that. Austin is not pretentious; it has a certain vibe we don’t want to lose. We have a character that’s not the “Keep Austin Weird” character, but we don’t need the trappings of Manhattan or Los Angeles.”*

KEY LEADER INTERVIEW, OCTOBER 2017



## FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

### African Americans

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? (Jot it down). Okay, would you share your initial thoughts?
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What downtown districts, places or areas do you frequent and why?
- We'd like downtown to be a welcoming place for all. Do you feel welcome in downtown? What are the most feasible and impactful ways to make downtown feel more welcoming to diverse groups (for example, people of color and moderate income families and individuals)?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

***"My parents and their friends live in Georgetown and they would love to come downtown to eat and enjoy the nightlife. But finding parking is so difficult. They change their minds about coming every time."***

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT, AUGUST 2017

### Asian Americans

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? (Jot it down). Okay, would you share your initial thoughts?
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What downtown districts, places or areas do you frequent and why?
- We'd like downtown to be a welcoming place for all. Do you feel welcome in downtown? What are the most feasible and impactful ways to make downtown feel more welcoming to diverse groups (for example people of color and moderate income families and individuals)?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

### Creatives (visual and performing artists)

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? (Jot it down). Okay, would you share your initial thoughts?
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- Does downtown Austin have a "creative spirit"? Why or why not? And, what would it take for the environment in downtown to feel like a more welcoming and supportive place for performing and visual artists to work?
- What types of amenities and services are needed to make downtown a better place for people to live, work and do business?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the most creative in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?



# FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

## Developers

- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What do you think of as downtown Austin's biggest limitations or shortcomings?
- Take a moment to just think about other downtowns and what makes them great. Now, imagine that Austin could leverage the momentum we have here to make this the best downtown in the country in 10-15 years. What 2-3 big changes would it take to do that? *Probe: Mix of housing, retail (first); cultural amenities, parks, diversity, etc.*
- Let's focus on a couple where there's agreement: Reiterate 2-3 changes that they seem to agree on. Let's focus on these 2-3 changes. What would it take to get there? *Probe public, private and public-private partnerships?*
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

## Downtown Residents

- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What types of amenities and services are needed to make downtown a better place to live and/or work?
- New parks and other spaces in the public domain are being planned for downtown Austin (e.g., plazas, sidewalks, bus stops, rebuilt roadways). Think about places like these that you (and your family/friends) don't use. Now think about places that make you want to linger. What attracts you to these places and makes them comfortable and appealing? What do you want to be able to do or experience there?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

## Downtown Retailers

- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What are the most feasible and impactful ways to make downtown feel more welcoming and appealing to customers? To complementary retailers?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?



***“My roots in this town grow deep. I love that I can walk from downtown to the trail and be close to nature and the lake at the edge of the urban landscape.”***

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT, AUGUST 2017

# FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

## Hispanics

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? (Jot it down). Okay, would you share your initial thoughts?
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What downtown districts, places or areas do you frequent and why?
- We'd like downtown to be a welcoming place for all. Do you feel welcome in downtown? What are the most feasible and impactful ways to make downtown feel more welcoming to diverse groups (for example people of color and moderate income families and individuals)?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

## Historic Preservationists

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? (Jot it down). Okay, would you share your initial thoughts?
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- Focusing more narrowly on historic and cultural assets, what would you say are downtown Austin's most defining or beloved cultural and historical assets? How could these assets be better contribute to a more unique and compelling experience in downtown Austin?

- Beyond protecting existing assets, are there some historic or cultural narratives, or other opportunities to share our heritage, that we have not tapped into? What are they?
- Imagine it's 2040 and we look back at Austin's downtown and consider the evolution of its cultural and historic assets since 2000. What might we regret – through action or inaction?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

## Members, Downtown Austin Alliance

- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- Which downtown districts or areas do you see as most in need of improvement in the next decade and why?
- What types of amenities and services are needed to make downtown a better place to live, work and do business?
- What actions or services of the Downtown Austin Alliance do you value the most?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

***"It's going to sound hokey, but I really appreciate the values, attitude and feedback of the Downtown Austin Alliance. It has allowed us the mechanism to reach downtown businesses as a whole, and DAA has a wide, balanced, respectful perspective regarding the homeless, as do some of their individual members."***

KEY LEADER INTERVIEW, OCTOBER 2017



# FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

## Those experiencing homelessness

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to mind? What are your immediate thoughts?
- We know that many individuals who are homeless live in downtown. Why do you live or stay in downtown?
- What services (or other things) available in downtown Austin are useful? What's not useful?
- Are there any services (or other things) not available that you think would be more helpful in addressing the needs of people who are experiencing homelessness (what are they)?
- Do you feel safe living downtown? Why or why not?
- What is it about downtown that either makes you want to live here or makes you want to live someplace else?
- What 2-3 changes would make downtown better in the future?

## Those who patronize downtown in the day and at night

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? (Jot it down). Okay, would you share your initial thoughts?
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What downtown districts, places or areas do you frequent and why?
- We'd like downtown to be a welcoming place for all. What are the most feasible and impactful ways to make downtown feel more welcoming to diverse groups (for example people of color and moderate income families and individuals)?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

## Those Who Work Downtown

- When you think of Austin's downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? (Jot it down). Okay, would you share your initial thoughts?
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- Outside of work, what downtown districts or areas do you frequent and why? Do you consider working in downtown an asset or detriment and why?
- What types of amenities and services are needed to make downtown a better place to work?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin's downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?

***"My roots in this town grow deep. I love that I can walk from downtown to the trail and be close to nature and the lake at the edge of the urban landscape."***

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT, AUGUST 2017



# KEY LEADERS INTERVIEWED AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Ordered by date interviewed:*

Mobile Loaves & Fishes CEO Alan Graham  
Visit Austin President & CEO Tom Noonan  
Precinct Three County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty  
Austin Chamber President and CEO Mike Rollins  
Precinct Four County Commissioner Margaret Gomez  
Austin Area Research Organization Executive Director Barbara Johnson  
Precinct Two County Commissioner Brigid Shea  
District 6 Council Member Jimmy Flannigan  
ECHO CEO Ann Howard  
Front Steps CEO Mitchell Gibbs  
Austin Community College Public Engagement VP Dr. Molly Beth Malcolm  
Mayor Pro Tem and District 9 Council Member Kathie Tovo  
District 2 Council Member Delia Garza  
District 3 Council Member Sabino “Pio” Renteria  
District 10 Council Member Alison Alter  
Huston-Tillotson University President and CEO Dr. Colette Burnette, Ed.D.  
District 1 Council Member Ora Houston  
Texas Senator Kirk Watson  
Office of Governor Greg Abbott – Deputy Chief of Staff David Whitley and  
Economic Development and Tourism Executive Director Brian Daniel  
Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt  
Mayor Steve Adler  
University of Texas Senior VP and CFO Darrell Bazzell  
District 8 Council Member Ellen Troxclair  
District 5 Council Member Ann Kitchen



***“To those who move downtown and then complain about the noise, the music was here before you: If you don’t like it, you shouldn’t have moved down here.”***

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT, SEPTEMBER 2017

## Key Leader Interview Questions

- When you think of Austin’s Downtown, what comes to your mind? What are your immediate associations? Please share your thoughts!
- Different people like different things about downtown Austin. What about you? What elements or aspects of downtown do you value/like most?
- What places do you see as good models for downtown Austin, and why?
- What are the most feasible and impactful ways to make downtown feel more welcoming to people of color and moderate income families and individuals?
- Think about our downtown in 10-15 years from now. What 2-3 changes would help ensure that Austin’s downtown is one of the best in the country?
- Are there other critical downtown issues that need the attention of the Downtown Austin Alliance (and others) as this visioning process continues? If so, what are they?



# FOCUS GROUPS DEMOGRAPHICS

Focus Groups		Total FG Participants	Work downtown	Home zip code	Workplace zip code	ethnicity								age					gen						
Name	Date					a. African American	b. Asian American	c. Hispanic	d. Anglo/White - Non Hispanic	e. Native American	f. Other	g. Prefer not to say	a. 18 or under	b. 18 - 24	c. 25 - 34	d. 35 - 44	e. 45 - 54	f. 55 or older	g. Prefer not to say	Male	Female	Prefer Not to Say			
1	DAA Members	15-Aug	8	8	78702, 78739, 78741 (2), 78746, 78756, 78620, 78640	78701 (5), 78704 (2), N/A (1)	1		1	6							1	1	1	5		6	2		
2	Residents	15-Aug	8	3	78701 (7), 78745	78701 (2), 78703, 78731, 78739		1	1	6									1	1	6		4	4	
3	Retailers	16-Aug	6	5	78703, 78704 (2), 78731, 78737, 78739	78701 (5), 78735				6									3	2	1		4	2	
4	Residents	16-Aug	9	7	78701 (9)	78701 (7), 78712, N/A (1)				2	6				1				1	1	5	1	6	3	
5	Developers	16-Aug	7	4	78701, 78703, 78704 (2), 78723, 78746, 75206 (1- Dallas)	78701 (4), 78704 (2), 75206 (1- Dallas)						7							3	3	1		4	3	
6	Working Downtown	29-Aug	11	11	78751, 78746, 78741, 78757, 78741, 78705, 78702 (2), 78704 (2), 78744, 78758	78704 (2), 78701 (8), N/A (1)	1	2	1	7									6	1	2	2	6	5	
7	Night Patrons	29-Aug	9	0	78730, 78731, 78704 (2), 78741, 78749, 78731, 78704, 78702 (2), 78721, 78744, 78758	78730, 78731, 78704 (2), 78741, 78749, 78744, 78758, N/A (1)	1		2	5									4	2	1	2	4	5	
8	Daytime Patrons	31-Aug	8	0	78757, 78751 (2), 78702, 78705, 78752, 78736, 78703	78753, 78727, 78702 (2), 78705, 78752, 78730, 78751	1	1	1	5									1	3	2	1	1	4	4
9	Working Downtown	31-Aug	10	10	78704 (2), 78758, 78728 (2), 78741 (3), 78756, 78757	78701 (9), 78702	2	1	2	5									1	3	5	1	3	7	
10	Creatives	7-Sep	6	4	78701, 78702 (3), 78723, 78660	78701, 78750, 78702 (4)	1		1	4									4	1	1		3	3	
11	Historic Preservation	11-Sep	9	4	78703 (3), 78704 (2), 78723, 78724, 78753, 78759	78701 (3), 78702 (3), 78704, 78705, N/A (1)			2	6									3	1	5		2	7	
12	Experiencing Homelessness	19-Sep	10		N/A	N/A	3	1		4									4	4	2		4	6	
13	Asian American	11-Oct	11	2	78704, 78753 (2), 78734, 78723, 78703, 78759 (3), 78745, 78727	78754 (6), 78757 & 78703, 78701, N/A (2)		9		2									2	1	2	6	6	5	
14	Hispanic	11-Oct	9	1	78752 (2), 78753, 78735, 78702, 78758, 78704 (3)	78701, 78754, 78735, 78703, 78702, 78727, 78704 (3)			9										1	4	1	2	1	5	4
15	Hispanic	12-Oct	10	6	78704, 78739, 78701, 78745, 78705, 78731, 78722, 78756, 78748, 78744	78747, 78745, 78705, 78701 (5), Retired (1), N/A (1)			7	1					2				1	1	2	6	4	6	
16	African American	17-Oct	10	6	78665, 78748 (2), 78723, 78749, 78660, 78702, 78723, 78729	78754, 78702 (6), 78705, 78762	9												1	3	4	1	1	5	5
<b>Totals</b>			<b>141</b>	<b>71</b>			<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>70</b>				<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>5</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>71</b>	