

Leave
No one
behind
- Growth
is a
move-
ment
- Equal
part
- Are the
Economy
will fall
You will
become
stagnant
without
the arts.
- Never
Assume
I thank
you for Astoria
C. J.

THE COMMUNITY'S TABLE



Engagement Report

Public City was charged with reaching new voices in new ways to support the community visioning process for the Downtown Austin Alliance.

From October 5-November 5, 2017, Public City collected ideas from across the city in the form of 'vision boards'. These wooden boards were precut 18" x 3" cedar planks that when assembled became the top of a 50' long community table installed in Republic Square.

Provided with a vision board and plethora of Sharpies, the participants were asked to write directly on their board a response to this prompt:

**PICTURE DOWNTOWN AUSTIN IN 10 OR 15 YEARS.
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?**



A total of 294 responses ranging in ages from **ages 4-84** and representing **50+ zip codes** were collected during **8 engagement events** of varying formats and locations.

From highly curated brunches to workshops with partner organizations, expos and dialogs with complimentary topics, the vision boards were completed creating a beautiful collection of words, pictures and symbols that came across in many colors, shapes and creative ways.

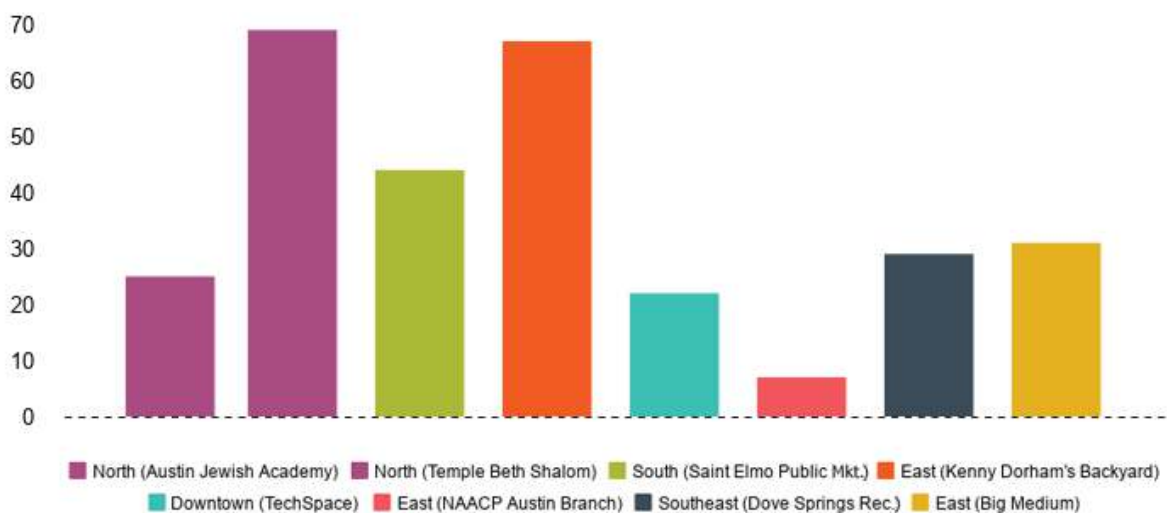
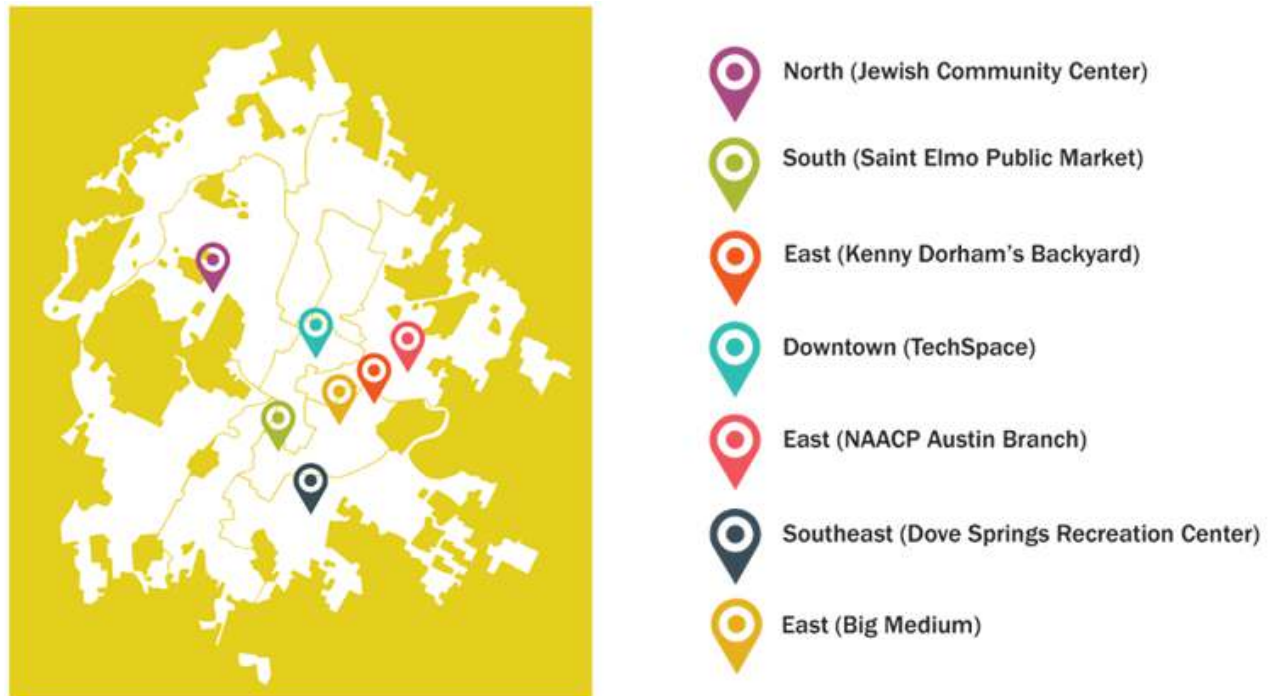
In summary, the vast majority of responses gathered were positive and forward-thinking. The process was generally received with genuine interest and gratitude for being asked to help shape the future of downtown Austin. We also discovered that participants had an appreciation for the Downtown Austin Alliance for bringing this project forward and were excited for the opportunity to provide creative input. The input gathered is publicly displayed in the form of a 50' long table in downtown's historic Republic Square. It serves as a great reminder to the community of the engagement process undertaken for the Vision, and the shared values and aspirations.

The Process

The Community's Table engagement project was conceived, designed and developed to support the Downtown Austin Alliance's comprehensive public engagement effort for the Downtown Vision that included workshops, focus groups, interviews with community leaders, and a community-wide survey. With an aggressive agenda and scope of reaching new audiences in new ways, the Public City team set out to engage a diverse group of partners and collaborators that would help in achieving its objectives.

After careful consideration and research, the sites and partners were solidified and planning began. The event partners and sites were strategically chosen to reach outside of the downtown boundaries and seek input from audiences not heard from before. The partners were key to reaching different regions of the city and the diversity of participants. With trusted and knowledgeable partners at the table, we worked collaboratively to shape experiences that were appropriate and relevant for each audience.

We produced or participated in the following engagement events:



October 5, 5:30-7P

The Community's Table: Your Vision for Downtown Workshop
Town Hall with Big Medium and Creative Standard @ Big Medium
916 Springdale Rd #101, Austin, TX 78702

October 14, 2-5P

The Community's Table: Your Vision for Downtown Workshop
Exhibition + Expo in partnership with Big Medium
and Creative Standard @ Techspace
98 San Jacinto Blvd. Austin, TX 78701

October 22, 12-2P

The Community's Table: Your Vision for Downtown Brunch
In partnership with Tribe Called Brunch @ the future
Saint Elmo's Public Market
113 Industrial Blvd. Austin, TX 78745

October 18

Intergenerational Art Program at the Austin Jewish Academy
7300 Hart Lane, Austin, TX 78731 (Open to 4th-5th graders and Seniors)

October 24, 5:30-7P

The Community's Table: Your Vision for Downtown Workshop
In partnership with Interfaith Action of Central Texas, The Red Bench,
Austin Jewish Academy, and the Jewish Community Center
@ Temple Beth Shalom
7300 Hart Lane Austin, TX 78731

November 2, 6-8P

The Community's Table: Your Vision for Downtown Workshop
In partnership with Totally Cool Totally Art
@ Dove Springs Recreation Center
5801 Ainez Drive Austin, TX 78744 (Open to 7th-12th graders)

November 3, 9-10A

Building Bridges Community Dialog First Fridays
In partnership with Leadership Austin
1709 East 12th Street; Austin, Texas 78702 NAACP-Austin Branch
Office

November 5, 12-3P

The Community's Table: Your Vision for Downtown Brunch
In partnership with DiverseArts @ Kenny Dorham's Backyard
1106 East 11th Street Austin, TX 78702

November 18, 11-1P

The Community's Table: Opening at Republic Square Community Brunch
Coinciding with the Sustainable Food Center Farmers' Market Downtown
422 Guadalupe Street Austin, TX 78701



We tested the process during the partner-led Town Hall in conjunction with Big Medium and Creative Standard held on October 5, 2017. What we learned informed our process going forward. A **how-to sheet** accompanied each of the boards in addition to the liability release, and a team of people were available during events to answer questions about downtown Austin.

The mechanism for receiving input, the ‘vision board’ and markers, were purposefully high-level and tactile as we were talking to people who generally had little to no background on downtown. We were asking participants to be thoughtful and creative, which the boards encouraged.



Each participant was given a vision board, and we found that it took an average of 15 minutes to gather their thoughts and ideas for their board. Participants were invited to use words, pictures or a combination of both to express their ideas. After the boards were completed and turned in, participants had the option of having their portrait taken with their board and were invited to stay involved throughout the process via the information sheets.

Posters were created to give background and context to the project. The facilitator or host would give instructions on the process but generally withheld giving ideas as to not influence the participant responses. Additionally, there was a team available to give historical information on downtown if needed or requested. When available, locally sourced refreshments were provided for participants from a vendor or partner in the region of the engagement.





Once completed, the boards were collected and data documented following each event. The completed boards were then delivered to **Hatch Workshop** to be categorized by color noting region and built into the table. The table was fabricated and installed in Republic Square in downtown.



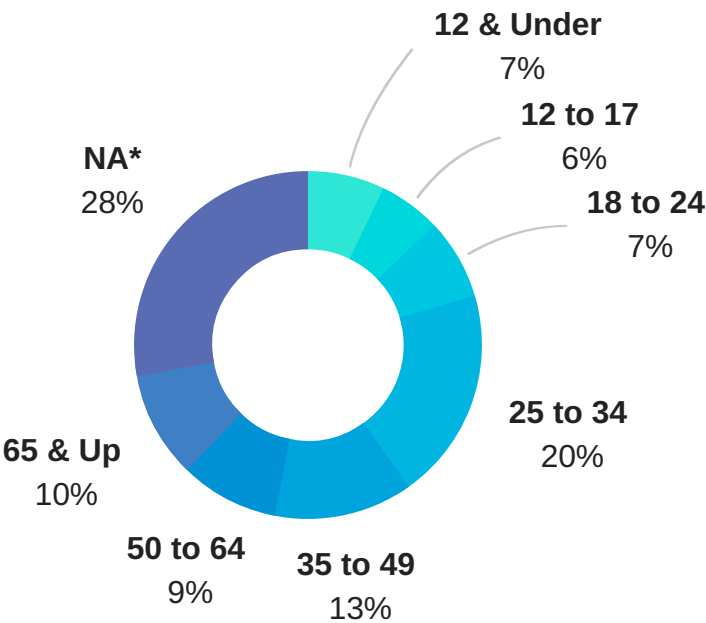
The Data

The data was collected on information sheets and the boards themselves. We found a wide range of ages, zip codes and ethnicity that directly correlated to the design of the process.

The majority of the findings were positive and hopeful for the city’s future. A common thread was the desire for people to see themselves and their interests in downtown. A desire for the intentional creation of spaces and places for community activity, people of all ages and abilities, and cultures of all kinds. Green spaces, love and equity for all were themes seen at every engagement event and seem to cross all demographics.

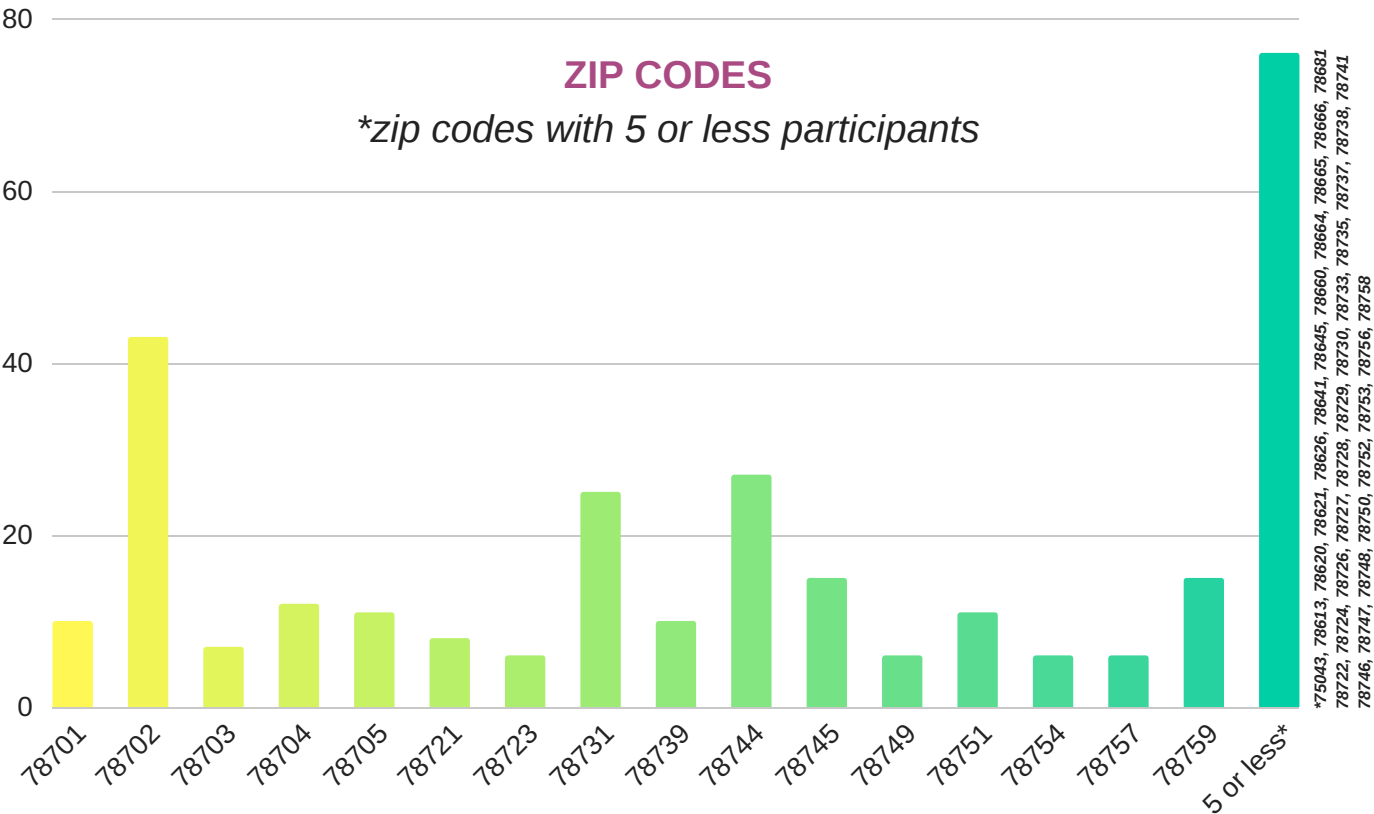
AGE BREAKDOWN

**NA: preferred not to answer*



ZIP CODES

**zip codes with 5 or less participants*





DIVERSITY



MOBILITY



ENVIRONMENT



DIVERSITY

The most prominent theme expressed through the vision boards was the idea of a downtown for all (even dogs!), a downtown where everyone can see a part of themselves through cultural (art, food, music, small and/or local businesses, sports) and economic diversity and opportunity (affordable housing, jobs), a downtown whose success benefits and lifts all its citizens, a downtown that cares about its inhabitants (Everyone deserves a place to live.), a downtown that is thoughtful and safe, welcoming and makes it easy for all to feel at home.



1. More Cultural Outreach
2. More Economic Diversity
3. Investing more resources with culturally based organizations and promoting business equity!
4. Connecting the business community with cultural organizations.

Immigrants, Business Owners, Police and The Homeless Marching Arm and Arm up Congress Ave.



Me gustaria un Downtown, ATX economico. Un lugar donde todos se sientar bienvenidas. Con Diversidad de restaurantes cuyxs duenxs sean diversxs. Diversidad de razas, etnias, culturas, lenguajes, generos....Empresas Diversxs





MOBILITY

Access into downtown through better-serving public transportation (including both train/bus) and bike lanes, ease of getting around downtown through multi-modal options and pedestrian-only, car-free streets and bridges were also noted on the vision boards.

• BRING BACK THE DILLO! •

Transporte publico accesible para todos!

Fully accessible to people with strollers, people who use wheelchairs, people on bikes, walkers and people who walk! Places to meet and gather. Get in and out without a car.

MORE BOARDWALKS. MORE BIKE LANES.
MORE SAFE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES.

A Walkable City that Sparks Creativity and Innovation





ENVIRONMENT

Environmental stewardship, both programmatically (recycle only, zero waste; community gardening; food sources) and through the design of the built environment (solar panels on buildings; nature first; green spaces and more flowers) was expressed.



Nature First!!!!

Reducing Trash by Landfills by 90%; Keep Austin Fed; Moving Towards Zero Waste; Future Austin: Less Food Waste, More food recycling; More Opportunities/Spaces for artist communities to display their work; more museums; more housing and support for refugees and asylum seekers

Parks - More integration with Lady Bird and creeks. Retail stores that are for all people and more diverse than present specialty shops. Better mix of people downtown; Retain Austin's uniqueness. Car free streets, Good people-moving transit. More parking outside of downtown.

Simple earth-friendly spaces; No Trash, just recycling; Biking and Walking friendly; Affordable healthy food; Safety, lights and lots of benches, Come One Come All, Kindness Capital of the World

The Documentation

Photographer and documentarian, **Giulio Sciorio** was commissioned to document the process from beginning to end. His main charge was to capture a representative sample of participants with their vision boards at each event.

His unique style of portraits captured the emotions and visions of over 70 participants (see appendix). Those portraits were then printed and displayed at during The Community's Table: Opening Brunch at Republic Square on November 18, 2017. The portraits told the story of those community members who participated and helped provide context for people viewing the table for the first time.



IN ADDITION TO THE PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION, A THREE-MINUTE VIDEO WAS ALSO PRODUCED TO HELP TELL THE STORY:

[Insert Link to Video](#)





"Downtown Austin, Texas 2030: A thriving city-center whose tourists continue to flock and residents are proud to call home. A place that continues to emphasize community while looking for ways to stay innovative. A place many want to visit and the locals are eager to host. A place that is loved. Jose"





PROJECT TEAM

Meredith Powell, Melissa Wolf and Miriam Conner, Public City

Andrew Danziger and Spencer Cook, Hatch Workshop

Giulio Sciorio, Documentation

Frederico Geib, Coordinator, Caminos

(Teen Leadership Program, Emma S. Barrientos Mexican

American Cultural Center, City of Austin)

ADVISORS/PARTNERS

Simone Talma Flowers, Interfaith Action of Central Texas (iACT) | Harold McMillan, DiverseArts and Kenny Dorham's Backyard | Brandon Bolin, Saint Elmo Public Market | Michael Henderson and Jared Culp, Tribe Called Brunch | Shea Little, Big Medium | Nick Schnitzer, Creative Standard | Teresa Ferguson, Austin UP | Ashley Phillips, Mike Manor and Nelson Linder, Leadership Austin First Friday at Building Bridges Community Dialog | Kelley Hasandras and Clint Hofmeister, Totally Cool Totally Art, Austin Parks and Recreation Department, City of Austin | Susan Slomowitz, Austin Jewish Academy | Judy Maggio, KLRU-TV, Austin PBS, Decibel