



ENVISIONING THE AVENUE
A STRATEGIC REPORT

DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE
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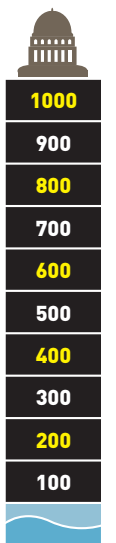
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COMPASS:
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Envisioning the Avenue A Strategic Report

★ INTRODUCTION

WHO ARE WE?

The Downtown Austin Alliance (DAA) is a partnership of property owners, businesses and individuals whose mission is to preserve and enhance the value and vitality of downtown Austin.

WHY FOCUS ON CONGRESS AVENUE?

The DAA recently completed a strategic plan that centers around six strategic priorities intended to define how and where the organization will focus its resources to best achieve its mission and vision over the next few years. Congress Avenue was identified as one of the focused priorities because while it functions well today, it could be much more than it is. With a little help, the right stakeholders, a unified vision and well executed ideas Congress Avenue could be Austin's Champs-Elysees, its Michigan Avenue.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Over the course of the last year, the DAA has had an internal team developing a strategy to help take Congress Avenue to the next level. The team has been made up of DAA Board members, Congress

Avenue property owners, City staff and the Downtown Neighborhood Association. In February 2010, the internal team turned outward and led a workshop to gain insight and input from the community at large. The event, *Enhancing the Congress Avenue Experience—Leading Downtown into the Future*, was co-sponsored by the Congress for New Urbanism, the Real Estate Council of Austin, the American Institute of Architects Austin chapter, Envision Central Texas, the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association, Capital Metro, the Heritage Society of Austin and the Austin chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council.

WHAT IS THIS REPORT?

This report outlines the feedback and response received from over 120 participants who represented over 30+ organizations and agencies at the February 2010 workshop. The following pages detail their input and opinions on what Congress should and could become, things that need to change in order to achieve the vision and how they and others can become involved.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

As the spine of downtown, the Main Street of Texas, Congress Avenue serves

a ceremonial role not only for Austin but also for the State of Texas. It serves as the potential for the rest of downtown—the strength of the spine supports the weight of the whole, and so as Congress goes, the whole downtown goes. So just imagine the place it could become—a place that is full of life, is active, vibrant, walkable, the heartbeat of what is authentically Austin and the gateway to the Capital City. The Avenue could be full of interesting places to shop, host to a plethora of outdoor restaurants and sidewalk cafés, a wonderful mix of turn-of-the-century architecture and new more modern buildings, lined with public art and cultural institutions, easy to navigate on foot or by transit, and a great place to people watch. But without a vision and the community, Congress will not live up to its potential.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Turn the pages and rediscover the most famous street in Texas, block by block. Become active in its future and in the future of downtown Austin. It's time to think of Congress Avenue as that great place that will reside in our hearts and minds forever as one of the great places in the world. There is no better time than now to take that leap from good to exceptional and to lay the foundation for the rest of our downtown.

This Report is not a city plan. It is a set of opinions and recommendations captured in a workshop. It is a vision plan built by the community, for the benefit and betterment of that community.

★ CHARRETTE EVENT SUMMARY

The Charette Experience

In February 2010 the DAA hosted an event called “*Enhancing the Congress Avenue Experience—Leading Downtown into the Future.*” This section is a summary of the charrette event, how it was organized and what charrette participants did prior to and during the event. The report documents the work done by 120 Austin citizens representing more than 30 organizations who came together for one day to envision how to make Congress Avenue, from Lady Bird Lake to the Capitol, a truly exceptional place.



PRE-EVENT ASSIGNMENT

The charrette participants were assigned a specific Congress Avenue block to assess. Prior to the event, participants were asked to spend time on their block and fill out a place evaluation form developed by Project for Public Spaces called the Place Game. Using the Place Game, participants rated their block in terms of comfort and image, access and linkages, uses and activities, and sociability. Participants were asked what they liked best about their block, what they would do to improve the block that wouldn't cost a lot, and changes they would recommend over the long term. They interviewed folks on the street asking their opinion about the block, and they defined partnerships that could be forged to help implement the vision. This assignment gave participants a chance to look, listen and experience their block with the components of a great public space in mind.

CHARRETTE EVENT

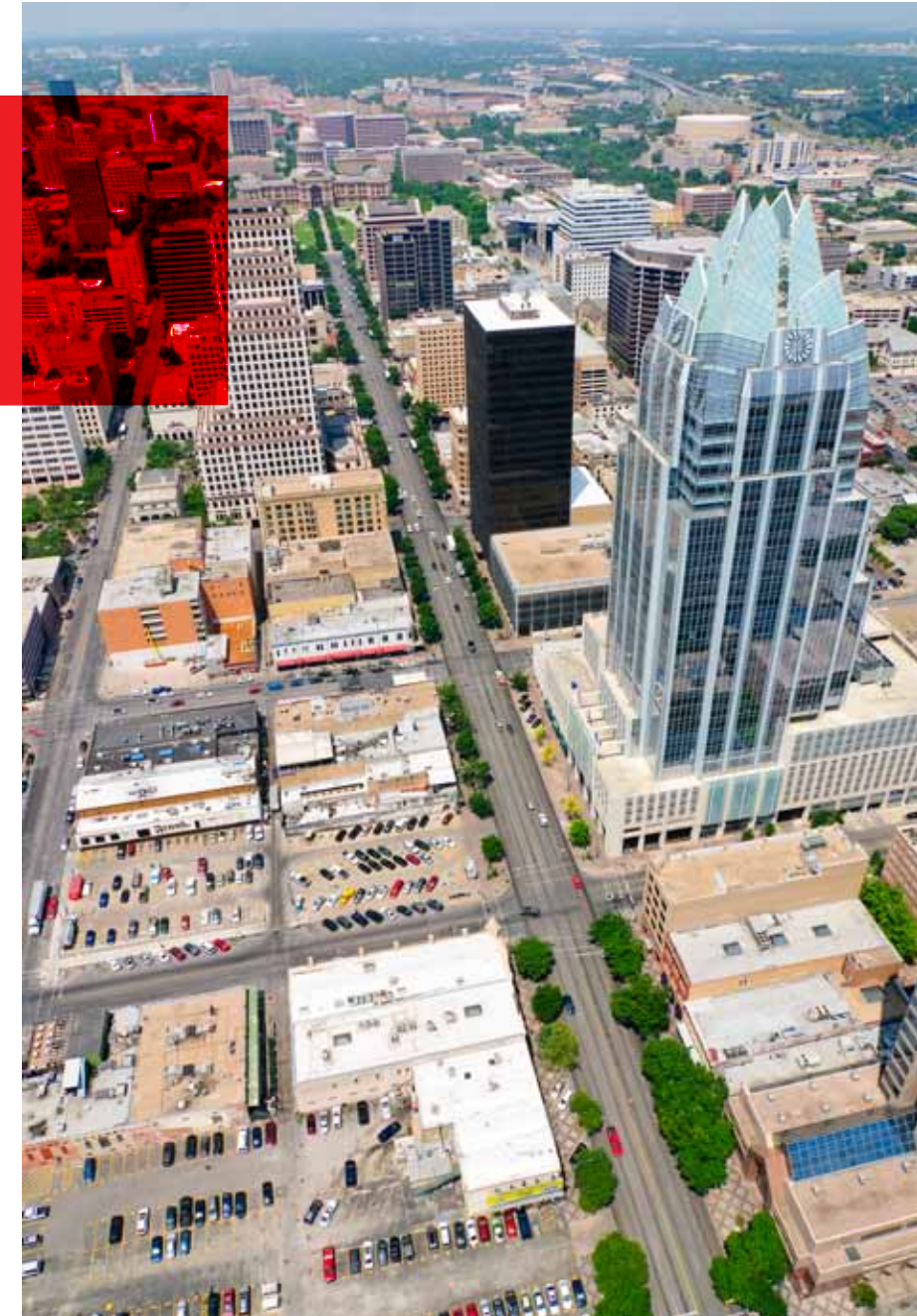
The morning started with an inspiring presentation by Max Reim of Live Work Learn Play, LLP, about great places in the

world and what makes a great street. He inspired the participants to think beyond great, that the community has the ability to really make Congress Avenue one of the most exceptional memorable places in the world. It is these exceptional places that inspire us, that are defined by a vibrant street life, a sense of civic pride and superior form. But most of all, exceptional places are defined by the experiences that people share as they interact with the place.

Max asserted that Congress Avenue is not living up to its potential, and he

charged the charrette participants to work together to envision Congress Avenue as one of the greatest places in the world. He sent the participants out to their respective blocks with two assignments. He challenged them to think about what Congress could become by asking them to be tourists in their own community. He asked participants to answer the following questions:

- The year is 2020 and you just picked up a travel guide at the bookstore. You flip to the section about Austin. The first



sentence reads, “Welcome to Austin, home of Congress Avenue, known everywhere as _____.”

- You have just spent ‘a day in the life’ along Congress Avenue in 2020. Describe three most memorable and enjoyable experiences you had in that 24-hour period.

CHARRETTE TEAMS

Facilitators guided each team through a block assessment and discussion of what should be done to achieve the experience they envisioned for a transformed Congress Avenue. The discussion included:

- the things they like about their block
- the characteristics and functions of their block

- what they would want to preserve on their block
- the challenges the block faces
- what they want to change on their block
- what things they want to add to their block
- short-term and long-term improvements to get closer to the vision
- what they could personally do starting tomorrow to get closer to the vision

Team Findings

When each team finished their group assessment, they gathered together with all the teams and reported key findings. Participants shared their block assessment and even though they were assigned different areas of Congress, many of the

This report documents the work done by 130 Austin citizens representing 30 organizations who came together for one day to envision how to make Congress Avenue, from Lady Bird Lake to the Capitol, a truly exceptional place.

groups shared the same goals and vision for Congress Avenue.

EVENT CONCLUSION

The event concluded with a luncheon attended by over 250 people. Those attending were charrette participants and others interested in downtown and Congress Avenue. Max Reim gave a presentation on cities around the world with great streets and provided insight and key outcomes from the morning charrette event. Following his presentation, a panel of local and national experts joined Mr. Reim on stage to answer questions about the future of Congress Avenue. Panelists included Council Member Chris Riley, Jim Adams of McCann Adams Studio, Lee Einsweiler of Code Studio, and Andy Smith of Thomas Properties Group.

★ **SIX THINGS THAT ROSE TO THE TOP**

Charrette participants consistently identified the following issues as critical components to achieving the vision of Congress Avenue.

1 OUTDOOR DINING
Outdoor dining, sidewalk cafés are part of the downtown experience



2 ART, CULTURE AND THEATER
Temporary and permanent cultural experiences along Congress Avenue



3 SHOPPING
More local businesses, womens and mens apparel, home furnishings, bookstores, and window shopping



4 HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE
Charrette participants value the blending of historic and modern architecture



5 STREETCAR/URBAN RAIL
Participants want to ride a streetcar along Congress Avenue



6 PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE
Walking, strolling, sitting, people watching, seeing and being seen



100

BLOCK



A connection to downtown.



★ 100 BLOCK

Overview

The view from the Ann Richards Bridge facing north is breathtaking. Tree-lined Congress Avenue, the central axis of Edwin Waller's original plan for Austin, frames the Texas State Capitol. For many, this is the primary gateway and first experience of downtown. It is a place for snapping photos and viewing bats and a logical place to enhance connections between Lady Bird Lake and Congress Avenue.

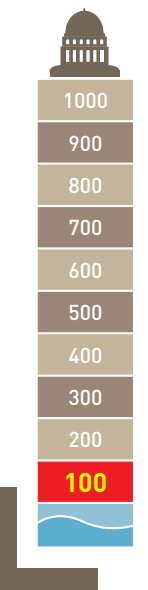
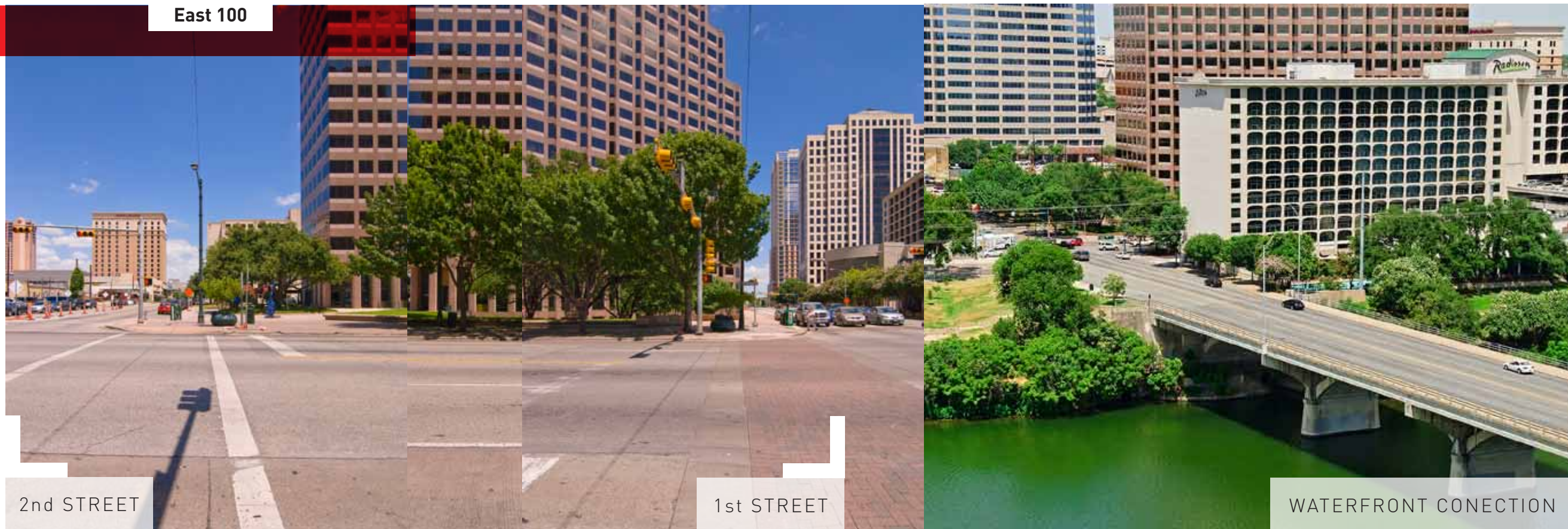


West 100



(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 100



What do we like?

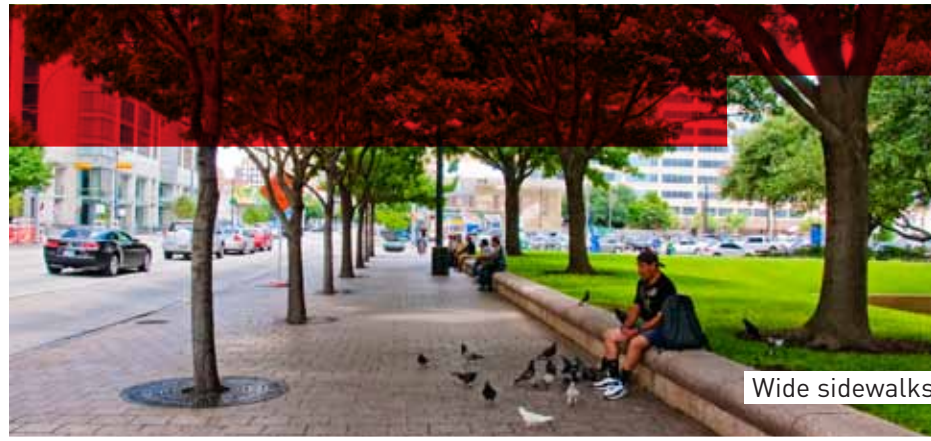
- Connectivity—a gateway to downtown
- The proximity to Lady Bird lake
- The stately vista of the State Capitol
- The generous wide granite sidewalks
- Extensive landscape at building entries
- A continuous tree canopy on both sides of the street
- The fountains at 100 and 101 Congress



Landscaping



Fountain at One Congress Plaza



Wide sidewalks



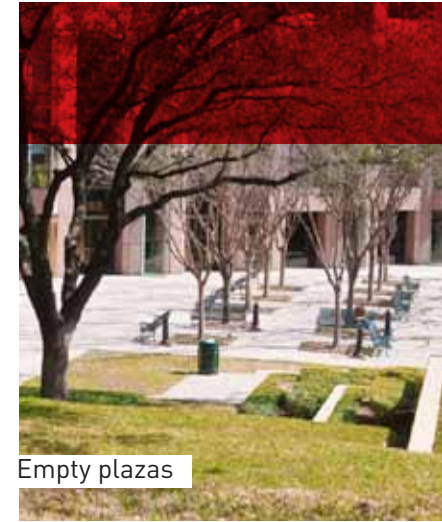
Mature trees

Characteristics/ Functions

- Location—a gateway to downtown
- Large flexible plazas
- The proximity to Lady Bird lake, the trail and Second Street retail and restaurants
- The generous wide granite sidewalk
- A transportation hub along a major north/south and east/west transit corridors
- A lack of on street parking

Challenges

- Public transit; frequency, mode of transportation and ridership
- Volume of traffic
- Understated pedestrian crossings, particularly at the Ann Richards Bridge
- Congress bridge does not put hierarchy to the Pedestrian
- The block has a lack of daytime and nighttime activity, events or retail
- Large open plazas have great potential but are empty and have no activation to draw pedestrians to them
- A lack of activity creates perceptions related to safety



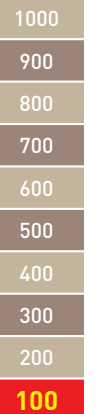
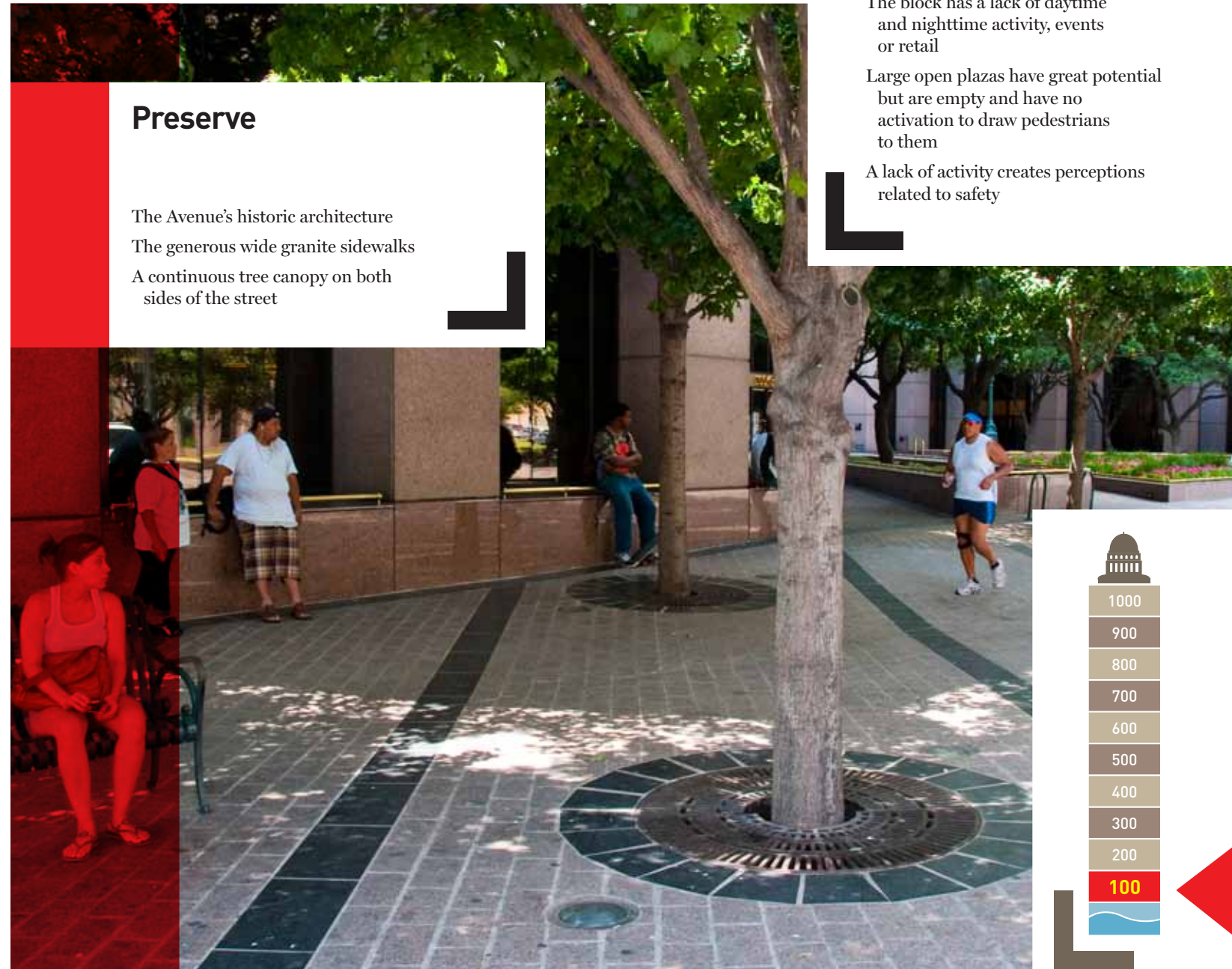
Empty plazas



Retail opportunities

Preserve

- The Avenue's historic architecture
- The generous wide granite sidewalks
- A continuous tree canopy on both sides of the street



Change

- Activate the street—add day and nighttime retail and activities
- Utilize the potential of the large plazas and the west side of the Radison
- Relocate the buses and bus stops
- Enhance the landscape along the block



Add

- Retail that enhances day and nighttime activity
- Pedestrian scale uses and vendors
- Landscape enhancements—add more color and interest
- Invest in public art in the plazas and courtyards

Short-term improvements

- Increase street activity by promoting vendors, busking, entertainment and day and nighttime activity
- Public order—promote and manage the cleanliness of public spaces
- Eliminate bad behavior to improve public safety
- Enhance the connectivity, signage and wayfinding to Lady Bird Lake and the trail

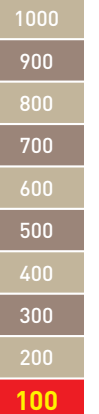
Long-term improvements

- Activate dead spaces and plazas
- Increase the number and frequency of pedestrian amenities such as food, music, entertainment, retail and public art
- Improve pedestrian crossing safety
- Enhance the Ann Richards bridge as a gateway to downtown and the lake amenities
- Promote better cleanliness and public safety
- Redevelop motor bank



Can do tomorrow

- Increase street cleaning frequency
- Add signage, maps and banners to promote an enhanced visibility and orientation
- Add sidewalk vending and lift permitting restrictions
- Enhance the landscaping
- Encourage ground-floor retail in existing buildings



200

BLOCK



A vibrant urban experience



★ 200 BLOCK

Overview

The Austonian creates a transition between the specialty shops in the 2nd Street District and Congress Avenue. Described by charrette participants as a “versatile block with great room for change,” the east side of this block offers opportunity to blend historic buildings with new architecture.

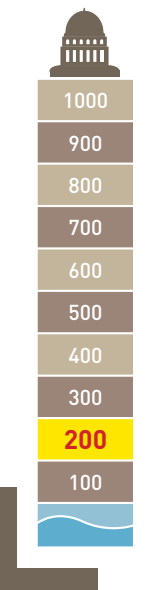


West 200



(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 200



What do we like?

- The potential for the Austonian, particularly retail and restaurants
- The amount of daytime activity
- The connection to Second Street and Lady Bird Lake
- A mix of local businesses
- The blend of historic and modern architecture
- Generous wide sidewalks with pedestrian amenities



Retail and restaurant opportunities at Second and Congress



Promote the diverse mix of local businesses

Characteristics/Functions

- The potential of the block because of the vacant lot and redevelopment opportunities
- The connection to Second Street, Convention center and Lady Bird Lake
- The density of uses
- The implementation of great streets and its associated pedestrian amenities
- The preserved historic buildings
- Residential on the avenue

Challenges

- The economy and financing redevelopment
- Competition from other sectors of downtown
- Unifying a shared vision for the avenue
- Overcoming policies and regulatory environment

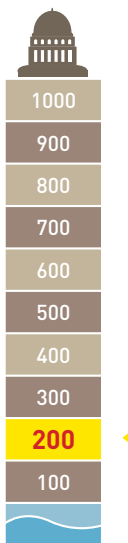
Preserve

- Historic architecture and the old advertising murals
- The sidewalk amenities
- The width of the sidewalks
- The consistency and quality of trees on the block
- The seasonal lighting across the avenue



Celebrate the richness and local distinctiveness of the historic buildings

Preserve and enhance the historic murals



Change

- Develop the vacant lots and ensure street level amenities
- Get buses off Congress Avenue
- Promote wider sidewalks
- Improve signage and wayfinding
- Provide a balance between cars, bicycles and pedestrians



Retail that promotes a mix of uses

Add

- Amenities and activities that are focused on a scale and use for pedestrians
- Development that adds density, mixed uses and street-level amenities
- Retail that promotes a mix of uses
- Street vendors



Redevelop vacant lots with uses that promote a vibrant mixed use and engaging pedestrian activities

Short-term improvements

- Increase day and nighttime amenities and activities
- Encourage new seating and shade
- Add landscape that adds color
- Street vendors
- A farmers market in the vacant lots

Long-term improvements

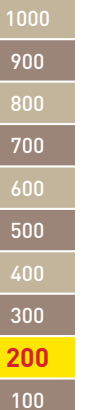
- Develop the vacant lots
- Promote pedestrian uses and activities at the street level
- Promote compatibility with the street and the historic buildings
- Create a complete, built-out avenue
- Promote pedestrian balance over cars and parking
- Improve signage and wayfinding
- Ensure design consistency on the block and along the avenue



Promote parallel parking as a mechanism for wider sidewalks

Can do tomorrow

- Encourage an active participation on the block—frequent the existing retail and restaurants
- Pick up trash
- Promote the block by generating positive word of mouth
- Participate in the Downtown Austin Plan

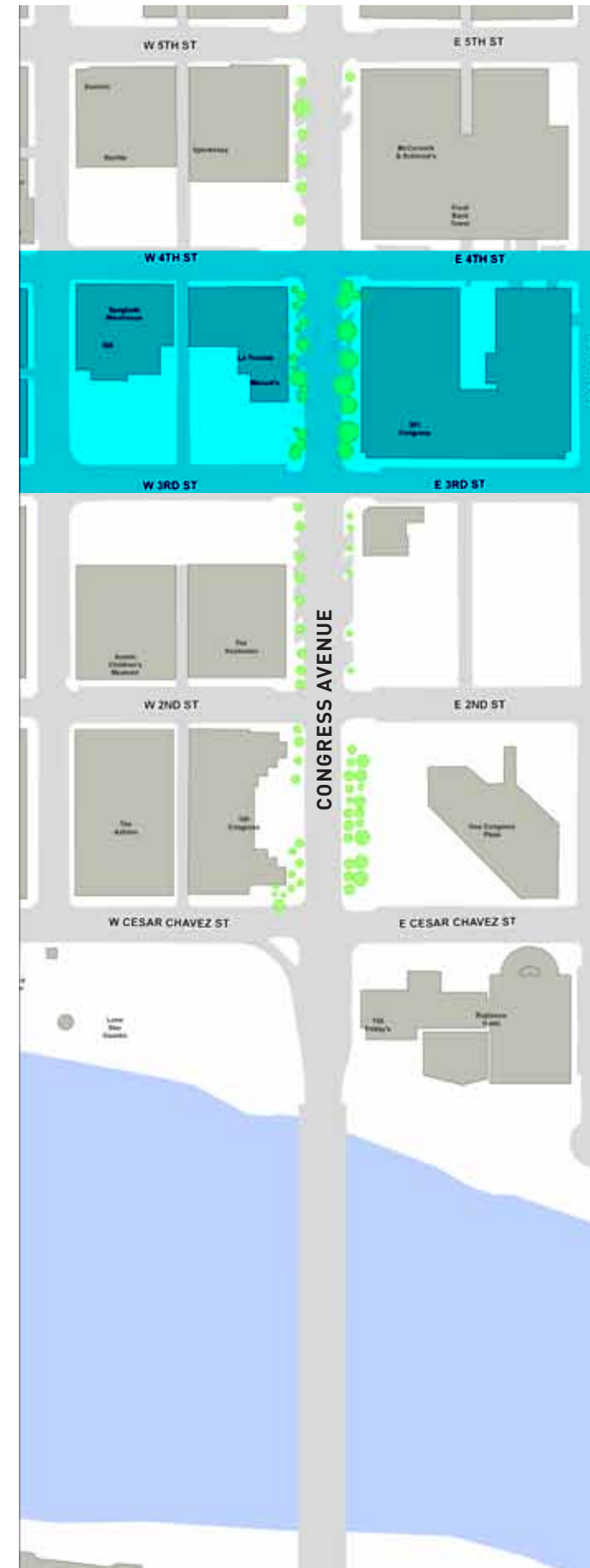


300

BLOCK



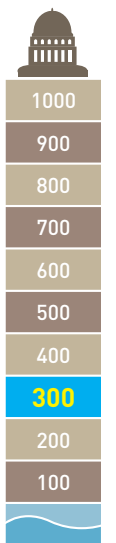
A visionary pedestrian retail experience



★ 300 BLOCK

Overview

This block offers a great mix of office, food, retail, services and entertainment. Along this small stretch of historic buildings, you can buy a dress or a suit, mail a package, eat lunch at a sidewalk café, visit a jazz club, and drink a margarita.



West 300



3rd STREET

4th STREET



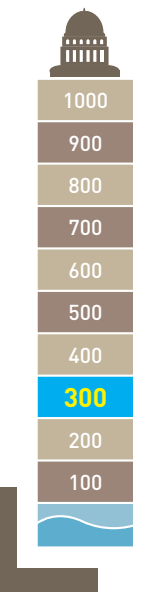
(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 300



4th STREET

3rd STREET



What do we like?

- The blend of historic and modern architecture
- Adaptive reuse of buildings and spaces
- The mix of retail and sidewalk restaurants/cafe's
- The proximity to Second Street, the Warehouse District and the Convention center
- The comfortable pedestrian scale of the sidewalks
- The size and frequency of trees
- The views of the Capitol



Blend of historic and modern architecture

Characteristics/ Functions

- A place to see and be seen
- A healthy mix of local retail businesses
- The blend of old and new architecture



A place to see and be seen; day and night

Challenges

- Creating a unified vision with all public and private entities
- Develop the vacant lots and ensure street-level amenities
- Guide the free market - promote a mix of affordability



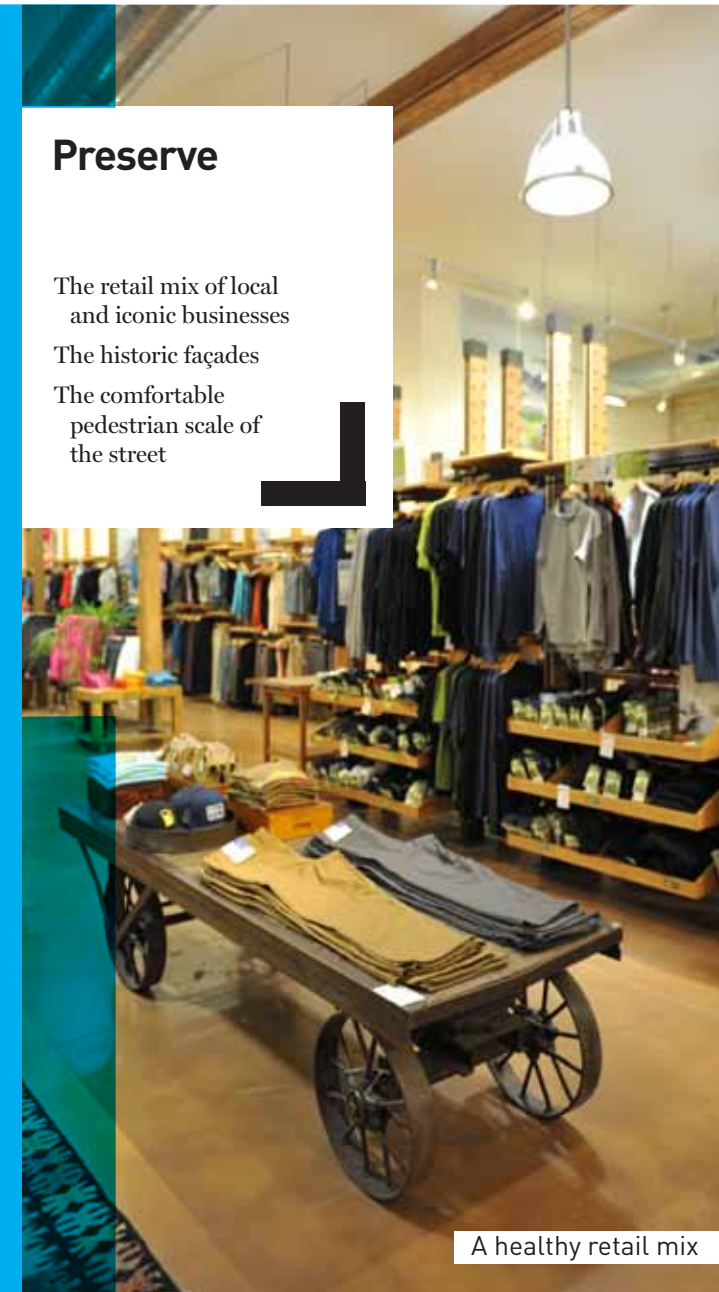
Infill development opportunities



Promote local and iconic businesses

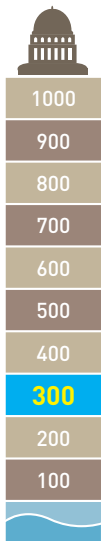
Preserve

- The retail mix of local and iconic businesses
- The historic façades
- The comfortable pedestrian scale of the street



A healthy retail mix

Preserve and enhance the mix of historic and modern architecture



Change

- Promote a retail mix that supports outdoor seating, active storefronts, kid-friendly stores
- Make codes and policies that encourage retail/restaurant infill
- Move Cap Metro office off of Congress
- Relocate the bus routes off of Congress
- Replace head-in parking with parallel parking
- Expand the sidewalks and improve the aesthetics of the street environment by removing unnecessary curb cuts
- Remove or replace existing billboards and news racks with a well-designed alternative.
- Prune and care for existing trees



Enhance the opportunity to stop and relax



Create a great pedestrian experience



Add

- Pedestrian amenities such as seating, lighting, awnings, shade, wayfinding and art
- Daily and “spontaneous” events on the avenue
- Landscape enhancements by adding native plants, hanging baskets and additional planters
- Encourage “guerrilla” parks
- Redevelop the vacant parking lot—encourage more residential or a hotel

Short-term improvements

- Improve the maintenance regime of both the landscape and the sidewalks.
- Clean streets and empty trash more often
- Add better landscape
- Promote a tree-lined avenue, use native plants and encourage owners / retailers to use hanging baskets
- Encourage more amenities and activities with the use of banners, outdoor events and more seating

Long-term improvements

- Promote rail on the avenue
- Replace head-in parking with parallel parking
- Promote great streets
- Introduce a consistent, well-designed wayfinding scheme
- Redevelop the parking lot
- Promote a healthy mix of local and iconic retail
- Repurpose vacant and underutilized retail spaces
- Encourage sidewalk cafés
- Make the avenue a kid-friendly environment

Promote a spontaneous experience



Promote urban infill

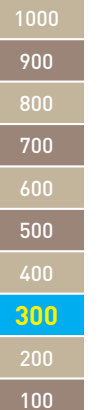


Can do tomorrow

- Clean the sidewalks more frequently
- Add well-placed, well-designed furnishings
- Promote “guerrilla” landscaping
- Encourage sidewalk dining
- Event programming
- Encourage mobile food vendors
- Advocate for rail on the avenue



Facilitate unexpected “greening”



400 BLOCK



A visionary 24/7 environment



★ 400 BLOCK

Overview

The Frost Bank Tower is a prominent Austin landmark and home to many downtown employees who fill the streets of Congress Avenue during the daytime. The opposite side of the street is dominated by nighttime uses. This block is an important connection between the Convention Center District and Capital Metro's Red Line commuter rail along Fourth Street. Next door is Mexic-Arte Museum, the official Mexican-American Fine Art Museum of Texas, which serves as a cultural hub of Latino, Mexican and Latin American culture.



West 400



4th STREET

5th STREET



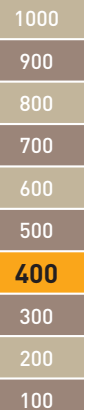
(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 400



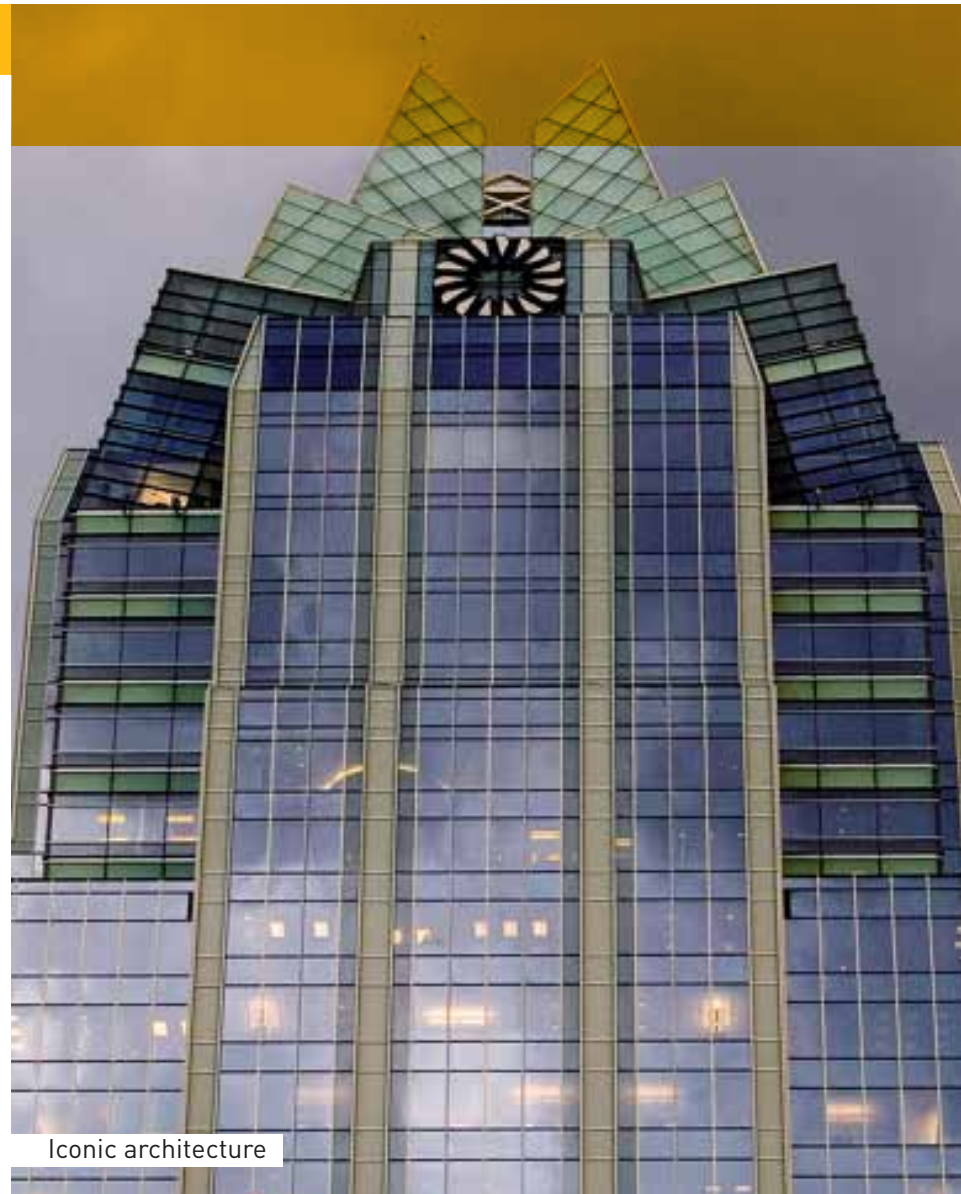
5th STREET

4th STREET

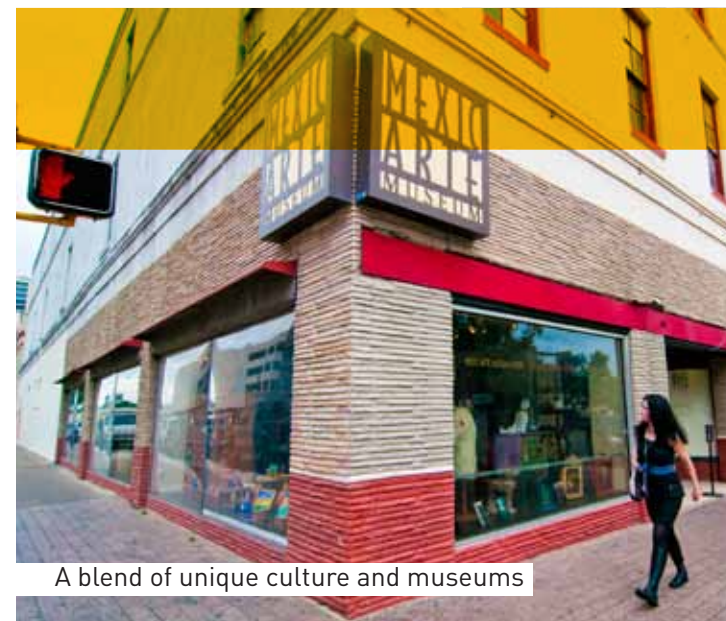


What do we like?

- The historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol and Lady Bird Lake
- The Frost Bank Tower
- Generous wide sidewalks



Iconic architecture



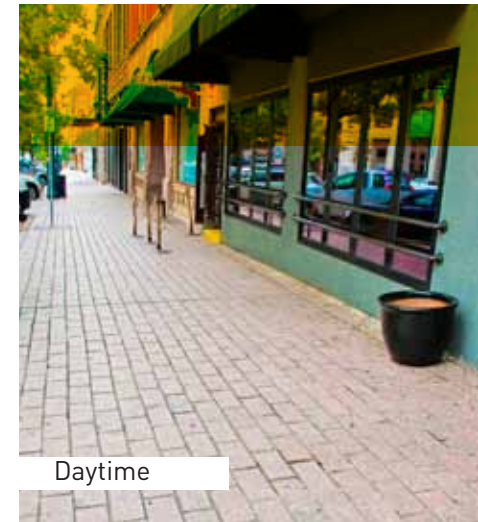
A blend of unique culture and museums

Characteristics/ Functions

- A diverse blend of architecture and uses, including small retail, museum, services, premier office buildings
- The density of the block
- The block as a central node of activity

Challenges

- The bars on the west side of the street are nighttime oriented
- There is little daytime activity



Daytime



Nighttime



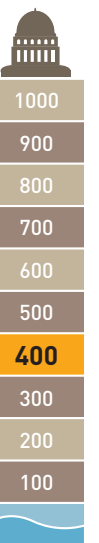
Celebrate the historic buildings

Preserve

- The historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol and Lady Bird Lake
- The shade created by tree-lined streets



Promote a tree lined, shaded streetscape





Nighttime oriented use



Retail mix with pedestrian activity, shade, seating and planters

Change

- Create a more diverse mix of retail
- Develop surface parking lots
- Improve the connection between the retail façades and the sidewalk
- Replace the newsstands with a well designed family of furnishings

Add

- Retail that promotes a mix of uses
- Landscape enhancements to add native plants and year-round color
- Larger pedestrian space and add more seating
- Retail curb appeal

Short-term improvements

- Improve the maintenance regime of both the landscape and the sidewalks
- Clean and empty trash more often
- Remove the news racks
- Add better landscape
- Create design and maintenance enhancements, including removing the newsstands, cleaning sidewalks, creating consistent design improvements
- Promote “guerrilla” parks
- Transform the Frost Bank Plaza to capitalize on an underutilized asset
- Encourage more pedestrian enhancements such as outdoor events and more seating

Long-term improvements

- Promote a healthy mix of local and iconic retail
- Introduce consistent, well-designed pedestrian amenities



Replace dying trees



Activate underutilized assets

Can do tomorrow

- Small beautification projects, such as planting the existing planters
- Remove the news racks
- Add landscape planters
- Promote “guerrilla” parks
- Add banners that promote better wayfinding and branding of the avenue
- Encourage more pedestrian enhancements such as outdoor events in the Frost Bank Plaza
- Add more sidewalk seating
- Initiate improvements to the Mexic-Arte exterior
- Incorporate the culture and energy that Mexic-Arte brings to the block
- Patronize, participate and promote street life



500

BLOCK



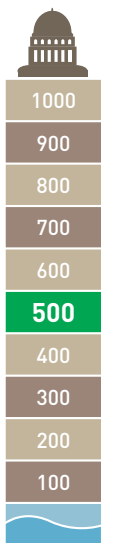
A vibrant urban experience.



★ 500 BLOCK

Overview

Where Congress meets East Sixth Street is known as “Main and Main.” Austin’s first skyscraper, the Scarbrough Building, was erected here in 1910 in the Chicago School style of architecture. A tribute to old Austin, this block has always served as the commercial center of the city and continues to do so today.



West 500



5th STREET

6th STREET



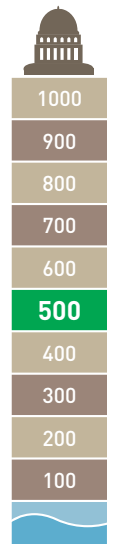
(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 500



6th STREET

5th STREET

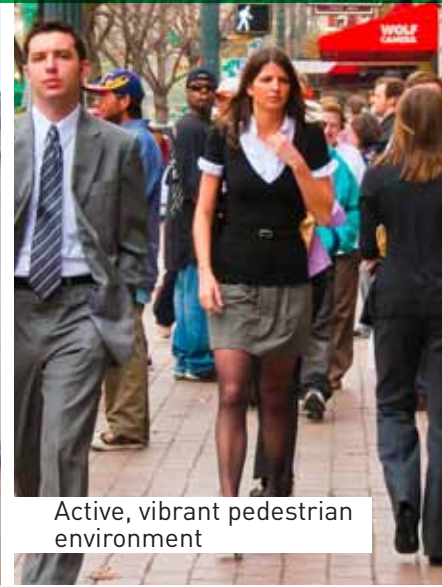


What do we like?

- The location along the avenue
- The potential of the block
- The Historic Architecture
- The views of the Capitol
- Generous wide sidewalks that are well shaded by established tree canopies



Mix of architecture



Active, vibrant pedestrian environment



Consistent tree canopy

Characteristics/Functions

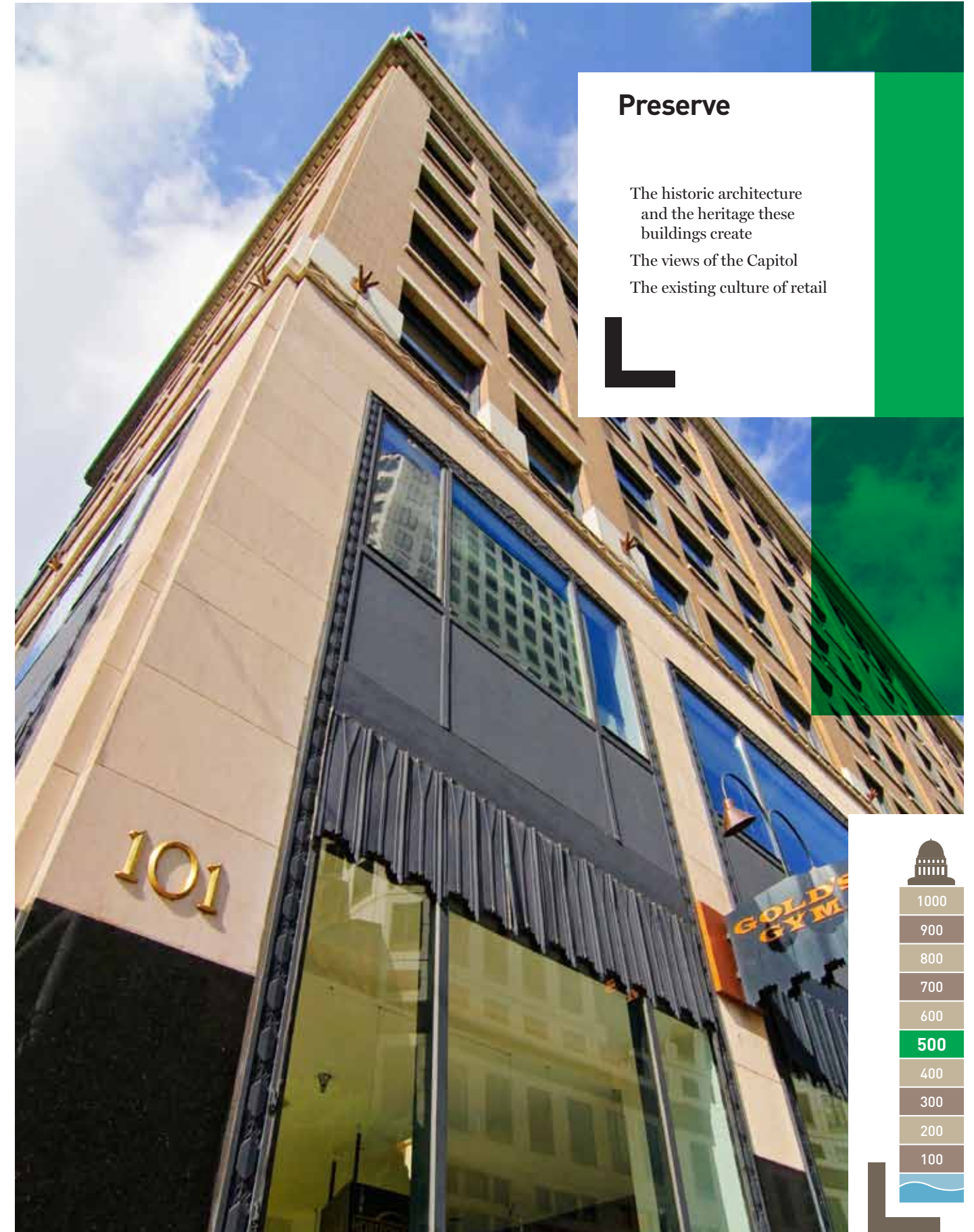
- A diverse blend of historic and modern architecture - old meets new
- A centralized location - "main and main"
- Wide sidewalks with amenities
- The awnings on the existing buildings

Challenges

- A lack of common vision
- The block needs a coordinated effort and management strategy and financing
- The amount of vacancies and vacant property
- The challenge of the bus routes and the number of buses at peak times
- The retail activity and potential

Preserve

- The historic architecture and the heritage these buildings create
- The views of the Capitol
- The existing culture of retail



Change

- Replace and organize the clutter of the existing newsstands with a well-designed family of furnishings
- Add sidewalk amenities and kiosks
- Promote a continuous tree-lined street
- Remove buses from the avenue
- Provide a balance between cars, bicycles and pedestrians
- Promote social order and manage behavior



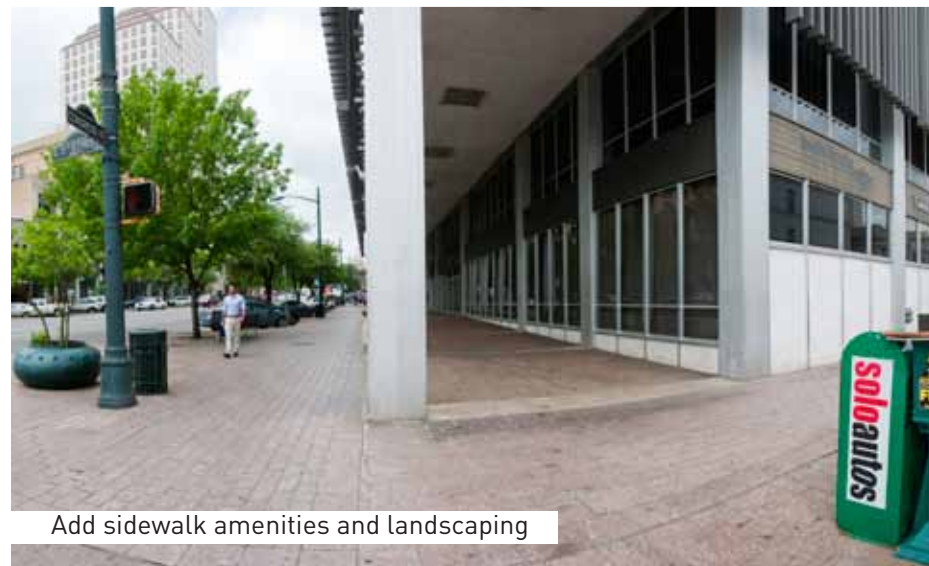
Activate "dead" spaces

Add

- Trolley or street car as an alternative mass transit
- More bike parking
- Strategically locate electric car charging stations
- Public restrooms
- More retail that promotes a mix of uses
- Larger sidewalks, add more seating, trees, lighting and kiosks
- Street activity
- Sidewalk cafés



Provide bike parking



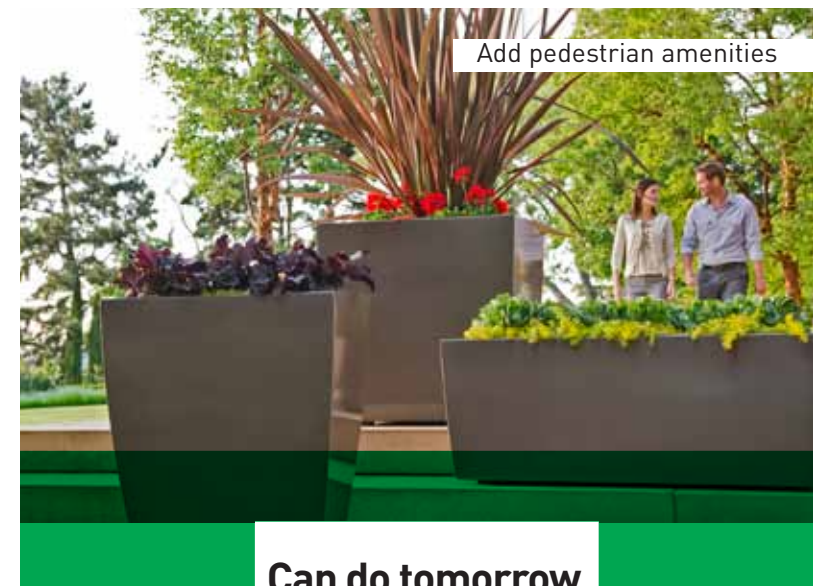
Add sidewalk amenities and landscaping

Short-term improvements

- Encourage more pedestrian enhancements such as landscaping, additional benches, plants and trash cans
- Improve the maintenance regime of the existing landscape
- Promote use of underutilized assets—fill vacant windows and vacant stores with art
- Improve the bus stops
- Promote a consistent signage and wayfinding scheme
- Screen the existing vacant lot.

Long-term improvements

- Add more retail and fully engage it with the sidewalks
- Improve the sidewalks and the landscape
- Improve the newsstands, the signage and the furnishings
- Transform and re-purpose 501 Congress
- Develop the vacant lots and ensure street-level amenities



Add pedestrian amenities

Can do tomorrow

- Promote local street vendors
- Activate the street by having more special events on the avenue
- Encourage a lively street—activate the dead spaces



Street vending adds vitality



600

BLOCK



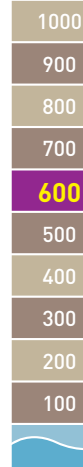
A vibrant place to experience



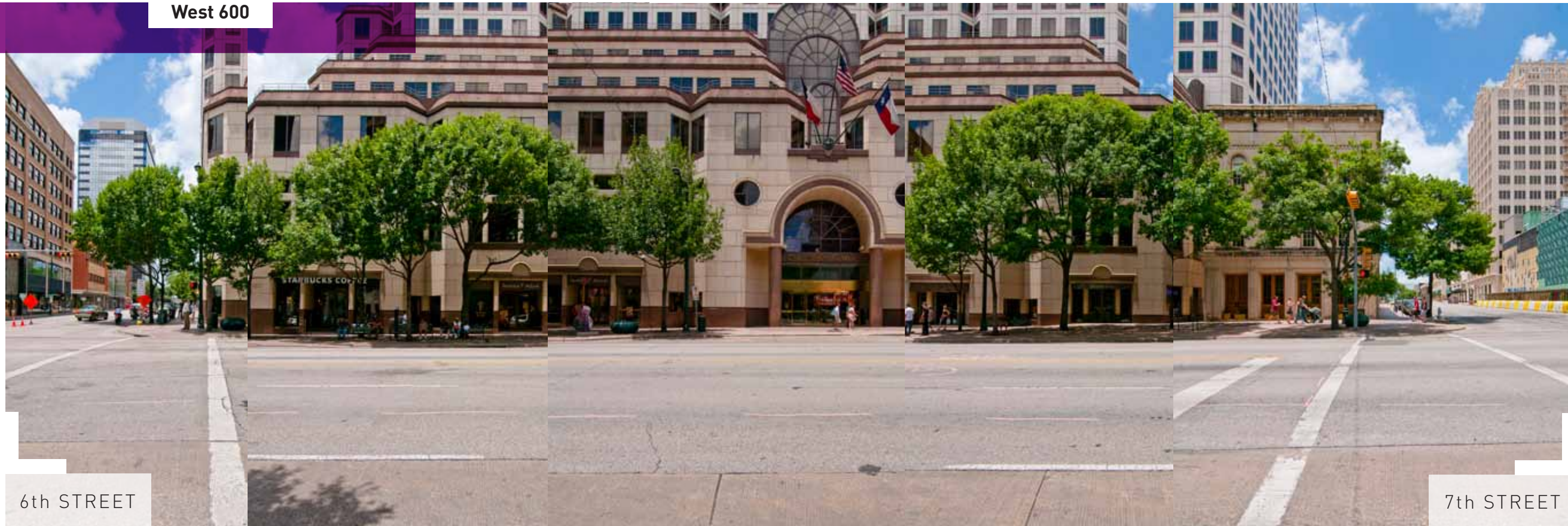
★ 600 BLOCK

Overview

This busy area of Congress Avenue is filled with places to gather. Downtown employees conduct meetings in cafés and courtyards, and visitors rest under the trees or pose for pictures amidst the public art and historic building façades. A bronze statue tells the story of Angelina Eberly, who fired the cannon that helped to keep the state archives, and the state Capitol, in Austin.



West 600



6th STREET

7th STREET



(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 600



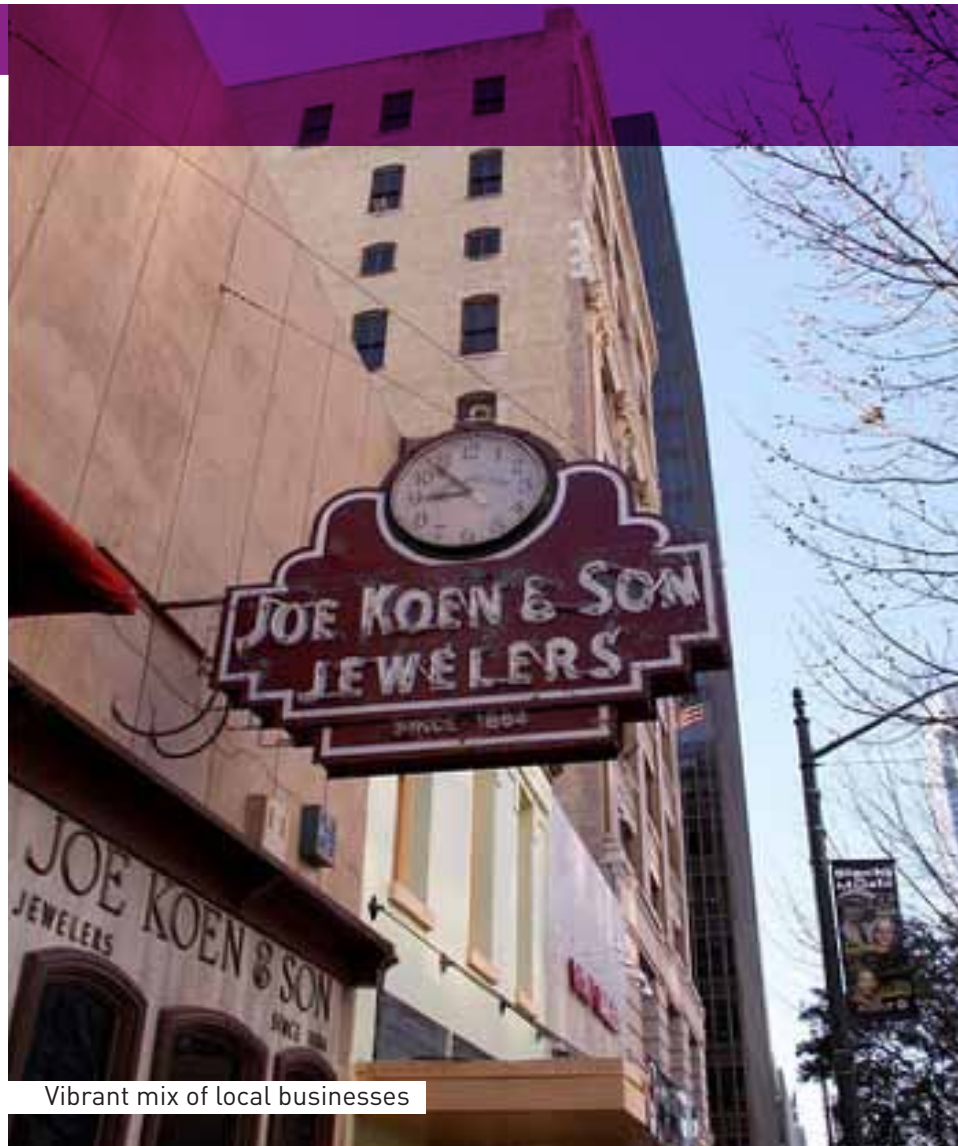
7th STREET

6th STREET



What do we like?

- The ambiance of the block
- The look, feel and location
- The integration of public art
- The retail mix and buzz of an active street



Vibrant mix of local businesses

Characteristics/ Functions

- Wide sidewalks with amenities such as furnishings, the historic clock, sidewalk cafés and the courtyard
- The established trees
- A diverse mix and use of retail
- The culture of art and the theater



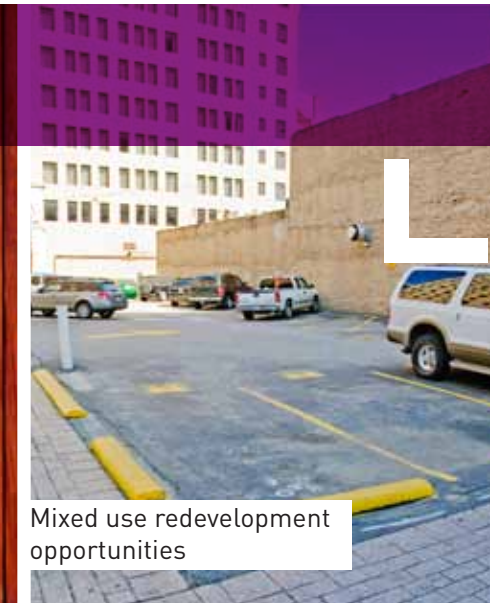
Public art

Challenges

- A lack of common vision
- The block needs a coordinated effort to bring together finance, policies and attitudes for change
- The quality of the existing pedestrian amenities
- The perception of safety
- The lack of public restrooms
- The retail mix and affordability.



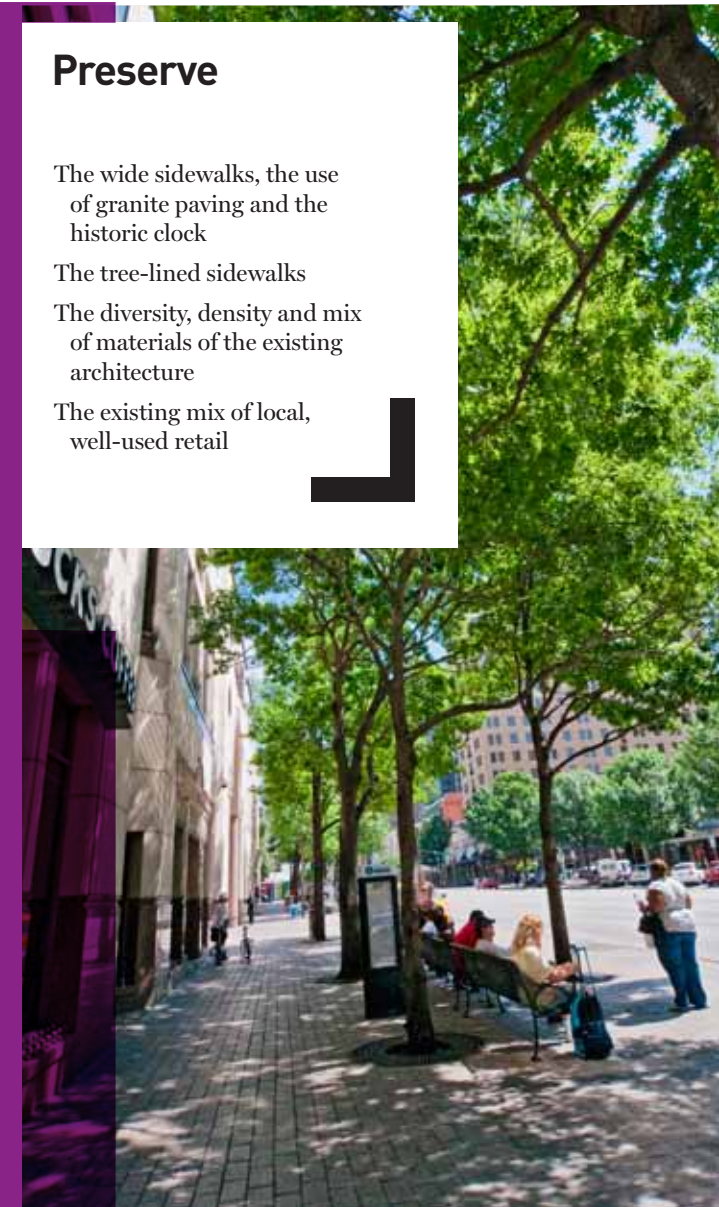
Local retailers



Mixed use redevelopment opportunities

Preserve

- The wide sidewalks, the use of granite paving and the historic clock
- The tree-lined sidewalks
- The diversity, density and mix of materials of the existing architecture
- The existing mix of local, well-used retail



Change

- Replace and organize the clutter of the existing sidewalks
- Add sidewalk amenities and furnishings
- Promote a continuous tree-lined street and encourage additional landscape with native plants
- Remove buses from the avenue
- Provide a balance between parking and pedestrians
- Encourage storefronts to open up and engage the street



Encourage parallel parking



A unified family of furnishings

Add

- Better mix of retail that promotes outdoor dining, sidewalk vendors and better hours of operation
- Evening activities and outdoor establishments
- Art projects on the avenue
- More residential on the avenue



24/7 street activity



Mixed use development

Short-term improvements

- Improve the maintenance regime of the existing landscape
- Promote sidewalk upgrades and repairs and a regular schedule of cleaning
- Encourage more landscape, consistent tree wells, native plants and year-round color
- Promote hanging baskets on buildings
- Encourage more pedestrian enhancements: outdoor events and amenities such as furnishings and litter receptacles
- Be creative and fun

Long-term improvements

- Address the challenge of transit, and add rail on the avenue
- Promote great streets
- Promote sidewalk cafés
- Replace head-in parking with parallel
- Develop the vacant lot, and ensure street-level amenities
- Add a better retail mix and fully engage it with the sidewalks
- Transform and repurpose vacant space
- Improve the signage and wayfinding
- Make the block a kid-friendly environment

Encourage a branded banner campaign for the avenue



Neighborhood supporting retail

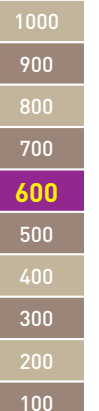


Can do tomorrow

- Regularly clean the sidewalks
- Add more sidewalk seating
- Promote “guerrilla” parks
- Encourage sidewalk dining
- Encourage more pedestrian programming such as outdoor events and mobile food vendors
- Advocate for urban rail on the avenue



Advocate for urban rail along the avenue

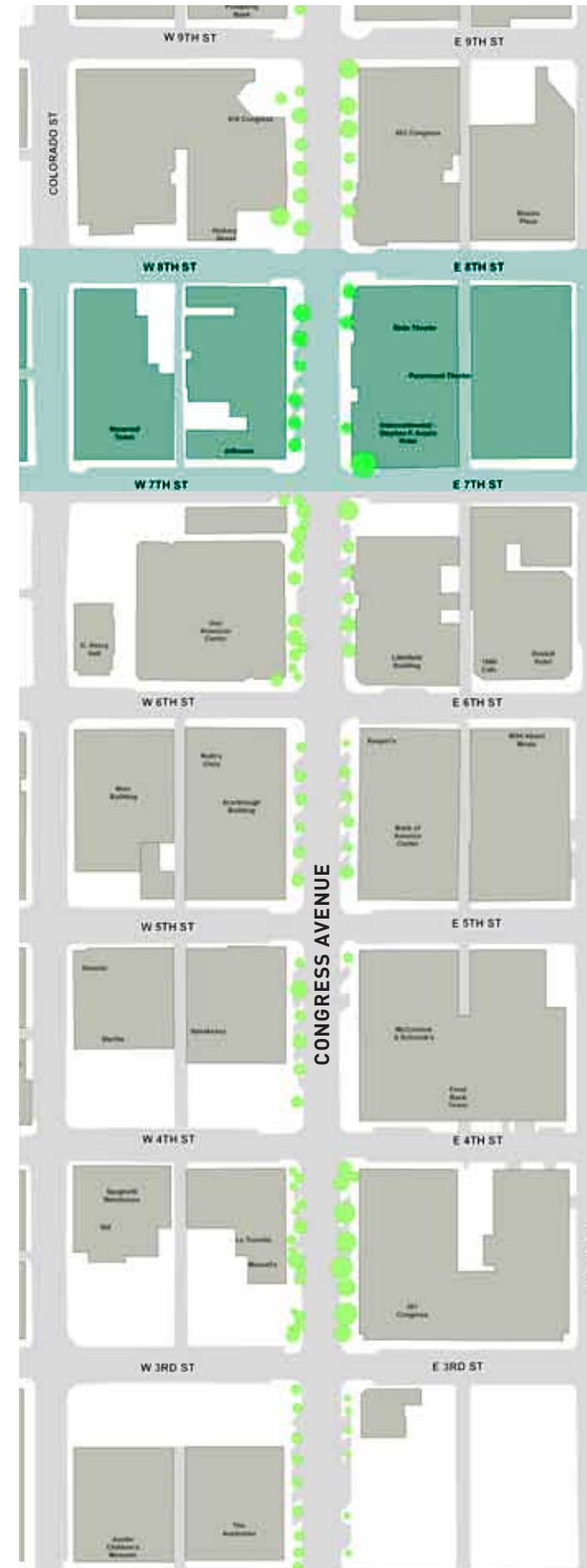


700

BLOCK



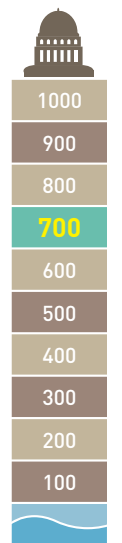
An visionary cultural experience



★ 700 BLOCK

Overview

A cultural hub of Congress Avenue where you can take in a show at the Paramount Theatre, view contemporary art at the Arthouse at Jones Center, or have lunch on the balcony of an historic hotel overlooking Congress Avenue. Several family-owned businesses on the block are part of an architectural archive, with a number of buildings boasting different eras and styles.



West 700



7th STREET

8th STREET



(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

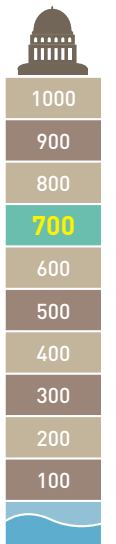


East 700



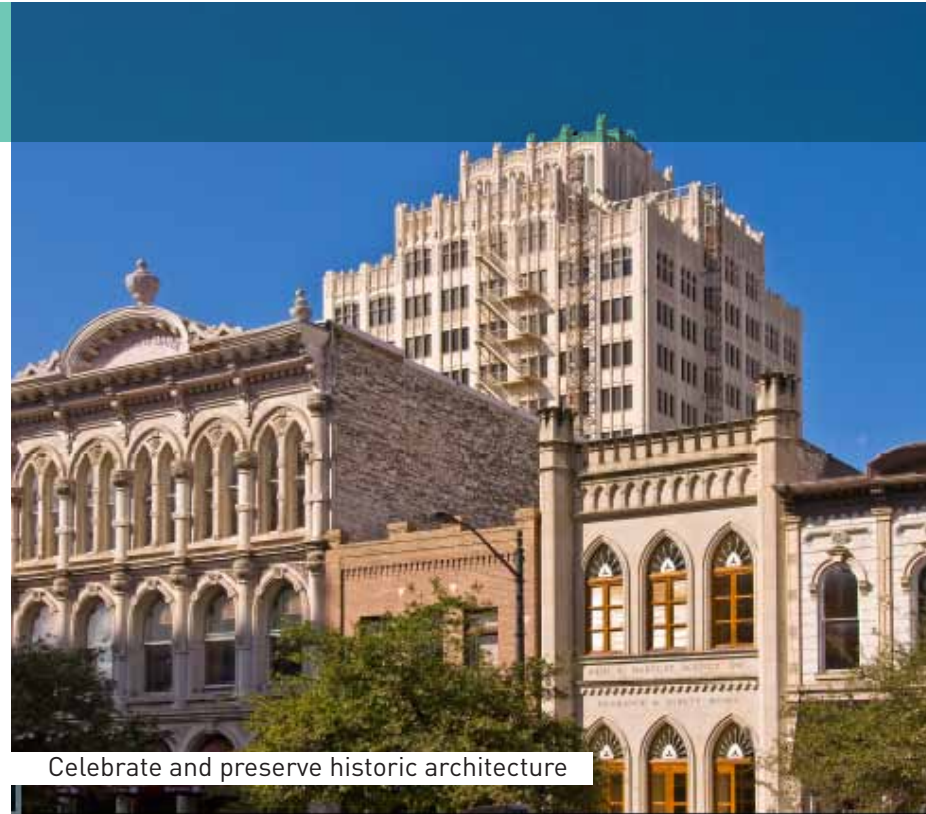
8th STREET

7th STREET



What do we like?

- The historic buildings and signage
- The generous wide sidewalks
- The existing established trees
- The scale and mix of architectural styles
- The mix of uses



Celebrate and preserve historic architecture



Opportunities for temporary art



Historic signage

Characteristics/ Functions

- A diverse array of historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol
- The scale of the pedestrian environment
- A diverse mix and use of retail
- The culture of art

Challenges

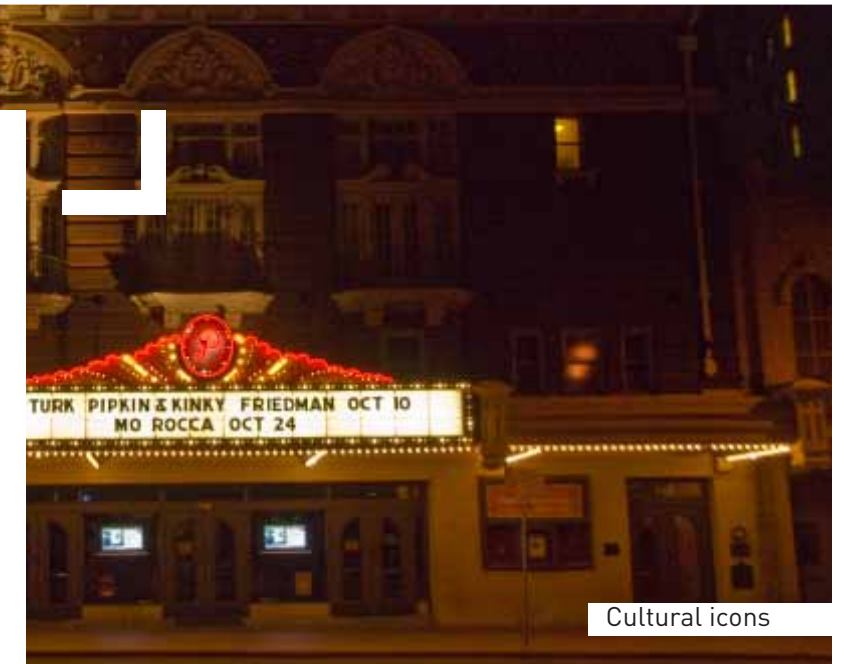
- A lack of common vision and political will
- The retail use and mix and affordability.



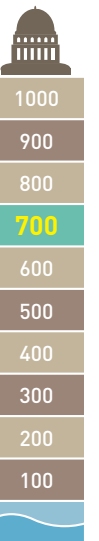
Historic architecture

Preserve

- The diversity and mix of materials of the existing historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol
- The wide sidewalks and the pedestrian amenities
- The existing mix of local, well-used retail / uses
- The significance of art and cultural establishments



Cultural icons



Change

- Provide a balance between parking and pedestrians - change head-in parking to parallel
- Resolve the issue of “no left turns” and the traffic light sequence
- Remove buses from the avenue
- Promote great streets with appropriate sidewalk amenities, furnishings and lighting
- Encourage a diverse mix of retail and uses
- Create an all pedestrian light sequence
- Right-of-way management issues need to be streamlined



Opportunities for pedestrian amenities

Add

- Better pedestrian amenities
- A streetcar up the avenue
- Public-private partnerships that provide facade grants and help the State Theatre
- Tools such as a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) and an Economic Development Corporation (EDC)



Enhance the sidewalk experience



Better pedestrian amenities and vibrant street life

Short-term improvements

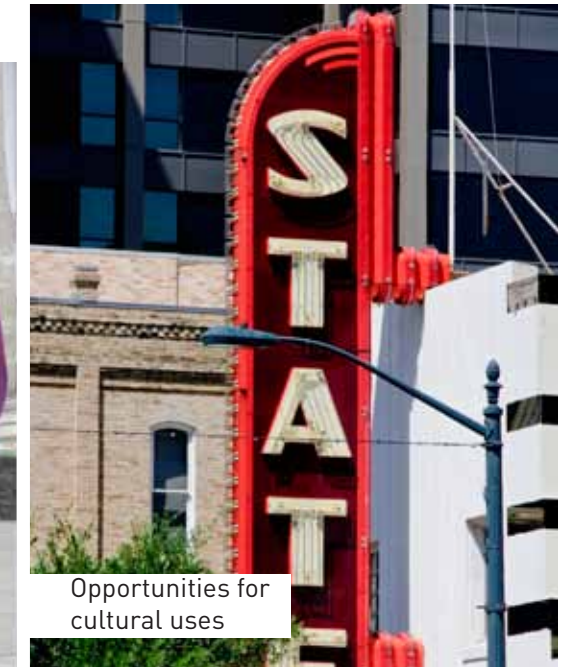
- Activate empty spaces and windows with temporary art
- Promote sidewalk cafés and outdoor seating
- Regularly clean building windows, sidewalks and façades
- Encourage more landscape, consistent tree wells, native plants and year-round color
- Promote hanging baskets on buildings

Long-term improvements

- Address the challenge of transit, and add rail on the avenue
- Replace head-in parking with parallel
- Promote the redevelopment of the historic State Theatre
- Add a better retail mix, and fully engage it with the sidewalks



Encourage spontaneous use of vacant space



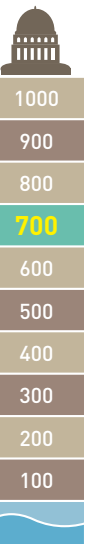
Opportunities for cultural uses

Can do tomorrow

- Regularly clean and wash the sidewalks and building windows
- Promote better landscaping in the existing planters
- Create an “all walk” condition for pedestrians at signalized street intersections
- Encourage more performance art and music busking



Enable street performances and art

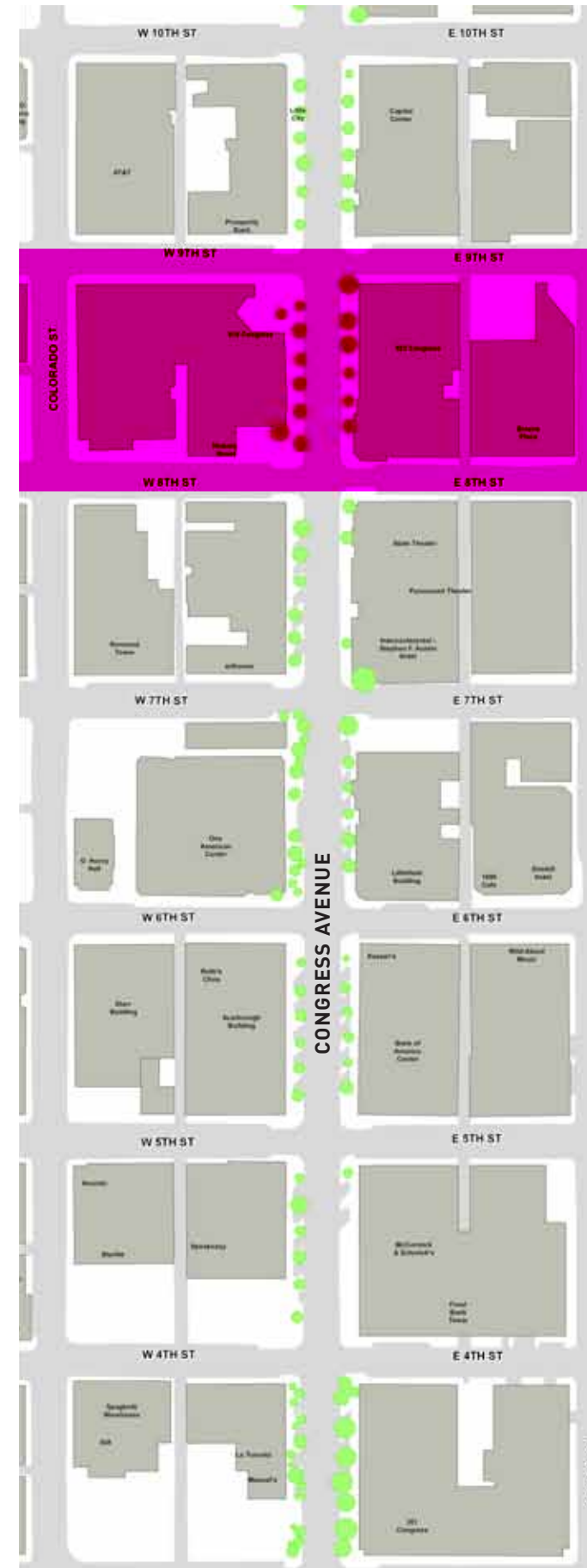


800

BLOCK



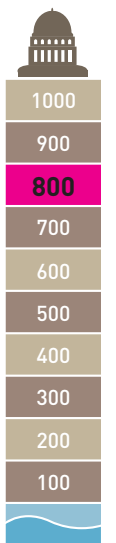
A visionary art experience



★ 800 BLOCK

Overview

Art and business intermingle with modern and historic architecture on this block, which, with the 700 block, creates a burgeoning cultural hub in the heart of downtown. Major office towers with prominent sculptures and museum headquarters at their base sit next to residences, restaurants and retailers nestled in quaint, well-preserved buildings.



West 800



8th STREET

9th STREET



(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 800



9th STREET

8th STREET



What do we like?

- The blend of historic and modern buildings
- The views of the Capitol
- The integration of art and sculpture in the public realm
- The generous wide sidewalks
- The existing established trees



Views of the Capitol



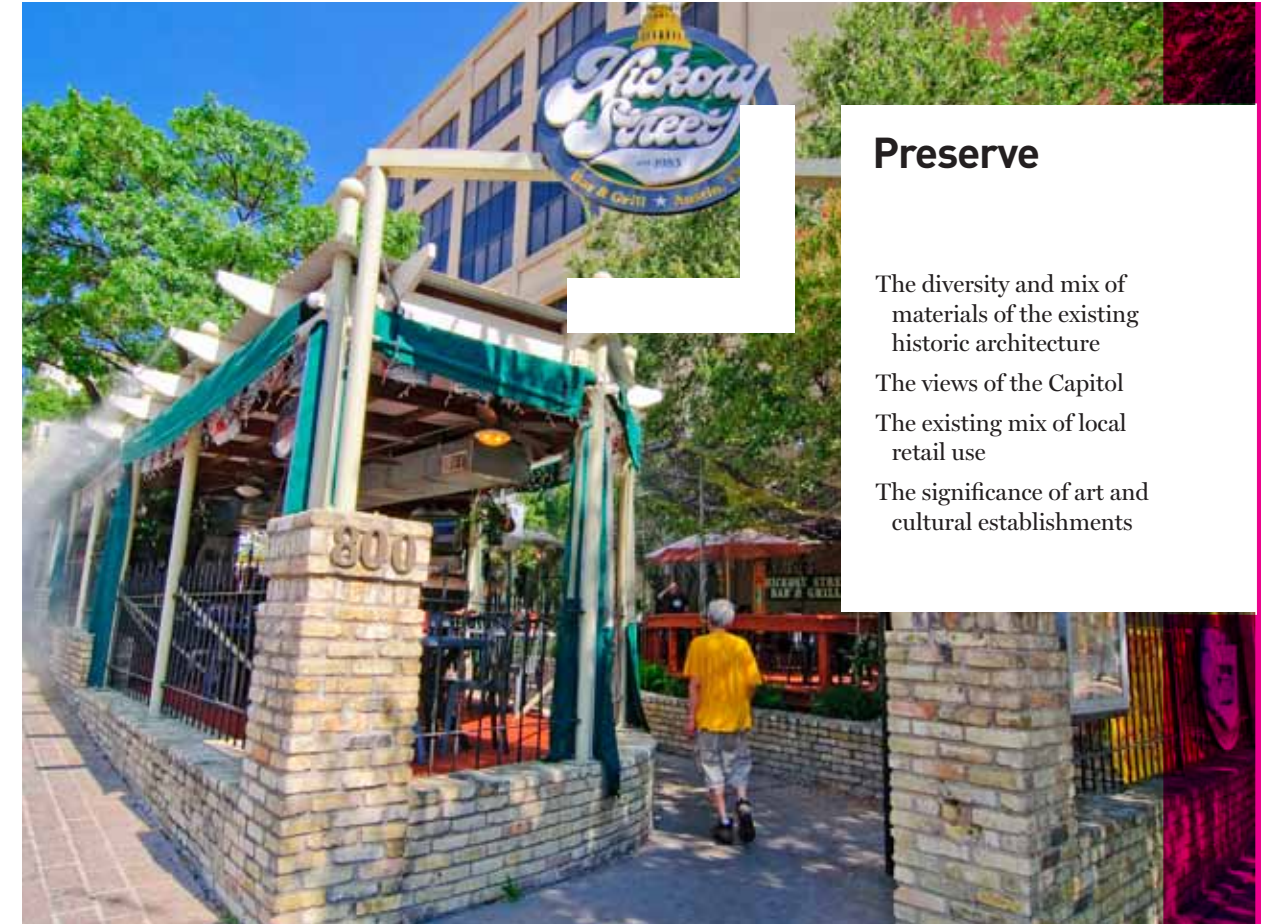
Great civic spaces

Characteristics/Functions

- The culture of art and music
- The 816 Plaza and pocket parks
- A diverse array of historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol
- The street vitality

Challenges

- A lack of community buy-in and shared vision
- The need for major infrastructure reconfiguration including electrical, wider sidewalks and parking

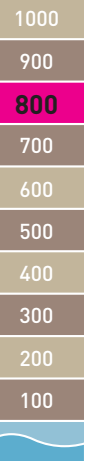


Preserve

- The diversity and mix of materials of the existing historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol
- The existing mix of local retail use
- The significance of art and cultural establishments



Promote the cultural arts and museums



Change

- Encourage a diverse mix of retail and uses on the first floor of existing buildings
- Activate dead spaces
- Have retail stores open at night to promote nighttime activity
- Provide a balance between parking and pedestrians - change head-in parking to parallel
- Provide larger trees
- Remove the on-street ATMs and promote better sidewalk amenities, furnishings and lighting



Repurpose and fill vacant storefronts



A healthy mix of local retailers and businesses



Wider sidewalks and parallel parking

Add

- Substantial pedestrian infrastructure with wider sidewalks and gathering spaces
- Better pedestrian amenities such as seating, more trees and lighting
- Street vendors and a more robust mix of retail
- Daily events to draw people to the block



Short-term improvements

- Regularly clean sidewalks and continue bird control
- Improve the maintenance regime of the existing landscape
- Provide additional seating and shade
- Promote a mix of local and iconic retail uses
- Encourage street vendors
- Promote retail storefronts to engage the sidewalks better and encourage sidewalk cafés
- Promote events and partnerships between the businesses and museums of the block

Long-term improvements

- Address the challenge of transit, and add rail on the avenue
- Replace head-in parking with parallel
- Add a better retail mix, and fully engage it with the sidewalks

Better bird control and cleaning of streets

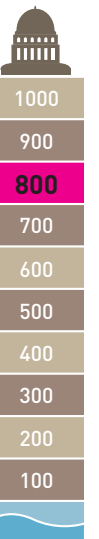


Can do tomorrow

- Regularly clean the sidewalks and building windows
- Promote better landscaping in the existing planters
- Remove unsightly signage and newspaper racks
- Promote more street furniture
- Activate dead spaces along the block
- Improve the permit process for license agreements and building permits
- Encourage more performance art, hold concerts
- Promote business and art partnerships



Functional art

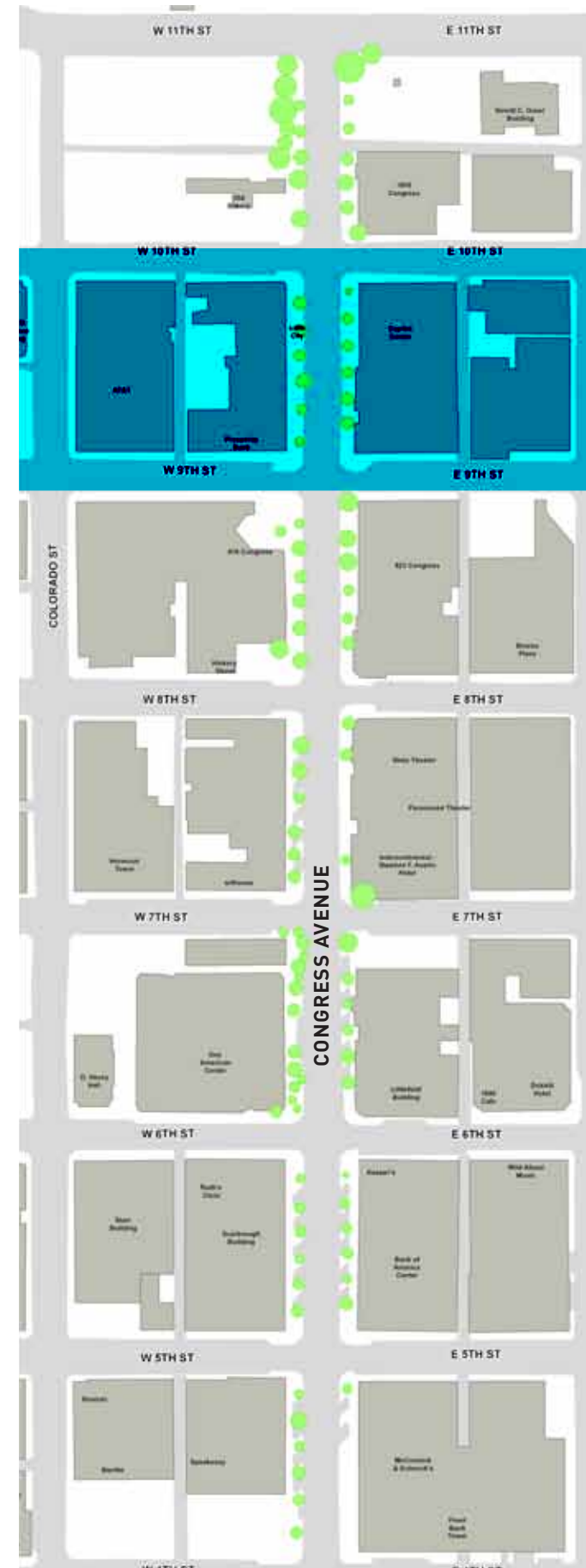


900

BLOCK



A unique sense of place



★ 900 BLOCK

Overview

Just a stone's throw from the Capitol grounds, the shops along this block are among the first encountered by Capitol visitors. This is an active block—filled with local retailers, restaurants, sidewalk dining and a great place for people watching. If rehabilitated, the row of vacant buildings on the east side will add substantial street life to the block.



West 900



9th STREET

10th STREET



(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 900



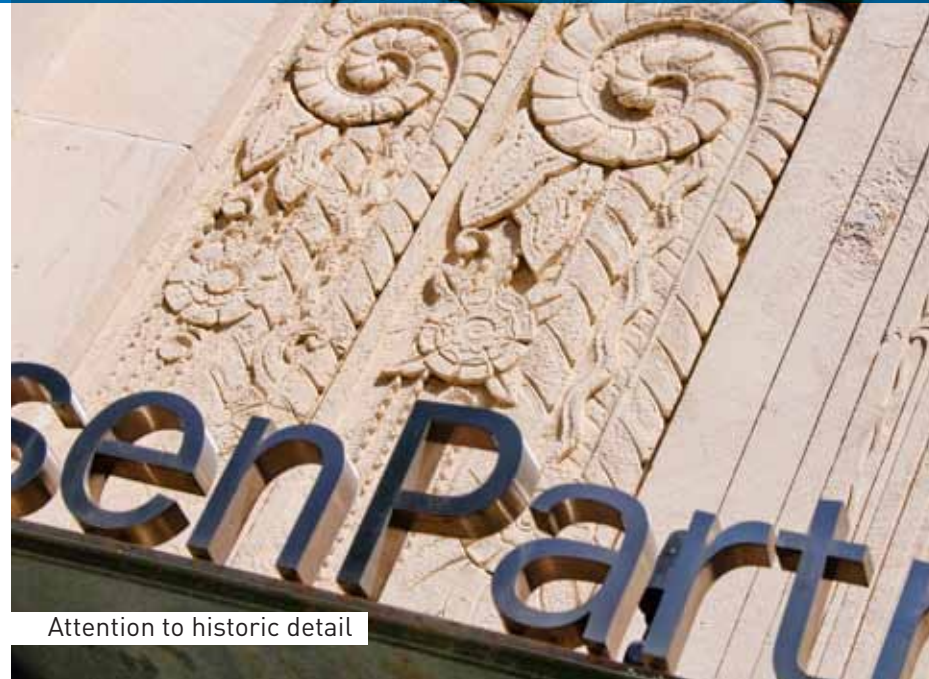
10th STREET

9th STREET

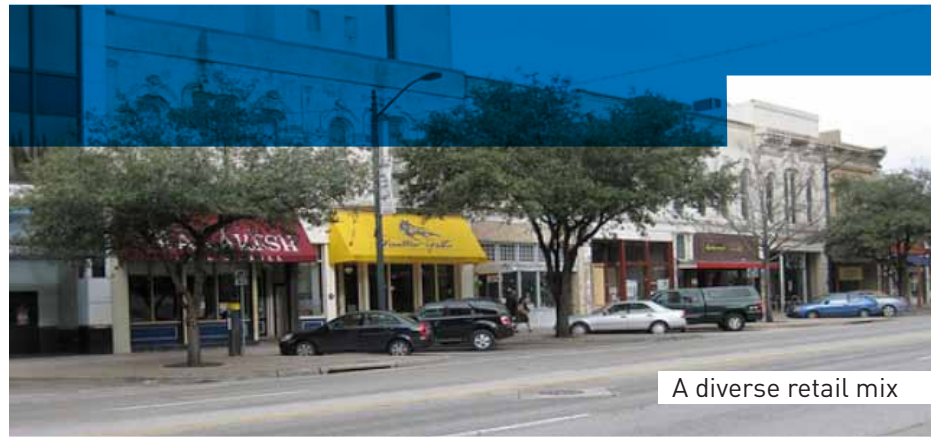


What do we like?

- The historic fabric of the block
- The views of the Capitol
- The retail mix and activity lends to the local flavor of the block
- The potential for positive change



Attention to historic detail



A diverse retail mix



Unique sense of place

Characteristics/ Functions

- A diverse array of historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol
- The unique retail mix
- The mix of façades, awnings and windows
- The redevelopment opportunities of 907, 909 and 911 Congress

Challenges

- The disparate ownership and a lack of shared vision
- A coordinated effort and vision for management
- The number of vacant buildings on the east side of the street
- The issue of head-in parking "pinching" the sidewalk width
- The issue of buses on the avenue



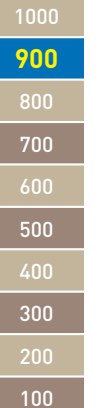
Vacant buildings



Head in parking "pinches" sidewalk width

Preserve

- The diversity, scale and character of the existing historic architecture
- The great street amenities of wide sidewalks, existing trees and granite paving
- The existing mix of local, well used retail
- The relationship to the other blocks



Change

- Promote the redevelopment of the vacant buildings
- Encourage a diverse mix of retail uses and designs on the first floor of existing buildings
- Provide a balance between parking and pedestrians—change head-in parking to parallel
- Resolve public order issues within the sidewalk and crosswalks



Lack of attention to detail

Add

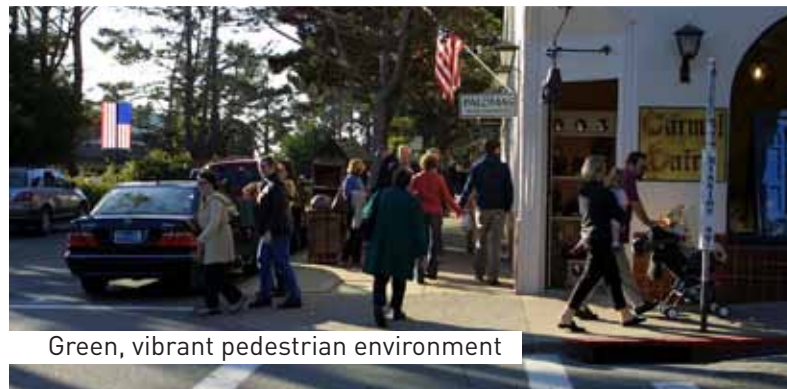
- Better pedestrian amenities such as seating, more trees, landscape and lighting
- Enhance landscaping plantings along the avenue.
- Year-round color and interest



Celebrate an attention to detail



Enliven streetscapes



Green, vibrant pedestrian environment



Add life and color

Short-term improvements

- Encourage more landscape, consistent tree wells, native plants and year round color.
- Promote hanging baskets on buildings
- Promote sidewalk cafés
- Encourage additional seating, shade from new tree plantings and pedestrian lighting
- Improve the permit process for license agreements and building permits
- Encourage street vendors and a street fair
- Promote visual art
- Utilize vacant buildings as temporary art exhibits and live music venues

Long-term improvements

- Strengthen, diversify and create a retail destination
- Address the challenge of transit, and add rail on the avenue
- Replace head-in parking with parallel, or have no parking at all and widen sidewalks
- Promote the redevelopment of the vacant buildings, and strengthen the diversity and mix of retail and uses to create a destination
- Promote more green space and trees



Design the street for pedestrian use

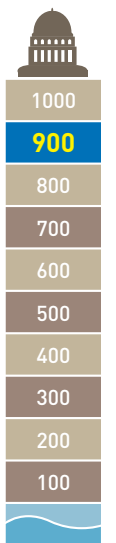


Can do tomorrow

- Clean up vacant building façades
- Encourage and promote street activity - spontaneous and planned events, tours and jogging
- Advocate for rail on the Avenue



Provide places for sociability

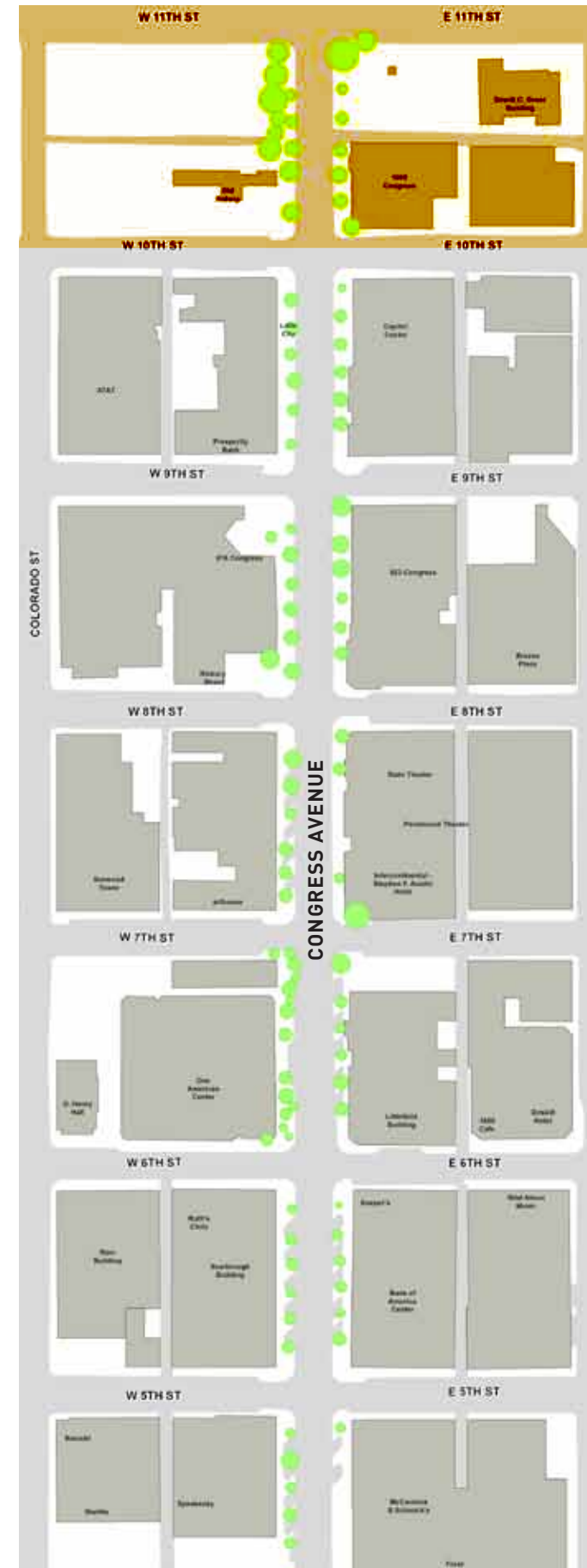


1000

BLOCK



A visionary green gateway to the avenue



★ 1000 BLOCK

Overview

As the front porch of the Capitol, this block is often a visitor's first introduction to downtown. The west side is lined with civic amenities, including the historic Old Bakery building, and pocket parks. The east side of the block is a parking lot. Small changes will go a long way to improving and activating the block's public spaces and connecting it to the rest of the avenue.



West 1000



9th STREET

10th STREET



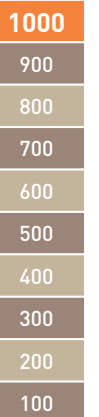
(Above) Charrette participants evaluating their block

East 1000



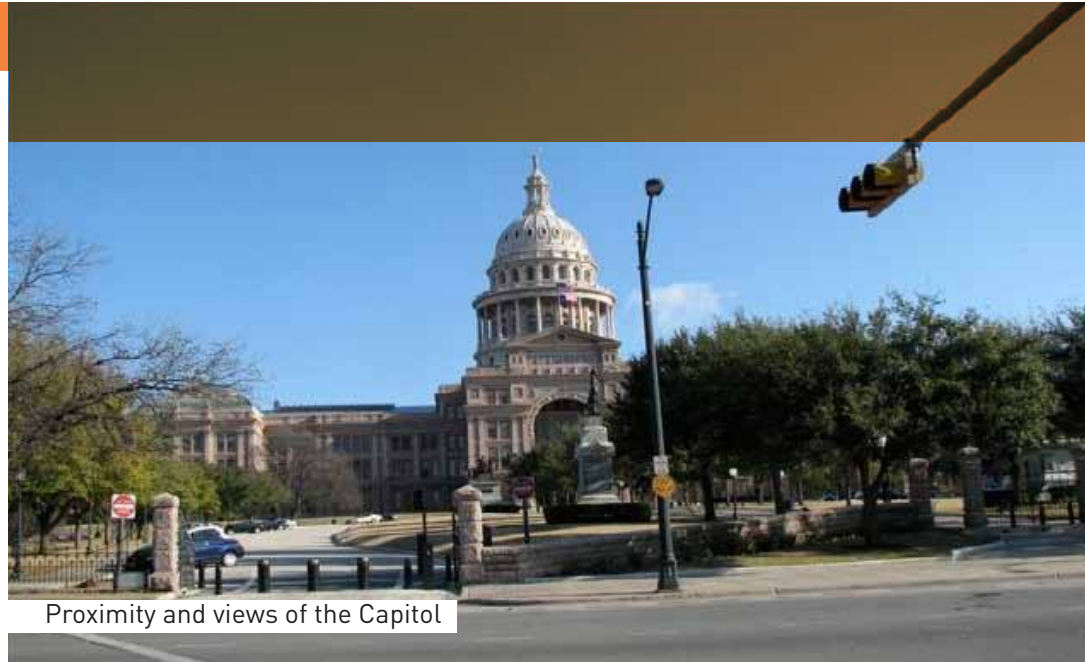
10th STREET

9th STREET



What do we like?

- The historic architecture of the block
- The views of the Capitol
- The existing green space including the pocket park and the Capitol grounds
- Activity is tied to the seasons



Proximity and views of the Capitol



Open spaces and pocket parks

Characteristics/Functions

- The block serves as the point of entry to downtown from the Capitol
- The visitors and sightseers
- The block is an information point and civic center
- Generous open space and pocket park
- The block has good redevelopment opportunities

Challenges

- There are multiple government entities and stakeholders
- The block needs to fully comply with ADA regulations and be senior friendly
- Emphasize the layers of history between state and city themes
- Development solutions need to be capable of withstanding heavy use

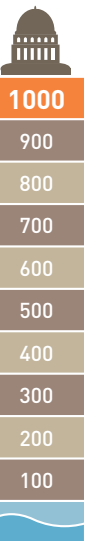
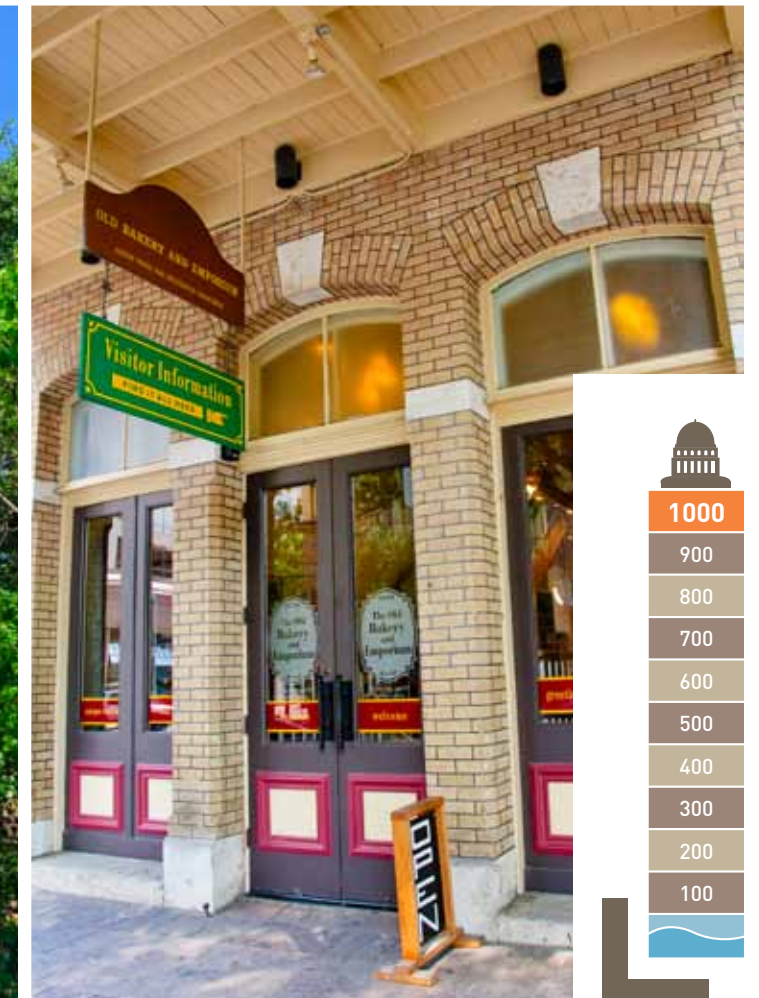
Preserve

- The diversity, scale and character of the existing historic architecture
- The views of the Capitol
- The public open space and pocket park



Open space as a unique gateway to the avenue and the Capitol grounds

Preserve and enhance the historic buildings



Change

- Transform the existing parking lot
- Repurpose the existing public open space
- Move the buses off the avenue
- Provide a balance between parking and pedestrians - change head-in parking to parallel
- Resolve the large blank walls and dark windows of existing buildings



Ground-level parking lot



Add places to sit and rest

Add

- Better pedestrian amenities, such as seating, more trees and lighting
- Well-designed sign and wayfinding scheme for the avenue
- More landscaping, native plants and year-round color.



Wayfinding and navigational system

Short-term improvements

- Regularly clean sidewalks, and improve the maintenance regime of the existing landscape
- Encourage more landscape, native plants and year-round color.
- Promote hanging baskets
- Provide additional seating and shade
- Improve the existing pocket parks
- Enhance the existing bus stop with better furnishings or move altogether

Long-term improvements

- Promote great streets with wider, more generous sidewalks
- Replace head-in parking with parallel parking
- Add more lighting in existing trees
- Promote better pedestrian amenities
- Add a better retail mix, and fully engage storefronts with the sidewalks
- Promote the redevelopment of the vacant lot/surface parking
- Promote the addition of public art
- Create a robust redesign of the public spaces to allow for event programming



Invest in our public parks and open spaces



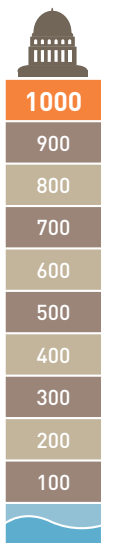
Parallel parking and wider sidewalks

Can do tomorrow

- Have regular meetings with the jurisdictional partners of the city, state and county
- Convert the Old Bakery to house tourist information
- Empower local property owners to take ownership of the streets around their properties
- Promote better landscaping in the existing planters
- Reopen the walkway along the west side of the Governors Mansion to reconnect the pedestrian/tourist experience.



Add color and plants



SITE #: 500

Rate the Place:

COMFORT & IMAGE		POOR		GOOD	
Overall attractiveness	1	2	3	4	
Feeling of safety	1	2	3	4	
Cleanliness/Quality of Maintenance	1	2	3	4	
Comfort of places to sit	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	could use more signage, flowers would be nice, better bus stop				
ACCESS & LINKAGES		POOR		GOOD	
Visibility from a distance	1	2	3	4	
Ease in walking to the place	1	2	3	4	
Transit access	1	2	3	4	
Clarity of information/signage	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	could really tell street be signage seems to be pretty empty block				
USES & ACTIVITIES		POOR		GOOD	
Mix of stores/services	1	2	3	4	
Frequency of community events/activities	1	2	3	4	
Overall busy-ness of area	1	2	3	4	
Economic vitality	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	bank, CVS, tech...				
SOCIALITY		POOR		GOOD	
Number of people in groups	1	2	3	4	
Evidence of volunteerism	1	2	3	4	
Sense of pride and ownership	1	2	3	4	
Presence of children and seniors	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	by the city not by retailers				

Identify Opportunities

- What do you like best about this place?
 - central location
 - good foot traffic
 - good transportation
 - lot of potential
- List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:
 - flowers
 - better bus stop
 - better signage (even sidewalks)
- What changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
 - fill retail space w/ actual retail (not banks or tech services)
 - bring services out to sidewalks
- Ask someone who is in the "place" what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:
 - like - people / foot traffic; Assted. Dis. s

PLACE GAME

★ COMMON THEMES: CONGRESS AVENUE EXPERIENCES AND CHANGES

SITE #: 700 block

Rate the Place:

COMFORT & IMAGE		POOR		GOOD	
Overall attractiveness	1	2	3	4	
Feeling of safety	1	2	3	4	
Cleanliness/Quality of Maintenance	1	2	3	4	
Comfort of places to sit	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	Inconsistent tree cover Inactive street for pedestrians too car-centric - 45' parking takes up sidewalks?				
ACCESS & LINKAGES		POOR		GOOD	
Visibility from a distance	1	2	3	4	
Ease in walking to the place	1	2	3	4	
Transit access	1	2	3	4	
Clarity of information/signage	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	Ain ramps inconsistent Where are you supposed to be good. Ent. Social fronts				
USES & ACTIVITIES		POOR		GOOD	
Mix of stores/services	1	2	3	4	
Frequency of community events/activities	1	2	3	4	
Overall busy-ness of area	1	2	3	4	
Economic vitality	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	Separate from cars! All bus restaurants are nighttime events				
SOCIALITY		POOR		GOOD	
Number of people in groups	1	2	3	4	
Evidence of volunteerism	1	2	3	4	
Sense of pride and ownership	1	2	3	4	
Presence of children and seniors	1	2	3	4	
Comments/Notes:	by the city not by retailers				

Identify Opportunities

- What do you like best about this place?
 - Views & presence
 - Potential for more diverse, longer opening stores
 - As potential
 - Historic & new mix of built form
- List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:
 - Add more green?
 - Better signage & wayfinding
- What changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
 - Wider walks - reduce traffic flow & speed
 - Rail
 - Trees & green
- Ask someone who is in the "place" what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:
 - nothing to do - no reason to be here other than catch the bus
- What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.
 - next art mural or commission on pavement

PLACE GAME

[Above] Project for Public Spaces place game

Congress Avenue Experiences COMMON THEMES

- Food & Drink (50) - sidewalk cafés
- Experiencing art, culture, theater, shows (46)
- Shopping (37)
- Riding the streetcar, urban rail, trolley (21)
- Walking, strolling, pedestrian experience (17)
- Music (16)
- People watching (13)
- Capitol (12)
- Activity, vitality (10)
- Serendipity (running into friends, meet & greet) (8)
- Appreciating history (8)
- Fun (games, events, parties) (8)
- Kids and families (7)
- Mimes, jugglers, street performers (6)
- Parks/plazas (6)
- Exercise, health, wellness (5)
- Safe and clean (4)
- Quite relaxing (4) specific to bus noise

Congress Avenue Changes COMMON THEMES

- Streetscape/Pedestrian Experience/Ambience (99)
- Retail Uses/Storefronts (46)
- Transportation (22)
- Art/Music (22)
- Temporary dead space improvements (14)
- Clean and Safe (10)

★ CHARETTE FINDINGS

The following data is from the April 26 presentation. It is an interim assessment of key themes and findings. All of the charrette attendees were asked questions during the event and this represents their responses.

AGENDA

- Charrette Findings
 - Congress Avenue Vision
 - Congress Avenue Experience
 - Congress Avenue Changes
 - What I Can Do Tomorrow
 - Block Challenges
- Addressing Challenges
- Activating Congress Avenue
- Next Steps
- Questions and Discussion



CONGRESS AVENUE VISION—TOP 3 IN RANKED ORDER

The year is 2020, and you just picked up a travel guide at the bookstore. You flip to the section about Austin. The first sentence reads,

“Welcome to Austin, Home of Congress Avenue, known everywhere as...”

1. The Main Street of Texas
2. The Greatest Street in Texas
3. The Avenue of Texas

DESCRIBE THE CHARACTERISTICS YOU WANT TO SEE ON CONGRESS AVE.

1. Active
2. Exciting
- 3 Vibrant
4. Heartbeat
- 5 Authentic
6. Cool
7. Soul
8. Historic
9. Walkable
10. Friendly
11. Culture
12. Epicenter
13. Lively
14. Gateway
15. Capitol

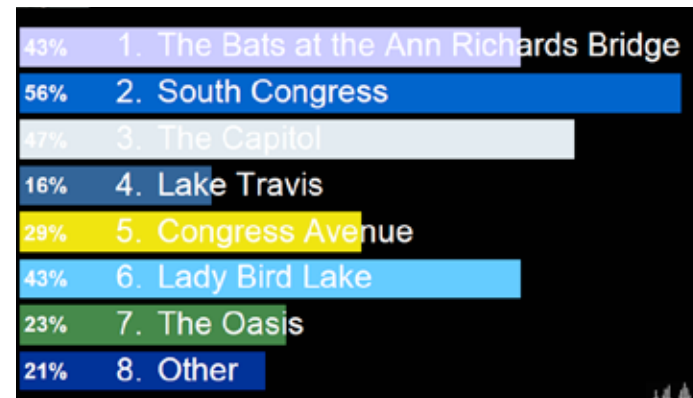
CHARRETTE REPORTING METHODOLOGIES

- Tabulated All Findings
 - Individual PlaceGame
 - Visioning Documents
 - Charrette Group Reports
- Created a Block-by-Block Assessment
- Identified Common Themes

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM YOU

- You want to be involved
- You have strong opinions
- You want a shared and common vision
- You want action and results

WHAT SITES DO YOU TYPICALLY SEE WITH OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS?



HOW MANY TIMES EACH WEEK DO YOU EAT AT A FOOD ESTABLISHMENT ON CONGRESS AVENUE?



THE CONGRESS AVENUE EXPERIENCE

It's still 2020, and you've just spent a day along Congress Avenue.

Describe the three most memorable and enjoyable experiences you had in that 24-hour period.

Sidewalk cafés

More than half focused on outdoor dining and sidewalk cafés

Shopping

Charrette participants want to see more local businesses, bookstore, window shopping

Art, Culture and Theater

Participants want to share more cultural experiences along Congress Avenue

History and Architecture

Charrette participants value the blending of historic and modern architecture

Streetcar/Urban Rail

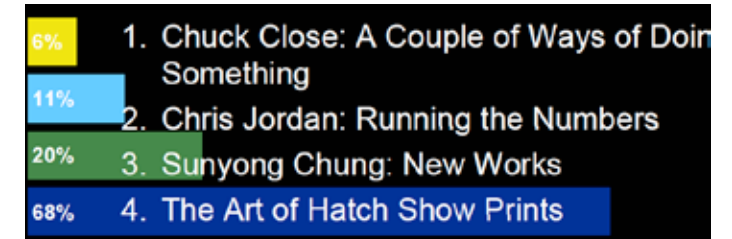
Participants want to ride a streetcar along Congress Ave.

Pedestrian Experience

Walking, strolling, people watching, see and be seen



WHAT EXHIBIT IS CURRENTLY ON VIEW AT THE AUSTIN MUSEUM OF ART?



CONGRESS AVENUE CHANGES

In order to achieve the memorable experiences you described, list between three and five things about Congress Avenue that would have to change before 2020.

1 Streetscape/Pedestrian Experience and Ambience

- Seating and gathering spaces
- Wider improved sidewalks
- Move buses off Congress
- Outdoor cafés
- Lighting
- Consistent design
- Pedestrian amenities and great streets
- Trees and shade

2 Retail Uses/Storefronts

- More, variety, better mix
- More daytime uses
- More restaurant choices
- Continuous, engaging storefronts
- Better merchandising
- Meld the storefronts with public/private spaces

3 Transportation

- Move (local) buses off of Congress
- Create better transportation options
- Add streetcar/urban rail

4 Art and Music

- More art/sculpture
- Public art
- Live Music/Busking

5 Vacant Space Improvements

- Utilize art/performance to fill in vacant spaces
- Fix boarded-up buildings
- Do something with blank walls
- Utilize food vendors and kiosks
- Utilize plazas

6 Clean and Safe

- Keep it clean
- High standard of maintenance
- Address bird droppings
- Safety
- Address panhandling

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU PURCHASED CLOTHING, SHOES, ACCESSORIES, JEWELRY, ARTWORK OR A GIFT FROM A MERCHANT ON CONGRESS AVENUE?



WHAT I CAN DO TOMORROW?

Name one thing that is in your power that you can change tomorrow—no matter how small—that will start the implementation of your vision for your Block and for Congress Avenue.

- Beautify: clean daily, plant plants, pick up trash
- Patronize: participate, promote and buy from Congress retailers and restaurants
- Advocate: participate in the Downtown Austin Plan, promote rail on Congress Avenue, promote the vision for Congress Avenue

WHAT YOU'RE DOING

People are already making changes on Congress Avenue!

Daryl Chalberg

- Planted all 3 planters on the west side of the 600 block of Congress
- Had contractor complete granite sidewalk pavers and grout repairs
- Contacted CapMetro to repair signage at corner of 6th and Congress
- Promoted events on Congress to tenants

David Kruger

- Planted planter ball in front of his store at 722 Congress

The Arthouse

- Painted their temporary covered construction sidewalk in collaboration with their Young Artists @ Arthouse and Club Arthouse

Michele Van Hyfte

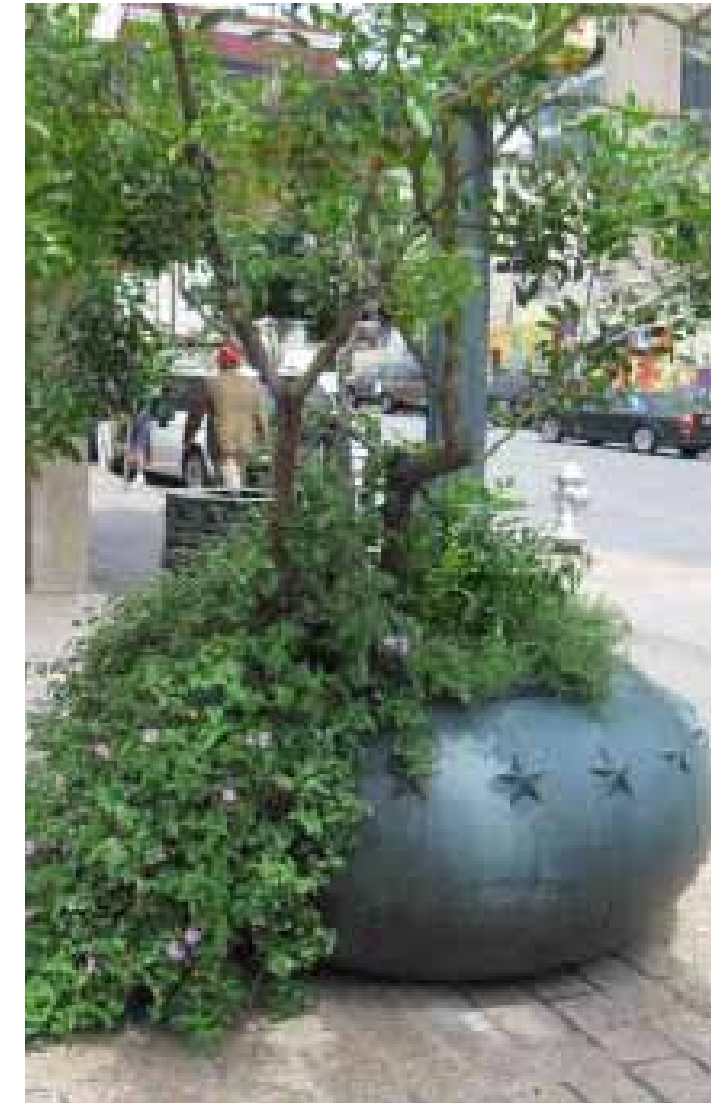
- Has been a good patron to businesses: Starbucks, Hideout and other restaurants, retailers
- Serves on the DAA Mobility Committee and advocates for rail on Congress Avenue

Mary Ober

- Has hosted a meeting for the 900 block to begin making progress on their ideas generated at the charrette

Nancy Burns

- Has adopted the planters in the 700 block—purchasing and installing plants, watering daily



HOW MANY MAN HOURS DOES THE DAA MAINTENANCE STAFF DEVOTE TO LITTER REMOVAL, GRAFFITI REMOVAL AND SIDEWALK WASHING IN THE PID IN A FISCAL YEAR?



CONGRESS AVENUE CHALLENGES

What challenges do we face in achieving our vision for Congress Avenue?

Challenges

- Lack of Shared and Common Vision
- Lack of coordinated efforts among all stakeholders—property owners, tenants, DAA, City, CapMetro, County and State

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

What's being done to maintain the momentum?

Downtown Austin Alliance

- Maintenance Crew: Getting downtown ready for business every day.
- Downtown Rangers: Helping to make downtown safe; Our eyes and ears on the street
- Professional Staff: Advocate, address and assist

City, County and State

Council Member Chris Riley, City staff, members from the Texas Facilities Commission and the State Preservation Board met to discuss how they can best work together to make Congress Avenue a better place

CITY OF AUSTIN

The City is creating a team to address the issues of Congress as a District. Looking at issues from permitting, right-of-way management, banners, etc. Lead by:

- Sue Edwards, Assistant City Manager
- Howard Lazarus, Acting Assistant City Manager

City of Austin: Coordinated Maintenance

Beginning October 1:

- Public Works will be the sole department responsible for sidewalk maintenance and washing, tree trimming, maintaining medians and planters
- DAA Maintenance Crew will continue to work with Public Works, utilizing new equipment including a gum removal machine

City of Austin: The Old Bakery

- Reconfiguring and updating store
- Adding visitor information
- Visioning the future role of the Old Bakery and Pocket Park



CAPITAL METRO

- Problem Solver/Solutions Coordinator
- Plan with timeline and with deadlines will be created for moving the buses off of Congress Ave. to Guadalupe and Lavaca, as adopted by ServicePlan 2020

ACTIVATING CONGRESS

What's being done to make Congress Avenue a more lively destination?

One Congress Plaza

- Working to program plaza for noontime concerts in spring and fall



721 Congress

- Pop-Up Art Installation in conjunction with Art Week Austin

Retailer Evie Evan at 504 Congress

- Cosmetics company's national headquarters with retail storefront

Retailer Austin Details at 801 Congress

- Art Gallery with artist services

823 Congress: Austin Museum of Art

- AMOA envisions transforming its sidewalk and entrance

501 Congress Plaza

- Property owner is rethinking the streets, plazas and empty spaces, and envisions transforming the space

SINCE THE DAA BEGAN ACTIVELY RECRUITING RETAIL IN 2005, HOW MANY NEW RETAILERS HAVE OPENED ON CONGRESS AVENUE?



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

How can we keep the momentum?

Next Steps

- Final Report
- DAA Board/Strategic Committee
- How-To Toolkit
- Communications

Join the "Congress Avenue" Facebook Group

- Share photos, successes, ideas, updates, meeting locations, info

Get Started TODAY!

- Join a DAA Committee:
 - Arts & Entertainment
 - Security & Maintenance
 - Parks
- Adopt a Planter:
 - May-Oct. 2010
 - How-To Guide
 - Sign up and create partnerships
- Take an Active Role

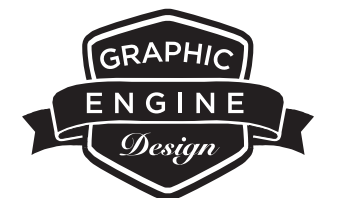
★ ATTENDEES

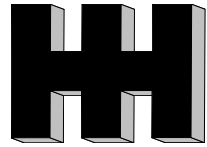


CODE STUDIO



Anne Lindeman Wheat
LINDEMAN PROPERTY





★ TABULATED DATA FROM CHARRETTE

Data tabulated from participants Placegame form, group discussion and Vision document

100 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Connectivity/Proximity to the Lake and Views of the Capitol (7)
- Sidewalks – landscaping, trees, fountain (5)

Block characteristics/function:

- Large spaces – plazas, wide sidewalks, mature trees (4)
- Location – proximity to the Lake/Trail, and to 2nd Street (2)
- Transportation – transit corridor, no on-street parking (2)

Block challenge:

- Transit – traffic, pedestrian crossings, Congress bridge, disconnects (6)
- Attractiveness & Lack of Activity – empty plazas, opportunity with retail (5)
- Perceptions related to safety (2)

Preserve:

- Historic buildings (2)
- Trees (1)
- Wide sidewalks (1)

Change:

- Add life – to plazas, activities, retail, Westside of Raddison, plants (5)
- Move buses (1)

Add:

- Retail – pedestrian scale use, vendors (3)
- Landscape – add color, plants, terrace, art (2)

Short-term improvements:

- Street Activity – vendors, busking, entertainment/activity (6)
- Public Order – clean, manage and eliminate bad behavior (4)
- Connectivity & Signage – wayfinding, connection to lake/trail (3)

Long-term improvements:

- Activate – plazas, dead spaces, eliminate parking lots, redevelop motor bank (8)
- Amenities – food, music, entertainment, pedestrian crossings, retail, art (6)
- Attractive – make a gateway with bridge, clean it up, make it safe, tie to lake/trail (5)

Can do tomorrow:

- Clean daily
- Signs/maps/banners
- Sidewalk vending (vendors/permitting issues)
- Improve landscaping
- Add retail

200 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Potential – opportunities especially with the Austonian (4)
- Activity/Connection/Mix – daytime activity, connection to the lake, mix of businesses (4)
- Historic Buildings (2)
- Sidewalks – pedestrian amenities (2)

Block characteristics/function:

- Potential – connection/density/redevelopment (6)
- Historic buildings (3)
- Streetscape – seating, great streets (3)
- Residential (2)

Block challenge:

- Finance/economy/competition (6)
- Shared Vision – policies, regulatory environment (3)

Preserve:

- Historic buildings and mural (7)
- Sidewalk amenities – trees, lighting, width (3)

Change:

- Vacant lots – level, redevelop (5)
- Transit – buses off Congress, balance street & pedestrian, street grade (3)
- Sidewalk/Amenities – wider sidewalks, signage (2)

Add:

- Pedestrian use/scale/amenities/activities (7)
- Redevelopment/Development that fits/adds density and amenities (4)
- Retail/mixed use/street vendors (3)

Short-term improvements:

- Amenities – shade, seating, plants, color (5)
- Activities – vendors, farmers market (4)

Long-term improvements:

- Redevelopment of parking lots with pedestrian use, compatibility to street and to historic buildings (10)
- Create a true Avenue – pedestrian balance, street level activities, wayfinding, design consistency, transit (6)

Can do tomorrow:

- Actively participate in space – eat, shop, pick up trash (6)
- Promote/sell the block; spread the word (3)
- Participate in the downtown plan (2)

300 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Architecture – historic/modern/adaptive re-use (9)
- Mix of uses – retail, sidewalk cafés (5)
- Location/views of the Capitol/pedestrian scale (4)
- Trees (4)

Block characteristics/function:

- Place to see & be seen (3)
- Retail mix (7)
- Architecture – mix of old and new (3)

Block challenge:

- Creating a unified vision with all parties (7)
- Redevelopment of parking lot/repurposing of Frost Plaza (6)
- Guiding the free market/affordability (3)

Preserve:

- Retail – mix, local, iconic businesses (7)
- Historic façades (6)
- Scale of street (2)

Change:

- Retail Mix – outdoor seating, storefronts, kid friendly, make codes/policies easier (7)
- Transit – relocate buses, move CapMetro office, remove angle parking and expand sidewalks (6)
- Aesthetics – eliminate curb cut, remove billboard, newsracks and prune trees (6)

Add:

- Amenities/Activities – seating, lighting, awnings, shade, wayfinding, art, events (10)
- Landscaping – attractive plants, hanging baskets, guerilla park, planters (5)
- Use/Redevelopment of parking lot – residential, hotel (3)

Short-term improvements:

- Sidewalk improvement/general maintenance/clean (9)
- Landscaping – tree wells, plants, hanging baskets (5)
- Amenities/Color/Activities – banners, events, outdoor seating, creative and fun (5)

Long-term improvements:

- Transit – rail, great streets, replace angled with parallel parking, wayfinding (5)
- Redevelopment of surface parking lot (4)
- Retail mix – repurpose space, create sidewalk cafés, kid-friendly environment (4)

Can do tomorrow:

- Clean-Up/Landscaping – clean sidewalks, add seating, guerilla landscaping (8)
- Activity/Retail – sidewalk dining, event programming, mobile food carts (5)
- Advocate for Rail (2)

400 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Historic buildings (4)
- Views of Capitol and river (5)
- Frost Tower (2)
- Wide sidewalks (2)

Block characteristics/function:

- Mix of architecture and uses - small retail, museum, services(9)
- Premier office building, density (6)
- Central node of activity (4)

Block challenge:

- Bars and night-oriented uses dominate - no day use, limited activity (9)

Preserve:

- Historic buildings (4)
- Views (3)
- Shade (2)

Change:

- Retail uses (mix) (4)
- Surface parking (3)
- Connection between façades and pedestrian realm (3)
- News racks (2)

Add:

- Retail mix (4)
- Plants and color (3)
- Pedestrian space/seating (2)
- Retail curb appeal (2)

Short-term improvements:

- Design and maintenance enhancements -remove newsracks, guerilla parks, clean sidewalks, consistent tree grates, etc. (8)
- Plants and color (4)
- Activate spaces (2) (Frost Plaza)
- Pedestrian enhancements/seating (2)

Long-term improvements:

- Retail mix (5)
- Design/maintenance enhancements (5)

Can do tomorrow:

- Small beautification projects -guerilla parks, removal of newsracks, planters, banners (10)
- Activate spaces - seating & programmed events at Frost, improvements to Mexic-Arte exterior (7)
- Patronize, participate, promote the existing street life (5)

500 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Great location, lots of potential (7)
- Historic architecture, views of the Capitol (4)
- Sidewalks – wide, trees, clean, shade (4)

Block characteristics/function:

- Architecture – historic, old meets new (9)
- Central/Great location – Main & Main (5)
- Sidewalks and Amenities – wide sidewalks, awnings (4)

Block challenge:

- Lack of common vision/coordinated efforts/management/money (10)
- Vacancies – lack of retail, activity and potential (5)
- Transit – bus routes; number of buses (2)

Preserve:

- Historic buildings/heritage/views of the Capitol (8)
- Retail – culture of retail (4)

Change:

- Design & maintenance needs – organize clutter (newspaper racks), sidewalk amenities, trees, kiosks, (10)
- Transit – remove buses, create balance with transit, pedestrian and bikes (10)
- Social order – manage behavior (4)

Add:

- Transit – trolley/street car, bike parking, electric plug-in stations (7)
- Amenities/Activities – public restrooms, activities, kiosks, reasons for street activity (7)
- Sidewalks – redesign, trees, lighting, seating (6)
- Retail – more retail, sidewalk cafés (4)

Short-term improvements:

- Sidewalk Amenities/Landscaping – plant, maintain, rearrange, add benches, plants, trash cans (6)
- Utilize under utilized spaces – windows, vacant areas with vendors, art, etc. (5)
- Improve transit/vacant parking lots – bus stops, signage, screen vacant lot (3)

Long-term improvements:

- Retail – add more retail, bring retail to the sidewalk (5)
- Sidewalks/Landscaping – improve sidewalks, landscaping, newsstands, signage, benches (5)
- Redevelop/repurpose – 501, vacant parking lot, better activities (4)

Can do tomorrow:

- Street vendors (4)
- Special events (4)
- Activating dead spaces (3)

600 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Ambiance – look, feel and location (5)
- Art (3)
- Retail mix and buzz (2)

Block characteristics/function:

- Sidewalk/ Public Realm – benches, trees, clock, awnings, sidewalk café, courtyard (7)
- Retail mix and use (7)
- Art and theater (2)

Block challenge:

- Common Vision and Support – money, policy, attitudes (4)
- Public Amenities/Safety – public restrooms (2)
- Retail – mix of uses and affordability (2)

Preserve:

- Sidewalk/Public Realm – trees, wide sidewalks, granite pavers, clock (6)
- Architecture – diversity, density and materials (3)
- Retail – local businesses and mix of good uses (2)

Change:

- Sidewalk – obstacles, clutter, seating, furniture, trees, plants (6)
- Transportation – bus stops, parking and pedestrian balance (5)
- Open up storefronts to the street (One American Center) (2)

Add:

- Retail – better mix, outdoor dining, sidewalk vendors, better hours, marketing (10)
- Activity & Art - art projects, evening activities, outdoor establishments (3)
- Residential (2)

Short-term improvements:

- Sidewalk – add seating, plantings, trim trees, placemaking (4)
- Clutter/Clean – clean façades, remove clutter, deal with panhandling & solicitors (4)
- Retail – better storefront access, clean signage, sidewalk cafés (3)

Long-term improvements:

- Transit – rail, comprehensive parking, improve taxi stand, widen sidewalks, less parking (5)
- Retail – better mix, information for tourists, signage (4)
- Façade Improvements – open storefronts to street (2)

Can do tomorrow:

- Street performers (2)
- Create fund to repair sidewalk and improve (2)
- Fill planters (2)

700 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Historic buildings and signage (7)
- Sidewalks, trees, etc. (6)
- Scale and architecture (5)
- Mix of uses (3)

Block characteristics/function:

- Historic architecture, views of the Capitol, scale (8)
- Mix of uses/retail (2)
- Art (2)

Block challenge:

- Lack of political will and vision (8)
- Retail use and mix (4)
- Affordability (2)

Preserve:

- Architecture, historic buildings, views of the Capitol, scale (5)
- Retail/use (4)
- Sidewalk and pedestrian amenities (4)
- Art and cultural uses (3)

Change:

- Transportation – parking, no left turns, light sequence, remove buses (8)
- Great Streets – amenities, lights in trees, ROW management, furniture (5)
- Retail mix (2)

Add:

- Streetscape/Pedestrian amenities (4)
- Transportation – streetcar (4)
- Public/Private Partnerships – façade grants, State Theatre, TIF, EDC (3)

Short-term improvements:

- Activate empty spaces/windows with temporary art (4)
- Sidewalk cafés and seating (3)
- Clean – windows, sidewalk, façades (3)
- Add plants, flowers (2)

Long-term improvements:

- Retail – add retail/change the mix/activate first floor use (7)
- Redevelopment opportunities – 721, State Theatre (5)
- Transportation – parking, streetcar (4)

Can do tomorrow:

- Beautify – wash windows, landscaping, clean, decorate (6)
- Light cycle for pedestrians – create an all walk sequence (2)
- Performances for art/music buskers (1)

800 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Architecture, historic buildings, views of the Capitol (10)
- Art/sculpture (5)
- Wide sidewalks and trees (3)

Block characteristics/function:

- Historic, architecture, views of the Capitol (6)
- Plaza and pocket parks (3)
- Art and music (3)
- Street vitality (2)

Block challenge:

- Lack of community buy-in/vision (3)
- Infrastructure – electrical, wider sidewalks, reconfigure parking (3)

Preserve:

- Retail mix (5)
- Historic buildings, architecture, views of the Capitol (3)
- Art (4)

Change:

- Improve 1st floor retail uses – activate dead spaces, open stores at night, more retail (7)
- Sidewalk infrastructure- parallel parking, larger trees, remove ATMs, street lights (7)

Add:

- Sidewalk infrastructure –gathering spaces, larger sidewalks, seating, more trees, lighting (6)
- Retail Activity – vendors, more retail, daily events (3)

Short-term improvements:

- Sidewalk amenities/infrastructure/clean – trees, bird control, planters, seating, shade (11)
- Retail – improve mix, street vendors, storefront improvement, sidewalk cafés (5)
- Activity and partnerships – events, partner - museum & restaurant (4)

Long-term improvements:

- Retail mix – enhance and strengthen (7)
- Transportation – street car, parallel parking (5)
- Art – more sculpture, add public art on the sidewalk (4)
- Streetscape – amenities and design – update, give it consistency (4)

Can do tomorrow:

- Clean & spruce up – plant plants, remove unsightly signage, remove newspaper racks (6)
- Sidewalk – more street furniture, improve permit process (4)
- Activity – hold concerts, business and art partnerships, activate dead spaces (3)

900 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Historic fabric, views of the Capitol (12)
- Retail mix and activity – local flavor (8)
- The potential exists (3)

Block characteristics/function:

- Historic – views of the Capitol, architectural styles (7)
- Unique retail and retail bones – façades, awnings, windows (7)
- Redevelopment opportunity – 907, 909 and 911 (2)

Block challenge:

- Transportation – take buses off, streetcar, remove/modify parking (6)
- Disparate ownership/ lack of shared vision (4)
- Coordinated effort/management of vision (4)
- Vacant buildings (2)

Preserve:

- Historic buildings/scale/character (4)
- Great Streets/Street amenities – wider sidewalks, trees, granite material (4)
- Relationship to other blocks (2)
- Retail (2)

Change:

- Vacant buildings (3)
- First floor uses/design (3)
- Parking – parallel (2)
- Public order issues (2)

Add:

- Sidewalk/pedestrian amenities – wider sidewalks, lights in trees, art, seating (6)
- Plants/color (2)

Short-term improvements:

- Landscaping – plants, flowers, baskets gardens (7)
- Sidewalk realm – outdoor cafés, shade, permit modifications, chairs, lights in trees (6)
- Retail – street vendors, restaurants, street fair (5)
- Art – visual art, temporary art on abandoned buildings, live music (3)

Long-term improvements:

- Retail – strengthen, diversify, create a destination (8)
- Great Streets/Transit – wider sidewalks, parallel/ no parking, rail more green, more trees (7)
- Redevelopment opportunities – boarded up buildings (3)

Can do tomorrow:

- Create activity – events, tours, jogging (3)
- Clean-up vacant façades (2)
- Advocate – rail; incentives (2)

1000 BLOCK- SUMMARY

What do you like best about this block?

- Historic Buildings/Views of the Capitol (8)
- Greenspace – pocket parks, Capitol grounds (4)
- Activity tied to seasons (1)

Block characteristics/function:

- Point of entry – front porch to the Capitol/ Congress (6)
- Visitors, sightseeing, information point, civic center (5)
- Open space/pocket parks – programmable and engaging spaces (3)
- Redevelopment opportunities (1)

Block challenge:

- Transportation – making it effective, heavy use (2)
- Multiple governmental entities and stakeholders (2)
- Making it senior friendly, emphasizing history – state and city themes (1)

Preserve:

- Views to the Capitol
- Historic Buildings
- Parks – pocket parks and open space

Change:

- Parking lot/open space (4)
- Transit – move buses, parallel parking, great streets (4)
- Blank walls and dark windows (2)

Add:

- More places to sit/rest (3)
- Signage and wayfinding (3)
- Plants and color (2)

Short-term improvements:

- Landscaping – plant colorful plants, hanging baskets (5)
- Improve pocket parks – plantings, clean, seating, programming (4)
- Enhance/move bus stop – clean, more seating (3)

Long-term improvements:

- Great Streets – wider sidewalks, parallel parking, lights in trees, pedestrian amenities (5)
- Storefront/retail engagement (5)
- Public space – program, redesign, add art (5)
- Redevelopment of NE corner (4)

Can do tomorrow:

- Meet with jurisdictional partners – city, state, county
- Put tourist information at the Old Bakery
- Talk with business owners about taking ownership of their space
- Plant planters

Charrette participants

The following individuals participated in the February 2010 charrette. Each team was led by a volunteer facilitator and a volunteer note taker.

100 BLOCK

Katherine Nicely, *Facilitator*
Julie Fitch, *Note Taker*
Jeb Boyt
Barksdale English
Jerry Harris
Lori Kline
Michael Knox
Richard MacKinnon
Susan Rankin
Tom Schurr
Charles Vaclavik

200 BLOCK

Daniel Woodroffe, *Facilitator*
Marisa Ballas, *Note Taker*
Linda Atkins
Kevin Burns
Lee Einsweiler
Fred Evans
Tim Finley
Glenn Gadbois
David Juarez
Eleanor McKinney
Amanda Taylor
Aaron Vollmer
300 Block
Facilitator – Roger Cauvin
Note Taker – Bill Brice
Boone Blocker
Janis Daemmrich
Mary Davidson
Gordon Derr
Charlie Fulton
Marshall Jones
Jana McCann
Stephanie McDonald
Alex Pope
Amanda Swor

400 BLOCK

Greg Anderson, *Facilitator*
Larry Schooler, *Note Taker*
Megan Crigger
Katherine Gregor
Ann Jacobson
Howard Lazarus
Andrew Moore
Judy Moss
John Rosato
Sania Shifferd
Andy Smith

500 BLOCK

Ryan Keathley, *Facilitator*
Linda Asaf, *Note Taker*
Glenn Coleman
Sue Edwards
Robert Hinojosa
John Horton
Michelle Perez
Mike Reynolds
Tom Stacy
Jessica Thompson
Michele Van Hyfte

600 BLOCK

Effie Brunson, *Facilitator*
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MICHAEL KNOX for his countless hours of photographing Congress Avenue and downtown Austin

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