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**Economic
Development**
CITY OF AUSTIN



Souly Austin is a place-based economic development program within the City's Economic Development Department focused on retaining strong, vibrant, culturally rich and diverse neighborhood business districts throughout Austin. Under the initiative, business owners receive a flexible set of tools to assist in the formation of merchants associations and organized commercial districts. A vibrant commercial district offers a range of goods, services and amenities that are essential to a socially and economically healthy Austin.

WHAT IS A MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION?

A Merchants Association is a group of business owners that exist to anchor and stabilize neighborhood businesses around beautification efforts, marketing and promotions, business retention, and economic development activities within a commercial district. A Merchants Association is formed when business owners come together to develop a collective vision and establish a set of bylaws that help guide the association.

BENEFITS OF FORMING A MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

- A unified voice for the neighborhood business district merchants
- Association leads positive change and helps advance the business district vision
- Association communicates business needs
- A collective voice with the City of Austin, partners and stakeholders

WHO CAN FORM A MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION?

Businesses of all types are eligible to participate in the Souly Austin program. Successful associations are built around engaged and proactive leaders within their business community, who are able to organize, communicate, and advocate for their district.

SOULY AUSTIN CORE COMPONENTS



Community Organizing: Outreach and education to business in commercial districts to then assist in the formation of a district merchant association that guides the district and helps accomplish its district vision and priorities.



Economic Growth: Promoting socially and economically healthy neighborhood business districts through program, projects, and policies that support business development, while also collaborating with other City departments and fostering partnerships.



Enhancing Place: Through district beautification, the development of a district economic strategy, and promoting and retaining cultural and historical assets, striving to create complete communities.