

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Description:

The project would be completed by city staff, students from Sacramento State University (CSUS), community partners (see support pledge attachment), and a consulting team selected through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The RFP would provide maximum competition, consideration of minority and women-owned businesses, and emphasize the need for African American community leaders and subject-matter expert participation.

City Staff and Community Partners Scope of Work:

Research: History students from CSUS and volunteers from other partner organizations would gather secondary and primary source material about the Black experience in specific neighborhoods. Students would organize the information and provide it to the consultant to support development of the thematic historic context document.

Oral Histories: Working with partner organizations, staff will identify key community leaders and informal historians in the African American community. Students from CSUS will meet with interested individuals and conduct up to 15 oral history interviews, process those interviews, and provide them to the consultant for inclusion as part of the final document.

Community Outreach: Community outreach and engagement is fundamental to creating a credible, successful, and fully useful product that will empower effective preservation planning efforts by the city, with support from its citizens. The public outreach effort would be a partnership between staff and the project partners who have deep roots in the African American community. The outreach team would hold community workshops and publicize the project on conventional and social media with the goal of achieving broad-based community ownership of the project's concept and deliverables.

Survey Component: City staff would work with students and faculty at CSUS to conduct property-specific research and prepare at least 15 individual historic property evaluations based on research and survey methodology developed by the consulting team. If called for in the methodology, city GIS staff could develop and deploy a survey digital application to facilitate the survey.

Consultant Scope of Work:

Research: The consultant would conduct historical research, and combine their research with student materials, and provide the information to the city's GIS staff for geo-spatial sorting. The amount of additional research may vary depending on the resources provided by students and the community.

Historic Context Statement: The consultant would be responsible for preparing a preliminary context outline to aid CSUS students during the project's early stages and a final context document. The final document would provide a foundation for the identification significant individuals, key events, and an evaluation of places and sites associated with the African American community. This document would assist the city with placemaking efforts already underway. The context would be an analytical framework for identifying and evaluating resources and sites, rather than a chronological recitation of significant events. The context would include a direct and precise narrative explaining what aspects of geography, history, and culture significantly shaped the physical development of Sacramento's Black cultural landscape, establish significant property types, and establish significance and integrity criteria. Further, the document would establish tangible and intangible characteristics and patterns that are important representations of the African American experience. The survey and oral history components of the project would be appended to the final report, to memorialize the community memories.

Survey Component: Consultants would be responsible for preparing a survey methodology for use by CSUS students and be responsible for reviewing and processing final survey documents to ensure a high standard of project deliverables. The methodology would describe both reconnaissance and intensive level survey methods for important neighborhoods, including but not limited to the Central City, Oak Park, and Del Paso Boulevard neighborhoods, along with subdivisions marketed to Blacks in the recent past (e.g., Glen Elder Tract, Eichler Tract in South Land Park Hills). The methodology would target potentially eligible resources based on the criteria established by the historic context, while the intensive survey would identify and evaluate at least 15 resources that appear eligible for listing on the national, state, and/or local historic registers.

Other Responsibilities: The historic consultant would be required for coordinating with staff on a regular basis; participating in four presentations to students at CSUS; making presentations at three community workshops; making two presentations to the city's Preservation Commission; and one presentation to the City Council.

Overall Scope of Work:

The City's Planning Division is currently engaged in a larger effort to identify, serve, and celebrate minority and marginalized communities in Sacramento. The development of a Black Historic Context and Survey would be an integral component of supporting this citywide effort.

Some examples of these efforts include:

- The identification and nomination of historic landmarks associated with minority groups, including the Nathaniel Colley Law office and Residence, the James Dodd Residence, and the Nisei VFW Hall.
- The inclusion of a goals and policies to support identifying historic places associated with minority and marginalized communities in the Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the 2040 General Plan.
- The inclusion of Environmental Justice component in the 2040 General Plan.
- Placemaking efforts focused at celebrating the contributions of African Americans and other people of color as part of redevelopment efforts along the city's underserved commercial corridors.

Project Timetable:

- Grant Awarded/Contract Signed: June-July 2021
- RFP/Consultant Process: August-September 2021
- Project Initial Outreach: September-October 2021
- CSUS Research/Oral Histories: September-October 2021
- Workshop #1/HPC Meeting #1: October-November 2021
- Additional Research/Draft Historic Context: October-January 2022
- Workshop #2: February 2022
- CSUS Historic Survey Work: April-May 2022
- Workshops #3/HPC Meeting #2: May-June 2022
- Final Draft/City Council Adoption: June-August 2022

Future Plans:

Upon completion the city will have three resources to use for future planning efforts:

1. Primary source material such as historic photographs, 15 oral histories, and newspaper articles;
2. The African American/Black Historic Context Statement; and
3. Windshield Survey and Individual Property Evaluations.

The primary source material can be used in our placemaking efforts identified as part of the 2040 General Plan goals and policies aimed at celebrating the people, places, and sites associated with minority communities, including the Black community.

The historic context statement will be utilized in our current and long-range planning function to identify buildings and sites with potential significance to the Black community early in the planning process, so that those places can be evaluated and preserved prior to a development proposal.

The windshield survey would be used as part of our current planning process to help identify potentially eligible sites associated with the Black community. The individual property evaluations would be nominated for listing on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources. Staff been in the process of nominating properties such as the Nathaniel Colley Law Offices, Nathaniel Colley's former residence, and the home of James Dodd to the Sacramento Register.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Anticipated outcomes include preservation planning and public education. The planning component focuses on historic identification and recognition of African American contributions in the community. The project's educational components include interpretation of important people, places, and events. A key project goal is to inspire the creation of new platforms supporting community memory through events, school curricula, the development of interpretative placemaking concepts, or other means.

Success would be measured in the short term by active participation by the community in the project development, and in the long term by the new educational platforms utilized by the city and community.

Financial Sustainability:

The Planning Division is currently engaged a long-term commitment to identify, serve, and celebrate minority communities in Sacramento. The creation of an African American Historic Context and Survey would enable a systematic approach to identify, preserve, and protect the places of significance in the Black community. Moving forward, this effort would be sustained chiefly through our long range and current planning efforts funded through both the city's general fund and development impact fees.