



## South Congress Business District

The South Congress District is an eclectic collection of retail and dining that offers an experience for locals and visitors.

CITY COUNCIL  
DISTRICT:

9

South of Lady Bird Lake, the South Congress business district stretches from Live Oak all the way to Riverside Drive; this iconic Austin avenue offers a gorgeous view of the Texas Capitol, and some of the best shopping, dining and people-watching in town. South Congress, dubbed by locals as SoCo, is nationally known for eclectic retail offerings; Allen's Boots keeps shoppers on their toes in finely handcrafted leather cowboy boots, while Lucy in Disguise with Diamonds is rumored to be a favorite shopping haunt of celebrated musician Bob Dylan.

Located in the music capital of Texas, South Congress doesn't disappoint; the Continental Club plays host to both local and touring acts, while Guero's Oak Garden offers a laid back, outdoor music experience.

There's no shortage of delicious food on South Congress, where locals can enjoy tried and true favorites at Magnolia Cafe and Jo's Coffee. For fine dining, Botticelli's serves up exquisite Italian cuisine, while South Congress Hotel's Otoko offers patrons an authentic Japanese Omakase experience.

SoCo locals enjoy all the amenities this beautiful district has to offer, such as alternative fitness services at Somaspace, and a haircut and a shave at Birds Barbershop.

South Congress is the backdrop for local life in Austin and continues to keep its "weird" vibe, proving that even in a changing city, some things stay the same.

## About Souly Austin

Souly Austin is a place-based economic development program focused on creating and retaining strong, vibrant, culturally rich and diverse neighborhood business districts throughout Austin. Neighborhood business districts contribute to the soul and economic vibrancy of Austin. They provide access to jobs, day to day services and amenities, entertainment, food, culture, history, community and more.

Offering tools and resources to businesses to form their own neighborhood business district merchants association, the Souly Austin approach serves as a model to build capacity, consensus and a vision for these districts that contribute to the soul and economic vibrancy of Austin.

# Outreach

Souly Austin provides an all-inclusive approach to building capacity and consensus in neighborhood business districts. Through robust outreach and education business leaders are cultivated and relationships and partnerships are developed to support the formation of district merchants associations.



**TRAINING  
HOURS: 5**



**BUSINESS  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS: 205**



**EXPENSES:  
\$79,273**



**MEDIA  
HITS: 4**



## South Congress Merchants Association

The South Congress Merchants Association began working with the Souly Austin program in 2016 and formed their association in 2017.

|                                             |     |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of Businesses in District            | 107 |
| Number of Rounds of Outreach                | 3   |
| Number of Meetings                          | 6   |
| Number of Steering Committee/Board Meetings | 3   |
| Number of Partners                          | 3   |
| Active Participation to Date*               | 90% |

Since outreach began, four (4) businesses have closed, relocated, or consolidated operations outside the District.

\*Active participation refers to percentage of businesses that have attended meetings, voted in Board elections, or district names/key priorities, participated in major events through Souly program, or are members of Merchant Association. Data collected and updated by the City of Austin's Economic Development Department in July 2018.

## Contact Information

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Website: [VisitSoCo.com](http://VisitSoCo.com)

## Follow Us

 Facebook: @SouthCongress

 Instagram: @SouthCongressATX

 Twitter: @SouthCongress

#southcongress #southcongressatx #soco  
#socoatx

## Partnerships

- Austin Transportation Department
- Public City
- Public Works Department
- South Congress Preservation and Improvement District







407,634  
COMMERCIAL  
SQUARE FOOTAGE



43  
ESTIMATED JOBS  
IN THE DISTRICT



107  
BUSINESSES  
IN THE DISTRICT



LEGACY  
BUSINESSES

Allens Boots  
DCW Properties  
Guero's Taco Bar  
Hudson Meats  
Long's Vacuum and Appliance  
Lucy in Disguise  
Yard Dog



\$346,641,707  
PROPERTY TAX  
INFORMATION  
(2018)

3

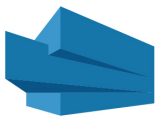
CULTURAL &  
HISTORIC ASSETS



\$1,113,765  
SALES TAX  
INFORMATION  
(2018)

Neighborhood business districts play a critical role in meeting the needs of our community. When Austin fosters vibrant and successful neighborhood business districts, social, economic and community benefits can be produced. Benefits and economic outcomes of neighborhood business districts locally and nationwide have included:

- Increase in sales and taxes
- Increase in pedestrian and bike activity
- Access to day to day services and amenities
- Access to jobs and job creation opportunities
- Preserving and promoting history and culture
- Industry development including tourism and local entrepreneurs
- Attracting and retaining talent
- Decreased Crime
- Lower vacancy rates



Economic  
Development  
CITY OF AUSTIN

## Discover South Congress



Banners



Eclectic Dining and Live Music Venues



Renowned Boutique Shopping



Iconic Murals

# South Congress District Priorities

The South Congress Merchants Association is working to maintain and preserve the heritage of its diverse neighborhood while promoting growth. It's focused on affordability and retention of creative and small business; building loyal repeat patronage from surrounding neighborhoods; resolving the issues of parking shortages; creating shared cultural events and collaborating with local artists to create distinctive public art.

## Public Right of Way Enhancements

Improving the public right-of-way is a major priority for businesses. This includes improving pedestrian and bike connectivity and safety, as well as aesthetic enhancements to reinforce a shared district identity. South Congress merchants are working to enhance pedestrian connections to their District, maintain district identity banners, and implement creative placemaking projects in the right-of-way.



## Retention, Preservation and Affordability

Preserving small businesses and cultural venues is a major concern for leaders in the District. Increasing rents and taxes make it difficult for small, local businesses and cultural venues to thrive. Business leaders want to ensure that their District is affordable for retailers, restaurants, and venues, and this is of paramount importance in the retention of legacy businesses such as Lucy in Disguise and Yard Dog. South Congress leaders are especially concerned about rents and taxes driving out the District's eclectic mix of small, local businesses, with only large corporate retailers able to afford property prices.

## Business District Identity

Developing shared events and place branding is important to businesses in the District. They want to reinforce public perception of their District as a local hub for culture and commerce. Their successful events include the district-wide First Thursdays, which businesses want to reinforce and promote to local visitors. This event strengthens the strong perception of South Congress as a major center for small, local retail in Austin.

## Traffic and Parking Management

Businesses want to ensure that their traffic and parking resources support a prosperous business district. They want safer traffic conditions and adequate parking for their customers and workers. They also want improved transit options, including circulators for patrons. South Congress merchants are especially concerned with the tremendous growth of resident-only parking around their district, and are seeking creative solutions to meet their parking needs.

