

# Round Rock

# 20 30

DEVELOPING **OUR** FUTURE

## POLCO HISTORIC PRESERVATION SURVEY REPORT



**ROUND ROCK TEXAS**  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



## INTRODUCTION

The City conducted its third phase of public input for *Round Rock 2030* from mid-April through mid-June using Polco, an online public engagement tool. During National Preservation month, staff posted a historic preservation survey to both educate the public about the City's historic preservation program and to gather input for the update to the City's historic preservation plan that will be incorporated into the comprehensive plan, *Round Rock 2030*.

A brief overview of historic preservation in Round Rock was provided at the beginning of the survey to help familiarize respondents with survey content. Respondents were then encouraged to answer a series of questions related to historic preservation. There were six questions in the survey, but participants were only required to answer questions 1, 2, and 5 in order to submit the survey. Questions 3, 4, and 6 were open-ended.

**Context:** Did you know May is National Historic Preservation Month? One part of Round Rock 2030, the City's Comprehensive Plan, is the City's 10-year historic preservation plan. This survey is designed to gather public input on the city's historic preservation program to incorporate into *Round Rock 2030*.



*(The Nelson Hardware Building at 201 E. Main Street, shortly after its construction in 1900. The Nelson Hardware Building in 2015.)*

Preservation Program: The City of Round Rock has a historic preservation program. Round Rock's historic preservation ordinance was adopted in 1979. The primary parts of Round Rock's historic preservation program are:

- Designating city historic landmarks and historic districts
- Advising owners of historic properties about how to appropriately preserve historic integrity
- Conducting project reviews of proposed alterations to historic landmarks
- Managing a partial property tax exemption program to incentivize maintenance of historic properties
- Educating the public about Round Rock's history and the City's preservation program

Designated historic landmarks: Round Rock currently has 79 city-designated historic landmarks, of which:

- 27 are commercial buildings, including the 25 buildings in the Round Rock Commercial Historic District (a National Register district) downtown
- 46 are houses (may have been converted to office or commercial use)
- 6 are other types of landmarks (e.g. the round rock, the water tower, etc.)
- 37 are also designated by the State of Texas and/or National Trust for Historic Preservation (including the 25 buildings in the Round Rock Commercial Historic District)

Just because a property is designated as a historic landmark does not ensure preservation. A historic landmark is threatened if its historic integrity is compromised through alteration or demolition.

Historic resources: Historic resources are districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are typically older than 50 years old. They are significant to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and/or culture. Typical examples include buildings, bridges, cemeteries, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, and natural or geological features.



*(The historic Stagecoach Inn during the relocation process in April 2018)*

The City has a city-wide survey which identifies many properties older than 50 years old, which have not been designated as local historic landmarks. Since the survey was conducted in 1992, some properties have been altered or demolished making them no longer eligible for designation. Additionally, more properties have now reached 50 years of age and may be eligible but have not been identified.

The City's preservation program primarily revolves around project review. Other entities participate in and support preservation-related activities, such as non-profit Round Rock Preservation and the Williamson Museum.

City staff recently gave a presentation to City Council about Round Rock's historic preservation program, which provides a more in-depth overview of the program. If you have questions about the City's historic preservation program, please visit [roundrocktexas.gov/historicpreservation](http://roundrocktexas.gov/historicpreservation)

## **SURVEY DATA SUMMARY**

- **229** Respondents
- **252** Comments
- **44%** of respondents were unaware that Round Rock has a historic preservation program prior to the survey
- **89%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that preservation of historic buildings benefits the City
- Generally respondents were concerned about the preservation of the water tower, the rock, downtown, Chisholm Trail, Kenney Fort, and open spaces
- Respondents think the City should allocate funding to maintain and restore City-owned historic properties and for the establishment of a historic archive

**Disclaimer:** The following document is non-interactive and is only intended for reference purposes. The content of this report provides the description and results from the Polco Historic Preservation Survey. Comments were recorded verbatim from Polco as entered by respondents.

# RESULTS

## 1. Prior to this survey, did you know that Round Rock has a historic preservation program?

Choices: Yes or No

All Respondents		
Options	Count	Percent
Yes	129	56%
No	100	44%
<b>Total</b>	229	100%

Registered Voters in Round Rock, TX		
Options	Count	Percent
Yes	91	57%
No	70	43%
<b>Total</b>	161	100%

Live in Round Rock, TX - Self-reported		
Options	Count	Percent
Yes	127	56%
No	98	44%
<b>Total</b>	227	100%

**2. How strongly do you agree that the preservation of historic properties in Round Rock benefits the City culturally, educationally, and economically?**

**Choices:** Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree

<b>All Respondents</b>		
<b>Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly agree	136	60%
Agree	68	30%
Neutral	15	6%
Disagree	6	2%
Strongly disagree	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	229	100%

<b>Registered Voters in Round Rock, TX</b>		
<b>Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly agree	97	60%
Agree	50	31%
Neutral	9	6%
Disagree	2	1%
Strongly disagree	3	2%
<b>Total</b>	161	100%

<b>Live in Round Rock, TX - Self-reported</b>		
<b>Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly agree	134	60%
Agree	66	29%
Neutral	15	7%
Disagree	6	2%
Strongly disagree	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	225	100%

**3. What designated historic landmarks in Round Rock do you think are the most threatened? What are these threats?**

**RESPONSES**

Downtown Round Rock has become nothing but bars. Need to hang the politicians responsible for this desecration.
The historic cemetery & slave cemetery on Sam Bass Rd. The slave cemetery headstones are busted & kicked around. The property is ill kept and sections up front are loaded w/memorabilia turned junk. Plus the neighbor adjacent to slave cemetery keeps his lot so I'll kept, it grows through the fence
Water tower
Not sure
Quick Hill Rd site of Texas Chainsaw Massacre film. Revitalize site open Chainsaw BBQ Bar and grill. A place like Hanover's at the top of the hill. A haunted house during Halloween time.
Don't know
I don't know.
not aware of any threats to historic landmarks
Old Town area and buildings, The Flats,
The oldest neighborhood Old RR The Plat/ The Flats City government
The buildings near increasing high speed traffic.
The actual Round Rock. It's the crossing for The Chisholm Trail. And it's on this little tiny road with no proper signage.
Houses near downtown that are in disrepair and not kept up. Also, I do not believe that turning historic houses into commercial is a good method of preservation.
historic buildings and farms. terrified we'll lose any open space
Palm House, Main Street. The threat is developers and and an over-zealous city council that wants to develop every empty piece of land while disregarding parks and open space.
the round rock
the round rock - people jumping on it
The water tower and the round rock
None because outside of just having "old stuff" there is really nothing of historical importance to Round Rock. The Immortal 10 Bridge and the Round Rock are the two most historically relevant historic structures.
Facilities that were once homes are at greatest risk. Some have been moved out of Round Rock and others have been moved for development such as one of the old buildings on Sam Bass and Chisholm Trail on the SE corner for the shopping center in the 1980s. The best example is what is now a business west of May's on Bagdad on a southeast corner. It had unique-to-Round Rock features architecturally but because it was somewhat changed the city allowed it to be totally

<p>changed. Then there is the current painting of the brick on the Nelson mansion and the unnecessary fight to save the core of the Stagecoach Inn. The city supposedly wanted to tear it down. Not sure what happened to the Mexican school. Chisholm Trail should be declared an Historic District and assist the Museum in preserving the facilities, go back and redo the sidewalks which were done in the 1990s so the area is walkable safely. The sidewalk brickwork and overhanging branches are hazardous. And some parking near the Stagecoach building should be created perhaps as a grant to the Stagecoach Inn owner so people can park and walk along that area north of Brushy Creek. And finish the bathing beach for heaven's sake.</p>
<p>The slave quarters at the mansion. I think it was part of history but because of it being a slaves quarters it was removed.</p>
<p>NA</p>
<p>Down town round rock and Sam bass</p>
<p>Round Rock, Water Tower and old Round Rock homes. Visitor destruction(taking tophies), lack of sufficient preventative maintenance on most structures(esp metal) and pest and insect damage to older homes.</p>
<p>The water tower; downtown buildings; the Nelson mansion</p>
<p>I think Main Street has been kept, but I worry about the Craftsmen and Victorians in the area.</p>
<p>Unknown</p>
<p>None</p>
<p>None of them are important enough to care.</p>
<p>older homes and businesses</p>
<p>Not sure</p>
<p>-</p>
<p>Rural roadways and farmland</p>
<p>They're all threatened because as we run out of land to stuff businesses and housing developments on, they become fodder for destruction to make way for "economic progress</p>
<p>the ones downtown the threats are demolition</p>
<p>The Mansion and other buildings downtown. Texas Baptist Children's home.</p>
<p>Downtown buildings, rapid urbanization</p>
<p>Not sure</p>
<p>the round rock and creek. under development and not the right development</p>
<p>The Nelson Hardware Buildin- you practically got a mini 6th street next to each other man pee on the side of buildings people vandalized buildings with graffiti</p>
<p>Not sure</p>
<p>Didn't know about the program but I do now and support their mission and support expanding it</p>
<p>CD Fulkes, the old high school and all the history that goes with it.</p>
<p>All of them. Rats.</p>
<p>The rock, the "skyscraper" water tower, much of downtown, Brushy Creek and access to it</p>
<p>Main street and the Round Rock</p>
<p>Unsure</p>

Structures in Old Town because funds for maintenance and restoration falls on the shoulders of citizens and non-profit entities.
The rock
The Round Rock itself is threatened regularly, with erosion and water damage.
The Round Rock Defacing
Kinney Fort area. Corporate buildings
The Round Rock
Unsure.
The Samson House and the Old Log Cabin in Old Town. The Old Log Cabin is collapsing and the Samson House is vacant and starting to show the signs of neglect where the stones in the structure need repointed.
I was sad to see the brick of the Nelson-Crier House/Woodbine painted. The new commercial owners of that property made irreversible changes with what appeared from the outside as no waiting period. I think I would call the threat "The Magnolia Effect"—where popular television equates remodeling or renovation with restoration.
don t know
Chisholm Trail area
The rock
Not sure
The Round Rock - erosion and defacement.
The Round Rock. Erosion.
N/A
Not sure
?
Downtown. Losing the old small town feel.
Not certain
The Round Rock and Chisholm Trail area. Also, the "bluff" and old-town RR. Commercialization of the areas adjacent to downtown, along with all the bars. Not a good move for our city...in my opinion. These areas need to remain residential and family friendly. That's just my opinion.
Commercial historic district
Downtown
There is a landmark on Highway 79, near where they are building the new Kalahari Resort. This landmark I believe would be in jeopardy of being "lost," to everyone. Is there a way to bring The Double File Trail Landmark more into Public View and knowledge?
houses turned into businesses
The Round Rock, ensuring it is not damaged/vandalized, and making the area around it more visible to the city. Also the downtown area, keeping the businesses thriving but buildings in good condition...similar to how Georgetown has been doing.
I am not educated on this topic enough to comment.
Unknown

The old settlers association village.
Structural destruction
Downtown/Main Street area homes
Downtown area. I like to make sure that the integrity of the historic buildings are protected.
Meh.
N/A
The Round Rock. Too many people stand on it and mess with it
Unknown
Downtown
I don't know of any since stage coach inn was moved.
The round rock—erosion.
Not for sure which ones are threatened, but I'm sure city expansion and construction is a huge threat.
bats under I35
Farm houses and land
Sadly I don't know.
Unknown
The big house just east of downtown - it is supposed to become an events center. Also, the Owen house on the Chisholm trail
Downtown is threatened by a lack of infrastructure and continued development.
The forests and parks
Not enough Kenney Fort markers in that area where it used to stand and not much on double file trail
Houses/bldgs and natural sires such as land and trees
The Round Rock. With sitting in the water that no doubt wears it down and the multitude of people that climb on it for whatever purpose.
I don't know
I don't know.N
Chisholm Trail / Round Rock area....down town/ Donuts, RRHS stadium
As I said it is unimportant.
The entire downtown area. Our current leaders have one thing in mind...seeing just how many bars they can bring into town and making downtown Round Rock a little 6th Street. It makes me want to vomit.
The stage coach building (as was very important to the foundation of Round Rock, the actual Round Rock land mark we are names for, the remnants of the Train Bridge, and the view of the Balconies Fault line that is visible from some of Round Rock. These are unique and distinctive features that are being lost to developers who have no vested interest in the culture or heritage of this amazing city. Please preserve it and see that Round Rock stays the beautiful gem it is ment to be. The 20 year development plan in the city looks to force gentrification and will dissolve the beautiful spirit we have here. Please consider carefully the impact that the recent changes have

had on the city at large. We are seeing more intoxicated drivers and more malicious mischief as a result of the pushed increase in bars and decreasing the shopping and boutiques on Main street. It is also a huge risk to our Family Value image as well as to the historical building that make our city so beautiful.
The Rock, chisholm trail. Vandilism.
The Round Rock flooding erosion and pollution.
Chisholm trail from Old Sam Bass to 620
Nothing.
The Round Rock. Potential damage from historic flooding.

**4. Are there historic resources not currently designated as historic landmarks that should be preserved?**

**RESPONSES**

Yes
Na
Quick Hill Rd site of Texas Chainsaw Massacre film
Don't know
I don't know
not that I am aware of
Same in that area possibly
Yes MANY
I honestly do not know.
See comments on the Round Rock
Not that I'm aware of
Nope.
Some are mentioned above. The HPC should have an inventory and that committee needs to be more visible.
The old buildings by the round rock.
I don't know
I don't know of any.
not sure
Not that I know of.
Unknown
Water tower and the Round Rock
None.
Education of the historic landmarks.
-
Unknown
Wouldn't know. No one advertises their existence or makes a big enough deal out of them to care.
the round rock water tower.
I don't know
Not sure
no clue
All should be
Not sure
See answer to question 4

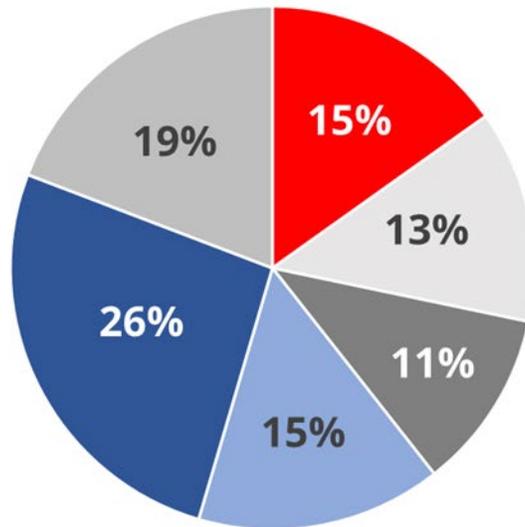
Yes the old High School now known as CD Fulkes.
Probably
Unsure
I'm not sure.
Not that I know.
Kenny Fort Site
Not that I know
The answer has to be yes. As each year goes by, additional 50 year structures become eligible for designation as historic properties.
Is the big tree at the Methodist church protected? The Round Rock? Those are irreplaceable
don't know
Not sure
I think the landmarks that are being preserved are appropriate
No, our City is good at this.
Not Sure.
N/A
Not sure
The round rock
Not certain
I can't answer this...not informed enough.
Not to my knowledge.
I am not sure about here. I have only been a resident for about three and a half years now.
n/a
Probably.
Yes, Round Rock's beautiful open green fields and forests MUST be preserved and not paved over or "developed."
I am not educated on this topic enough to comment.
Unknown
The lightning rod house on the Kalahari property
Meh.
N/A
Not that I can think of.
Unknown
I don't think so.
Sadly, I don't know. I should.
Unknown
The various stone houses around town that seem to be in the "hispanic" sections - over by Brushy Creek on the west side of town (by the bridge) and in the east side - in the "flats"
yes
Kenney Fort

Not sure.
Not that I know of.
probably, not sure
No.
Not that I am aware of, but I feel we should do more to preserve the scenery and natural beauty of Round Rock, as the wild flowers and lush plains are a very important part of the cultural value we hold. I am very sad to see the destruction of the open feilds and the froested areas around Sam Bass park and the Dell Diamond. It had greatly damaged the image of the city as well as the charm. Soon Round Rock will be absorbed in to Austin and will lose all individuality and charm.
I do not think so.
I do not know
No.
No

**5. Which of the following historic preservation programming options should the City allocate the most resources to?**

*For this question, respondents were given 100 points and were asked to allocate the points to six different programming options.*

**Allocation of funding for historic preservation programming (all respondents)**



- Education of City's history and historic preservation program
- Preservation planning- updating historic resource surveys, design guidelines, etc.
- Designation of eligible properties
- Financial incentives and technical assistance for historic property owners
- Restoration and maintenance of city-owned historic properties
- Establishing an archive of historic documents, photos, and other pertinent historic materials

<b>All Respondents</b>		
<b>Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Education of City's history and historic preservation program	3,378	15%
Preservation planning- updating historic resource surveys, design guidelines, etc.	2,987	13%
Designation of eligible properties	2,618	11%
Financial incentives and technical assistance for historic property owners	3,506	15%
Restoration and maintenance of city-owned historic properties	6,050	26%
Establishing an archive of historic documents, photos, and other pertinent historic materials	4,361	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,900</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Registered Voters in Round Rock, TX</b>		
<b>Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Education of City's history and historic preservation program	2263	14%
Preservation planning- updating historic resource surveys, design guidelines, etc.	2101	13%
Designation of eligible properties	1897	12%
Financial incentives and technical assistance for historic property owners	2586	16%
Restoration and maintenance of city-owned historic properties	4149	26%
Establishing an archive of historic documents, photos, and other pertinent historic materials	3103	19%
<b>Total</b>	16,100	100%

<b>Live in Round Rock, TX - Self-reported</b>		
<b>Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Education of City's history and historic preservation program	3273	15%
Preservation planning- updating historic resource surveys, design guidelines, etc.	2942	13%
Designation of eligible properties	2578	11%
Financial incentives and technical assistance for historic property owners	3461	15%
Restoration and maintenance of city-owned historic properties	5935	26%
Establishing an archive of historic documents, photos, and other pertinent historic materials	4311	19%
<b>Total</b>	22,500	100%

**6. Do you have any additional comments about historic preservation in Round Rock?**

**RESPONSES**

Bring back Sam Bass
Anything historic should mandate maintenance routinely
no
Need more folks on board to do all you need to do.
Those with no money are overlooked No one knows that there actually was a minority population instrumental to Round Rock's history.
Keep it up because once those properties are gone we can not get them back!
Part of a city's integrity lies with its historic places. Without them and the people who created them, the city we see today would be much different. Also, do not shy away from the "darker", less admirable parts of our history. We should recognize them so we know what not to repeat.
Downtown buildings should not specifically be preserved, however I think the building facades could be preserved. I'd also recommend if downtown were redeveloped with preservation of facades, the space should be mixed-use commercial and residential. I understand that facadism is not preservation, but it's a good compromise
How do you make our population aware of all that is happening or planned in RR
There is nothing of real historical importance in Round Rock beyond what people want to hang on to for sentimental reasons, however as the demographics of the city continue to shift (safely over half of the residents of Round Rock are not native to the Austin area, probably over half are not native to Texas) real history where something of real importance that actually shaped the future/current laws and culture of Texas or the US happened (not Sally falling off the wagon and dying of malaria on the Oregon Trail) should be considered, if it was so and so's Grandfather who was a cattle thief was hung in front of this building-who cares?
The Williamson Museum may be more capable of expanding the archive. While libraries often take on this role it is less known if RR Public Library sees that as its mission to actively collect, catalog, and make available such resources.
Historic preservation should not prevent economic development but should enhance it.
No
Other than tax abatement what additional incentives were or are being offered to historical site owners/operators?
No
Historic preservation is a good and noble thing, and should be undertaken and funded voluntarily by interested citizens. Historic preservation is not an appropriate use of city resources, except to preserve and maintain city-owned property that it is actively using for city business. The city should encourage a group or groups of private citizens to come forward to

take up the task of historic preservation, then divest itself of any historic properties that it is not actively using.
No
Quite wasting millions moving dilapidated old buildings that no one but a few cuckoos care about. Huge waste of taxpayer \$\$\$
Don't waste resources on preserving landmark of the past, go all in on building landmarks of the future.
It's important that we understand the history of community.
Do you honestly care? Any historical integrity becomes moot when the structure is in the way of developing some new business or housing development. This whole thing is a joke.
Let's do what we can to preserve our history.
I don't know enough to answer some of these questions to priority.
Don't remove historic landmarks and relocate to another site. That ruins the historic perspective of the site and/or structure.
None
No.
Need to make it clearer where these are
Why is this publicly funded? If people want to preserve historical buildings they can crowd fund it. There is absolutely no reason for people to get a fat gov't paycheck for something that DIRECT crowd funding should handle.
Historic preservation in Round Rock should be a priority. This focus will lead to economic development and tourism for our city.
None
No
The City Historic Preservation Office needs at least 2 extra employees to enhance the program. The City needs to annually provide funds from the Hotel Occupancy Taxes for Historic Preservation efforts.\$25K won't go far but it would be a start to enhancing the capabilities of historic preservation within our great city.
Keep up the good work
Downtown is becoming an adult bar area, we need more shops, more like Georgetown
no
Preserving the past is the most vital part of our future.
Not at this time.
No
No
No
I think leaders in the last 20+ years have done a good job preserving the heritage of Round Rock. While it is important to remember the past we must keep abreast of the social issues that impact the people of today.
No

No
At this time all i have to say, is that since I have moved here. I have loved learning about my surrounding area and the rich history that is so abundant.
I think your downtown commercial Buildings should be required to have higher quality, modern signage to make the whole area more attractive to people. The current limitations have made many owners skip signage or get cheap signage.
Keep Round Rock a small town with much open green, undeveloped spaces.
I do not know if you deal with this area...the hideous Oncor, Spectrum, At&t wiring is greatly scarring the appearance of our city. Lines are draped from telephone poles to houses and businesses without any regulations on appearance. The careless stringing of internet lines is a ghastly eye soar.
Not at this time
Bring the well back to downtown.
I believe historical preservation is important to maintaining the character of the community. I think you should look at successful programs from other communities to inform your decisions. I don't really care about a particular programming option.
No
Keep Round Rock normal.
No
No
Keep up your good work.Many midwestern cities have destroyed much of thir history due to poor planning and lack of vision.
Change the name of Sam Bass Road, he was a criminal.
A lot of hidden history
No
No.
just this, the city sign/ display on the south bound interstate shoulder is silly. It looks like something that would fit in Colorado. Why would it have that harsh angled slate/rock? Why not a replica of "the Round Rock"? I guess this was funded by someone with a connection to the artist? Maybe I am missing the message the artist was attempting to send.
Question number 5 just above has no answer, such as not or none. I do not particularly care about preserving old buildings. I also would prefer them to remain intact.
The current leaders from the Mayor down should hang their heads in shame.
Please consider the future of the city and the rich history and the culture of family value. We are, as a city and community, at a very defining moment. What we choose can build or destroy our entire city and culture. By choosing preservation we can grow in a healthy and unique direction that nurtures family value, beauty, and community. Or we can sell out, lose what is unique about us, gentrify our citizens, and be annexed into Austin. Please keep Round Rock her own beautiful self.
Seems like the city planners did not start soon enough to preserve the historical buildings

Our kids can not afford to live in Round Rock. Stop spending money on crap. Teachers will complain - no matter what. I am med-low income. Soon, I cannot afford my 30 yr old house taxes.

No