



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Austin Arts Commission

Recommendation 20160222-5.a.x.-a: Request for support for the development and maintenance of affordable space

WHEREAS the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* identifies Austin's arts and entertainment scene as central to the city's identity and asserts that arts and entertainment are important elements of the city's economy which leverage additional economic growth (See also *Economic Prosperity IV*), and

WHEREAS the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* further declares that access to arts studio and performance space needs to be maintained, and

WHEREAS the *CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan* identifies that the challenge of affordable creative spaces of all types limits expansion of arts opportunities and creates an exodus of Austin's creative talent, and

WHEREAS *Imagine Austin Creative Policy 8* commits the city to expand access to affordable and functional studio, exhibition, performance and office space for arts organizations, artists and creative industry businesses, and

WHEREAS the Austin Arts Commission continues to hear growing concern from local artists about the affordability of live/work/creative/performance space in Austin, and

WHEREAS multiple performance spaces are being eliminated or under threat due to ending leases, rising rent costs and other development concerns, including, but not limited to, The Off Center, Salvage Vanguard Theatre and Ground Floor Theatre, and

WHEREAS galleries and small creative businesses such as Thornton Road Studios, 727Studios, Tillery Street Studios, and others face similar threats from development pressures, rising rents and gentrification, and

WHEREAS, as demonstrated through the Austin Music Census (2015) and the *Building Austin's Creative Capacity Needs Assessment*, Austin creative artists continue to face low incomes, challenges with affordable housing and lack of access to health care, and

WHEREAS the Mayor Steve Adler in his State of the City address (February 16, 2016) references the affordability crisis in Austin as significant enough to establish an Affordability Audit, and

WHEREAS, the Austin creative community through the Arts Commission now considers the loss of arts venues at crisis level,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin creative community, through the Arts Commission, encourages the Austin City Council to support, through any and all resources available, the development and maintenance of affordable creative live/work/studio/rehearsal/performance space. Resources may include, but are not limited to, allocation of city funds, the encouragement of public-private partnerships, the establishment of specific development areas, revisions to CODENext, and any and all other means within the Austin City Council's power deemed necessary to secure the growth, stability, and access of affordable live/work/studio/rehearsal/performance space for Austin artists.

Date of Approval: February 22, 2016

Record of the vote: 8-1; Commissioners Barnes, Nimura, Castillo, Polgar, Mok, Flores, Willenzik for; Commissioner White against; Commissioners McCain and Stillwell absent

Attest: Laura Gonzalez

(Staff or board member can sign)