



ARTS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20180319-6.a.i.

Date: March 21, 2018

Subject: Recommendation to support the Bond Election Advisory Task Force's \$67,500,000 Cultural Centers Bond recommendation and to include an additional \$25,000,000 for property purchase/ adaptive reuse for creative space in the 2018 Bond Package.

Motioned By: Commissioner Bears Fonte

Seconded By: Commissioner Jaime Castillo

Recommendation

The Arts Commission recommends that the City Council approve the proposed bond amount of \$67,500,000 for City of Austin Cultural Centers as recommended by the Bond Election Advisory Task Force. We further recommend, in light of the Omnibus Resolution and the continuing crisis in creative space availability, an additional allocation of \$25,000,000 in bond funds toward the purchase of property and adaptive reuse of a facility for creative space.

Description of Recommendation to Council

The Arts Commission supports the recommendations of the Bond Election Advisory Task Force's proposed \$67,500,000 in bonds for the city's cultural centers as follows:

- \$5,000,000 Asian American Cultural Center – primarily to be used to address identified needs at the center.*
- \$7,500,000 George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center – funds to be primarily used to address infrastructure, ADA requirements, update the master plan and renovations*
- \$15,000,000 Emma S. Barrientos Mexican-American Cultural Center – Phase II renovations to the existing facility*
- \$25,000,000 Dougherty Arts Center Project – to raze and replace the facility*
- \$15,000,000 Mexic-Arte Museum – Renovations, interior rebuild, and equipment upgrades*

The Arts Commission also recommends an additional \$25,000,000 be added to the 2018 bond package and be allocated to the purchase of property and adaptive reuse to bring new creative space to be utilized by multiple artists and arts organizations.

Rationale:

Austin's creative community is losing working, performance and exhibition space at an alarming rate. Over the last two years, the Arts Commission has heard repeatedly of the affordability challenges face by the local arts community. Multiple performance spaces have been eliminated or are under threat due to ending leases, rising rent costs and other development concerns. Galleries, artist studios, and small creative businesses face similar threats from development pressures, rising rents and gentrification. Longstanding visual arts institutions have recently learned that their leases will not be renewed.

The City of Austin has a strong commitment to the Cultural Arts Community. 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 further declares that access to arts studio and performance space needs to be maintained. *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. Creative Policy 9 promotes the creation of creative industry hubs

districts, and clusters, and Economic Policy 6 supports up-to-date infrastructure and adaptive reuse of buildings so local, small and creative businesses thrive and innovate.

In light of the current crisis, and the value of the creative sector that is recognized by our City Council, it is critical that we not only address the current infrastructure needs for our Cultural Centers, but also prioritize bringing additional creative spaces online. The Arts Commission greatly appreciates the significant work of the Austin City Council to date in support of the Austin creative community and offers this recommendation as a vital tool and the important next step in the process. This recommendation is consistent with and supports the Music and Creative Ecosystem Stabilization Recommendations (Staff Response to City Council Resolution No. 20160303-019) on page 6, and reflects the type of proposed project by Economic Development Department staff (see attached).

Vote 7-0

For:

Lulu Flores – Chair
Michelle Polgar–Vice Chair
Brett Barnes
Jaime Castillo
Bears Fonte
Amy Mok
Renee Rice

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Chris Bryan
Felipe Garza
Alissa McCain
Krissi Reeves

Attest: *Anne-Marie McKaskle-Davis, Arts Commission Staff Liaison*



CREATIVE MIXED USE CENTERS FOR THE ARTS

A STUDY IN SPATIAL PROGRAMMING

PREFACE

Our intentions are through this document to outline a strategy for evaluating existing sites and buildings for adaptive re-use and conversion into mixed-use facilities anchored by arts and arts-related programs of use.

Also, this document should be viewed strictly as a preliminary study and should not supplant a full feasibility study but rather serve as a tool for testing potential sites or buildings that could qualify for full feasibility. A full feasibility would be focused on a specific site and/or existing building and include a comprehensive assessment of existing infrastructural and structural conditions, building soundness, available utility service, preliminary zoning and code review, neighborhood and transportation exigencies, etc. Such comprehensive scope is excluded from this study which centers mainly on general programmatic needs and projected associated costs.

This study was based on target parameters offered by the Cultural Arts Division and Economic Development Division of the City of Austin combined with our own experience and research into arts spaces:

- 50,000 square foot building for conversion
- \$10M to \$15M total project budget
- Existing parking or enough space to include required parking that may be a combination of surface or structured parking
- Facility to be located in north Austin in a favorable city district
- Earlier cost projections by COA departments at \$300/sf were taken into consideration
- The facility may house a range of arts programs and exterior site improvements

As we compiled our own data and reviewed the “Austin Parks and Recreation Department Community Creativity Centers” we were able to distill the initiative into pointed strategies. Our expectation is that a program mix derived from our study could serve as a foundation for manifesting the following goals:

- Revitalization and Destination-Building
- Scaleability and Affordability
- Opportunity and Partnership
- Sustainability and Stewardship



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REVITALIZATION AND DESTINATION-BUILDING

The struggle for the arts in Austin has reached crisis levels. Austin has an international reputation as a place to be. For Austin to live up to this reputation, the places within the place need to meet expectation and universal support from the community and the City of Austin are essential to ameliorate the problem.

Mixed-use arts facilities with the right mix can directly address the need and serve as a destination for both Austinites and visitors, for both makers and participants. Smart adaptive re-use of existing building assets can reverse urban decay at good cost-to-benefit value, revitalize the areas in which they are located and serve as a vibrant node for a local microeconomy in surrounding neighborhoods and beyond.

Furthermore, concentrating the arts at a single location builds density that best utilizes shared infrastructure and aggregate interest across the various programs. This encourages a steady flow and overlap of users and visitors to the destination which builds diversity, reliable revenue streams and widespread community support.

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SCALEABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

These are the two most important operative qualities to the creative mixed-use center (CMUC). Many if not most arts organizations are non-profit entities. They rely on grants and philanthropic investment as well as collective and community support. Moreover, by their very nature, the arts are fluid, amoebic, metamorphic, and even opportunistic.

To the extent that the arts comment on our culture and themselves are extensions of our culture, the arts bend and sway as culture does. The CMUC must needs have the ability to respond to these cultural shifts.

Strategic planning, smart space-making and cost-efficient design is critical in achieving the most value out of initial development capital as well as long-term life-cycle viability in response to the vicissitudes of the market economy and the culture to which it is tied.

Scaleable strategies allowing flexible spaces, big and small, in varying combinations and range of uses will allow the CMUC to capture prevailing market and cultural winds. In so doing, revenue can be generated from any number of sources at any given time.

The mix of arts groups encourages cross-fertilization of interest at the maker as well as the visitor level. This allows the individual artists to support each other and their constituencies to avail themselves of the full range of offerings at the CMUC.

Since much of the overhead in producing art resides in rent and materials, a scaleable strategy will allow the CMUC to provide affordable spaces and the potential for shared amenities to support the making of art. If the cost of production can be maintained at an affordable level over the life of the CMUC, the natural ability of the arts to generate traffic and interest will help keep the CMUC accessible to both artist and visitor and eventual leapfrog into the realm of profitability.

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OPPORTUNITY AND PARTNERSHIP

With a healthy mix of arts under a single roof, the opportunity for artistic and business interaction and collaboration is high.

Most of the arts groups in Austin have been spread out, isolated from one another in whatever affordable corners of the city are within budgetary reach. And yet, this geographical displacement hasn't prevented the arts from developing loyal followings and deep and comprehensive subscriber and fan bases. Nor has this fact prevented the arts from creative collaboration with each other. Theatre arts regularly involve the visual and dance arts. Visual arts collaborate with musicians. Multi-media is becoming the norm in the performance arts.

A creative mixed-use facility promises to deliver what it implies in its name: to facilitate creation from a wide range of sources. Two simple ingredients, contact and interaction, set the tone for creative opportunities. Make a space where both planned and spontaneous collaboration is possible and the artists will take care of the rest.

Concentrating this creative activity in a single facility also helps the larger community focus their support. Scaleability in partnership also becomes possible. Grant money, philanthropic money, private equity investment and community investment, can all be pipelined at different scales. Individual artists can seek support, entire programs can be underwritten, investment into the facility itself in public-private funding financial structures become possible, and specific events can find corporate sponsorship.

Most importantly resident programs will emerge to anchor the facility. These primary partners can serve as the recurring basis of activity while shorter-term, smaller initiatives can enhance the regular schedule of offerings from the CMUC.

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SUSTAINABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

Partnerships benefit from the old tenet of “strength in numbers” but more pointedly in the related concept of “shared resource value.” To the extent that there is great overlap in similar needs from one art to the other, the CMUC bears the potential to efficiently fulfill those needs. The overlap of function and building performance throughout the CMUC enables its users to fully realize their artistic and business goals.

Sustainable design practices further enhance these goals.

In our field, the architectural needle always slides in the direction of progress: better materials; efficient MEP systems, efficient energy usage and energy generation; lighter but stronger structural strategies; long-term sustainable design; low-impact development and life-cycle strategies.

With a \$10M-\$15M project budget, every effort should be taken to allocate costs towards and take advantage of prudent sustainable design. The low-rent spaces that have traditionally been the rule for the arts are not sustainable in the long-term. The cost of maintaining such spaces offsets any savings in rent and progressive building deterioration eventually leads to a point where the cost of capital improvement becomes insurmountable for the non-profit business income streams. Upfront investment in systems that are less costly to maintain is a safeguard for long-term success.

Such systems, introduced into the building or in the innovative site strategies surrounding the building, require informed stewardship. All users and visitors should understand and commit to proper use and maintenance of the facilities.

Sustainable design is employed by the best affordable housing developers. Tenant pride and stewardship has proven to be a measurable positive outcome, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in such developments. The same benefits would be seen in a CMUC. Moreover, pride in stewardship of the building and grounds further ensures that the financial pipelines continue to flow as investors see their seed capital netting tangible rewards.

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THE EMPTY SPACE

Consider this: except for one thing, the spaces for the arts are empty, blank canvases yet to be conformed to creative vision.

It's everything around these spaces – the walls, ceilings, floors, the lighting, air movement, windows and doors – where designers and architects can contribute with their own vision.

With a little imagination and intelligent design we can enhance the one thing contained in these otherwise empty spaces: potential.

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PROJECTED MATRIX OF PROGRAMS

Visual, Sculptural, Tactile Arts Section

- Exhibit space with lobby – white gyp board walls with moveable gyp board partitions to allow a variety of exhibit set-ups; ambient overhead lighting (LED) grid with unistrut subgrid for directional spotlights (halogen and/or LED)
- Art studios – white gyp board walls with 100sf-120sf partitioned spaces for artist use; common area space for impromptu pin-ups; outfitted with general use work tables; ambient lighting grid with individual overhead mountable lights per space
- Workshop / woodshop / kiln – workshop featuring carpentry, welding, pottery tools and equipment for general use by entire facility; some storage of basic materials but artists would be responsible for their own materials for the making of items to support their work (frames for painters, flats for theatrical performances, etc.); the workshop could also be used for theatrical sets and facilities maintenance

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PROJECTED MATRIX OF PROGRAMS

Education Section

- Classroom – simple classrooms with white gyp board walls; group tables and chairs; ambient overhead lighting; possibly moveable chalkboards or white boards; projection screen; media may be leased from facility for classes; classes for both youth and adult including arts, acting, continuing education, personal improvement, business-related, etc.; can double as special event space or rehearsal
- Community room / conference room – fully finished room with full multi-media capabilities; conference table and chairs; tackboards and white boards; ambient overhead lighting; retractable projection screen; undercounter refrigerator for refreshments; room darkening mechanical shades

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PROJECTED MATRIX OF PROGRAMS

Administrative Section

- Offices – discrete offices for facilities managers; white gyp board walls; carpet tile or similar; ambient overhead lighting; systems furniture including desk, tables, chairs and storage
- Co-working facility – similar to We Work, Link or Vuka co-working facilities, a range of work spaces within a single, communal work space; communal work tables; smaller conference tables; some dedicated private conference rooms for smaller meetings

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PROJECTED MATRIX OF PROGRAMS

Performance Section

- Theatres / stages – small, medium, big theatre spaces; black-box formats with sprung wood floors to allow for maximum flexibility and seating arrangements; flexible light grids to allow for a range of performances; light booths in each space for operating lighting and sound for shows; can be used for theatre, dance, musical performances and also film screenings, lectures, stand-up comedy, etc.
- Dressing rooms – prep space for performers featuring dressing counters with dressing mirrors and lighting; storage lockers personal effects and costume storage; double height space could allow for further storage
- Green room – prep space for performers with wi-fi video to performance spaces; lounge with refrigerator, microwave, vending machines; can double as lounge for admin and co-working facilities
- Rehearsal spaces – sprung wood floors; ambient overhead lighting; storage carrels and work tables and chairs; optional mirrored in dedicated dance rehearsal spaces; imperative soundproofing in demising and corridor walls; not to be used for musical rehearsal (there are plenty of those spaces all around town); can double for classrooms or special events usage; one or two may be dedicated green screen for film production



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PROJECTED MATRIX OF PROGRAMS

Co-Retail Section

- Co-retail – a fairly new concept in retail that leading retailers like Amazon are spearheading on a national scale; similar to co-working facilities, co-retail can utilize a single concentrated space to house several retailers, each with a display area and point of purchase for their product; a limited amount of select products may be kept on-site but with primary focus on online purchases aided by a retail agent; this space can also serve the resident artists and artisans who can opt to sell their art here or have consumers be directed to their studio spaces

Flex Short-Term Rental Spaces

- Short-term rental – assuming COA will allow STR licenses, hospitality microsuites for use by visiting artists; can do combination of microsuites with their own bathrooms or congregate bathrooms for a cluster of microsuites

Café / Lounge / Commercial Kitchen

- Café / Lounge – with commercial kitchen for catering and food prep for special events; can be 51% TABC license; ideally partner with operator to manage the café / lounge which can be open to the public as well as for events occurring at the CMUC

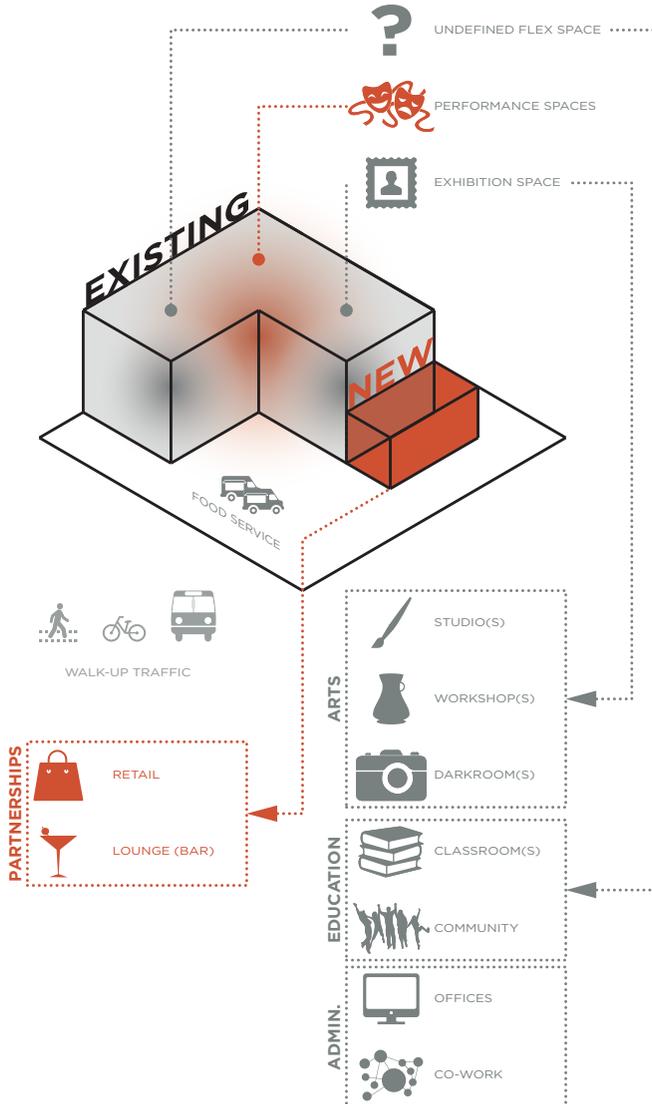
Unprogrammed Shell Space

- Unprogrammed shell space – 9,000sf of unprogrammed space has been set aside; this can be a combination of existing space plus new construction in the form of continuation of existing space or a stand-alone building; the program of this space is scaleable to meet future needs; it can serve as a single program for uses not currently represented in the CMUC or an extension of existing uses in any number of combinations that can be housed in the allocated square footage



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SOURCES

Janet Seibert, Civic Arts Program Consultant, City of Austin

Meghan Wells, Manager, Cultural Arts Division, City of Austin

Sylnovia Holt-Rabb, Assistant Director, Economic Development Division, City of Austin

“Austin Parks and Recreation Department Community Creativity Centers,” draft report

Forge Craft Architecture + Design, research on and feasibility studies of related art spaces
– compiled by Rommel Sulit, Principal + Founder and Carrie Gammell, Project Designer +
Research Analyst

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CREATIVE MIXED-USE ADAPTIVE RE-USE DEVELOPMENT
 CONCEPTUAL PROGRAM MATRIX AND
 PRELIMINARY COST BREAKDOWN

PREPARED BY ROMMEL SULIT
 PRINCIPAL + FOUNDER, FORGE CRAFT
 21 FEBRUARY 2017

SPACE	INDOOR/OUTDOOR	FRONT/BACK	SQFT	COUNT	GSF	LOAD FACTOR	NSF	COST/SF	COST	OCCUPANT LOAD	PARKING	FUNCTION OF SPACE
art sections												
lobby / exhibit space	INDOOR/OUTDOOR	FRONT	4000	1	4000	1	4000	125	500000	133	8	assembly without fixed seats - standing space
studios (assume 10-12 artists per studio)	INDOOR	MIDDLE	1200	5	6000	1.3	7800	125	975000	156	28	studio work space for artists and artisans; assume 120sf per occupant = 60-72 resident artists
art storage	INDOOR	BACK	200	5	1000	1	1000	100	100000	3	2	storage allocated adjacent to studios
workshop / woodshop / kiln	INDOOR/OUTDOOR	BACK	2000	1	2000	1.3	2600	175	455000	40	9	shop support for artists, set designers, exhibits and installations, on-site maintenance
paint booth / industrial waste	OUTDOOR ADJACENT	BACK	60	2	120	1	120	125	15000	0	0	ventilated area outside with drying racks
dark room	OUTDOOR	FRONT	300	1	300	1.2	360	150	54000	6	1	equipment and chemicals to be covered in membership agreements
public bathrooms (M/F) - exhibits areas	INDOOR	FRONT	200	2	400	1.2	480	150	72000	4	2	WCs: 1 per 125 M (or 67% urinals), 1 per 65 F; lavatories: 1 per 200 M/F; fountains: 1 per 500 occupants
education												
classrooms / rehearsal (flex use)	INDOOR	MIDDLE	325	10	3250	1.2	3900	100	390000	163	8	youth and adult arts, professional development and continuing education-type classes -- rooms can double as event, rehearsal or flex use space
community room - conference room	INDOOR	FRONT	800	1	800	1.3	1040	200	208000	53	11	subdividable with media hook-ups and eqpm
public bathrooms (M/F) - office	INDOOR	BACK	200	2	400	1.2	480	150	72000	4	2	
admin sections												
offices	INDOOR	BACK	100	6	600	1.2	720	125	90000	6	3	facilities staff
co-work - common area work space	INDOOR	FRONT	1200	1	1200	1.2	1440	175	252000	12	5	shared co-working space for tenants
print / copy	INDOOR	BACK	100	1	100	1.2	120	100	12000	1	0	wi-fi based; printing can be tracked per user with appropriate software
public bathrooms (M/F) - office	INDOOR	BACK	200	2	400	1.2	480	150	72000	4	2	
performance sections												
lobby / box office	INDOOR	FRONT	1200	1	1200	1	1200	175	210000	40	4	assembly without fixed seats - standing space
main stage (200 occ) with sprung floors	INDOOR	FRONT	3200	1	3200	1	3200	300	960000	200	50	flexible black box space; assume ceiling / roof may need to be raised with new structure
second stage (120 occ) with sprung floors	INDOOR	FRONT	2400	1	2400	1	2400	300	720000	120	30	flexible black box space; assume ceiling / roof may need to be raised with new structure

auditorium / flex theatre (60 occ)	INDOOR	MIDDLE	1200	1	1200	1	1200	300	360000	60	15	flexible black box space; assume ceiling / roof may need to be raised with new structure	
public bathrooms (M/F) - performance areas	INDOOR	FRONT	350	2	700	1.2	840	150	126000	7	3		
dressing rooms (2) with bathrooms (showers?)	INDOOR	BACK	400	2	800	1	800	175	140000	16	2		
green room/ backstage (w/ kitchenette?)	INDOOR	MIDDLE	300	2	600	1	600	175	105000	12	1		
rehearsal space (dedicated with sprung floors)	INDOOR	MIDDLE	400	4	1600	1.2	1920	125	240000	32	32		
costume storage	INDOOR	FRONT	300	1	300	1	300	125	37500	1	1		
co-retail space	INDOOR	FRONT	1000	1	1000	1	1000	200	200000	10	4	can serve brands or resident artists and artisans; assume 120sf per display per user for limited quantities of retail products	
retail storage / support	INDOOR	BACK	500	1	500	1	500	125	62500	2	1		
flex short-term rental	INDOOR	BACK	220	12	2640	1.2	3168	200	633600	13	13		
large supply closet for lounge	INDOOR	BACK	200	1	200	1	200	200	40000	4	0		
cafe / lounge / commercial kitchen	INDOOR/OUTDOOR	FRONT	2000	1	2000	1	2000	200	400000	133	20		
public bathrooms (M/F) - office	INDOOR	BACK	200	2	400	1.2	480	150	72000	4	2		
unprogrammed shell space	INDOOR/OUTDOOR	END / NEW	9000	1	9000	1.2	10800	200	2160000	180	22	future program, assembly, etc. to be determined based on future need	
					38910		55148		9733600	1236			
parking count												257	
parking reduction							66826		500000			206	allowance assuming 20% urban core reduction
max buildable area							121974						
allowable percentage buildable area / site sf							95% of site area						if site is zoned CS, max allowable bldg coverage and impervious cover = 95%; FAR = 2:1, max height = 60 feet
allocation for water quality / detention / landscape							20% of site area						
minimum required site area							154072						154072 sf = 3.53 acres round up to 3.6 acres to allow for additional parking, green space or future development
site improvements (including landscaping)									1000000				allowance (includes flatwork, landscaping, curbs, drainage)
construction contingency (15%)									168504				budget contingency to account for market cost fluctuations
soft costs > designer / engineering / consultant fees									634236				based on 6% total construction cost
development fees / development contingency									342063				based on 3% total construction cost

projected total development cost	12378404	hard cost + soft costs + contingencies
projected bond	15000000	maximum bond allocation
cost delta	2621596	if max amount is approved, then surplus funds can be allocated to land purchase, operations and/or future development