



Economic Prosperity Commission Recommendation

Recommendation Number: (20190821-003c/d) Economic Prosperity Commission Budget Recommendations.

WHEREAS, the City of Austin urgently wants to alleviate problems around homelessness, affordability, and mobility;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is a UNESCO Creative city that takes risks and invests in innovative approaches to solving hard problems;

WHEREAS, cities like Seattle, WA, and Boulder, CO, and others have invested in innovation funds to empower social entrepreneurs and other emerging organizations to help solve and streamline solutions in areas like homelessness, affordability, and mobility;

WHEREAS, Austin's Office of Innovation has successfully invested in numerous promising, emerging Austin-based social enterprises;

WHEREAS, the City of Austin's Arts Commission Fund has elevated numerous local emerging artists and arts organizations;

WHEREAS, Austin's vibrant economy and innovation environment is home to numerous passionate and talented social entrepreneurs dedicated to tackling Austin's most pressing challenges;

WHEREAS, longstanding problems require dynamic, creative, and multivarious solutions;

WHEREAS, smaller bets on emerging service providers can lead to a higher return on investment than more expensive traditional approaches;

WHEREAS, this is a flat budget year due to state legislation, which increases the urgency to attain the most cost-effective results within existing budgets.

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2019-20 proposed budget makes a historic investment of \$62.7 million in response to the City's growing homelessness crisis;

WHEREAS, unused discretionary funds exist within the Economic Development Department's budget, including but not limited to funds leftover from vacancies or other unappropriated but authorized expenditures;

WHEREAS, unused discretionary funds can be reclassified or repurposed for other uses, including an innovation fund within the Economic Development Department;

WHEREAS, the Office of Innovation used funds resulting from a vacancy to grant funds to emerging organizations providing solutions to our city's most critical problems;
WHEREAS, Strategic Direction 2023 encourages innovative collaboration between City Departments; and

WHEREAS, Austin, as a growing, dynamic city committed to social justice and with a vibrant innovation economy has a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead in crafting 21st century solutions to social problems.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Economic Prosperity Commission recommends that the Austin City Council:

- *Continue funding the Office of Innovation's Innovation Fund;*
- *Authorize the Director of the Economic Development Department to reclassify or repurpose unused discretionary funds for the establishment of an Economic Development Innovation Fund housed within the Economic Development Department.*
- *Authorize Directors of Departments that administer the City's homelessness programs to partner with the Economic Development Innovation Fund and/or the Office of Innovation to help fund, within existing budgets, innovative solutions to Austin's growing homelessness crisis.*

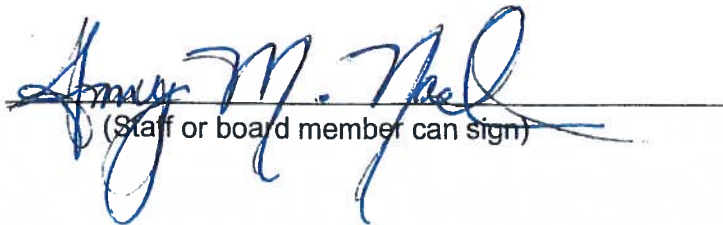
Date of Approval: 8/21/19

Record of the vote:

6-0 vote - Yea: Kirsha Haverlah, Alexis Taylor Preston Tom, Amy Noel, Nathan Ryan, and Holt Lackey

Absent: Tam Hawkins, Larry K Anazia and Tam Hawkins (departed meeting early)

Attest:


(Staff or board member can sign)