

## A STATE-OF-THE-ART ARCHIVAL HISTORY CENTER FOR AUSTIN!

*Progress and planning update, April 2021*



*Conceptual rendering by Evan Taniguchi, Taniguchi Architects, Board of Directors & Past President of AHCA*

The Austin History Center (AHC), part of the Austin Public Library (APL) system, is a rapidly growing asset for Austin's future. For 41 years, the Austin History Center Association (AHCA) has advocated to develop this destination-venue for ALL of Austin.

The visionary passage of bonds by Austin voters in 2012 and 2018 is enabling critical infrastructure updates and repairs to the Faulk Library and the Austin History Center. AHCA shares an update about our aggressive pursuit of a critical path of planning activities:

1. In 2018, AHCA leaders and staff partnered with AHC staff and community stakeholders in a dynamic visioning process commissioned by APL and led by Gensler. Gensler's report, ***Re-imagining the Faulk; Vision Project; Report on the Future of the Faulk Library Building - January 2019***, strongly re-affirmed that archival use was the most desired outcome for the Faulk Building.
2. In 2019, AHCA committed to raise funds for a Master Plan to guide redeveloping and repurposing the 1978 Faulk Library building, the adjacent 1933 Library building, and the flex-space in between. **To date, AHCA has raised \$53,050 toward this goal.** A Master Plan will support and facilitate our visioning process for programming and civic use that is compelling, engaging, attractive, accessible, and pertinent to the diverse history of ALL of Austin and its visitors.

3. In 2019, AHCA received a \$12,000 donor grant to hire three graduate students at Texas State University's School of Public History for Fall 2020-Spring 2021. These outstanding interns are tasked with researching master planning and programming at similar large American history centers, including the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Atlanta History Center and San Diego History Center. They have also focused on the use of emergent technologies for history centers and archives to engage the public and provide dynamic and appealing exhibit ideas for the AHC Master Plan. Following the interns' research, incoming AHCA President Kent Collins toured/ visited with Executive Staff of the Atlanta History Center this April! AHCA Executive Director Jeff Cohen also plans a July 2021 visit to the Atlanta History Center.
4. Ongoing tireless efforts to grow the profile and footprint of the AHCA in the Austin community have resulted in nearly 700 annual members for our organization. Our new Life Membership category now includes seven members who have added \$35,000 to our ACF Endowment Fund. A Business Membership will launch this coming Fall.
5. March, 2021- we are very pleased to announce that the AHCA received a gift of One Million Dollars to seed a new endowment fund that will generate interest revenue for AHCA annual operations. This gift marks the official launch of an Endowment Fundraising Campaign; an endowment advisory committee and an investment management company will steer this fund for the AHC's future.

In 2020, AHCA launched a new "big-picture" **Strategic Vision Committee**. Chaired by former Austin Mayor Ron Mullen, the *Strategic Vision Committee* is tasked with designing a major multi-million dollar Capital Campaign to be executed in the 2025-2028 timeframe. Our goals for Capital Campaign funding include these enhancements:

- Increase numbers of onsite exhibits utilizing AHC collections; in-house thematic exhibit design is a unique strength of the AHC among History Centers and archives;
- Engage Austin's tech companies to support the interactive use of augmented/ virtual reality and holographic tools for AHC exhibits;
- Use of shows and film projections on the Faulk's outside north wall for evening viewing in the flex-space between the Faulk and 1933 buildings;
- Enhance the Faulk rooftop for programming and as a rental venue;
- Establish an onsite Faulk recording studio for AHCA's highly productive oral history program;
- Create a "listening/ viewing room" to focus on the AHC's growing oral/ video history collection as well as Austin's music scene, past and present; and
- Develop a "Visitor Center" to build connections with nearby historic resources including the Bremond Block, Governor's Mansion, Travis County Courthouse, and the AHC's historic downtown neighborhood to create engaging experiences about Austin history for residents and Austin visitors.

The AHCA asks your support as we undertake this ambitious development program showcasing Austin's past for a better understanding of Austin's future, as described in the Gensler Report:

***The Austin History Center, "a welcoming place for all of Austin's communities to come together."***