



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board

Recommendation Number: 20221102-7

Request for additional funding for the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Phase 2 expansion and renovation project.

WHEREAS the ESB-MACC leased a portion of their property at 64 Rainey Street to Sackman Enterprises and used the funds to commission the 2018 Facility Expansion without the use of the General Fund, Hotel Occupancy Tax, the Rainey Historical District Fund, or the like.

WHEREAS a comprehensive community engagement was completed as part of the 2018 Facility Expansion Plan which included community members and Austin City Council members.

WHEREAS the 2018 Facility Expansion Plan included an estimated Phase 2 project cost between \$30 Million and \$42.5 Million.

WHEREAS the Austin City Council unanimously voted to adopt the 2018 Facility Expansion Plan on May 24, 2018 with the intent to complete all remaining phases without preconditions on funding sources.

WHEREAS the 2018 Bond Committee recommended, and Austin City Council approved \$27 Million to be included under Proposition B for the ESB-MACC Phase 2 project. The original recommendation of \$15 Million was insufficient to meet the outlined Phase 2 in the 2018 Facility Management Plan and was met with much community and ESB-MACC Advisory Board opposition.

WHEREAS 74 percent of voters in the 2018 election voted in favor of Proposition B.

WHEREAS the Joint Venture team of Miro Rivera Architects (Austin) and Estudio Tatiana Bilbao (Mexico City) was selected to lead the Phase 2 design in part because of their experience designing world-class facilities.

WHEREAS the Joint Venture team's first priority was to provide a Phase 2 Scope of Work outline that would provide clear guidance on what could be afforded with the 2018 Proposition B

funds. This phase began in November 2020 and concluded in February 2021. The ESB-MACC Advisory Board unanimously approved the Phase 2 document at the March 3, 2021, Advisory Board meeting with a list of recommendations on how the Phase 2 project management team could maintain a transparent and equitable process.

WHEREAS the ESB-MACC Advisory Board were notified at the May 13, 2021, Special Called Meeting of the Advisory Board that an additional \$3 Million would be required to keep the project within budget. It was then noted that additional funds would become available through a Parkland Dedication Fund. It was the Advisory Board and community's understanding that the design being developed was back under budget.

WHEREAS from December 2020 through March 2021, the Schematic Design was unanimously approved by the Downtown Commission, Design Commission, and Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Commission.

WHEREAS the Schematic Design was presented to the Advisory Board at the January 26, 2021, Special Called Meeting of the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board delayed a motion supporting the Schematic Design due to the overwhelming citizens' communication on the lackluster community engagement process.

WHEREAS the Schematic Design was unanimously approved by the ESB-MACC Advisory Board on March 2, 2022. The motion included a list of recommendations on how the Project Managers could improve communication to the Advisory Board and community. The project presented was described as meeting the budget.

WHEREAS the Design Development phase continued with less frequent communication from the Project Management team. The Advisory Board continued to press for a Community Communication Forum which was promised to occur at the beginning of Schematic Design.

WHEREAS a cost reconciliation effort, which is part of the design phase process, was first reported to the Advisory Board on July 6, 2022, via a monthly project memo.

WHEREAS the ESB-MACC Advisory Board was notified through a Memorandum issued by the Director of Austin Parks and Recreation Department on September 20, 2022, that significant value engineering, or cost cutting items, were reviewed and approved by the Department. The ESB-MACC Advisory Board were not part of the discussion nor able to properly advise on the proposed strategies. To our knowledge, the discussion and decision on what should be omitted from the design scope was completed without input from ESB-MACC Staff, Advisory Board, Phase 2 Working Group, or community member.

WHEREAS a presentation by Council Member Kathie Tovo, Luke Urie and Marna Garcia from Austin Transportation on October 5, 2022, regarding the Rainey Street Historic District Special Reserve Fund described how the special reserve fund failed to capture development fees from approximately 2018 to the present day.

WHEREAS the ESB-MACC nor any other cultural landmark in the Rainey Street Historical District have received any financial assistance or impact assessment on the ESB-MACC when approving building permits for the many luxury high-rise projects within the district.

WHEREAS some of the tallest and most expensive high-rise projects in Texas and the United States have been built and are currently in development at the doorstep of ESB-MACC without any consideration for these projects occurring within the Rainey Street Historic District.

WHEREAS the 2020 Census data shows an alarming diaspora of generational Mexican American residents away from Central Austin and East Austin neighborhoods at the cost of new housing and commercial developments that are unaffordable to historically marginalized Austin communities.

WHEREAS the ESB-MACC Advisory Board and community are only provided updates to some of the largest and most transformational projects in the city - such as Project Connect, I-35 expansion, Waterloo Greenway, and various downtown utility infrastructure improvements – without consideration for how it impacts the enjoyment and operations of the ESB-MACC campus.

WHEREAS the first public meet-and-greet between the Joint Venture design team and community was held on October 25, 2022. This was also the first time anyone outside of the Phase 2 project management team and ESB-MACC staff were able to see the already approved design reductions. It was at this time that further information was shared on the increased limitations imposed on the design due to an inflation and the continued competitive environment of subcontractors. It was confirmed that the decision to move forward with the proposed design changes was already approved by the Director of PARD without input or comment from the ESB-MACC Advisory Board, Cultural Community Forum, or community members.

NOW, THEREFOR, BE IT RESOLVED BY the Mexican American Cultural Center Advisory Board encourages the Austin City Council to:

Allocate an additional 6.2 million for the Phase 2 project in order to fulfill the commitment by the City of Austin to complete a Phase 2 expansion that is commensurate with a world-class cultural center that continues to be a reflection of the strength and resiliency of Austin's Mexican American community.

Date of Approval: November 2, 2022

Record of the vote: Unanimous on an 8.0 vote, Members Maga Rojas and Navarro were not in attendance.

Attest:  _____
Michelle Rojas, Staff Liaison