




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Kimberly A. McNeeley, M.Ed., CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department 

THROUGH: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, LMSW, Assistant City Manager

DATE: July 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Staff Update on Cultural Center Construction (Resolution No. 20221208-068)

On December 8, 2022, Council approved [Resolution No. 20221208-068](#) directing the City Manager to:

- proceed with the construction of the Dougherty Arts Center and Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center without a reduction in the scope of proposed work, and to develop an estimate of the resulting funding gap for inclusion in the 2024 City of Austin General Obligation Bond election,
- to develop cost estimates for the next phase of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center and the Asian American Resource Center as part of the development of the 2024 City of Austin General Obligation Bond Program, and
- to work with the Austin Economic Development Corporation to develop recommendations and possible funding levels for creative space funding as a part of the development of the 2024 City of Austin General Obligation Bond election.

This memo is a staff update to the above Council directives.

Per Council's direction, the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) proceeded with design and permitting on both the **Dougherty Arts Center (DAC)** and **Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Ph. 2 Expansion (ESB-MACC Ph. 2)** projects, without a reduction in the scope of the proposed work. While a funding plan and completion date for the DAC is still under consideration, the Department expects the new building to continue its mission of supporting arts access for all in a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment. Until that time, programs will continue to be offered at the existing DAC facility for as long as the building remains viable. Construction at the ESB-MACC Ph. 2 project is expected to commence in July with site and infrastructure improvements.

The **George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center (Carver)** and **Asian American Resource Center (AARC)** received \$7.5 million and \$7 million, respectively, through the 2018 Bond Program, to assist with near-term building improvements and plan for future phases of expansion as described in the Facility Expansion Plans

for each site. The Carver facility expansion project will be initiating a request for quote (RFQ) in the Fall/Winter of 2023 for conceptual design services and early cost estimates. The AARC phase 2 improvements completed schematic design in November 2022 and are currently working towards the design development package.

Following the 2018 Bond election, the City of Austin resolved to support a community arts stabilization trust, called the Cultural Trust, with the intention of creating affordable spaces that support artists and arts organizations while also preserving historic and iconic cultural buildings. Together with the City's Economic Development Department, the Austin Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) released a request for proposal (RFP) in 2022 to develop an inventory of **recommendations for creative space projects** using the Cultural Trust funding. From this process, AEDC compiled over \$300 million in needs, but shortlisted several projects with a near-term value of up to \$65 million. More information is available [here](#), and via AEDC's Chief Transaction Officer, Anne Gatling Haynes, at anne@austinedc.org.

The Department will provide the next update on the Council directives by the end of September 2023.

Should you have any questions regarding this update, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

Cc: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager
Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager