

## **RESOLUTION NO. 20230720-128**

**WHEREAS**, the Imagine Austin comprehensive plan states that creativity is a cornerstone of Austin's identity and economic prosperity, and arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the City's unique and distinctive identity, and further are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life and economy, and collectively, the Austin music and creative ecosystem generates rich social, cultural, and economic benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, economic and cultural districts are contiguous micro-geographic areas containing concentrations of creative, cultural, entertainment, heritage, or commercial assets that contribute to neighborhood supportive commerce or place-based storytelling and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2005, the State of Texas established the Texas Commission on the Arts as administrator of the Cultural and Fine Arts District Program and to award state and federal grants that support local placemaking, cultural activity, and organizational capacity development; and

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 52 cultural districts designated by the state, including two in Austin: the Six-Square African American Cultural Heritage District, locally designated by Resolution No. 20071213-058, and the Red River Cultural District, locally designated by Resolution No. 20131017-036; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Texas Commission on the Arts, Cultural District goals may include:

- Attracting artists and cultural enterprises to the community
- Encouraging business and job development

- Addressing specific needs of a community
- Establishing tourism destinations
- Preserving and reusing historic buildings
- Enhancing property values
- Fostering local cultural development; and

**WHEREAS**, Council adopted Resolution No. 20190523-029 directing the City Manager to initiate the process for a cultural district designation of the 5th Street Mexican American Corridor, the timeline for completing the designation, and identifying other actions that will help amplify the stories and contributions of the Mexican American community within that corridor and its immediate surroundings; and

**WHEREAS**, Council adopted Resolution No. 20210902-048 directing the City Manager to determine strategies necessary to implement various initiatives to preserve and enhance the African American Cultural Heritage District and to work collaboratively with the Austin Economic Development Corporation's Austin Cultural Trust and other programs administered by the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City currently operates a place-based economic development program called "Souly Austin" focused on creating collaborative partnerships and retaining strong, vibrant, culturally rich and diverse neighborhood business districts throughout Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, the area that exists between the adopted South Central Waterfront Vision Plan and the proposed Zilker Vision Plan includes the Long Center for the Performing Arts, the Palmer Events Center, the Zachary Scott

Theater, the Dougherty Arts Center, and the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum, as well as numerous local businesses that help create and preserve the identity of Austin; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1940, the City purchased an airplane hangar on the south shores of the Lower Colorado River and the hangar was then converted into an all-purpose City Coliseum that opened to the public in 1949 and was later named the Lester E. Palmer Auditorium; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1959, with the damming of the Lower Colorado River to create Town Lake, later renamed Lady Bird Lake, the adjacent parkland became known as Auditorium Shores, and the site of many important cultural gatherings; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1998, Austin voters approved a referendum to create a new Palmer Events Center and separately to provide a long-term lease of the land and structure of the former facility for the purpose of developing a multi-use arts center; and

**WHEREAS**, the Palmer Events Center hosts many community events that are of cultural significance to the City, including the Armadillo Christmas Bazaar, Citywide Garage Sale, and the Junior League's Christmas Affair; and

**WHEREAS**, the Long Center for the Performing Arts (Long Center) opened in 2008 as a result of community fundraising and was conceived as Austin's creative home, adapting the former auditorium structure with plans for as many as four stages and other support facilities, such as a commercial kitchen, but was reduced in scope due to budgetary constraints; and



**WHEREAS**, in addition to the creative facility it operates, the Long Center has steadily grown to support other community support services for local arts organizations and is a trusted partner of the City that currently administers elements of the City's cultural contracts, preservation grants, and live music fund programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Long Center is currently preparing to do a long-term strategic plan that reviews its capital and facilities needs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Long Center and the Palmer Events Center currently share a parking garage and have other shared long-term facility needs that require planning and coordination; **NOW THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The City Manager is directed to explore and recommend the formation of a South Shore Cultural District that includes, at a minimum, the Long Center, the Palmer Events Center, the Zach Scott Theater, the Dougherty Arts Center and the Umlauf Sculpture Garden, and the boundaries of the district shall not include Zilker Park.

The City Manager should work with the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Austin Economic Development Corporation's Austin Cultural Trust, and stakeholders in the immediate vicinity of the Long Center and Palmer Events Center, including arts institutions and local businesses, regarding appropriate boundaries and shared goals and identity for any potential cultural district.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to proactively collaborate with the Long Center on its long-term strategic plan and look for synergies with the Palmer Events Center that further the goals of both centers and those of a potential South Shore Cultural District. This collaboration should include an assessment of cultural and creative space needs of the community.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to explore funding mechanisms for the Palmer Events Center and the Long Center and report back by December 2023 with any proposed financing recommendations for Council consideration.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to include the South Shore Cultural District into the Economic and Cultural District Framework that is currently underway. This framework's currently proposed equitable prioritization of districts should be maintained. This framework should additionally seek to create capacity development plans to assist the Six Square African American Cultural Heritage District, the 5th Street Mexican American Heritage Corridor, and the Red River Cultural District as well as for each of the Souly Austin districts, and also provide a path for equitably developing future districts. The framework should also include implementation mechanisms such as financial, regulatory, or programmatic tools that incentivize the preservation and development of the cultural district.

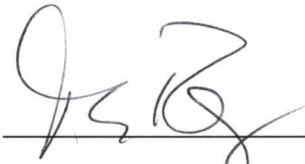
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The City Manager is directed to conduct regular evaluations and assessments of the South Shore Cultural District's progress and impact, ensuring accountability

and the ability to make adjustments based on community feedback and changing needs.

**ADOPTED:** July 20, 2023

**ATTEST:**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Myrna Rios', written over a horizontal line.

Myrna Rios

City Clerk