




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: November 21, 2023

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

This memo is an update to [Resolution No. 20221208-068](#) that was approved on December 8, 2022, by Council.

Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) proceeded with design and permitting for the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center Ph. 2 Expansion project (ESB-MACC Ph. 2), without a reduction in the scope of the proposed work. A notice to proceed with construction on the phase 2 site work at Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center was issued to the general contractor on August 28, 2023.

PARD proceeded with design for the Dougherty Arts Center (DAC); however, due to escalating construction costs and a significant funding gap, PARD is exploring the most appropriate path forward.

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 initiate a request for quote (RFQ) in the Spring of 2024 for conceptual design services and early cost estimates. The AARC as part of its phase 2 improvements completed schematic design for the performance arts center in November 2022 and produced a cost estimate that may be used for funding requests in a future bond cycle.

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 preserving historic and iconic cultural buildings. In 2022, the Austin Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) and City's Economic Development Department released a request for proposal (RFP) 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 an update by the end of February 2024.

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