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Joint Music & Arts Commissions Urban Core Land Use Working Group

Recommendations for the Austin Convention Center Expansion

Public Private Partnership (P3) Development & Site-wide Considerations

The Joint Arts & Music Urban Core Land Use Working Group was formed to study and provide recommendations for City-involved real estate development. The Arts and Music Commissions recognize that land use planning is immensely critical to the sustainability and growth of Austin's music and cultural arts economies.

Working Group Members

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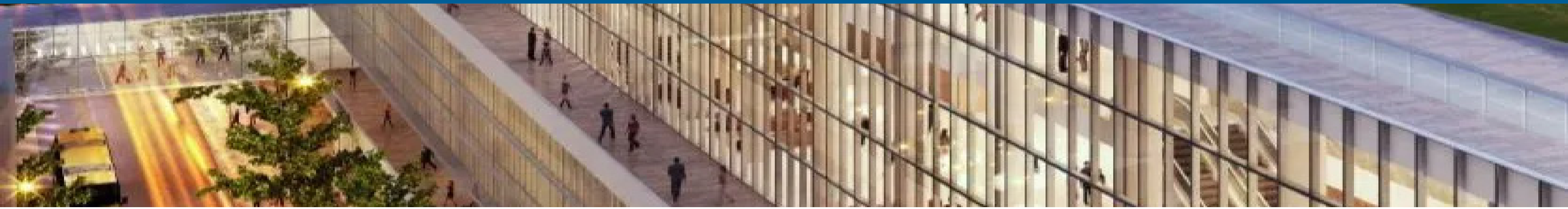
Convention Center Expansion



The Austin Convention Center expansion is a tremendous investment of over $1 billion in public funds and a landmark downtown project. **This endeavor holds tremendous potential for public benefits to Austin, including increased tourism revenue, exceptional public spaces, and robust programming**. City of Austin Music and Cultural grant programs are funded by Hotel Occupancy Taxes, which are directly impacted by Convention Center operations. Cultural and small business spaces are threatened by rising rents, but remain central to Austin's iconic brand.

The Austin Convention Center now has **the opportunity to set itself apart and above competing facilities by leveraging and strengthening Austin's status as a thriving mecca for creativity, arts, music, and diverse culture. The Joint Arts & Music Commissions Urban Core Land Use Working Group provides the following recommendations** to help guide expansion planning vision with the hope that the Austin Convention Center will become a unique world-class destination attracting visitors from across the US and the world.

Convention Center Expansion Recommendations

P3 Development: Vision

- Cohesive master plan for the district that integrates building ground floor uses with the streetscape and public realm.
- Experiential, enages with and heightens the surrounding urban environment.
- Publicly accessible to draw locals and non-convention tourists in addition to convention attendees, including foot traffic from Rainey Street, Red River Cultural District, Palm District, and Ann & Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail.
- Positioned to promote Austin culture and artists, and music
- Authentic Austin experience

Convention Center Expansion Recommendations

P3 Development: Music Spaces

- Record store featuring & promotion local artists and bands touring through Austin that week
- Music lounges and stages (ABIA model)
- Rehearsal spaces with windows to public areas, available for rent at affordable rates
- Recording studio with windows to public area
- Outdoor staging and performance opportunity, with staff and equipment availability

Convention Center Expansion Recommendations

P3 Development: Arts Spaces

- Flexible space for pop-up maker markets featuring local artists plus DJ/live music (Frida Fridays, Blue Genie, etc.) and bar area
- Murals by local artists (permanent and changing) and art exhibit spaces
- Dance studio with with windows to public areas, available for rent at affordable rates

Convention Center Expansion Recommendations

P3 Development: Retail & Other Spaces

- Retail stores featuring local goods
- Bookstore featuring Texas authors
- Locally-owned coffee and cocktails lounge
- Rotating gallery/exhibit space featuring local artists, items from the Texas Music Museum, and other curated exhibits relating to Austin and Texas

Convention Center Expansion Recommendations

P3 Development: Financial, Operational, and Promotional Considerations

- City to use and implement economic incentive opportunities for creative tenants. Tools like tax reimbursements, grants, or other programs to encourage desired community outcomes or local businesses and nonprofits to maintain affordable prices on space.
- Place advertisting space around high-traffic areas to promote locally-owned small businesses, iconic music venues, restaurants, theaters, dance companies, galleries, and local non-profit organizations that support Austin's creative ecosystem (such as HAAM, the SIMS Foundation, etc.) so that tourists may explore and support the authentic Austin experience.
- Include PSAs in high-traffic areas educating visitors and new residents about "How to Austin." Describe the ways they can help the creative community to thrive and be part of our culture (eg. always tip the bands, pay the cover, visit local businesess, enjoy our outdoors spaces, etc.)

Convention Center Expansion Recommendations

Site-wide vision

- Intentional inclusion of public benefits and support for music and arts
- Publicly accessible green space: Water & plant features, and nature/eco-friendly plaza design elements (mixed-use of natural and artificial materials for efficient and experiential atmosphere) indoor/outdoor courtyard design, elevated dog park
- Enhanced parking systems (low cost & free parking for artists & general public)
- Dedicated workspaces & conferencing areas (indoor/outdoor)
- Fitness and recreational space

Convention Center Expansion Recommendations

Site-wide vision

- Support for cleanup and restoration of adjacent spaces (ex. 333 E. 2nd St) for re-use and integration into the Convention Center environment
- Flex use indoor/outdoor restaurant and artist/performance venue space
- Physical connectivity throughout convention center (skybridge, pedestrian friendly walk-ways, and other pathways across CC complex)
- Cafe + lounge
- Retail spaces
- Digital displays & enhanced AV systems for artists, performances, & brand showcasing (flat screens, modern lighting for artwork, lighted projections, marquees for content, etc.)

Contact the working group:

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