



ARTS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation Number: (20241114-011): RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL TO COMPLETE THE DOUGHERTY ARTS CENTER REPLACEMENT PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Dougherty Arts Center has been a cornerstone of Austin's cultural landscape for over 45 years as well as an economic driver for Austin's creative economy,

WHEREAS, the Dougherty Arts Center advertises programs to tourists and provides evergreen programming to all who enter during the Dougherty's open hours,

WHEREAS, the Dougherty Arts Center provides invaluable programs through its arts school, theater and gallery spaces, enhancing Austin's image as an attractive destination for local families, out of town visitors and relocating workers,

WHEREAS, the existing building is undeniably unsafe due to the presence of asbestos and other infrastructure issues making the need for a new building both urgent and non-negotiable,

WHEREAS, the replacement project was initiated with a two-year community engagement process which enjoyed enthusiastic participation from artists, PARD staff, non-profit organizations and neighbors at a cost of \$1million,

WHEREAS, City Council passed Resolution 20221208-068 directed the City Manager to complete the Dougherty Arts Center without a reduction in size or scope

WHEREAS, Austin Parks and Recreation Director provided a presentation to a work session of City Council on March 19, 2024 suggesting that the project begin again with a new community engagement and a new design after \$4.6 million was spent on the design of the new building which fully addressed the concerns and needs of the Dougherty's constituents,

WHEREAS, Studio 8 completed construction documents after 10 years of planning, design and engagement and is ready to amend the design to eliminate the costly underground parking garage,

WHEREAS, the Dougherty Arts Center, built in 1947 and dedicated to the City in 1978, a jewel in our cultural landscape, is in dire danger of catastrophic structural failure;

WHEREAS, every day that the project to replace the Dougherty Arts Center is delayed, citizens of Austin lose critical access to affordable arts programming and community resources provided by a cornerstone institution of Austin's cultural landscape;

WHEREAS, inflation and rising construction costs further exacerbate the financial burden of delay, and the project loses money daily due to escalating costs;

WHEREAS in the past seven years, during which there were 2,555 operational days, the DAC experienced 3,856 days of operational impact caused by the building's deteriorating condition, meaning that interruptions or program disruptions occurred more than once per day on average;

WHEREAS, the Dougherty Arts Center serves upwards of 60,000 people annually, providing low-cost or free access to arts programming for adults and youth in Austin;

WHEREAS, the risk of imminent failure is real due to the building's severe state of disrepair, increasing the urgency to act immediately to preserve the DAC;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the CITY OF AUSTIN ARTS COMMISSION encourages: that City Council formally commit to completing the Dougherty Arts Center without a reduction in size and scope as stated in Council Resolution 20221208-068 with a complete arts center made up of theaters, galleries and art schools as designed by Studio 8, and that the necessary funds required to complete the Dougherty be included in the 2026 bond.

Date of Approval: November 18, 2024

Record of the vote: Approved on Commissioner Mok's motion, Commissioner Medicharla's second on a 7-0 vote with Commissioner's Gray, Maldonado, and Kracheni absent

Attest: Jesus Varela