



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff 

From: Angela Means, Director, Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment 

Date: August 7, 2026

Subject: **The Creative Reset Update: Listening. Learning. Leading Change.**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment's (ACME) Creative Reset initiative, with a focus on Phase II, which is reimagining how the City's cultural facilities and museums serve Austin residents.

Background

The Creative Reset is ACME's department-wide initiative to strengthen how the City's arts and cultural facilities operate, activate public spaces, and connect with residents and visitors.

Phase I focused on strengthening the City's funding programs by making them more accessible, transparent, and responsive to the needs of Austin's artists, musicians, nonprofit organizations, and creative businesses. Guided by extensive community feedback, the department implemented enhancements that expanded year-round applicant support, improved language access, streamlined application processes, and increased technical assistance. These improvements are reflected in the FY27 Cultural Funding Programs, which launched on July 7, 2026. Additional information on Phase I was provided in ACME's [March 18, 2026 memorandum](#).

Phase II: Reimagining Austin's Cultural Facilities & Museums

Phase II shifts the focus from funding programs to the City's cultural facilities and museums. Through this initiative, ACME is reimagining these facilities as vibrant, community-centered destinations that are active throughout the week, responsive to neighborhood needs, and connected through partnerships, collaboration, and innovative programming.

This effort is intended to maximize the City's existing cultural assets, improve public access, strengthen stewardship of City resources, and create more opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with arts, culture, music, and entertainment.

Community engagement concluded on June 30, 2026, following months of surveys, public meetings, stakeholder conversations, focus groups, and staff workshops involving thousands of residents, artists, musicians, nonprofit organizations, educators, community partners, and City employees.

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What We Heard

Several themes consistently emerged throughout the engagement process. Community members expressed a desire for ACME to:

- Activate our facilities: More activity, more energy, more opportunities.
- Expand partnerships: Collaborate with artists, nonprofits, schools, and community organizations.
- Improve customer experience: Create welcoming, consistent, easy-to-access spaces.
- Reduce barriers: Simplify processes and increase accessibility.
- Celebrate each site's unique identity: Honor history while creating new opportunities.

What We're Doing

Community feedback is directly informing a new operating model for ACME's cultural facilities.

Current implementation efforts include:

- Developing activation plans that increase year-round programming and community use at every cultural facility.
- Expanding partnerships with artists, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and community groups to bring more activities, events, and services into City facilities.
- Returning staff to on-site operations to enhance customer service and streamlining operations so staff can focus more time on serving the public.
- Strengthening collaboration across facilities while preserving the unique identity and cultural significance of each site.

Next Steps

ACME is transitioning from community engagement to implementation. Over the coming months, the department will:

- Present at Commissions and meet with Key Partners.
- Complete the Final Phase II Report.
- Implement the ACME Operational Excellence Framework.
- Launch Phase II operational improvements.
- Continue engaging the community.
- Monitor performance and adjust as we learn.
- Reimagine Austin's cultural spaces for future generations.

Creative Reset Phase II represents an opportunity to transform Austin's cultural facilities into more active, accessible, and connected public spaces that better serve residents while maximizing the City's investment in its cultural infrastructure.

As implementation moves forward, ACME will continue working with community stakeholders and advisory bodies to ensure these improvements reflect community priorities and position the City's cultural facilities to support Austin's creative economy and quality of life for years to come.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Angela Means, Director of Austin Arts, Culture, Music and Entertainment, at angela.means@austintexas.gov or 512-974-1624.

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Erika Brady, City Clerk
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