




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

THROUGH: Stephanie Hayden-Howard, LMSW, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Kimberly A. McNeeley, M.Ed., CPRP, Director
Austin Parks and Recreation Department 

DATE: April 4, 2024

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

This memo is an update to [Resolution No. 20221208-068](#) which directed the City Manager to:

- Proceed with the construction of the Dougherty Arts Center and Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center without a reduction in the scope of proposed work, and to develop an estimate of the resulting funding gap for inclusion in the next applicable City of Austin General Obligation Bond election,
- Develop cost estimates for the next phase of the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center and the Asian American Resource Center as part of the development of the next applicable City of Austin General Obligation Bond Program, and
- Work with the Austin Economic Development Corporation to develop recommendations and possible funding levels for creative space funding as a part of the development of the next applicable City of Austin General Obligation Bond election.

The Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) proceeded with design work for the Dougherty Arts Center (DAC). However, escalating construction costs and a revised scope of work beyond the original renovations for the DAC, resulted in a significant funding gap. PARD, through a Council Work Session presentation, recommended the delivery of a new Dougherty Arts Center utilizing the exiting funds and a phased delivery to accommodate the full cultural center project scope. This approach is independent of traffic, parking and transportation projects. The next steps for the redesigned DAC project include informing stakeholders of the recommendation, conducting additional community engagement, completing the Board and Commission process, and permitting for project construction.

PARD continues with site construction related to Phase 2 of improvements at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center. A notice to proceed for the building renovation and expansion is anticipated by March 2024. Major construction activities are expected to be complete in summer 2025 with a grand opening to follow in the fall. For additional information please visit: [MACC Phase 2 improvements](#).

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 Carver theater renovation project is under construction and completion is anticipated in Spring 2024. The AARC, as part of its Phase 2 improvements, will begin a conceptual design and programming phase for a pavilion and associated improvements in Spring 2024. Please find additional information for the Carver facility at: [Carver Museum Expansion-Phase 1](#) and for AARC at: [Asian American Resource Center-Phase 2 improvements](#).

In 2022, the Austin Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) with support from the City's Economic Development Department compiled an inventory of recommendations of over \$300 million for creative space projects, and AEDC shortlisted several projects with a near-term value of up to \$75 million. City Council has provided authorization for \$6.9 million from the original \$12 million in the 2018 Bond Program, and approval for the remaining \$5.1 million is anticipated within the next six months. More information is available at [Austin Cultural Trust — AEDC \(austinedc.org\)](#), and via AEDC's Chief Transaction Officer, Anne Gatling Haynes, at anne@austinedc.org.

PARD will provide the next update on the Council directives by the end of October 2024.

Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (512) 974-6717.

Cc: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager
Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager
Sylvia Holt-Rabb, Economic Development Department Director
James Snow, Capital Delivery Services Director