

CITY OF AUSTIN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
CULTURAL ARTS DIVISION

CULTURAL TOURISM PLAN



**ART IS A NATION'S MOST
PRECIOUS HERITAGE.
FOR IT IS IN OUR WORKS
OF ART THAT WE REVEAL
TO OURSELVES AND TO
OTHERS THE INNER VISION
WHICH GUIDES US AS
A NATION. AND WHERE
THERE IS NO VISION, THE
PEOPLE PERISH.**



PRESIDENT LYNDON JOHNSON

UPON SIGNING INTO EXISTENCE THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT ON THE ARTS

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MICHAEL KNOX


Culture and Public Policy

20ft WIDE, a public/private alley activation project, launched a policy discussion about the critical role urban alleys play in the character and grain of downtown Austin. 20ft WIDE by Dan Cheetham and Michelle Tarsney was the featured cover story of the July/August 2013 issue of Urban Land Magazine.

At the core of cultural tourism is a deep and honest commitment to quality of place and the authenticity and uniqueness of the people and stories that bring it to life, give it character and shape its distinction. Austin is known as a creative city with an established cultural brand. Because musicians, artists, writers, chefs, filmmakers and all sorts of interesting and talented people choose to and can live and create in Austin, the city and its community benefits. And yet more can be done to support the cultural ecosystem that enables art, culture and creativity to thrive.

Austin is known globally for its iconic, world-class festivals and events with a direct and undeniable relationship to tourism revenues, brand identity and economic resiliency. Perhaps less direct but equally important, Austin's leading creative industry employers, small local businesses, creative learning initiatives and non-profit arts organizations generate the ongoing energy and vibrancy that defines the city. Both commercial and non-commercial, temporary and permanent, infrastructure and program are critical factors to the health of the cultural ecosystem and therefore cultural tourism.

Austin's creative and tourism industries are incredibly productive. Annually in Austin, the creative industries generate \$4.35 billion¹ in economic activity, and the tourism industry generates \$6.3 billion² in visitor spending alone. And while Austin's global recognition as an emerging 21st century city is on the rise and the region is seeing unparalleled growth and rapid urbanization, Austin faces very real challenges like cost of living increases, access to affordable housing and studio space, and sufficient transportation infrastructure to support both current and projected residents. All of these factors put at risk the very essence that defines its distinct and authentic character by providing an accessible and affordable place for the creative sector. Thus puts Austin's established cultural brand at risk.



After a multi-year effort including numerous stakeholders from varying perspectives, this plan lays out the economic value of cultural tourism and efforts to date, what it means and how it impacts the city and a place-based approach to a plan that is derived from the needs, existing efforts and potentials that were discovered through the planning process. This plan does not recommend any change in the percentage of current or future allocation of HOT revenues.

As there is no existing cooperative effort, the recommendations in this plan provide a foundation and framework. It will take many public/private partners and a variety of entities to implement this effort. The start and end point of the plan is a vibrant, healthy cultural ecosystem supported by investments in creative industry infrastructure. The strategic growth areas that are key to the success of the effort are investment in excellence to ensure best-in-class cultural product, concerted action amongst and within industries, and defining, connecting and sharing Austin's story. The specific recommendations, actions and pilot initiatives support the above framework for the plan.

Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and commissioned by the City of Austin Economic Development Department Cultural Arts Division, Austin's cultural tourism plan is about continuing to build, invest, and provide the conditions that further Austin's capacity to create and share the stories of the people and cultures that define the Austin experience. This is an opportunity to invest in the excellence of Austin's own unique characteristics of place, and from there continue to build an attractive, unique and resilient brand.

**ARTS AND CULTURE
ADD VALUE TO THE
TOURISM INDUSTRY
BY ROOTING IT IN THE
AUTHENTICITY OF PLACE
AND LEVERAGING A
REGION'S UNIQUE
CULTURE.**

Cultural Tourism refers to travel directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage and special character of a place. Tourism tied to or driven by cultural interests and activities is a robust and growing subset of the tourism industry as a whole. At the local, state and national levels, tourism industry research has repeatedly demonstrated that **arts tourists stay longer and spend more than the average traveler.**

In an increasingly global and urbanized world³, distinctiveness and authenticity are key competitive advantages for both emerging and established cities. Places that are dynamic, different and yet accessible and discoverable (or re-discoverable) offer a sense of wonder and invite exploration.

The foundation for strong cultural tourism in a city as unique as Austin lies in the city's ability to offer best-in-class and diverse cultural offerings and products, which fundamentally must be supported through investment in local artists and the creative economy. In building a broad base of support for original cultural programming and products, the City is inherently helping to support and create marketable inventory that will attract visitors to Austin. In expanding those offerings, tourists who have known and loved Austin for its quirky authenticity and vibrant music and entertainment scene will have even more compelling reasons to discover something new about the city.

Austin has long been recognized both in and beyond its city borders for its culture of creativity and innovation. Even prior to the adoption of the city's official tagline (the "Live Music Capital of the World") twenty years ago, Austin has enjoyed a far-reaching reputation as a place where creative individuals and artists can flourish. In recent years, this brand has been substantiated through innovations in music, film, food, literature, performance, design, technology, entrepreneurship, green infrastructure, and while a long list, the list goes on. In 2012, Imagine Austin, the comprehensive plan for the city, codified the ongoing vision for and relevancy of the creative economy by emphasizing the importance of arts, culture, and creativity as the backbone of the Austin ethos, thus its global brand.



From the Imagine Austin Vision Statement:

Austin is Creative. Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity. Arts, culture, and creativity are essential keys to the city's unique and distinctive identity and are valued as vital contributors to our community's character, quality of life, and economy.

While Austin's global recognition as an emerging 21st century city is on the rise and the region is seeing unparalleled growth and rapid urbanization, Austin faces very real challenges like cost of living increases, access to affordable housing, and sufficient transportation infrastructure to support both current and projected residents. All of these factors put at risk the very essence that defines its distinct and authentic character by providing an accessible and affordable place for the creative sector.

As the urban population increases, so does the impact and importance of culture and creativity. Culture is the lifeblood of our cities, it is a major reason why people gravitate to them. It is deeply embedded in our social and economic structures, and because of this, culture is now at the heart of public policy in most major cities⁴. And fortunately for Austin, growing and investing in Austin's creative economy is a key strategic priority of the Imagine Austin implementation work plan (which is being led by the City of Austin Economic Development Department (EDD)) therefore developing a generative place-based strategy will aid in its pursuit of economic resiliency.

As one of the short-term initiatives in the implementation work plan, the development of this cultural tourism plan was commissioned by the EDD and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) with the **goal of defining strategies that leverage Austin's creative and tourism industries to create job growth and, ultimately, economic resiliency**. Since both the creative and tourism industries receive monies from Austin's Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT), a collaborative approach to leveraging both growing industries will mutually benefit the industries themselves and the City of Austin as a whole as envisioned in Imagine Austin:



#5: GROW AND INVEST IN AUSTIN'S CREATIVE ECONOMY.

Austin's healthy economy stems, in large part, from its vibrant, local creative community and diverse workforce. Creative individuals (artists, musicians, film and digital media professionals, and other knowledge-based workers), cultural organizations, and creative businesses contribute to the region's economic growth and quality of life. Continued strategic investment in these industries is needed to grow existing creative sector entrepreneurs, organizations and businesses, encourage "home-grown" start-ups, and attract new organizations, businesses, residents, and visitors who will contribute to a healthy economy.



MICHAEL KNOX

Willie Nelson and Austin, TX are synonymous for relentless commitment to individuality. An Austin icon, both in person and in art, the eight foot tall sculpture was unveiled on Willie Nelson Way (2nd Street) across from Austin City Hall at Austin City Limits Moody Theater on 4/20/2012 at 4:20 pm.

Imagine Austin outlined the purpose of a planning effort around cultural tourism as a way to improve tourism offerings (such as technology and cultural diversity) at the regional, national, and global scales, in order to stimulate trade and bring new resources to the community.

Consistent with the promotion and enhancement of the city as a cultural destination, the intent of the plan is to:

- › Support economic growth and the creative sector by leveraging the travel industry and the City's current investments in the arts
- › Provide an opportunity to build new partnerships across sectors
- › Increase tourism around place-specific arts, cultural, and heritage offerings
- › Address the need to broaden marketing efforts and reach out to new audiences, both residents and tourists, to increase tourism throughout the year
- › Aim to elevate the City leadership (both staff and elected officials) understanding of the importance of culture and investment in its proliferation to build a sustainable, resilient 21st century city.

USING THE PLAN


The plan is a guide to establish a favorable environment to create the basic building blocks for a successful cultural tourism effort. The plan will help establish shared policy and strategy, implementation budgets, build community buy-in, help illustrate the roles of each industry, create a cohesive voice and call to action to work together to leverage both the creative and tourism industries. The plan knits existing efforts, makes recommendations for investments and a structure to ensure implementation accountability.

THE AUDIENCE

The audience for the plan itself is City of Austin elected officials and management, creative and tourism industry leaders, business leaders and potential strategic partners (funding and otherwise), organizations funded by the HOT revenues and all other members of the cultural tourism ecosystem.

OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL TOURISM PLAN HISTORY AND PROCESS

- 1969 The City of Austin begins funding artists and the arts.
- 1985 Austin City Council adopt the Art in Public Places ordinance.
- 2010 Austin City Council accepts CreateAustin, Austin's most recent cultural master plan. The plan identified the **need for a cultural tourism task force**.
- 2010 Due to tensions over the use of HOT revenues as a source of funding for non-profit arts organization, the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association releases a memo with suggestions on partnership opportunities between the creative and tourism industries to work together more effectively. Some of the partnership ideas to come out of this memo included:
- › Exchange of Central Board positions
 - › Set out a core value to make arts events an amenity of group & convention bookings wherever possible
 - › Create Joint Hotel/Arts Committee to coordinate mutual utilization
 - › Joint marketing efforts
 - › Mutual regular education of key hotel and arts staff on resources
 - › Consideration of off-season, shoulder season and multi-day events
- 2011 The Cultural Arts Division of the Economic Development Department hosts three days of cultural and heritage tourism roundtables presented by Lenwood Sloan, then Director of Cultural and Heritage Tourism at the Pennsylvania Tourism Office.
- 2011 The Economic Development Department established a HOT Fund Task Force with representatives from both the creative and tourism industries to address the recommendations from the memo. The Task Force identified these key areas as the focus for collective efforts:
- › Marketing
 - › Relationships
 - › Shoulder seasons
 - › Shared vision
- 2012 Austin City Council adopts Imagine Austin, Austin's comprehensive plan, which included a recommendation for a cultural tourism and heritage plan as part of the short-term work program for priority program (item #5: Grow and Invest in Austin's Creative Economy).
- 2013 The Cultural Arts Division of the Economic Development Department receives a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to commission the City of Austin's Cultural Tourism Plan.

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- 2013 The Cultural Arts Division invites Robert Lynch, president of Americans for the Arts and member of the US Travel Advisory Board, to Austin for a public presentation on cultural tourism and to raise awareness among the creative community.
- 2013 A multi-sector, multi-disciplinary steering committee forms to establish the vision for the plan. The team served from 2013-2015 and established the vision, conducted resident and small groups surveys, made recommendations on goals and objectives and advised the consulting team throughout the drafting of the plan.
- The outcome of this work was the creation of a document outlining the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies from the Committee, which became the basis for this report and was incorporated into the recommendations. The committee's Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies document is included in the appendix of this report.
- 2014 Through a competitive bid process, the Cultural Arts Division engages Public City, a culture-driven public engagement consultancy and studio, to draft the plan.

The process for researching and drafting the plan was:

Phase 1: RESEARCH & INPUT to gain Historical Context

Public City conducted meetings and interviews to identify opportunities and resources that could be combined to create an impactful, implementable plan. In addition to meeting with City Staff on a regular basis and the Cultural Tourism Steering Committee for periodic briefings, nearly 50 one-on-one meetings were conducted with individuals representing nearly 45 local and national organizations and institutions; arts leaders were convened and surveyed (24 attended/8 responded to survey); and 300 resident survey responses (through SpeakUP! Austin) were reviewed and analyzed. Public City also presented at the City's Partners in the Arts luncheon to 75 attendees.

Phase 2: INPUT & ANALYSIS to better understand Contemporary Landscape

Input was synthesized and analyzed to determine the common threads and then cross-referenced to local and national data (see the Appendix for a full list of resources and documents reviewed during the process).

Phase 3: ANALYSIS & STRATEGY Weave. Test. Complete.

A foundation for the strategy was established with three supporting key elements. These were then tested for relevance with constituencies within the EDD's Cultural Arts Division, Music and Entertainment Division and Small Business Development staffs and leading cultural heritage tourism expert Cheryl Hargrove of CTH Partners and founding organizer of the Cultural Heritage Tourism Exchange. The draft plan was shared with the steering committee and City for input and feedback and completed.



At the core of cultural tourism is a deep and honest commitment to quality of place and the uniqueness of the people and stories that bring it to life, give it character and shape its distinction.

Communities that attract cultural tourists experience an additional boost of economic activity. At the local, state and national levels, tourism industry research has repeatedly demonstrated that **arts tourists stay longer and spend more than the average traveler**. Contextually, the timing of the creation of a cultural tourism plan is following a national movement and effort to better understand culture's role in the distinctiveness and authenticity of place and why and how it is valuable, so now is an opportune time to mine data and research from organizations from the local to the international levels as it relates to cultural tourism.

The research also pointed to a concern with cultural tourism. Cities and communities that focused on prioritizing the visitor (non-resident) audience or a plug-and-play tactic in its cultural offerings over livability and quality of place saw declines in the production of local unique and authentic culture, and frequently became solely considered to be tourist attractions, or "one hit wonders." Cities find themselves needing to balance between short-term, quick-hit economic bumps and long-term cultural vibrancy and economic resiliency.

For the sake of implementing vibrant cultural tourism practices, this is an opportunity to invest in the excellence of Austin's own unique characteristics of place, and from there continue to build an attractive, unique and resilient brand. The following pages include highlights from secondary research that provided critical insights into the development and foundation of this cultural tourism plan.

FINDINGS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The 2014 World Cities Culture Report, produced by the World Cities Culture Forum and commissioned by the Mayor of London, analyzes over 70 collected data sets from its 24 member cities, and has determined these key shared factors in resilient, attractive, competitive world cities:

- › Culture is at the heart of public policy.
- › In a globalized world, culture gives world cities a distinctive appeal.
- › World cities are as important in culture as they are in finance and trade.



FINDINGS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Both the tourism business and the cultural economy are big business in the United States with dynamic growth potential at a national and international level. Ken Hyatt, Acting Deputy Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce (at the time) cited research saying, “Travel and tourism is the fastest growing export sector of the economy growing nine percent in 2013.” He further emphasized that cultural heritage tourism plays an important role in the National Travel and Tourism Strategy.

Multiple report findings at the national level from various years all point to consistent trends and data. A 2009 national research study on U.S. Cultural and Heritage Travel by Mandela Research reports that cultural and heritage visitors spend on average \$994 per trip compared to \$611 for other U.S. travelers, and that 78 percent of all U.S. leisure travelers (equivalent to 118.3 million adults each year) participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling⁵.

In 2012, the Federal government developed a National Travel and Tourism Strategy to support economic growth and job creation by better leveraging the travel and tourism industry. This National Strategy proposes that Federal agencies work together and with the private sector to meet the goal of increasing American jobs by attracting and welcoming 100 million international visitors, who will spend an estimated \$250 billion annually by the end of 2021. The strategy posits:

A significant competitive advantage of the United States as a tourism destination lies in the diversity of experiences offered here, ranging from urban destinations and small-town America to the many unique regional cultures found throughout the United States and its territories. Popular culture— including music, film and television— is also a significant selling point.

As a result of the Travel Promotion Act of 2009, Brand USA (the nation's first destination marketing organization charged with marketing the United States) was created to promote international travel and tourism to the United States. Prior to Brand USA, no coordinated campaign existed to promote U.S. destinations to American visitors either, which might encourage them to travel more at home. Aimed at telling the unique stories that make up the diverse culture and landscape of America, Brand USA just released the results of its first marketing campaign (2013):

>1M

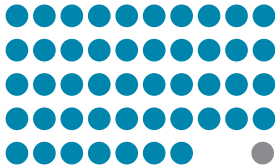
MORE THAN 1 MILLION VISITORS

\$3.4B

IN VISITOR SPENDING

\$7.4B

IN OVERALL ECONOMIC IMPACT



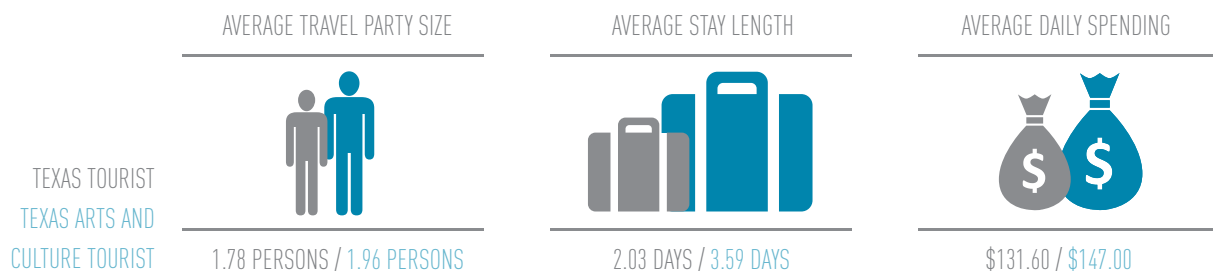
\$47 TO \$1 RETURN
ON THE CAMPAIGN'S
INVESTMENT

As an evolving field of focus, the Cultural Heritage Tourism Exchange convened in 2014 to discuss the future of cultural heritage tourism. The group identified three important actions to advance and sustain cultural heritage tourism. Those were:

- > Usable Research
- > Hospitality Training
- > Expanded Partnerships (specifically with planners and economic development agencies)

FINDINGS AT THE STATE LEVEL

Economic impact data released in early 2015 by the Texas Cultural Trust and TXP, Inc. and compiled by D.K. Shifflet & Associates Ltd. (DKSA) for the Texas Economic Development and Tourism office within the Office of the Governor report similar impact at the state level: Cultural and arts tourists stay longer, bring more people and spend more⁶. Texas arts and culture tourist statistics⁷:

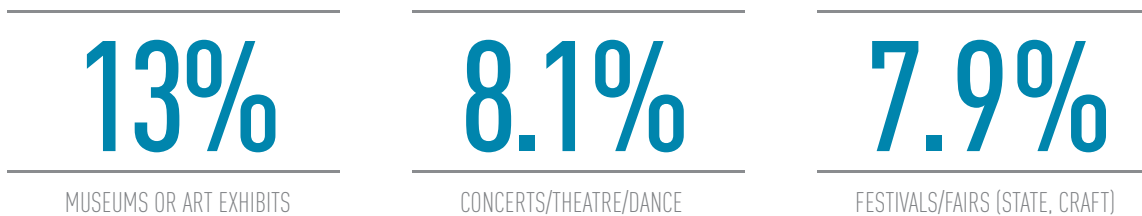


In Texas, travel parties participating in a cultural activity spend on average \$1,034.35 while the average Texas travel party spends \$475.52 per trip.

\$475.52

\$1,034.35

Furthermore, additional data concludes⁸ one in seven Texas visitors enjoys cultural activities while on vacation and that three of the top 12 activities for non-resident visitors are arts, culture and festival-related activities, broken out as follows:



FINDINGS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Cultural Events Attract New Dollars and Retain Local Dollars

Arts & Economic Prosperity IV by American for the Arts reports that Austin's non-profit arts and culture sector provides attractions that draw visitors to the community. Out of 864 surveys, non-resident attendees spend an average of 120 percent more per person than local attendees (\$42.87 vs. \$19.52) as a result of their attendance at cultural events. Further, 8.4 percent of the non-resident survey respondents reported that they spent at least one additional night away from home in Austin as a direct result of attending the cultural event (which increased their average spend to \$212.84 from \$42.87)⁹.

Additionally,

- › 69.3 percent of all non-resident survey respondents reported that the primary reason for their trip was “specifically to attend this arts/cultural event.”
- › 31.5 percent of the resident cultural attendees report that they would have traveled to a different community in order to attend a similar cultural experience.
- › 46.0 percent of the non-resident cultural attendees report the same.

These figures demonstrate the economic impact of the non-profit arts and culture in the purest sense. If a community does not provide a variety of artistic and cultural experiences, it will fail to attract the new dollars of cultural tourists. It will also lose the discretionary spending of its local residents who will travel elsewhere to experience the arts. Arts & Economic Prosperity IV reflects these findings: 32 percent of attendees live outside the county in which the arts event took place, and their event-related spending is more than twice that of their local counterparts (nonlocal: \$39.96 vs. local: \$17.42).

The message is clear: a vibrant arts community not only keeps residents and their discretionary spending close to home, it also attracts visitors who spend money and help local businesses thrive.

ArtPlace
America funds
\$656,500 for two
Austin creative
placemaking
projects (2014)

Austin theater
artist Shawn
Sides wins
\$275,000 Doris
Duke Artist
Award (2015)

AUSTIN in the NEWS

Alamo Drafthouse
Ranked 5th Most
Innovative Company
in the World in
Entertainment
(Fast Company,
2015)

Richard
Linklater named
Time's 100
Most Influential
People (2015)

Olamaie Chefs
Named Two of
Food & Wine's
Best New
Chefs (2015)

Austin Among
Best Cities
For Young
Entrepreneurs
(ABJ, November
2014)

SXSW, ACL and
FFF Fest named
among 21 Best
Music Festivals
of 2015 (fuse)

Austin ranked
No. 1 tech
city over San
Francisco (ABJ,
February 2015)

Travel Channel's
picks for the Top
10 technical,
innovative and
business savvy
cities in America

Paul Qui,
Best New Chef
(Food & Wine,
2014)

Austin Ranks
Among the Top 60
Fastest Growing
Economies in the
World (USA Today,
March 2015)



SUMMARY

Austin must continue to produce and preserve place-specific, best-in-class cultural content to be competitive in the global marketplace and maximize its current and planned infrastructure investments. Annually in Austin, the creative industries generate \$4.35 billion¹⁰ in economic activity, and the tourism industry generates \$6.3 billion¹¹ in visitor spending alone. An increased focus on and investment in cultural tourism for Austin presents an opportunity to increase the vitality and impact of both sectors, and, in turn, to grow the annual HOT revenue and local spending. Significant new hotel inventory recently opened with more slated to open within the next 12-18 months. The award-winning Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) is also expanding and expansion feasibility is in the works for the Austin Convention Center.

Developing a viable and sustainable cultural tourism plan of approach for Austin will only stand to enhance the vibrancy of both the creative and tourism economies, and ultimately, cultural tourism should evolve into a closed loop cycle (pictured on the following page) that helps to provide a stream of funding for additional investment into cultural capacity and products. The creative product in Austin creates the authentic brand identity and draw for tourists, and the ability of the tourism industry to attract visitors generates dollars to continue to reinvest in the cultural economy through both contributing to the HOT revenues and through direct investment into the city's economy.



CULTURAL VIBRANCY

CREATIVE INDUSTRY

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Artists and Creators produce authentic, original cultural product and experiences

The product creates an authentic, distinctive and unique place

Austin provides an attractive home and ecosystem for Artists and Creators

The uniqueness of the place lends itself to Austin's Competitive Advantage in a global tourism market

The attractiveness of Austin as a cultural tourism destination increases Revenue for the creative economy through direct investment and indirect sources like HOT Revenue

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

MAYORS UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ARTS INDUSTRY AND CITY REVENUES.

Arts activity creates thousands of direct and indirect jobs and generates billions in government and business revenues. The arts also make our cities destinations for tourists, help attract and retain businesses, and play an important role in the economic revitalization of cities and the vibrancy of our neighborhoods.

PHILADELPHIA MAYOR MICHAEL A. NUTTER
President, The United States Conference of Mayors 2012–2013



JODY HORTON COURTESY OF LA CONDESA



THE STARTING POINT

The bedrock of a successful cultural tourism plan is a vibrant and healthy cultural ecosystem. In many ways, the ecosystem is both the beginning and end point for this plan: the ecosystem creates the operating context through which Austin can continue to build and cultivate cultural tourism. In this closed-loop cycle, the macro environment includes the cultural programming, which attracts the tourists, which in turn yields more and more funding for additional creative product and the infrastructure investment that supports it.

Place-specific cultural production, preservation and particularly the cultural producers themselves are the key ingredients of this cultural tourism plan for Austin. Absolutely key to the cultural and heritage sector are the creators: the artists, performers, writers, filmmakers, thinkers, designers and other creative workers whose skills and vision bring to life the city's genius and ideas, innovations and traditions. Austin's greatest asset, and ultimately its competitive advantage, is the creative energy that is generated here, the talent that chooses to live here and create here, and the ecosystem that nurtures its pursuit of excellence. At the core of this plan, and aligned with Imagine Austin, is the need to serve and support this incredibly important asset to Austin's unique quality and character of place, cultural ecosystem and global cultural brand.

BUILDING BLOCKS

This cultural tourism plan builds on the work of several efforts that have come before it. The work of **Imagine Austin**, and **CreateAustin** before that, laid out priorities and an implementation plan that aims to grow and invest in Austin's creative economy. It includes initiatives that are focused on building the robustness of the foundation of the cultural ecosystem, like land use and development mechanisms; creative learning programs to develop the next generation workforce; household affordability and creative space development; and complete communities that are compact and connected along with other initiatives focused on both quality of life and quality of place.

As parties come together to understand, more closely align, and appreciate efforts between industries, both must also work together to solve the city's most complex issues like household affordability (including spaces to create) and lack of transportation infrastructure and connectivity. These challenges potentially put at risk environments and conditions that are conducive to continuing the prolific cultural production and generation Austin is known for locally, and ultimately could put the Austin brand at risk.



STRATEGIC GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

The ecosystem – as it currently exists – is vibrant and robust in many ways. But, in order to continue to build upon the opportunities for advancing cultural tourism, work needs to happen in three key areas that are all fundamentally necessary and oriented towards actionable items. Those areas are **investing in excellent product and producers** across the board; **concerted action** between key constituents; and **discovering, connecting with and sharing the story**.


INVEST IN EXCELLENCE.

The ability to offer excellence is most critical to Austin’s competitiveness as a distinct, authentic, world-renowned city and cultural brand. A relentless drive and commitment to fresh, original, independent, ground breaking and best-in-class product development will confirm Austin as a leading creative force, and help position it on the global market for cultural tourist destinations. As such, the pursuit of and investment in excellence is necessary for all creative endeavors that have the potential to be attractive to cultural tourists. This should be kept top of mind by both organizations who administer existing pools of money to fund creative projects, as well as any new or future funds that become part of the economic mechanism of growing the creative sector.

CONCERTED ACTION.

To leverage the investments and efforts in both the creative and tourism industries (particularly entities receiving HOT revenues), the industries need to work together toward the common goal of making Austin an even more-attractive city, and therefore destination for cultural tourists, thus contributing to and growing the overall pool of HOT revenues and direct local spending. Advancing cultural tourism presents one opportunity for a collaborative effort amongst the parties involved (CAD cultural contractors, the cultural producers and artists, the Austin CVB, hoteliers and the hospitality industry, for instance).

In the simplest of terms (and as was illustrated in the findings section of this document), the creative industries develop the product and the tourism industry markets and sells the product. And because the industries are supported by the same funding mechanism, there is mutual benefit in working cooperatively to maximize efficiencies and scale revenues.



With no existing organization that regularly convenes representatives from both industries in conversations around goals and challenges for cultural tourism specifically, this is going to be a challenge. But, both sectors must – first and foremost – collectively agree that cultural tourism is an important part of their respective industries. For tourism, it plays a critical role in continuing to attract a different segment of visitors, and, as the research has demonstrated, attracting additional incremental and new dollars into the local economy during tourists' stay in the city. For the creative sector, it means attracting a new and broader audience to help support original work.

In lieu of creating all new structures and mechanisms for focusing on and driving cultural tourism, integrate concerted action into existing City of Austin efforts across departments and cultural contractors and work cooperatively with Austin CVB efforts to determine where opportunities might exist to leverage resources across interests.

DISCOVER, SHARE AND CONNECT THE STORY.

Cohesiveness and articulate marketing are essential to spreading the word beyond Austin about what's happening here in the cultural realm. As is the case with the call for concerted action, multiple parties are involved in and take responsibility for these efforts.

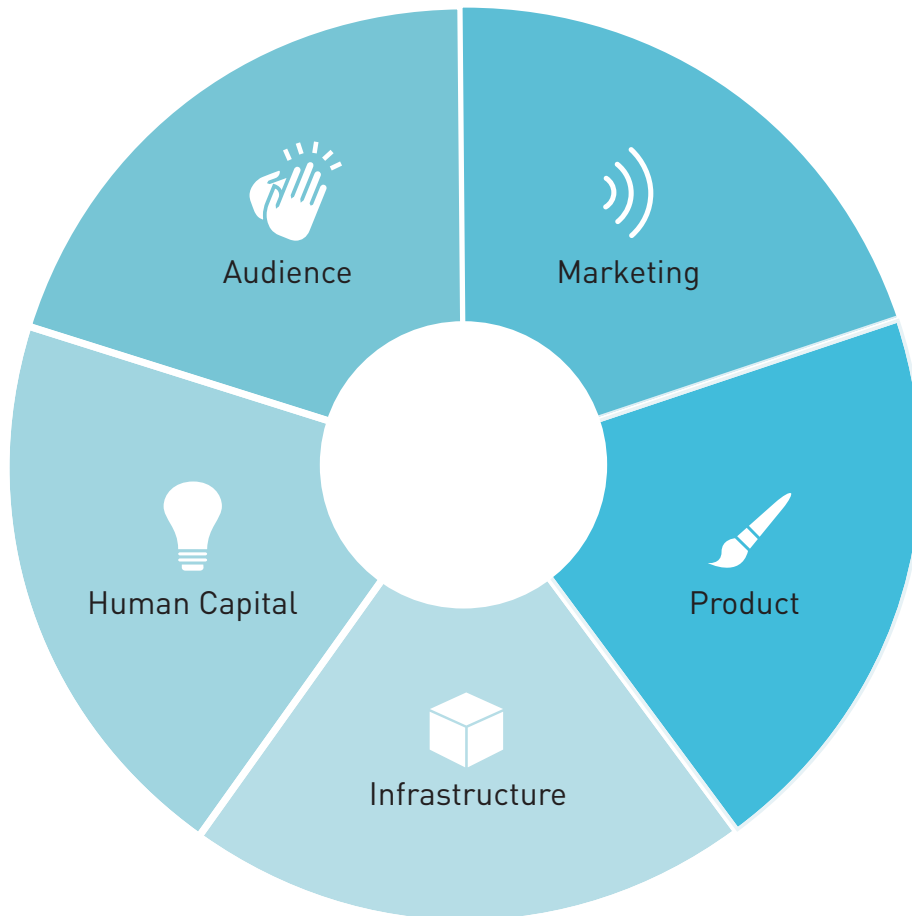
The Austin CVB, responsible for positioning Austin as a premier leisure, convention and meeting destination, is the leading expert in marketing Austin to visitors. Its award-winning campaigns and programs are effective, innovative and rooted in the character and culture of Austin. The creative industries play a critical role in these efforts, not only by creating the interest and distinct character that makes Austin competitive in the global marketplace, but also substantiating it when visitors arrive and return. The city's cultural heritage is one of its most valuable assets. Additional focus needs to be given to Austin's multicultural diversity to more accurately represent the quality and character of place and attract a more diverse cultural tourism audience.

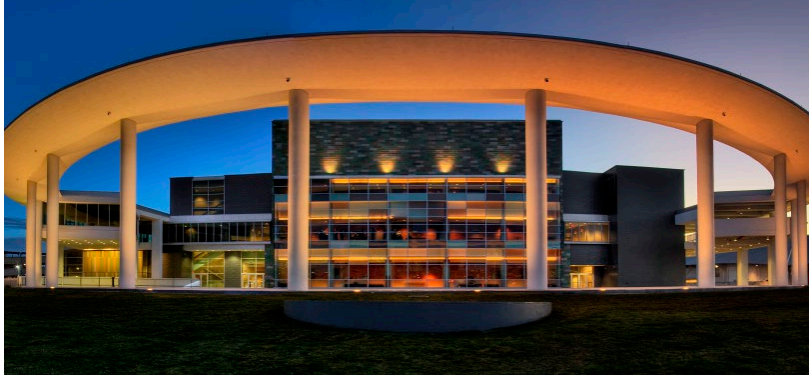
Residents, whether hosting visiting friends and family or meeting a visitor on the street, also play a key role in a visitor's decision to come to Austin and as ambassadors of the Austin experience. To support the efforts of the Austin CVB's visitor targeted marketing campaign, a similar marketing campaign targeted at residents to promote Austin's culture of creativity is a role the City is positioned to drive working cooperatively with the Austin CVB, and the EDD's CAD-funded cultural contractors and the Music and Entertainment Division.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

Pursuing the strategic growth opportunities outlined above should remain as an overarching goal or guiding light for all efforts. In the following pages, specific tactical recommendations and action steps are listed and broken down by different components of the ecosystem. These are implementable, momentum builders and considered the beginning stages of a cultural tourism plan. This is a living, breathing effort that will grow and become more robust over time.

COMPONENTS OF THE CULTURAL TOURISM ECOSYSTEM





The bedrock of a successful cultural tourism effort is vibrant, healthy cultural ecosystem. In many ways, the ecosystem is both the beginning and end point for this plan: the ecosystem creates the operating context through which Austin can continue to build and cultivate cultural tourism.



Investing in Excellence

Excellence is most critical to Austin's competitiveness as a distinct, authentic, world-renowned city and cultural brand. Commissioned by Landmarks, the public art program of the University of Texas at Austin building a world-class public art collection, **Monochrome for Austin** by Nancy Rubins is the largest project by a female artist on the UT Austin campus.



Infrastructure

The creative and tourism industries in Austin are strong and demonstrating continued growth (\$4.35 billion annual economic impact¹² for creative industry and \$6.3 billion¹³ in visitor spending alone for tourism respectively). Both industries are individually operating at an incredible level of output; yet, lack a shared strategy or vision that drives towards both common and mutual benefit. By working cooperatively, the two sectors can explore ways for enhanced communication, promotion, and alignment of resources in ways that are mutually beneficial.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Establish cultural tourism as a focus area for both the creative and tourism industries.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Design a collaborative entity (committee, task force, working group, commission, etc.) bridging the creative and tourism industries that exists to develop innovative, place-based efforts to increase cultural tourism and provide implementation accountability. Research shows efforts go as far as full time staff or as little as an MOU.

Options¹⁴ for Austin may include:

- › a Memorandum of Understanding similar to the agreement between Fort Worth CVB and the City's Cultural Affairs Department
- › a Culture Commission like that of Austin's Film or Sports Commissions
- › Committee on Economic Opportunity, Technology, Innovation, and Creative Industries chaired by Councilmember Troxclair and appointed by Mayor Adler

ACTIONS Brief elected officials and City management on this plan and encourage adoption of this plan. Determine funding and staffing resources to support a collaborative task force or joint committee, which would create a charter or working agenda for this collaborative effort. Select a leader(s) or manager(s) and key partners for implementation efforts. Form a structure that is representative of the cultural tourism ecosystem, educated and informed on national and statewide cultural tourism efforts and examples, and develop accountability measures. Determine collective goals and develop action plans and key roles. Build strategic alliances and begin to implement plan. Key partners who would need to be at the table to accomplish this recommendation include, but are by no means limited to, the Austin CVB and EDD.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Look for additional opportunities to support cultural activity in other city offices and departments like the Austin Center for Events, the Offices of Innovation and Sustainability, Austin Transportation Department, Austin Police Department, Code Compliance and the Public Works Department to build collaborative efforts particularly where existing efforts may conflict.



Human Capital

Efforts to develop the creative workforce are currently underway through the EDD and programs like the Creative Learning Initiatives, a partnership between the City of Austin, Austin ISD and MindPop. Continuing to build out the creative economy within Austin only strengthens the diversity and variety of offerings that may prove to be attractive programs for cultural tourists. Additionally, building the workforce and creative producers strengthens the quality of work available to the general public.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Work with the EDD's Global Business Recruitment Division to recruit creative industry and supportive sectors.

ACTION Prioritize recruiting new creative business to locate in Austin, with a focus on businesses that would strengthen the state of creative industries in Austin. That includes but is not limited to hiring and developing local creative talent, supporting existing creative efforts as well as a need for creative products developed locally. Add culture-based programs, artist exchanges, and generative partnerships to deepen the shared human experience to establish an authentic interest in building a more productive partnership, both in the recruiting phase and long-term relationship if company has multiple locations.

In odd numbered years, Austin Music People compiles and presents a comprehensive white paper on the State of the Austin Music Industry. The 2015 white paper will be an addendum to this plan.



Product

The product lines include the actual creative offerings that are accessible to cultural tourists. The recommendations fall into two categories: looking at continuing to develop existing products and product lines, and starting to develop new product lines.

Strengthen and Deepen Existing Product Lines

RECOMMENDATION 1: Identify and diversify products to attract new visitor audiences.

ACTION Continue to fund non-profit cultural production to deliver interesting content, experiences and images for aid in promoting Austin as a vibrant, multi-dimensional cultural destination on an ongoing basis. Inventory and categorize existing cultural contractors to better understand the dynamics of the existing product, the gaps and overlaps. Include programs from EDD's Music and Entertainment Division and PARD's History Arts & Nature Division to best understand collective ecosystem.

Non-profit arts organizations and individual artists are awarded cultural contracts from funds allocated from HOT revenues to produce, commission and program art, develop artists, and/or educate audiences, both local and visiting. Required to present and market public programs as a condition of funding, these artists and organizations represent and serve the diverse, multi-cultural, multi-generational, multi-dimensional Austin that cultural tourists are looking to experience. Both directly and indirectly tied to hotel room nights, this investment is critical to developing and sustaining the cultural product that is the backbone of a resilient cultural brand. It provides the authenticity and distinctiveness cultural tourists seek when deciding on a destination.



ACTION Invest in the preservation of the built environment and cultural heritage. In a relatively young city like Austin, preservation is critical to developing a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the unique character of place. In addition to physical site preservation, fund engagement through contemporary public programs including technology platforms to continue to instill relevance for the next generation of stewards. A portion of the HOT revenue is also allocated to preservation. Determine annual amount generated to fund preservation efforts, qualifications and process for funding to align with the current needs.



The Paramount Theater is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2015. The Paramount blade, a dynamic architectural element long lost to age and time will be recreated and reinstalled facing Congress Avenue, creating a new beacon for the Avenue. The theater draws thousands of people and dollars to Congress Avenue in the evenings, when the Avenue has for the last many years been a quiet place with little foot traffic. It also hosts hundreds of performances and film screenings of all types and is home to festivals like the Austin Film Festival, Moontower Comedy Festival, and SXSW. It is an example of investing in preservation excellence to restore beauty and function while enabling ongoing, generative programming that supports the development of Austin's cultural ecosystem.



PAUL BARDAGY COURTESY OF LANDMARKS

ACTION Include and promote university and higher education assets, expertise and scholars to broaden the Austin and visitor audience. As an example, the University of Texas College of Fine Arts is an excellent cultural resource with an interest in developing outward-facing programs and engaging with the larger Austin community. In development, the College recently announced the Design Institute for Health, a collaboration between the College of Fine Arts and Dell Medical School, a first-of-its-kind institution dedicated to applying design thinking and creative solutions to the nation's health care challenges. Through designing creative, uniquely Austin solutions to America's healthcare delivery system, the institute aims to make Austin a model healthy city. Existing campus resources such as the Blanton Museum of Art, the Landmarks public art collection, and exhibitions and public programs at the UT Visual Arts Center and Bass Concert Hall compliment the collection of world-class institutions like the recently reimagined LBJ Library and Museum (located on campus but not a UT institution), the Harry Ransom Center, Texas Memorial Museum and the Briscoe Center.



ACTION Fund the development of niche cultures and emerging talent to expand cultural product. Support the development of the most promising artists and arts organizations, makers, and creators; the writers providing the critical dialogue and coverage; and commerce needed to help develop their work, fuel excellence in their field, and grow and sustain the market. Events like Print Austin which showcases Austin’s vibrant print-making scene and AIPP’s TEMPO public art program nurture Austin’s visual artists. Other niches include slam poetry, improv, craft brews and urban farming, public interest design and creative placemaking to name a few examples. Publications like aether magazine, Art Alliance Austin’s Austin Arts Weekly and independent zines and blogs can play a critical role in cultural expansion. Artists’ markets and commercial activity also serve an important function to sustainable growth.

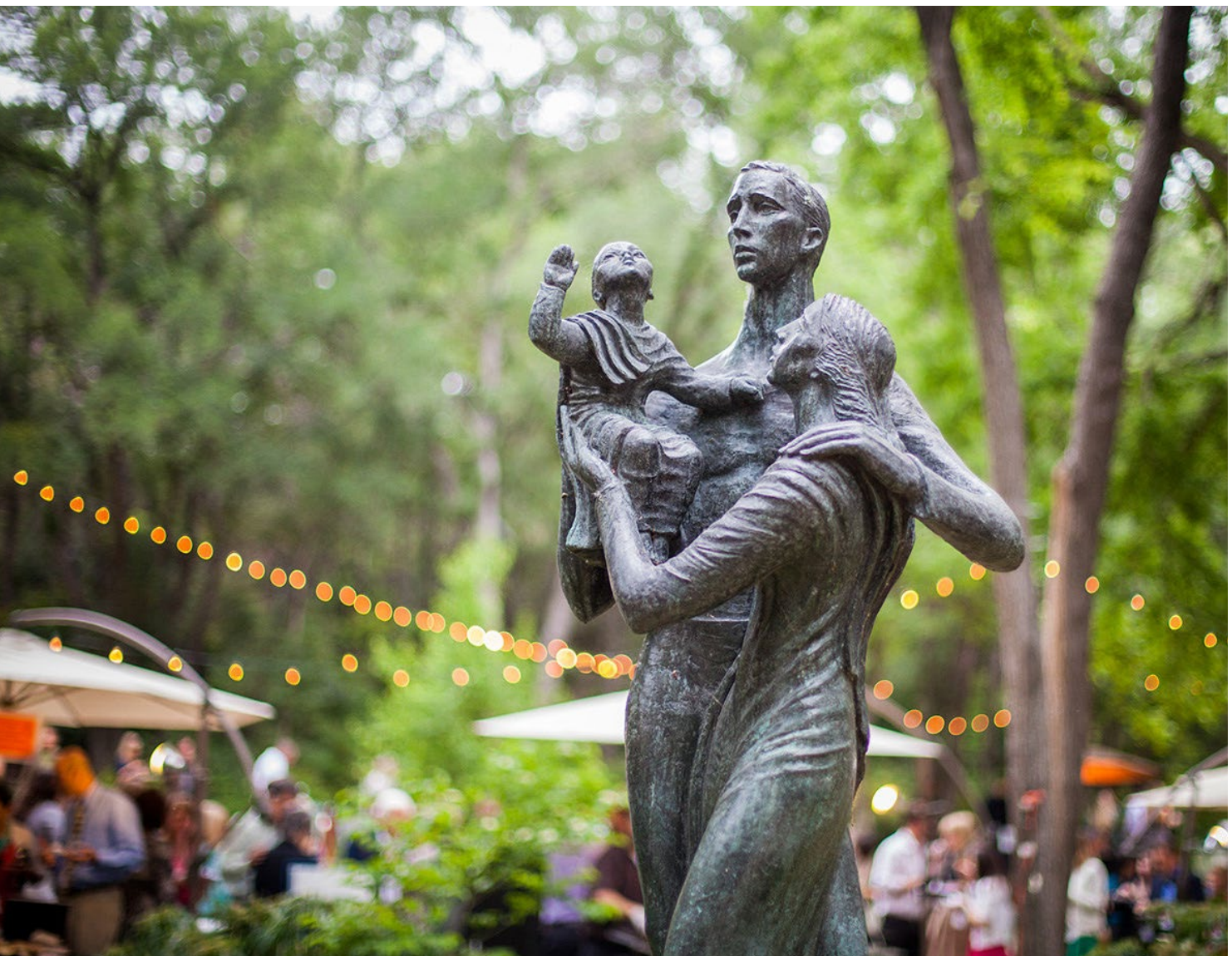


COURTESY OF THE HIDEOUT THEATRE



RECOMMENDATION 2: Foster neighborhood character and identity to generate more diverse and clustered cultural product to promote.

ACTION Invest in existing and future cultural and historic districts that exemplify Austin’s diversity. Austin has one state-recognized cultural district (Austin’s African American Cultural Heritage District) and a city-designated cultural district (the Red River Cultural District). Both of the designated districts, as well as potential future cultural districts or zones (the 5th Street Mexican American Heritage Corridor, the Barton Springs Corridor, Congress Avenue and E. 6th Street, Innovation Zone) provide a unique perspective into the past, present, and future of a specific place or culture.



UNLAUF SCULPTURE GARDEN BY JEFF WATT BRAND



ACTION Grow capacity and expand impact and reach through ongoing contemporary programming that engages new audiences with the districts. Build on the success of projects like the preservation and activation of Downs Field and the historic cemeteries in Austin’s African American Cultural Heritage District; festivals like Pachanga Fest, Dia de los Muertos, the Dragon Boat Festival, and Pride Austin; and work closely with resident anchor businesses like Cheer Up Charlies (RRCD) to drive additional programming.



› Austin’s African American Cultural Heritage District’s Discover Heritage Interactive map. The students at Keeling Middle School provide content for this interactive map and live website that can be found at discover.aachd.org

Develop a Generative Cultural and Historic District Model for Austin

Austin’s African American Cultural Heritage District and the Red River Cultural District represent a generative cultural district model worth investing in to test and replicate. They are both comprised of a variety of types of districts (as defined by Americans for the Arts), featuring an eclectic collection of the built environment with a mix of venue types and open spaces, encapsulate multi-disciplinary, mixed uses and audiences and generate ongoing cultural production while also preserving integral stories of an Austin past or at risk.

Note: Funding for cultural districts is a priority initiative for the Texas Commission on the Arts and Texans for the Arts during the 2015 legislative session.



ACTION Leverage the small and music business loan programs and the Soul-y Austin Business District Incubator pilot initiative to support creative industry development and preservation. Prioritize the development of new creative industry small businesses, preserve existing legacy businesses and nurture the development of creative clusters and the cultural nuances of the neighborhoods in and outside of downtown. In certain cases, these efforts could enhance cultural districts if done collectively. Support the formation of merchants associations that provide strong, vibrant and functional commercial business districts that can further promote and preserve the history and culture of an area.

ACTION Explore opportunities with the cultural facilities of the Parks & Recreation Department (including the Historic Cemeteries Master Plan) and Library Services for existing cultural activities and where supplemental contemporary programming or artist residencies can support cultural tourism. A world-class, innovative central library is in development in downtown Austin and PARD's History Arts & Nature Division, Austin's second largest arts organization, is developing a template for a "Community Creativity Center". These open-source, do-it-yourself cultural centers represent an incredible opportunity to offer cultural tourists a hyper-local insiders' view into Austin's distinct and diverse neighborhoods, and can spur exploration into the cultural fabric of the ten new council districts. With the forthcoming Cultural Asset Maps, these facilities and cultural resources can be a powerful insight into the heart of culture making and the City's cultural foundation.



COURTESY OF AUSTIN'S PARKS AND RECREATION HISTORY ARTS & NATURE DIVISION

Note: Currently, the Austin CVB promotes specific areas of Austin that have a concentrated collection of businesses relevant to visitor interests (ie. live music, dining, shopping, accommodations, cultural arts, etc.). The district designations have been developed over time by utilizing resources including Downtown Austin Alliance and business district associations like 2ND Street District and South Congress Avenue. These areas are outlined in the district map found in the appendix of this report from Austin CVB's current 2014-2015 Austin Insider Guide (visitor guide). As the City's Cultural and Historic District Model develops, Austin CVB will include mention of cultural arts, where applicable, within district editorial.



New Product Development

RECOMMENDATION 3: Develop new culturally relevant products to expand the market.

ACTION Incentivize excellence in the design, activation and stewardship of Austin’s new and existing public spaces and embed access to art, culture and creativity in its development. Monumental downtown public space improvement projects underway or in the planning phases are Shoal Creek, Waller Creek, Congress Avenue, the historic squares—Republic, Wooldridge, and Brush, Pease Park and Duncan Park. Examples of this in other markets include the successes that Chicago has had with Millennium Park, New York with The Highline, and Atlanta’s Beltline.

ACTION Develop a robust shoulder season program for Austin CVB to promote. Incentivize collaboration amongst the creative industry partners focused on attracting families and kids during the summer (August) and winter (December) months to build new audiences. Summer in Austin brings an abundance of local art school camps, fresh water in the springs and creek system and Highland Lakes, and nearby Hill Country attractions. The typically pleasant winter season brings iconic Austin traditions like the Zilker Tree Lighting, Trail of Lights, Holiday Sing-Along and Downtown Stroll and the Armadillo Christmas Bazaar. There is significant opportunity to build on an already robust family-friendly shoulder season in Austin.



Build from [The Long Center’s ALL Summer LONG event series](#) including favorites like Bubblepalooza, Trailer Food Tuesdays and Sound & Cinema as well as The Contemporary Austin’s New World Kids: Creativity Camp.



ACTION Support ecosystem gaps in emerging cultural sectors. The visual art scene in Austin continues to grow thanks to major acquisitions by the Blanton Museum of Art, prominent exhibitions at The Contemporary Austin in both locations, monumental public art commissions by Landmarks at the University of Texas, the expansion of Co-Lab, Canopy at capacity and the success of EAST and WEST. All of this supported by the steady, decades-long commitment of Art Alliance Austin (est. 1956) and the art gallery community anchored by Gallery Shoal Creek celebrating 50 years and Wally Workman Gallery in business for more than 30 years. With this existing momentum and anchor support, the city’s visual art ecosystem would benefit greatly from a world-class festival experience as is happening in other creative subsets like creative industries (SXSW); music (Austin City Limits and Fun Fun Fun Fest); film (Austin Film Festival and Austin Film Society’s Film Hall of Fame); culinary (Austin Food & Wine Festival); comedy (Moontower Comedy and Oddity Festival); literature (Texas Book Festival); and contemporary performance (Fusebox Festival).

PILOT Led by The Contemporary Austin, invest in and support the development of a new place-based citywide contemporary public art exhibition or survey to begin to develop a global profile for Austin’s visual art sector. Investing in a program centered around a place-based citywide contemporary public art exhibition or survey would catalyze excellence and begin to build a global profile for Austin’s visual art ecosystem.



P.3
YOU BELONG HERE, 2014
TAVARES STRACHAN

About Prospect New Orleans

Prospect New Orleans was conceived in the tradition of the great international exhibitions, such as the Venice Biennale and the Bienal de São Paulo, to showcase new artistic practices from around the world in settings that are both historic and culturally exceptional, and contribute to the cultural economy of New Orleans and the Louisiana Gulf region.

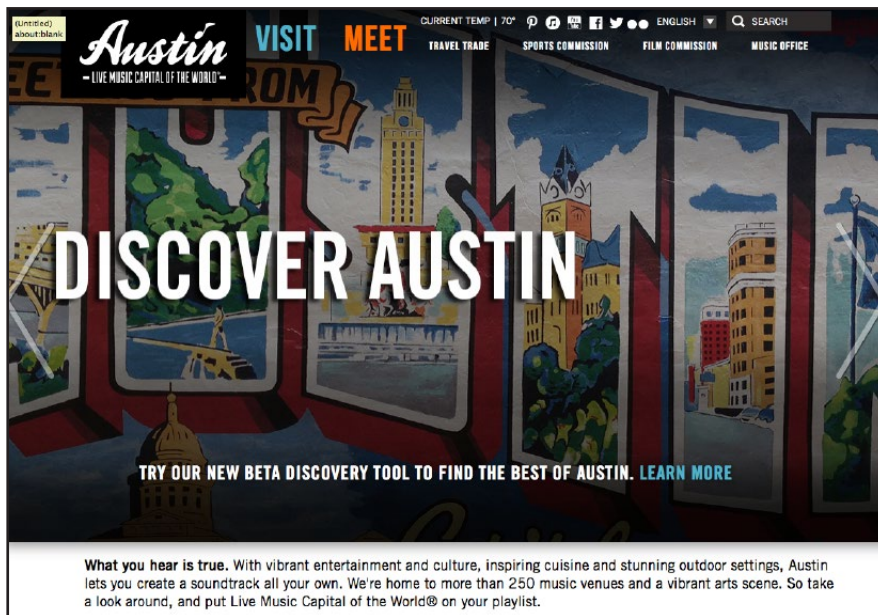
You Belong Here was staged on the Mississippi River and part of P.3, the third iteration of Prospect New Orleans in the ten years since its founding in 2005. While not an exact replicable model for this pilot, it is a successful, place-based contemporary art exhibition from which to learn.



Marketing/Product Packaging

The Austin CVB Visitor Inquirer research shows more than 90 percent of those who had visited Austin agree or strongly agree Austin is a great place to visit for live music¹⁵. The brand message is on point and resonates with visitors after two decades of promoting and billing Austin as the “Live Music Capital of the World.” With the Austin CVB’s campaign marketing objective to strongly align with the city’s musical roots while serving to differentiate and highlight those experiences (cultural, heritage, nature, etc.) and state of mind that can only be found in Austin, the current campaign relies heavily on Austin’s distinctive musical and cultural heritage product. The Austin CVB is on the forefront of travel industry technology aimed to revolutionize the travel experience and integration into those efforts would greatly benefit the cultural producers and the cultural tourism experience.

Currently, there is no cohesive marketing effort focused on informing Austin residents about the creative industries and cultural activity in Austin. As noted in prior planning efforts such as CreateAustin, marketing to residents is key to the health of the arts ecosystem. A cooperative effort between the Austin CVB’s visitor-focused campaign and a new resident-focused campaign driven and funded by the City could close a major communications gap and increase the cultural tourism audience.



The Austin CVB is the leading expert in marketing Austin to visitors. With award-winning campaigns at the forefront of travel industry technology aimed to revolutionize the travel experience, austintexas.org is an incredible resource for cultural tourists.



RECOMMENDATION 1: Leverage the multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary content and documentation produced by the cultural contractors, for profit arts and culture organizations, and artists to expand attendance and participation. The benefit of this approach is two-fold: it allows arts organizations and artists to reach new audiences, and provides authentic, cultural experiences for visitors they may have otherwise missed.

ACTION Develop and share with the Austin CVB a robust inventory of content, images and programs to be used to market the city to priority markets.

ACTION Showcase the Austin arts ecosystem to visitors to uncover and substantiate Austin's rich cultural diversity and experiences.

ACTION Recommend resident arts and culture writers for the Austin CVB's award-winning #trueaustin program. Currently the Austin CVB features local experts across a variety of fields, including shopping, music, family, food, and events. There is an opportunity to add an expert who would write about and respond to questions about art and cultural happenings. The Austin CVB's #trueaustin program with 209,000 page views and recent recognition by *Travel+Leisure Magazine*, proves visitors want direct access to resident suggestions.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Allocate resources and engage experts to develop a comprehensive communications strategy targeted at Austin residents to reach a whole new audience of marketers. Collaborate with Austin CVB on content and messaging that compliments their current visitor-targeted marketing strategy. Neighborhood list-servs were a key source of event listings in the resident survey responses and short-term rental owners also might be an efficient means of communicating with residents. The Houston Arts Alliance and Greater Houston CVB's shared campaign Houston Is. is a successful collaborative model.

ACTION Conduct extensive demographic research to better understand both the local and cultural tourist profiles. Utilize research institutions like SMU's National Center for Arts Research to best understand audience engagement and participation and its correlation to a healthy arts ecosystem.

ACTION Evaluate current technology, calendaring and marketing efforts including programs by cultural contractors and adjust investments as necessary.

ACTION Leverage the reach of the non-profit arts organizations in Austin (particularly the cultural contractors) to help attract the local audience thus attracting more visitors. Austin's arts organizations attract both visitors (24 percent) and local audiences (76 percent)¹⁶.

ACTION Develop consistent communication channels, whether through the Austin CVB or otherwise, with hospitality front line employees ranging from drivers and concierges to directors of marketing.



RECOMMENDATION 3: Export Austin.

Austin has a long history of notable artists, cultural brands and creative projects developed and produced in Austin. From the iconic Austin City Limits and SXSW to the recent notoriety of *Boyhood* and the culinary scene, from Ballet Austin's *Light / The Holocaust and Humanity Project* and *The Intergalactic Nemesis*, both touring the country and globe, these expressions represent Austin's creative culture and introduce it to new audiences globally.

ACTION Invest in creative projects that are developed locally with the potential of global interest. Given this cannot be forced, adds an element of risk, and requires the infrastructure that makes the creative process possible, investing in the potential and creating mechanisms that support this ambition would provide invaluable exposure for Austin that will continue to substantiate its cultural brand at the global level.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Position Austin as the go-to model for cultural tourism

ACTION Add an arts, culture and creativity/cultural tourism track to the Austin CVB hospitality training events and education program to inform the tourism industry about arts organizations and interesting projects happening in the arts community as well as any training and information that would help arts groups better market their product to the tourism industry. Foster ongoing opportunities to connect groups from both industries to learn from and inform each other of current and future collaborative efforts.

ACTION Participate and lead in the global culture and cultural tourism efforts. Currently the EDD is in the application process to become a UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts. Additional networks to engage with would be the World Cities Culture Forum (invitation-only global network), the Cultural Heritage Tourism Exchange (national) and continue involvement in additional resources like Americans for the Arts and Destination Marketing Association International.



Audience

As with product development, audience refers to two distinct segments: those already traveling to Austin for other tourist reasons (leisure, conferences, etc.) who could be drawn into cultural tourism through presenting the right opportunities and incentives, and new tourists cultivated specifically as cultural tourists.



JUSTIN WALL COURTESY OF WYATT BRAND

Existing Visitor Audiences Development

RECOMMENDATION 1: Enable access to authentic, local experiences to maximize the existing visitor base and local spending to grow the market for the arts.

ACTION Integrate art, culture and creativity into future public space improvements, way finding, mapping, and transit systems. Well-designed, active public spaces, way finding systems, and a robust, multi-modal transit system provide direct access to the culture of Austin as a visitor simply moves within the city. This brings surprise, interest, variety and depth to the visitor experience that connects them more deeply and keeps them coming back.

Many efforts are currently underway to address access and connectivity within the City of Austin. The City's Downtown Way Finding Master Plan and mobile platform FIND AUSTIN will begin to serve a directional purpose. The City of Austin Transportation Department's street banner campaign serves to promote cultural activity and the Cultural Asset Mapping project



(funded by the NEA and ArtPlace America, and led by EDD) will begin to identify the cultural assets and resources within the 10 council districts. Capital Metro is in the planning phases of a downtown transit gateway and circulator system and is also in the process of developing an art program.

The Cultural Asset Maps will be included as an addendum to this plan. Ensuring efforts of connectivity extend into each of the new council districts is of utmost importance to creating a more representative experience of Austin. Once the maps are complete, identify key access points and paths to cultural resources, assets and hubs and work with key team leads to ensure this new transit and way finding infrastructure communicates locations and supports direct access through routes, signage and inclusion in the new technology systems. Ensure the technologies are compatible and able to feed real-time data about cultural events, exhibitions and experiences directly into these tools.



Congress Avenue is the central starting point for the visitor experience. The density of cultural and historic resources, assets and experiences on or in close proximity to Congress Avenue needs to be recognized and maximized. As discovered in the resident survey conducted by the cultural tourism steering committee, residents believe Congress Avenue is one of Austin's most unique places and take more visitors there than anywhere else when hosting. The story of Austin unfolds along Congress Avenue and yet the physical avenue itself currently serves no story telling function. Current efforts are underway led by the City's Public Works Department in partnership with the Downtown Austin Alliance to plan infrastructure improvements along the avenue, so now is an opportune time to support these efforts.



ACTION Integrate the arts into existing events drawing large non-resident crowds. Fund collaborations to commission projects during internationally recognized festivals like SXSW, Austin City Limits and Fun Fun Fun Fest; global destination events like F1; and sporting events like the Austin Marathon and ESPN's X Games. There is interest from festival producers to expand program offerings if funding were available to commission local artists. As an example, *Hello Lamp Post: Austin* was commissioned by the City of Austin Art in Public Places program in partnership with Art Alliance Austin and was an official art project of SXSW 2015.

ACTION Work with the City's Planning and Review Department to require a cultural strategy for new developments – particularly hotel developments. Requiring a cultural strategy (local art work acquisition, cultural anchor/venue, cultural programs, public art) as part of the planning and review process frames the place-based cultural experience as a key priority from both industry perspectives.

Models for success include the W Hotel Austin (local art collection and Austin City Limits as a cultural anchor) and the recently-renovated Hotel Ella (historic property with contemporary approach to its art collection and food and beverage operations) and boutique hotels Hotel St. Cecilia, Hotel San Jose, Kimber Modern and the South Congress Hotel opening Summer 2015. Outside of Austin, 21c Museum Hotels have become the gold standard for integrating and showcasing art as part of its attractiveness and The James New York's Art at the James program commissioned its first public art project reflecting the creative vibrancy of its neighborhood while offering a curated See Art Soho travel package.



COURTESY OF AUSTIN ART IN PUBLIC PLACES



ACTION Curate place-specific cultural experiences for conventioners as an added-value to convention services offerings. In addition to directly promoting specific experiences and opportunities to convention-organizers and goers to grow the arts audience, the Austin CVB could repackage these materials to Destination Management Companies (DMCs), who are also frequently communicating with large groups of visitors coming to the City.

ACTION Encourage the creative industry to utilize the new state-of-the-art Austin Visitor Center as a venue to host events, exhibitions and performances and to generate new content. While this may not be a direct advancement of a cultural tourism strategy, it ensures that the sectors are cross-promoting their interests and supporting each other.

New Visitor Audience Development

RECOMMENDATION 2: Work with convention sales to attract more culture-based group meetings and conventions, who would be natural audiences for Austin’s existing cultural product. Additionally, these visitors would take knowledge of Austin’s creative economy back to their hometowns, and hopefully become on-the-ground advocates for what’s happening in Austin. Current examples of this are Ballet Austin hosting a national Board meeting for the Performing Arts Alliance in Spring 2015 and the 2016 National Conference for Dance/USA as well as Fusebox Austin hosting the 2016 National Performance Network annual meeting in Austin. National Performance Network is a national organization supporting artists in the creation and touring of contemporary performing and visual arts. Their annual meeting will bring about 400 artists, managers, curators, and arts leaders from around the country to Austin. It’s also an important opportunity to showcase local artists’ work for presenters and curators that will result in economic impact for local artists through touring and other “export” opportunities. Austin will also host the National Arts Marketing Conference in 2016, presented by Americans for the Arts.

A summary table of all of the recommendations follows.



SPOTLIGHT *on the* FILM INDUSTRY

Austin’s film community is a leading model for creative sectors when examining the health and structure of its ecosystem. This success results in an influence on the city’s cultural identity and thus its global brand.

The collaboration and resourcefulness of the film community makes its infrastructure some of the most robust. Funded both by public and private sources, Austin Studios (the City’s former airport) and planned creative space expansions are underway. The sector receives support from both the City of Austin Economic Development Department Cultural Arts Division through cultural contracts and the Austin CVB’s Film Commission. The industry is fueled by talented human capital that makes it an active and robust workforce through film crews and supportive industry services. Globally recognized, innovative film talent and product are coming out of Austin and ground breaking theater concepts are advancing product consumption and the human experience. The Texas Film Hall of Fame Awards recognizes industry greats and a plethora of genre-specific film festivals make Austin a year-round destination for film enthusiasts.

Exemplifying all components of the ecosystem, the film community demonstrates how for-profit, non-profit, industry, creatives, consumers, festivals/events, infrastructure, visitors and residents are all working toward excellence, investment and appreciation.



PHOTO BY MATT LANKES/IFC FILMS



COURTESY OF AUSTIN FILM SOCIETY

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

FOUNDATION

Strength and Capacity of Cultural Ecosystem (infrastructure) – the ability to create – affordability and access

STRATEGIC GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Invest in Excellence; Concerted Action; Discover, Share, and Connect the Story

ECOSYSTEM AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:



INFRASTRUCTURE

Recommendation 1: Establish cultural tourism as a focus area for both the creative and tourism industries.

Recommendation 2: Design a task force to bridge the creative and tourism industries that exist to develop innovative, place-based efforts to increase cultural tourism and provide implementation accountability.

Recommendation 3: Look for additional opportunities to support cultural activity in other city offices and departments.



HUMAN CAPITAL

Recommendation 1: Work with the EDD's Global Business Recruitment Division to recruit creative industry and supportive sectors.



PRODUCT

Recommendation 1: Identify and diversify products to attract new visitor audiences.

Recommendation 2: Foster neighborhood character and identity to generate more diverse and clustered cultural product to promote.

Recommendation 3: Develop new culturally relevant products to expand the market.



MARKETING/ PRODUCT PACKAGING

Recommendation 1: Leverage the multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary content and documentation produced by CAD's cultural contractors, arts and culture organizations and artists to expand attendance and participation.

Recommendation 2: Allocate resources and engage experts to develop a comprehensive communications strategy targeted at Austin residents to reach a whole new audience of marketers.

Recommendation 3: Export Austin.

Recommendation 4: Position Austin as the go-to model for cultural tourism.



AUDIENCE

Recommendation 1: Enable access to authentic, local experiences to maximize the existing visitor base and local spending to grow the market for the arts.

Recommendation 2: Work with convention sales to attract more culture-based group meetings and conventions, who would be natural audiences for Austin's existing cultural product.

As Lawrence Wright, an Austin-based Pulitzer Prize-winning author and screenwriter, accepted his 2015 Texas Medal of Arts Award from the Texas Cultural Trust, he stated

“NO CULTURE CAN BE GREAT WITHOUT TELLING ITS OWN STORY.”

That sentiment is echoed throughout this plan. This place-based plan is about supporting the infrastructure of the cultural ecosystem that makes Austin what it is today. It is about working together as a community that appreciates the artists and creative energy generated here that provides an unequivocal quality of place. It is about an investment in the excellence that will continue to drive innovation and interest and thus economic resilience. Austin is known as a creative city with an established cultural brand, yet more has to be done to sustain the cultural ecosystem that enables art, culture and creativity to thrive here.



JODY HORTON COURTESY OF LA CONDESA

Local pride. All Austin-based, architect Michael Hsu commissioned art collective Sodalitas to create this mural for La Condesa, the first restaurant concept by entrepreneurs Violet Crown Management.

REFERENCES

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- 2 Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau 2014-2015 Marketing Plan
- 3 World Health Organization, Global Health Observatory Data. http://www.who.int/gho/urban_health/situation_trends/urban_population_growth_text/en/
- 4 World Cities Culture Report 2014
- 5 According to a 2009 national research study on U.S. Cultural and Heritage Travel by Mandela Research
- 6 D.K. Shifflet & Associates LTD (DKSA)
- 7 Source: TXP Inc.; DKSA
- 8 The Office of the Governor, Economic Development and Tourism www.travel.state.tx.us/TravelResearch/Travel-Volume-and-Behavior.aspx
- 9 Arts & Economic Prosperity IV Americans for the Arts
- 10 The Economic Impact of the Creative Sector in Austin 2012 Update, TXP, Inc.
- 11 Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau 2014-2015 Marketing Plan
- 12 The Economic Impact of the Creative Sector in Austin 2012 Update, TXP
- 13 Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau 2014-2015 Marketing Plan
- 14 Examples of roles http://www.dcvb-nc.com/cr/Draft_Toolkit_for_AFTA-DMAI.pdf
- 15 Austin Visitor Profile Study (Jason Draper, Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel & Restaurant Management, Sept. 2011)
- 16 Arts & Economic Prosperity IV Americans for the Arts

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Imagine Austin
 CreateAustin
 TXP Inc Economic Impact of the Creative Sector
 Americans for the Arts Arts & Economic Prosperity IV
 THLA Memo
 HOT Fund Task Force
 Hispanic Quality of Life Report
 Cultural Tourism Steering Committee Report
 Partners in the Arts Keynote
 Austin CVB 2014-2015 Marketing Plan
 Texas Cultural Trust 2015 State of the Arts Report
 Creative Industry Summit Report
 National Travel and Tourism Strategy 2012
 National Governors Association NEW ENGINES OF GROWTH: ARTS, CULTURE, AND DESIGN 2012
 World Cities Culture Report 2014

Submitted to Public City with review materials, the Steering Committee Report was developed by the Cultural Tourism Steering Committee and documented by the Cultural Arts Division. The report is as follows:

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

Goals = Broad long-term aims that define accomplishment of the mission

Objectives = quantifiable and specific; measures results, not activities

Strategies = broad activities required to achieve an objective, overcome a barrier, or control a critical success factor

Actions = specific steps to be taken, by whom and when, to implement a strategy

Members:

Shilpa Bakre and Amanda Garcia, Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau

Melissa Barry, Downtown Austin Alliance

Marina Bhargava, Greater Austin Asian Chamber

Mary Davidson, Austin Overtures Sightseeing

Laura Esparza, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, History Art & Nature Division

Denise Eisman and Judy Barrick, Austin Hotel and Lodging Association

Marcy Hoen and Aaron Sanders, Austin Creative Alliance

Tam Hawkins, Greater Austin Black Chamber

Kim McKnight, City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, Preservation Division

Bruce Willenzik, Austin Arts Commission

Meredith Powell, Art Alliance Austin

Facilitated by Marion Sanchez, City of Austin

VISION:

Austin will be a welcoming and thriving international destination for cultural tourists seeking authentic experiences over a spectrum of disciplines and cultural opportunities.

GOALS:

- Engage new audiences for Austin arts & culture
 - **Objective 1** – Increase number of international travelers to Austin
 - » Barriers
 - › Lack of awareness about Austin cultural offerings,
 - › Limited marketing materials in foreign languages
 - » Critical Success Factors [key conditions to achieve objective]
 - › Emphasis on diversity and inclusion for – age, family, ethnicity, youth, economic, etc.
 - **Strategy 1** – Outreach to increase Austin’s profile as a cultural center
 - › **Action 1** - Chambers of Commerce will reach out to international destinations to facilitate arts and cultural exchanges & collaborations between Austin and other cities
 - › **Action 2** – The City will designate Creative Ambassadors (local artists traveling overseas) who can serve to bolster Austin’s reputation as well as make connections with international governments and organizations
 - › **Action 3** – Leaders expand sponsorship of international scholarly & cultural programs (exhibits, artistic exchanges, and collaborations, performance, etc.)
 - › **Action 4** – Sister City network...
 - **Strategy 2** – Outreach to culturally-specific communities
 - › **Action 1** – Message ethnic tourism offerings
 - › **Action 2** - Create cultural guides in foreign languages
 - **Strategy 3** – Capture tourists at the airport, Airport Cultural Concierge...

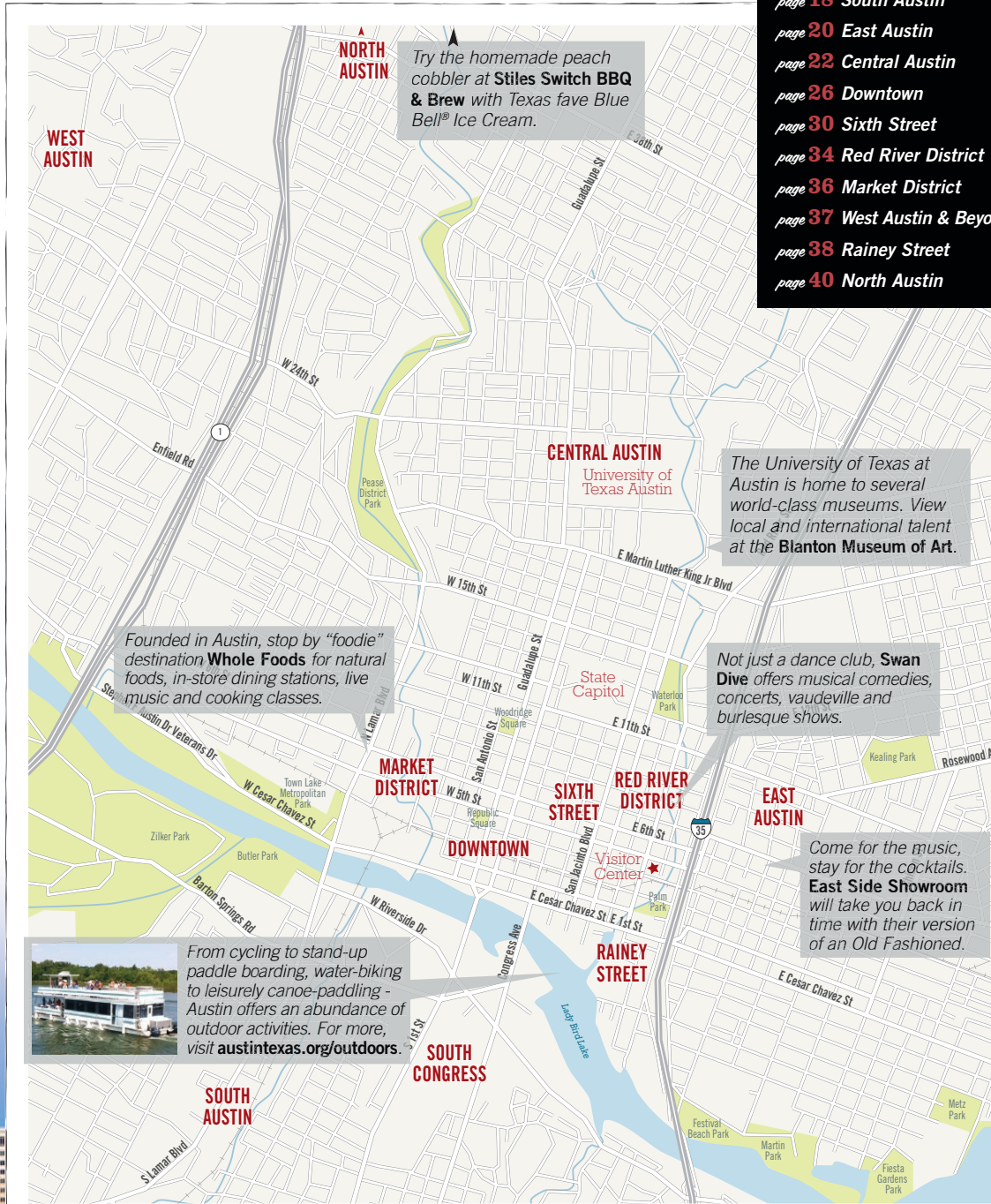
- **Objective 2** – Create favorable conditions for local residents to become a “cultural concierge” for visiting friends and relatives
 - » Barriers
 - › Many different outlets for getting information
 - › Lack of awareness about cultural offerings
 - › No centralized experience for visitors, travel is difficult
 - » Critical Success Factors
 - › Simple, easy to use tools for finding cultural offerings
 - **Strategy 1** – Resident focused campaign to “Discover Austin”
 - › **Action 1** – Focus on connections between natural, historic, and cultural resources and the life of the community itself
 - › **Action 2** – Passport Program: drives visitors to the included venues; EX: WOO Card (Worcester, MA)
 - **Strategy 2** - Create partnerships with transportation providers for promotions
 - **Strategy 3** – Increase awareness among local residents about existing tools for getting information about cultural events, attractions, etc. (Ex: tour apps, True Austin)
 - › **Action 1** – NowPlayingAustin.com...
 - › **Action 2** – Contact local event planners to introduce arts and culture events to their clients
- **Objective 3** – Increase National/International media coverage of Austin arts/culture
 - **Strategy 1** – Organize press junket around arts
 - **Strategy 2** – Utilize public relations/publicity to inform audiences of existing assets
- Align tourism initiatives by local stakeholders
 - **Objective 1** – Create communication pathways among arts organizations & artists to broaden awareness of attractions, visitor interests, and services
 - » Barriers
 - › Lack of communication between groups leads to overscheduling / saturation
 - › Smaller arts groups don’t plan far ahead
 - » Critical Success Factor
 - › Staff from a wide range of cultural institutions must be able to easily share information about their organizations’ offerings
 - › Unify community to create a unified message
 - **Strategy 1** – Convene regular meetings for arts marketers & communications staff to broaden awareness of attractions, visitor interests, and services
 - **Strategy 2** – Special Events League...regular meetings, info sharing, mentoring...
 - **Objective 2** – Create communication paths between arts and culture sector and tourism & hospitality industries
 - » Barriers
 - › Arts organizations don’t know who to contact or how
 - › Venues move, change names
 - › Requires constant upkeep
 - › Lack of knowledge of local offerings
 - › Staff turnover
 - **Strategy 1** – Educate hospitality staff about cultural offerings
 - › **Action 1** - Website/cultural calendar (NowPlayingAustin.com)
 - › **Action 2** – Hold bi-annual expo for hotel staff featuring performances by local arts groups
 - **Strategy 2** – Cluster Promotion – events, hotels, restaurants, bars
 - **Objective 3** – Leverage existing resources in the private sector
 - » Barriers
 - › Businesses tend to support online large orgs and ignore the small

- › Business community unaware of benefits, concept of supporting cultural tourism
 - **Strategy 1** – Engage local university tourism management programs to develop curricula that addresses cultural & heritage tourism
 - › Action 1 –
 - **Strategy 2** - Reach out to Home Away to find ways to reach tourists who aren't in hotels, how to reach property managers
 - **Strategy 3** – Make partnerships with transportation providers (cabs, taxis, pedicabs, Bike share, Car 2 Go, Cap Metro, Megabus, etc.)
 - › **Action 1** - Use Wayfinding kiosks/Cap Metro kiosks to promote tourism
 - › **Action 2** – Create special bus route to arts venues
 - **Objective 4** – Identify affinity partners within 90 min. drive – can we work with San Antonio, San Marcos, Round Rock, North Austin corridor, etc.?
 - **Strategy 1** – Regional Marketing (NowPlayingAustin.com)
 - **Strategy 2** – Partner with other chambers within the 6-county region, emphasize partnership and profitability in social and cultural aspects
- Empower local practitioners to participate in cultural tourism initiatives
 - » Barriers
 - › Lack of understanding of cultural and heritage tourism and its benefits
 - › Lack of funding for nonprofit arts / low pay in for-profit arts
 - › Marketing is costly
 - » Critical Success Factors
 - › Broad buy-in from community
 - › Continued quality arts product from the arts community
 - **Objective 1** – Train arts organization personnel in “front-line” tourism techniques & business practices
 - **Strategy 1** – Create ... learning opportunities
 - › **Action 1** – Artists mentoring other artists – sharing best practices among festival organizations
 - › **Action 2** – Local artists collaborate with international artists
 - › **Action 3** – Create an academy for the arts community about business management, marketing, etc.
 - › **Action 4** – Partner with AISD Performing Arts Center for arts/business mgmt. programming with a spin on local tourism
 - **Strategy 2** – Create a cultural & heritage tourism tool-kit for local arts organizations
- Maximize cultural tourism opportunities throughout the year
 - **Objective 1** – Increase visitors during “shoulder seasons”
 - **Strategy 1** – Leverage existing festival culture
 - › **Action 1** – Create branding around the concept of “a festival for every season/ everyone”
 - › **Action 2** – Organize special events league (see Goal #2)
 - › **Action 3** – Partner with SXSW and ACL...
 - **Strategy 2** – Promote shoulder season to conferences and other events looking at Austin
 - › **Action 1** – Invite companies/organizations to initiate having “first rights” to have meetings in Austin, particularly those who meet several times a year
 - **Objective 2** – promote a deeper and more diverse portfolio of Austin’s cultural tourism offerings
 - **Strategy 1** – Create branding for cultural / historical districts
 - › **Action 1** – Designate a “non-congruent, historic, thematic region” i.e. Pennsylvania Civil War trails
 - › **Action 2** – Develop historic neighborhood itineraries

- **Strategy 2** – Family Friendly activities...
 - **Strategy 3** – Arts-Education Festival, revenue funds arts education
 - **Strategy 4** – Promote “roots” theme, stars that started here with humble beginnings, but are now big
 - **Strategy 5** – Create outreach to LGBTQ travel market
- **Objective 3** – Increase outreach to current visitors (ex: conventioners, airport visitors)
 - **Strategy 1** – Educate visitors about what is unique or different in our City / promote local flavor
 - › **Action 1** – Place re-usable shopping bags sponsored by arts orgs, with information inside it, in hotel rooms (because Austin has a plastic bag ordinance – unique)
 - › **Action 2** – Get “culture picks” from local celebrities (e.g. Mayor, musicians, legislators, UT coach) and use in marketing materials; have someone from one artistic discipline recommend another, e.g. Stephen Mills of Ballet Austin recommends The Contemporary Austin museum.
 - › **Action 3** – create door hanger cards for hotels and campgrounds, such as “year of festival” and rotate quarterly
 - › **Action 4** – Partner with film festivals to put up a slide re: cultural tourism, developed by ACVB/City of Austin
 - **Strategy 2** – Create a larger presence for arts and culture at visitor centers
 - › **Action 1** – Use the Old Bakery as a year-round cultural tourism hub
- **Enhance access to arts and culture**
 - » Barriers
 - › Lack of comprehensive mass transit system which reaches all areas of the city
 - › Lack of wayfinding system which helps visitors find points of interest
 - › Housing affordability for artists
 - » Critical Success Factors
 - › Earning opportunities for artists
 - › Funding mechanism
 - **Objective 1** – Enhance transportation options and wayfinding...
 - **Strategy 1** – Implement a wayfinding System
 - › **Action 1** – Tourism kiosk strategically placed downtown
 - **Strategy 2** – Diversify public transportation options
 - › **Action 1** – Downtown Water Taxi
 - › **Action 2** – Bus routes to cultural hubs (ex: Austin's Cultural Campus, Laguna Gloria)
 - **Objective 2** – Talent retention / maintaining infrastructure
 - **Strategy 1** – Create an environment which empowers artists to be successful
 - › **Action 1** – Affordable housing for artists
 - › **Action 2** – Develop busking policy which makes it easier for artists to busk
 - › **Action 3** – Talent training and development...(see Goal 2)
 - › **Action 4** – Arts education festival in partnership with Mindpop and AISD for parents and educators; to increase revenue, opportunities, and diversify funding
 - **Strategy 2** – Develop markets beyond music, particularly in regards to culturally-specific groups
 - **Strategy 3** – Support/investment from donors, businesses, other arts groups...
 - **Objective 3** – Access to information...
 - **Strategy 1** – Identify points of entry (cabs, restaurants, relatives) at which to provide information...
 - **Strategy 2** – Promote events in different platforms (Brochure? Mobile site? Apps?)

AUSTIN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICTS

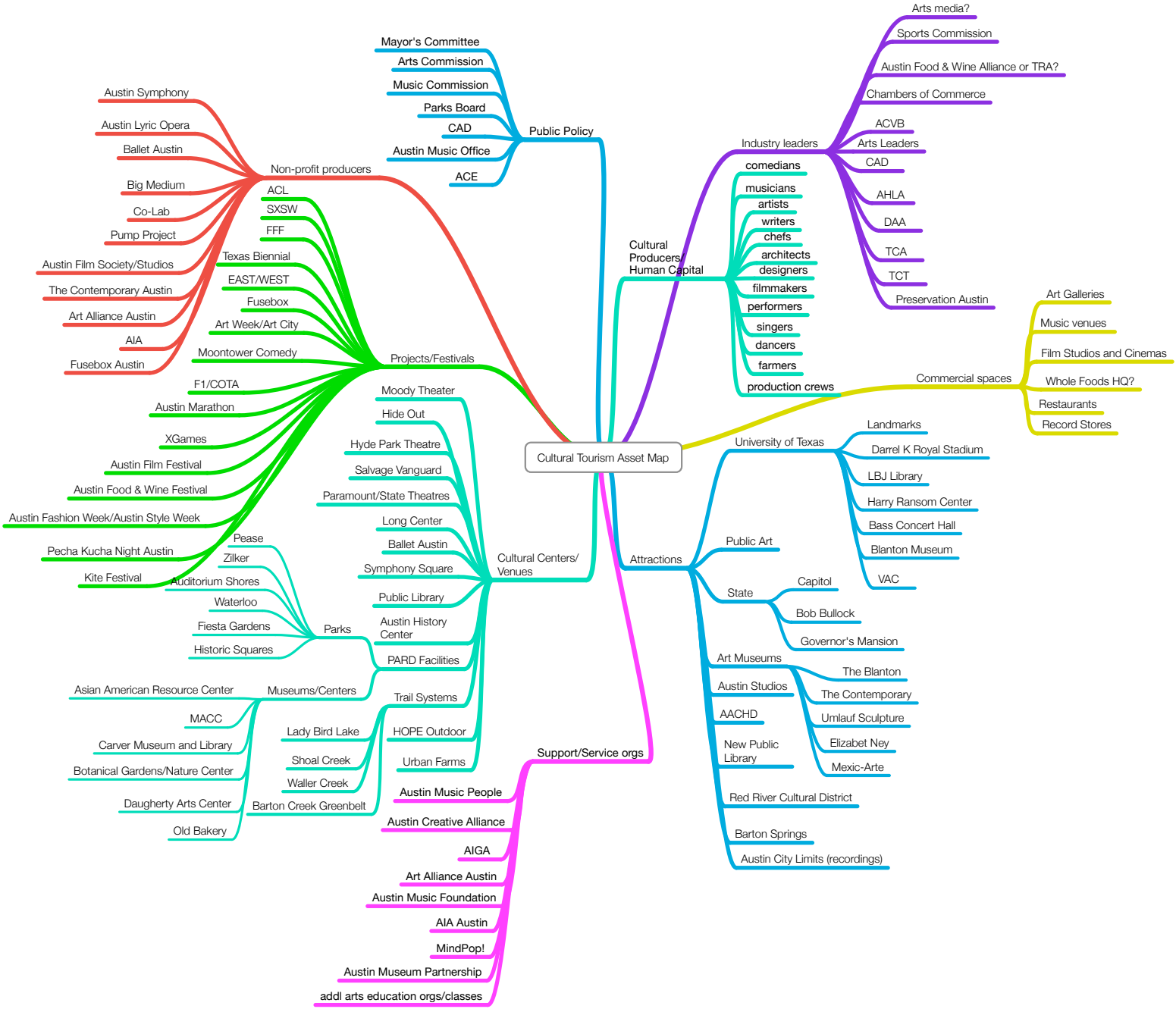
- page 16 South Congress
- page 18 South Austin
- page 20 East Austin
- page 22 Central Austin
- page 26 Downtown
- page 30 Sixth Street
- page 34 Red River District
- page 36 Market District
- page 37 West Austin & Beyond
- page 38 Rainey Street
- page 40 North Austin



SHUTTERSTOCK/KENNY TONG



SAMPLE OF ASSET MAP



THANK YOU

Many voices and perspectives made this plan possible. In addition to the steering committee members listed in their report, below are the organizations and individuals that guided and impacted the planning process and work tirelessly, along with countless others, to make Austin's cultural tourism ecosystem as vibrant and dynamic as it is today.

› ORGANIZATIONS

Austin CVB, Austin Hotel & Lodging Association, Texas CVBs (Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston), Austin's African American Cultural Heritage District, Red River Cultural District, Cheer Up Charlies, Paramount and State Theatres, Long Center for the Performing Arts, Austin Opera, Art Alliance Austin, Austin Creative Alliance, Big Medium, Fusebox Austin, Austin Music People, PARD Cultural Facilities Staff: Asian American Resource Center, Austin Chronicle, The Contemporary Austin, Downtown Austin Alliance, Chambers of Commerce, Ballet Austin, Austin Film Society, Austin Opera, SXSW, C3 Presents, Transmission, Austin Sports Commission, Texas Book Festival, Preservation Austin, Texas State History Museum Foundation, UT College of Fine Arts, UT Visual Art Center, Texans for the Arts, Texas Cultural Trust, Texas Commission on the Arts, Capital View Arts, Mexic-Arte Museum, City of Austin Small Business Development, City of Austin Cultural Arts Division, City of Austin Music and Entertainment Division, HTC Partners, Cultural Heritage Tourism Exchange, National Cultural Districts Exchange, Americans for the Arts

› INDIVIDUALS

Julie Hart, Bob Lander, Jennifer Walker, Lisa Byrd, James Taylor, Jim Ritts, Asa Hursh, John Reidie, Shea Little, Brad Carlin, Jennifer Houlihan, Taja Beekley, Robert Faires, Louis Grachos, Julie Weaver, Cookie Ruiz, Rebecca Campbell, Brad Spies, Brooke Box, Bobby Garza, Matthew Payne, Lois Kim, Jacqui Schraad, Jack Risley, Jade Walker, Ann Graham, Jennifer Ransom Rice, Jim Bob McMillan, Travis James, Amy Wong Mok, Alissa McCain, Sylvia Orozco, Don Pitts, Megan Crigger, Lani Golstab, Vicky Valdez, Synovia Holt-Rabb, Kevin Johns, Cheryl Hargrove, Theresa Cameron

› PHOTO CREDITS

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Photo credit Jody Horton, courtesy of La Condesa

ACL Live at the Moody Theater, photo credit Alison Narro, courtesy of ACL Live at the Moody Theater
Graham Reynolds closing performance of *Play Me, I'm Yours Austin*, photo credit Johnny Walker

Chris Schlichting *Stripe Tease*, photo credit Gene Pittman, courtesy Walker Art Center & Fusebox Festival
James Turrell, *The Color Inside*, 2013

Living wall by Monique Capanelli, photo courtesy of Articulture Designs

Page 27, Group left-right, top-bottom:

The Long Center, photo credit Scott Melcer, courtesy of Wyatt Brand

The Color Condition, *Oilostream (outside in)*, 2015, Gently Fried Act II

Out in the Field, photo credit Jody Horton, courtesy of La Condesa

Lannaya Dance, courtesy of Wyatt Brand

Out in the Field, photo credit Jody Horton, courtesy of La Condesa

Willie Nelson, 2012 ACL Live at the Moody, photo credit Scott Newton, courtesy of Austin City Limits
Live at The Moody Theater

Back cover image: Okay Mountain



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