



Friends of the Dougherty Arts Center

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Item 13

Late

Backup

PARD

May 19, 2021

Dear Mayor Adler and City Council Members:

For the past 10 years, the Friends of the Dougherty Arts Center (FODAC) has been advocating for the rebuilding/replacement of Austin's beloved (yet aged) Dougherty Arts Center.

The Friends of the Dougherty is an all-volunteer, community-based organization dedicated to protecting, promoting, and improving the Dougherty Arts Center's (DAC) facilities and programming through active advocacy, community involvement, and financial support (we operate under the 501c3 umbrella of the Austin Parks Foundation).

As President of the Friends of the Dougherty (and a 30-year Austinite), I have actively participated in *umpteen* public meetings over the past 10 years – City Council/Boards and Commissions meetings, Bond Election Task Force workgroup meetings, DAC Public Engagement meetings, Town Lake Metropolitan Park Public Visioning Sessions, etc. – and I have tirelessly advocated for a new Dougherty Arts Center facility.

Each step of the way, I have observed firsthand the concerns of fellow Austinites regarding the DAC Replacement project – particularly regarding traffic, parking, and environmental impacts. I have also seen how City Staff/DAC Replacement Project vendors have strived to address public concerns raised at various City Council/Boards and Commissions and public engagement meetings.

I am writing this letter to express the Friends of the Dougherty's wholehearted preference for DAC Replacement Option 1B for the following reasons:

- Option 1B **best addresses the variety of traffic/parking concerns expressed in past meetings** by stakeholders and City Council/Boards and Commission members (i.e., an intuitive sense of entry from Riverside Drive, a much-needed drop-off/pick-up area for Art School/Theater customers, traffic mitigation strategies/reduced traffic impact on Toomey Road).

- Option 1B ***allows for concurrent construction of the DAC Building and an underground parking garage - yielding shorter completion timeframes AND lower overall project costs*** (Option 1A requires the DAC building and parking garage be built sequentially vs concurrently).
- Option 1B ***allows for phasing and expanded programming needs*** – as Austin grows at a record pace so does the demand for affordable, accessible arts programming for ALL Austinites across ALL Council Districts.

While some late-to-the-table stakeholders may raise last-minute concerns, I know from my participation in 10 years' worth of public meetings that *traffic, parking, and environmental concerns are not new*. I can personally attest that DAC Replacement Option 1B is well-planned – and that City Staff have thoughtfully addressed previously-voiced stakeholder concerns regarding traffic, parking, and environmental concerns.

The time has come to move forward. In summary, the Friends of the Dougherty reaffirm our continued support for the DAC Replacement Project and our continued preference for Option 1B as it best addresses the traffic, parking, and environmental concerns previously expressed over the past several years by various stakeholders.

The Friends of the Dougherty will continue to work tirelessly to support the DAC Replacement Project and spearhead a Capital Campaign as the DAC replacement process progresses.

We look forward to the day a new Dougherty Arts Center building stands proudly at Butler Shores Park – ready to provide all Austinites access to quality, affordable arts programming, services, and experiences – all in a world-class, state-of-the-art arts facility!

Onward and forward,

Lucky Lemieux

President, Friends of the Dougherty Arts Center