



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

African American Resource Advisory Commission

Recommendation Number: 20220330-001: Equitable Funding and Completion for the George Washington Carver Library Museum and Heritage Center

WHEREAS, the African American Resource Advisory Commission (the "Commission") is authorized by Austin City Code§ 2-1-101 to advise the City Council on issues related to the quality of life for the City's African American community; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is specifically authorized to recommend programs designed to alleviate any inequities that may confront African Americans in social, economic, and vocational pursuits, including (1) health care; (2) housing, including affordable housing, home ownership, and homelessness; (3) entertainment opportunities for professionals and students; (4) employment; and (5) cultural venues, including museums, theaters, art galleries, and music venues; and

WHEREAS, the George Washington Carver Library Museum and Heritage Center continues to be historically underfunded when compared to the Asian American resource Center (AARC) (\$100K to \$200K less) and the Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) (~\$400K less). The Carver’s funding has always been about \$300,000 behind the MACC and the Dougherty Arts Center (DAC) over the last 15 years. Funding is even a little below the AARC, which is a much smaller facility. In 2021, the Museum and Cultural Programs Department requested more funding for budget year FY2022, but additional funding did not get approved in the budget process; and

WHEREAS, the following charts document the Funding shortfalls by budget year; and

Carver Museum Budget by Budget Fiscal Year

BFY	Proposed	Amended	CYE	Actual	Balance	% of Budget	View/Edit
2018	\$ 923,947	\$1,011,531.00	\$ 1,011,531	\$1,046,643.39	(\$35,112.39)	103.47%	[View]
2019	\$ 1,033,036	\$1,067,316.00	\$ 1,066,801	\$1,080,070.10	(\$12,754.10)	101.19%	[View]
2020	\$ 1,078,397	\$1,203,560.00	\$ 1,116,380	\$1,338,828.82	(\$135,268.82)	111.24%	[View]

2021	\$ 1,156,002	\$1,165,335.00	\$ 1,182,440	\$1,193,231.75	(\$27,896.75)	102.39%	[View]
2022	\$ 1,446,546	\$1,180,023.00	\$ 1,162,473	\$516,074.75	\$663,948.25	43.73%	[View]
2023	\$ 1,267,320	\$0.00	\$ 0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	[Edit]

Mexican American Cultural Center Budget by Budget Fiscal Year

BFY	Proposed	Amended	CYE	Actual	Balance	% of Budget	View/Edit
2018	\$ 1,448,344	\$1,487,864.00	\$ 1,494,038	\$1,539,947.66	(\$52,083.66)	103.50%	[View]
2019	\$ 1,551,224	\$1,562,145.00	\$ 1,562,152	\$1,413,256.91	\$148,888.09	90.47%	[View]
2020	\$ 1,552,574	\$1,583,185.00	\$ 1,496,402	\$1,318,290.75	\$264,894.25	83.27%	[View]
2021	\$ 1,513,827	\$1,578,675.00	\$ 1,579,594	\$1,396,637.50	\$182,037.50	88.47%	[View]
2022	\$ 1,578,675	\$1,568,622.00	\$ 1,568,622	\$630,693.37	\$937,928.63	40.21%	[View]
2023	\$ 1,601,885	\$0.00	\$ 0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	[Edit]

Asian American Resource Center Budget by Budget Fiscal Year

BFY	Proposed	Amended	CYE	Actual	Balance	% of Budget	View/Edit
2018	\$ 1,022,042	\$1,127,528.00	\$ 1,127,528	\$1,183,688.67	(\$56,160.67)	104.98%	[View]
2019	\$ 982,716	\$1,186,277.00	\$ 1,183,716	\$988,744.85	\$197,532.15	83.35%	[View]
2020	\$ 1,193,962	\$1,293,782.00	\$ 1,109,944	\$1,032,032.61	\$261,749.39	79.77%	[View]
2021	\$ 1,287,966	\$1,249,072.00	\$ 1,199,385	\$1,076,787.36	\$172,284.64	86.21%	[View]
2022	\$ 1,245,609	\$1,245,965.00	\$ 1,263,515	\$353,105.88	\$892,859.12	28.34%	[View]
2023	\$ 1,255,451	\$0.00	\$ 0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	[Edit]

Dougherty Arts Center Budget by Budget Fiscal Year

BFY	Proposed	Amended	CYE	Actual	Balance	% of Budget	View/Edit
2018	\$ 1,350,632	\$1,402,700.00	\$ 1,401,750	\$1,378,783.70	\$23,916.30	98.29%	[View]
2019	\$ 1,475,448	\$1,514,940.00	\$ 1,515,419	\$1,462,018.75	\$52,921.25	96.51%	[View]
2020	\$ 1,524,862	\$1,563,629.00	\$ 1,415,855	\$1,436,887.32	\$126,741.68	91.89%	[View]
2021	\$ 1,561,296	\$1,574,244.00	\$ 1,573,193	\$1,376,432.08	\$197,811.92	87.43%	[View]
2022	\$ 1,564,394	\$1,572,943.00	\$ 1,572,943	\$518,865.70	\$1,054,077.30	32.99%	[View]
2023	\$ 1,550,400	\$0.00	\$ 0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	[Edit]

WHEREAS, the Carver has not been able to maintain basic operations on their General Fund budget, let alone program to the degree that they desire. Furthermore, the Carver barely has enough in funding to pay temporary workers for coverage of their front desk. This has forced administrators to choose between providing culturally competent summer camps or use allocated funding for new exhibits. The ongoing shortfalls are devastating especially when emergencies arise, and the Museums & Cultural Programs department must draw from other

facilities budgets to cover these emergency expenses. For years, the Museums & Cultural Programs department had grant funding from Broadway Bound, but now they do not, to cover such emergency expenses. This demand does not seem as though it slow, as the number of quality of programs grows at the Carver along with the facilities expansions; and

WHEREAS, the George Washington Carver Library Museum and Heritage Center history is the only museum within the City of Austin that showcases and celebrates the resilient history of black people in Austin. In its early years, the Angelina Street library was simply known as the “Colored Branch”. In 1947, however, it was christened the George Washington Carver Branch Library in honor of [the inventor and scientist](#) who brought so much pride to African-Americans. For decades, the Carver Library served the Central-East Austin community, and its patronage and book collection grew steadily. As patrons increased and space became limited, the need for a larger [Carver Branch Library](#) became apparent. Through the efforts of the Central-East Austin Citizens for a New Carver Branch, this issue continued to have a voice. In 1979 a new facility was completed directly adjacent to the original Carver Library; and

WHEREAS, the original building – the community imagined a museum and community center that would promote African American history and achievement in Austin, Travis County, and beyond. On October 24, 1980, their vision became a reality. What was once Austin’s first library, and what later became Austin’s first branch library, opened its doors as the George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center, the first African American neighborhood museum in of Texas. Since the Carver first opened its doors in 1980, it has become a pillar of historical knowledge representing black community for all Austinites to enjoy. As such, the Carver deserves a facility that meets the need of the community to provide quality programming at optimum operational capacity. As we mentioned earlier, funding for the carver has been grossly underfunded whether it be intentional or an oversight the message that is being heard is that African Americans and the preservation their history is not of importance to the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, as Austin has grown, the historically Black East Austin has been decimated with gentrification, increased home pricing and property taxes lend to current number of Black Austinites residing within city limits being less than 7% and declining. Over the years, the percentage of black Austinites, their heritage and businesses has continued to decline therefore, validating the importance of the Carver Museum and the cultural significance that it provides; and

WHEREAS, There are no other cultural centers, within Austin that have been disregarded, underfunded, and frankly left to crumble and struggle to survive over 20 years. The mere action of no action by the City of Austin to repair and expand the Carver Museum in a justifiable timely manner is a blatant reprise of the City of Austin’s treatment of African Americans that has long been documented. To continue to underfund the Carver would, in fact, continue to erase the presence and history of African Americans and their contributions and legacies within Austin. “A

people without the knowledge of their past history is like a tree without roots.” - Marcus Garvey, publisher, journalist, and political activist in the early 20th century who launched the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the African American Resource Advisory Commission encourages the Austin City Council to allocate funds and explore all available means in order to resolve the current and inequitable underfunding issue and complete the Carver’s major expansion project that has been delayed for more than 20 years with a current project estimated costs of approximately \$57M (to complete all phases) per presentation from PARD in April 2021.

Voted

Unanimous – 8 Absent - 4 Vacant - 2

Date of Approval: March 30, 2022

Record of the vote: Unanimous on an 8-0 vote

Attest: Daryl Horton, Chair