



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Sylvania Holt Rabb, Acting Director  
Economic Development Department

**DATE:** April 14, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Update on Cultural Trust and Creative Space Bond

On behalf of the team supporting organizational development and execution of priority projects, this memo serves as an update with you on the progress of the Cultural Trust and the determination of support for the execution of work for the Creative and Cultural Facilities Bond under the auspices of Austin Economic Development Corporation (AEDC).

As you are aware, Mayor and Council provided direction to align the development of AEDC with the intent and creation of an "Austin Cultural Trust" through Resolutions [20160303-019](#), [20170216-040](#), [20170302-034](#), [20180215-082](#) and [20190808-072](#). Council further directed the City Manager to expedite a review of existing entities and resources that could be centralized to support the timely execution of recovery efforts that could secure or retain creative culture and community benefits in Resolutions [20200521-095](#) and [20200521-096](#). AEDC was officially created by Mayor and Council through Resolution [20201001-055](#) on October 1, 2020. Since that time, staff and consultants have organized a significant amount of research and work to refine the scope of the trust while working with legal teams to determine viability of roles for the organization to support the use of the \$12 million Creative and Cultural Facilities Bond. Council also allocated \$2.4 million for the Iconic Venue Fund as established in 20201203-046 to create leasing structures to acquire and permanently preserve creative and music venues that promote tourism, support equity, and represent Austin's brand and history.

### **Contracting with the AEDC**

The City and AEDC are developing an interlocal agreement to frame the partnership between both agencies and to identify land or buildings to be acquired or land on which buildings would be constructed by the AEDC on behalf of the City with these bond proceeds. EDD staff is consulting with the City Attorney and the City's outside bond counsel-to ensure use and operation of the facilities are within the legal framework for these funds. The interlocal agreement will be placed on a future Council agenda for consideration at the time that the agreement has been agreed upon by City staff and AEDC.

### **Status of the Cultural Trust**

AEDC is in the process of finalizing findings and feedback in the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support the acquisition and preservation of creative arts, culture, and music venues and facilities throughout Austin. The organization anticipates releasing that RFP in spring of this year. Further, AEDC anticipates using multiple funding sources. Pending Council approval in April, AEDC intends to include the

use of Hotel Occupancy Tax funds allocated by Council through Resolution [20201203-046](#) and the Creative Facilities Bond through Resolution [20180809-061](#). AEDC is also in negotiations with an existing foundation to channel philanthropic giving to support the program while it continues the process of establishing a 501c(3) to support long term philanthropic capacity for future or additional acquisition.

To inform the next steps, all memos, reports and recommendations from the Arts and Music Commissions were provided to AEDC staff and consultants for consideration of use in crafting a RFP and evaluation criteria. More specifically, AEDC has founded its work on the recommendations from the [Arts Commission](#) and [Music Commission](#), informed by the work of the Joint Arts and Music Working Group with documentation recommendations posted on the [SpeakUp Austin site](#) and referenced in the [July 24, 2020 Memo to Mayor and Council](#) for increased transparency. AEDC staff and consultants have also coordinated with the Economic Development Department (EDD) to collect and analyze responses to the Request for Information distributed on August 8, 2020 and additional market context to inform the scope and evaluation criteria.

### **Monthly Updates and On-going Coordination**

Immediately upon formation of AEDC, the organization gave an update to the Joint Music and Arts Commission in December of 2020. AEDC then recommended the inclusion upon its interim (and permanent) board members nominated by each of these commissions, to insure constant flow of information. In addition, to support on-going coordination of communications for transparency, feedback and guidance, AEDC desires to directly provide a monthly update to the Arts and Music Commissions. AEDC will coordinate with staff liaisons for each commission to tentatively hold a place for updates on the monthly meeting agenda; if irreconcilable conflicts arise in scheduling, AEDC will directly coordinate with Arts and Music Commissions to insure timely updates if desired by the respective Commissions. AEDC has requested to be placed on the agenda for the next Joint Arts and Culture Commission meeting, currently being scheduled. Our staff and consultants are available to provide additional briefings prior to that date upon your request.

To ensure on-going community input and transparency, AEDC has established a Cultural Trust Advisory Committee (CTAC). Our next CTAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14th at 5pm. CTAC's membership is open to those without a conflict of interest in funding, and those interested in participating are asked to [apply through the linked questionnaire](#). Additionally, CTAC members can apply to be on the evaluation committee that will partner with AEDC and City staff to support evaluation of this initial Cultural Trust RFP responses. The AEDC Board will ultimately select the evaluation committee members from those applications that will join staff. Note that CTAC membership requires a high level of participation from its members. Please feel free to circulate this information to your networks or directly to those that you feel would be interested in serving on the CTAC.

Thank you for all of the time and energy you devote to enhancing Austin's creative environment and identity and we look forward to ongoing collaboration. Should you have any questions or interest in discussing any of the attached information, please contact myself or David Colligan, AEDC Interim Chief Operating Officer, at 512-974-6381 or [david.colligan@austintexas.gov](mailto:david.colligan@austintexas.gov).

CC Rosie Truelove, Chair, Austin Economic Development Corporation  
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