



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 10/6/2015

ALL

Item Creation Date: 9/30/2015

MYR-Adopt Houston Arts and Cultural Plan

Agenda Item#: 2.

Summary:

Motion to adopt Houston Arts and Cultural Plan

Background:

The City of Houston is world renowned for its cultural offerings including major companies in all the performing arts, vibrant Museum and Theater Districts, five Cultural Districts designated by the Texas Commission on the arts, the world's largest rodeo and stock show, a large active artist community, small and mid-size organizations with a myriad of artistic expressions, and a wealth of diverse ethnic communities that impart their cultural traditions through artworks, performances and festivals. Arts and cultural offerings help define a city's character and quality of life. They are paramount to attracting and retaining a great workforce and families that want to stay and become civically active in our city. Arts and cultural offerings are essential for growing convention business and tourism.

The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) has led a community driven process to develop an Arts and Cultural Plan (the Plan) that will provide strategies to ensure the best investment of the City's funding and programs for the arts and to build on the city's already rich cultural base. The MOCA recommends that Council adopt the Plan which outlines priorities and recommendations for fostering an environment in which art and culture flourish for the sharing and benefit of all residents and visitors. The Plan aligns with the City's General Plan which includes an action to "Maintain a Plan for supporting Arts and Culture."

The first and last Arts and Cultural Plan was done in 1993 by the Cultural Arts Commission of Houston (CACH), which in 2006 was changed to the Houston Arts Alliance. Out of that 1993 plan several advances were made, including the initiation of a Civic Art Ordinance setting aside 1.75% of qualifying CIP projects for civic art. After 22 years and given the extraordinary growth in Houston's cultural communities, it is time to develop a new vision.

Leading a diverse Advisory Committee as co-chairs of this effort were volunteers Philamena Baird and Rick Lowe. Their depth of knowledge in the cultural arena has been invaluable. The Advisory Committee consisted of over 30 members representing artists, large cultural institutions, small to mid-size organizations and representatives of business, hoteliers, educational institutions and many others. Extensive community engagement was utilized to help guide the Plan's development. Professional consultants, Cultural Planning Group (CPG), as well as an experienced local lead consultant, Debbie McNulty were engaged to shepherd the process. The Advisory Committee participated in monthly meetings from December 2014 through September 2015. Residents, stakeholders, community leaders, City department directors, several town hall meetings, public meetings in Council districts, focus groups, 25 presentations, 100 interviews, over 400 intercept surveys and 7,000 unique visitors to ByYouCity.org participated and/or provided feedback. Three update presentations have been made to City Council's Quality of Life Committee.

The Arts and Cultural Plan has three priorities of "Promote. Enhance. Advance" and includes 27 strategies that can be carried out over the next five to 10 years. Each strategy in the Plan document has an assessment and actions. The Plan is meant to be fluid and can be updated on a regular basis as the arts and cultural communities change or needs are perceived.

Initial recommendations to be worked on in the next year by MOCA include:

- A plan for enhanced oversight of City arts resources in order to quantify return on investment (ROI) by developing enhanced reporting methodology for grants funded to the City's partner organizations through Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenues dedicated to the arts and other city funded or incentive based programs
- With leadership from the private sector and cultural organization partners, work to build consensus and begin to identify strategies for developing potential new revenue streams to support the arts
- Update the 2006 Civic Art Ordinance to clarify application of the 1.75% set aside for qualifying City construction projects and remove obsolete language
- In partnership with cultural and neighborhood organizations and the Houston Arts Alliance, expand access to arts in neighborhoods with projects similar to the Mini Murals (artist painted control cabinets in District K and B)
- Partner on arts marketing opportunities with the Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau, Houston Arts Alliance and others

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Amount of Funding:

No funding necessary.

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