



October 3, 2015

Hon. Annise D. Parker, Mayor
Hon. Members of Houston City Council
P.O. Box 1562
Houston, TX 77251

Dear Mayor Parker and Honorable Council Members:

Thank you so much for inviting me to serve on the Steering Committee for the City's Arts and Culture Plan. As one who has been actively involved in Houston's performing arts industry for more than 40 years, I was honored to add my voice and experience to the discussions.

There is perhaps no other place in Houston that celebrates artistic and cultural diversity, inclusion and access to the performing arts like Miller Outdoor Theatre. By leveraging the City's annual investment of HOT, the Miller Theatre Advisory Board programs 130+ productions that showcase the exceptional breadth and depth of Houston's performing arts organizations and present them free of charge to the public. More than 400,000 Houstonians and visitors of all ages, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds come together each season to enjoy live performances in an incredible facility in a magnificent setting. This is a tremendous gift and MTAB and all who attend Miller are most grateful.

While the planning process was occasionally maddening, it was also enlightening. Having so many diverse interests at the table gave us all the chance to learn from one another about the real impact of the arts and culture in the lives of Houstonians.

With the leadership of Philamena Baird and Rick Lowe, Minnette Boesel and Debbie McNulty and the consultants, we have created a document that demonstrates the critical role that the arts and culture play in the economic health and vitality of this City. To have the importance of arts and culture included in the City's General Plan is a huge step forward. One of the key discoveries and the major point of agreement is that the current allocation of HOT funds is inadequate to support an industry that has grown and will continue to grow exponentially. For the arts to flourish in the City center and in the neighborhoods, for major institutions to thrive as cultural tourism drivers and mid-size and small organizations to grow and prosper; for individual artists to find Houston a welcoming and affordable place to work and live, there needs to be another source of funding.

We have a path forward and I do hope to continue serving on task forces with the Cultural Affairs office and my colleagues throughout the arts and cultural community and the private sector to give life to the vision: *to foster an environment in which art and culture flourish for the sharing and benefit of all residents and visitors.* Working together, we can make this happen.

The Miller Theatre Advisory Board encourages the members of City Council to adopt this plan and to work with all of us to let the arts and culture show the world that Houston is truly a world-class city.

Respectfully,


Cissy Segall Davis
Managing Director



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2 October 2015

Mayor Parker and Council Members
 City of Houston
 901 Bagby, 3rd Floor
 Houston, TX 77002

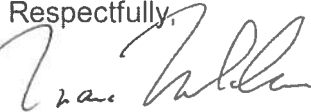
Dear Mayor Parker and Council Members:

Congratulations on the adoption of a General Plan for the City of Houston which includes as an action that the City "Maintain a plan for supporting arts and culture." As arts and culture is an indelible component of the life of a community, we applaud the city's efforts in creating the first Arts and Cultural Plan since 1993.

As we know, planning is aspirational, and the Arts and Cultural Plan is, in fact, aspirational.

As the city's local arts agency created to advance the arts and culture on behalf of the city, we applaud the Arts and Cultural Plan's vision and call to increase public investment in the arts, expand the civic art program so that public art can be realized throughout the city, and enhance the roll of arts and culture in branding our city as a cultural tourism destination.

We are supportive of the plan and look forward to working alongside the City of Houston in the coming years toward implementation.

Respectfully,


Marc Melcher
 Chairman of the Board



Jonathon Glus
 President + CEO



October 2, 2015

Dear Mayor Parker and Councilmembers,

Congratulations on creating the first Arts and Cultural Plan for the City of Houston, and thank you for your leadership in advancing a process representing the entire community.

As a member of the Plan's Community Advisory Committee, I encourage City Council to adopt the Plan when it comes forward for a vote.

I applaud the vision and call for greater oversight of the City's cultural grants to ensure a fair and equitable process for all. Fresh Arts (and the many artists and small organizations it serves) greatly appreciate the public support we receive for our work. It has helped us make Houston a more exciting place to live and visit, reach new audiences, and develop the next generation of creative voices within the community.

Thank you for this tremendous opportunity to fully realize the benefit of artists and creative businesses working in our city. I look forward to working alongside the City of Houston in the coming years to implement this important plan.

Sincerely,

Jenni Rebecca Stephenson
Executive Director, Fresh Arts



Fresh Arts is a 501(c)3 professional organization.

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Boesel, Minnette - MYR

From: Tinterow, Gary <gtinterow@mfah.org>
Sent: Friday, October 02, 2015 1:04 PM
To: Boesel, Minnette - MYR
Cc: Tammie Kahn; sue@suelovell.com; jsanders@hallattorneys.com; Stuart, Lorraine
Subject: Fwd: Cultural Plan

The Hon. Annise Parker
Mayor
City of Houston

Dear Mayor Parker,

I am very grateful that you invited me, as president of the Houston Museum District, to participate on the Arts and Cultural Plan Advisory Committee. It proved to be a robust forum for diverse viewpoints, and I learned a great deal in the process.

Without question, the overriding conclusion of the year-long study was the inadequacy of public funding for the arts in Houston. The 19.3% allocation of HOT funds for cultural promotion -- the limit allowed by Texas state law -- is woefully insufficient to support the myriad organizations and cultural initiatives of our community; nevertheless, it was surprising to learn that Houston's governmental support for the arts ranks at the very bottom of all large metropolitan regions in the country, despite the enormous reach (over ten counties), immense local impact (from school children to seniors), and international reputation of many of our organizations (thanks to our organizations, Houston is now seen as a cultural destination).

The board of the Houston Museum District, comprising nineteen institutions, voted unanimously in July 2015 to urge our civic leaders to address this glaring shortfall. Although there are worthy aspirations embodied in the Arts and Cultural Plan, they pale in comparison to what must be seen as the absolute priority, to identify and work toward the establish of a new source of municipal funding for the arts. We must increase funding substantially so that we may join the ranks of cities such as Denver, Detroit, St. Louis, Seattle and San Francisco -- not to mention New York and Los Angeles -- as a place where a creative community and a vibrant art scene are properly recognized as the economic force, and source of an enhanced quality of life, that they can become with the appropriate municipal investment.

We therefore recommend that in considering the Cultural Plan, City Council endorse the priority of increased local government funding for culture and the arts. Re-distributing current allocations will only dilute their impact and result in mediocre returns. Without a new source of funds, few of the Plan's aspirations could ever become a reality.

Sincerely,

Gary Tinterow
President, Houston Museum District
Director, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

HoustonGrandOpera



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HoustonGrandOpera.org

October 2, 2015

The Hon. Annise Parker
Mayor
City of Houston

Patrick Summers
Artistic & Music Director
Margaret Alkek Williams Center

Perryn Leech
Managing Director

Dr. John Mendelsohn
Chairman, Board of Directors

Dear Mayor Parker,

I would like to thank you for the vision that you have demonstrated in advancing this Arts and Culture plan for the city. It was an honor to be asked to represent the Theater District companies and I greatly appreciated the opportunity to talk with other artists and institutions about the importance of the arts to Houston. I also appreciate the hard work of Minnette, Debbie and the Office of Cultural Affairs in getting us to this point.

Many of the key discoveries and priorities in the plan will require significant extra funding and I think the identifying of a new revenue stream or streams will prove to be the clarion call of this plan. We must be prepared to work together to make sure that we are a united and consistent voice.

The arts community in Houston is strong and diverse. The arts are a huge economic driver and are crucial to the quality of life and the attraction of new talent to work for Houston based corporations. The Theater District is about to embark on a Master Plan that will help shine the spotlight on this cultural centre and we are excited about this bright future.

On behalf of the Theater District I would like to thank you again for allowing the arts the opportunity to plan for the future,

Very best wishes,

Perryn Leech
Chairman, Board of Directors, Theater District Houston
Managing Director, Houston Grand Opera

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Managing Director
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Boesel, Minnette - MYR

From: HCAS Executive Director <trish.rigdon@cinemartsociety.org>
Sent: Sunday, October 04, 2015 1:31 PM
To: Trish Rigdon
Cc: Emily Todd; Sixto A Wagan; Sarah Stauder; jason.nodler@catastrophictheatre.com; andrea.cody@dancehouston.org; jcosley@ensemblehouston.com; Rachel Cook; info@fotofest.org; rainey@glasstire.com; Stephanie Coleman; Jenni Rebecca Stephenson | Fresh Arts; rebecca@freneticore.net; rich@imprinthouston.org; cwest@lawndaleartcenter.com; rudden@mainstreettheater.com; dave.dove@namelessound.org; aztecmuse@aol.com; Lynette Wallace; geoff@pozosartproject.com; samskritihouston@hotmail.com; mzuraw@sjs.org; bhammad@gmail.com; R Lowe; info@votedorothyolmos.com; reyea02@imperiomayaballetfolklorico.com; nancy.castro1@att.net; muna.ahmad@yahoo.com; mauricio@brazilianarts.org; annachiwang@gmail.com; info@houstonbluessociety.org; info@houstonebonyopera.org; kristian@q-fest.org; John Guess; jguess@hmaac.org; annedeny@yahoo.com; dukeofnuke@gmail.com; dukeofnuke@mail.com; sutapaji@gmail.com; imshouston@gmail.com; vatsakumar@att.net; cynthia.huang@icc-houston.org; info@texirish.org; info@iccchouston.com; jash.mail@gmail.com; info@kannadavrinda.org; mixtecobf@yahoo.com; info@sempermusic.org; smediwala@sbcglobal.net; info@texanfrenchalliance.org; Michelle Barnes; contact@vcsa.org; Sehba Sarwar; mhall@awakeningsmovement.com; membership@acchouston.org; ed@apah.org; odbor@bosnjaci.us; casacubahouston@hotmail.com; info@casaargentina.org; czech@czechcenter.org; Karen Farber; Ayanna; Carrie Marie Schneider; Ryan Dennis; elizabeth@diverseworks.org; Nestor Topchy; philamena123@aol.com Baird; Boesel, Minnette - MYR; McNulty, Deborah - MYR
Subject: Please attend City Council meeting to support the adoption of the Arts and Culture Plan

Dear all,

I am typically not a political activist but the Mayor's Arts and Culture Plan comes before City Council at the next meeting on Tuesday, October 6 at 1:30 pm and I believe that this is of vital importance to our city. The plan is the third item on the agenda. Ayanna McCloud and Terri Diraddo are on the schedule to speak during the 2:00 pm public session of the meeting. Many of us from the small and midsize arts organizations will be there in support. I invite you to join us. A collective show of support by our organizations will let City Council members know that we care about this issue and so should they.

To help council members recognize us as a group I ask that everyone wear blue. A bright blue is best but any shade will work. Why blue? Simply because several of us thought that most of you would have something blue to wear.

The meeting agenda and a copy of the full plan is available at this link:

<http://houston.novusagenda.com/agendapublic/DisplayAgendaPDF.ashx?MeetingID=119>

Let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I hope to see all of you at the city council meeting on Tuesday!

All best,

Trish Rigdon

Executive Director

Houston Cinema Arts Society

4409 Montrose, Suite 150

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cinemartsociety.org | HCAF15.org | CineSpace15.org