



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:19-8415

Agenda Item Number: 4.

Agenda Date: 11/12/2019

In Control: Planning and Community Development Committee

DEPARTMENT: Department of Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Performing Arts Strategic Plan

SUMMARY:

Briefing and possible action regarding the Performing Arts Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 2017, the Department of Arts & Culture has been developing components of its Cul-TÚ-Art Cultural Plan, a coordinated planning document to guide investments in the arts to provide equitable opportunities that encourage San Antonio's arts community, residents and visitors to thrive in a culturally inclusive environment. Though the Performing Arts community is a large piece of the San Antonio arts landscape, representing \$924 million of the \$4.8 billion total creative economy, the unfortunate and abrupt closures of several performing arts entities, confirmed the importance for the development of a strategic plan to sustain and grow the Performing Arts community. Therefore, the Department proposed development of a Performing Arts Strategic Plan as a department goal for FY2020 during the budget process.

However, as a result of the City's agreement with Ticketmaster approved September 26, 2019, the department has expedited the planning process to determine best use of the Arts & Entertainment Fund. The department is committed to identifying the overall needs of San Antonio Performing Arts and developing strategies to ensure the sustainability of these organizations.

In 2017, the department contracted with a national research company to distribute an arts and culture survey among three different segments: residents, visitors and art patrons. As a part of the Cul-TÚ-Art plan, the department planned to replicate the survey every 2 years. In fall of 2019, the department replicated the 2017 survey but added questions related to performing arts and venues in anticipation of the Performing Arts Strategic Plan. The survey, distributed between August 20 and September 16, 2019, used a representative sample of residents and visitors and was also distributed by 45 local arts non-profit agencies to their patrons (called “Arts Patrons” through online and paper surveys). The survey was available in English and Spanish.

Key findings of the survey indicated that performing arts had one of the highest levels of participation and interest in all the arts segments. Additionally, the survey confirmed the previous finding that Culturally-specific programming is important to over two thirds of the respondents. Barriers to attendance included cost, scheduling/overlapping events, and need for more accessible venues or better transportation access to current venues.

Additionally, the department conducted benchmark research of other cities to identify best practices in supporting the performing arts. The following cities were selected for comparison: Austin, Houston, Oklahoma City, San Diego, Phoenix, Chicago and Seattle. Four of the seven cities provided support to performing arts agencies outside of their normal arts agency funding process and they all provided some assistance with costs of venues which has also been identified as a need of the San Antonio performing arts community.

The Department of Arts & Culture hosted two community and stakeholder work sessions over consecutive Saturdays in October 2019. Over thirty people attended representing all sizes of non-profit performing arts agencies, venues, event promoters, artists and arts patrons.

The draft plan, resulting from the survey, best practices research and community input, was presented to the San Antonio Arts Commission’s Arts Funding Committee on November 7, 2019 and will be taken to the San Antonio Arts Commission on November 12, 2019. A community reveal of the draft plan for community feedback is scheduled for November 13, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the Guadalupe Theater. The finalized plan will go back to the San Antonio Arts Commission and the Arts Funding Committee in December, and would go to City Council for consideration in January.

ISSUE:

The Department of Arts & Culture is leading a Strategic Planning process for Performing Arts which was included as a department goal for FY2020. The expedited planning process will include feedback from residents, visitors, arts patrons, and performing artists, agencies and venues. Stakeholder work sessions, an arts & culture survey, and community meetings will inform a 5-year Strategic Plan for the Performing Arts. The plan will include actionable steps for the Department and San Antonio Arts Commission as well as the performing arts community.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose to not move forward with this planning effort. As a result, the department would not have a plan dedicated to performing arts.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department of Arts & Culture has dedicated \$38,000 of FY20 Cultural Planning funds for an arts & culture

community survey, facilitator, and consultant for this strategic planning effort. Ticketmaster has proposed an annual contribution of \$50,000 to the Arts & Entertainment Fund for Performing Arts. Additionally the department of Arts & Culture has engaged a consultant to research revenue-generating donation models through Ticketmaster whose results have been received and the consultant has briefed the Department of Arts & Culture and Convention & Sports Facilities. Staff will present these models at the Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval to move forward with the strategic planning process to develop the 5-year plan for Performing Arts.