



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 2.

Agenda Date: 3/2/2020

In Control: Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: Department of Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Performing Arts Strategic Plan and Funding Guidelines

SUMMARY:

Approval of the Performing Arts Strategic Plan and Funding Guidelines.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 2017, the Department of Arts & Culture developed six 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. The six individual strategic plans included in the Cultural Plan are: Film (2017), Centro de Artes (2017), Arts Agency Funding (2018), Public Art (2018), Music (2019), and Cultural Districts (2019). 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. Therefore, the Department proposed development of a Performing Arts Strategic Plan as a department goal for FY2020 during the budget process. To develop the plan, staff distributed a survey, researched best practices, facilitated focus groups and community workshops.

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. Three 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 three community and stakeholder work sessions in October and November 2019. Over thirty people attended each session 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 shared with the community on November 13, 2019 for their feedback. The finalized plan was approved by the San Antonio Arts Commission on December 10, 2019. A workgroup from the Arts Funding Committee of the San Antonio Arts Commission convened in January to develop Grant Guidelines which were approved by the San Antonio Arts Commission on February 11, 2020.

ISSUE:

The Vision for the Performing Arts Strategic Plan is for San Antonio to be a place where Performing Arts thrive. The plan focuses on four goals with both short and long term strategies to support these goals as well as a Grant Funding Program.

Goal #1: Create and promote a strong performing arts image by building an accessible and dynamic information resource guide of performing arts organizations and activities to better tell the San Antonio performing arts story. Additionally, the Department will host a marketing workshop designed to build partnerships and opportunities for cross promotion of performing arts.

Goal #2: Develop opportunities for accessible, affordable & diverse venues through grant programs to assist artists and arts agencies with production costs for security, equipment rental and back of house fees. The department will also provide access and fee waivers for the use of the City’s venues, its mobile stage and marley dance floor. A grant funding program has been developed and approved by the San Antonio Arts Commission which provides small \$10,000 to \$25,000 grants for equipment and facility improvements for currently funded performing arts agencies who operate and have a long term interest in their venue. Another grant called the Performing Arts Production Cost Grant Program will allow performing arts producing organizations and individual artists to apply for funding to assist with venue back-of-house costs, security and equipment rental for specifically planned performances. Both grant applications opened February 12, 2020 and will be due on April 3, 2020. The applications will be evaluated by an expert panel and recommendations will be made by the Arts Funding Committee to the San Antonio Arts Commission and by the Commission to City

Council with the FY21 Budget. An appeals process is included in the Guidelines allowing appeals to be heard by the Arts Funding Committee and San Antonio Arts Commission.

Goal #3: Increase and diversify performing arts revenues. In October 2019, City's Convention, Sports Facilities Department (CSF) entered into a 5 year ticketing agreement with Ticketmaster which included Ticketmaster making a \$50,000 annual contribution to a new city fund called the "Arts & Entertainment Fund" annually. Additionally, CSF has agreed to provide 10% of Ticketmaster Commissions deposited into the "Arts & Entertainment Fund". The departments will also collaborate to develop a "Donate to the Arts" program for ticket buyers. Revenues will be deposited in the "Arts & Entertainment Fund" and be managed by the Department of Arts & Culture. The Departments will also reach out to other San Antonio area venues requesting they create a similar program to create revenues for the new "Arts & Entertainment Fund" dedicated to help fund items in the Performing Arts Grants. Additionally, Department will work to create a clearinghouse of local funder organizations interested in providing grants to the performing arts

Goal #4: Engage in performing arts collaborations with a strategy to increase performing arts presence throughout San Antonio by building a database of venues and assessing venue needs. The venue database, once created, will be utilized to identify needs for new venues of different locations, sizes and configurations. The Department of Arts & Culture will advocate for city-wide performing arts venues to be included in the 2022 General Obligation Bond Program, however, bonds are subject to their own eligibility requirements, outcome of community process, voter approval and funding availability.

Additionally, the department will leverage its Film Office to foster cross-disciplinary opportunities to enhance arts programming and increase awareness for organizations with audiences. The Department of Art & Culture will utilize its local film contest in FY20 to ask filmmakers to create short films showcasing performing arts organizations or performing artists. These films will be screened locally and made available to the city and the organizations/artists to help with marketing and awareness.

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 nor approved Performing Arts Funding Guidelines with the ability to provide grants to performing arts agencies and artists utilizing the "Arts & Entertainment Fund".

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. CSF will provide an annual contribution of \$50,000 from Ticketmaster to a new city fund called the "Arts & Entertainment Fund". Additionally, CSF has agreed to provide 10% of Ticketmaster Commissions deposited into the "Arts & Entertainment Fund". Any donations received from ticket buyers will also be deposited into the Arts & Entertainment Fund and the Department of Arts & Culture will manage the fund. Expenditures from the fund will be approved by City Council with the adopted FY21 budget using revenues collected during FY20 to ensure the amount collected can cover any recommended grant allocation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee authorize the department to bring the

Performing Arts Strategic Plan and Funding Guidelines before full City council on March 19, 2020.