

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Lori Martin, President  
Clayton Bullock, President-Elect  
Allen Wise, 1st Vice President  
Richard Kooris, 2nd Vice President  
Alyson McGee, Secretary  
Clay Cary, Treasurer  
Vanessa McElwrath, Immediate Past President

**DIRECTORS**

Melissa Barry  
Richard Craig  
John Donisi  
Steve Genovesi  
Eileen Gill  
Ann S. Graham  
Harmony Grogan  
Linda Y. Jackson

Ken Johnson  
Patrick Johnson  
Scott Marks  
Kelley McClure  
Dennis McDaniel  
Christina Randle  
Michael Strutt  
Corinna Wenks

**REPRESENTATIVES**

Michael Holleran, UTSOA  
Bob Ward, Travis County Historical Commission  
Charles Peveto, Austin History Center Association

**STAFF**

Lindsey Derrington, Executive Director  
Lesley Walker, Development and Communications Coordinator

May 21, 2020

Austin City Council  
301 W. Second Street  
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: Music Venue Economic Recovery Resolution

Dear Mayor Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Garza and City Council Members,

Preservation Austin has been our city's leading nonprofit voice for historic preservation since 1953. Our mission is to promote Austin's diverse cultural heritage through the preservation of historic places. Nowhere is the connection between culture and place more prominent than in downtown's Red River Cultural District, where older and historic buildings provide settings for our city's most important concentration of live music venues. These unique spaces shape unique experiences that cannot be replicated or replaced. Historic venues throughout Austin from South Congress to Cameron Road are equally vital. Preservation Austin enthusiastically supports the proposed resolution (Agenda Item 96) addressing economic recovery of the live music ecosystem, with its emphasis on preservation of and investment in creative spaces in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

We are particularly supportive of Council's endorsement of the Red River Cultural District's State Cultural District designation application; the establishment of a cultural land trust; and exploration of Transfer of Development Rights, land banking, and acquisition strategies for stabilizing assets and preserving existing venue spaces citywide. State Cultural District designation through the Texas Commission on the Arts is long overdue and would provide much-needed resources to, in TCA's own words, "harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization." The designation would make this dense, but delicate, creative ecosystem stronger and help catalyze downtown's economy during the current downturn. Land trusts and public acquisition would constitute bold, progressive, and effective strategies for stabilizing the creative spaces upon which so much of our city's identity and economy rely. These venues were struggling to remain in place before the pandemic and, by their nature, will continue to suffer from its fallout long after many other businesses have reopened. Without this direct investment they will close.

Preservation Austin has worked to build connections between the Red River Cultural District's past and present for several years. Our projects have included an oral history program pairing high school students with such venues as Mohawk, Stubbs, and the former Emo's, and hosting a tour of the district's history and preservation challenges during the Texas Society of Architect's 2017 Annual Conference. Our Board of Directors supported Council's May 2019 Palm District Master Plan Resolution, of which the Red River Cultural District is a crucial part. Lindsey Derrington, our Executive Director, serves on the Planning

and Zoning Department Urban Design Division's Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) Steering Committee for the Palm District to advise on how historic preservation can enhance these planning efforts.

Historic places are the foundation of our work as a preservation nonprofit. But it's the relationship between these places, and the communities that bring them to life, that makes them worth preserving. The importance of Austin's live music venues to our cultural fabric, our identity, and our economy cannot be overstated. Preservation Austin commends this resolution's sponsors for their vision during these difficult times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Martin".

Lori Martin  
President