



# City of Austin

## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 25-1363, **Agenda Item #:** 15.

7/24/2025

### **Posting Language**

Authorize negotiation and execution of an agreement with Lucas Aoki for artwork for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Spaces for Children - Quiet Energy Art in Public Places Project in an amount not to exceed \$546,000. Funding: \$110,000 is available in the Capital Budget of the Aviation Department. Funding for the remaining years of the agreement is contingent upon available funding in future budgets.

### **Lead Department**

Office of Arts, Culture, Music & Entertainment.

### **Fiscal Note**

Funding in the amount of \$110,000 is available in the Capital Budget of the Aviation Department. Funding for the remaining \$436,000 of this contract will be added as the construction phases begin.

### **For More Information:**

Angela Means, Director, Office of Arts, Culture, Music & Entertainment, 512-974-1624; Morgan Messick, Assistant Director, Office of Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment, 512-974-7873.

### **Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:**

In August 2024, the Art in Public Places (AIPP) Panel and Arts Commission approved the "Art in Public Places Sites and Opportunities Plan for Austin-Bergstrom International Airport," which identified and scoped three phases of AIPP opportunities within the current Airport Expansion and Development Program (AEDP).

On June 9, 2025, the AIPP Panel approved the selection process recommendation for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Spaces for Children - Quiet Energy AIPP Project, naming Lucas Aoki as the selected artist and Iris Kwon as the alternate for the \$546,000 commission. (Motion by Panel Member Danziger second by Panel Member Diaz; approved 4-0-0, with one vacancy and Arts Commission Liaison Maldonado and Panel Member Davis absent).

On June 16, 2025, the AIPP Panel approved the selection process recommendation for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Spaces for Children - Quiet Energy AIPP Project, naming Lucas Aoki as the selected artist and Iris Kwon as the alternate for the \$546,000 commission. (Motion by Commissioner Maldonado second by Commissioner Medicharla; approved 6-0-0, with Commissioners Keys, Garza, and Kracheni absent).

### **Additional Backup Information:**

This commission is part of Phase III of the City's AIPP initiative, implemented in collaboration with the AEDP at the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS). Developed in partnership by the Office of Arts, Culture, Music, and Entertainment and the Department of Aviation, the phased AIPP plan was approved by the Arts Commission in August 2024.

Phase III prioritized artists local to Austin and Central Texas, building on Phase II which prioritized the inclusion of Texas-based artists, and on the nationally focused Phase I. All thirteen commissions awarded in this phase were granted to Austin area artists, including this project. Phase III continues the City's focus on

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elevating local voices while delivering innovative, meaningful public art experiences in civic infrastructure.

**Artist Selection Process:**

These projects are part of a broader Phase III open Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process focused on talent based in the Greater Austin area:

**Application & Outreach:**

- RFQ released: February 28, 2025
- Submission Deadline: March 31, 2025
- Promotion included City newsletters, PublicArtist.org, social media, and community outreach
- Artist information and pre-submittal meetings were held on February 27 and March 10, 2025
- 173 total applications were received; 120 met the minimum qualifications

**Panel Review & Interviews: Amenity Lounges & Spaces for Children**

- The Amenity Lounges & Spaces for Children panel convened on May 15, 2025, to review applications
- Finalist interviews occurred on June 6, 2025

**Final Recommendation: Spaces for Children - Quiet Energy**

- Recommended Artist: Lucas Aoki
- Recommended Alternate: Iris Kwon

The recommendation was approved by the AIPP Panel on June 9 and affirmed by the Austin Arts Commission on June 16, 2025.

**About the Artist**

Lucas Aoki is a visual artist based in Austin, Texas, known for his imaginative paintings and murals that blend surreal landscapes with whimsical, otherworldly characters. His work invites curiosity and wonder, often drawing from dreams, childhood memories, and a deep appreciation for nature. Through soft textures, organic shapes, and calming color palettes, Aoki creates visual environments that feel both playful and serene. His gentle, storybook-like aesthetic makes him an ideal artist to design the airport's quiet space for children, offering a peaceful, creative atmosphere where young travelers can feel comforted, inspired, and at ease.

**Project Context Within the AUS AIPP Plan:**

This project is one of thirteen Phase III commissions within the AUS AIPP program. While Phase I focused on national artists, and Phase II emphasized Texas-based artists (particularly those living and working in Austin), Phase III was reserved exclusively for Austin-based creatives.

**This phased model:**

- Ensures a balance of excellence and equity;
- Prioritizes meaningful engagement with local artists; and
- Aligns with the AEDP infrastructure timeline.