



# City of Austin

## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 25-1355, **Agenda Item #:** 7.

7/24/2025

### **Posting Language**

Authorize negotiation and execution of an agreement with Essentials Creative for artwork for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Restroom Entries Art in Public Places Project in an amount not to exceed \$80,000. Funding: \$16,000 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 \$16,000 is available in the Capital Budget of the Aviation Department. Funding for the remaining \$64,000 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 Art in Public Places (AIPP) Panel approved the selection process recommendation for the nine (9) Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Restroom Entries AIPP Projects, naming Essentials Creative as the selected artist for one of the nine \$80,000 commissions. Shannon Fannin was recommended as the first alternate and Matli Lee was recommended as the second alternate. (Motion by Panel Member Lemmo second by Panel Member Danziger; approved 4-0-0, with one vacancy and Arts Commission Liaison Maldonado and Panel Member Davis absent).

On June 16, 2025, the Austin Arts Commission approved the selection process recommendation for the nine (9) Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Restroom Entries AIPP Projects, naming Essentials Creative as a selected artist for one of the nine \$80,000 commissions. Shannon Fannin was recommended as the first alternate and Matli Lee was recommended as the second alternate. (Motion by Commissioner Gray second by Commissioner Zisman; 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

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

#### Artist Selection Process: Restroom Entries

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:

- The Restroom Entries panel convened on May 22, 2025, to review applications

#### Final Recommendation (One Set of Restroom Entries per Recommended Artist):

- Recommended Artist: Hallie Brewer
- Recommended Artist: Elizabeth Chiles
- Recommended Artist: Elizabeth Hudson
- Recommended Artist: Essentials Creative
- Recommended Artist: Hope Hummingbird
- Recommended Artist: Phoebe Joynt
- Recommended Artist: Deborah Mersky
- Recommended Artist: Monica Mohnot
- Recommended Artist: Manik Nakra
- First Alternate: Shannon Fannin
- Second Alternate: Malti Lee

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

Essentials Creative is an Austin-based artist collective working at the intersection of design, installation, and community engagement. Their collaborative practice explores the relationship between people and place, often drawing on themes of accessibility, belonging, and shared experience. Blending bold visual language with thoughtful spatial design, Essentials Creative transforms everyday environments into interactive and inclusive spaces. Their inventive and people-centered approach makes them an ideal group to activate the Restroom Entry with a work that fosters connection, invites curiosity, and encourages meaningful interaction with the surrounding space.

#### 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.