



March 21, 2022

Downtown Austin Community Court/Municipal Building, 124 West 8th Street

Dear Council Members,

AIA Austin is the diverse and inclusive voice of our region's architecture community, and we work hard to enhance the vibrancy, prosperity, and quality of life in our community.

Our Advocacy group and Chapter leaders have been following the public discourse regarding the location of the Downtown Austin Community Court and the impending City Council vote to relocate the DACC to the old Municipal Building at 124 W. 8th St. This community conversation around the location of support services for the unhoused raised discussion that AIA Austin could provide a resource for the city, to help with an open forum on the DACC and the unhoused citizens it serves.

AIA Austin has always been a resource for workshops where stakeholders join to map solutions to a variety of issues. We call them charrettes. In 2013 we administered the Tiny Victories design competition for housing at Community First. In 2017, 2018, and 2019, AIA Austin ran charrettes over month-long periods to test the drafts of the proposed re-write of the Land Development Code. We continue to be involved with public conversations—this month we held a charrette on the McKalla Station with Project Connect and continue to be engaged in urban planning exercises surrounding transportation.

Should the contemplation of West 8th Street as a location for the DACC be delayed we would be pleased to host a series of community workshops on behalf of the City of Austin to

- Determine the optimum space Program for the DACC
- Further develop site selection criteria for the DACC
- Explore the possibility of including other community support service agencies with the DACC

This process would provide enhanced opportunities for community input and discussion as a building block for your decision. AIA Austin could also assist in a study of the West 8th Street Municipal Building itself with respect to confirming optimal scenarios, one of which will certainly be the DACC. It is a historical downtown architectural gem that begs a rigorous contemplation of both restoration and adaptive reuse. We have understood that there had previously been a consideration of the building as a cultural/civic center and that should the DACC go here, there would still be a possible cultural use that could happen in the building. Our study could also review how that interface might work perhaps within the context of efforts by the Austin Cultural Trust and the Austin Economic Development Corporation, both of which underscore the City's commitment to our thriving cultural assets.

We are bringing this forward in the spirit of offering the strength and resourcefulness of 1300 design and planning professionals to assist on any number of urban issues. We love creating buildings, but creating community and everything that could possibly mean, is what we really do. We would like the City to always consider AIA Austin as a resource to assist in robust and transparent community conversations and charrettes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Camille Jobe".

Camille Jobe
2022 AIA Austin President