



115 Pine Avenue STE 350
Long Beach CA 90802



Al Austin
Candidate for Long Beach City Council
District 8

Q. The creative economy encompasses people with creative occupations working in the creative industries, as well as workers with creative occupations working in any other industry, and people in a non-creative job working in a creative industry.¹ What would you do to deepen the City's investment in its creative economy?

A. The creative economy has been identified as an important part of the need to create quality jobs in Long Beach as part of the Economic Development Blueprint that was adopted by the City Council. The City will continue to invest in our arts and creative economy, through identifying ongoing revenue sources, such as the Percent for the Arts and Measure B on the March ballot.

Q. How would you champion expansion of the City's current funding stream for local arts and culture?

A. On the City Council, I supported establishing the Percent for the Arts program, which has already generated hundreds of thousands of dollars for public art and arts programs in the first few years since it was established. I also voted in support of placing Measure B on the March ballot to provide an additional revenue source for arts programs throughout the City through the Transit Occupancy Tax on hotel stays, and I support its passage.

¹ 2019 Otis Report on the Creative Economy, conducted by Beacon Economics



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Q. Ballot Measure B would increase the City's "hotel room tax" by 1% to support arts education in Long Beach schools; provide resources for Long Beach arts and cultural institutions; and pay for critical repairs and upgrades to the Convention Center. What are your views on this measure?

A. I voted to put Measure B on the March ballot for voters to provide an ongoing revenue source for arts programs and education, as well as to make needed investments in the Long Beach Convention Center. This funding will come from a 1% increase in the Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) which is charged on hotel room stays, and keeps Long Beach competitive with other Southern California convention and tourist destinations. I support its passage by the voters.

Q. How can the City increase representation, diversity and access to the arts for all?

A. The City can continue to increase access to the arts for all by partnering with organizations such as the Arts Council to identify funding for grants and other support to artists and organizations that represent all of Long Beach. I have worked to engage students in schools throughout the Eighth District in the arts, whether it is helping to paint a mural near their school, or accessing free opportunities to experience music and theater performances.



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Q. Which art initiatives in your district do you find successful and how would you support these programs in the future?

A. The Eighth District has a thriving arts and cultural scene throughout the district, and I am pleased to have work closely with a number of organizations to help make this possible. The monthly First Fridays Art Walk in Bixby Knolls features live music, visual art and performance artists, organized by the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association. I have worked to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in upgrading the Expo Arts Center, a City-owned facility that is home to a kids' theater, improv classes, free senior activities, and numerous art shows and concerts. I have worked closely with Pow!Wow! Long Beach to bring a number of new public murals to the Eighth District, including under the railroad bridges and in Virginia Village on North Long Beach Blvd. I have also sponsored new murals on Market Street and North Atlantic Avenue. We have several free music series throughout the district, including the Gr8 Summer Blues Concert, Municipal Band concerts, and additional concerts in the parks. I have also partnered with many of the great arts and cultural organizations in the district, including Rancho Los Cerritos, the Long Beach Shakespeare Company and the Historical Society of Long Beach.