



Legislation Text

File #: Res 31628, Version: 2

CITY OF SEATTLE
RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION relating to the Seattle Center Department; expressing support for a \$5,000,000 payment to the Seattle Opera for enhancements or other public benefits to the renovation or replacement of the Mercer Arena.

WHEREAS, the Seattle Center Century 21 Master Plan (“Plan”) is a 20-year management plan that contains Planning and Design Principles to guide redevelopment at the Seattle Center and encourages the use of public/private partnerships as one method to achieve redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the Plan envisions that McCaw Hall and the Mercer Arena will be the permanent home for the Seattle Opera (“Opera”), including the location of administrative, rehearsal, and technical support facilities for the Opera. The Plan also envisions accomplishing the goals of the Theatre District Plan to enhance the vitality of performing arts venues along Mercer Street; and

WHEREAS, the Opera is a world-renowned performing arts organization that has presented arts programming that greatly enhance the cultural and economic life of the City; and

WHEREAS, the Opera requires a permanent home for its administrative, rehearsal, and technical support functions, and its planned Mercer Arena project is integral to the success of the Plan, the Seattle Center Theatre District, and the surrounding Uptown Urban Center; and

WHEREAS, the City and the Opera entered into a ground lease for the Opera’s use of Mercer Arena and Seattle Opera began paying rent for use of the Mercer Arena on June 30, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Mercer Arena has been closed since 2003 due to seismic and code compliance deficiencies and

currently produces no public benefits, and that although the Arena redevelopment to be undertaken by the Opera under the terms of lease will improve the facility, additional enhancements to the Arena will provide additional benefits to the City's facility and to the vitality of the Seattle Center; and

WHEREAS, the Plan re-envisioned the original Theatre District Plan to focus on enhancing and activating the performing arts venues on the south side of Mercer St., by providing public amenities along August Wilson Way, and by designating the City-owned two-block Mercer Garage for mixed-use redevelopment;

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that efforts are underway to establish an arts and cultural district in the Uptown Urban Center that, together with the potential redevelopment of the Kreielsheimer block on Mercer Street, could help realize the vision of the Theatre District;

NOW, THEREFORE,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR
CONCURRING, THAT:**

Section 1. The City Council requests the Executive propose legislation that would appropriate \$5,000,000 for a contract with Seattle Opera to enhance the Opera's redevelopment of the Mercer Arena. Any expenditures of the appropriation shall be subject to the following conditions:

A. No more than \$200,000 should be approved in the 2016 City budget. Appropriation of the remaining \$4,800,000 should be included in the City's Capital Improvement program for review by the City Council in the 2017-18 biennial budget process so that, if this funding is appropriated by the Council, the funding may be available to Seattle Opera during 2017.

The contract shall require that the funds be used to enhance the redevelopment of the Mercer Arena in a manner that exceeds the Opera's obligations for redevelopment under the terms of the existing lease.

B. Additionally, the appropriation of the remaining \$4,800,000 should be contingent upon Seattle Opera's compliance with the following requirements contained in section 12 of the existing ground lease for the

Mercer Arena between Seattle Opera and the City and summarized below:

1. The proposed renovation shall be subject to review and comment by the Seattle Design Commission to the extent the Commission has authority to review that proposal.
2. The proposed renovation shall be subject to review and comment by the City Council committee responsible for oversight of the Seattle Center.
3. Seattle Opera shall have entered into a construction agreement with the City for the proposed renovation of the Mercer Arena before Seattle Opera executes a construction agreement with the general contractor for renovation of the Mercer Arena.
4. Seattle Opera has demonstrated to the City Budget Director that Seattle Opera has sufficient financial resources to complete the proposed renovation of the Mercer Arena and the Budget Director, in the Budget Director's sole discretion, shall have determined that this standard is met. This section does not obligate the City to appropriate money to the Seattle Opera as described, nor does it bind or limit the authority of future City Councils to make decisions for funding renovation of the Mercer Arena in a manner different than that described here.

Adopted by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2015, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this _____ day of _____, 2015.

President _____ of the City Council

The Mayor concurred the ____ day of _____, 2015.

Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2015.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)