A Public Art Strategic Plan for Waco

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We **grow** and **support** a thriving cultural and creative community.

A vibrant arts sector cultivates

- quality of life
- tourism & cultural destination
- education
- economic development
- recruitment & retention
- branding & placemaking
- connection & identity
- mental health

a well-rounded lively place we are proud to call home.
A Growing Partnership

Formed in 2015

Contracted in 2016 with the City of Waco to serve as the Local Arts Agency to:

● distribute & evaluate resources for cultural programming
● manage Waco Downtown Cultural District
● guide cultural development and infrastructure
● support arts leadership & entrepreneurship
● manage over $1m in public art
Why Are We Thinking About Public Art?

- to level-up from project to strategic focus
- to recognize Waco’s growth as opportunity for placemaking
- to align dedicated resources for managing public art collection
- to guide key decisions (quality, quantity, location, values, who, how, where, why, how much, how long)
- to clarify roles and responsibilities
- Waco has never done this
- we got NEA $$ - and City support

These decisions define how Waco looks and feels for future generations.
Objectives

● Engaging diverse community stakeholders in vision casting and goal development for quality public art captured in a Public Art Strategic Plan
● Defining strategic priorities and pathways for creative placemaking that represents our community, especially traditionally underrepresented stories and people
● Ensuring that the City of Waco and other key partners (City Center Waco, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) are knowledgeable about why and how public art should be prioritized in future planning
● Generating new financial resources for democratizing and diversifying the commissioning of public art
● Evolving enthusiasm for public art into a community-wide passion for creative placemaking.
BRIDGES TO PUBLIC ART
A Strategic Plan for Public Art in Waco, Tx
• Public art planning is a best practice
• Formalize processes
• Meet larger community goals
• Opportunities for community engagement
• A strong foundation exists in Waco
The City of Waco has not done this before; the current model is inherently reactive.

There’s enough activity to be more proactive and strategic.

Moving forward could:
- Capitalize on opportunities for funding
- Develop the workforce
- Enhance quality of life
- Facilitate economic development
- Do this sustainably and uniquely to Waco
- Public art planning is a best practice
- Addresses questions such as what public art is and is not, where it should go, what it should look like, who should pay for it, how to spark a public art idea
- The City of Waco has not done this before
- The current model is inherently reactive
- There’s enough activity to be more proactive and strategic
Formalize processes, program structure, resourcing

Sustain over the long term

Involve the community in the process

$4,000,000 to the local economy

Position Waco as key arts and culture destination
Meet The Team

Tashita Bibles
Chris McGowan
Raj Solanki
Food Truck Showdown
Chalk Waco
Juneteenth Celebration
Animal Day at East Waco Library
Overwhelming support for more public art

Would you like to see more public art locally?

97% yes
Overwhelming support for public art across the city
Where should public art be located?
WHAT SHOULD THE ROLE OF PUBLIC ART IN WACO BE?

- Beautifies my community and makes me feel proud
- Provides fun and entertainment
- Makes our community feel unique and interesting
- Helps connect people to stories that we share
- Helps artists make a living
- Boosts the local economy and makes new development projects more exciting
- Expresses community values and land acknowledgement and social justice
- Makes me feel better about my community
- Creates a focal point for tourists
- Makes me feel like I have a voice in my community

Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who agree with each statement.
Would you support a percent for Art for Waco?

Yes: 73.4%

No: 3.9%

I'd want to know more...: 22.7%
PROCESS AND FINDINGS

- Community
- Growth
- Sustainability
- Maintenance
- A living strategic plan
- Diversifying the collection
- Defining public art more broadly
- Staff capacity
- Access
- Community support
- Experiences and storytelling
- Sharing information about arts and culture activities
- Collaboration
- Youth
Municipal Arts and Culture Management Structures

1. Embedded within the city

2. City leads
   Partners

3. City
   Nonprofit

4. City
   Nonprofit
   County
Goal 1: Identify and build upon existing assets
GOAL 2

Cultivate new relationships and build partnerships
GOAL 3

Create pathways to public art that are inclusive of multiple stakeholders
Formalize and democratize the public art process, governance, and management
GOAL 5

Develop projects that expand and celebrate community identity
GOAL 6

Identify and secure diverse funding mechanisms

WACD

EXPAND + BUILD COMMUNITY IDENTITY
The time is right for Waco to take advantage of the fast growth happening across the city. There is already a great foundation to build upon, and following the recommendations laid out in the plan will build a proactive public art program. It will build upon existing assets and formalize a public art program that will integrate art into public spaces across the city, support local artists and develop the workforce, and put Waco on the map as a cultural destination that brings quality art and creative expression to the community. This is Waco’s de Medici moment.
Thank you!