

# The City of Waco

## Holiday Events

10.15.2024

Jonathan Cook, Director of Parks & Recreation



# WHY ARE WE HERE?

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## Purpose

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- Provide an overview of the annual Waco Wonderland event and preview the 2024 plans
- Discuss plans for the 2024 Downtown Lighting Display and Cameron Park Zoo Wild Lights
- Highlight City of Waco departments that are working on holiday events & activities and events throughout the city



# WACO WONDERLAND

- Signature holiday festival launched in 2013 by the City of Waco, City Center Waco, and Waco Public Improvement District Number One to enhance the tree lighting ceremony, showcase downtown Waco, and boost economic impact
- Funded by the PID, community sponsors and City of Waco in-kind staffing support
- Collaboration between city departments to produce and execute event logistics and operations
- Estimated weekend attendance of 25,000
- Average revenue stream of \$80k from ticket sales and merchant booths

# 2021-2023 REVENUE OVERVIEW

## TICKET REVENUE

2021	\$53,210
2022	\$48,600
2023	\$56,270

## MERCHANT REVENUE

2021	\$21,925
2022	\$23,625
2023	\$21,250



# THREE DAYS OF CHEER

## December 6-8 at Heritage Square

- Dec. 6: Tree Lighting Ceremony and Fireworks
- Dec. 7: Holiday Parade

## Weekend Festivities

- Mistletoe Merchant Market
- Local Food Trucks and Vendors
- Community Entertainment Stage
- Ferris Wheel
- Snow Tube Hills
- Library Storytimes
- Visits with Santa

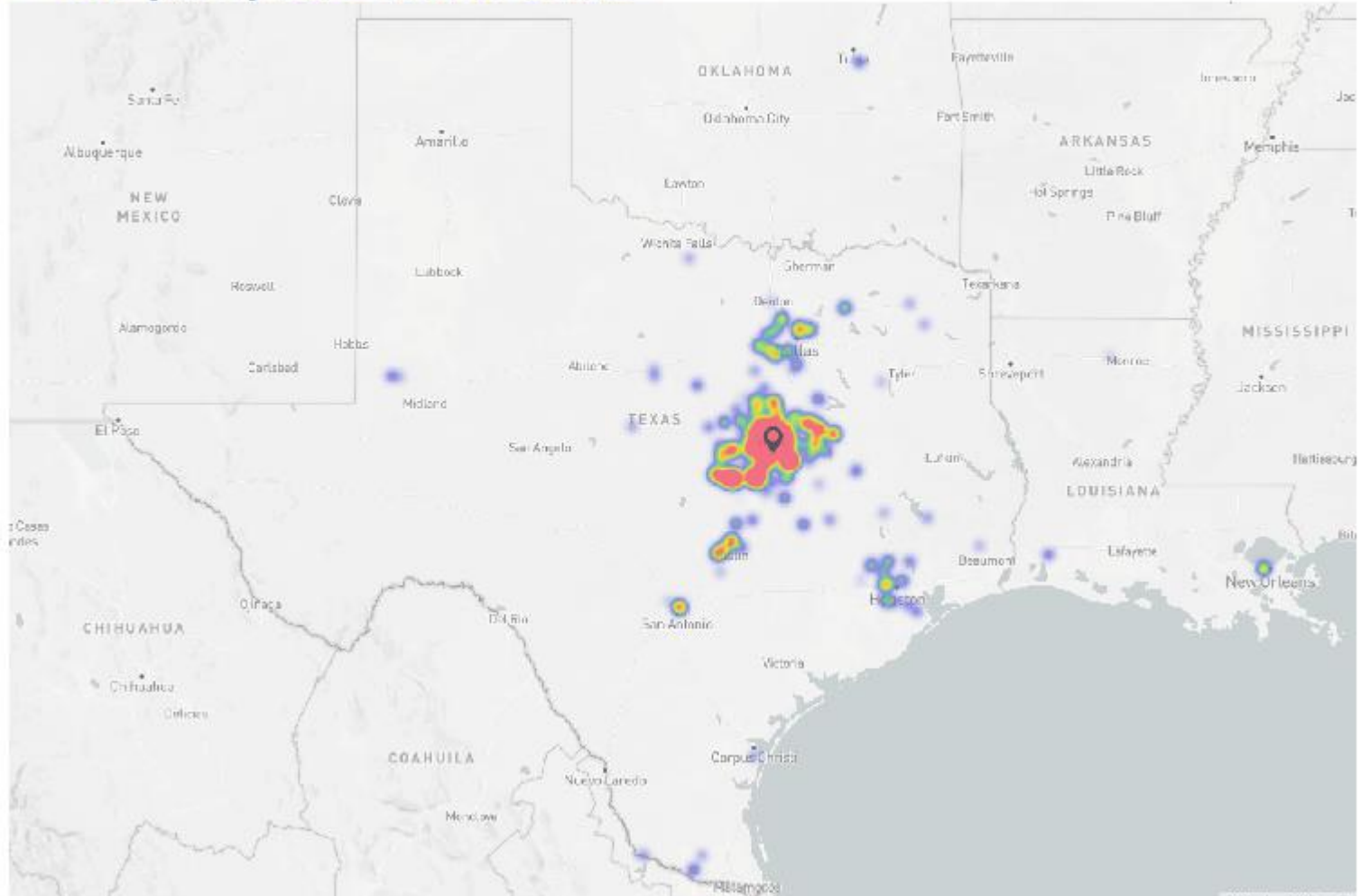




# 2023 VISITOR DATA

**Total Visitors: 21.8K**

- **2.1K (10%) Tourists (Live Over 50mi Away)**
- **408 (1.8%) Live Out of State**







# DOWNTOWN LIGHTS

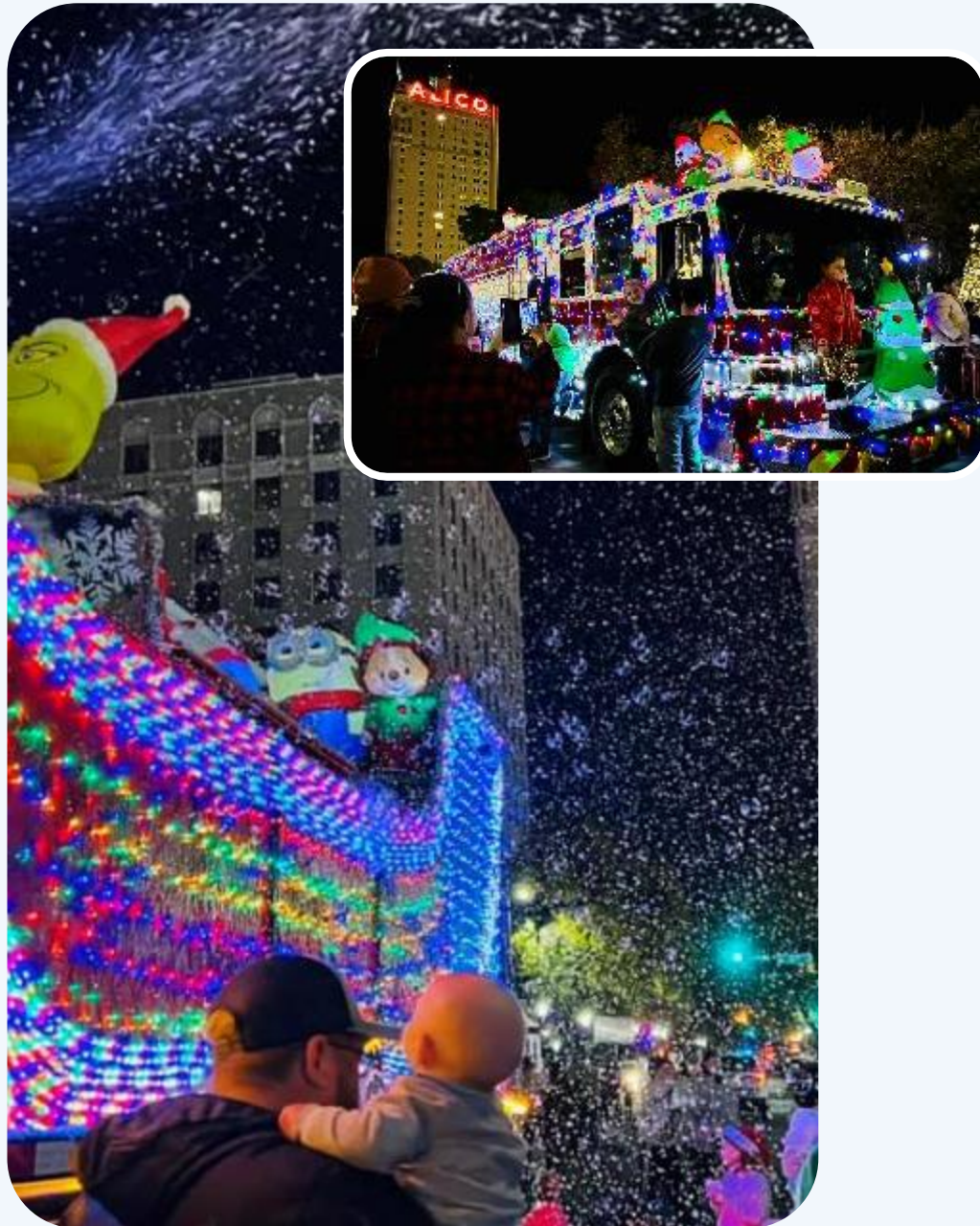
- City Center Waco and Waco Public Improvement District Number One coordinate the installation of the downtown holiday lights, décor, and photo opportunities
- Locations include Heritage Square, Bridge Street Plaza, City Hall, and Convention Center
- Contract established in 2020 between Waco Public Improvement District Number One and Sherrariums Company for the installation, removal, shipping, and storage
- 2023 expenditures were \$73.7K
- Installation week of November 18 and removal week of January 8



# WILD LIGHTS AT CAMERON PARK ZOO

- Established in 2021 as revenue-generating event to showcase the zoo during the holidays
- More than 3 million lights, 65 displays and two tunnels along the zoo's inner loop
- Open to the public on select nights from November 29 – December 31
- 15,500 attendees in 2023
- Includes visits with Santa, activities for kids, and food and beverage options
- Introducing a combo ticket available online for daytime and Wild Lights admission
- Host to city employee appreciation event, which attracted more than 1,200 employees and their family members in 2023





# CHEER ON WHEELS

- Holiday Cheer Fire Engine will return
- Solid Waste will introduce the Polar Express
- Waco Police Department will debut a mobile holiday truck
- Vehicles will visit neighborhood parks, libraries, and schools throughout December
- Creation of an interactive map featuring schedule, route, GPS link, and event information
- Special appearances at Waco Wonderland and other events





# CITY EVENTS

## COMMUNITY CENTERS

- Holiday story times
- Community performances
- Holiday camps for kids

## LIBRARIES

- Ornament decorating, Storytime with Santa, Gingerbread House decorating

## YOUTH COUNCIL

- Holiday toy drive

## PET CIRCLE REGIONAL ANIMAL CENTER

- Holiday adoptions





# AROUND WACO

- **Nov. 29 – Dec. 31:** Christmas at the Silos
- **Dec. 3:** H-E-B Feast of Sharing
- **Dec. 4:** Holiday Market at Bridge Street Plaza
- **Dec. 5:** Christmas on 5th Street
- **Dec. 13-15 & 20-22:** Mayborn Museum's Christmas Lights in the Village
- **Dec. 14 & 15:** Waco Symphony's "The Nutcracker"
- **Dec. 1 – 24:** Holiday shows at the Hippodrome
- Complete calendar at [wacowonderland.com](http://wacowonderland.com)



# DECEMBER TO REMEMBER

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## Summary

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- Downtown lights will be installed week of November 18
- Cameron Park Zoo Wild Lights will take place November 29 – December 31
- Waco Wonderland will take place December 6-8 with the Tree Lighting and Fireworks show set for Friday, December 6
- Decorated City vehicles will spread cheer around town the month of December

# THANK YOU

Questions: [jonathanc@wacotx.gov](mailto:jonathanc@wacotx.gov)

