

# **Texas Commission on the Arts-Cultural District Designation**

City Council Work Session  
May 1, 2018

# Overview

- **Purpose:** To inform the City Council about the process for an Arts and Cultural District Designation Program.
- What is the Cultural District Designation Program?
- Who can apply? What is the application process?
- What are the Goals/Benefits?
- What are the Challenges?
- What are the City's obligations?
- How does this type of District fit in with our community-based input processes such as the Comprehensive Master Plan and Arts Master Plan?
- Examples of other Cities.
- Next Steps.

# What is the Cultural District Designation?

- Authorized by HB 2208 in 2005, allowing the Texas Commission on the Arts to designate cultural districts in Texas.
- The intent is to designate special zones in cities and Texas communities that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization.



# Who can apply? Application Process?

- Established Arts Organizations, Local Art Agencies, Government Local Arts Agencies, Established Minority Arts Organizations, Government Agency or Department, and College Arts Institutions.
- Interested applicants submit a Letter of Intent to Apply by January 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.
- Applications due on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Applications are reviewed by a panel and evaluated based upon the following criteria:
  - Artistic Quality
  - Capability
  - Impact

# Goals/ Benefits of Cultural Districts

- Attracting artists and cultural enterprises to the city.
- Encouraging business and job development.
- Addressing specific needs of a community.
- Establishing tourism destinations.
- Preserving and reusing historic buildings.
- Enhancing property values.
- Fostering local cultural development.
- Tourism Marketing Tool.
- Designated Cultural Districts can apply for limited funds through the Texas Commission on the Arts - Arts Respond Projects.

# Challenges to Organizing a Cultural District

- Gentrification of neighborhoods
- Staffing
- Financing
- Relevance to local residents
- Long-term planning



# What are the City's Obligations to the Proposed Cultural District?

- The City is not obligated to provide funds.
- The City is not obligated to provide wayfinding signage.
- The Cultural District Designation does not include any regulatory control over existing codes, land-use, or historical district regulations.



## **How does this type of District fit in with Comp Plan?**

- Goal 3 of the Parks, Public Spaces and Facilities - A vibrant central arts district and robust arts and cultural educational opportunities for everyone
- Objectives: Create funding mechanism(s) for the area designated as the Central Arts District
  - Establish an Arts District Development Task Force to identify the location for, and implement the creation of, the Central Arts District
  - Develop Art in Public Places Program, identify areas of the city that could be used for murals/ public art displays.



## **How does this type of District fit in with Arts Master Plan?**

- Spaces - Develop a central arts district.
- City Involvement - Promote a variety of cultural activities and attractions in the downtown area. Include the development of a central arts district.
- Promotion and Advocacy - Develop a strategy for using the arts to define San Marcos as an arts destination to promote tourism.

# **Examples of Cities Nearby who have received Cultural District Designation**

- Total of 36 Designated Districts in Texas.
- Huntsville
- Bastrop
- Smithville
- Wimberley
- Denison
- Bryan
- Georgetown

## Next Steps

- Consider approval of a Resolution supporting the Dunbar Cultural District at the May 15 City Council Meeting.
- If approved, applicant will submit an application to the Texas Commission on the Arts by June 15.
- Texas Commission on the Arts will convene an Evaluation Panel in August to review all applications.
- Feedback from the Evaluation Panel will be used by the members of the Texas Commission on the Arts to make their decision on whether or not to award the Cultural District Designation.

# Questions & Answers