



Texas
Commission
on the Arts

CULTURAL DISTRICT DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Waco Downtown Cultural District

Name of cultural district

Creative Waco

Submitted By

June 2016

Date

CULTURAL DISTRICT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

1. Cover Sheet

2. Maps

- City map
- Cultural district map

3. Narrative

A. Level of Community Support

- Benefits of cultural district
- Evidence of public input into the planning process for the cultural district
- Copy of signed resolutions from city and/or county
- Copy of signed resolution of support by nonprofit organization(s)

B. Management Structure

- Leadership/management team (*see application instructions*)
- Organizational chart

C. Presence of cultural Assets

- Description of cultural district
- List of existing cultural, arts and tourism enterprises and those planned with a timeline for completion

D. Incentives and Collaborations

- Describe incentives (*local, state, federal or private*)
- Describe local, regional, state, federal and private collaboration efforts in support of the cultural district

E. Plan for Developing and Sustaining the cultural district

- Overall goals and objectives
- Program and activity plan

1. COVER PAGE

Waco Downtown Cultural District

Name of cultural district

Waco, Texas

Name of city

Creative Waco

Name of nonprofit applicant

State Senate District 22, House Districts 12 and 56

Texas Legislative District(s)

District 17

Congressional Legislative District(s)

PRIMARY CONTACT & PROJECT DIRECTOR

Name: Fiona Bond

Title: Executive Director, Creative Waco

Mailing Address: 101 South 3rd St, Waco, Tx

City: Waco State: TX Zip Code: 76712 County: McLennan

Daytime Telephone Number: (254) 214 7640

Email Address: Fiona@creativewaco.org Website URL: www.creativewaco.org

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS CITY

(Mayor's signature certifying accuracy of application)

(Date)

Mayor Kyle Deaver

(Name and title)

Mailing Address: City Hall, 300 Austin Avenue

City: Waco State: TX Zip Code: 76702 County: McLennan

Daytime Telephone Number: (254) 7505750

Email Address: wacomayor@wacotx.gov

Website URL: http://www.waco-texas.com

(City Manager's signature certifying accuracy of application)

(Date)

City Manager Dale Fisseler

(Name and title)

Mailing Address: City Hall, 300 Austin Avenue

City: Waco State: TX Zip Code: 76702 County: McLennan

Daytime Telephone Number: (254) 7505640

Email Address: DaleF@wacotx.gov

Website URL: http://www.waco-texas.com

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL COUNTY

(County Judge's signature certifying accuracy of application)

(Date)

Judge Scott Felton

(Name and title)

Mailing Address: 501 Washington Avenue, Room 214

City: Waco State: TX Zip Code: 76701 County: McLennan

Daytime Telephone Number: (254) 7575049

Email Address: smfelton@co.mclennan.tx.us Website URL: http://www.co.mclennan.tx.us

CHAIR OF COLLABORATING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

(Signature certifying accuracy of application)

(Date)

Charles D. Olson

(Print name and title)

Mailing Address: Haley & Olson, P.C., 510 N. Valley Mills Drive, Ste 600,

City: Waco State: TX Zip Code: 76710-6078 County: McLennan

Daytime Telephone Number: (254) 776 3336 Fax Number: (254) 776 6823

Email Address: colson@haleyolson.com Website URL: http://haleyolson.com

2. MAPS

Note: Maps can be either black and white or color copies and no larger than 8 1/2 x 14 inches. Include a legend and indicate North on each map. All parts of map must be legible, clearly marked and reflect the same information in the narrative (especially for the description of the cultural district boundary).

City/County Vicinity Map: Indicate salient features (*i.e. district boundary; transportation corridors and facilities; cultural, arts, entertainment and tourist facilities; as well as proposed capitol improvement projects that affect the cultural district*).

Cultural district Map: Identify standing structures; existing or proposed historic district(s); properties within the cultural district and their use (*a list of properties is encouraged*); on the property list indicate occupied or vacant; indicate general condition as good, fair or poor; survey current building use; zoning designations; identify housing resources; accessibility features; identify the primary pedestrian corridors and additional information pertinent to cultural district.

3. NARRATIVE

A. Level of Community Support

In one page or less describe how a cultural district designation will benefit the community and the surrounding area; provide evidence and certification that the concept for the cultural district has been discussed in a public hearing (with adequate notice and publicity) and any vote or action taken as a result of public meeting(s). On separate pages, include a copy of the public notice and/or minutes from the hearing. Include the applicable resolution from the governing body and collaborating organization(s).

Public consultation over more than a decade

This application has its roots in a community consultation process begun (2004) under Mayor Mae Jackson and developed (2009) through the “Imagine Waco” plan, which seeded Waco’s aspiration to be a cultural hub. These visioning projects revealed that the people of Waco recognized the importance of cultural and artistic vibrancy to the prosperity of the City.

Public hearings for the creation of a Waco Downtown Cultural District began in Spring of 2014, when Jim Bob McMillan of Texas Commission on the Arts spoke to a gathering of 35 people.

This led to the formation of Creative Waco in early 2015, a non-profit corporation tasked with overseeing the Cultural District program and becoming the City’s local arts agency. Waco’s Mayor and City Manager, elected officials, leaders from our Chambers of Commerce, City Center Waco (Waco’s Downtown Development agency), Mainstreet District, Historic Waco Foundation, Museums Association, Public Improvement District, neighbourhood associations, Convention and Visitors Bureau, education institutions, and local businesses joined Creative Waco and Waco Arts Alliance to research and visit cultural districts in Texas and beyond. Representatives from these stakeholder organizations evolved into the Task Force responsible for meeting regularly to develop strategy and plans for Waco Downtown Cultural District.

Community support for the development of Waco Downtown Cultural District has also been voiced through unanimous City of Waco, McLennan County and Creative Waco resolutions; enthusiastic letters of support from every sector in our community; engagement through Creative Waco’s year-long online survey; consistently supportive local, regional, and even national media coverage, and the list of hundreds of individuals who have invested in this initiative by purchasing and carrying Creative Waco tote bags painted by local artists. (see attachments).

Multiple benefits across Waco and surrounding area

The Waco Downtown Cultural District planning process has already helped our community to focus strategy and grow resources for the arts and cultural sector. State level designation from Texas Commission on the Arts will allow us to achieve greater impact, so that benefits are amplified across our community and surrounding area. This designation will:

- Endorse the fact that Waco is already a great cultural destination and extend the reach of that message;
- Grow cultural tourism, which makes our cultural, hospitality, and retail businesses more successful;
- Elevate the role of our cultural organizations as major contributors to economic development;
- Stimulate joint marketing and cross-sector partnership initiatives to make better use of cultural resources, and to strengthen Waco’s cultural branding;
- Amplify the benefits to the community of Waco’s outstanding higher education cultural and creative programs at Baylor, MCC and TSTC.
- Introduce exciting new programming and activities to the cultural district and beyond;
- Enable our cultural organizations to grow new audiences, access new funding and share best practices (improving their financial sustainability);
- Deliver measurable impact in areas of community-wide strategic priority, such as tourism growth, talent retention, economic development and educational enrichment;
- Engage arts organizations and artists in the process of community development and revitalization.

Sample A: Flyer from February 24th, 2014, which was printed, e-mailed and distributed via social media and local calendars to publicize the public meeting in March 2014. 35 people attended this meeting.

A Cultural Arts District For Waco?



Come and join Waco Arts Alliance to hear

Jim Bob McMillan

of **Texas Commission on the Arts** talk about the Texas Cultural District program and whether this could be right for Waco.

Date: March 19th
Time: 1:30pm
Place: ~~ThIncSpace's~~ NEW location,
514 Franklin Ave

ALL WELCOME!

Questions?
fionajmbond@gmail.com

Sample B: Flyer from early January 2015, which was printed, e-mailed and distributed via social media and local calendars to publicize the public meeting with Theresa Cameron on January 27th, 2015. Approximately 90 people attended this meeting at the newly refurbished Waco Hippodrome.

A Cultural Arts District For Waco?



Come and join Waco Arts Alliance to hear



Theresa Cameron
of Americans for the Arts

Theresa is one of the USA's leading experts on Cultural Districts, Local Arts Agencies, and the role of the arts in economic development.

Date: January 27th
Time: 1:30pm
Place: Waco Hippodrome,
724 Austin Ave

ALL WELCOME!

Questions?
fionajmbond@gmail.com

RESOLUTIONS:

Texas Cultural District Designation Application

Three resolutions relating to the Waco Downtown Cultural District follow. Each was passed unanimously:

Resolution of the Commissioners Court of McLennan County

Resolution of the City of Waco

Resolution of the Board of Directors, Creative Waco

STATE OF TEXAS *
COUNTY OF MCLENNAN *

RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT
OF MCLENNAN COUNTY, TEXAS IN SUPPORT OF WACO DOWNTOWN CULTURAL
DISTRICT**

WHEREAS, the McLennan County Commissioners Court endorses the authorization and certification of a cultural district for a least ten [10] years to be named the **Waco Downtown Cultural District**; and

WHEREAS, a cultural district has been designated to assist the county and community to develop a public-private partnership to support the **Waco Downtown Cultural District** and;

WHEREAS, CREATIVE WACO has signed a resolution of support and the Texas Commission on the Arts will be petitioned to designate the **Waco Downtown Cultural District** and;

WHEREAS, the McLennan County Commissioners Court endorses the submission of this application and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of the **Waco Downtown Cultural District**; and.

WHEREAS, the McLennan County Commissioners Court endorses the goal of economic development of the **Waco Downtown Cultural District** within the context of preservation and rehabilitation of our historic buildings; and

WHEREAS, the McLennan County Commissioners Court endorses the goal of tourism development of the **Waco Downtown Cultural District** within the context of contributing to the overall visitor development goals of the city; and

WHEREAS, the McLennan County Commissioners Court will appoint a county official to represent the county on the governing board of the **Waco Downtown Cultural District**; and

WHEREAS, the McLennan County Commissioners Court by this action, directs county staff to actively support and cooperate with the governing board to develop and maintain the **Waco Downtown Cultural District**; and

WHEREAS, the McLennan County Commissioners Court by this action, requests all residents of McLennan County and especially those citizens who own property or businesses within **Waco Downtown Cultural District** to support, promote and help maintain activities and events in **Waco Downtown Cultural District**; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the McLennan County Commissioners Court urge the citizens to support of the **Waco Downtown Cultural District**; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be made a permanent part of the minutes of Commissioners Court;

WITNESSED OUR HAND AND SEAL this 5th day of April, 2016

Scott M. Felton
SCOTT M. FELTON, County Judge

Kelly Snell
KELLY SNELL, Comm. Pct. 1

Will Jones
WILL JONES, Comm. Pct. 3

Lester Gibson
LESTER GIBSON, Comm. Pct. 2

Ben Perry
BEN PERRY, Comm. Pct. 4

Attest:
J.A. "Andy" Harwell, County Clerk
McLennan County, Texas

Myrcatya Harwell
By: Deputy County Clerk



RESOLUTION NO. 2016-281

WHEREAS, a cultural district will assist the City of Waco in growing tourism, attracting and retaining talent and jobs, increasing community resilience and revitalization, improving educational outcomes, reducing unemployment, creating a greater sense of community pride and social cohesion, and even reducing crime; and

WHEREAS, Creative Waco has signed a resolution of support for a cultural district; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Commission on the Arts will be petitioned to designate a cultural district,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WACO, TEXAS:


That the City Council of the City of Waco, Texas:

1. Endorses the designation of a cultural district in downtown Waco as reflected in Exhibit A;
2. Endorses submission of an application for a cultural district and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of said cultural district;
3. Endorses the goal of economic development of said cultural district within the context of preservation and rehabilitation of our historic buildings;
4. Endorses the goal of tourism development of said cultural district within the context of contributing to the overall visitor development goals of the city;
5. Will appoint a city official to represent the city on the governing board of said cultural district;
6. By this action, directs city staff to actively support and cooperate with the governing board of the cultural district to develop and maintain said cultural district; and
7. By this action, requests all residents of the city and the county, and especially those citizens who own property or businesses within said cultural district, to support, promote and help maintain activities and events in said district.

That it is hereby officially found and determined that the meeting at which this resolution is passed is open to the public, and that public notice of the time, place and purpose of said meeting was given as required by law.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 19th day of April, 2016.






Malcolm Duncan, Jr., Mayor
City of Waco, Texas

ATTEST:



Esmeralda Hudson, City Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM & LEGALITY:



Jennifer Richie, City Attorney



**RESOLUTION OF THE
CREATIVE WACO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

A resolution authorizing support and participation in the governance of a cultural district for at least ten (10) years to be named: **Waco Downtown Cultural District**

Whereas a cultural district has been designated to assist the county, city and community to develop a public-private partnership to support said district and,

Whereas McLennan County and City of Waco have signed resolutions of support for said cultural district and,

Whereas the Texas Commission on the Arts will be petitioned to designate said cultural district and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CREATIVE WACO that we:

- Article 1. Endorse the submission of this application and agree to participate in the development and financial support of said cultural district.
- Article 2. Endorse the goal of economic development of said cultural district within the context of preservation and rehabilitation of our historic buildings.
- Article 3. Endorse the goal of tourism development of said cultural district within the context of contributing to the overall visitor development goals of the city and county.
- Article 4. Will appoint at least one member of the board of directors to serve on the Cultural District Committee of said cultural district.
- Article 5. By this action, direct staff to actively support and cooperate with the Cultural District Committee.
- Article 6. By this action, request all members of the organization to actively support, promote, and help maintain activities and events in said district.
- Article 7. Direct the Chair to sign and submit such resolution on creation of said cultural district.

ADOPTED ON THIS 20th day of May, 2016

Signature of Chair

5/20/16

Date signed

Charles D. Olson

Print Chair's name

ATTEST

B. Management Structure of Cultural District Committee

In one page or less explain the proposed structure of your local cultural district leadership/management team, marketing plan, and voluntary registration procedure.

Note: Identify key staff and personnel to lead and manage the cultural district. Explain their expertise and ability to manage the cultural district. Note their anticipated roles and responsibilities and chain of command. Identify which entity (city, county or local community organization) has ultimate responsibility for the cultural district.

Creative Waco is the lead organization with ultimate responsibility for maintaining and protecting the Waco Downtown Cultural District. The Executive Director will form the main point of contact with Texas Commission on the Arts. The Creative Waco Board is responsible for financial oversight, program approval, implementation, evaluation, and the updating of Cultural District Strategy.

The Board of Creative Waco is also responsible for appointing a Cultural District Committee and ensuring that it is representative of key stakeholder groups. City and County government entities are standing members (as per their resolutions). Current representation also includes Waco's Chambers of Commerce (i.e. Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, Centex Hispanic Chamber and African American Chamber), City Center Waco (Waco's Downtown Development agency), Main Street Program, Historic Landmark Preservation Commission, Museum Association of Waco, Public Improvement District, neighborhood associations, Convention and Visitors Bureau, education sector, City and independent urban design and planning expertise, Waco Business League, Arts Alliance and Central Texas Artists Collective.

The Cultural District Committee is responsible for making recommendations regarding activities, programs, marketing, branding, structural improvements and other initiatives for the Cultural District.

Member organizations will also be partners in the implementation of the Cultural District strategy and program. City Center Waco (Waco's Downtown Development Corporation) oversees Waco's Main Street, City Center, and Public Improvement District. It would therefore implement physical improvements in the Cultural District. A newly-formed marketing collaborative comprising the CVB, Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, City of Waco, Sports Commission, Creative Waco, City Center Waco, Magnolia Market, Baylor, and other key representatives will undertake branding and marketing of Waco as a cultural destination, together with "Downtown Waco, Texas" (the interactive Cultural District lifestyle and calendar site).

Texas Cultural District Designation Application

Governance

Creative Waco

Implementation

Executive Director

Community Representation

Cultural District Committee
with representation from community, stakeholders, city, county, chamber, CVB, business, education, hospitality and arts.

Implementation

Creative Waco
Programming & activities

Greater Waco Marketing Collaborative
Marketing & branding

City of Waco and City Center Waco
Physical/capital improvements, signage & streetscaping

C. Cultural Assets

In one page or less provide a detailed description of the cultural district boundary (including street names and directions, side streets, blocks, etc. that adequately describe exactly which properties are included in the district). List cultural, arts, tourism, and heritage enterprises in the area (include those in the cultural district, the immediate area or those planned for the cultural district).

Waco, Texas, is located midway between Austin and Dallas/Fort Worth on the Interstate 35. It is the ideal location to be a cultural hub for Texas, with over 80% of the state's population living within a 4-hour drive.

The Waco Downtown Cultural District lies to the northwest of I35, with boundaries that capture the greatest concentration of Waco's cultural assets. The district also incorporates the downtown historic preservation area plus additional key historic buildings, the Public Improvement District, Tax Increment Financing Zone and Main Street District. The boundaries of Waco Downtown Cultural District are:

Northeast: Garrison Street/Chestnut Avenue
Southwest: 11th Street
Southeast: Clay Avenue/ Taylor St
Northwest: Jefferson Avenue / Elm Avenue

At the heart of the Cultural District is the historic crossing of the Brazos River via Waco's suspension bridge, flanked by Indian Spring Park and Brazos Park East. These connect Waco's cultural assets via popular hike/bike trails and provide ideal venues for festivals, concerts, and events (e.g. "Brazos Nights" concerts, the award-winning Cultural Arts Festival), that bring the entire community together. Northeast of the River, Juneteenth Carnival and Art on Elm Avenue and southwest of the river, Celebrate Waco, Waco Wonderland, "Rootstock" Texas wine festival and Texas Foodtruck Festival (which alone attracts 20,000 people) feature local performers and visual artists, as well as those from further afield. Increasingly, football game days at Baylor University's new riverside stadium also provide a festival-like atmosphere downtown, where free parking and shuttle services bring thousands of visitors and opportunities to showcase Waco's creative side.

Within the Cultural District are several museums with collections of national significance (Dr Pepper Museum, the Masonic Grand Lodge and four Historic Homes. There are two libraries (each with strong cultural programs), and many venues for exhibitions, performances, and live events (Waco Hippodrome, Waco Convention Center, Phoenix Ballroom, The Palladium, Downtown 301, Backyard Grill, the stage at Magnolia Silos, Dichotomy Coffee & Spirits, Barnett's Pub, the Paul Quinn Campus community center, Doris Miller Center, a thriving twice-weekly riverside Farmer's Market, artisanal foodtrucks, and a growing number of galleries and boutiques featuring work by local artists, artisans, and craftsmen/women. There are also many locally owned restaurants offering live music, exhibiting local art and featuring award-winning products from local craft breweries, wineries, and the pride of 11th Street; Balcones Distillery.

There are 40 (and counting) public art sites in Waco Downtown Cultural District, plus a major new sculpture and memorial of national significance commemorating WWII hero, Doris Miller, about to begin construction. Waco is also home to many performing arts groups who perform in downtown venues (including those listed, plus churches, the Masonic Grand Lodge, and other public spaces). These include Waco Symphony Orchestra (recent soloists have included Chris Botti, Joshua Bell and YoYo Ma), Waco Civic Theatre, Central Texas String Academy, Youth Choir of Central Texas, Central Texas Choral Society, Waco Jazz Orchestra, Waco Community Band, Waco Youth Symphony, Jubilee Theatre, Joy's School of Dance, Jenni Holley Dance,

Out on a Limb Dance Company, ITWOW Poetry Collective, Nuestra Vox, Waco Poets Society, Baylor Opera, Brazos Theatre Group, an independent film society, and several bands, improv, comedy, and smaller groups and performances typical of a lively, diverse city.

Since opening in fall 2015, Magnolia Market in the Cultural District's historic silos has rapidly become a major tourist attraction, driven by the popularity of HGTV's "Fixer-Upper" show. Over 20,000 people visit each week to see (and buy) art, crafts, architectural pieces, and repurposed antiques designed by local celebrities, Chip and Joanna Gaines, and other Waco-based designers featured on the show. Waco's ecosystem of downtown designers, makers, architectural artists and merchants is flourishing as a consequence.

Just beyond the Waco Downtown Cultural District, to the southeast of I35, lies the campus of Baylor University with its Martin Museum of Art, Mayborn Museum, Texas Ranger Museum, Texas Sports Hall of Fame and Armstrong Browning Library as well as the university's five performing arts venues featuring a vast range of concerts, theatre, masterclasses, and recitals of every style imaginable. Further up river, on the other side of the cultural district, is mountain-bike heaven in

Texas Cultural District Designation Application

the form of Cameron Park, and its award-winning Zoo. Beyond that, McLennan Community College also offers excellent performing and visual arts programs, hosts Art Center Waco and the beautiful Bosque River Stage. Still further up river is the newly designated Waco Mammoth National Monument Site.

List of existing cultural, arts and tourism enterprises and those planned with a timeline for completion

Bars and restaurants with live performance programs (e.g. music, comedy, poetry)

- 5th St. Icehouse
- Austin's
- Balcones Distillery
- Barnett's Pub
- Brazos Bar & Bistro (at Hotel indigo)
- Cricket's Bar & Grill
- Diamondbacks
- Dichotomy Coffee & Spirits
- Hilton Hotel
- Klassy Glass Wine Bar
- Lula Jane's
- Chow Town Food Truck Park
- Magnolia at the Silos Market Stage
- Muddle
- Sascee's Southern Eatery
- Tea 2 Go
- The Backyard Bar Stage & Grill
- Truelove Bar
- Waco Downtown Farmer's Market
- Waco Hippodrome

Bookable venues for performances

- Austin's
- Backyard Bar Stage & Grill
- Barnett's Pub
- Brazos Events Center
- Chow Town Food Truck Park
- Dichotomy Coffee & Spirits
- Downtown 301
- Grand Lodge of Texas
- Heritage Square
- Hilton Hotel
- Indian Spring Park
- Palladium
- Paul Quinn Campus
- Phoenix Ballroom
- Magnolia Market
- Muddle
- Truelove Bar
- Waco Convention Center
- Waco Downtown Farmer's Market
- Waco Hippodrome
- Waco Suspension Bridge

Live-work space for artists/creative professionals

- Anthem Studios at The Praetorian Building (20 apartments, 12 studio spaces, 2 retail spaces; Franklin & 6th)
- Historic Lofts at Waco High (8th & Columbus; 104 units)
- Stratton Building (Austin & 8th; planned 2017/18)
- Skinny Homes (Elm & Dallas) (planned 2017 onwards)

Museums, libraries & historic attractions

- Alico Building
- Dr Pepper Museum
- Doris Miller Memorial Site (due for completion 2017)
- East Waco Library
- First Baptist Church of Waco
- First Presbyterian Church of Waco
- Fort House Museum
- McCulloch House Museum
- St Francis on the Brazos Catholic Church
- St Paul's Episcopal Church
- Waco Central Library
- Waco Suspension Bridge
- Washington Avenue Bridge
- Paul Quinn College Campus & Community Center

Exhibition and retail of locally designed and made art, craft, fashion, artisanal , repurposed, household or furniture items

- Anthem studios (fine art, craft, jewelry, artisan)
- Balcones Distillery (award-winning craft whisky)
- Bloomingals (floral design & art)
- Brian Broadway Gallery (fine art; opening Washington & 8th, Summer 2016)
- Cameron Trading Co. (fine art, antiques & repurposed items)
- Christi's (on-site designed & made furnishings, household, metalwork & repurposing)
- Falcon & Owl (fine art, design, upcycling warehouse. Store planned for late 2016)
- Gather (fine art, pottery, craft, artisan; opening Washington & 5th, Summer 2016)
- Hey Sugar Candy Store (handcrafted & designer candy)
- Magnolia Market (art, home design, furnishings, metalwork, repurposing)
- Marilyn's Gift Gallery (crafts, artisanal)
- Papillon (fine art gallery, furniture, household & craft)
- Roots Boutique (fashion, jewelry, accessories)
- Spice Village (fashion, crafts, accessories, artisan, household)
- The Findery (fashion, art, crafts, artisan, household)
- W Promotions (design and print)
- Waco Downtown Farmer's Market
- Wildland Supply Company (fashion, household, artisan; larger store opening Washington & 7th, Summer 2016)

Waco Downtown Festivals, parades, and Street Events

- First Friday Downtown (Downtown; year-round)
- Deep in the Heart Film Festival (Austin Avenue; planned February 2017)
- Margarita & Chilli Festival (Heritage Square; February)
- Texas Foodtruck Festival (Heritage Square; April)
- Art on Elm Avenue Festival (Elm Avenue; April)
- Brazos River Festival (Riverside; planned April 2017)

- "Rootstock" Texas Wine Festival (Indian Spring Park; April)
- Brazos Nights (Indian Spring Park; April, May, June)

Texas Cultural District Designation Application

- Cinco de Mayo Fiesta (Indian Spring Park; May)
- Black Glasses Film Festival (Austin Avenue; May)
- Juneteenth Carnival (Brazos Park East & Brazos Event Center; June)
- 4th on the Brazos (Brazos Riverbanks; July)
- Waco Cultural Arts Fest (Convention Center & Indian Spring Park; September)
- (including Artfest, Dancefest, Filmfest, Musicfest, Sciencefest, Wordfest (Convention Center; September)
- Baylor Homecoming Parade (Downtown streets; October)
- Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market (400 S University Parks; every Saturday, year-round)
- Waco Wonderland (Austin Ave & Heritage Square; December)

Waco-based Arts Organizations who perform/work/exhibit in Waco Downtown Cultural District

- Art Center Waco
- Art Forum of Waco
- Ballet Folklorico
- Baylor Opera Theatre
- Baylor Film Society
- Black Poet’s Society
- Brazos Theatre Group
- Central Texas Artist Collective
- Central Texas Choral Society
- Central Texas String Academy
- Cultural Arts of Waco
- Dot Buds Dance
- In the Words of Womyn – ITWOW International
- Jubilee Theatre
- Mariachi Azteca
- Miriam’s Army
- Music Association of Central Texas
- Out on a Limb Dance Company
- Paint the Town Waco
- Stanton Studios
- Texas Fine Artists
- Waco Civic Theatre
- Waco Poets Society
- Waco Youth Theatre
- Waco Symphony Orchestra and Waco Youth Symphony
- Youth Chorus of Central Texas

D. Incentives and Collaborations

In one page or less, describe incentives and/or collaborations that the county, city, or local nonprofit or for-profit organization will offer to cultural, arts, tourism, and heritage enterprises as well as the workforce and residents (*if any*) of the cultural district.

Note: Please be as specific as possible and describe incentives offered such as special signage, publicity, local grants, property tax abatement, Municipal Improvement District, Tax Incremental Districts (TIF), rent buy-downs, low interest loans, zoning to encourage live/work space for artists, other state or federal programs such as federal historic tax credits, Main Street Revitalization Loan Program, etc.

County, City and other enterprise incentives

The City of Waco and McLennan County provide multiple incentives to attract quality investment and development to our community with input from the Chambers of Commerce and City Center Waco. The Waco Downtown Cultural District is in a State of Texas Enterprise Zone, Public Improvement District and Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) area. Most of the Cultural District is also a Downtown Overlay District and a Texas Main Street District. The Cultural District also includes a National Register Historic District and additional buildings of historic significance. All these designations offer financial and other practical incentives to cultural, arts, heritage and tourism enterprises.

For example, enterprises offering capital improvements and job creation are eligible for tax abatement, business and economic development grants from the city, county and Waco-McLennan County Economic Development Corporation. Those providing educational facilities can apply for financing through a facility bond program.

Enterprises seeking to renovate, improve facades, or make the downtown area more attractive, pedestrian friendly and secure can benefit from incentives via the Tax Incremental Fund, Public Improvement District, Façade Improvement Program and Downtown Overlay District (administered through City Center Waco, with input from merchants and property owners).

Projects that preserve historic architecture are eligible for a municipal tax abatement and permit fee waivers on locally designated or recognized historic property that undergoes renovation/rehabilitation.

These incentives have catalyzed recent cultural enterprises, such as renovation of the historic Hippodrome Theatre, Magnolia Market at the Silos, and Anthem Studios (which houses art retail, exhibition, and live-work artist and designer studio spaces).

Full details and maps regarding incentive programs for Waco are available at <http://www.waco-texas.com/economic-development/incentives.asp>

Waco Arts Alliance

Waco Arts Alliance is a collaborative and networking group that started meeting in 2010. It is open to anyone engaged in cultural programming in Waco, including every art form and major venue that is active in our community. There is also a group that connects individual artists and performers and another “creative potluck” hosted by a local design firm for creative professionals in design, media, architecture and other industries. Monthly meetings for each of these groups is connecting the arts community and providing a platform for sharing ideas and expertise and developing collaborative projects. During 2015-16, Arts Alliance initiatives have included “Viva Waco” community-wide promotion of Latin and Hispanic art and events, collaboration with the CVB to enrich Waco’s marketing as a cultural destination, hosting of a Texans for the Arts Statewide arts advocacy day, and a parent-friendly marketing campaign with online calendar featuring creative Summer Camps across our community (for every age, ability, and income level).

Creative Entrepreneurship Collaboration

The Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce is committed to working with Creative Waco, local business partners and creative professionals to develop opportunities, training, networking and angel funding for creative entrepreneurship ventures, many of which are cultural, arts, tourism, design, or heritage based. A downtown shared workspace, “ThincSpace” incubates start-up enterprises in a stimulating and supportive environment (see Attachments section II).

Marketing Collaborative

The recently formed “Greater Waco Marketing Collaborative” comprises marketing and communications professionals with responsibility for marketing and branding Waco as a destination. It includes Waco Convention and Visitors Bureau, City of Waco, Chamber of Commerce, Sports commission, Creative Waco, Magnolia, Baylor, and City Center Waco. It aims to focus expertise and resources to developing an ambitious, strategic, collaborative approach to destination marketing and branding through monthly working meetings and quarterly strategy sessions. Its first project is a seasonal visitor map featuring Waco’s cultural assets and Waco Downtown Cultural District.

Wayfinding, streetscaping and connectivity

Waco Downtown Cultural District: Main Application

Texas Cultural District Designation Application

A community-wide collaboration is currently under way, led by City Center Waco and the PID, to develop systematic, artistic wayfinding in Downtown Waco. In the short term, large visitor numbers have made this a pressing issue, so a temporary, experimental “tactical urbanism” approach is being adopted to attach finger-signs with strategic walking times to existing street fixtures. In the longer term, artistic wayfinding and signage featuring the cultural district is planned. This same collaboration is also responsible for the free “DASH” bus which connects attractions in the Waco Downtown Cultural District area, and a broader program of streetscape improvements and urban design features. Regular input is sought from across the community, including residents, merchants, arts, entertainment, restaurant, tourism and historic stakeholders.

E. Developing and sustaining the cultural district

In two pages or less, describe how the community will coordinate economic development and initiatives with other programs (*i.e. Main Street, Certified Local Government, Historic Commission, Chamber of Commerce, local development corporation, etc.*); identify potential for affordable housing (*rental or purchase*), studio and performance space; list proposed activities and time frames; explain proposed budget for cultural district – describe funding sources; explain goals and objectives and their expected outcomes. Include proposed transportation/walking routes for the cultural district (*may include signage, parking, shuttle buses, walking maps, etc.*); identify Americans with Disabilities Act (*ADA*) accessibility features of the district (*individual enterprises as well as transportation and common areas*).

The Waco Downtown Cultural District is already at the heart of an economically thriving city thanks to over a decade of effective, collaborative leadership across sectors and a commitment to working collectively to achieve the goals set out in Waco's Community Visioning and "Imagine Waco" consultation and planning processes.

Since 2001 the annual rate of growth in real GDP for the Waco economy averaged 2.6% compared with 2.0% average for U.S. metro areas. From 2011 to 2013 Waco's average growth was 2.7% compare with 2.2% average for U.S. metro areas. (*Waco Metro Area Economic Outlook for 2016*, Tom Kelly, Director, Baylor Center for Business and Economic Research, 2016)

The Waco Downtown Cultural District is an initiative rooted in the same coordinated approach that has delivered success for Waco's other economic development programs and builds on robust community-wide consultation. Waco's cultural plan was developed by pooling the cultural goals already present in over a dozen plans and strategic documents adopted across civic, cultural, business and education sectors (these are listed in the Cultural Plan attachment). This approach means that Waco's Cultural Plan shares common goals and strategies with all the agencies responsible for Waco's economic development, allowing a coordinated approach to implementation.

The formation of Creative Waco means there is a local arts agency dedicated to implementing the community's cultural strategies, providing a sustainable structure for cultural funding at local level and offering a platform for leveraging additional funding from local sources and beyond.

Base funding for co-ordination of the Cultural District program comes from the City of Waco and McLennan County via their support for Creative Waco and their ongoing commitment to investing in local arts non-profits through Creative Waco's regranting (\$100,000) and match funding (\$125,000) programs. A further \$300,000 is being committed to programming and marketing for the Cultural District. Local funding will be used to leverage sponsorship, match grants, attract strategic project investment and increase revenue by growing audiences and developing markets. There is a wide range of organizations committed to developing and sustaining quality artistic and cultural programming (see program attachment) in the Cultural District, and Creative Waco is committed to working co-operatively with them for maximum impact and best use of resources.

Hotel-Motel tax dollars (totaling \$ 2,707,056 in 2015) collected in Waco are re-invested in growing Waco as a destination, including the marketing collaborative described in section C. State Designation of Waco Downtown Cultural District will help elevate cultural district marketing as a priority and will amplify the impact of local spending.

Waco is already a great location for artists to live and work because the majority of housing is considered affordable. Texas A&M's Real Estate Center report a Texas Housing Affordability Index of 2.05 for Waco (meaning that a median-income family earns 2.05 times more than enough to buy a median-priced house). In the proposed Cultural District, there are income adjusted affordable housing units, many of which are occupied by artists and creative professionals. The Historic lofts of Waco High utilized low income tax credits and historic tax credits to deliver premium affordable living to the cultural district. A number of property owners are also committed to developing affordable, flexible, live-work space for artists. This is currently offered in the historic Praetorian building developed by Ellis Urban. Studio, art retail and apartment units are also planned for the Stratton Building (2018). On Elm Avenue, a new neighborhood of affordable, high design "skinny houses" is planned, which will also be ideal spaces for artists and creative professionals to live and work (2018). Churches, schools and community centers in the cultural district offer affordable or free rehearsal space. Performance venues vary in cost from free or low cost (churches, community centers, libraries and Waco Hippodrome) to market-rate for venues that target the wedding and corporate market. The recently refurbished Hippodrome is owned by a local family who are committed to making its historic stage available to community and performing arts groups for minimal or no charge whenever possible and a growing number of downtown restaurants, bars and stores are hosting programs for live music, comedy and poetry/spoken word events.

The main goals of Waco's Cultural Plan are:

Growing and maintaining successful, sustainable arts organizations in Waco.

Texas Cultural District Designation Application

This goal addresses the needs of arts and cultural organizations throughout the Waco area, recognizing that our downtown vibrancy depends on a diverse ecosystem of successful artists, performers and educators. This goal will be addressed primarily through Creative Waco's regranting, match-funding and local arts agency programs as well as shared initiatives with City of Waco, City Center Waco and the Greater Waco Chamber to grow strong cultural businesses downtown. Throughout 2016, Creative Waco is partnering with Waco's nonprofit arts organizations to participate in Americans for the Arts' "Arts & Economic Prosperity 5" survey in order to benchmark economic impact and set future goals. **Impact/measures of success:** Increase in number and range of arts organizations and cultural businesses based in Waco, growth in revenue and sustainability metrics for cultural organizations.

Developing and promoting a hub of cultural activity in downtown Waco to attract residents, businesses and tourists.

This goal is specific to the development of Waco's Cultural District and is delivered through a multi-agency approach. Specific programs currently under way include:

The free DASH bus linking key attractions (launched 2015), Integrated marketing (pilot launched 2015, marketing Collaborative launched 2016), "Chisholm Crossing" calendar and lifestyle website (launched 2013 and currently undergoing rebranding as "Waco Downtown"), Artistic way finding for walking routes (pilot launching 2016, phase 2 planned summer 2017), Main Street improvements (launched and ongoing, including banners and "Discover, Enjoy, Connect" downtown branding), Doris Miller public art project (Fall 2017), New and existing cultural programming (described in program attachment) (launched and ongoing). **Impact/measures of success:** Increase in visitors from outside Waco, increase in length of stay and average spend for visitors, overall increase in attendance at downtown events.

Engaging the creative sector in revitalization, entrepreneurship, education, and economic development

This is a long-term goal engaging arts, cultural, business, civic, and higher education communities to find innovative ways that the arts can help Waco address wider livability and economic development targets across Waco's neighborhoods and generations (current, 5-year and ongoing targets).

Impact/measures of success: Increased number of creative businesses, increased graduate retention, use of vacant buildings, attraction of new investment, revitalization of priority areas and development of artistic programming that addresses specific community or social issues.

Waco is easily accessible via car and bicycle well with multiple points of entry. There is bike and boat hire available and multiple off-road hike and bike trails connect downtown attractions with the river. On-street parking is free with additional parking available in Heritage Square, and Convention Centre parking lots.

Downtown attractions are also connected via the free DASH bus. Additional free buses are added for Baylor game days and other special events, ensuring that large events bring increased activity to the Downtown area. Riverside walking trails are signposted and a new network of walking signs are currently being installed to indicate the number of minutes it takes to reach key attractions.

A new visitor map has been produced to help visitors navigate cultural and other attractions and an interactive GPS-linked Waco History app has been developed so that sites of historic interest can be toured by car, on foot or by bicycle.