



### 1. BACKGROUND

The City of San Antonio's Public Art Ordinance, first passed in 1996 and updated in 2011, outlines policies and procedures for the development of public art on City owned property using City funds. The program operates under the following vision, mission, and guiding principles.

### 2. VISION

We open the landscape to diverse voices and narratives to create engaging public art.

### 3. MISSION

To manage public art projects and programs that express the vibrancy and diversity of our community through art and placemaking for the City of San Antonio.

### 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a. Encourage the selection of artists who can work successfully as members of a project design team, and to encourage collaboration among teams and building disciplines.
- b. Foster the creation of quality artworks in all media, that respond to the distinctive characteristics of each project site and the communities that it serves.
- c. Open the landscape to diverse voices and narratives to create engaging public art.
- d. Select artists who represent the diverse cultural landscape of San Antonio, keeping in mind diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the selection process.
- e. Encourage the development of projects that are accessible to the public and respect the historical resources and mobility of the citizenry.
- f. Encourage projects for open spaces, parks, infrastructure, and facilities that contribute to neighborhood revitalization and enhance the quality and pride of neighborhoods in the city.
- g. Encourage community participation throughout the public art process.
- h. Encourage the role of public art in enhancing economic development and cultural tourism.
- i. Encourage the role of artists in the functional design of eligible capital improvement projects.
- j. Maintain and provide stewardship of the City of San Antonio public art collection.

### 5. PUBLIC ART PROGRAM REVIEW

Over the past several years, the City has seen an increase in public art requests and donations and the 2022-2027 Bond Program included \$15.7 million for public art (applied to applicable propositions). The \$15.7 million for public art was a result of a policy change to increase the 1% to 1.5%. As a result of the increase in demand, donations, and funding, the Department of Arts & Culture worked with community stakeholders, the San Antonio Arts Commission and its Public



Art Committee, and City Council to develop the Public Art Strategy that will further enhance the implementation of public art for capital projects that are in the City's Capital Budget and also provide more guidance on public art donations. The Public Art Strategy will be revisited every 5 years.

### 6. COMMUNITY AND VISITOR SURVEY

In Fall 2022, the Department contracted with Dynata to develop a biennial survey of residents and visitors regarding arts and cultural activities in the San Antonio. The survey, distributed between October 25, 2022 – November 11, 2022, used a representative sample of residents and visitors. Questions were added this year to inquire about the overall impact of public art.

#### **Research Objectives**

- a. Measure levels of awareness of various venues, events, and programs offered by the city
- b. Understand the engagement and participation levels in the arts
- c. Measure attitudes and perceptions of the various arts and cultural attractions in the city
- d. Identify opportunities to enhance arts and cultural offerings
- e. Identify any barriers to engagement or participation for any of the arts and cultural attractions

A total of 1,449 surveys, 1,019 residents and 430 visitors, were completed. Key findings of the survey related to public art include:

- a. Participation rates in arts and culture offerings show overall, *Arts festivals, fairs or parades, Music performances, and Exhibits* garner the highest rates of participation, with these offerings followed closely behind by *Public Art*.
- b. Four out of five respondents, 79%, consider seeing and experiencing art in San Antonio highly important.
- c. Public art is highly valued among participants. Overwhelmingly they report public art as highly important to a city's identity (88%), that public art makes them feel happy (82%) and investing in its creation is important (79%).
- d. Two out of three (66%) of respondents believe that art *Provides landmarks that help define San Antonio and its neighborhood*.
- e. When asked about art in San Antonio today, more than half (60%) of respondents believe it *Aesthetically improves the appearance and experience of public facilities and open spaces, Makes the city competitive with other major cities (59%), Stimulates the economy (58%), and Opens a dialogue (53%)*.



- f. When asked how art in San Antonio should impact the future, respondents prioritized *Stimulate the local economy* (57%), *Make San Antonio competitive with other major cities* (56%) and *Aesthetically improve the appearance and experience of public facilities and open spaces* (54%).

## 7. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

From August 2022 to October 2022, the Department surveyed residents through the City of San Antonio's SASpeakUp program on where they would like to see public art as part of the 2022 – 2027 Bond as well as themes residents would like to see explored through public art. In addition, the Department hosted five in-person meetings and tabled nearly 20 events across the city to gather feedback regarding public art in San Antonio. The Department worked with the City of San Antonio's Communications & Engagement Team to distribute the survey and meeting information, as well as sharing to neighborhood associations, City Council members' newsletters and social media, and Department of Arts & Culture communications outlets including a weekly newsletter, website, social media and marketing and media outreach. A total of 517 completed surveys were collected.

A key finding from this process is that hosting an information and survey table at community events versus hosting events solely focused on public art garnered more survey results and feedback. Residents' schedules are full and split with many other programs and meetings looking for feedback. When a survey is directly brought to a pre-scheduled community event it allows for a quick, easy, and more convenient way to provide feedback.

In all, meetings and conversations were opportunities to provide education about how the Public Art Program works, including funding, artist selection, community engagement, and events and maintenance. Most attendees were not previously aware of how the program worked, and in addition, there were questions in every in-person meeting regarding the maintenance of projects, particularly public art pieces that are already in the City of San Antonio's collection and are in need of attention.

Feedback on themes for public art varied by district, but the common themes that appeared frequently across districts were nature and San Antonio's history and multiculturalism. Parks are a common request for the location of public art, with suggestions for using San Antonio's talented artists to create these pieces. Another request, which was echoed by the Public Art Committee, is to consider creating interactive artworks.

Throughout this process, the Department also received a significant increase in calls from private property owners interested in investing in public art at their businesses or homes. The Department consistently serves as a resource on creating public art, but there is not an



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easily accessible online or printed guide for creating art on private property. In addition, the Department has also received calls from nonprofits interested in funding the creation of temporary public art on City of San Antonio property.

Finally, the Department gathered feedback from artists who have been part of the Public Art Program as well as those who have had interest in the program but have not yet engaged with the program or been selected. This feedback has also been collected by the Public Art Committee in their work with the community. Feedback from artists who have not yet engaged with the program or who have not yet been selected mirrored feedback from the community regarding the lack of knowledge about how the program works and how artists are selected. Once an artist is engaged with the program, however, they are overall highly satisfied with their participation – providing the program an overall artist satisfaction score of 4.9 out of 5. Artist feedback particularly revolved around their satisfaction with the mentorship and guidance provided by the department, especially for first-time public artists.

The learnings detailed in these community and stakeholder feedback meetings were heavily considered in the recommendations below.

### 8. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Combining feedback from all stakeholders and key findings from the survey, and best practices research, the Department of Arts & Culture drafted this Public Art Strategy to continue a strong Public Art Program that prioritizes quality of art, equity, accessibility, community engagement, and artist development.

- a. **Update Public Art Ordinance:** Originally passed in 1996 and last updated in 2011, the Public Art Ordinance contains the former names of the San Antonio Arts Commission and the Department, making the document outdated. In addition, it does not contain guidance on topics of community art on City property. Staff recommends to:
  - i. **Update outdated language** – Correct the names and roles of the Department of Arts & Culture, the Public Art Division, and San Antonio Arts Commission and simplify language for readability and relevance where possible.
  - ii. **Ensure support of community driven art on City property** – Require canvassing for donations and Public Art Committee and San Antonio Arts Commission review and approval of temporary art.
  
- b. **Connect Community from Start to Finish:** The Department and its Public Art Division will work closely with other City departments, City Council offices, and



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community partners to identify highly attended community events where Public Art surveys and discussions can be included to further engage residents in the creation of public art. In addition, the Department will work with relevant project stakeholders and partner City departments to create public art dedications that are not only ribbon-cutting ceremonies but community events (examples include poetry readings, games, coloring activities, culinary offerings, artist talks, etc.) to drive additional attendance and include all in public art celebrations.

- c. Foster Artist Development:** The Department will mentor and support artists of all experience levels throughout the public art process. The Department currently provides artists with:
- i. Detailed briefings about the public art process, including line-by-line reviews of contract requirements
  - ii. Key contacts and timeline for meetings with the department and stakeholders
  - iii. Project walkthroughs with in-depth information about the public art location and how the space is currently and will be used
  - iv. Connections with resources including subject matter experts on the location and artwork materials, size and scope

The Department will also prepare selected public artists for career advancement opportunities including artist talks and marketing activities. Throughout the project, public artists will receive information on working with the media, social media marketing, and other marketing and communications activities. The department will work with each artist to determine comfort level with artists talks and media interviews and will work with the artist to schedule opportunities accordingly. Following project dedications, each public artist will receive a marketing packet that includes high resolution images of the artwork, media clips about the project, and any additional marketing materials to support the artist in the development of their portfolio and future public art proposals – both in San Antonio and in other cities.

In addition, all artists on the City of San Antonio’s Prequalified List will be provided the option to be informed if they are being considered for a public art project, and ultimately, if they are selected to provide more transparency through the artist selection process.

- d. Create a Toolkit for Art in Visible Spaces:** To help foster opportunities for artists and the enhancement of public facing spaces, the Department of Arts & Culture will create a “How-To” toolkit for private property owners interested in investing in large-



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scale artworks seen by the public. The toolkit will serve as a step-by-step guide for developing a project and will include information on finding artists, working with artists, examples of art budgets and projects, key considerations for contracts and insurance, marketing the project, and more.

- e. **Explore Opportunities for Functionality and Interactivity:** The Department of Arts & Culture will work with selected artists to explore opportunities for functionality and/or interactivity in projects to encourage community participation in public art. This can include lighting to enhance public safety and accessibility, climbable art, art in motion, and art that interacts with the landscape or public art location.
- f. **Research Maintenance –** To preserve and protect existing artworks in the City of San Antonio’s collection, the Department of Arts & Culture will conduct Best Practices Research on the maintenance of public artworks in City collections as well as funding sources. In addition, the department will develop a strategy for promoting the department’s donation fund, in which businesses or individuals can donate to the maintenance, repair or creation of public artworks in San Antonio.
- g. **Educate and Inform on the Public Art Program:** To create transparency and enhance participation in the City of San Antonio’s Public Art Program, the Department of Arts & Culture will develop a marketing and communication strategy to educate members of the public, artists and visitors about public art and the public art process in San Antonio. This strategy will include updated website materials, informative videos, social media posts, media relations, and opportunities for public presentations and discussions.